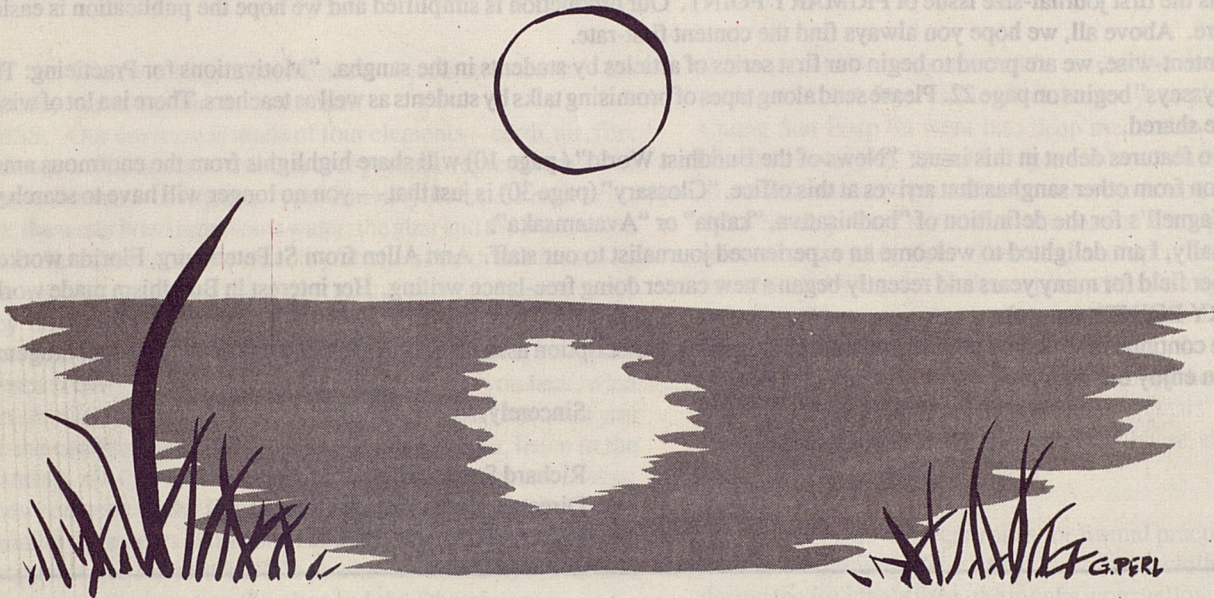


PRIMARY POINT

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*So much suffering in Nirvana castles,
So joyous to sink into this world.*

*When in old clothes you call yourself
Buddha, what do you call yourself in silk?*

*Wooden man went out with shoes at night,
Stone woman came back with hat in morning.*

*You, for the first time, can perceive when you
Pick up the moon three times as it floats on the pond.*

Zen Master Seung Sahn

From The Editor

You may have noticed we've done a little remodeling of PRIMARY POINT. This paper began 6 years ago printed on the most inexpensive newsprint we could find, which was the most we could afford. Two years ago we moved to a higher quality paper, so that the newsprint would melt in your mind, not in your hands. All along, however, from the origin of PRIMARY POINT with Ellen Sidor (first Editor) and Mu Guk Sunim (first School Director) we have had a dream: a journal-style paper.

With the purchase of our first desk-top system (a MacIntosh SE and a Laser Printer) our dream became a reality. You hold in your hands the first journal-size issue of PRIMARY POINT. Our production is simplified and we hope the publication is easier to read and store. Above all, we hope you always find the content first-rate.

Content-wise, we are proud to begin our first series of articles by students in the sangha. "Motivations for Practicing: Three Personal Odysseys" begins on page 22. Please send along tapes of promising talks by students as well as teachers. There is a lot of wisdom waiting to be shared.

Two features debut in this issue: "News of the Buddhist World" (page 10) will share highlights from the enormous amount of information from other sanghas that arrives at this office. "Glossary" (page 30) is just that — you no longer will have to search your Funk and Wagnell's for the definition of "bodhisattva," "kalpa" or "Avatamsaka".

Finally, I am delighted to welcome an experienced journalist to our staff. Ann Allen from St Petersburg, Florida worked in the newspaper field for many years and recently began a new career doing free-lance writing. Her interest in Buddhism made working on PRIMARY POINT a natural.

We continue to welcome your comments, photographs, transcription assistance, advertisements and overall encouragement. We hope you enjoy our new look.

Sincerely,

Richard Streitfeld
 Director, Kwan Um Zen School
 Editor, PRIMARY POINT

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PRIMARY POINT

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Senior Editor: School Abbot Jacob Perl, Ji Do Poep Sa Nim
Editor-in-Chief: School Director Richard Streitfeld
Teaching Editor: Bobby Rhodes, Ji Do Poep Sa Nim
Feature Editor: Mu Soeng Sunim
Production and Advertising Manager: J.W. Harrington
Advisor: Ellen Sidor
Copy Editing: Ann Allen, Scott Restivo
Book Reviews: Ellen Gwynn, Dhananjay Joshi
Contributors this issue: Bruce Blair, Glen Bradley, David Jordan, Jan Potemkin, Richard Shrobe Ji Do Poep Sa Nim, Zen Master Seung Sahn
Production and Transcribing Staff: Joe Bergeron, Sarah Hummingbird, Gayle Johnson
Cover Design: Grazyna Perl

Wearing a Kasa, Carrying the World

Uncovering the Mystery of Form

An Interview with Zen Master Seung Sahn

Interviewed by Glen Bradley at Dharma Sah Zen Center in Los Angeles, August, 1989

PP: What is the significance of the objects on the altar—the rice, the water, candles and incense?

ZMSS: Our universe is made of four elements—earth, air, fire, and water. The items on the altar are symbolic representations of these elements—the incense represents air; the candle represents fire; the water bowl represents water; the altar and the Buddha are symbolic of the earth; the rice is symbolic of earth and food. The four elements make up the universe and also our human body; they also control our consciousness. So when the incense is burning, you have a good smell; the smell goes into your consciousness. At any time, what you see, what you hear, what you smell all becomes part of your consciousness. So when you see the candles, smell the incense, see the Buddha, listen to the chanting, all this creates good feeling in your consciousness; when you come to the Dharma room, your outside condition and situation disappears and a good feeling appears. Your small mind disappears and for a little while you have Buddha Mind. That's how we use the items on the altar and the Dharma room.

PP: Why do we bow when we enter and leave the Dharma room?

ZMSS: In the Orient, when two people meet, they bow to each other according to their status. The person who is high-class bows just a little bit; the person who is lower-class bows much more deeply. This is Oriental hierarchy. But when we enter the Dharma room, we leave behind this high-low mind; an emperor bows to the Buddha and a beggar also bows to the Buddha. This is cultivating humility. In that moment, the mind becomes very simple. Also, this is a moment of paying attention and having correct relationship with the situation. The Buddha is our ideal and our inspiration. So the correct relationship is to bow to the altar.

PP: What is the origin of the moktak?

ZMSS: "Mok" means wood; "tak" means hit. But the original word is "Mok O". The Japanese call it "Mokugyo". "Moku" means wood; "gyo" means fish; so this instrument is like a fish with its mouth open. There is a story about the origin of this instrument. Long time ago, in China, there was monk called Chung San Poep Sa. He lived near a big city and a big lake. One day a high government official came to the lake with his family for a picnic. They had a small baby, only a few months old. By chance, when they were on the boat, the baby fell overboard. The official engaged local fishermen to swim into the waters and find the body of his baby but they couldn't find the body. So he went

to Chung San Poep Sa and said he would like to do a ceremony for his dead baby but cannot find the body, so please help him. Chung San Poep Sa went into deep meditation and perceived what had happened. He told the government official, we must go to the fish market very early tomorrow morning and buy some fish. So they went to the fish market and Chung San Poep Sa selected a very big fish. Then they cut open the stomach and found the baby inside. To the surprise of the family, the baby was still alive. They were all very happy. Then the official wanted to help all fish for saving the life of his baby. So this moktak is shaped like a fish, with an open mouth and a hollow stomach. When you hit the moktak, a good sound appears. The meaning of the moktak sound is that the baby is still here, all fish can hear the sound and get enlightenment.

PP: Why do we wear robes for formal practice?

ZMSS: Originally these robes are monk clothes. In India, during the Buddha's time, the monks wore yellow robes because



Zen Master Seung Sahn

it is the color of the earth. They chose the yellow, the color of ground, because they get less dirty if the dust is blowing. If the color was white, the robes would get dirty in no time. But yellow robes don't get so dusty. When Buddhism came to China, things changed a little bit. The robes that we wear are Taoist-style clothes, not Indian style. Only the monk's big kasa is Indian style. So when Taoism and Buddhism came together, a new style of clothes appeared. The kasa, both small and large, is a symbol. They have squares and lines—7-lines, 12-lines, 18-lines. There are five points — east, west, north, south and a middle. This means the whole world. So when a monk wears his kasa, it means carrying the whole world with him. A monk leads a homeless life, but with his kasa he symbolically carries the whole world with him; that means he is not separate from the world and still takes care of all beings. So the robes and kasa are different; robes are Taoist-style clothes; kasa is a symbol of renunciation, of leaving behind ego and small I.

PP: What is the origin of the four-bowl style of eating?
ZMSS: This style is from China. Originally, in Buddha's lifetime, there was only one bowl. In China, this style changed again. The four bowls are again symbolic of the four elements—earth, air, fire and water—and also of Buddha, Dharma, Sangha and Mind. In Korea, they always use four bowls in the monastery; here also we use these four bowls during retreats and formal meals but our American style is a little different from Korean monastery style.

PP: What is the origin of the Four Great Vows?
ZMSS: The tradition of reciting the Four Great Vows started during the Tang dynasty in ancient China; these vows are taken from the Avatamsaka Sutra. In China and Korea, they recite these vows only at the end of a ceremony and not in the morning, as we do at Kwan Um Zen School centers. When we first started Providence Zen Center, somebody suggested saying the Four Great Vows in the morning. I thought this was a good idea, because we do 108 bows, which are the bows of repentance; these Four Great Vows provide our direction. First wake up, then bow to the Zen Master in gratitude, then recite the Four Great Vows to reaffirm our direction, then bow 108 times in repentance for all our mistakes.

PP: When you do a solo chant in the morning, before the Heart Sutra, what is the meaning of that?
ZMSS: That means praying for the whole world. The first part says we want all beings to get off the Wheel of Samsara and allow the Wheel of Dharma to go around and around and take away all peoples' suffering. The second part means wishing for harmony in all parts of the world — east, west, south and north. This part is praying that all beings become one mind, become world peace, become Buddha. The third part means praying that all students in the Kwan Um Zen School and all of Buddhism get enlightenment. The last part is a recitation of the Ten Precepts.

PP: Why do people take off their shoes when coming into the temple?

ZMSS: That's Korean and Japanese style, not Chinese or Indian. Korean and Japanese use ondol or tatami floors inside the house; if you wear street shoes inside the house, the floors get dirty. So the relationship is clear; if you take off your shoes, the house or the temple stays clean.

PP: Korean Buddhist statues are always large and colorful; other traditions use smaller, simple statues. Why is there this difference?

ZMSS: This is not only Korean style; Chinese use much bigger and more colorful statues. In India, Thailand and Cambodia, they use very big statues, very colorful. But that is not Hinayana style, only Indian or Thai or Cambodia style. In Hinayana, they have only Shakyamuni Buddha statues, but no Bodhisattvas. Bodhisattvas are part of Mahayana tradition; Chinese style is very colorful, so they have large and colorful statues of the various Bodhisattvas. In Korea, they have only middle size, not

*When you . . . hear the sound
of the bell, universal nature
appears. . . everything
becomes equal.*

quite as big as Chinese style. Buddhism came from China to Korea and then went to Japan. There, during the period of Nara Buddhism, they built this very large Buddha at Todaiji which was the largest Buddha in the world. Also, during the Kamakura period, they built a huge Buddha outdoors. For many people, when they look at the huge Buddha, a very strong feeling of awe or reverence arises; for a very short time, this feeling takes away their karma, their small I. For some people, when they look at a small Buddha, there is no such feeling. But for some people, looking at a small and simple Buddha, there is a deep feeling. So people have different consciousnesses. In China, Korea and Japan, big and colorful Buddhas and Bodhisattvas have a deep impact on the people's consciousness.

PP: What is the meaning of the Morning Bell Chant? Please explain some of the lines.

ZMSS: The Morning Bell Chant comes from the Avatamsaka Sutra. This sutra talks about the interdependence of all beings. So all animals, birds, human beings, all demons, all beings in hell, when they hear the sound of the bell, they wake up, get enlightenment and become Buddha. So, this sound penetrates all six realms of existence — heaven, astral, human beings, animals, hungry ghosts, hell — and takes away your ignorance; wisdom grows up, you get enlightenment and save all beings. Together, we all become Buddha.

There is a line in the chant that says, "Everywhere

everything is equal.” This means in universal nature, everything is equal; there is no form, no name. So at the time when you just hear the sound of the bell, universal nature appears, name and form disappear, everything becomes equal.

Another line says, “Together you and I simultaneously attain the way of the Buddha.” This means we are all equal — all animals, all birds, all human beings, all equal — and all attain enlightenment at the same time through hearing the sound of the bell. When you hear the sound of the bell, it means you wake up; wake up means going beyond time and space. Time and space are a hindrance caused by thinking; so hearing the sound of the bell makes this thinking disappear, makes time and space disappear and all become Buddha at the same time.

At another point, it talks about “Great love, great sadness, our great teacher.” It means great love and great sadness is substance. Love is substance, and great sadness is compassion. If other people are suffering, I am sad and compassionate. If everyone is happy, I am happy. “Our great teacher” means we are connected to everything else in the universe, and everything is teaching us the lesson of great compassion and great love.

