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# PRIMARY POINT

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## PERCEIVE UNIVERSAL SOUND

### An Interview with Zen Master Seung Sahn

This interview with Zen Master Seung Sahn appeared in "The American Theosophist" (AT) in May 1985. It is reprinted by permission of the Theosophical Society in America, Wheaton, Illinois. The interviewer is Gary Doore. Zen Master Seung Sahn is now referred to by his students as Dae Soen Sa Nim. (See note on page 3)

**Gary Doore:** What is Zen chanting?

**Seung Sahn (Dae Soen Sa Nim):** Chanting is very important in our practice. We call it "chanting meditation." Meditation means keeping a not-moving mind. The important thing in chanting meditation is to perceive the sound of one's own voice; not hear, but perceive.

**AT:** Are you using the word "perceive" in a special sense?

**DSSN:** Yes. Perceiving your voice means perceiving your true self or true nature. Then you and the sound are never separate, which means that you and the whole universe are never separate. Thus, to perceive our true nature is to perceive universal substance.

With regular chanting, our sense of being centered will get stronger and stronger. When

we are strongly centered we can control our feelings, and thus our condition and situation.

**AT:** When you refer to a "center" do you mean any particular point in the body?

**DSSN:** No, it is not just one point. To be strongly centered is to be at one with the universal center, which means infinite time and infinite space.

The first time one tries chanting meditation there will be much confused thinking, many likes, dislikes and so on. This indicates that the whole mind is outwardly-oriented. Therefore, it is necessary first to return to one's energy source, to return to a single point.

**AT:** In other words, one must first learn to concentrate?

**DSSN:** Yes. Below the navel we have a center that is called an "energy garden" in Korean. We eat, we breathe, and this area becomes a source of power. If the mind becomes still, this saves energy. The mind, however, is constantly restless. There is an endless stream of desires for various kinds of experience; sights,

(continued on next page)

## Mt. Fuji in the Mist and Rain

by George Bowman, Master Dharma Teacher

This talk was excerpted from a Dharma Talk given at the Providence Zen Center in January 1988.

During this retreat we have been sitting short, twenty minute rounds with the intention of not moving. Ordinarily, we sit much longer and allow people to stand behind their cushions when they are in great pain or uncontrollable sleepiness. Perhaps we have been fearful of scaring new students away from their cushions when they feel overwhelmed with pain or boredom. There is, however, great wisdom to be found in stillness.

Before each round of sitting we are vowing not to move, to sit with whatever appears in this moment and to relate to it as our teacher and friend. Of course, some friends are quite challenging, but nevertheless we are committed to a full relationship with them!

Why should we try this experiment? We can enjoy the flowers only if we stop long enough to look at them. What stops moving? First, our body stops moving; next, our scattered thinking stops moving; then, our dispersed and confused awareness stops moving; and finally, we come into full relationship with this flower. This full relationship and clear experience of the flower is not a meditation upon something that is separate from us. Rather, in stillness, we forget ourselves and become intimate with the flower, we enter the boundless world of prajna.

In sitting still we are able to receive what this moment has to offer. We see that this moment, regardless of what our idea about it may be, is entirely trustworthy—not only can we trust it, we are it. So we are not trying to amputate pieces of ourselves to fit some arbitrary image of what is acceptable. (That would be

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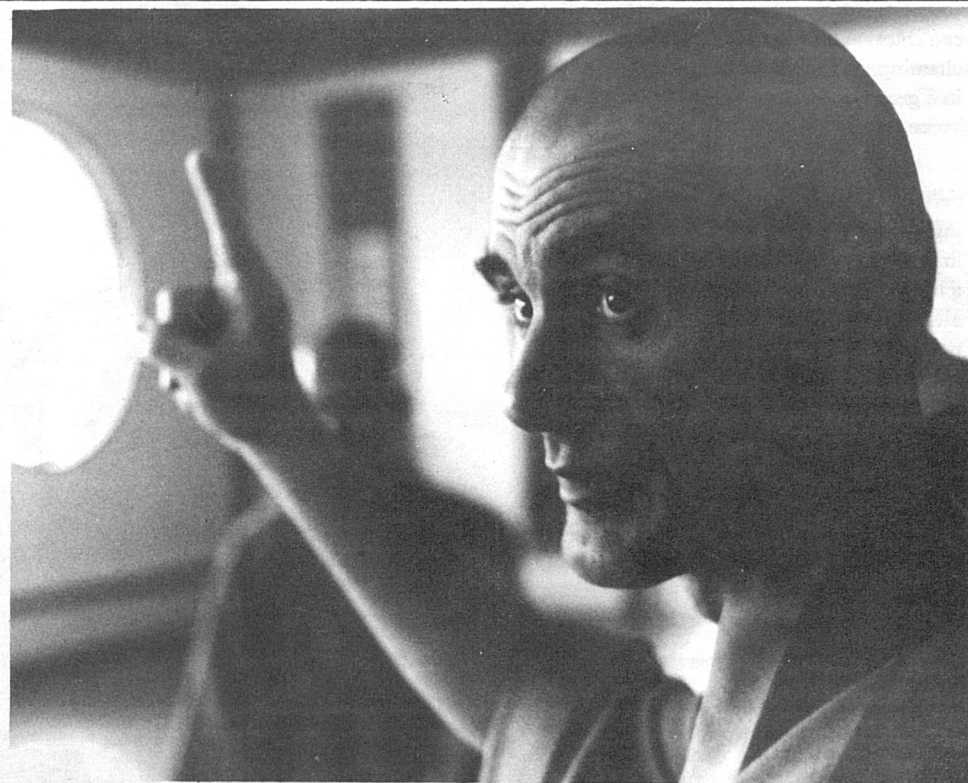
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Master Dharma Teacher Do Am Sunim

## Do Am Sunim Becomes Poland's First Master Dharma Teacher

Zen Master Seung Sahn is now referred to by his students as Dae Soen Sa Nim. (See note on page 3)

[Editor's note: excerpts from the inka ceremony given below were translated by Dorota Krzyzanowska and edited by Susan Phillips.]

On June 4th of this year Do Am Sunim became the first Master Dharma Teacher of Kwan Um Zen School of Poland. Over one hundred fifty people came to the Warsaw Zen Center to see Dae Soen Sa Nim give inka—the authority to teach kong-an practice and lead retreats—to Do Am Sunim. The inka ceremony took place one day before the Polish Sangha's ten year anniversary celebration. Master Dharma Teacher (and honorary Polish KUZS President) Jacob Perl joined Dae Soen Sa Nim there for these major events. Representatives from all the Buddhist sanghas in Poland attended, reflecting the very close ties that the groups have.

The Polish Sangha had its beginnings in 1978, when Dae Soen Sa Nim and Jacob Perl visited Poland at the invitation of a former member of Chogye Zen Center in New York who had returned to his native land. During that visit, Dae Soen Sa Nim and Jacob first met Do Am Sunim or, as he was known at that time, Andrzej Czamecki.

In 1978, Andrzej was a self-employed artisan producing mosaic tiles. After the visit he became deeply involved in Zen practice and started a Zen Center in his home in Krakow. A couple of years later Andrzej moved to War-

saw, and, as often happens among Zen students, he switched careers: his experience with Zen practice enabled him to use meditation techniques to counsel drug addicts.

In Warsaw, Andrzej started a second temple which was given the name Do Am Sa, from its founder's Dharma name, Do Am (Sa means temple). The Polish Kwan Um Zen School was formed as a separate entity from the North American Kwan Um Zen School. Andrzej has been Abbot of that body since its inception. As Dae Soen Sa Nim often tells his students, the Polish school is very strong and is growing. In addition to the centers in Warsaw and Krakow already mentioned, there is a center in Gdansk and approximately fifteen affiliated sitting groups throughout Poland.

In December of 1986, Andrzej took traditional monk's precepts at Providence Zen Center, and would thereafter be called Do Am Sunim. Now, less than two years later, he would participate in another momentous ceremony that would profoundly affect his life.

Traditionally, inka ceremonies include an explanation of the procedures to the audience, a period of Dharma Combat in which members of the audience challenge the initiate, a speech by the new Master Dharma Teacher, and congratulatory speeches. In this the first Polish inka ceremony, Jacob Perl, who was born in Poland and speaks the language fluently, explained the ceremony and invited members of the audience to engage Do Am Sunim in Dharma combat. The following are excerpts from the Dharma combat exchanges, Do Am Sunim's Dharma Talk, and congratulatory speeches by Jacob Perl and Dae Soen Sa Nim.

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## Soen Sa Nim Interview

(Continued from front page)

sounds, smells, tastes, feelings. This turning outward of the mind in search of sensory experience dissipates one's energy until finally there is nothing left in the energy garden. Thereby one becomes subject to control by outside conditions or influences, and so loses control over his or her life.

For this reason, our meditation practice means: Do not think anything. In other words, do not use your eyes, ears, nose, tongue, body or mind. By doing this our center gets stronger and stronger, and there is an experience of growing clarity.

AT: How does Zen chanting differ, if at all, from the recitation of mantras?

DSSN: In mantra practice there is no (audible) sound. It is only internal. One merely concentrates on repeating the mantra to oneself. In chanting, on the other hand, we chant out loud in a group and just perceive the sound of our voice.

When we talk about perceiving sound during chanting we mean having a clear mind. This is different from a mind that can be lost, and also different from a one-pointed mind.

For example, consider two people having a good time together, enjoying each other's company, laughing, feeling good and so forth. Suddenly a man appears with a gun and demands money. Instantly the good feeling evaporates and there is only fear and distress. "Somebody please help! Don't shoot!" The mind, the centeredness is completely lost.

But suppose that a person is walking in the street concentrating on a mantra with a one-pointed mind. Then a man appears with a gun and demands money there will be only "OM MANI PADME HUM" or whatever. "Hey, are you crazy! I said give me your money." Then there is still only "OM MANI PADME HUM." Nothing else matters. "I will kill you unless you give me your money!" Then what? Only "OM MANI PADME HUM." This is concentration, one-pointed mind.

Finally, suppose that someone with a clear mind is walking in the street and a robber appears. Then the response is "How much do you want?" That is clear mind. If the man

the general area of the stomach it will be correct. One does not have to try to chant from that point below the navel. The sound comes by itself if it is done correctly.

AT: What is the difference between Zen chanting and singing?

DSSN: Direction is what makes the difference. Love songs, for example, have only what we might call a "love-direction." This is in the realm of opposites; love and hate, liking and disliking. Emotions come in, so most singing is emotional. Chanting, however, means that the direction is very clear. Remember the phrase "chanting meditation." The direction or aim here is to obtain enlightenment in order to save all beings from suffering.

AT: And this is not to try for some type of feelings or emotional quality?

DSSN: No, I am not trying for any good feeling for me. Chanting is not for oneself. It is for all beings. That is the difference.

AT: In other words, it is an expression of the Bodhisattva's compassion?



Zen Master Seung Sahn

DSSN: Yes.

AT: What is the relation between compassion and wisdom?

DSSN: Compassion is the function of wisdom; it is the action. Wisdom gives the direction.

AT: By this you mean knowing what to do in order to help someone—and also how to do it correctly?

DSSN: Right.

AT: So compassion is more than just a warm feeling toward a person.

DSSN: Yes. If that warm feeling of compassion has no direction, if one's mind is not clear, there is every chance of doing more harm than good; and that will not really be compassion. Therefore wisdom is crucial.

AT: How long should one chant?

DSSN: Everyday chanting is important in our practice. We do not do it for such a long time. In the morning we chant for about forty-five minutes, and in the evening perhaps for twenty-five minutes. But regularity is important.

AT: You do not try for any emotional effects in chanting, but does it still have an effect on the emotions?

DSSN: Just do it! This analysis into emotional mind, intellectual mind and so on must dis-

appear. There must be no mind! Then there is just clarity, and infinite time and space.

AT: In one of the Buddhist Sutras it says that enlightenment may be obtained by turning back the faculty of hearing to the original nature, and that this is the most suitable method for human beings. Will you comment on this?

DSSN: Those are merely different "teaching words." The idea, however, is the same as we have been discussing. Don't cling to words. Just do it! (Laughter.)

AT: How?

DSSN: Listen. Everything is universal sound: birds singing, thunder, dogs barking—all this is universal sound. If you have no mind, everything will be perceived as such. Therefore, when you are chanting with no mind it is also universal sound. If you have "I" then it is "my" sound. But with a mind clear like space, sometimes even the sound of a dog barking or a car horn honking will bring enlightenment. Because at that moment you and the sound become one.

AT: Is this moment of enlightenment related to samadhi?

DSSN: Samadhi, as we use the term, means one-pointed mind. This is not enlightenment. It is concentration-mind. Samadhi, you see, is only a good feeling for me, not for other people. Moreover, it is merely a one-pointed mind, not clear mind.

AT: Will you explain a little more about how someone can attain enlightenment by hearing a loud sound, as we often read about in Zen stories?

DSSN: If you do loud chanting, for example, and if you do it one hundred percent - put your whole energy into it - at that time there will be no "I". Thus there is no "my" opinion, situation or condition. In this regard, chanting together in a group is very important. Group chanting takes away "my" opinion, situation, condition and so on very easily. One has to blend in and harmonize

with the rest of the chanters. The main thing, however, is just to do it totally.

AT: You said in your Dharma talk earlier that in practicing a mantra or chanting it is important to keep the "Big Question," namely, "Who is practicing this mantra?" or "Who is chanting?" Why is this question about "who?" important?

DSSN: I tell students to find out "What am I?" This is a kong-an. Before thinking, what are you? One says "I don't know." But even before speaking, prior to any words or thoughts, this "before-thinking mind" is clear mind.

AT: Can music be a form of Zen practice also?

DSSN: Music is not usually Zen practice, but it can be. If the player just plays and becomes one with the playing it can be called Zen. But most of the time the direction is not clear in music. Usually there is some emotional control, some direction given by emotions. And the musician may be trying to control the emotions of the audience through his music. In fact, we speak of *good music* as having this sort of effect on other people's emotions. Emotional music means opposites-mind: wanting or not wanting, good feeling, bad feeling. But true Zen music is different. It has been compared to the jumping of a fish up and down in the river.

AT: Spontaneous?

DSSN: Yes, but not emotional. Listening to it brings a very quiet mind, a very clear mind. That is Zen music. But one should not cling to the opinion "This is music, that is not music." If we are not attached to anything then everything is Zen music.

(continued on next page)

## PRIMARY POINT

PRIMARY POINT is published by the Kwan Um Zen School, a non-profit religious corporation under the direction of Zen Master Seung Sahn. The school supports and arranges the world-wide teaching schedule of Zen Master Seung Sahn and his senior teachers, issues publications on contemporary Buddhist practice, and supports dialogue among religions.

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**"Compassion is the function of wisdom; it is the action. Wisdom gives the direction."**

shouts "Give me all of it" there is no problem. "Okay, here is all of it." In fact, with a clear mind one can use such a situation to teach others. There are a number of Zen stories in which thieves or robbers have been so surprised and shaken by the calm response of a clear-minded Zen Master that they later returned to learn Zen from him.

So chanting ultimately means clear mind, not concentration. In concentration you want to make something, there is some desire to focus on one point. This is different than simply perceiving the sound of one's voice, without separation.

AT: In some Buddhist chanting the sound is very low and constricted, as though being produced from below the navel under great pressure. What is the reason for this?

DSSN: That is the Japanese style. It comes from the hara, the point just below the navel. This is not necessary. If the sound comes from

**Soen Sa Nim Interview**

*(Continued from previous page)*

**AT:** In the Heart Sutra it says that the Prajna-paramita mantra (mantra of transcendental wisdom) is the greatest mantra. Would you explain this?

**DSSN:** Yes. They call it 'the transcendental mantra, the great bright mantra, the utmost mantra' and so forth. This means that if one simply tries this mantra, *GATE GATE PARAGATE PARASAMGATE BODHI SVAHA* with one's whole energy, then it will be the greatest mantra. Actually, of course, any mantra which you try in this way will be "the greatest mantra"... for you! That particular mantra is not special, not different from any other. But all Sutras which refer to any kind of mantra will say that it is special.

**AT:** Which means it is special if one believes that it is.

**DSSN:** Correct. A student once asked me "if this is true then even the words *Coca Cola* can be a mantra?" Yes, if you really believe that 'Coca Cola' is the greatest mantra and practice it diligently, it will work for you.

**AT:** Isn't there a danger of hypnotizing oneself with a mantra, of putting oneself into a sleepy state?

**DSSN:** Yes. Again the difference between this and the correct method of practice lies in the direction or aim. Falling into a sleepy or hypnotic state means that the direction is not clear. Practice thus becomes merely habitual or mechanical action. So it is important to ask "Why am I practicing this mantra? Is it for me or for other people?" In self-hypnosis from mechanical repetition there is no such aim; or perhaps the aim is merely to relax or to get some sort of good feeling for oneself. In that case it is easy to fall into a dull, drowsy state, but not so if the direction is clear.

However, sometimes if very neurotic

**AT:** How does one keep a before-thinking mind during chanting?

**DSSN:** Just do it! If you chant with all your energy, thinking has already been cut off.

**AT:** Because to think while chanting is to divide one's energy?

**DSSN:** Right. Simply chanting with one hundred percent of one's energy poured into the chant is already empty mind, clear mind, which is not a state of ignorance or delusion. 'Your' before-thinking mind and 'my' before-thinking mind are the same mind. Then your substance, the substance of this paper in front of us, my substance are all the same, all universal substance.