PP: The Great Dharani, which we chant, is a long mantra and has no translation. What is the origin of this Dharani and what is its meaning?

ZMSS: In Buddha’s lifetime, one monk broke precepts and was very unhappy. So the Buddha taught him that karma comes from your mind; if mind disappears, karma also disappears. If you hold your mistake, your karma will never go away. Then the Buddha

Big mistakes cause problems for others; small mistakes, problems only for myself.

gave this monk the Great Dharani mantra in order to take away his holding and thinking mind.

PP: Why do we do 108 prostrations in the morning? Why 108?

ZMSS: In Korean style, there are 108 names for Buddhas and Bodhisattvas. So in that style, 108 bows mean repeating these names of the Buddhas. Another style says that human beings have 108 delusions and we bow to cut off these delusions.

PP: When people take precepts, you give them Dharma names? How do you pick these names?

ZMSS: First, I pick a family name for the whole group that is taking precepts on that day; then I separate men and women; then I perceive what kind of name fits what kind of person.

PP: When someone takes monk’s precepts, as part of the ritual you sprinkle water on his or her head and touch it with a

sword. What is the meaning of this ritual?

ZMSS: It is symbolic of cutting the last hair, last ignorance. Becoming a monk means going from ignorance to light. When you shave you have to use soap and water, otherwise it’s very hard. So we use the water from the altar for this symbolic purpose; the sword is symbolic of the mind-sword, the sword of wisdom that cuts through ignorance. So this is cutting the last hair.

PP: What is the meaning of the repentance ceremony?

ZMSS: Everybody makes mistakes; how do we correct our mistakes? In some forms of Hinayana Buddhism, if you make mistakes, then you have to give up your precepts. But in Mahayana and Zen, if you make mistakes, you can do a repentance ceremony. There are big mistakes and small mistakes. Big mistakes mean my mistake causes many problems for other people; small mistake means a problem only for myself. Doing 108 bows every morning is a repentance ceremony in itself for our small mistakes. For big mistakes, there is a public ceremony; then my mind becomes clean, also other people’s minds become clean. If we don’t do this kind of ceremony then everyone is holding “my mistake” and making more karma. In the Catholic Church, if you make a mistake, you can go to the priest and confess your mistake, then feel relieved and complete. The repentance ceremony is like that. But Catholic ceremonies are secret; in Buddhism there are no secrets, everything is open. If you make a mistake, and make a public ceremony, then one can forgive and move on without holding.

PP: You often encourage your students to do forty-nine and one hundred day retreats. Why forty-nine days? Why one hundred days?

ZMSS: We have two eyes, two ears, two nostrils, and one mouth. That’s a total of seven holes in our head. The number seven is considered lucky in the Orient. Also, seven times seven is considered a good number. The 100-day retreat is a little bit not correct. Originally a retreat was done for three months, ninety days. The number 100 comes from Taoism. For Taoists, ten is a lucky number, so their retreat time is ten times ten. In China, Buddhism and Taoism got intertwined, so many Buddhist rituals have come from Taoism.

PP: What is the role of women in Korean monasteries and should their role be different in American Zen?

ZMSS: In Korea, a nun is the same as a monk, except nuns cannot officiate at a precepts ceremony. Other than that, nuns can become teachers, also become Zen Masters; they can also get transmission but cannot give transmission. That’s the tradition from China. But that’s not a problem in America. Buddhism is always adapting itself to the culture of the country where it goes, so Korean style is not absolute in America. We can change it. Changing transmission rule is no problem, but we cannot change the precepts rule.

PP: How can we make Zen practice more interesting for Americans?

ZMSS: Traditionally, in China and Korea, only monks did Zen practice. But Zen has come to the West and here lay people practice Zen, so this has changed the character of Zen. Now our teaching is Zen in everyday life. Sitting Zen all the time is not possible for lay people. Everyday life Zen means learning mind-sitting. Mind-sitting means not moving mind. How do you keep not-moving mind? Put down your opinion, condition, and situation, moment to moment; when you are doing something, just do it. This is everyday Zen.

Monks have rules about their life — cannot go to theatre, cannot go to restaurant, cannot do this, cannot do that. Their precepts are always telling them this is no good, that is no good. So the monks only sit Zen all the time, then get enlightenment and understand truth. That's old-style Zen. In that style, there is not much teaching about great love, great compassion, great Bodhisattva Way. But for lay people this teaching of great love, great compassion, great Bodhisattva Way is very necessary. To attain that, it is important to keep a not-moving mind; then correct situation, correct function and correct relationship appear by themselves in everyday life.

PP: Some people don't like any kind of form, especially chanting. How should we approach them?

ZMSS: This is Western mind, always strong like and dislike. But there are many people who like chanting very much. Chanting means doing together action with other people, then this together action takes away your opinion, your condition, your situation very easily. That's the teaching of chanting meditation. If people don't like Korean chanting, then maybe some time in future, we will chant everything in English. But remember that our school is not only in America but also in Poland, Germany, Spain and other parts of Europe. So if someone from America goes to Poland, it's the same form, same chanting; then you have

the feeling of being part of a large international family. Then your mind becomes bigger and you are at one with the world; you "become world peace."

PP: Could you talk a bit more about chanting as meditation?

ZMSS: Meditation means not-moving mind. As I said before, old-style meditation means body-sitting, but mind-sitting is more important than body-sitting. When you chant you have one mind, not-moving mind. That's mind-sitting. It is called chanting samadhi. You chant "Kwan Seum Bosal, Kwan Seum Bosal, Kwan Seum Bosal", then you perceive sound. That's clear mind. Clear mind is wake-up mind; wake-up mind is enlightenment. So in chanting, samadhi mind is the first step, this is One Mind. The next step is perceive sound, this is Clear Mind. This is enlightenment. If you attach to samadhi, then you have a problem. That's a very important point.

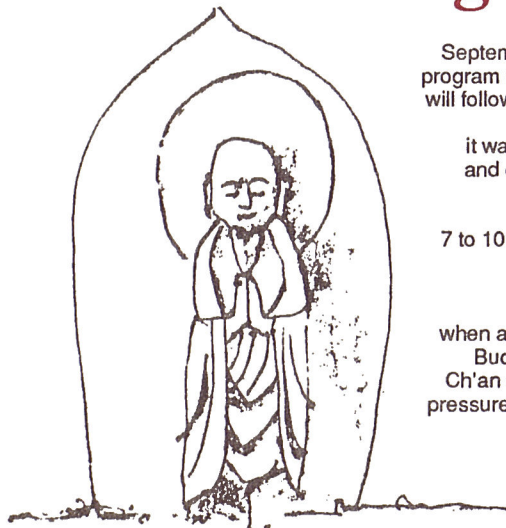
PP: How do you see the relationship between Korean Buddhism and American Buddhism changing in the next ten years?

ZMSS: These days I don't stay so much in the United States; my travels are in Korea, Europe, Australia, and other places. So now most of the teaching in United States is being done by Ji Do Poep Sa Nims. Before, everybody was my student, but now some Ji Do Poep Sa Nims have their own students. Now Ji Do Poep Sa Nims will decide the Kwan Um Zen School's direction; they understand American mind better than me. I taught only Korean Buddhism style; now the Ji Do Poep Sa Nims are teaching American style Buddhism, so that's already changing.

PP: When do you plan to give transmission? We are all waiting.

ZMSS: Spring comes, grass grows by itself. (Laughs)

Gathering in Korea, Summer 1990



Ellen Sidor

The second triennial world-wide visit to Korea will take place from August 18 to September 1, 1990. The opening event will be the second "Whole World is A Single Flower" program at Su Dok Sah Temple, from August 20 to 22. A similarly themed conference in Seoul will follow the Su Dok Sah event. The first gatherings in 1987 brought together a large number of practicing Buddhists from the United States, Europe, Latin America and Asia; it was a coming together of East and West with our different understandings of Buddhism, and of transcending our different interpretations and practicing together in an environment which has nurtured Buddhism for more than 1500 years.

The 1990 visit will follow approximately the same format as in 1987, with a 7 to 10 day tour of spectacular temples in the mountains of Korea following the initial events.

As in 1987, we are expecting a large contingent from Europe and the United States, as well as special guests and featured speakers from the two continents.

This gathering is a rare opportunity to have a first-hand glimpse into what happens when a great tradition modernizes. Korea has been the repository and custodian of the great Buddhist tradition from T'ang China; its Zen communities are a living link with the ancient Ch'an communities of China. Now this tradition is undergoing radical changes as a result of pressures from the forces of modernization and westernization. The glimpse into this process is always intriguing and fascinating; we will be participating in this process ourselves, bringing to it the creative aspects of our own experience and practicing in the West.

The Kwan Um Zen School office will be making group travel arrangements for people traveling from the United States. If enough people plan to go, group-rate air fares are possible. Please write for more details:

Kwan Um Zen School, WWSF, 528 Pound Road, Cumberland, RI or call 401-658-1476.

Native Tradition in Korean Zen

Part II: The Teachings of Chinul

by Mu Soeng Sunim

Bojo Chinul (1158-1210) is considered the founder of a native tradition of Zen in Korea, combining the cultivation of prajna (wisdom) and samadhi (meditation), of sutra study and Zen practice. As such, he is the seminal thinker in the tradition of Korean Zen. In the first part of this article (PRIMARY POINT, June, 1989) we examined the turbulent times in which he was born and the background of his monastic training.

Zen Master Chinul became the first Zen teacher in Korea to systematically use “hwa-tou” (or kong-an, C: koan) practice in the training of monks in his community. This was also an interesting transitional time in Korean Zen. The founders of the Nine Mountain schools had trained in Ma-tsu’s method of shock tactics, but even in China itself, the use of koans as a teaching tool was not adopted until the third generation after Zen Master Lin-Chi in the mid-tenth century. By that time, it had become very difficult for Koreans monks to travel to China; also Korean Zen itself had lost its original vigor and was entering a period of decline. For these reasons, it fell to Chinul to introduce this new teaching tool in Korean Zen. His own knowledge of it came through the writings of Zen Master Tai-hui (1089-1163).

Before we go into Chinul’s method of investigating the “hwa-tou”, I want to emphasize Chinul’s insistence again and again on One Mind. This is the core of Chinul’s teaching: that both the deluded mind and the enlightened mind are part of the same landscape, the One Mind. The deluded mind is not separate from the enlightened one and the enlightened mind is not separate from the deluded mind, and they are both within us. Most of us have the idea that there is something outside of us that we must look for. Chinul firmly demolishes this notion again and again in his writings and talks. For a record of Chinul’s writings, we have a translation of Chinul’s works by Robert Buswell (*The Korean Approach to Zen*, University of Hawaii Press, Honolulu), a premier work of Buddhist scholarship in America.

In Buswell’s translation, Chinul’s writing is very clear; part of the reason is the writings are answers to questions put to him in open assemblies. Thus his words become live and have a sense of immediacy about them.

At an assembly, someone asked Chinul, “How is it that saints and ordinary people are not the same?” We all have this idea that we are very ordinary and are not saints, that we are inferior, that we don’t have the qualities of saints. The questioner is asking Chinul why, if both the ordinary person and the saint have the same One Mind, they are not the same? Chinul responded to this question, “The true mind is originally the same in the saint and the ordinary man, but because the ordinary man endorses the reality of material things with the false mind, he

loses his pure nature and becomes estranged from it, therefore the true mind cannot appear. It is like the tree’s shadow in the darkness, or a spring flowing underground. It exists.”

When asked, “When the true mind is beset by delusion, it becomes an ordinary mind. How then can we escape from delusion and achieve sanctity?”, Chinul replied, “When there is no place for the deluded mind, that is Bodhi. Samsara and Nirvana always remain equal.” It becomes a very interesting question: how can we reach this place where the deluded mind has no place?

Chinul describes this place as “luminous awareness”. Later on, someone asked him how we approach this place and, in response, we have an interesting exchange:

Chinul: Do you hear the sound of the crow cawing?
That magpie calling?

Student: Yes.

Chinul: Trace him back and listen to your hearing nature. Do you hear any sounds?

This is an interesting experiment all of us can do. Anytime we hear a sound, whether it is the sound of a jet plane overhead or a bird singing outside, all we have to do is bring this sound inside and listen one hundred percent. If we listen one hundred percent, there is no idea of “I am listening to the sound”. So when Chinul asked the student what happens when you listen to the sound of a crow or the magpie, one hundred percent, the student said, “At that place sounds and discriminations do not obtain.” That can be our experience, too. If we really go deep into a sound, the idea of “I am listening to a sound” disappears; then you become the sound.

Sometimes at Zen Centers this happens — we are listening to the morning bell chant, being a little sleepy, not completely asleep, but just a little bit and the bell is hit. All of a sudden, there is nothing but the sound of the bell resonating deep within ourselves. Then, there is no sound and no discrimination. “I, my, me” disappears and the whole universe is just one sound. This place of no discrimination is what Chinul calls luminous awareness. This is the whole point of Zen practice. Zen Master Seung Sahn always talks about cutting off I, my, me mind. Our mind is deluded because in every situation we apply I, my, me to everything that appears. When we don’t see things through I, my, me then we can see, hear, taste, and touch everything clearly. It’s that simple.

When Chinul is talking about entering into the sound, the same can be applied to tasting, seeing, touching, everything. In “just doing it” one hundred-percent, there is no discrimination.

So, the student says, at that point, the sounds and discrimination do not obtain. Chinul says, "Marvelous! Marvelous! This is Avalokitesvara's method for entering the noumenon. Let me ask you again. You said that sounds and discriminations do not obtain at that place. But since they do not obtain, isn't the hearing-nature just empty space at such a time?" The student says, "Originally, it is not empty, it is always bright and never obscured." Chinul asks again, "What is this essence which is not empty?" The student: "As it has no former shape, words cannot describe it."