But someone will say that this universal



*12-5-87 Palma de Mallorca Elaine Schmidt Urbain*  
Drawing of Zen Master Seung Sahn by Elaine Schmidt Urbain

**AT:** Would you say something about the relationship between chanting and the breath? What about the link between the breath and the mind?

**DSSN:** One should not check the breathing. It is necessary to put all such considerations aside and just do the chant with all of one's energy. Correct breathing will then naturally be the result. Just sitting will also do the same thing.

**AT:** Do you mean as in Soto Zen where the main form of practice is called "just sitting" (shikantaza)?

**DSSN:** Yes. But it is easy to get attached to sitting in Soto Zen practice. Therefore, one must understand what this "just sitting" is. Any kind of action—chanting, bowing, sitting, lying down, walking—all these can be Zen practice so long as one keeps a still mind. But in Soto Zen practice it is often only "body sitting," that is, where one's body is sitting but the mind is

moving all over, chasing thoughts. This is not just sitting.

**AT:** You mentioned that any action can be Zen practice, but is there something about just sitting that makes it especially good? Why do Zen monks spend so much time at it?

**DSSN:** For one thing, if one just sits, then all the internal organs of the body benefit. The sitting posture is very helpful because when one just sits with the back straight and the mind still, a great deal of energy is accumulated and all the functions of the body become correct. Some times the body is ill because it is out of balance. So one must first control the body, then breathing and mind will automatically be controlled.

**AT:** Are there any other sorts of sounds or rhythms that are important in Zen practice?

**DSSN:** One famous Zen Master only heard the sound of a rooster crowing and was enlightened. Another Zen Master was just sweeping in the yard when his broom threw a rock against a piece of bamboo with a loud knock and he was enlightened. He and the sound had become one. So this matter of sound in Zen practice is really very simple. Any sound will do.

But in regard to particular sounds that we regularly use, there are bells, drums, gongs and so forth. All of these have a meaning. For instance, the drum made out of animal skin reminds us about saving all animals; the sound of the big bell means saving all beings in the different hells. Thus we are reminded about the Bodhisattva's compassion. But this is only the external meaning. The inner meaning is the same as what we have been discussing. It is necessary to perceive the sound, whatever it is—bell, drum, gong, etc.—and to become one with it. There is no thought, no separation, only perceiving sound. This is the crucial point. So just perceive this bell or drum sound, cut off all thinking, and then your wisdom-mind will grow up. You will get enlightenment and thus save all beings.

**“Yes, if you really believe that ‘Coca Cola’ is the greatest mantra and practice it diligently, it will work for you.”**

people come to learn about our practice, mechanical repetition of a mantra can do some good, perhaps helping them to gather more energy and become stabilized.

substance is Buddha, or God, or nature, or the Absolute and so forth. But actually it has no name, no form, no speech, no thought, because it is before all of this appears.

**Dae Soen Sa Nim**

In keeping with Korean tradition, Zen Master Seung Sahn is now addressed as "Dae Soen Sa Nim" by his students. The "Dae" is an honorific prefix commonly used in Korea when a prominent teacher passes a certain age (e.g. sixty years) or has achieved a specific prominence.

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# Do Am Sunim Becomes Poland's First Master Dharma Teacher

## We Expect Something Special

Dharma Talk by Master Dharma Teacher Do Am Sunim

[He hits the table with his Zen Stick: Hit!]  
"This stick is sky, sky is this stick. Is this true?"

[Silence. He hits the table again with his Zen stick: Hit!]

"There is no stick, there is no sky. Is this true?"

[Silence. Then once again — Hit!]

"Stick is stick, sky is sky. Is this true?"

[Silence.]

"KAAATZ!! Sky is blue."

Questions often appear about what we attain after a certain period of practice— what is enlightenment, what is it like? Since I completed my 100 day retreat I've been asked many times what I attained. I always say: "Nothing special. When I was bowing, I was just bowing. During chanting, I was just chanting sutras. During sitting, I was just sitting. During meals, I was just eating. And during rest period, I just rested." But I noticed that no one really believed me. People would say, "Didn't you have some kind of special experience at least once? Maybe during the night?"

Other people asked me why I spent all that time just sitting there doing nothing. They wondered why I didn't work, or help other people. So again I would go back to what I said before: "When it was time to sit, I just sat. When it was time to bow, I just bowed. When it was time for meals, I just ate." But they would not believe me. We expect something special; we have the idea that our direction is to attain enlightenment, so we may help other people. No doubt this is a much better idea than most ideas, but it is still just an idea. Our teacher reminds us frequently that it is quite easy to attain enlightenment; the difficulty is keeping it, moment after moment after moment.



First Dharma Speech by Master Dharma Teacher Do Am Sunim

When someone asks what this practice is for, or wonders what enlightenment is like, it is worth realizing that each moment of our lives is a great enlightenment. The sky is blue. The wall is white. This light is shining straight into my eyes and I am blinking. Nothing else. But in order to learn to function at this moment with full harmony and peace, we need to make some effort. The practice gives us the op-

portunity to make this effort— it doesn't matter whether this effort is in formal practice or outside of the Dharma Room.

As Dae Soen Sa Nim has told us many times, what is important is try mind, from moment to moment. If we make a mistake, then we must perceive it. Then correct it, and try again. And we must remember that we practice not only for ourselves but for all people and it is nothing special.

On the one hand, sitting, bowing, and chanting is just the same as playing, working, and eating or whatever. But, on the other hand, during formal practice, it may become clear why we do this. The answer may suddenly appear: 'To help others.' To help others is also just an idea, but of all dualistic ideas that we can create in life, it is the best.

*"People would say, 'Didn't you have some kind of special experience at least once?'"*

Through persistent practice, which is not really special, our try mind slowly, slowly gets clearer. When our mind is clearer, we perceive every situation more clearly, our perception becomes wider. At the same time, we learn to act to help others. And after awhile these words become truth, because we experience them more and more ourselves. We begin to experience that this world and we ourselves are not different. How can we say that this world and we ourselves are separate? How can we

keeps telling us it is nothing special, always there are a lot of mistakes, struggles. . . Maybe we will have to spend all our lives like this but in ancient times — BOOM!! One moment and that was it! [Enlightenment was attained.]

First of all, part of the stories is usually missing. These tales were first told long ago when people had very simple uncomplicated minds. It was not necessary to explain that such and such a fellow who stumbled over the stone merely loosened his mind for a second, long enough to feel— 'Oh! Everything is clear'; nor that the fellow might later make a mistake, and have to say, 'I am sorry,' and continue his struggle to be enlightened.

So certainly today is an important day for me; but, in just a short moment this day will be even more important and in the next moment even more important still. So I think that for at least the next 10,000 years, we will have better and better days— all at one instant. Let's understand finally that there is no time, no space. There is only: Hit! [He hits his Zen stick on the table.]— this one moment. This moment has already died.

But: [Hit! He again hits his stick on the table.] "The next one is alive!"

"And this one has died too!"

"No problem. That which has been, that which is going to be is only this moment."

[Hit! Again he hits his Zen stick.]

"Next, how to help at this moment? Whether we succeed or not it does not matter. Only be [Hit! The Zen stick pounds the table]— in this moment. Only help!"

Now I will say something about one of the dangers in our practice— which is creating the idea of enlightenment — in the form of three questions:

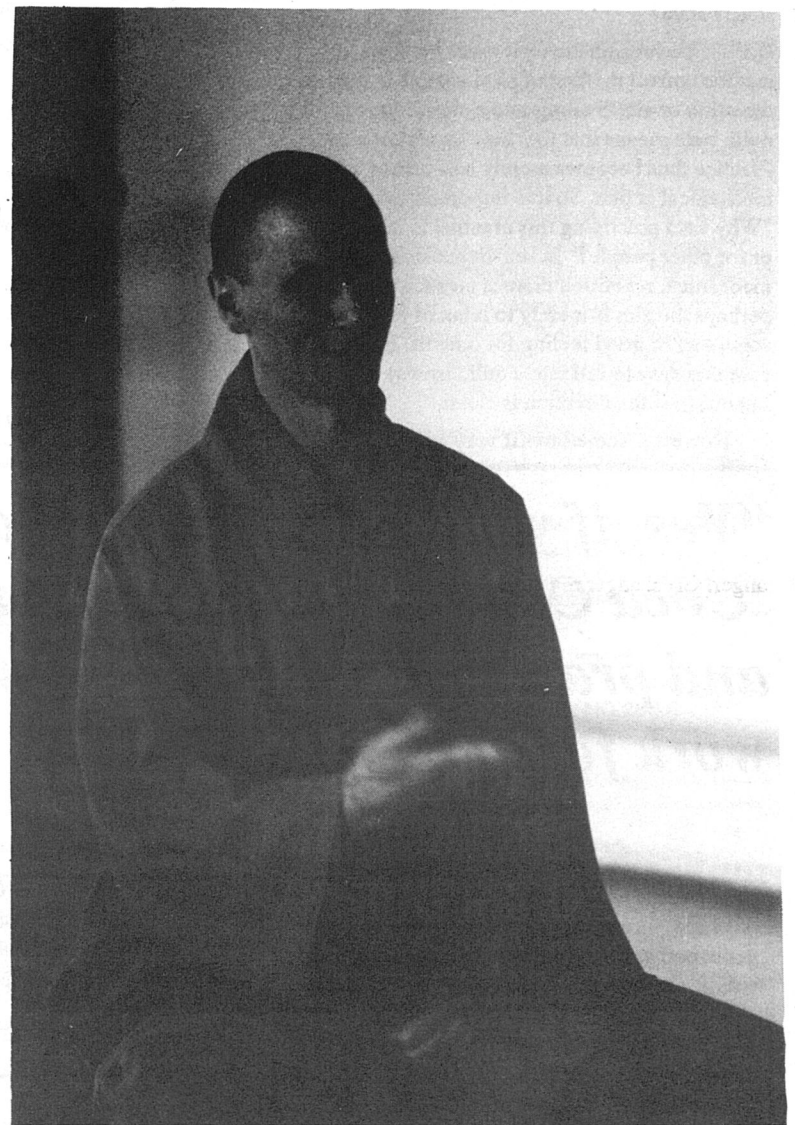
[Hit! The Zen stick hits the table.] "Someone said that enlightenment is very easy! Is that true?"

[Hit! The Zen stick hits the table.] "Someone said that enlightenment is very difficult! Is that true?"

[Hit! The Zen stick hits the table.] "Someone said that enlightenment is neither easy nor difficult. Is that true?"

"KAAAAAATZ!!!" [Very loud.]

My talk is finished. Thank you for coming.



## Dharma Combat

### MDT Do Am Sunim's First Defense

**Questioner:** We say there are three jewels: the Buddha, the Dharma, and the Sangha. Which one is the most important?

**Do Am Sunim:** You already understand!

**Questioner:** I ask you!

**Do Am Sunim:** I am very glad we are all together at this ceremony.

**Questioner:** Thank you for your teaching. (Do Am Sunim and the questioner bow together.)

**Questioner:** The Heart Sutra says: No attainment with nothing to attain. So I ask you, for whom is this celebration?

**Do Am Sunim:** You already understand!

**Questioner:** If I already understood, I wouldn't have asked you!

**Do Am Sunim:** For you!

**Questioner:** Thank you for your teaching!

(Do Am Sunim and the questioner bow together.)

**Questioner:** My watch has been stolen from me. Do you know how I can get it back?

**Do Am Sunim:** You already understand!

**Questioner:** I still miss it!

**Do Am Sunim:** It's twenty to eight.

**Questioner:** Thank you for your teaching. (Do Am Sunim and the questioner bow together.)

After the Dharma Combat was complete, Dae Soen Sa Nim presented Do Am Sunim with the two classic collections of traditional kong-ans— the Mu Mun Kwan and the Blue Cliff Record— a Zen stick, and the special Master Dharma Teacher kasa. Do Am Sunim then gave his first formal Dharma talk as a Master Dharma Teacher.

## This was Brought Forth by You as Well

by Master Dharma Teacher Jacob Perl

I met Do Am Sunim ten years ago. Who would have guessed we'd be here like this now? (Laughter)

I must tell you that what just happened when Do Am Sunim was answering your questions was very interesting. I have had a chance to attend such happenings twice as a spectator, and once I was the subject myself. Whatever it may look like from the outside, it is impossible to imagine how difficult it is, until you find yourself in that situation.

It is important because you see try mind very clearly. Various feelings appear at such an occasion, due to the various relationships among us. I remember how it was when we had the first inka ceremony, for George Bowman and Barbara Rhodes, a long time ago. Dae Saen Sa Nim said something that I want to paraphrase for you now; it struck me at that time, and I think it will be very helpful for everyone. Dae Soen Sa Nim said: 'Maybe someone is very happy. If so, this happiness will add even more energy to that person's practice, because it is nothing special—anyone can do it. Maybe someone else is jealous—but, also, being jealous is neither good nor bad. Our job is not to check our feelings but to put energy into our practice. If someone is jealous, that person should just practice, so he/she can attain everything, better than Do Am Sunim, better than me. Better than Dae Soen Sa Nim. Maybe someone else is angry: 'Oh, gee . . . Do Am Sunim is such and such! Small anger is not necessary, only practice. Then small anger may become great anger. Great anger means only, 'how to help others?'

So whatever feeling appears, please put it into your practice and from that moment on only try harder. Try harder means, as Do Am Sunim has said before, not to make anything special, only to go straight moment to moment. When we are doing something, in Dae Soen Sa Nim's words—**ONLY DO IT!!**

I am truly very happy for this is a great occasion. Here in this country the first Dharma Master has appeared who was born and raised here, who lives here, and who knows the culture, this language, all of you very intimately. But one Dharma Master is not enough. [The audience laughs!] So for everyone it is the proper occasion to make a firm decision.

In congratulating Do Am Sunim, I would like to congratulate all of you, because what has been created here was brought forth by you as well; in our practice we always clean each other by rubbing up against one another. In this way we help each other. These experiences which helped Do Am Sunim can also help you; they helped this ceremony to happen. You have helped him to receive inka from our teacher. Now it is his turn to help you. [Laughter.] Thank you very much for your presence here and also for your very good questions, very difficult ones! I don't know what I myself would have done with those questions, but this time I was lucky to be in the audience.



Congratulations, Do Am Sunim, on becoming a Master Dharma Teacher. Congratulations to the Polish Sangha that this one great man appeared; Congratulations to Polish Buddhism, because it will become independent.

Buddhism means to become independent. It began in India and went to Tibet, and Tibetan Buddhism appeared; then it went to China, so Chinese Buddhism appeared; then it went to Korea—Korean Buddhism appeared; then it went to Japan, where Japanese Buddhism appeared. Most recently it came to the Western World and American Buddhism began to appear; and finally it has come to Poland, where Polish Buddhism is appearing. People from many countries, from Japan, from Tibet, from Korea, are coming to Poland and teaching here. This is a very important moment.

Bodhidharma went to China and taught Buddhism. Before, only Sutras were taught. When Bodhidharma came to China he hit [meaning "challenged"] all the Sutra teachings and started to teach the *become independent practice*. The name of that practice is Zen. Zen is the result of Indian meditation and Chinese Taoism coming together. Together they became Zen. Next Zen Buddhism continued to Korea, and it went to Japan. Now it has come here to Poland.

Masters come to Poland and teach how to become independent. Ten years have passed since I first came here. Now a Polish teacher has appeared. This is the beginning of Polish Buddhism's independence. So today is a very important day—a day of great happiness, a very wonderful day.

Becoming a Master Dharma Teacher is very difficult. Also it is very easy. If you are thinking, it is very difficult. Everyone has had an interview with Do Am Sunim today. Some answers were very good and some of them were . . . OK. It is his first teaching. First teaching is very difficult! If you do not believe in yourself 100% then you may under-

stand something [meaning "know how to answer a challenging question"], but the answer will not come out! It is his first teaching today. Even great masters make big mistakes sometimes. For instance, Zen Master Jo Ju, who when asked: 'Does the dog have Buddha nature?'—replied, 'Mu!' (or "No").

Buddha once picked up a flower and no one understood—only Mahakasyapa, who smiled; Buddha said: 'I transmit my true Dharma to you!' That was a great mistake! If I were Mahakasyapa, I would have already smiled. That meant that I already had my Dharma, and I would have said, 'Thank you Buddha, but I already have it. I don't need your Dharma!' Then Buddha would have had a problem. That was Buddha's big mistake. Today Do Am Sunim made some mistakes, but this is not a problem. How to make correct, how to function correctly—that is the important point!

When you finish high school you may teach at a primary school. The first time it is very difficult. Then you teach and teach, and soon the teaching habit appears. Then—no

## Colonial Buddhism Is Not Necessary

Talk by Dae Soen Sa Nim

problem! If you finish University training, you may teach at high school. The first time you may be confused and teaching is very difficult. But every day, as you are teaching, you are getting better and better at it. So you and Do Am Sunim are helping each other to practice everyday, to teach each other everyday. One day Polish Buddhism will grow up. Finally Polish Buddhism will become completely independent.

pletely Polish Buddhism will appear and it will save all beings from suffering.

When I come to Poland I am always very happy. The Polish Sangha is very strong, stronger than in America, stronger than in Europe, stronger than in Asia. I think this is because everyone here understands both communism and religion—both God and the materialistic way. But our Sangha is following neither God's way nor the materialistic way.

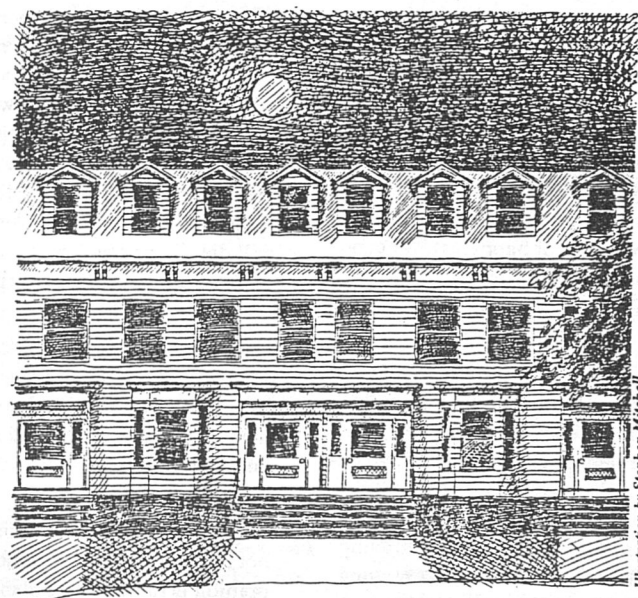
***"Our Sangha is following neither God's way nor the materialistic way. Here everyone becomes independent from God and materialism."***

If only teachers from other countries come here and teach their style—only Korean or Tibetan style and say 'You do this!' or 'You do that!'—then you will have only colonial Buddhism in Poland. Colonial Buddhism is not necessary. It is very important that the Polish style of Buddhism become independent.

Polish Sangha, practice strongly!! Then a second Master Dharma Teacher and a third Master Dharma Teacher and many Master Dharma Teachers will appear. Then someone will get transmission and become a Zen Master. This is very important! Now it is just the beginning—a Polish teacher has appeared. So I hope you will practice together, just do it, and get enlightenment—then a com-

Here everyone becomes independent from God and from materialism. This is Zen Buddhism—to become one. The direction of the Polish Sangha is very strong, its meditation is very strong, and its practice in daily life is strong. I hope that soon many Master Dharma Teachers will appear, a great Zen Master will appear, and Polish Buddhism will become completely independent. Then it can help the American Sangha, the European Sangha, and the Asian Sangha. It is possible!

I hope that you will practice strongly, attain enlightenment, and save all beings from suffering.



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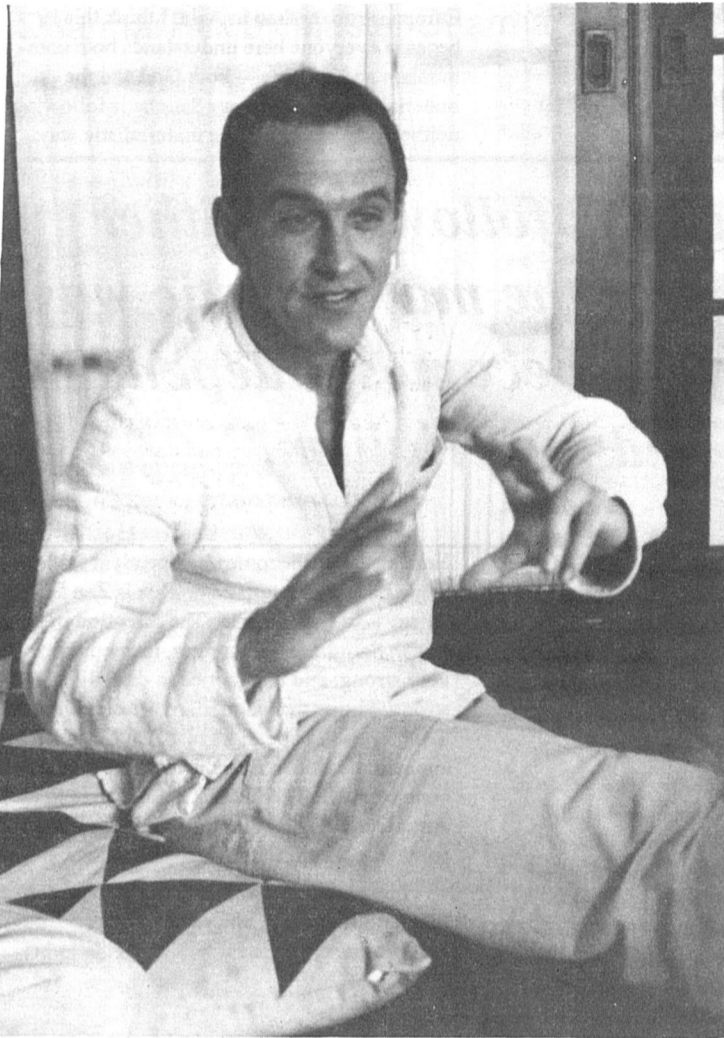
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## George Bowman—"Mist and Rain"

(Continued from front page.)

creating a monster.) Instead, we are stopping and embracing ourselves.

Can you understand this very important relationship between samadhi, that is, concentration and unwavering attention, and wisdom? Wisdom is not something we accumulate or understand but rather it is be-



Master Dharma Teacher George Bowman

coming one with experience. In order to do that we must renounce the well-traveled mind road—the understanding, the judgment and the dispersion of attention that keep us separate. Then we can appreciate the wisdom of pain and the wisdom of happiness, we can appreciate a mosquito on a flower.

The Sixth Patriarch put it quite succinctly in the Platform Sutra, "Learned Audience, in my system, Samadhi and Prajna are fundamental. But do not be under the wrong impression that these two are independent of each other, for they are inseparably united and not two entities. Samadhi is the content of Prajna, while Prajna is the activity of Samadhi." In other words, the content of wisdom is a not moving mind without ideas and when this not moving mind without ideas manifests or acts that activity is the truth.

**Questioner:** There is physical pain and there is the pain of clinging to our likes and dislikes. Can you talk about these?

**George:** What is our relationship with our suffering? Of course there is the physical pain and our attempts to escape, barter, hypnotize, or congratulate ourselves on our strength or openness. Perhaps we judge or criticize or decide that we can't stand it any longer. When all is said and done then physical pain settles into physical pain and it is boundless and clear. It is quite challenging to let go of our opinion about pain. Our practicing is only a matter of letting go of our cherished opinion. Then we can feel clearly, hear clearly, and our mind functions smoothly by itself!

We love our opinions so! It is a great loss to let them go even though they are the source of endless sorrow. Someone once described Zen as a practice of grieving. Without being morbid about it, the practice is one of letting go and appreciating the vivid, changing nature of our experience. It is clear that whatever we are clinging to so hopefully will disappear. There is no way around it. Everything will inexorably be taken away from us—our wives, our husbands, our children, our friends, our moods, our eyes, our wishes, our wants, every last speck. There is nowhere to

take refuge and nothing to which we can cling. We might as well begin letting go right now. It is such a paradox that as we let go we appreciate this life so much more! Our minds tell us that we will lose something, that something will die. I suppose that is true, but in that dying something else is born, something vivid, boundless and clear.

This letting go and "not making anything" soon becomes another idea, another distortion or confusion. Instead of letting go and realizing that there is no self and no practice to attain, letting go becomes another problem, another ideal and identity.

A lot of Zen students sincerely think that not making something or not having an opinion is to be dull or blank, or to be unaware of the continual mix of their feelings and

opinions, likes and dislikes. The fact of it is, that not making anything is not reacting to what's already there. It's not telling yourself, that it must not be there if you're to be a good Zen student. It's already there. That's the truth that the Buddha talked about. This continual changing suchness. That things are impermanent and that we have this human predicament. There's a very important difference between blankness and not making anything. We take into our practice these slogans like "not making anything" or "going straight" and then use them in the service of our neurosis.

Practice is so simple. And yet we're so unskillful. Fog asks you to slow down or you'll get hurt. You'll panic or run off the road. So, when you're in the fog of your own ignorance, slow down and move very, very, very slowly and carefully. Then the fog has its own beauty. The mist has its own beauty.

This was the point in Basho's wonderful Haiku. Everyone was writing their commentary on Mount Fuji. They all wrote, "Clear Mount Fuji, Radiant Mount Fuji, Stable Mount Fuji, Massive Mount Fuji, Not-moving

## "When you're in the fog of your own ignorance slow down and move very, very, very slowly and carefully—Then the fog has its own beauty."

I speak for myself. For me a long time my not making anything was sort of a super athletic Zen, anything that got in its way... "poof". That was my idea of not making anything. It has changed a little bit over the years. Now, it really has to do with softening to the fact of my experience in this moment, just as it is, without adding, or ignoring or taking away. Of course, this is also making something. It's an aversion. "This experience is unacceptable so I will move here." And when we hear people tell us, in Zen circles, "don't make anything," or "put it all down," 99 times out of 100 it's because they are experiencing some difficulties themselves. They are in pain over who we are and they want us to get away, or get themselves away as soon as possible. So, when they say "Don't make anything", what they mean is "Please get away from here because I'm making something."

**Questioner:** You mentioned doing some work with running. A couple of years ago when I started running I said, "Let's try something else—instead of hating the pain and using that to abuse yourself by going further, see if you can embrace it and see if you can run just as well or better? Can you talk about your running experience and how you relate it to practice?"

**George:** Distance running was my way of life for ten years. There are two schools of distance runners. One is that you deal with the pain of the moment, the inevitable pain of pushing your self to your limits. It's very painful, if any of you run or do anything like that. It also has a very strange beauty. It's very vivid, alive and beautiful. You want more. You want to go back to it, again and again, not realizing that your whole life can become vivid and clear. It's very delicious.

Maybe some of us are like that in our sitting, "Now, I will sit in the triple lotus." Anything to avoid being enshrouded in mist and fog. Anything. Instead, if we are sitting in triple lotus to avoid sleepiness or to avoid mist and fog, maybe it's time then to be enshrouded, coming to your point, in mist and fog.

Mist, rain, fog, wrapped in cotton, ignorance, numbness, all are a kind of a body novacaine. It has a really rare and wonderful beauty of its own if you're willing to attend to it and be with it, if you're willing to know your ignorance, your foggy, instead of castigating yourself for being a bad meditator, for being in the fog. But if you're in the woods and it's foggy, or in a field when it's misting, you may go for a walk. If you're driving in it, it can be quite a panic. It's happened to me, where I'll be driving along, and then suddenly the quality of the air will change. It will suddenly be damp and all of a sudden you're in it. You can't see anything. Now you will insist on continuing to drive fast. You're terrified and panicked. You want to escape. And the more you want to escape from your lack of vision and awareness, the greater chance you will drive faster and cause an accident or run over some hapless creature in the road. Or the road will turn and you will find yourself in the woods. So what that fog is asking you to do is to slow down.

Mount Fuji, Samurai Mount Fuji." ...and variations on the theme in however many ways you can say it succinctly and clearly—all in 17 syllables, of course. Basho, wonderful Zen Master that he was, a completely realized human being, wrote, "Mount Fuji in the mist and rain." Now that's interesting. That's so wonderful. Can we sit with that spirit? Mount Fuji in the mist and rain. It's not someplace else. What's happening is the Dharma, is the way. Can we have enough trust in ourselves? It's hard, because we are so confused and crazed a lot of the time. *Trust that?* What, you've got to be kidding? But can we have enough trust in our experience to see that the Dharma is not outside of what's happening. That's what's continually being called for with our practice. That it isn't happening somewhere else. That exactly what you're experiencing right now is the Dharma. And you're on the way.

Back to running, the other method was called the Mantra School. You repeat a mantra enough times, or you do something to distract yourself from the pain. Then you won't think about the pain and you'll run faster. The school that I belong to, that I liked, was the first one, that you try not to distract yourself at all. That you're completely so. That you carry no baggage. That you run naked when you run. If you hurt you hurt completely. That's the style I appreciate the most. It's a vivid and alive style. I don't like this other one. Maybe it works for some people.

Our coach used to encourage us to have no baggage. The less baggage we carried the more we would run to our full potential. If we were carrying no baggage whatsoever, we would manifest as the one who runs. Then winning and losing would not be an issue. But if you're carrying your baggage then there's some problem. So that was the practice of running. It's quite a practice when you're in the heat of it. How do you realize your Buddha nature while running?

I've been trying to encourage people on this retreat to take what they are experiencing seriously and let it be what it is. Just do this much. Whatever that experience is.

Ah, but you think Mu is some place else. Realize the moment—just now. "Yes, but Mu is somewhere else." Then we think, "Oh, I know what Mu is." "Mu is everything. Now I know what Mu is! Or "Don't know." "What does this mean? Don't know what a wall is. Oh, that's what don't know is." Or we think, "Gee better do something while I sit here. I really have to do something. I've got half an hour between now and the end of sitting. And after lunch I can probably fit in a few bows. Or I might do a little Kwan Seum Bosal-ing or something." Yak, yak, yak.

It's so sweet. We sit on the cushion and think, "Well I better do something about this." What are you going to do? "I better do some bows."—this is critical. "Better count my breath now." But what is there to do? Who are we trying to become?

**Questioner:** Would you talk about *shikantaza*—just sitting? When I began my practice I was told to count my breaths. And then a little later somebody said I should do, "What is

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this?" on the in-breath, and "Don't know" on the out-breath. For a long time I did that.

George: Just throw yourself into it, whatever it is— fly closer and closer to the flame until you're gone! It's very difficult to practice pure *not knowing*. I think it's the most wonderful, challenging thing in the world. I have this wild love affair with Zen practice, but it's very difficult to *just sit*. The tendency is to fool ourselves and to think that we are practicing when we're just lost in our own fantasy and just spaced out. "I just don't know." "No Problem." "Don't know." Hey. That's not practice. That's automatic pilot. You slip into your invisible, familiar self. And every time you do that what happens is then you slip into doubt, or you feel cheated. Like, I don't need to do this. Just "Don't know." Or you slip into hiding but you don't know what you're hiding from.

Yes, it's very hard to just sit. And traditionally in Zen practice, in the purest form, we're studying the self. We're not studying the art of attention. The art of attention is like studying a tape recorder and taking each little piece apart and you realize that there's nothing left. That, if you're really careful, you could put it back together again and there's your tape recorder. That's a kind of Vispassana style. Zen studies the self, itself, how it comes to be born and how it dies. Where does this wave of experience come from? How does it manifest itself, what does it return to?!

Traditionally with Buddhist practice, it's taught that there is a balance between concentration and focus, and this open hearted quality. So both are necessary and both are absolutely important. And the foundation of practice is concentration. The foundation of our practice is Samadhi, which is not some sort of space zone but the ability to pay attention to

nothing under it. Otherwise you will suspect that there's something under it. Right? So you have to look. You cannot take your doubt lightly. You have to exhaust your doubt, completely. So if you think it's under the glass of water, look. Nope. Now look around this room. There are a lot of hiding places here. Look under the mike. Nope. There is a moment of relief for each one of us. When we've looked and we say, "Whew, just like I read." "I can relax now, it's not there." And then the doubt appears again. That's what we call exhausting the *Hwado*.

But rather than trying to get rid of the doubt we'll look again for this ungraspable fundamental principle. And maybe you'll think it's under the cushion, so you look under the cushion and it's not there. Well, we're working on it now. We know where it's not. It's not under the glass. It's not under the mike and not under the cushion. The closet! It's back there. And during walking meditation you can just sort of peek, but it's not there. Or maybe you get in bed at night, if you're on a platform bed, you might think it's under the bed. Or under your Zafu. So we continue this practice of sincerely looking into this matter of, "Is it there?"

What we find continually is that it's not there. Sometimes this causes us frustration, disappointment and anger, all from the perspective of the small I. But from another perspective, this can mean our liberation, our release and to our becoming a truly sane and loving human being. So, we look and look and finally, we begin to get the message from the other side. Rather than from the fearful side of losing what we never had to begin with, we start to experience it and perceive it from this other perspective. This "I" does not exist.

"There is no attainment with nothing to at-

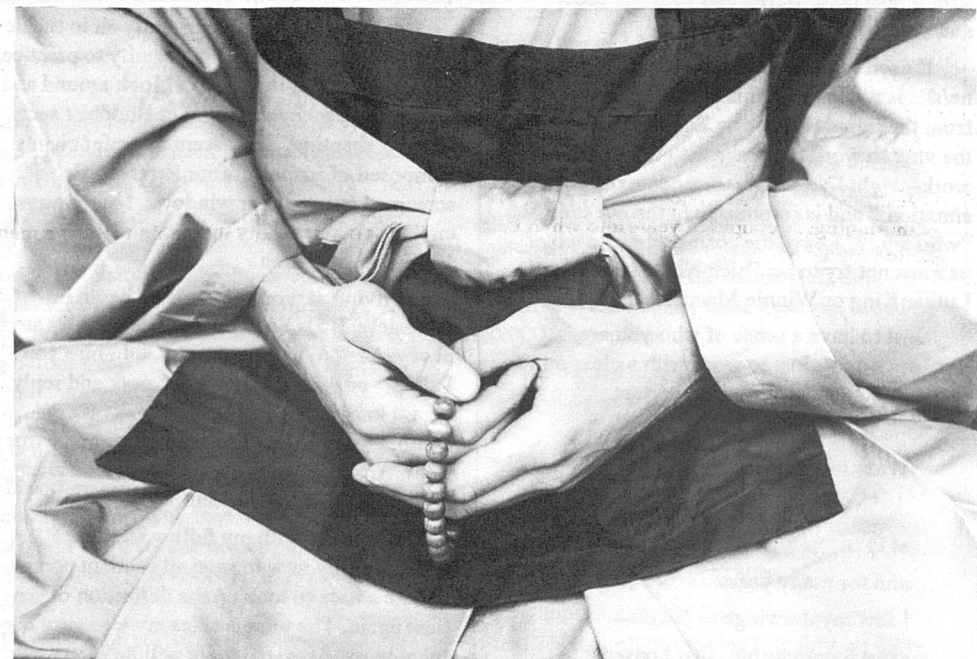


Photo by Steve Wunrow

one thing and to keep your attention there. And you are either doing it or you aren't. It's that simple. Feel your breath. Are you with it or aren't you? Or is your mind a mad gorilla, somewhere swinging through the trees? And if it is, be aware of that and continue. You can collect yourself so that you can in time actually feel your whole breath. It's a wonderful, wonderful experience to be able to sit in the evening and to enjoy a quiet and peaceful Samadhi with occasional thought fading by. Simple. But it's a wonderful thing, the content of that moment of experience, whether it be a happy moment or a sad moment. The content of each moment of experience is that which doesn't move. That which is clear and before thought. That's what practice is. Realizing that each moment of experience has as its content zero. Or Not-moving Mind. Or Mu itself. Or "Don't know." Or Buddha Nature. Or whatever you're comfortable talking about. And in order for you to realize that clearly you have to stay with it and see what it is that's happening. What's happening is the truth.