The student describes the hearing-nature as being always bright and never obscured. We can find the same thing in our own experience by bringing any sound within ourselves and going deep into our hearing-nature. You will find that there is something there, some kind of radiance; it's not just blankness. This radiance or brightness is our luminous awareness. This brightness does not come from the sun, it's our own original true nature. This experience can be reached through our eye-consciousness, through nose-consciousness, tongue-consciousness, touch-consciousness and thinking-consciousness.

Chinul further says, "If you believe me to the point where you can suddenly extinguish your doubt, show the will of a great man, and give rise to authentic vision and understanding; if you know its taste for yourself, arrive at the stage of self-affirmation and gain understanding of your true nature, then this is the understanding-awakening achieved by those who have cultivated the mind. Since no further steps are involved, it is called sudden. Therefore, it is said, 'When in the cause of faith, one meshes without the slightest degree of error with all the qualities of the fruition of Buddhahood, faith is achieved'."

Chinul is asking us to show the will of a great person and have this complete faith. That's all we have to do: apply this resolution and courage to every situation that appears for us. Rather than holding onto our idea and applying I, my, me mind to every situation, we can let go and perceive things as they really are. It's a simple matter of whether a situation controls us or we control the situation. Who is in control? By control, I don't mean in a neurotic sense, but perceiving things with complete clarity and acting clearly. This is the mind of a saint. But if a situation clouds our vision, we act with the mind of a deluded person. The choice is ours; we have the One Mind from which comes the action of a saint or an ordinary man.

In his writings, Chinul comes back to this issue again and again. And he gives some interesting examples. One of the examples he is fond of quoting many times, is of a frozen pond. "Although we know that the frozen pond is entirely water, the sun's heat is necessary to melt it. Although we awaken to the fact that an ordinary man is Buddha, the power of Dharma is necessary to permeate our cultivation. When the pond is melted, the water flows freely and can be used for irrigation and cleaning. When falsities are extinguished, the mind will be luminous and dynamic, and then its function of penetrating brightness will manifest."

In our day-to-day life, our mind is like a frozen pond, frozen by our conditioning so that we respond in deluded ways



Main Hall of Songgwang-sa Temple in Korea.

and continue to wander around in samsara of anger, desire, and ignorance. But when we start to practice, it's like the sun's heat; it comes down and melts the ice. The only thing that happens through practice is that the frozen waters of our conditioning melt and start to flow.

At another point, Chinul says, "A person who falls to the ground gets back up by using that ground. To try to get up without relying on that ground would be impossible." We all have the same dilemma: How to let go of the conditioning of anger, desire, and ignorance. Chinul says we have to use our own deluded mind to get out of its delusion, to use our deluded mind to awaken to the fact we are already Buddha. In this way, the deluded mind is not a liability but a necessity. This means we can use our delusions or any bad situation skillfully to understand what the correct situation is.

Chinul goes on to say, "Sentient beings are those who are deluded in regard to the One Mind, and give rise to boundless defilements. Buddhas are those who have awakened to the One Mind and have given rise to the boundless sublime functions. Although there is a difference between delusion and awakening, essentially both are derived from the One Mind. Hence, to seek Buddhahood apart from the (deluded) mind is impossible." It is a remarkable statement for Korean Zen of the 12th Century, because at that time the whole notion of Buddhism was filled with the idea that the Buddhahood is something out there, maybe in the Pure Land, and that you had to do these rituals or read these sutras and then maybe someday you will become Buddha. But Chinul says again and again, that to seek Buddhahood apart from the mind is impossible.

Chinul further talks about the mind of the saint and says: "All the sound of slander and praises, acknowledgement and disapproval that deceptively issue forth from the throat are like an echo in an empty valley or the sound of the wind. If in this manner, we investigate the root cause of such deceptive phenomenon in ourselves and others, we will remain unaffected by them." In our own daily life too, whatever appears in front of us, if someone badmouths us or gives us a hard time, says something unpleasant and our minds don't move, then that's the mind of a

saint. It happens to all of us at some point that our center does not move and we remain unaffected by other peoples' slander or bad speech.

QUESTION: You talked about Chinul's impact around the year 1200. What has happened in the 800 years since then?

MSSN: Chinul established the temple called Songgwang-sa and throughout these 800 years it has remained the premier Zen Temple in Korea. It's a remote temple, situated in the mountains, and has continued the tradition of Zen teaching which Chinul founded. After Chinul, sixteen of his successors were given the title of "National Teachers". Fortunately for Songgwang-sa, that does not seem to have caused any permanent damage to them. Chinul's successor, Hae Shim, compiled the collection of sixteen hundred kong-ans, which is now the standard reference in Korean Zen. So, Songgwang-sa is the lasting legacy of Chinul and its influence has continued even to this day. When the Yi dynasty came into power in Korea in 1392, they

*"The true mind cannot appear.
It is like the tree's shadow in the
darkness, or a spring flowing
underground. It exists."*

turned to Confucianism and undertook a very open and systematic persecution of Buddhism. So for five hundred years, Buddhism had to go underground. At that time, there were no temples in urban areas and Zen was practiced only in the mountains. Songgwang-sa remained the only large temple which had a clear function in Zen training. All other Zen monks had to find caves in the mountains or small temples:

When the Japanese armies invaded Korea in 1592, Sosan Taesa was one of the few well-known Zen monks in Korea. Sosan is the most famous Zen Master between Chinul and this century and his fame came largely because of his role in organizing a monks' militia against the Japanese. Sosan is the prime example of a Zen monk of those dark times; he didn't have a high profile and lived in a succession of temples in the mountains. In those years, the lineage was handed down in a rather obscure manner. Then Zen Master Seung Sahn's great-grand teacher, Zen Master Kyong Ho, appeared at the turn of the last century (he died in 1912) and revived Korean Buddhism. For about two hundred years before him, Korean Buddhism had become almost extinct. Even at temples like Songgwang-sa, there was nothing much going on.

Zen Master Kyong Ho and his students revived Korean Buddhism in this century. Zen Master Mang Gong, Kyong Ho's best known successor, was a very charismatic teacher and became the first person to really popularize Buddhism, even among lay people. The Japanese occupied Korea from 1910-1945 and

tried to abolish Korean Buddhism. In 1945, when the Japanese rule ended, there were only four or five hundred traditional celibate monks in Korea. Of these, about two hundred and fifty were at Zen Master Mang Gong's temple, Sudok-sa, and the rest were scattered all over the country. Today, there are about thirteen thousand monks and nuns in Korea. So, we have this dramatic shift from about five hundred to about thirteen thousand monks in only forty years.

QUESTION: Was there any lay support for Buddhism during the years of persecution?

MSSN: The only support for Buddhism during these years came from ladies of the royal household. There was a Queen Regent in the mid-16th Century, too, who was able to revive Buddhism for a few years. To some extent, these royal ladies were responsible for Buddhism not dying out. Now, there is tremendous support from lay people, and Mahayana Buddhism in Korea is probably the strongest Buddhist church anywhere in the world. But the focus is very different now. For five hundred years the monks kept alive the flame of intense meditation in mountain caves and temples, just practicing very hard and giving transmission from one generation to the next. Now it is more a popular religion, involved with politics and social action. It's very different from the focus of Chinul and Sosan Taesa. They would hardly recognize it. Chinul's community, when he first founded it at Songgwang-sa, was open to lay people; lay people could enter the monastery for a period of time and leave any time they wanted but while they were there, they had to live the life of a monk. They had to give up all connections with the outside world.

QUESTION: What about Chinul's writings? Are any left?

MSSN: As mentioned earlier, these writings are now available in English translated by Robert Buswell. Though not extensive, these writings had a major impact on the subsequent development of Buddhism in Korea. For example, in Buswell's translation, we have a chapter called "Admonitions to Beginning Students". Today these admonitions serve the function of temple rules in all Zen temples in Korea. Our own temple rules, here in America, are adapted from Chinul's guidelines. His temple rules are to Korean Zen what Pai-chang's temple rules were to Chinese Zen. Also, the chapter on "Secrets of Cultivating the Mind", has been very influential on Korean monks for the last 800 years, an obligatory reading for them.

QUESTION: What are differences between Japanese and Korean Zen, since you have drawn a parallel between Dogen and Chinul? (*Ed: see last issue.*)

MSSN: Zen came to Japan through Dogen and Eisai, but it was adopted by the samurai who had the base of their political power in Kamakura. In Japan of the late twelfth century and early thirteenth century, there was a clash of two kinds of religious cultures. On the one hand, there was the imperial capital at Kyoto where they patronized the Tendai sect and all the other

sects which had dominated Nara Buddhism for five hundred years. On the other hand, the samurai adopted the new religion of Zen as their own; its training and discipline seemed perfectly suited for their purposes. A new form of Zen appeared which had not been seen in China before. In Korea, during the eleventh and twelfth centuries, Zen was adopted by the royal court and thus became absorbed in the larger Korean Buddhism. In Japan, it remained separate from Buddhism as the culture of the samurai. For the next two hundred years, Zen developed a very distinctive personality in Japan. But, there also, it started to die out. Between Ikkyu (who died at the end of the fourteenth Century) and Hakuin there is a period of about three hundred years, and during this period there are no more than three or four notable Zen Masters. Once the Kamakura shogunate fell out of power, the patronage for Zen dried up and Zen had to compete against the Tendai and other sects.

In Korea, during the same period, Zen was not allowed to have any temples in the cities; the monks were not even allowed to enter the city gates. But in Japan, Zen had always flourished in or near urban areas. For all these reasons, there is more continuity and a sense of uniqueness in Japanese Zen than there is in Korean Zen.

QUESTION: Was there ever a warrior class in China who also adopted Zen like the samurai did in Japan?

MSSN: If we look at the history of China, we find that T'ang unified the whole country in the late sixth century. The T'ang was a fierce warrior race but without the same code of conduct which the samurai had. The samurai code was much more codified and their Zen was made to fit into their code. The T'ang didn't have a similar impact on Chinese Ch'an. In fact, since Ch'an was not patronized by T'ang, it remained unaffected by whatever warrior-ideas they might have had. The contrast and

contest in China (Zen) was more between Zen and Confucianism. In some ways, Ch'an was a reaction to the institutionalized norms of behavior which Confucianism provided for the Chinese people. Even today, Oriental cultures are very much based on hierarchy and how you are supposed to behave in a given situation with given people. So the boundaries of social behavior are well-defined. A child knows what his boundaries are, and when he grows up he knows what his boundaries as an adult are. That's Confucian culture. So, within the context of Confucian culture, a Zen interview with a teacher is probably the only time when you have the freedom to be yourself. You can hit the teacher, shout at him, you can be your authentic self. If we read the exchanges in the Blue Cliff Record or Mu Mun Kwan, they shed some interesting light on the unorthodox behavior of Zen monks.

QUESTION: What was Bodhidharma's practice when he sat at the cave in Shaolin temple?

MSSN: What we know from the legend of Bodhidharma, it would seem that his practice was Shikantaza; at the same time, his interview with the future second patriarch would suggest a mastery of the techniques which later developed into kong-an practice. But most certainly, he was not reading sutras at that time. The interesting thing about Bodhidharma, though, is that when he gave transmission to the second patriarch, he passed on a copy of the Lankavatara Sutra along with his robe and bowls. These were the items of transmission until the Sixth Patriarch. For a long time, the Lankavatara Sutra remained a basic text of the Ch'an school in China. Hui Neng himself had his awakening upon hearing a verse from the Diamond Sutra and this Sutra was also revered by Ch'an students in China. All of this changed in the hands of Ma-tsu when Ch'an became very experimental. Even then, it seems that most of the teachers in Ma-tsu's lineage were well-versed in the sutras, they just didn't refer to them in their teachings.

In closing, we have talked about how Korean Zen became absorbed by the larger Buddhism by the time of Chinul's birth (*Ed: see last issue*) and how Chinul was able to revive it through the elements of sudden awakening and gradual cultivation, using both Zen practice and sutra study for this purpose. His lifelong teaching can be summed up in just one phrase: The self-nature is just your own mind; what other experience do you need? In keeping with this tradition of Korean Zen, Zen Master Seung Sahn travels all over the world and teaches "don't know". When people ask him how to keep this "don't know", he says "only don't know". Thus, there is a very direct connection between Chinul's teaching and Zen Master Seung Sahn's teaching — having faith in your self-nature. And that's enough. In every situation, asking "What is this?" is in itself an expression of our self-nature. And that's our challenge and our practice.

Mu Soeng Sunim is senior monk and Abbot of the Diamond Hill Zen Monastery in Cumberland, Rhode Island. He is the author of Thousand Peaks, a history of Korean Zen. This article is from a talk given at Providence Zen Center in January, 1987.



Wooden Pagoda at Popju-sa Temple in Korea.

Stepping off a One-Hundred Foot Flagpole

by Richard Shrobe, Ji Do Poep Sa Nim

An old kong-an says: “Before the donkey has left, the horse has already arrived.” This kong-an tells something about our minds, because it points to the fact that moment by moment many different thoughts are occurring — horses coming, donkeys going. Before this one has even left, the next one is already on its way. In the Avatamsaka Sutra it says, “If you want to understand all the Buddhas of the past, present, and future, then you should view the whole universe as being created by mind alone.” The Avatamsaka Sutra is one of the major Buddhist scriptures, a very vast, visionary work, and in one paragraph it says the essence of understanding Buddha is just to view the whole universe as being created by mind alone. How can we understand this mind that creates a universe?

At the end of a one-day retreat recently, I told the story of a man who encounters a genie, or supernatural being, who says, “I will fulfill one wish for you.” The man says, “I’d like to get a view of the difference between heaven and hell.” The genie says, “O.K., I’ll show you.” He takes him to a door and they enter a huge banquet hall. On the table is everything you might wish to eat, and if something is not there you only have to think about it to make it appear. But there’s one injunction in this setting: You have to use special utensils. These utensils have a glove that fits up to the elbow, and attached to this glove is a fork that is so long that the food doesn’t reach your face when you bend your elbow. All these people are sitting at the table trying to feed themselves, but they can’t get the food to their mouths.

Then the genie takes this man through another door, and they find an identical setting. Again, the same utensils are being used — so long that the food never reaches the people’s mouths. But in this particular room the people are seated across from each other at the table, and the person on this side of the table picks up a piece of food and extends it over to the person sitting across from him. Because the fork is extremely long, it just reaches the other person’s mouth, and likewise the man or woman sitting on the other side of the table picks up a morsel of food and extends it across the table and the person opposite eats it.

So, which one is heaven and which one is hell? Exact same setting, exact same situation, exact same implements, but the relationship to those implements and to the situation is totally different. One is a desperate attempt to feed oneself, and the other is a perception of cooperation and interdependence between beings who have similar needs, desires, wants, and interests — heaven, hell. If you want to understand the realm of all the Buddhas of the past, present, and future, then you should view the whole universe as being created by mind alone.

How does mind create this universe? When the Heart Sutra talks about the five skandhas (form, feeling, perception, impulse, consciousness), it indicates one way of organizing our perception of the world and of ourselves. The Sanskrit word “skandha” literally means a heap or aggregate. Thus, we bring

together these different aspects of experience and begin to relate to things and experiences through them. That means at any moment our experience of self and world comes into being through the interplay of these five elements.

Imagine a moment of absolute clear space before anything has occurred. The first thing that will happen is a sense of something coming into being. This is the aggregate or skandha of “form”, the mind’s tendency to form something out of the primary openness of any particular moment. Form, *feeling*: As form arises, you will begin to have a feeling about it — good, bad, or indifferent. Form, *feeling*, *perception*: Then you will perceive it in some way. Form, *feeling*, *perception*, *impulse*: Impulse here means the tendency to go towards it or to pull away from it. And *consciousness*: Final recognition of the whole event. That’s our experience, and it’s created through the interplay of those five energies. It’s just a way of looking at mind and perception; it’s an organizing principle. Somebody dreamed up that set of categories to talk about the way we organize our experience. You

Original mind, mind which is before thinking, is already relaxed, already clear, already radiant and perceptive.

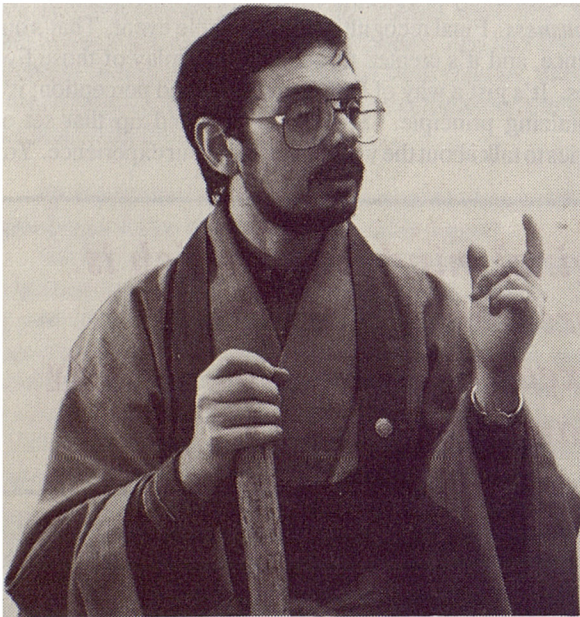
could dream up any number of categories.

But the important thing about the Heart Sutra, and the reason you will never see a skandha face-to-face, is that it says all five skandhas are empty. To perceive that they’re all empty means to perceive that none of the things that we take as our experience is self-sufficient. These things don’t have a permanent, enduring self in them in any way. They’re all dependent on something else. Also, to see things as empty of the names, labels, and opinions we attach to them is to see the skandhas as empty.

There is nothing wrong with naming things. The problem is that we take those names seriously and think that if we name something it exists in that way. There’s a Buddhist saying that “all names are no names”. What does this mean? That is a kong-an. Names are no names; no names are names. That doesn’t mean that we have to get rid of all names and labels. It just means we should perceive that naming something isn’t solid. It’s translucent, transparent; don’t hold it tightly. When you feel your arms, there’s a feeling in your arms, there’s just feeling your arms. That’s the moment before you give rise to calling it “my body”, as if it were something apart from you. That experience is just that. It is empty of self-nature, empty of some category. It

just is what it is at that moment. It doesn't mean there is no body, like it dissolves or is insubstantial, although, from a scientific point of view, an atomic physicist would tell you the same thing as an ancient philosopher: Everything is in flux. Your body is ultimately just a mass of energy. You could say that means it is not a body, for it is not enduring, not permanent. There's no self-nature to it, and it depends for its existence on many things outside it.

If we were going to philosophize, we would say your body is dependent on the water, the air, the food you ate, the fact that a farmer in Nebraska grew the food you ate; the list could go on and on, until your body in this moment is only there because the whole universe is there around it. If you talked about the farmer who grew the wheat for the bread made this morning, then you would have to talk about all the things the farmer is depend-



Richard Shrobe, Ji Do Poep Sa Nim

ent on as well; it goes on and on. Your body is not existing in and of itself. It's existing because of many other things. It's interdependent. And, if you recognize interdependence, then you recognize compassion, because you realize we're not in this alone. If someone is hurting that means I am hurting, and the sense of kinship and connection emerges.

In Zen training, we give rise to the question, "What am I?" Zen practice is essentially understanding my true nature, my true self. What am I? If you raise that question, immediately you are face to face with the state of mind that does not know. What is the essence of this "I"? All day long, I'm using the word "I" this, "I" that, "I" the other thing, but what does the word "I" refer to? As soon as you try to look for it, you're left with a big question mark. *Don't know.* You have just that mind, that actual experience of that moment of not knowing. And that not knowing is your original self before thought, before words, before ideas.

That not knowing is open. Why? "Clear like space" is clear like a mirror, so if red is coming at the moment, it totally just reflects red. If white is coming, it totally just reflects white. From that standpoint, the reflective mind is the mind that is responsive to the situation at hand, the mind that is involved in clear functioning. It is the mind that is capable of compassionate activity, because it is not holding anything in a limited way. It's like a mirror, reflecting and becoming one with the situation at hand. Morality, or right and wrong, or good and bad, are perceived in relationship to that moment. What is correct in the moment? If you're not holding a limited notion of anything, then you can perceive what is correct in this moment. What is my correct function right now? What is my correct situation right now? What is my correct condition right now? It doesn't come out of a preconception; it comes out of a responsiveness to the situation. But that can only occur if you let everything go and have that clear-like-space mind, mirror-like, just reflective.

But this letting go of knowing can produce a lot of fear. One old Zen Master said, "It's like when standing on top of the flagpole, 100 feet in the air, how will you take one step forward?" Letting go of all this knowing feels like stepping off a flagpole 100 feet high in the air, and — pkshhh! — that's the imagined sense because the whole world as we know it is organized around our experience and how we've categorized it. This is this, that is that, or this in relationship to that, etc., etc., etc. The whole world comes into being for us in relationship to categories that we have developed over a lifetime, or if you believe in reincarnation, over many lifetimes. If you let go and enter the realm of unknowing, at that moment fear arises because knowing is security.

If you think you know something, then you feel secure at that moment. The world is as it should be, because you know what it is. But the minute you enter the realm of not knowing, you give up that security and enter into the borderline of going beyond knowing. At that point vitality can emerge, because it's not being limited by what's known. But vitality that's not supported from within turns to anxiety. The physical experience of anxiety is a kind of narrowing down of the chest and not getting enough air at the moment. But if you can experience uncertainty without narrowing down, by getting enough support from your center of gravity and recognizing that you have eyes, you have ears, you have tongue, you have body, you have mind, you have orientation, you have all these things, then —POW! — you can just perceive without having to know beforehand.

I'm talking ideally here. Obviously, this is an ability that develops. But, we set up all these categories, all these knowings, as a way of securing our ground. Of course, it's necessary to have categories and to know things and to think about things in certain ways. That's not the problem. Knowing, or thinking, is not the problem. It's clinging to the knowing as if our lives depended on it, as if we were sitting on a flagpole 100 feet in the air, clinging to the known and rejecting the possibility of stepping beyond it at that moment. That's the difficulty. Clinging. Attachment. Holding something and declining that step beyond is the real issue at hand. The step beyond is the step of non-knowing. It is beyond knowing. If you step beyond the

categories of non-knowing and knowing, then what emerges? Something that is neither known, nor not known. Something that neither appears nor disappears. That's why in the Heart Sutra it says no appearance, no disappearance, no purity, no impurity. Stepping beyond all opposite categories just means coming to the realization of what *is*. And the most profound transcendental experience is the most simple fact of what *is*.

How do we perceive what is, moment-by-moment-by-moment? Do we perceive what we are doing, moment-by-moment-by-moment? If we're resenting, do we perceive that in this moment? If we're pressuring ourselves, do we perceive that in this moment? If we're making ourselves afraid in some way, do we perceive that in this moment? How are we killing ourselves in this moment? How are we hesitating from taking one step forward off the flagpole 100 feet in the air? Out of embarrassment? Out of fear of humiliation? Out of fear of failure? Out of fear of being able to negotiate the next step? Little children do not have the same difficulty. Watch them when they start to walk. They get up, take one step, then another. They plop down, get up, walk some more. That's it. It's no big deal.

That's why we have to perceive that "not holding" mind, not holding so tightly to our ideas about what's going to happen next. That's why in the Heart Sutra it says, "When the Bodhisattva perceives that all five skandhas are empty, he is saved from all suffering and distress." Then there is no hindrance and no fear. If you see that all five skandhas are empty, that you are not a self-sufficient independent being at war with your surroundings, then there is not so much to guard here as you thought. There is not so much to secure. Then you can more readily go with what *is* without fear, without resentment.

That's why we practice, to get established and develop some degree of relaxed steadiness of mind. But that isn't the end that we're practicing for. That's just something you need in the practice. Essentially, the point is that original mind, mind which is before thinking, is *already* relaxed, is *already* clear, is *already* radiant and perceptive, so it isn't so much a matter of developing those qualities as a matter of returning to our original self, which *is* essentially those qualities. That's the deeper meaning of "even before the donkey has left, the horse has already arrived." Even to say it's "those" qualities is to put some label on it. It's something that is before labelling. But things such as relaxation or calmness or clarity are not things that you're practicing to develop, from the Zen Buddhist standpoint. Those things are the actual essence of mind energy, and are there the moment you let go of conditioning, clinging to a situation, clinging to an opinion, clinging to ideas.

It helps to understand that all this conceptual framework — good and bad, right and wrong, should and should not — comes from parental and authority figures. So Hui Neng, Sixth Patriarch, asks, "When you don't make good and bad, at the moment, what is your original face before your parents were even born?" Don't think that's something in the past, before your parents were born. At every moment that we get hooked onto the train of making opposites, making conceptual referents, holding opinions, that is giving birth to our parents. Time goes back-

wards, not forward. It goes from present to past. Any moment when we begin to get caught in some chain of associations, and rights and wrongs, and shoulds and should nots, and judgments, and seeing ourselves or the world in limited ways, then that moment is giving birth to our parents. So Zen means becoming an orphan.

At any moment, when you don't make good and bad, what is your original face before your parents were born? Original face means empty, like a mirror. That's why many Zen illustrations use this empty circle. That means empty and simultaneously full. Empty and simultaneously complete, whole. Totality is there in that moment. Meditation is to perceive that, to be with that, then to use that. So how will you know when you've seen the five skandhas face to face? You'll know when you recognize your original face before your parents were born.

Richard Shrobe is a Gestalt therapist in New York City, where he lives with his family. He is Abbot of Chogye International Zen Center of New York. Compiled from talks at Cambridge Zen Center, November, 1986, and Chogye International Zen Center of New York, December 1988 and January 1989.

What is this?

Gray Dharma caterpillar
12 pairs of legs clomp, clomp, clomp, clomp
through the dharma room and out onto the deck
eating everything in sight:

thinking thinking legs hurting
kimchee cricket sounds
da wonderful soups of Do Won
branches stirring up the wind

sitting walking eating sleeping
through days and weeks and months
while leaves turn red and fall
and snow covers the ground

over and over again until nothing
but a Buddha in the night sky
that looks like a Pillsbury doughboy
that eats the dharma caterpillar

burps up — butterflies
with blue black wings and lapis lazuli spots
that skywrites:
WHAT IS THIS?

*David Jordan
Diamond Hill Zen Monastery
Summer Kyol Che, 1989*

Motivations for Practice: Three Personal Odysseys

An important part of Zen training in the Kwan Um Zen School is the taking of Ten Precepts. Taking these precepts makes one a Dharma Teacher in the sangha. To be approved as a Dharma Teacher, the individual (who has previously taken the Five Precepts and become a student in the School) must write a short essay on his or her motivations for practice. Three such articles follow; all three individuals became Dharma Teachers in August, 1989.

From Guest to Host

by Bruce Blair

It is a bright summer afternoon. I've just finished mowing the lawn. While mowing the lawn, I stopped to talk to John, a neighbor across the street, about transplanting tiger lilies. We also talked about summer pinks, and California poppies. It is a bright sunny summer afternoon. Tiger lilies, summer pinks, and California poppies are blooming. Neighbors are talking. The motive for practicing Zen?