So, in the Zen tradition if you can focus your attention on anything. If you can understand one particle of dust clearly, you've got the whole picture. Because everything is working under the same fundamental principle. It's an interesting thing, this not knowing. What am I? It's completely unknowable. Completely ungraspable. Where is it? Oops, almost saw it that time. I'll try again. I mean you have to look under the glass of water to see that there's

tain." This is not a belief or understanding or experience— this "I" is simply not to be found. That's a tremendous relief. It's like being on a wonderful desert island, filled with fruits and vegetables, where you can fish and the sun shines brightly, and every conceivable thing is there right at your fingertips. But you are convinced that this island belongs to someone else. And the owner is going to appear momentarily and snatch it away from you. You've really covered the island thoroughly and could not even find another foot print. You could never find anyone, then it would dawn on you, "It's my island. I can enjoy the sunlight. I can eat the fruit. I can swim in the ocean. I can roll in the sand. It's my home." Imagine. "Sariputra perceives that all five skandhas are empty and is saved from all suffering and distress."

Well, then let's go back to our sitting, and take refuge in the Buddha. Taking refuge in the Buddha is taking refuge in ourselves. Now we can take refuge in the fact of our experience, trusting and taking refuge in what we are experiencing because it is true and entirely trustworthy. No one knows better than you how it is for you. Take refuge in the Sangha, which is all sentient beings. Sentient beings, from our perspective of Dharma practice, includes the stones and the trees and this floor and our cushions. So, let's sit still and appreciate this moment!

## First Kyol Che

by Do Won

*Kyol Che is the Korean name for the 90-day retreat that is held twice a year (winter and summer) in Korea and has been held at Providence Zen Center (or across the pond at the Diamond Hill Zen Monastery) every winter since 1980. Kyol Che's are also starting in Poland. Do Won is a senior student of Zen Master Seung Sahn and is Abbot of the Providence Zen Center.*

The meaning of 'Kyol Che' is *Tight Dharma*. It is a time for intensive practice. Silence is maintained except for functional talking, one-on-one interviews with the teacher twice a week and the one or two Dharma Talks a week. Participants can do one to four, 3-week intervals, and there is an intensive week in the middle of the Kyol Che (when 12 midnight to 2 a.m. practice is added onto the schedule).

Over the years the schedule has changed slightly, but generally it means rising at 4:45 a.m. and practicing through most of the day until bed at 9:40. Fifteen minutes of prostrations are the kick-off to the day, followed by sitting meditation from 5:30 to 7 and then 45 minutes of chanting. Shortly thereafter we have a formal breakfast followed by a work period and again sit until the formal lunch at noon. After lunch is the longest break of the day— almost one hour (a treasure time— I would generally walk to a solitary spot in the woods to sit and look and listen or would add my own voice to the sounds of nature with chanting). The practice begins again at 1:30 and goes until 4:30. These sitting stretches are generally 30-40 minutes with 10 minutes of walking meditation in between. Occasionally, there is a long walking meditation outside during the afternoon. A light, formal supper is served at 5:30, chanting is from 6:30 to 7:30, and sitting goes again until 9:30 when the evening winds up with one final effort: chanting together for 10 minutes. (Kyol Che in Korea maintains a schedule that is very similar except wakeup is at 3 a.m. when the Korean temple where it is held begins the day.)

Kyol Che offers the opportunity to simplify the structure of our life and serves as a wonderful background against which to attend to mind's functioning. Outward distractions are minimized so that our focus can more readily return to this moment.

To me, a new student before my first Kyol Che, it sounded wonderful—a perfect and rare opportunity to hunker down with the habits of mind that seemed to me to hinder a clearer, more energetic and compassionate functioning of my life. And the group support would be so useful in maintaining the schedule—in not buying into my own wavering mind when the original intention and motivation would be fogged in. It seemed like a very good idea, and making that space in my life was possible. So...

Lying awake for a little while before the bell and listening to the stirrings of those still asleep and those beginning to awake— outside in the woods and on the pond the sounds are still too quiet to hear. Some mornings it's still hard to get up and others it's easy and natural. In any case these is no choice: We're all sleeping together here on the Dharma Room floor, so it's time to get up, roll up our mats and sleeping bags, put them away and use the bathrooms quickly. Then we meet back at our seats for bows. Today I'll try again to be, mentally as well as physically, here for bows— or at least for one third of them— so far it's probably been about one eighth.

Today is interviews— good— a break for the old knees and back— but then there's that damn kong-an. George gave me this one four months ago and still no clarity about it. (Hey— cut the crap— stay with this moment— What is this!?)

How can I sit really deeply when there is this person next to me sneezing for the 20th time? Once more— just one more time, and I'll scream!

Oh, God! The pain is too awful— surely we've sat past the scheduled time. Is the Head Dharma Teacher sleeping— or is she simply

torturing me? I've read stories about this, purposefully making us sit longer to push our limits. Well, it's damn inconsiderate. Don't they know how painful this is? (Sound of the wooded clapper) Oh— right on time— my thinking again.

Okay. Just walk around this room... One step at a time... Whoops— once again I haven't been here for 7 minutes— okay— there are 3 minutes left— just come back to this step and this step.

Bananas again?! I want something more substantial— and some variety. Boy! when this thing is over I'm going to the "Swiss Alps" for cheese fondue and salad with that wonderful house dressing and wine and chocolate mousse and coffee.

Gradually there is a change— small inroads into complaining, wanting mind— periods of quiet; light changing on the floor as a cloud passes overhead. The small bruise on an apple— wow! It tastes of slightly hard cider.

And bows— at times it is just the movement of the body, up and down— and not just me. This whole group moves as one— one body— is this it? When I finish here I'll give a Dharma Talk about this experience: This is what practicing is about! Whoops— How many bows have we done? There are countless ways to lose this moment, even through wonderful insights and feelings.

Interviews again... there's the bell... my turn... up, walk to the room... close the door... holding this question carefully. The same question asked— still no answer... return... sitting down. Oh, that's it! Of course! So simple, so obvious, open the window of mind ever so slightly— the joy of a fresh spring breeze...

And now a new kong-an. There's no handle on this one. Anyway, I look at it— just a smoothly polished metal ball with no place to catch hold or to penetrate. Impossible! Let it go. What is this?!

Day after day— how many now? 65? That willow— every day now there's some sense that buds are beginning to expand. The cold creaks of winter winds are giving away to enormous winds carrying some warmth. More frequently now there are downright balmy days. Today after lunch with my sweatshirt off, I'm down to a t-shirt. The big rock I sit on more often now gives warmth rather than draws it from me.

83 days? One week left. Can't believe it. All these days and minutes are suddenly almost at an end. Such mixed feelings arise. Family, friends soon to see and talk with. And these increasingly precious moments on the cushion soon to decrease. So what is this! Let's not waste this time.

And this group. I know next to nothing of anyone's like history yet some strong bond has grown here— through sharing this effort together. The idea of one body/mind has given way to a fuller experience of one body/mind— so much more complete than the idea and so ordinary, too... What is this? Breathing, light changing— still pain at times but the flow of the day and its rhythm is smoother with less struggle. Still many kong-ans unanswered— and these, too, are part of the rhythm. The willow is glowing with a light yellow-green. Spring bird songs fill our ears. No more creaking of the massive trunk with these gentler winds.

Tomorrow we finish. Tonight many of us sit later and rise earlier, a habit that has been gradually happening over the last few weeks. All of our habits seem to remain, and yet softer— the raw energy of beginning has given way to a more supple movement as group; the openness of the air jives with the milder air of Spring.

Today we finish— stay with it... What is this? Movement— of light, of season, of bodies through the day, of each of us offering a stick of incense and any merit earned to all sentient beings, of packing our bags and hugging and speaking 'hello' and 'goodbye' and moving on.

## SOUNDS OF THE WORLD

Our Readers Respond

## Practice and Right Livelihood

## It's Not a Cosmic Issue

by Paul Bloom

Just to work, to work with clear mind, is very important. Also very difficult. Not to work at special work, but just to do whatever it is that each of us does.

I grew up being very aware that I was a working person. And also that I wanted to work for liberation. As a Buddhist, working is a central focus of my practice.

Buddha referred to right livelihood as part of the Eightfold Path, which means that work is part of Buddhist practice. However, it can be a big problem to think of right livelihood as Right Livelihood—it is not a cosmic issue at all but small, simple and close to home.

Each of us has probably spent some period of time obsessed with the question "what should I do with my life?" While searching for an answer, each of us has his or her own karma with which to contend—skills, family background, etc. Understanding an answer to the question "what should I do with my life?"—the question of right livelihood—is not cosmic and has more to do with the question "who am I?" and with starting to understand correct situation.

I am the Director of a small Drafting/Engineering Department for a custom furniture factory (millwork contractor) in Westchester, N.Y. Here's a poem that I wrote my staff last winter:

## At Work 1-17-88

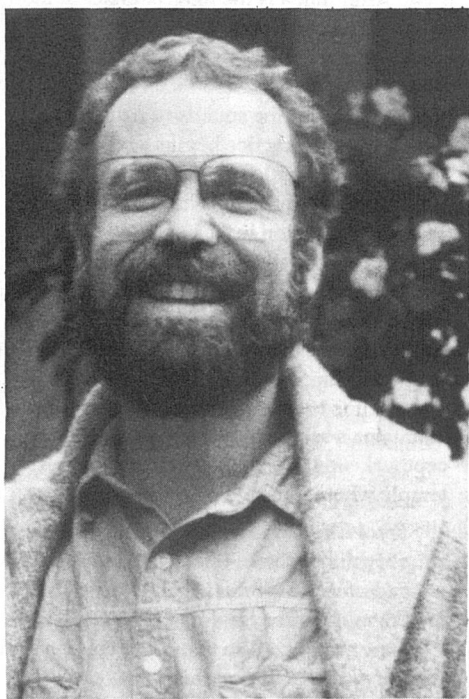
Pencil touches shop drawing,  
universe in a line  
as architect, millworker, sheetrocker,  
electrician, client  
all arise—  
nothing  
but graphite on vellum.

So this is my situation and my karma. Also, I have Judeo-Christian karma of "guilty for not doing enough good." So, how do we help the poor, stop the genocide in Central America and South Africa, avoid nuclear disaster, etc.—all while working and supporting a family, loving a husband/wife, avoiding insanity?

Just working is very important. Showing up for work without anger, with a little bit of clarity about what you're doing this moment; not holding the client's anxiety, the staff's anxiety, the boss's profit drive, your own insecurity—this is all very important. Focused and uncluttered work helps to shelter the homeless, stop the war in Central America, spark a little flicker of sanity. But maintaining this sanity is not always possible; just a form of practice. This is the Mahayana aspect of work. Beyond the particular task at hand, there is an environment which reflects the situation of the whole world. If I confront a client across a conference table while I am holding lies, manipulation and the absence of mutual self-interest, how can we put an end to nuclear proliferation? If I review performance and procedure with a staff member but am filled with fear and insecurity, how can we stop the war in Central America? If I come to work obsessed with mortgage payments and the absence of love, how can we shelter the homeless or feed the hungry?

Here's another poem for you (which was originally accompanied by a large shop drawing):

every day  
in north america  
we work to get ahead,  
to save the world  
from communism.  
why?  
  
this drawing  
of the soul of  
one particular cabinet  
celebrates life  
and sings an end to genocide  
for nicaragua.



So, there is a Mahayana aspect to work which reflects the world, which has to do with relationships, compassion and oneness with all beings. (Pardon the dramatic language; I suppose there is a more everyday way to say this, but I don't know what it is.) There is also an aspect of work which is like sitting meditation, just absorption with the task at hand. There is an element of this in all work—for example, washing the dishes elegantly, or typing this article with focus and good form.

I am very fortunate to have work which has a strongly meditative aspect. My company builds custom furniture and cabinets designed by architects and interior designers. The designer makes a drawing, and my job is to make a more analytic drawing (or to supervise others in this) which the shop will actually use to build the piece. My job, then, is to understand each joint, each corner of the cabinet before it is built—a custom cabinet which has never been built before—and to put lines on paper which will communicate this to other people, to communicate exactly what is required. The draftsman must actually become the cabinet and the process of making the cabinet. In the best of circumstances, this process is very similar to kong-an practice.

This is wonderful. But there are also problems.

As with all work, if I view my work as practice it can be wonderful, but it also runs the risk of being at odds with the perceived goals of the company for whom I work. A very well made shop drawing which is created in an environment where staff is clear-minded and calm will tend to lead to cabinets that are well made, and to clients that are happy. But good drawings take longer to make, and

focused work generates little of the hustle-bustle confusion and posturing that usually accompany the "quick-quick get it done and move on" attitude of manufacturing organizations. The company tends to respond by thinking that here is something wrong, that the Drafting/Engineering Department isn't doing its job.

This is nothing really new, although the form takes me by surprise. In a world filled with pain, anger and confusion, centeredness is sometimes perceived with anger, confusion and mistrust.

The good news here is that centered/focused work is usually profitable—although I don't know how this crosses over to other fields. My experience has been that after a period of jousting and inter-personal pain within a particular organization, drawings that are well run (read: with focus and compassion) usually gain applause, respect and appreciation. Not surprisingly, this rings in sympathy with Dae Soen Sa Nim's statement, "Strong center, strong; just do it. Believe in yourself 100% and others will follow."

If each of us works at a job to which he/she is well suited, this must not keep us from the impulse—or as a Zen Buddhist, from the vow to work for peace. But this peace work—right livelihood—has context, "correct situation," and is responsive to the question "who am I?" Leave the cosmic alone; each of us must not try to be Thich Nhat Hanh, Martin Luther King or Winnie Mandela.

Just to have a sense of who you are is very important. Just to work with a clear mind and without anger, is very important.

One last poem:

## Working Drawings

at first,  
and for many years,  
i saw my drawings as jewels—  
crystal outpourings that housed  
the essence of cabinets,  
glittering gems  
whose structures arose  
from necessities of communication.

lately  
these drawings appear more a conduit,  
a passage  
from concept to finished object—

beautiful  
in the simplest telling possible.

Paul Bloom was born in Brooklyn, N.Y., 1945. His parents were second generation Eastern European Jews, working class and upwardly mobile. After getting his B.A. at Brandeis University in 1966, Paul received his M. A. in Architecture, from Yale University ('70). He has work experience in a variety of fields all related to furniture design and manufacture. He has been employed since '80 as a custom furniture (millwork) draftsman/engineer, which is his clear career path of choice. He is a member of the New Haven Zen Center and happily living in New Haven with wife Mildred and 11/2-time with two delightful teenage sons from a former marriage—all in a recently renovated house with beautiful dharma room to which all are welcome.

## Zen and the Turnpike

by Gary Snyderman

I am firmly convinced that Zen practice in everyday life is not very much different from Zen practice in monastic life. At our house wake-up begins at 4 A.M. However, we do not use a moktak. We usually awaken to the rhythmic sound of my son banging his crib against the wall screaming for juice or his teething sister crying. These are always done with complete 100% devotion and seriousness.

Before I head for my meditation mat I practice bowing, that is picking up 108 toys. The children help with the morning bell chant. They already know the meaning of this ritual. They help the adults in the house, as well as the neighborhood, to understand that "everything must wake up".

Sitting down to practice I am surrounded by children screaming, jumping on me and throwing things at my head. I am reminded of Buddha sitting under the Bodhi tree. As the story goes, before reaching enlightenment many demons attacked him trying to swerve him from self realization.

After meditation I head down for breakfast. Apparently the kitchen master has decided this is a fasting day. My wife often presents me with kong-ans to consider at the breakfast table. Today, I reflect on "Does a cranky, tired woman have Buddha nature?" I quickly answer Mu.

Leaving for work, I frequently sit in traffic jams. This offers me an opportunity to practice chanting Kwan Seum Bosal. I look around and notice many members of other Buddhist sects are also chanting. They seem to prefer chants composed of strings of four letter words screamed out their car windows. I am always envious at their ability to do this with such 100% concentration.