On a sunny afternoon, much like this one, nine years ago, I bumped into Erik Berall downtown. I'd first met Erik (*Ed: now Mu Ryang Sunim*) during my freshman year — before he'd taken off to live with a guru, and I'd taken off to live on a beach in Alaska. He explained that he was living at the New Haven Zen Center and invited me to come to practice. I'd heard rumor of the Zen Center in a philosophy class semesters before, but I'd been told it was Korean. Having lived in Japan for a year as an exchange student, my prejudices were set: Korean meant second class. My bigotry got the better of me for two years.

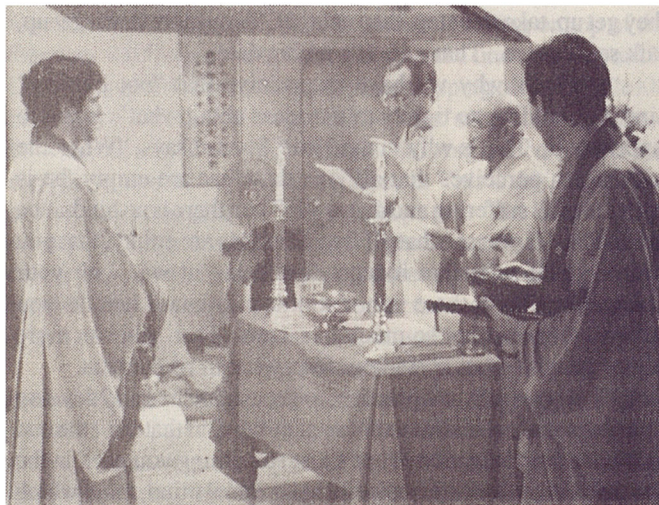
While in Japan, I'd spent endless hours wandering in the mountains that surrounded my home, visiting temples with my host father. Living in a profoundly foreign culture, I had been touched by experiences I didn't know how to name. Returning, I yearned for a way to recreate the wonder and the vitality I had known there. At the same time, I found popularized attempts at Eastern Spirituality unappealing. While wandering around the U.S., I spent several days at Green Gulch, the San Francisco Zen Center's farm in Marin County, and was surprised by its integrity. But that was in California. This was Connecticut. And this was said to be Korean Zen.

I was suffering. Hurting. Confused. My world was out of control. And I was frightened. And very angry. Whenever I stopped running, all that I had thought stable reeled around in my head. Heartbroken over a lost love. Worried about my parents' troubles, and obsessed with my own. I was lost. And fast falling apart. I took Erik up on his invitation.

Sitting in the Dharma Room, I found that the world stopped spinning. Emotions subsided. At first, upon leaving the Zen Center, I immediately got all caught up in my suffering again. But gradually a clearing began to open. The world kept turning, but I was able to let go and let it spin a little on its own. I learned to stop squirming. The clearing broadened. Lasted longer. I'd leave the Zen Center and things would be O.K. for a while. I'd smell the breeze. Listen to evening emerge. And only then begin to sputter. And crash. Returning again and again to the Dharma

Room, and my cushion.

That fall, I moved into the Zen Center. Remembered, the move now appears as a necessity born of desperation. I don't know how I would have coped if I hadn't. Formal practice got me up in the morning and brought me home at night. It got me

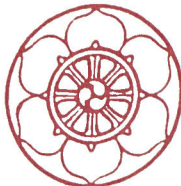


Bruce Blair (left) at the Precepts Ceremony.

through each day. But it was a private practice. I was practicing to save my life, much as a child might run to escape a monster. But just as the child eventually turns to realize that the monster is gone — only an illusion, so too, I turned to find that the pain was gone. And as the pain subsided, so too did my initial enthusiasm for practice. I wasn't hurting. I didn't need it. During exams the following spring, I started pulling all-nighters in the library, dozing off just before dawn. After repeated warnings, I was thrown out of the Zen Center for failing to make it home for bows.

I moved several houses down the street, returning for retreats and an occasional practice, but eventually as I filled my life with other things, I put formal practice behind me. I filled my emptiness with work: First advocacy with alcoholics and drug addicts; then I worked for several years at a shelter for homeless men and women; and then I started working for the state finding permanent housing for the homeless families. I worked long and hard to fill the emptiness. But after five years, I began to realize

Continued on page 18

Kwan Um  **Zen School**

**First Annual
Winter Sangha Weekend
December 8 - 10, 1989
at Providence Zen Center**

Opening Program Friday, December 8, 1989 7:30 p.m.

Chi Kung Soen Yu

Spiritual Energy

Jacob Perl, JDPSN and Bob Moore, JDPSN

Buddha's Enlightenment Day Ceremony

Saturday, December 9, 1989 2:00 p.m.

Teaching Workshops Saturday and Sunday

Intimacy, the Heart of Zen

Robert Genthner, JDPSN

Perceiving Dreams

Richard Shrobe, JDPSN

Practice as a Refuge

Barbara Rhodes, JDPSN

Concentration and Wisdom

George Bowman, JDPSN

Together Practice Evening Entertainment
Panel Discussion on **Outreach and Community Building**

For more information and to register:

Kwan Um Zen School, 528 Pound Road, Cumberland RI 02864

(401) 658-1476

Discount for registration by November 24, 1989

Providence Zen Center

Yong Maeng Jong Jin Retreats

Three Day November 3 - 5, 1989
Seven Day December 11 - 17, 1989
Three Day January 5 - 7, 1990
Three Day March 2 - 4, 1990
Seven Day April 9 - 15, 1990

A Yong Maeng Jong Jin ("to leap like a tiger while sitting") is a time of sustained meditation, an opportunity to simplify our lives. These silent retreats are conducted regularly at the serene country setting of Providence Zen Center.

The daily schedule includes sitting, chanting, walking, and bowing meditations as well as work practice. Vegetarian meals are eaten in silence in traditional temple style. Talks and daily interviews are given by the retreat leader. For the three-day retreats, minimum participation is one full day. For the seven-day retreats, minimum participation is two full days.

The leaders, entry dates and times for each retreat are as follows (please specify on registration form):

Three Day Yong Maeng Jong Jin with **RICHARD SHROBE, JDPSN**

Entry Thursday, November 2, 1989 at 7:00 p.m.
Entry Friday, November 3, 1989 at 6:00 p.m.
Entry Saturday, November 4, 1989 at 4:30 p.m.
Retreat ends Sunday, November 5, 1989 late afternoon

Seven Day Yong Maeng Jong Jin with **JACOB PERL, JDPSN**

Entry Monday, December 11, 1989 at 10:00 a.m.
Entry Wednesday, December 13, 1989 at 6:00 p.m.
Entry Friday, December 15, 1989 at 6:00 p.m.
Retreat ends Sunday, December 17, 1989 late afternoon

Three Day Yong Maeng Jong Jin with **JACOB PERL, JDPSN**

Entry Thursday, January 4, 1990 at 7:00 p.m.
Entry Friday, January 5, 1990 at 6:00 p.m.
Entry Saturday, January 6, 1990 at 4:30 p.m.
Retreat ends Sunday, January 7, 1990 late afternoon

Three Day Yong Maeng Jong Jin with **GEORGE BOWMAN, JDPSN**

Entry Thursday, March 1, 1990 at 7:00 p.m.
Entry Friday, March 2, 1990 at 6:00 p.m.
Entry Saturday, March 3, 1990 at 4:30 p.m.
Retreat ends Sunday, March 4, 1990 late afternoon

Seven Day Yong Maeng Jong Jin with **ZEN MASTER SEUNG SAHN**

Entry Monday, April 9, 1990 at 10:00 a.m.
Entry Wednesday, April 11, 1990 at 6:00 p.m.
Entry Friday, April 13, 1990 at 6:00 p.m.
Retreat ends Sunday, April 15, 1990 late afternoon

\$35.00 per day (\$22.00 Kwan Um Zen School members).

Long Kyol Che Retreats

A Kyol Che ("coming together") is an intensive meditation retreat held summer and winter. Kyol Che training is a powerful tool for enriching our lives with greater clarity and direction. Kyol Che is an important opportunity to look intimately at what is happening in our lives; it is a time when all of our energies, under the guidance of a teacher, are devoted to deepening and clarifying the meaning of what it is to be human.

Kyol Che is modeled after the traditional Korean retreat in which Zen monks and nuns sit together for 90 days in the mountain temples. Conducted in silence, the daily schedule includes sitting, chanting, walking, and bowing meditations, as well as work practice. Meals are eaten in silence in traditional temple style.

Kyol Che is suitable primarily for students with a background in Zen or Vipassana meditation retreats, or who have already developed a strong personal meditation practice.

Winter Kyol Che

January 2 - March 30, 1990

BARBARA RHODES, JDPSN, will lead Winter Kyol Che 1990. She will give kong-an teaching interviews three times a week, and a weekly Dharma talk. Participation in Winter Kyol Che can be up to three months, in segments of one week, with a minimum of two weeks. There is an Intensive Week, February 10 - 16; participation is limited to those who have previously sat retreats, or who have entered by January 26. Entry dates and times are as follows (please specify on registration form):

Entry Tuesday, January 2 at 10:00 a.m.
Entry Friday, January 12 at 4:30 p.m.
Entry Friday, January 26 at 4:30 p.m.
Entry Friday, February 9 at 4:30 p.m. (no new students)
Entry Friday, February 16 at 4:30 p.m.
Entry Friday, March 2 at 4:30 p.m.
Entry Friday, March 16 at 4:30 p.m.
Retreat Ends Friday, March 30 late afternoon.

\$210.00 per week (\$130.00 Kwan Um Zen School Members)
\$1500.00 full retreat (\$1300.00 Kwan Um Zen School Members)

Summer Kyol Che

July 24 - August 12, 1990

MU DEUNG SUNIM, JDPSN will lead Summer Kyol Che 1990. Participation in Summer Kyol Che can be up to three weeks, with a minimum of three days. Entry is July 24 at 10:00 a.m., and each Friday and Monday during the retreat at 4:30 p.m. Retreat Ends Sunday, August 12 late afternoon.

\$35.00 per day (\$22.00 Kwan Um Zen School Members)
\$210.00 per week (\$130.00 Kwan Um Zen School Members)
\$595.00 full retreat (\$375.00 Kwan Um Zen School Members)

“Introduction to Zen” Workshops

The “Introduction to Zen” Workshop is a three-part series designed to introduce the beginning student to basic Zen philosophy, history, and practice methods.

Over two or three successive Sunday mornings, you will participate in group discussions and actual Zen practice sessions involving sitting, walking, and chanting meditations. This workshop is designed to give you a firm foundation in Zen practice, and to help you develop a regular meditation practice at home. Some sessions include a public talk and a vegetarian buffet lunch.

Fall Workshop: November 12, 19, and 26, 1989

Winter Workshop: January 14 and 21, 1990

Spring Workshop: March 11, 18, and 25, 1990

\$45.00 for the workshop (\$30 Kwan Um Zen School members)

Other Programs

Providence Zen Center sponsors many other events, including daily meditation practice, beginner practice orientation, kong-an teaching interviews, public talks and tours, morning meditation sittings, and workshops and conferences on a variety of subjects. For a complete information package, and to receive our quarterly catalog, return the coupon below or call (401) 658-1464.

Summer Training Period

A very useful tool in the practice of Zen is “together action” . . . meditating, working, and living with others. This allows us to see more clearly our habits of mind and how strongly they can control us. The student learns to uncover the stable, still space within themselves. From this spontaneously emerge clarity of mind, compassion towards others, and wisdom of action.

Providence Zen Center's 1990 Training Period has been planned to provide both the beginning and advanced student with intensive experiences in the various forms of Zen practice. . . sitting, walking, chanting, and bowing meditations; work practice and kong-an teaching interviews; all with the support of a group acting together. Included will be talks on Buddhist teaching and history, discussion groups, and related field trips.

You can participate in the full thirteen days of the Summer Training Period or either the first half or second half. The full Summer Training Period will include registration in three one-day programs during the period: a workshop, a Work as Spiritual Practice day, and a Kido (chanting retreat).

A list of teachers and a complete schedule of the Training Period will be available in March.

June 16, 1990 through June 28, 1990.

Full program \$450.00 (Kwan Um Zen School Members \$300.00).

June 16 through June 22 *or* June 22 through June 28.

Half program \$250.00 (Kwan Um Zen School Members \$175.00).


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Registration

- Yong Maeng Jong Jin Retreat November 3 - 5, 1989
Entry __ Thurs. 7:00 pm __ Fri. 6:00 pm __ Sat. 4:30 p.m
- Introduction to Zen Workshop series November 12, 19, 26
- Yong Maeng Jong Jin Retreat December 11 - 17, 1989
Entry: __ Mon. 10:00 am __ Wed. 6 p.m. __ Fri. 6 p.m
- Winter Kyol Che Retreat January 2 - March 30, 1990
Two week minimum participation
Entry & exit dates (see description) _____
- Yong Maeng Jong Jin Retreat January 5 - 7, 1990
Entry __ Thurs. 7:00 pm __ Fri. 6:00 pm __ Sat. 4:30 p.m
- Introduction to Zen Workshop series January 14 and 21, 1990
- Yong Maeng Jong Jin Retreat March 2 - 4, 1990
Entry __ Thurs. 7:00 pm __ Fri. 6:00 pm __ Sat. 4:30 p.m
- Introduction to Zen Workshop series March 11, 18, and 25
- Yong Maeng Jong Jin Retreat April 9 - 15, 1990
Entry: __ Mon. 10:00 am __ Wed. 6 p.m. __ Fri. 6 p.m
- Summer Training Period June 16 - 28, 1990
__ Full Period __ First Half __ Second Half
- Summer Kyol Che Retreat July 24 - August 12, 1990
Three day minimum participation
Entry & exit dates (see description) _____

TOTAL AMOUNT ENCLOSED. \$ _____

Continued from page 14

that I couldn't do it. Tired and burnt out, I started riding my bicycle back across town for morning practice. Shortly after, I went to an intensive week of Winter Kyol Che. I came out for three weeks, and then went back for more. When summer came, I moved back into the Zen Center. Here I remain.

But as I turn to give this answer, or first turn to listen to the answer already given, and the memories conjured, I hear a certain meanness, a disbelief, an astonished, and fearful asking, "Things weren't really that bad, were they?" "Was that really you?" "Be honest!"

Within this asking an affirmation emerges, that yes, that suffering was and remains mine, was and is me. But packed within this answering is a sense of "not knowing". Pushing to the edge of honesty, I am forced to acknowledge that I do not know why I practice Zen. I did. Perhaps. But I don't anymore. While once the answer would have been, "I practiced because it kills my pain," or because "it keeps me from killing myself"; I now find that the closest thing to an answer is something like, "I practice because I am Bruce Blair." The practice is who I am. "I practice because, when the alarm clock rings, it's time to go downstairs to bow," Or, "the tiger lilies are blossoming; talk to John." In a sense, the motive for my practicing Zen is simply a consequence of my being who I am as a human being. And while this all begins to sound a bit sophomoric, and practicing to save myself from suffering remains a motive, just as the initial sense of clearing broadened, so too has the scope of my intent.

It is here that rhetoric begins to emerge as experience. Each morning we vow to "save all beings from suffering".

Within the context of experience this has come to be an affirmation of a newfound faith that "healing occurs". As I sit, simply sit, and allow myself to open to awareness, letting the thoughts and feelings come and go, healing happens. It is not something that I do. It occurs of its own accord.

Change occurs. I find myself surprised by who I am. By this faith, I find myself enabled to recognize and acknowledge suffering long buried or ignored, my own and others. And in doing so, I am able to be more fully present to myself and others. Not only in moments of hurt, but in moments of hilarity as well. "Getting down," "loosening up", I find the practice throwing me within the suffering currents of life rather than leaving me sitting, squirming at its edge, thinking about it, or with toe outstretched, checking it out, too hot, or too cold, and always too wet.

From this standpoint of affirmation, wet and refreshed, I'm inclined to invite others to join in. The practice is precious. But how to share it? How to make it accessible? Erik is now a monk. I am now the Abbot of the Zen Center. As such, I see my role as that of host. My job is to see to it that people feel at home here. The task is obviously more than simply getting people to come to the Dharma Room to sit. The question is, "What can I do to bring people to find a practice that heals?" It is a bright sunny summer afternoon. Tiger lilies, summer pinks, and California poppies are blooming. Neighbors are talking. A breeze is blowing. The motive for practicing Zen?

Bruce Blair is the Abbot of New Haven Zen Center, where he lives. He is self-employed, placing homeless families throughout the state.

Pushing Away is a Form of Contact

by Jan Potemkin

Since my first visit to a Zen Center, I have resisted formal involvement with the Zen "organization". I did not become a member for many years, and for many more did not take five precepts. Now, at the point of becoming a Dharma Teacher, I feel the need to examine this hesitation and the consequences of holding back my commitment as far as the whole group of people who practice together. Also, I hope to clarify in my mind how becoming a Dharma Teacher will affect my relationship with the Sangha.

What is the impulse to resist involvement? I imagined some sort of freedom that would be lost with commitment to a set form. Not only would I be saddled with various responsibilities of attendance and activities, I would be giving up the possibility of reaching my goals of personal growth and integration on my own, without the crutch of a formal system. I felt that there was freedom in being without the responsibility of being a "member" of something.

And my practice has continued to waver between commitment and pushing away from it. My involvement with the

Chogye International Zen Center of New York has been sporadic. For a while, I'll come very often, and then hardly at all. I'll



Jan Potemkin (left) receiving the Ten Precepts.

engage in some special practice for a time and then move away from practicing except for some sitting at home. This winter I did a 100 day "retreat" at the Zen Center — I came to evening practice every night for 100 nights. At first, there was an exhilaration about being there, as if it was going to accomplish something remarkable. But after a few days, it was just simply being there at 6:30 night after night.

A few people knew or realized what I was doing, but for the most part I was just a person who seemed to be there a lot. But that sense of seeing someone who was showing commitment helped everyone to some extent. I noticed some effects of my increased practice at work or at home, but nothing exceptional. At the end, Nina Davis, the Director of the Zen Center, gave me a beautiful card with the message "Thank you for your effort." I think this sums up nicely the idea that people are helped by seeing someone else trying.

On the 101st day, it was strange to find myself elsewhere. There was a giddy feeling of openness and vulnerability, as if anything might happen. At first I decided I would keep going to the Zen Center unless I had something important to do. But after a while, I wasn't going very much at all. The startling feeling of just being somewhere at 6:30 soon faded into a monotony of being on the same old living room couch.

And soon I wasn't coming to the Zen Center much at all. And in the several weeks since, this pushing away has persisted. As much as I was a presence in the Zen Center earlier, I became an absence. To the degree I was helpful to others in showing commitment, my absence probably affected their practice in a negative way.

So, in some unexpected way, I have come to abandon the notion of freedom that comes from non-involvement. Instead, I have become aware of the effect my own practice has on those around me. To my surprise, I have become part of the "organization" that I did not want to become part of. Pushing away is a form of contact, I guess.

So now that this consciousness and responsibility is somehow stuck to me, despite pushing away, I have to decide what to do about it. Throughout my practice, from the beginning, the idea of working to help others has felt like something very difficult, some grand achievement far beyond my concern with my own practice and development. Practice has always been for me a kind of deep self-inspection, an examination over and over again of motivations and emotions and fears.

In fact, the "freedom" that I kept escaping to seems to be more than anything a way of maintaining this cycle of self-examination. And it is an examination that doesn't lead to action, but rather to more and more thinking, the "checking mind" busy at work. But the simple act of going to the Zen Center for 100 nights didn't have any reason or motivation, no special reason for night 34 or 78. I just opened the door and went in.

In that way, I decided to become a Dharma Teacher. The checking mind has been active in making that decision, but I have known all along that becoming a Dharma Teacher is not a resolution of that mind or an ending of it, as if making the decision would somehow remove the energy of self-doubt. So I will probably check right until the moment of the ceremony, and then after the ceremony I will check again. But I want to just stand up and simply be a Dharma Teacher. With all the checking, I think that decision was made a long time ago, anyway. And in the way that my presence made a difference to the sangha's practice this winter, I hope my new role as Dharma Teacher has a positive effect in some way on the practice of my friends at the Zen Center. I can understand that form of helping, and I can do it, and I hope other ways of helping emerge.

Jan Potemkin practices law in New York City. He is a member of the Chogyu International Zen Center of New York.



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Aryaloka Retreat and Study Center is part of a growing Buddhist movement, the Friends of the Western Buddhist Order. Founded in London in 1967 by the Ven. Maha Sthavira Sangharakshita, the F.W.B.O. now has some 40 centers throughout the world, in the United Kingdom, Europe, India, South-East Asia, Australasia and the United States.

Aryaloka, situated on thirteen acres of woodland, houses a residential community as well as two cooperative businesses which contribute to the center's financial support. Classes are offered to the public almost every evening of the week. Besides meditation, the schedule includes T'ai Chi, yoga and massage. Aryaloka also has a regular schedule of day, weekend and longer retreats and space for visitors wishing to make an extended stay. Retreats are led by members of the Western Buddhist Order.

Upcoming Events

Oct. 28-29 Image and Symbol
In Spiritual Life
Nov. 23-26 Meditation Intensive
Dec. 22-Jan. 1 Winter Retreat

Paying Attention The Practice Volume 1

The first in a new series of videotapes from The Very Center which clearly and simply explains what attention practice (zazen) is and why it's important.

This videotape is helpful for beginners because it describes and demonstrates various forms of practice. It may also be helpful for people interested in understanding practice from a conventional scientific perspective. It describes the two most important functions of mind and explains how practice changes what people perceive and, more importantly, how practice changes people.

Approximate time: 25 minutes.

To order a copy, please send \$19.95 plus \$1.50 for postage and handling to:



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Face to Face with Suffering

by Ralph Hendrix

In my youth I was an angry young man. My experience in the Catholic church and with racism in America made me susceptible to Marxist and atheist propaganda. From the tender age of seventeen until my thirty-third year, Marxism and atheism were the philosophical pillars of my world outlook.

The 1960s was a decade of turbulence and extremes. I was very much influenced by the assassinations of Malcom X, the Kennedys and Martin Luther King. I had refused to be drafted into the Vietnam War. It seemed that only extreme measures would turn this country around.

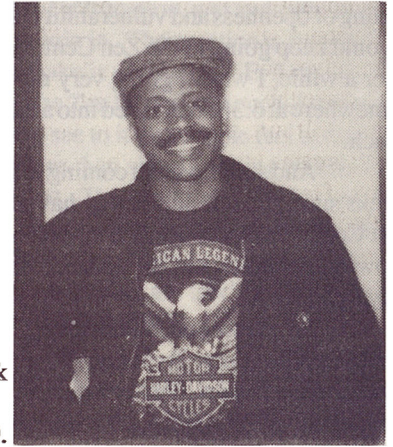
I entered the 1970s with a broken marriage. It was an era of sex, drugs and rock and roll, and self pity. It was not all bad. In spite of the drugs and booze I was able to get my high school diploma and do a year of college. By the end of the 70s I began to modify my drug use, change my diet, and get into running. I began the 80s in the best physical health of my life. Meanwhile the allure of Marxism was wearing thin. Events like the "Cultural Revolution" in China were leading me to abandon Marxism as a personal philosophy. My relationship with Marxists I once held in high regard had deteriorated. I no longer believed them or trusted them. In short, I was disillusioned.

In 1981, my younger sister died in her sleep. This was the first time death had touched someone so close to me. My grief was great. It was Christmas eve. My sister and I had been very close in the years when we were growing up. She was born retarded. I used to look after her and my brother while my parents worked.

The death of my sister made me realize that atheism was a reaction to my negative experience of Christianity, rather than an outright rejection of "God" or spirituality. Hence, another disillusionment. So I began the decade of the 80s disillusioned, depressed and seemingly without hope. Many events would add to these negative feelings: unemployment, my mother's deteriorating health due to strokes, my father's alcoholism, my best friend contracting and eventually dying of cancer. The one thing that has remained constant throughout this decade has been my search for truth and a means to express myself spiritually.

This search began intellectually. I began to read everything I could get my hands on that referred to the religions of the east: Hinduism, Buddhism, Taoism. I even studied Rastafari and Santaria. Eventually I found my way to the Himalayan Institute, where I took two introduction to meditation classes and began taking part in the open group meditation every Wednesday. In December of 1984 I landed a full time job and could no longer practice at the Institute, but by now my gut told me that meditation was the way to go. Meditation was helping me to be more calm, relaxed, and more at peace with myself. But, I needed a group to help me maintain my practice. Since I was mainly interested in Taoism and Zen, I was determined to find one of these traditions to practice with. My search led me to Chogye International Zen Center.

From January 1985 to January 1986, I practiced regularly at the Zen Center and also participated in weekend retreats and one-day sittings. In August of 1986 I took the five precepts. In my first year at Chogye I was suffering a lot both physically and emotionally and I came face to face with it. It has taken me until this year, 1989, to be able to have some control over my life and the source of my suffering (my mind). After having been a member of the Zen Center for more than four years, I can say that I have benefitted positively from this relationship.



Ralph Hendrix, who took Dharma Teacher precepts in August, 1989.

Three things have never failed me in times of difficulty and emotional upheaval. The Sangha, with their warmth, sincerity, and lack of fanaticism have always been supportive and helped me to understand the teachings of Zen Master Seung Sahn. Zen Master Seung Sahn's teachings have helped to regain my center when my emotions lead me astray. The Practice has given me a positive and creative outlet to help me rise above my negative tendencies. My anger is dissolved, my sorrow is easier to bear, my ignorance is more apparent. This is my motivation for practicing Zen.

Ralph Hendrix is a resident at Chogye International Zen Center of New York City; he is currently studying to practice massage.

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Long Retreats: Anchor to Our Practice

A talk by Mu Soeng Sunim at Providence Zen Center on February 12, 1989.

In talking about long retreats, or meditation, it is important to remember that one can at best talk only about one's own experiences. In the last five years I have had the opportunity to sit three-month long retreats each winter and summer, so that's a place to start, but each person's experience of a long retreat is unique and different from any one else's experience. At the same time there is a certain commonality of elements so that two persons sharing the same experience can understand what the other is talking about. It is these common elements, in themselves nourishing and nurturing, which have inspired and motivated people to undertake the rigorous long-retreat practice in each succeeding generation.

It might be useful to know a little bit about how the tradition of these retreats came into being in the history of Buddhism. The Buddha's lifestyle, for 45 years of teaching after his enlightenment, was that of a wandering monk. He never settled down in one single place although there were cities and towns where he returned to teach more regularly. The only time his travels were brought to a stop was during the three months of monsoon season when road conditions made travel impossible. During this period the Buddha would settle down in one place along with all the disciples who were traveling with him to wait out the rains. During these three months the Buddha would expound the Dharma to the disciples every day and answer their questions. After his monk-disciples had stayed with him for one or two "rains" the Buddha would encourage them to go out and spread the Dharma on their own. As a result soon there were a large number of monks traveling all over the sub-

*Patience, perseverance, faith, motivation
— these are both the journey and the
fruit that come out of a three-month
long retreat.*

continent of India, either singly or in pairs. During their own travels these monks, too, encountered the hazardous conditions of a monsoon season; so a number of monks would find a place in each region to stay put during the monsoon season, and use these three months as a time for intense personal practice. In the beginning the institution of a monsoon retreat was marginal and not very tightly formulated. Eventually these monsoon retreats came to be institutionalized and structured; a whole body of rules and regulations governing these retreats came into place.