Arriving at work, interviews begin immediately. Boss Sa Nim questions, "Why am I always late? What am I? Why did I hire you?" I simply answer by hitting my desk and reply "don't know." Throughout the day other Senior Dharma Teachers also offer me instructions. Apparently they are intent on me reaching a realization of "no self".

Interacting with my fellow workers I remember my vow to save all sentient beings. I make a note to look up the definition of sentient again. The temple rules are also very useful at work. I am told there will be salary cuts again and that one of the secretaries is wearing what appears to be "only" a short gray meditation robe. Soen Sa Nim's admonition concerning sex and money flashes through my mind.

By the end of the day I reaffirm the validity of Buddha's first noble truth. Life is certainly suffering. Before I leave, I received a memo concerning the second noble truth, that the source of suffering is impermanence. They will be laying off 200 people by the end of the week.

As I set out for home on the turnpike, a kindly state trooper stops my to instruct me in an "only like this" kong-an. 55 mph is 55 mph, 85 mph is 85 mph. He offers me the opportunity to decrease some of my bad karma by donating money to a worthwhile cause.

Arriving home for dinner my wife confronts me with the familiar question, "why do you eat everyday?" She also informs me that she will be leaving me with the children for the evening so she can visit one of our most holy Buddhist shrines, the shopping mall. She will be practicing "just shopping". As I crawl towards bed after a busy day of practice, I am again supported in maintaining celibacy by my wife who utters the traditional "I'm too tired."

Gary Snyderman and his family live in Bensalem, Pennsylvania.



## Practice: Design For Release

by Gary M. Haskins

I spent 5 years in Japan studying an ancient style of pottery called Bizen ware. It was also an opportunity to study Buddhist thought and see its presence as a driving force in Japan, particularly in art.

Bizen ware, usually fired with wood, is made with a unique clay. The earthy, stony texture and infinitely variable fire markings reflect a sophisticated culture and craft. The rustic product, prized for the tea ceremony, is considered innately Japanese, i.e. it originally was not influenced by the clay work from

Japanese, Buddhism and art. I began to see the three disciplines not only as compatible but almost identical.

Was it possible to think about Buddhist ideas while doing the work at the studio? Could I count breaths? Have no opinion? I wanted to give each thing my full attention. Encouraged to "live life as life lives itself", I sought to be utterly occupied with the job at hand. Besides, I might easily crush my hand in the clay mixer, or severely burn myself if I was not fully mindful.



Bizen-ware produced by Gary Haskins

China, Korea, Middle East, etc. Mr. Buyo Shin, my ceramics sensei, is one of the top artists in Bizen-shi, Okayama prefecture.

As long as it didn't take too much time away from my studies with clay and fire, I was encouraged to study different aspects of the culture, such as tea ceremony, religions, flower arrangement, ink painting etc. It wasn't long before I was enjoying books of translation and commentary on Buddhism. The clay work, the people, and the religion shared a vast common ground.

If pottery making was the main course on my cultural menu, The Buddhist readings and consequent joy were the dessert, the sweetness and humor I often overlooked in my everyday activities.

I wondered if I could (and should) devote equal time to studies in religion as to the pottery. Another crafts student in Bizen went a long way to a Zen temple to sit every weekend.

When I asked my teacher if he thought that was OK, the teacher said that he was worried that the student was not fully focused on his instruction. Japanese teachers like to see intense devotion and earnest study on behalf of their efforts to instruct you.

I had to ask myself, could I overcome self-seeking and travel the Eightfold path while still continue my demanding studies in ceramics? Could I practice non-attachment in the pottery shop? Is there such a thing as an egoless artist? This was certainly a Kong-an for me.

Wasn't the Eightfold Path a course in training, in PRACTICE, and a way of intentional living? Patient discipline gradually cures the person of disabilities. Certainly practice was primary for me anyway, trying to learn

The respect of the local potters for the clay, wood, straw, and fire gave me a deeper appreciation too. I learned that we, our ancestors, the clay and straw are all the same materials of the cosmos. That cold, passive lump of clay became the magic stuff of the universe—the slightly used flesh and blood of 10,000 generations.

The Japanese respect for nature, natural materials, and things made with them brought me to clearly face the relationship between the tangible artifacts of man and the less obvious symbolic and spiritual wealth or depravity reflected therein. I tried to make the artwork express something genuine, vital and perhaps even a bit eccentric and humorous.

What is a Zen practitioner but an artist who uses the self as his clay? Reality, as early thinkers and yogis knew it, was an artifact of their own inner vision. They could change their world through the power of the imagination. Meditators are artists with their own lives, painting and sculpting their growth and joy!

I found this practice of externalizing in material form one's subtle inner being vitally important for myself as an artist. In the same way, while the clay was being centered on the potter's wheel, I too was moving into harmony towards my personal point of least resistance.

*Gary Haskins, a potter living in central Florida, fires his large, 3 chambered kiln with pine as the fuel for at least three days and nights per firing. Gary also is accomplished in Sumi-e and calligraphy.*

## Women's Right Livelihood

by Hojun Carol Welker

On March 14-15, 1987 in Berkeley, California, I attended a workshop on "Right Livelihood" entitled "A Celebration of Women in Buddhist Practice", a conference of about 150 women. We focused on finding a means of livelihood that does not do evil, that helps other beings on the planet. The discussion covered a number of issues facing not only women, but all Buddhists in America. The following are my memories and reflections of that conference.

Most Americans on the spiritual path—lay and monastics alike—have to support themselves in some way. We want to support ourselves in a way that does not contribute to the overall craziness of the world or cause us to break the precepts. All jobs have some aggravations, but we asked, "Does this job's aggravations improve or inhibit my growth? Are they challenges to be met, or inequities inherent in the situation?" Some of the women felt that their role in the workplace as women was to find ways to lighten up the situation.

Everyone agreed that jobs that caused harm to others (e.g. trading in weapons, slavery, prostitution) were harmful to self and others. But we could not reach a consensus on how or to what extent we should try to "do good" and help others through our livelihood. How could we even know what "doing good" was? We also questioned if it is wise to work for a nonprofit for a "good" cause and not necessarily have the time, energy or resources to be able to meditate or seek out excellent teachers.

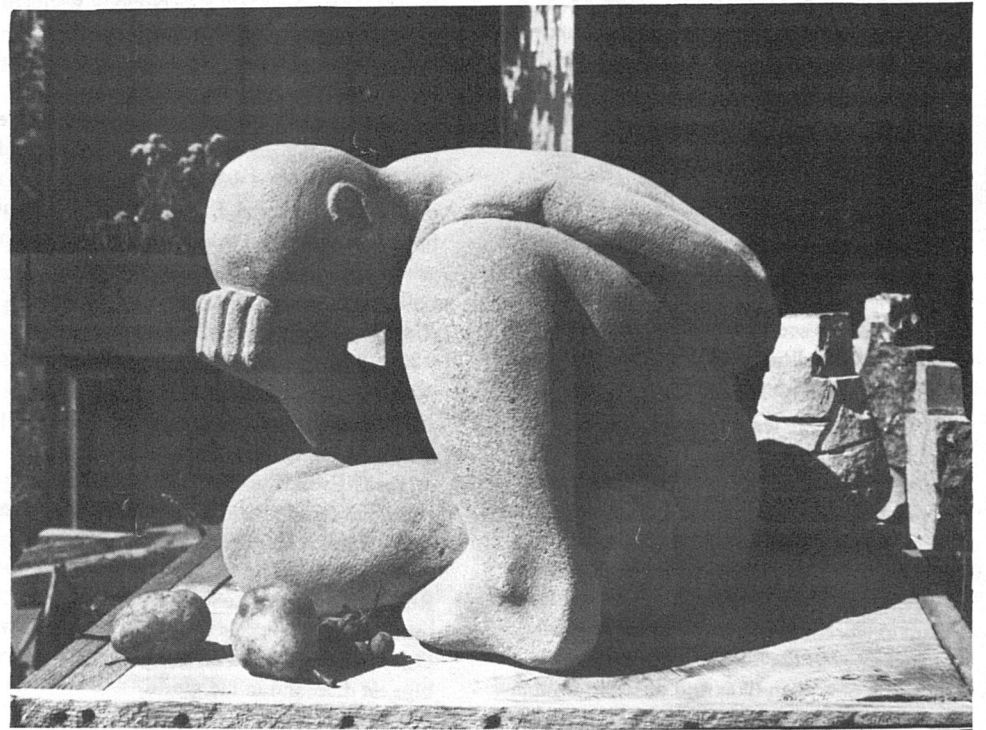
People commented on the similar problems and benefits found in different workplaces. Greed, hate, delusion and power plays are no monopoly of for-profit organizations, but are everywhere, even in Buddhist organizations. It is easy to throw stones at Corporate America, but we felt that we were

living in quite fragile houses ourselves. At the same time, the world of business and profit offers opportunities for helping others. I remembered from my Business School days that one of the major principles for success in the workplace was finding a need and filling it. An attitude of service could be very compatible to both successful practice and a successful form of livelihood. Yes, you can do "straight" work and practice, also.

As the conference progressed, for many the question seemed to be not so much "what" livelihood to choose, but "how" to approach any livelihood. Much disease results from not being centered and open to the teaching directly in front of us. Whatever one does, one needs to have it integrated with one's practice. I can offer a personal testimonial to that point. Several months after the conference, I was diagnosed as having CFS (Chronic Fatigue Syndrome), which I believe resulted from a lack of integration between my livelihood and my practice. I could not "fit" my work as a chief finance officer in a large corporation with trying to live and do the Practice Period at the San Francisco Zen Center. I believe that the problem was not so much what I was doing or not doing at either place, but my inability to integrate the two. I continued to keep them as two separate worlds and that was the source of the problem.

One woman told a story about watching a dog follow a scent. The dog would traverse the entire field in a very thorough zig-zag to keep the scent. He had to cover the whole field to find the path and always be open to a new twist or turn. Perhaps, there are some environments more conducive to practice than others, but, like the dog, we must keep our noses open.

*Carol Welker is a student of Dainin Katagiri Roshi. She lives in Goff, Kansas, and is a friend of the Kansas Zen Center.*



Stone sculpture by Ellen Sidor

## Torture or Refuge?

by Anthony Scionti

Right Livelihood. How does your everyday occupation reconcile with your practice and vice-versa?

A couple of years ago it seemed pretty clear. My circumstances were easy to live with and so easy to reconcile. My everyday occupation was being a private-practice psychotherapist at a prestigious medical center. I enjoyed a fine reputation and a fine life. Keeping the greatest direction of the practice in this everyday occupation meant forget about "I, me, my" and act only for the benefit of others. This meant mostly keeping my motivation clear; why was I in this profession—for

money, prestige etc., or to help save all beings from suffering?

I found that the best way to use my practice and the teaching was to reunite the people who came for counseling with some sense of reality. No matter what a client's specific problem, he or she had invariably created for themselves a reality which supported their painful view of life. In trying to address the patient's false sense of reality, every person who came for counseling first worked through a preliminary course in Emptiness. A kind of "what is this?" training. What is a glass of

(continued on page 13)

### Contributors Wanted For Next Issue

Our March Issue will contain a feature entitled "Zen Practice and the Family Life." We need contributors to write on how their family affects their practice and vice-versa. How does the one contribute to and support the other? What kind of conflicts arise? If you're interested, write or call Bruce Sturgeon (Editor), 5 Devonshire Place, Asheville, NC 28803, (704)254-8140.

## Harmonizing is the Number One Practice

by Dae Poep Sa Nim

*This fall Dae Poep Sa Nim's new book, **One Dust Particle Swallows Heaven and Earth**, will be published. The book consists of talks and questions and answers from the past few years of Dae Poep Sa Nim's teaching in Europe and Hawaii. Topics to be addressed are: Zen and religion, practice, perceiving karma and giving energy, ceremonies, relationships and the body. For availability contact Centre Zen de Paris or the Kwan Um Zen School office.*

*The following is an excerpt from the chapter on relationships. The original talk took place in December 1987, at Dharma Buddhist Temple of Hawaii during a retreat.*

We are attached to this form body with many likes and dislikes and opinions of what is right and wrong. At your home you are very comfortable. You have your own bedroom, eat what you want, rest any time you are tired. You are only pleasing your self. Is that really finding your true self? You have only been pleasing this bag of flesh. Humans are very attached to this bag of flesh. It is difficult to find your true self. If you spoil this body it wants more, if you get lazy it gets more lazy.

This body is made of 'Desire I'. By only pleasing this desire body, your true self is far away. When the body gets old it is not worth one spoonful of ash. While you have this body why should you only please it? We must use this body to find our true self so that we do not

boyfriend, husband and wife, but with everyone around you.

How can we harmonize? Kill 'I, my, me'. As soon as 'I, my, me' appears you are far away from others and like a small stone on the street. Nobody wants to be lonely. I always hear people say, 'Why am I lonely? Why can't I communicate with others? Why doesn't everyone like me? I try hard but they don't like me.' They blame others, but our difficulties come from 'I, my, me'. If you kill 'I, my, me' one-hundred percent you can see your true self and you can harmonize with others.

If you continue to keep 'I like' and 'I don't like', even while you are practicing, you will still make karma. Put down all of your blockages and become one with your true self; then you and universal energy become one. For example, when you become sick it usually comes from the mind. You make 'I like,' 'I don't like,' 'I'm tired,' etc. At that time you are creating negative energy. This negative energy does not go to somebody else; it comes right back to you and you become sick. Take off all conditions and situations and there is no negative energy. You can live freely and get in touch with universal energy. You will have no difficulties; you can do everything moment-to-moment. Before this you were a slave to time and space. Putting everything down means you can make your own time and space. You can use time and space. At that moment you are the universe and the universe is you. Life and death, they are up to you.

This retreat is very free but very restricted. Which one would you like? Free or restricted? Those in favor of the restricted

way, please raise your hand. Those in favor of the free way, please raise your hand. Nobody wants to raise their hand? What do you like? Free? You can have free. But free

is restricted and restricted is free. Understand? We practice so that we may become a master of free and restricted. Practice is very difficult, but it is also easy. If you can harmonize with others it will be very easy. If you cannot, it will be very difficult and you will be in hell. It's all up to you.

Don't have fears about practice. Just relax. We will provide good food and wine sometimes too. Why wine? In our lives until now how many times have you really been relaxed? Even if you are sitting in your nice bed your mind is thinking, thinking, thinking. You cannot relax. Practice is to attain relaxation. But relaxation without bone is not good. Relaxation with bone and purpose is good. As much as possible, relax. Put everything down. Once you are able to do this you will find the biggest diamond in the world.

Make your bowl very big. If you only have a small bowl not too much can go into it. Make it big and a lot can go into it. But to make your bowl big you must do your homework, whether your mind is clear or not. Do your homework, which means finish the number of mantras that I asked you to do, and your mind will become clear. If I talk for three hours and you listen with a cloudy mind, you will not get anything out of it. If I talk all day nothing will go into your brain. But if your mind is clear and I say just one sentence, it will go into your consciousness.

You have a great opportunity here. Take advantage of it and share the energy, practice together. Maybe in the next life someone who is here will be your husband or wife, boyfriend or girlfriend, sister or brother. So harmonize. If you do not have good relationships with someone you might be born as enemies. Don't make enemies.

## Hawaii-Retreat or Vacation?

by Do Mun Sunim and Do Haeng Sunim

Twice a year, in January and August, European, American and Mexican students of the Kwan Um Zen School of Europe travel to Hawaii for a "retreat/vacation" at the temple of Ji Kwang Dae Poep Sa Nim, The Dharma Buddhist Temple of Hawaii, just outside downtown Honolulu. The temple is a house in a quiet residential area, not far from the beaches, a large athletic field and a shopping center. It is situated along a high ridge of volcanic rock and is a strong energy point.

The retreats are held for three weeks. Everyone - usually between forty and fifty-five people - stays together in the house (this past August there were forty-eight persons). The retreat style brings practice directly into everyone's social and even vacation situations. Wake-up is at 6 a.m., followed by the regular Kwan Um Zen School morning schedule of bowing, chanting and sitting. All meals are communal and informal. All of the participants take turns helping to clean the temple and clean-up after meals.

There are seven altars in the house. Each morning at 10 a.m. rice and fresh water are offered at each altar in appreciation of Buddha-nature, our ancestors and the four elements of the universe which are constantly supporting us. Following that and until 12 noon is a Buddhist energy ceremony, at which one or more of the following takes place: a private interview with Dae Poep Sa Nim, a talk, meditation, soen yu exercises, or special teaching by Dae Poep Sa Nim. Afternoons are completely

free with many people going in groups to the beach, the mountains or into town.

Evening practice is at 6 p.m.: chanting, a short period of sitting, and a talk with questions and answers by Dae Poep Sa Nim— this is followed by a few short, ten-minute talks given by students (each participant gives one such talk during the retreat)— dinner follows. Late evening, as well as the afternoon, always find a number of students in the Dharma room doing extra bows, sitting or finishing mantra "assignments".

The retreats at the temple in Hawaii are extremely interesting and effective because they bring into a very good situation - a beautiful environment and the opportunity to really relax and have fun - a very strong emphasis on practicing. Through the three weeks one can see oneself and others growing in integrating practice with everyday life and making a necessary commitment to keeping a strong and continuous formal practice, both with others and individually. Dae Poep Sa Nim teaches her students not to separate their practicing mind from any moment and situations of their lives. These retreats are designed to strengthen each person's practice, which, critically, also means learning how to harmonize with others. A very central part of Dae Poep Sa Nim's teaching is to practice and keep the Bodhi mind in any situation in human life, to be able to truly be with and do for others. The Hawaii retreats, by bringing many people together under one roof for an extended period of time to live, practice, and share together, are a great lesson in just that.