The history of long retreats in China, especially Zen retreats, is not very clear. But in the Korean tradition these retreats have been an integral part of the training of Zen monks at least in this century. It seems reasonable to assume that during the five hundred years of persecution of Buddhism in Korea (the fourteenth through the nineteenth centuries), when the Zen monks stayed deep into the mountains, they must have had some structure of long retreats to sustain them in their isolation. When Korean Buddhism was revived in the early part of this century by Zen Master Kyong Ho, it was also a time of revival of the institution of long retreats; this was done most prominently by two of Zen Master Kyong Ho's foremost

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disciples, Zen Master Mang Gong and Zen Master Han Am. The establishment of Diamond Hill Zen Monastery here in Rhode Island has been a wonderful opportunity for both monks and lay people to connect with our lineage and our tradition through a long retreat each winter and summer. Our teacher, Zen Master Seung Sahn, did his early monastic training at Su Dok Sa and Jung Hae Sa, which were temples where Zen Master Mang Gong taught until his death in 1946.

A word about the connotation of the term “retreat”: when a person who has no familiarity with spiritual tradition hears the word “retreat”, it has the connotation of escaping from something. In military parlance, the term “retreat” is synonymous with a general being defeated and withdrawing from the battlefield. So there’s a negative connotation in the popular mind about the word “retreat”. When we look at the word itself we find it has two parts: “re” and “treat”. “Re” means again or one more time; so it means treating ourselves one more time to something. Treating ourselves means taking care of ourselves with kindness and compassion. So a long retreat is a time for reconditioning, reformation, transformation.

The other day several of us were watching a video of Joseph Campbell’s talks with Bill Moyers, from the PBS series. They were talking about myths and the influence of myths on our consciousness. Very early in the video Moyers asked Campbell, “How does the consciousness get transformed?” That’s a very important, key question: How does the consciousness get transformed? Throughout history, different traditions have employed different techniques to bring about a transformation in consciousness. Christianity offers a very clear example of this process: it holds that whatever transformation comes about in an individual consciousness comes from God, comes from outside. Many traditions have some kind of prescription about somebody or something doing it for you from outside.

Last week, I had a visit from a friend of mine whom I had not seen in six years. I knew him ten years ago in the early days of my practice; he was the kind of person who would go from one

I then asked him what exactly was the practice he was doing and, with a flourish, he pointed to the framed picture of his teacher and announced, “HE is my practice.” That was practically the end of the conversation for me. I don’t know anything about his teacher or what this guy did for him but, according to what my friend was telling me about his own life, he was going through a tough time, he had been divorced and was in a bad space. During this difficult time, he started seeing this “teacher” and maybe this teacher said certain things that were helpful to him and created some opening for him. That’s one way of relating to how the consciousness gets transformed.

Zen retreats are a very different kind of process. The tradition of Zen does not depend on any outside power. You have to work with yourself, within yourself, and ultimately what you are left with is your own effort and your own motivation. What you get out of a retreat is how much you apply yourself to transforming your consciousness. You cannot shift the responsibility to someone or something else.

Why do we need to work on our consciousness at all? The basic Buddhist teaching is that our suffering comes from our conditioning. Without understanding this conditioning, it is not possible to get out of the realm of suffering. When we look at the culture all around us, what we see happening to children is that from the age of six months or so, they are put in front of the television and the parents leave, becoming either physically or emotionally unavailable to these kids. Both parents are working and go on to live their own lives. So all the conditioning the child is getting is from whatever goes on the TV, through commercials, through the themes of violence and “getting my way” and “it’s okay to walk all over other people as long it gets you a buck”. The bombardment of these messages is so heavy and insistent, on subtle and gross levels, that children have no tool or training to sort out for themselves what it’s doing to them. When a whole society becomes a victim of this kind of conditioning, it produces a certain kind of adults — teachers, doctors, lawyers, leaders of the business community — who have no idea of who they are or any deep sense of what it means to be human.

In older, traditional societies, there were built-in rituals, like the Vision Quests in the Native American traditions, where people took time to reflect on these very intimate questions about human existence. In our culture, the bombardment of trivial and manipulative information is so insistent there is no time to get away from it. People end up pursuing one sensual experience after another, hoping that the next experience will do it for them, and give them pleasure that will last forever. Of course, this never happens and the search for pleasurable experiences never stops. In this kind of search, the tendency is to get away from any kind of negative experiences — pain, confusion and sorrow, and pursue the pleasurable; thus our whole existence becomes a rollercoaster of grasping and aversion. As a result, there is no real understanding of what’s going on in our lives, especially at deeper levels. When we go into a long retreat, especially three months or longer, it becomes the first time for many of us that we don’t have this bombardment from outside; in the silence of a long retreat, we are forced to deal with the accumulated junk of

*He pointed to the framed picture
of his teacher and announced,
“HE is my practice.”*

practice to another — sometimes Zen, sometimes Vipassana, sometimes Tibetan Buddhism; not any real serious practice, maybe two or three short retreats a year. But he could stay up all night and talk about “spirituality”. So he called me a few weeks ago and told me he was now living in Boston. I invited him to come visit the Zen Center and he came last week. We were just talking like old friends about what he was doing in Boston, things like that. He told me he was living with a group of people and they were all students of a teacher (a young Westerner) who had attained some kind of enlightenment in India. My friend had framed pictures of his teacher with him and showed these to me.

our minds.

A long retreat is a very powerful tool, and hopefully what comes of this training is what Zen Master Seung Sahn calls "mind-sitting". His teaching style is an echo of ancient Chinese patriarchs of Ch'an. The Sixth Patriarch, Hui-neng, talked about attaining "no-mind" but he never talked about how to go about getting this "no-mind." In our own time, Krishnamurthi has also given the same teaching. Zen Master Seung Sahn has been teaching "don't know" or "don't make anything" for forty years; for most of us to attain this teaching we need to do a lot of body-

The tradition of Zen does not depend on any outside power.

sitting. Mind-sitting is the highest attainment we can aspire to, but without a solid background of body-sitting, it becomes just another game. Many people read books on Zen or spirituality and think they are free and wise. This is the one impression I got from my friend when he came visiting: I was talking to him as an old friend but he had all these aggressive questions: "Why do you shave your head?" "Why do you wear these gray clothes?" "Why do you sit on a cushion?" "Why do you have to sit three months?" His whole basic attitude was: "Look, I have discovered the truth, or this person, my teacher, has discovered it for me, he has done this for me; my mind is free to go anywhere, so why can't you be free like me?"

If you don't have twenty or thirty years of solid experience of meditation behind you, it's very easy to get on these trips. And a trip is a trip; the trip of a self-proclaimed spiritual master is no different from the trip of a so-called deluded person. One of my favorite characters in the history of Zen is Zen Master Joju (C: Chao-chou). Joju's life story is very instructive. He had his first awakening when he met his teacher Nam Cheon at the age of eighteen. After this initial opening, he stayed with his teacher for twenty years until Nam Cheon died. Only then did he feel free to travel all over China for the next forty years of his life and engage the self-proclaimed adepts of Zen in dharma-combat. I would not be surprised if Joju had been tempted to say to himself at the age of eighteen "I am a free person" and go on his own. It is not an accident that Nam Cheon and Joju are the most brilliant teacher-student duo in the history of Zen, and the fact that Joju stayed to train with Nam Cheon for twenty years speaks as much for his own genius as for the genius of Nam Cheon.

In order to have the freedom where our mind can go anywhere, anyplace, we have to have a solid grounding, an anchor. And this anchor comes from solid sitting practice, or any other solid, focused practice within the context of a long retreat. The three-month long retreats are a very powerful vehicle in providing this kind of anchor to our practice. There is a big difference between doing a weekend retreat and doing a long retreat. I started sitting Zen and running long-distance at almost the same time. So for me there has always been a very interesting parallel between athletic training and Zen practice. The two or three-day retreats are like a 100-yard dash; you gather your physical energies together and, in one single burst of ten or fifteen seconds, you run your race. It takes a lot of grinding the teeth and applying brute strength. But when you run a marathon or do a three-month long retreat you need a different attitude of mind and a different kind of harnessing energy. You need qualities like patience and perseverance and faith and motivation. In a marathon, it's one foot after another for 3 1/2 or 4 hours; so it's a very different kind of mindset from a 100-yard dash. In doing a 2 or 3 day retreat you can also grind your teeth and sit a weekend but you cannot grind your teeth for three months; the teeth will break. A three-month retreat is a letting go, sitting after sitting, hour after

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hour, letting go of our ideas about ourselves, about our practice, about our possible attainment; you have to learn to be kind to yourself, you have to find a balance within yourself where you don't daydream the whole retreat away or drive yourself crazy about your lack of so-called "progress." Eventually these are the qualities —patience, perseverance, faith, motivation — that become both the journey and the fruit that comes out of a three-month long retreat.

A long retreat is like being in prison, especially when you do a group retreat like we do here at the monastery. The routine is all set, you are cloistered and the limits are very clear; you cannot go outside, you cannot talk to other people, you get up at the same time, sit at the same time, eat at the same time, sleep at the same time. This structure can be a very liberating force. Working within the boundaries of the retreat structure, you can go deep within yourself and discover your own strengths and frailties. Gandhi and Lenin did some of their best writing while they were in prison; in that setting they were forced to examine their own struggle and what they wanted to contribute to their societies.

Another way of being in prison is to use this time as a monastic experience. By monastic, I don't mean the outside form of shaved head or certain kind of robes but the fact that your life becomes very simple. There are no choices; and having no choice can bring to rest, perhaps for the first time, that mind which is always, constantly looking for the next pleasurable experience. When there is no stimuli coming in from outside, the mind settles down and has to deal with itself.

This becomes quite evident in the area of food. Different people have different food karma, and this becomes quite prominent in a retreat situation. We had one person recently who signed on for three months but left after three weeks. One of the big issues for him was food; he felt the food was just too good! And for him good food was a problem. It was a problem for him that other people were eating so much. At some level, it was a trip; he wanted a certain kind of relationship with food but, underneath that wanting, something else was going on which he was not willing to look into. Most of the time food is a sublimation. People invest so much in food as a way of not looking at certain things in their life.

Another kind of karma which becomes interesting to watch is sleep. For me, even after ten years of living in a Zen Center, sometimes it's still not easy to get up in the morning. Most of the time it's okay but once in a while this mind will appear that says, "Not today". And that's the function of our "back-seat driver" mind. If we listen to this back seat driver, we will always get caught. But if we can tell it to shut up and move on with whatever needs to be done, it's not so strong. In a long retreat, you don't have any choice; you have to get up at 4:30 a.m. Having no choice in the matter allows the backseat driver to take a rest from its usual routine of playing all kinds of games. When we choose not to listen to the backseat driver for three months, it creates powerful transformations in our mind-body system, not to speak of the self-esteem that comes from self-discipline. We see clearly that not wanting to get up in the morning is the seeking of a

pleasurable experience; sometimes it's "if only I could sleep for five extra minutes", and then the seeking of this pleasurable experience becomes another habit. We live our life through these habits and don't even realize how much our habits control our lives and how we are trying to rearrange our lives around their habits. Our conditioning is such that we don't have the tools or the training to really investigate how much suffering the effort of keeping these habits in place is causing us.

It may even come to the point, when we have practiced for a long time, that we can look at a certain habit of ours and have a completely neutral response to it, neither craving it nor avoiding it. Only in this neutrality is there a possibility of reconditioning, for choosing wisely, and for making wholesome choices which will not result in suffering. In a long retreat it's very easy to see

Ultimately, a long retreat is a gift to ourselves, a very precious gift.

that our habits need not control our life, and that it is possible to live in a really simple and uncomplicated way. All we have to do is to use the simplicity and clarity of a three-month retreat as a model for our everyday life and be nurtured by that experience.

When we have good habits, we don't lose energy. Most of the time in our everyday life we lose energy through our eyes and through our thinking. The internal chatter we carry on within ourselves, caught between choosing and not-choosing, is a tremendous drain on our nervous system. Zen Master Seung Sahn claims we lose as much as 80% of our energy through our eyes. In a retreat situation, you spend most of your time sitting on the cushion and there is not much sensory data coming in through the eyes. Gradually the internal chatter also settles down; so the two big sources of the loss of energy are eliminated. After some time, a reverse process, the gaining of energy, comes into place. Sitting in zazen or doing chanting or doing bows involves concentrated breathing in and out from the lower abdomen, the "hara". When we don't lose energy through our eyes and our thinking, and do a practice that energize the "hara", it becomes a tremendous source of empowerment. This empowerment is what allows us to follow a schedule that may seem brutalizing, day after day without much problem.

This empowerment is also something that we uncover for ourselves within ourselves. It is not given to us by someone or something outside. One result of this empowerment is a sense of peace and completeness that comes over the participant. You may have noticed that even if you sit for half-an-hour every morning, you feel more at peace and calm. Many people who have sat three-month retreats have told me that some of the happiest moments of their life were when they were sitting on their cushion. They had no idea of why these happy moments occurred at that time and place; after all, nothing was going on; there was no stimuli, no input coming in from outside. What was happening, instead, was that the mind was quieting down, going deep within its primordial silence. This is called "stillness". Out

of this stillness comes peace, wisdom, and compassion. Out of this stillness comes a simplicity of being that tells us we are complete in each moment; there is nothing that needs to be added or taken away. All we have to do in order to be complete is to be still and silent, in mind and body.