## "How can we harmonize? Kill 'I, my, me'"

have to be slaves to it. When you find your true self you can control your own life and death instead of being a slave to the body. I understand what kind of a life everyone of you are living and what kind of situation you are in now. Instead of pleasing your body, take this opportunity to see how much karma you have, how many conditions and blockage you have. You can really see yourself.

Most people want to practice in a quiet place with nobody around. We just want to practice. This kind of practicing is attachment to practice. Practice means to attain enlightenment. But attaining enlightenment is not enough. As soon as you attain enlightenment you must help others. In that way enlightenment exists continually. If you are only attached to practice, it is dummy practice. At this time put down likes and dislikes, right and wrong and take advantage of the situation. Try to harmonize with others. If you can harmonize with others, you don't have to sit on the floor in meditation. If you only do formal meditation, it is not worth even one penny.

When you have communication and action with others, you are doing the number one practice. Harmonizing with others means your 'I, my, me' desires are already being eliminated. That is very important. If a person is able to harmonize with others, this person is a winner in their life and knows how to utilize universal energy correctly; he/she is already Buddha. If you have no great purpose for enlightenment you are only falling into heavy karma. Look at yourself and see how well you can let go of your situation and condition. Even if you have a difficult situation, see how much you are able to drop it.

We don't live by ourselves. We exist with others. Without others there is no Buddha, no God. Without conditions and situations just harmonize with others. You have to learn to love together. Not only girlfriend and



## Dae Poep Sa Nim

Dae Poep Sa Nim received the title "Dae", meaning 'great' (which makes her full title "Great Dharma Master"), from Zen Master Seung Sahn during a special ceremony at the Centre Zen de Paris in June, 1988. This title is usually given to an enlightened master after the age of sixty and even then it is very rare. Dae Poep Sa Nim received this title in recognition of her deep enlightenment and her bringing together of Sutra and Zen practice and teaching. She is the first woman in fifteen hundred years of Korean Buddhism to become "Dae Poep Sa."

Richard Shrobe, C.S.W., A.C.S.W.

Psychotherapist

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## Book Reviews

### THE MARATHON MONKS OF MOUNT HIEI by John Stevens, Shambala Publications, Boston; pp 158; \$12.95

Reviewed by Mu Soeng Sunim

Just when we thought we knew all there was to know, and some we didn't even want to know, about the connection between Zen and Buddhism to things A to W— from archery to writing, with non-corporeal motorcycle maintenance, throwing a baseball at 165 mph, a la a nonexistent Sidd Finch, and myriad other hobbies and entertainments thrown in between— along comes a book which truly jolts our perceptions of human will and effort. And it's not even a flaky book about flaky people.

THE MARATHON MONKS OF MOUNT HIEI is a first glimpse for non-Japanese into the lives and training methods of Tendai Buddhist monks who run up and down the slopes of Mount Hiei for 18.8 miles a day for 100 days, without fail, as part of their religious training. The physical stress and wear and tear of these runs may equal, or even exceed, what the 26-mile marathon athletes experience. The graduates of this course may undertake the Great Marathon of 1,000 days, the ultimate test of human faith and endeavor.

As author John Stevens, a distinguished facilitator of Japanese Buddhism and martial arts for westerners points out, "It may well be that the greatest athletes today are not the stars of professional sport, not the Olympic champions, not the top triathlon competitors, but the marathon monks of Japan's Mount Hiei. The amazing feats and the incredible endurance of these "Running Buddhas" are likely unrivaled in the annals of athletic endeavor." An oversized claim indeed but one which begins to take on the dimension of being an understatement when we look at the accomplishments of these monks. What's more, "...the prize they seek to capture consists not of such trifles as a pot of gold or a few fleeting moments of glory, but enlightenment in the here and now—the greatest thing a human being can achieve."

Mount Hiei overlooks Japan's ancient capital of Kyoto from the north and is headquarters for the Tendai sect of Buddhism. Tendai (Chinese: Tien-t'ai) was established on this mountain in 788 A.D., by the great monk Saicho (766-822). The historical significance of the Tendai sect has been such that all the founders of great Buddhist sects in Japan— Eisai (Rinzai Zen), Dogen (Soto Zen), Honen (Jodo), Shinran (Jodo Shinsu), and Nichiren (Nichiren sect)— started their careers as Tendai monks. In course of time, the monastery founded by Saicho, today known as Enryaku-ji, the head temple of Tendai sect, grew into "one of the largest religious complexes the world has ever seen, a virtual state within itself, peopled by some of the best and worst priests of all times. Throughout its long and varied history, Tendai Buddhism has encompassed the lofty and the base, the sacred and the profane, the sublime and the awful."

The Tendai sect has always been eclectic, a reflection of its founder's personality, and an amalgam of almost every single Buddhist practice available in ancient China where Japanese monks traveled for inspiration and unraveling of secrets. Today the temple system on Mount Hiei offers a comprehensive program for the education of its monks as well as innumerable spiritual practices for attainment of enlightenment which is the goal of a Buddhist of any color or stripe. A remarkable twelve-year retreat at Jodo-in, site of Saicho's tomb, and the Great Marathon of 1,000 days (to be completed in seven years) are two of the most rigorous practices undertaken on Mount Hiei.

Monks who wish to become abbots of one of the subtemples of Mount Hiei are the ones most frequently applying for permission to undertake a 100-day marathons. A novice monk spends a week in preparatory training where

he is given a secret handbook (which he copies for his use and memorization) giving directions for the course, stations to visit (these are markers for departed Tendai saints and other holy sites), proper prayers and chants for each stop and other essential information. The marathon monk is always dressed in an all-white outfit, unique to Mount Hiei monks, made of white cotton only. Around his waist is a cord with a sheathed knife: these two items are reminders to the monk of his duty to take his life— by either hanging or self-disembowelment— if he fails to complete any part of the practice. This also explains the color of his outfit, which is white, the color of death in Japan rather than the basic Buddhist black. The items a monk wears or carries with him are hallowed by centuries of tradition and no deviation is allowed. A monk is allotted eighty pairs of straw sandals for the 100-day run; in heavy rains the sandals disintegrate in a few hours. The monk may not remove his robe or straw hat during the run, cannot deviate from the appointed course, cannot stop for rest or refreshments, no smoking or drinking, and he must perform all required services and prayers at the appropriate places. The monk starts his run around 1:30 A.M., and takes about six hours to come back to his starting point. The rest of the day is spent in preparing his meals and more services. It's not until 8:00 or 9:00 PM that the monk has a chance to go to sleep. Between the 65th and 75th day of the run, the monk runs a 33-mile course which takes him through the city of Kyoto itself. This special run takes nearly twenty-four hours to complete and, as a result, the monk loses one day of sleep. As soon as he comes back to the temple, it's almost time to start next day's run. The first month of the run is extremely difficult and causes immense physical suffering. By the 70th day, however, the monk acquires a majestic and relaxed stride; to the onlooker he may appear to be gliding over the boulders without touching ground.

Very few monks apply, and even fewer are given permission, to attempt the Great Marathon of 1,000 days. Upon completion of 700th day (usually after five years of marathoning) the monk attempts doiri, a nine-day retreat without food, water, sleep or rest. This is the supreme test for a Great Marathon monk; those who complete it are said to develop extraordinary sensitivity. Altogether there have been only forty-six 1,000 days marathon monks since 1885. The majority of these monks have been in their thirties, while the oldest completed his 1,000th day at the age of sixty-one.

Whatever motivation may impel these monks to undertake this perilous and arduous training, their efforts are a remarkable testimony of human will and spirit. The transformation that takes place in the marathoning monks of Mount Hiei endows them with a halo of energy and clear-sightedness that can be seen as an affirmation of all that is noble and uplifting in human spirit. What ultimately distinguishes a marathoning monk from a professional athlete is his belief that his efforts will stir up the Buddha-mind not only from deep within himself but also for others who can only look and listen.

**PALKHI, "An Indian Pilgrimage", D. B. Mokashi, Translated from Marathi by Philip C. Engblom, 1987, State University of New York Press, 291 Pages, Cloth, \$39.50.**

Reviewed by Dhananjay Joshi.

"When a man wakes from a sleep, will he try to rescue himself from the river in which he dreamt he was drowning? Then the dream in which he thought he would find knowledge disappears and he himself becomes that heaven in the form of knowledge in which there is neither knower nor object of knowledge." - Dnyaneshwar

This book awakened something precious. Childhood memories are treasured in a corner

of the mind that is reserved for special things. I remembered standing on the street...a ten year old boy looking at the world with wonder filled eyes....and watching this procession (called Palkhi). Hundreds and hundreds of people walking together and chanting together devotional songs composed by various Marathi saints. It was so inspiring and I still feel chills run down my back.

Pilgrimage is a very important part of Hindu tradition and in the Indian state of Maharashtra there is a site called Pandharpur situated about 200 miles from Bombay. Every year, four pilgrimages take place which draw people from all over to Pandharpur and the largest of these pilgrimages takes place towards the end of June. The number of pilgrims exceeds five hundred thousand. The pilgrims are called Warkaris and there is a wonderful description of what this word means— "Warkari means one who makes a Wari and Wari means coming and going. So, one who comes and goes is a Warkari. This coming and going takes place from one's own town to the town of the worshiped deity and back". The pilgrimage to Pandharpur is an integral part of a Warkari's life and he does it as sincerely as fulfilling other responsibilities towards his family and society. This is correct attitude! The path for the Warkaris is described clearly. This path attaches tremendous importance to the chanting of devotional songs composed by saints of the tradition. These are sung in groups and this chanting is the principal act of worship for the Warkari.

As most of the pilgrims are illiterate, coming from villages of Maharashtra, the singing and chanting to them is what the reading of spiritual books is to others. It is wonderful practice teaching surrender and humility, appreciation of life in its simplest and purest form. People from many parts of the country coming together, joining each other at different villages, walking together, singing same songs, speaking together, helping each other, strangers living together for the duration of the pilgrimage with no attachment to the surroundings and comfort, etc. Yes, there are some groups that are organized enough to have proper accommodations through their journey, but most sleep in tents and temples on the way. Many thousands just sleep under the sky on a makeshift bed of a few sheets and if it rains...well, it rains and you just get wet. When the sun comes up, one is dry.

What does Palkhi mean? A Palkhi is a palanquin. The palanquin that the book refers to is very special and it is one that carries the silver padukas (representing the saints feet) of Saint Dnyaneshwar from Alandi (the town where the procession begins) to Pandharpur. This is the core of the procession and it is joined by many others on the way. Mokashi's book describes his experiences along one such journey. His descriptions are full of feelings and profound insights. At one point he says, "I start to talk to the barber in an easy, familiar way. This is his tenth time going along with the Palkhi. He just covers the expenses of the pilgrimage by plying his trade. On rare occasions he has five or ten rupees (half dollar) left over. But his main purpose is not to ply his trade. After all, those who go along with the Palkhi are saints. There is true joy in serving them. His face shows complete satisfaction. The most contented people you meet up with are always the carpenters, the blacksmiths, the cobblers and other small time craftsmen. Is it because their ambitions are so limited? Or do they get their contentment from having an art they can call their own? Whatever may be the case, I think that of all the people, they really know best what is required for contentment"

Here is another wonderful passage: "Then the sun starts to decline and the wind begins to blow. The Palkhi's spirit is reviving. The cymbals and drums have begun to sound loudly again....Feet, feet, feet! All you see in every direction is moving feet...occasionally an echoing sound of Om-Om- Om draws near and then passes on..."

The chanting is still alive in me, I find I wonder if I will ever be one of those who finds contentment.

### THE BUDDHIST HANDBOOK, "A Complete Guide to Buddhist Teaching and Practice", John Snelling, Century Hutchinson, Ltd., London, 1987.

Reviewed by Bruce Sturgeon

John Snelling is a member and former General Secretary of the Buddhist Society, London, England and is currently editor of the Society's quarterly journal, The Middle Way.

In the author's own words, "The Buddhist Society has continued to the present, its traditional function as a kind of shop window in which all forms of Buddhism are, without partially, displayed for the newcomer." The Buddhist Handbook serves as a written manifestation of this same "shop window" function.

The book is subtitled "A Complete Guide to Buddhist Teaching, Practice, History, and Schools." Yet, while it does contain an excellent 42 page summary of "teaching and practices", the book is primarily focused on the history of Buddhism, the geographical transmission of the teaching, characteristics of the various sects and schools, and the people who have played roles along the way.

Beginning with a discussion of the Indian background of Buddhism and a brief biography of the Buddha, the book proceeds through the Four Councils, the Eighteen Schools and then to the development of the Mahayana and Tantra. The largest portion of the book explores the spread of Buddhism, separately noting the development of the Theravada from Sri Lanka throughout Southeast Asia; the Mahayana through China, Vietnam, Korea, and Japan; and the Vajrayana (Tantra) through Tibet, Nepal, Bhutan, Mongolia, and the Soviet Union.

Included in the Buddhist Handbook is a compilation of 250 teachers and notaries that have influenced and participated in the spread of Buddhism to the Western world. Each entry consists of a brief biography, including affiliations and major publications. Additionally, there is an address list of 150 Buddhist organizations and Schools (including the Kwan Um Zen School) and a fairly extensive bibliography for further readings on each of the topics covered by the book.

In general, The Buddhist Handbook is lucid and well written, but even at 372 pages suffers from being too brief. The section Teaching and Practices could have been expanded greatly (indeed, entire books have been written on the subject). For example, kong-an practice in Zen and Tantric practices in the

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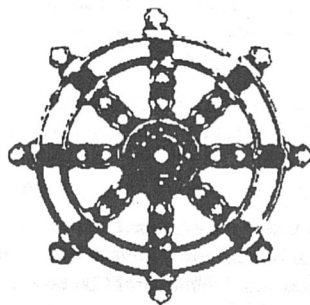
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## An American Monk in Korea

The world of Buddhism was transmitted to an enormous audience on Thursday, September 15, 1988. The Today Show, in Korea to cover the Olympics, did a series of background stories on Korea's culture and politics. They were alerted to an American monk, Mu Ryang Sunim (Erik Berall), who was famous for his walks around the country visiting temples, and for his rapid adaption to the Korean language and customs. Mu Ryang Sunim is a long-time student of Zen Master Seung Sahn. He took monk precepts in 1983. Since 1985 he has been in Korea, primarily in a hermitage above Su Dok Sah Temple. Su Dok Sah and its hermitages above it are strongly connected with Zen Master Seung Sahn and the teachers in his lineage. He considers it a prime "energy point" for Kwan Um Zen School.

Mu Ryang Sunim was also the subject of an article in Korea Today—A Monthly Photo Journal in May, 1988. The article was entitled Learning About Korea: Mu Ryang Sunim, an American practicing Zen Buddhism. The accompanying photos are from this article. The following is a translation of the Korea Today story interspersed with relevant quotes from Mu Ryang Sunim's appearance on the Today Show.

Chung Cheong South Province, Yesan County, Dok San Town, Sa Chun Village. Here 1,602 years of history are stored in Su Dok Sah (Cultivating Virtue People), which is shielded as if by a folding screen by Dok Sung San (Lofty Virtue Mountain). Following the hiking trail up the mountain, hearing the sound of water flowing rapidly downstream and the birds chirping, one arrives at Hyang Un Gak (Fragrant Cloud Hermitage).

Just below Jung Hye Sah (Mountain Wisdom Temple), a sub-temple of Su Dok Sah, and right beside a 20-meter tall statue of Kwan Seum Bosal (the Bodhisattva of Compassion), is the little hermitage called Hyang Un Gak. Here, Mu Ryang Sunim (Erik Dustin Berall), an American monk, is practicing meditation.

With the azaleas unusually brilliant for a mid-April day, Mu Ryang Sunim delightfully receives a visit from people of the world below.

A Yale university graduate with a degree in Geology, Mu Ryang Sunim, when asked his age, replied, "I was born in the Year of the Boar. In American age, that's 28."

While attending college, even though he practiced yoga meditation, he couldn't find truth or the purpose of human life. By chance, at the New Haven Zen Center, he heard a lecture on Zen; the lecture affected him so much that he immediately moved into the center and began practicing. While his Zen meditation was ripening, in December of 1983, he became a Buddhist monk.

"During college, I had a friend who was a vegetarian, so I became one too. To me, the vegetarian diet is very appealing; perhaps in past lives as well I may have been a monk. When I first decided to become a monk, my father was quite opposed. These days, however, he understands a little better, and the more I practice, the nearer I feel my mind is to that of my father."

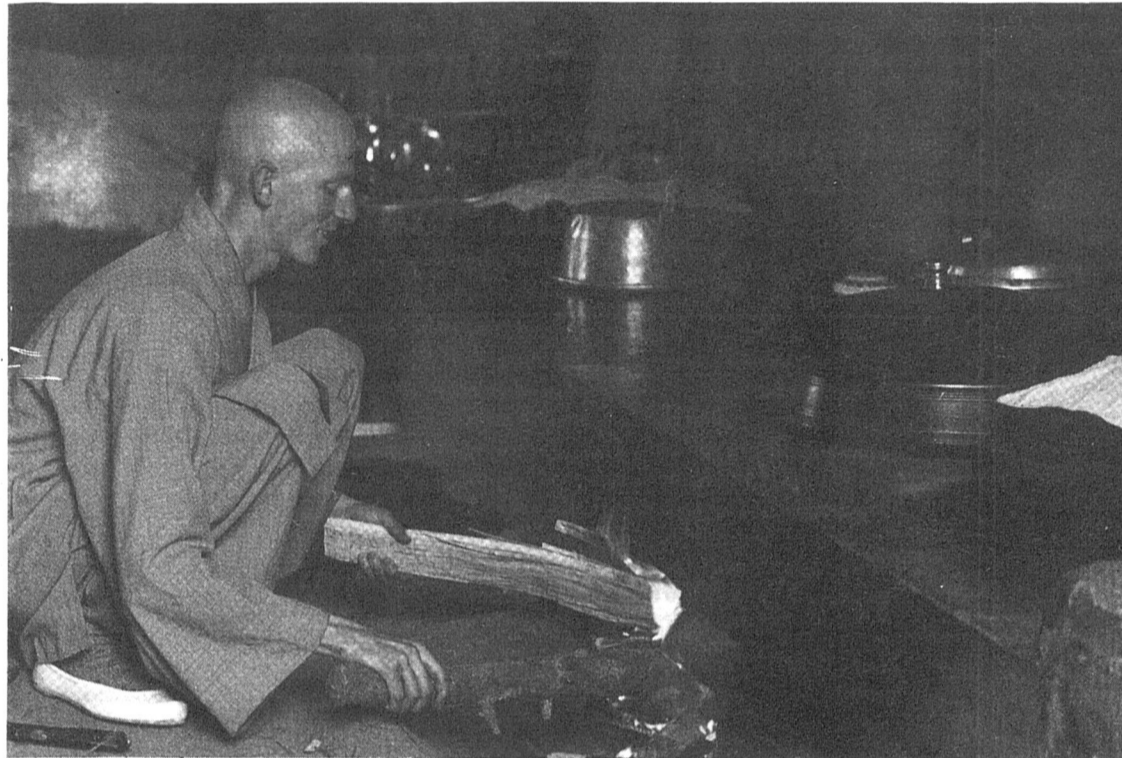
Having come to Korea in April of 1985, Mu Ryang Sunim's fluency in Korean is surprisingly good. During his stay in Korea, he has practiced Zen at Hwa Gye Sah (Flower Valley Temple) in Seoul, Tae Go Sah (Grand Old Temple), and elsewhere. Last year in May, he moved to this hermitage, and is "living like a Taoist spirit of the heavenly realms."

Three in the morning. Waking to the sound of the big temple bell struck at Su Dok Sah below, and retiring at nine in the evening. Except for mealtimes and short breaks, he practices meditation according to a rigorous schedule which he himself set up using elements given to him by his teacher: 108 bows and sit Zen, 108 bows and sit Zen...

"Bowing is not bowing to some image or object outside of myself. The practice of

bowing means: my body, my breath, and my mind all become one."

"Our practicing lifestyle must be regular for meditation to go well. If not, it's easy to become lazy. 'Keep your mind clear like space; use your mind like the tip of a needle.' Just like that, sitting Zen means seating the mind and keeping it unmoving, and then correctly using that unmoving mind for all people. For whom are you living? What are you? As you raise these questions more deeply, your mind becomes bigger. Practicing Zen through keeping a 'What is this?' mind, the great question of life's purpose becomes slowly bigger, and when it is not moving, at one instant, Tak! this doubt mass breaks apart and dissolves. This is called seeing your true nature and is the first



Mu Ryang Sunim tending the wood burning stove in the kitchen at Su Dok Sah Temple.

purpose of Zen: to see true nature and to become Buddha. If you attain that point, you can let go of your 'small I' and only live for all people. The mind without 'I' is like empty space; empty space is like a clear mirror: when red color appears, it's red; when gray color appears, it's gray; sky is blue, tree is green—every thing only reflected, just as it is. Practicing in this way, the mind is fulfilled, so that you want to live a life of practice. But this also is a desire that must be let go too—these days I experience the swift passage of time as a rather frightening thing. I sit down to meditate for what seems to be a short time, and discover life has all flown by. We're young so we don't really understand, but older people like our father or grandfather must feel this keenly."

About our existence and purpose, he says "only don't know. Keeping this not knowing mind from moment to moment, everything is clearly reflected: just see, just hear, just taste, just touch. All just like this is truth." For most people, however, it's not an easy thing to accept.

"When practicing Zen, inside and outside become one; so the shouts and noises of hikers passing by, are just the same as the sounds of birds chirping or water flowing—sometimes when practicing, if doubts appear, then just to reflect on the example of Buddha's own life and teaching is enough to dissolve the problem."

"I really enjoy the solitude that I have. It really helps the meditation practice; that is the main focus in my life right now, and living alone as I do, people do not come and disturb me. I can just practice all day."

Most Zen centers in Korea are in the mountains, like this, and you experience a wide, open view. Your mind then also becomes like that, very wide and very open.

Buddha was just a regular guy like you and me. He lived in India about 600 B.C. and had a big question: "What am I?" He left his palace, left his kingdom, went out in the woods, practiced for six years and one day, he got enlightenment.

Originally Buddhism was not some kind of religion, only understand our true self: "What am I?"

Before he came to Korea, Mu Ryang Sunim and his teacher, Zen Master Seung Sahn, went on a round-the-world tour teaching Zen meditation in Korea, Japan, Hong Kong, Thailand, India, Germany, Poland, France, England and America, visiting many Zen centers, Buddhist temples and famous places along the way. Then later, he again accompanied his teacher and a group of Americans on a pilgrimage of historical Buddhist temples in mainland China. Also, in the autumn of 1986 and the spring of 1987, Mu Ryang Sunim walked alone around Korea, visiting temples and meeting monks.

During that time, he learned about Korea firsthand. Since his major in college was geology, he has a special interest in the ancient science of "wind-water" geomancy; at each

bage and radish, soy bean sprouts, seaweed, various mountain plants and lettuce. He takes two lettuce leaves, puts a dollop of hot sauce and a spoonful of rice on them, rolls it all up and eats it like a Korean would.

Since he has learned not to waste food and to eat everything he has taken, he doesn't even leave one grain of rice, cleaning his bowl with hot water and then drinking that, too—very naturally, just as it is.

Without purposely effecting some kind of Korean manner, Mu Ryang Sunim is, in speech and action, not in the least bit different from a Korean. Only because of his unusually large nose, blue eyes and white skin, can one say that he is an American.

"In a past life, maybe I was a gentleman from Chung Cheong Province, since I like lettuce-rolls as much as they do. Also, I drink green tea instead of coffee. Korean green tea is very good," he said as he prepared tea, explaining additionally both the Nine Virtues and Six Benefits of green tea. A person hearing this from him directly would have difficulty in not becoming embarrassed.

His father, Frank S. Berall, who is a prominent lawyer in America, came to Korea as an officer to fight in the Korean War, during the midst of which, he became a Christian. So it is ironic that his son, Mu Ryang Sunim, came to Korea to practice Buddhist meditation.

Mu Ryang Sunim, who shaves his head by himself, says that "There is a Korean proverb which states that 'A monk cannot cut his own hair'. When shaving, if I think 'but I can cut my own hair', I invariably cut myself shaving. That's happened a few times. But if I can keep a clear mind, then it goes without incident."

Before coming to Korea, he received his Buddhist name and precepts. However, Mu Ryang Sunim came here and deliberately

did manual labor at a temple as a novice would, so he has learned to carry an A-frame backpack and make a wood fire very well.

"Perhaps because I've lived in Korea, when guests come and are departing, if I don't accompany them all the way to the bus stop, I feel uncomfortable." When asked how long he intends to live in Korea, he replied, "I'll live according to my karma (cause and effect)." Just as his Buddhist monk name 'Mu Ryang' (No Limit) indicates, his clear mind is "immeasurably" deep—he's that kind of person.

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"Torture or Refuge?"—by Anthony Scionti

(Continued from page 9.)

water, a match, a book, a watch? What are words?

When the talking therapy began again, I tried to connect this sense of the emptiness of reality to my clients' specific problems. Everyone, when defining their problem, would sooner or later use some label: insensitive, lacking confidence, cruel, good, bad, and so on. These labels served as the "reality" which supported the problem in question. Whenever one of these label-realities arose, we would refresh our memories of the emptiness of all labels. The idea was to show that the labels which served as the foundation of both their problem and their rhetoric about it (always inseparable) were empty of any definition except for what the person was making. In this way people who came in order to learn how to cope with a certain problem, found that the problem dissolved before their very eyes when they stopped making labels.

I felt that I had achieved a very high application of practice and teaching to everyday life. Right Livelihood. Then my personal circumstances changed suddenly and completely. Seemingly instantly, there was no counseling practice, no office, no reputation, no money, no one to look to for support (free of charge), no one even with whom to share life or love. Try as I might, I could not break out of it. It would not go away. My karma and horrible personal suffering were not even slightly impressed with my fancy understanding.

I began doing heavy construction, working with people who did not necessarily care about "personal growth" or "spiritual awakening". I found myself surrounded by the typical, macho, foul-mouthed, beer-drinking construction types. It's only that some environments are naturally attractive and some are not. This one was not.

My partner was arrogant, always right, thick-headed, and could not walk by one piece of work without criticizing what was wrong with it and pontificating how it should have been done... "if any one around here had any brains, that is". He also thought he was God's gift to women and he never stopped talking.

Then, a few strange things happened. A psychic told me that I was in the dire straits that I was in because of being "arrogant, stubborn, and possessive." Next, Soen Sa Nim told me that desire or clinging (controlling) mind makes having nothing. Finally, to add insult to injury, one worker on the job asked if my partner and I were brothers.

The Great Round Mirror had struck again. I had met the enemy and he was me. I realized that one is never teaching anyone else. The world around me reflects what I am, and in those reflections, I can only see myself. The Great Round Mirror has no one else to reflect.

How to use the practice in my everyday occupation became a very different question. What is everyday occupation? Only banging nails and carrying lumber? Only making enough money to survive, only to do it all over again the next day? Finally, what makes it all worthwhile to me is keeping my practice intact and shining. When everything in the world was taken away from me (or me from it), I was left with only my life-practice. One's life becomes torture or refuge depending on the nature of one's practice.

Everyone's everyday occupation is correct life-practice. There is nothing to reconcile because they are one and the same. The reconciliation is the realization of their sameness. Moment to moment keeping a sincere and compassionate heart - no judgments, no clinging, no cheating, no violence; keeping it clean, no self-reflection at all; just following the outside situation moment to moment. Only what is this, how can I help this situation?

Mud, wood and concrete  
 Are the Buddha's original face  
 The roar of machines and workers shouting swears  
 Are now the great sutras  
 The Karmacrete forming life never stops pouring.  
 Whoa, put it all down, stay awake!  
 Do you hear? Do you see?  
 "Hey, concrete comin' down the chute  
 Be careful; Let'er slip once and you've bought it!  
 Stay awake!"  
 Vrrroooooooooooshhhh...  
 "Yo, need a hand over there?..."  
 Then how about lending one over here?"

Editor's note: The above verse is a variation on Zen Master Seung Sahn's closing poem in the "Temple Rules":

Blue sky and green sea  
 Are the Buddha's original face.  
 The sound of the waterfall and the bird's song are the great sutras.  
 Where are you going?  
 Watch your step.  
 Water flows down to the sea.  
 Clouds float up to the heavens.

Anthony Scionti is a long time member of the New Haven Zen Center. He lives in Branford, CT.

BOOK REVIEWS

(Continued from page 11.)

Tibetan tradition are defined and noted, but not explained. However, for what he attempts to do, Mr. Snelling has done quite a serviceable job. He presents a broad overview that is comprehensive without getting bogged down in the details. The Buddhist Handbook is an excellent reference book that would complement anyone's bookshelf.

RETURNING TO SILENCE, "Zen Practice in Daily Life", Dainin Katagiri, 1988, Shambhala, 194 pages, Paperback, \$10.95

Reviewed by Dhananjay Joshi

Consider our daily life. Just for a moment. Why do we practice? Why do we go on retreats and sit every day? Why do we struggle with the kong-ans given by our teachers? Why? It is a tremendous challenge to sit a long retreat and meditate for hours, but it is a harder task to integrate what we learn during that grueling period of self-examination into our daily life. Moment to moment, we must attain the clarity that integrated practice means. We must blend our practice into our relationships every waking moment. This is wholehearted living. This is 'just living' and nothing else.

Zen practice is very simple and very clear. Truth is 'Just this'. Practice is not sitting, or walking or lying down, but an activity of enlightenment itself. This is what Katagiri Roshi's book points to. "Buddha is your daily life" is his message to us and he brings it to us with great enthusiasm.

This isn't a book that one can read and put aside. I think it has to be read slowly and deliberately. It has to be experienced. When Katagiri Roshi tells us to 'sit' we must try to understand. "When we sit, two flavors are there," he says, "One is very sharp, cutting through delusions, suffering, pain and any

emotion like a sharp sword. This is called wisdom. But within wisdom, there must be compassion. This compassion is to see human life for the long run... Compassion comes from the measure of our practice, which we have accumulated for a long time. It naturally happens. The second flavor of silence seen by the Buddha's eye is to accept all sentient beings as they are, what is, just is of itself..."

The book is based on Katagiri Roshi's talks with his American students. It also includes a commentary on "The Bodhisattva's Four Methods of Guidance" from Dogen Zenji's Shobogenzo: Giving, Kind Speech, Beneficial Action and Identity Action. He tells many stories and his words are simple and direct. He is concerned and compassionate and we feel it. In the section on beneficial action, he says, "When we see the human world today, it scares us. We feel fear just walking on the street. But even under these circumstances, there is no reason to stop living in peace and harmony. Under just such circumstances we have to live in peace, because there is still a chance to create our own beautiful world and to teach people too. We should not forget to give thought constantly, day by day, to how we can live in peace and harmony with all sentient beings. We have to do this. This is really beneficial."

Katagiri Roshi places special emphasis on the meaning of faith in Buddhist meditation. There is a wonderful chapter on 'The Ten Steps of Faith'. In the section on Right Faith, he says, "Faith in Buddhism is to trust in perfect tranquility, which means to trust in something greater than just our conceptualization...so, if we trust this tranquility and practice it, it is alive in our life and very naturally our life becomes joyful and peaceful and we can share our life with people because we know how to live with people."

Can we do this? Of course we can. "With a gentle expression, with a kind, compassionate attitude, we have to take care of our life and other people's lives... Very naturally we can practice giving, we can practice loving speech, we can practice beneficial action, we can really help others".

BUDDHIST MEDITATION SUPPLIES



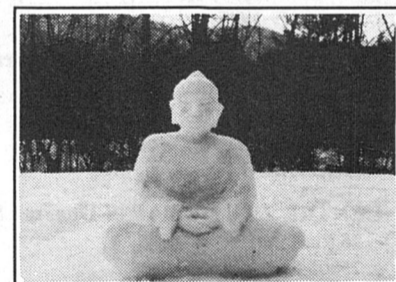
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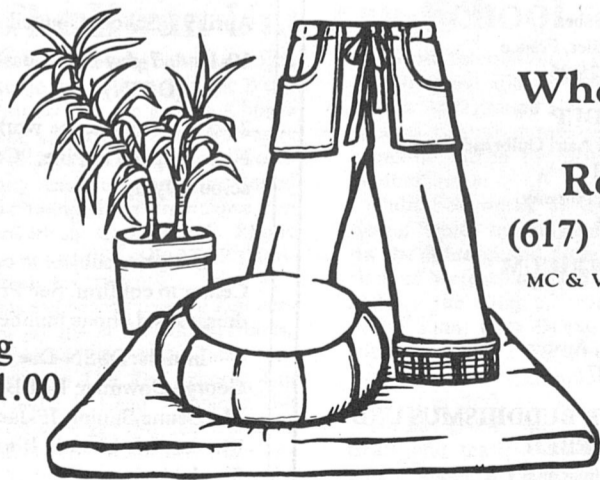
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## NOTICE

Effective November 19th, please use the following new telephone numbers:

Kwan Um Zen School— (401)658-1476

Providence Zen Center—(401)658-1464

PZC House Phone— (401)658-2499

Diamond Hill Monastery(401)658-1509

## RETREAT AND SPECIAL EVENTS CALENDAR

(Events not identified are retreats)

### NOVEMBER

- 3-4 Cambridge talk and interviews (BR)
- 5 Providence work and retreat day (BR)  
Kansas art auction
- 18-20 Kansas special retreat with Kwong Roshi  
Empty Gate (BM)  
Cambridge (GB)  
Lexington (RS)  
New Haven (BR)
- 20 Begin Korea Kyol Che (MDSN first month)

### DECEMBER

- 8 Cambridge talk (DSSN)
- 10 Enlightenment Day, Providence  
Master Dharma Teacher Certification  
Assembly, Providence (Robert Genthner)
- 11 School Council Meeting (Providence)
- 12-18 7-day retreat (last two days: chanting  
retreat), Providence (DSSN)

### JANUARY 1989

- 2 Begin Providence Kyol Che (MDSN)  
(see PZC ad for dates and fees)
- 2-8 Empty Gate (DSSN)
- 13-15 Dharma Sah (DSSN)
- 20-22 Cambridge (MDSN)
- 20-22 Providence (JP)

### LATER IN 1989

- Feb. 20 End Korea Kyol Che
- March Dae Soen Sa Nim to Australia and  
New Zealand
- 17-19 Dharma Teacher Yong Maeng Jon  
Jin at Empty Gate Zen Center, Berkeley  
(MDTs, SDTs, DTs, Bodhisattva Monks)
- 31 PZC Kyol Che ends.
- 31-Apr 2 Chicago Retreat (DSSN)
- April 8 Buddha's birthday, Providence  
(DSSN)
- April 9 School Council Meeting, Providence
- 10-16 7-day East Coast retreat, Providence  
(DSSN)
- 24-29 Providence workshop: Dae Soen Sa  
Nim, Stephen Levine, "Conscious Living, Cor  
scious Dying"

Dates are subject to change; call Zen Center to confirm. See Primary Point for addresses and phone numbers.

Initials: DSSN-Dae Soen Sa Nim; GM-George Bowman; BM-Bob Moore; MSDN-Mu Deung Sunim; JP-Jacob Perl; BR-Barbara Rhodes; LR-Lincoln Rhodes; RS-Richard Shrobe.

\*To be announced

\* Denotes Head Temple

## DEVELOPMENTS

*The Business of Zen*

by Richard Streitfeld, School Director

We were at our wit's end. For several years the Providence Zen Center, head temple of the Kwan Um Zen School, had been struggling with a declining resident population, financial crises, the stepping back of the charismatic founder, and a general loss of interest in a practice that requires profound discipline and attention. Historically, Zen has taken root in a country over a number of years—adapting to the new culture while retaining the teaching's roots. America of the 1980's with its fast food philosophy and highly competitive culture, is obviously different from 4th century Korea. If Zen communities are to survive and prosper, they must adapt to the realities of the culture, while retaining the bone of the teaching.

In our attempts to adjust, we had embarked on an ambitious program of conferences and rentals. Our large facility and scenic setting were a natural for programs which could help us solidify our financial situation. But it was unrealistic to expect a staff already burdened with running the residence to handle another large set of tasks with any kind of efficiency, much less good humor. Advertising went out late and innovative conferences were canceled. The staff was too busy planning programs to attend to new students and guests. There were no new ideas, and the friction among the directors increased as we worried about the future.

In addition to our difficulties adapting to the culture, we were also having trouble with the other, the essential, half of the historical method for bringing Zen to a new country: we were losing the bone of the teaching. The office staff was a revolving door of people drawn by practice but perpetually burning out—and losing sight of their direction, of their original motivation for coming to the Zen Center. It was not to just learn kitchen schedules or Dbase 3.2, but to do intense practice—awakening, so that office and kitchen tasks are done with complete awareness and attention.

By July of 1988 PZC had reached a critical point, and we came to a hard realization: We could not continue to run a large deficit each month and expect to survive. On our own, we had tried everything. Yet, we found that despite sincerity, hard work, and a grounding in practice, it wasn't working—the place wasn't thriving. In fact we were barely getting by. We weren't growing, and the teaching wasn't being served.

As a result of these realizations, the center's directors took the critical step of hiring a management consultant to work with us. The individual we turned to had been working with Kwan Um Zen School for a year, challenging the sangha organization and guiding it through productive, and in some cases revolutionary, changes. Since PZC and the school are intertwined, it was natural for the consultant to attack PZC's crisis.

The first step was to examine all our options, even the most extreme and painful possibilities. The status quo wasn't working. Due to the degree of the crisis, whatever option we chose would have to be dramatic and risky. The options we explored ranged from starting a business, to becoming a full-blown rental center (renting the space to various groups, putting our own activities on hold), to the unthinkable: selling the land and moving back into Providence, from whence we had come in 1979. There were strong arguments for moving—this property has risen dramatically in value; we would attract many more members in the city; we would be able to buy a smaller place, easier to maintain, and not have to work so hard to attract residents. The current residence is spacious and comfortable, but after the fifth water leak it seems huge, old and always needing attention.

After much soul-searching, we agreed to go professional by hiring a marketing coordinator at real wages. While the plan was bold and untested it was in line with what our real purpose is: to offer Zen teaching. Money for the new position would come from selling some assets. We had been struggling for years trying to do things we had inadequate skills for: designing brochures, running advertising campaigns, etc. We are all intelligent and trainable, but none of us had time to learn. Immediate action was needed.

Our consultant had further advice on this matter, counsel which was hard to swallow: concentrate your search outside the sangha. Given, we did not seem to attract marketing types, but our general policy was to hire only Zen students. Besides, how could a non-practitioner understand us?

Our advisor had observed that for most of us formal practice was why we were here; the job was secondary. Our purpose was to engage in traditional Zen practice. Often the result would be a tug-of-war between practice and work. Someone wants to do a long retreat, but there's no one to replace him or her. The flyer deadline is Monday and there's a retreat this weekend. And there was a yearning to stretch—to get out of the office and do the more traditional and physical jobs: chopping

wood, cooking, gardening. While the feeling wasn't universal, a pattern was clear. The consultant's most dramatic question was: "Why not get some real help and free yourselves to concentrate on practice and teaching?"

If our goal was to succeed on a business level it would be necessary to reach out to the surrounding culture. We would focus on the bone of the teaching, and someone from outside the sangha would help us to promote it.

As a result of this decision, ads for a "marketing and development coordinator" appeared in Providence area newspapers in late September. The prerequisites for the position include five years of successful professional work in marketing and development; the salary is \$25,000 per year plus profit-sharing based on extraordinary performance. The questions on the application form are a bit unusual, including such queries as "What is your direction in life?"; "What hesitations or cautions come up as you apply for the position?" The candidate is not expected to adhere to Zen philosophy or live at the center, but must be sympathetic and understanding of its goals and values. Once hired, the coordinator will be asked to attend "Introduction to Zen" workshops and experience the practice first hand.

Provocative? Yes. I suggest that not many centers have gone this route. It rubs us the wrong way to have someone else do our work. Yet, we are caught. To survive we must sponsor programs and have a full house. But when we are overwhelmed by the business of Zen, the teaching often loses its hold, and our way is lost. To incorporate this practice into our lives takes time and concentrated energy. Something has to give. This is not to separate Zen from everyday life, to say that practice is confined to the Dharma hall. It is to reiterate our original intentions in joining a Zen community—to discover our true selves; thus we must dive into the formal practice. A supportive atmosphere must exist, one that above all stresses formal practice as a tool to deepen our awareness.

Will it work? As Zen Master Seung Sahn says, we can only "go straight, don't know, try, try, try for 10,000 years non-stop." The directive to open our minds and not look back is well taken. Of course, this approach may not work. But no matter what results, if the center can stay open to this new experience we will have much of value to share with America's Buddhist sangha. We will keep you informed of the unfolding.



## PERCEIVE WORLD SOUND

### Zen Chanting Tape

Zen Master Seung Sahn and his students have created a masterpiece of sound—clear and profound chanting that cuts through our thinking minds to stillness and compassion. This tape includes the morning and evening bell chants and regularly practiced chants professionally recorded at Sprague Hall, Yale University.

Copies of these high quality tapes are available for \$10.95 each and can be ordered by writing to the Kwan Um Zen School, 528 Pound Rd., Cumberland, RI 02864.

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## About The Kwan Um Zen School

**The Teachers:** Zen Master Seung Sahn is the first Korean Zen Master to live and teach in the West. He is the 78th Patriarch in the Korean Chogye Order, and became a Zen Master in his native Korea at the age of 22. After teaching in Korea and Japan for many years, he came to the United States in 1972 and founded the Providence Zen Center, now located in Cumberland, Rhode Island. He is addressed as "Soen Sa Nim" (Honored Zen Teacher) by his students.

Soen Sa Nim has established over 50 Zen centers and affiliated groups in the United States, Canada, Brazil, Europe and Korea. These centers comprise the Kwan Um Zen School. The Providence Zen Center is Head Temple in the United States. In 1984 a Kwan Um Zen School of Poland was formed which includes five Zen Centers and ten affiliated groups, of which the Head Temple is Warsaw Zen Center. In 1985 a Kwan Um Zen School of Europe was established, with its Head Temple at Centre Zen de Paris.

Soen Sa Nim travels worldwide leading retreats and teaching Buddhism. Working to strengthen the connection between American Zen and Korean Buddhism, he has established

the Seoul International Zen Center in Korea and the Diamond Hill Zen Monastery in the United States. At Diamond Hill, Zen students who wish to may become monks and live the traditional monastic life in the original practice style of Bodhidharma.

Published works by and about Zen Master Seung Sahn's teaching include **Dropping Ashes on the Buddha** and **Only Don't Know** (collections of his teaching letters and Zen stories); **Ten Gates** - the Kong-an teaching of Zen Master Seung Sahn; **Only DOing It** (the 60th birthday tribute book with anecdotes from students and friends and a biography); and **Bone of Space** (a book of poetry).

He has given "inga" - authority to lead retreats and teach kong-an practice - to seven senior students. Called Master Dharma Teachers, they regularly travel to Zen Centers and affiliates in North America and abroad, leading retreats and giving public talks. They are: **George Bowman** and **Mu Deung**, Cambridge Zen Center; **Barbara** and **Lincoln Rhodes** and **Jacob Perl**, Providence Zen Center; **Robert Moore**, Dharma Sah (Los Angeles); and **Richard Shrobe**,

Chogye International Zen Center of New York.

**Training Programs:** Zen Centers offer daily meditation practice and introductory talks on a regular basis. These events are free and open to the public. Some centers also offer personal interviews each month with the teachers in our school when available.

**Introduction to Zen Workshops:** Beginners and newcomers can experience Zen practice for a day, with instruction on meditation, question periods, informal discussions and lunch. **Short Intensive Retreats** (Yong Maeng Jong Jin, or "Leap like a tiger while sitting"): Each month many of the Zen centers hold silent meditation retreats for 3 or 7 days under the direction of Zen Master Seung Sahn or one of the Master Dharma Teachers. The daily schedule includes 12 hours of sitting, bowing, chanting, working and eating in traditional temple style. Personal interviews and Dharma talks are given by the Zen teacher. Advance reservation is necessary and requires a \$10 non-refundable deposit. (Providence Zen Center requires a 50% deposit.)

**90-Day Intensive Retreat** (Kyol Che or "Tight Dharma"): Conducted in total silence, long intensive meditation retreats are powerful tools for examining and clarifying our lives. The daily

schedule includes 12 hours of sitting, bowing, chanting and formal silent meals. Personal interviews and Dharma talks are given frequently. Registration is for 90 days, 21-day periods or a one-week intensive. The School offers annually three long Kyol Che's (one in Poland, Korea and the United States) and a three-week summer Kyol Che at Providence Zen Center. See schedule.

**Chanting Retreats (Kido):** Occasionally chanting retreats are offered. A Kido is powerful training in keeping a one-pointed mind and using group energy to deepen awareness.

**Membership:** If you would like to become member of the Kwan Um Zen School, you may either contact the Zen center or affiliate nearest you, or become a member-at-large by writing directly to the School. You do not have to be a member to participate in any of the training programs. However, rates for members are reduced and include a free subscription to the bi-monthly **NEWSLETTER** and the international newspaper, **PRIMARY POINT** (3 issues per year). The most up-to-date calendar information is in the **NEWSLETTER**. Non-members may subscribe to the **NEWSLETTER** for \$6.00 a year and to **PRIMARY POINT** for \$10.00 a year. □

## 1988 Fall & Winter Schedule at the Providence Zen Center

### Coming Events

- Nov. 27 10 a.m. Meditation Instruction  
10:30 a.m. "Case Studies from the Mu Mun Kwan" by MDT Jacob Perl, Abbot of the Kwan Um Zen School.
- Dec. 10 2 p.m. Buddha's Enlightenment Ceremony Zen Master Seung Sahn and the Master Dharma Teachers. MDT Certification Ceremony—  
(Robert Genthner) Dinner following.
- Dec. 12-16 Traditional Yong Maeng Jong Jin in honor of Buddha's Enlightenment; interviews given by Zen Master Seung Sahn.
- Dec. 16 7:30 p.m. Public Dharma talk by Zen Master Seung Sahn.
- Dec. 17-18 KIDO-Intensive chanting retreat-led by Zen Master Seung Sahn.
- Jan2-Mar 31 WINTER KYOL CHE at Diamond Hill Zen Monastery; led by MDT Mu Deung Sunim.
- Jan. 20-22 YMJJ (meditation retreat) led by MDT Jacob Perl.
- Feb. 26 9 a.m.-4 p.m. INTRODUCTION TO ZEN WORKSHOP
- March 12 9 a.m.-4 p.m. One-day sitting. Teacher to be announced.
- April 8 Seven-day YMJJ (meditation retreat); interviews given by Zen Master Seung Sahn.
- May 6, 7 Two-day workshop with Zen Master Seung Sahn and Stephen Levine.
- May 8 One-day sitting with Zen Master Seung Sahn.

### For All Events

Please register early. A 50% deposit is required. For more information or to register, please contact:

Providence Zen Center  
Dept. PP, 528 Pound Rd.  
Cumberland, RI 02864  
(401)658-1464—New # after November 18

## 90 Day Winter Retreat

### Kyol Che at the Providence Zen Center

The annual 90-day winter Kyol Che (single-minded Dharma) is a rare opportunity to look intimately at what is happening in our lives. It is a time when all our energies are devoted to deepening and clarifying the meaning of what it is to be human. Kyol Che training is a powerful tool for enriching our everyday lives with greater wisdom and direction.

Master Dharma Teacher Mu Deung Su Nim will lead the winter retreat and be in residence. Mu Deung Su Nim has been a student of Zen Master Seung Sahn for fourteen years and received "inka" (authorization to teach) in 1981. He will offer guidance, Dharma talks and private interviews.

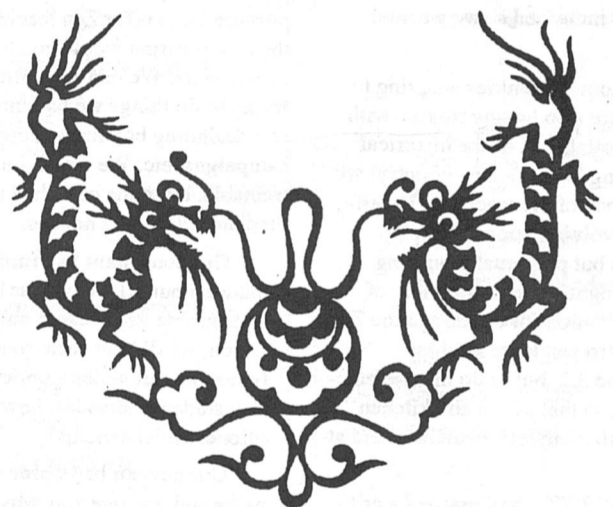
The 90-day retreat will be held at the Diamond Hill Zen Monastery, located on 50 beautiful acres of the Providence Zen Center in Cumberland, Rhode Island. Conducted in silence, the daily schedule includes nine hours of sitting meditation, with chant ing, bowing, prostrations and formal Zen meals held in the traditional temple style. It is unique in offering a continuous silent meditation retreat for three months.

The dates are Jan. 2, 1989 to March 31, 1989. A deposit of 50 percent is required. Minimum registration: two weeks. (One week blocks can be added on after that.)

Jan.2-13	First 2-week period	Feb 17-Mar 3	Fourth 2-week period
Jan. 13-17	Second 2-week period	March 3-17	Fifth 2-week period
Jan. 27-Feb. 10	Third 2-week period	March 17-31	Last 2-week period
Feb. 10-17	Intensive Week (Not open to new students)		

COSTS:	Period	Members	Non-Members
	90 days	\$1200	\$1500
	14 days	\$ 250	\$ 325
	Subsequent 7 day intervals	\$ 125	\$ 150
	Intensive Week	\$ 150	\$ 200

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## ZEN MASTER SEUNG SAHN

### Two retreats

5-day Yong Maeng Jong Jin (Sitting meditation) followed by a  
2-day Day KIDO (Chanting meditation)

Dec. 12-16(YMJJ) Dec. 17-18 (Kido)

The December Yong Maeng Jong Jin is a traditional retreat held in Zen monasteries all over the world. It honors the enlightenment of Shakayamuni Buddha; it honors all sentient beings' true nature. A kido is a powerful training in keeping a one-pointed mind, using group energy to deepen awareness.

### 7-day Yong Maeng Jong Jin: Intensive Meditation Retreat

April 10-17, 1989

Seven days of silence. kong-an practice with a keen-eyed teacher, quiet country environment, vegetarian meals, sitting, walking, bowing, eating, working, lying down.

A Yong Maeng Jong Jin retreat is an opportunity to simplify our life, asking only "What am I?" "What is this present moment?"

Note: This is the only retreat Zen Master Seung Sahn will be leading on the East Coast in 1989.

Cost: \$35 per day. (\$22 KUZS members)

## Conscious Living, Conscious Dying

with Zen Master Seung Sahn  
& Stephen Levine

These two fine teachers will again meet and teach together. Each has learned that questioning is the basis of living full and satisfying lives—even as we are dying. Out of the spaciousness of this open, alert mind appears the compassion that allows us to function as whole beings, healed and connected at every level; by this commitment to practicing inquiry, wise action and correct relationships are cultivated.

May 6-7, 1989

Cost: \$160 (\$115 KUZS member)

### One-day Meditation Retreat

4:30 a.m. to 3 p.m. A one-day Meditation Retreat with kong-an interviews given by Zen Master Seung Sahn. Silence, formal vegetarian breakfast and lunch, walking, chanting, and lying down.

Monday, May 8, 1989

Cost: \$35 (\$22 KUZS members)