This stillness and simplicity allows us to look at how we relate to food, to sleep, to clothes, to sex, to people we know. What kind of statement are we making by wearing certain kind of clothes? What kind of sublimation are we going through in our attachment to food? What are our deepest feelings about the people and situations around us? For example, if you live in Manhattan, it seems like a normal, natural thing to check out different restaurants, eat different kind of ethnic foods, and then talk relentlessly to those we know about these foods and restaurants. Or talk to them about our wardrobe, or about our jogging, or about movies or books or whatever. These things seem so necessary and such an important part of life in Manhattan, or at least for those who think they like to live in Manhattan, that there is no room to stand outside and see what's really going on in our lives in the guise of these activities. But if you settle down in a long retreat, gradually all these things seem so incidental, so uninteresting compared to the probing of the deepest questions about what it means to be human. Then all these activities and relationship to them can be placed in proper perspective; it is possible to see them simply as toys; it's okay to use them as skillful means but not to get caught in them.

The energy which allows us to become still and silent also becomes very interesting to watch. It's not that it's a constant and once we are grounded in it, it's going to be there all the time. It has its own ups and downs, it comes and goes in its own time and rhythm. For instance, you may be very tired and the moktak is hit for the next sitting, and you go, "Oh my God, I am going to be so sleepy sitting on the cushion for the next two hours", so

Structure can be a very liberating force. . . Gandhi and Lenin did some of their best writing while they were in prison.

there is a basic resistance to going into the Dharma room, but then a funny thing happens; after five minutes of sitting, you are as alert as ever. Or you could be full of pep and start thinking, "Tonight I am going to sit through the whole night and really go deeply into my practice," but that evening you start feeling so tired, for no reason whatsoever, that you can't wait to crawl into your sleeping bag at the end of the last chant. What happens? DON'T KNOW. This is truly one of those experiences about which no explanation is possible. We go through these ups and downs in our daily life, also, but we cover it up through different activities and habits rather than paying attention to what's going in. But in a retreat situation there is nothing to cover your bare

experience, and you have no choice but to learn how to deal with it. In dealing with these experiences, we are dealing with the very essence of our humanity.

So, ultimately, a long retreat is a gift to ourselves, a very precious gift. I believe that a long retreat is one of the truly creative things we as human beings can do for ourselves. All the games we play, with ourselves and with other people, get exposed, and we have to deal in a very direct and nonmanipulative way with the source of our being. This experience becomes all the more precious as our culture gets so complicated and bombards us relentlessly. Taking time off and trying to go deeply within ourselves is an act of generosity toward ourselves out of which comes a wisdom which can be our guide and companion in our journey of life. At the same time, it's important to remember that whether we do a short or long retreat, sitting on our cushion is not a time for solving the "problems" of our life. In that sense, meditation is not therapy. Sometimes people make the mistake of saying to themselves, "I have this problem and I can't seem to handle this right now. Maybe I will go into a retreat, and I will learn how to better deal with this problem." It may be that a clear answer to your dilemma will appear in a retreat situation, but that's a side-effect. What's important to understand is that your perspective on how you relate to life will change. You can learn how to have a very different relationship to a problem or problems but ultimately we have to uncover the wisdom which shows us that a "problem" is a creation of our own thinking and

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has no self-nature of its own; this wisdom shows us that the cause of suffering lies in our own grasping and aversion and not in things and people around us.

This wisdom appears as a result of continuity of practice when we are in a long retreat. Most of the time people find that if they are doing a little practice in the morning and a little in the evening, whatever energy they get out of it gets scattered during the day, through dealing with difficult situations at work or at home. Then faith in practice is hard to come by, and many people stop practicing. When we do a three-month retreat, the continuity allows us to go deeper into silence and stillness and we can see what a tremendous power our mind is: it can liberate us or it can break us. This experience is what gives us faith as our anchor; we can come out into the outside world and live in it with equanimity and even humor. Then morning and evening practice becomes a source of constant renewal and makes our life simple and clear.

patterns of the mind, we find that our minds have an inherent need for distraction from the unsatisfactoriness of the moment. Our mind is always telling us that this happening in the moment is not enough, there should be something more. So in order to distract itself from the moment's experience, the mind plays all kinds of games. And once we get caught in these games, we stop paying attention to what actually the mind is trying to get away from. This is where the continuity of practice becomes so important; once we have the discipline of bringing the mind back to the present moment, we are breaking out of the prison which the habits of mind have created. Bringing the mind back, again and again, to the present moment, without any idea of loss or gain, without grasping or aversion, is what our practice is all about. And this process is engaged in most powerfully in a long retreat, which in turn empowers us, enabling us to have a correct relationship to each moment. We can then use this training in the outside world, in being a correct worker when doing our job, being a correct friend when with a friend, being a correct husband or correct wife when with one's spouse, being a correct father when with one's children, being a correct son or daughter when with one's parents. This process is an exact parallel to practice in a long retreat — when bowing, just bow; when chanting, just chant, when sitting, just sit, when eating, just eat, when the moktak is hit, just go to the Dharma room, when the wake-up bell is rung, just get up and use the bathroom. No holding, no checking. In each moment, everything is complete. This wisdom is the door to liberation.

What a tremendous power our mind is: it can liberate us or it can break us.

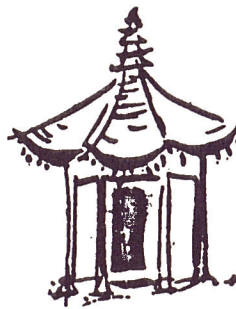
Then it's possible to *just do* what we are doing in the moment and then move on to the next thing in the next moment without a lingering attachment or residue.

In a long retreat, if we pay close attention to the habitual

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News of the Buddhist World

Kalu Rinpoche Dies

The great Tibetan teacher, Kalu Rinpoche, 84, died on May 10, 1989 at his monastery in Sonada, Darjeeling, India. Called the "Milarepa of our Age", he lived (like Milarepa) in a cave in Tibet for many years. He fled to India after the Communist takeover of Tibet. Rinpoche was renowned for the three-year retreats he inaugurated. Such retreats have taken place in Sonada, where he established a retreat center; in France; and on Saltspring Island, near Vancouver, British Columbia. Kalu Rinpoche was a lineage holder in the Karma Kagyu tradition of Tibetan Buddhism, as well as a lineage holder in the rare tradition of Shangpa Kagyu.

Newsletter for Buddhist Women Beginning

The international organization Sakyadita (Daughters of Buddha) has announced plans for a Newsletter, to be entitled "Who Are We?" The newsletter aims to facilitate communication among American Buddhist women. It will cover topics such as personal dharma experience, monasticism, and teachings related to women.

It welcomes submissions and donations. For further information, write to: "Who Are We?"; 928 South New Hampshire Avenue; Los Angeles, CA 90006.

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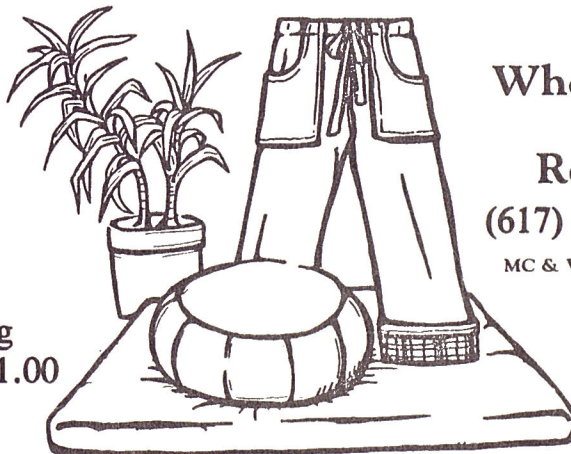
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Book Reviews

Everyday Zen; Love and Work. By Charlotte Joko Beck, edited by Steve Smith. Harper & Row, 1989.

Reviewed by Ellen B. Gwynn

After reading a few pages of *Everyday Zen*, I realized that I had stumbled upon a Zen classic. This is a book that contains the essence of Zen teaching, conveyed in words that are as accessible to one who knows nothing about Zen as they are to long-time students. The combination of depth and simplicity in this book is comparable to that found in Shunryu Suzuki Roshi's classic *Zen Mind, Beginner's Mind*.

Everyday Zen comprises forty-two dharma talks, usually given during sesshin at the Zen Center of San Diego where Charlotte Joko Beck has taught since 1983. Some of the talks close with brief dialogues between Beck and students. Although the book is divided into a number of thematic sections (e.g. "Practice," "Relationships," and "Choices"), each talk encompasses the same theme: the present is perfect as it is and our lives are complete, and although we don't want to believe that, Zen practice enables us to learn that truth for ourselves. But it is not easy. The way to that truth is to just be with what *is* over and over and over, choosing not to "spin off" into habitual thought and drama. This of course sounds like a breeze but is in fact an absolute bear.

There are occasional Zen stories in these talks, and references to sayings of the ancestral teachers, but for the most part, you will find pure Zen teaching with little of the "stink" of Zen speech and imagery. An American who has experienced the challenges of raising four children as a single mother, Beck encourages committed practicing by talking about the events of our daily lives in a refreshingly straightforward manner. As the title suggests, you will not find examples from the monastic life

in these pages but instead from the jobs and relationships of Beck and her students. Instead of misty mountains and drinking tea, you'll find soapy babies and traffic noise. One unusual feature of these talks is the more than occasional yet unobtrusive disclosure about Beck's own practice. She is able to teach as well as convey that her own learning continues in full force.

As stated by the editor, "Devoid of pretension or self-importance, she teaches a form of Zen that manifests the ancient Ch'an principle of *wu shih* — 'nothing special'." Beck began practicing with Maezumi Roshi of the Zen Center of Los Angeles in 1965 and became his third dharma heir in 1978. She and her students seem to be developing their own version of American Zen, and have been eliminating or modifying some of the formal elements of Japanese Zen practice. An interesting description of Joko Beck and the Zen Center of San Diego may be found in Lenore Friedman's *Meetings With Remarkable Women*.

As every Zen student knows, although we may no longer seek the more typical forms of embellishing life such as fame and fortune, practice helps us see the more subtle means we use to add drama to each moment. Beck compares such constant self-preoccupation with the ink a squid produces to cloud the surrounding water. In every page of this book, she encourages us to notice the ink we produce and to return to the plain, unvarnished, undramatic and infinitely reliable present. Acknowledging the difficulty of this, Beck mentions a few times that Suzuki Roshi once warned his students that they shouldn't be too sure that they wanted enlightenment, since from their current perspective, it would look quite dull.

"To look at this structure we have built is a subtle, demanding process. The secret is, we like that unreal structure a lot better than we like our real life. People have been known to kill themselves rather than demolish their structure. They will actually give up their physical life before they will give up their attachment to their dream. Not uncommon at all. But whether or not we commit physical suicide, if our attachment to our dream remains unquestioned and untouched, we are killing ourselves, because our true life goes by almost unnoticed. We're deadened by the ideals of how we think we should be and the way we think everybody else should be. It's a disaster. And the reason we don't understand that it's a disaster is because the dream can be very comfortable, very seductive. Ordinarily we think a disaster is an event like the sinking of the Titanic. But when we are lost in our ideals and our fantasies, pleasurable as they may be, this *is* a disaster. We die."

To read *Everyday Zen* is to be repeatedly reminded that practicing Zen is a process of piercing dreams and fantasies not in order to find perpetual joy or unending wisdom, but simply to experience an undiluted life.

Ellen B. Gwynn is a member of the Cypress Tree Zen Center (formerly the North Florida Meditation Center) in Tallahassee, Florida.

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A Buddha from Korea: The Zen Teachings of T'aego. By J.C. Cleary. Shambala Publications, 1988.

Reviewed by Mu Soeng Sunim

The monk Taego Pou (1301-1382) occupies a unique position in Korean Zen: he is the monk to whom all Korean Zen monks trace their lineage. Until recently, this lofty position was reflective more of Taego's political achievement in merging the disparate "Nine Mountain Schools" of Zen into one single school, the Chogye School, than of a great enduring legacy as a teacher of Zen. Cleary's book fills that gap in our knowledge of Taego the Zen master quite admirably. For this alone, the book would have been a valuable addition to our growing knowledge of Korean Zen; what makes it doubly important and interesting is the long (77 pages) introductory chapter called "T'aego's world", in which Cleary outlines the context in which Buddhism in East Asia grew and functioned for more than a thousand years, from the early fourth century to T'aego's own time, the end of the fourteenth century. The economic, political, and religious forces at work in East Asia during these years shaped Buddhism and were in turn re-shaped by Buddhism. It is a succinct and sympathetic view.

Zen came to Korea between 825 and 935 when Korean monks, who had trained long years in China and received transmission from the patriarchs there, returned to establish their own temples at different mountain locations. This was a time when "State Buddhism", which had dominated the religious scene in Korea for nearly five hundred years, was in tatters; the returning monks were able to introduce a sense of vigor and creativity which had gone out of Buddhism. Then the vitality of the nine Mountain Schools itself went into decline for a number of reasons, and for the next four hundred years several reform movements, particularly those led by the monks Uichon and Chinul, tried to correct the internecine squabbles that went on within Zen schools and also between the Zen and Sutra Schools. In his introductory chapter, Cleary lays out the complex background to this decline, resurgence, and reform quite clearly and effectively.

It fell to Taego, when he was a Royal Teacher at the court of King Kongmin, to urge the king to unite the Nine Mountain schools into one single school of Zen. The nine schools had not differed on any profound ideological basis; their differences were more along territorial lines. Finally, in 1356, the Chogye school was created to unify all nine schools, and Taego was appointed as its first patriarch. As a standard for the reformed Zen community, he proposed the adoption of "The Pure Rules of Pai-Chang", the model which had served the Ch'an communities so well ever since the Ch'an period. As Cleary himself admits, it is difficult to separate Taego the Zen teacher from Taego the political activist. It is a recurring theme in Korean Buddhist history. Korea has been the only country in East Asia where Buddhism was the unchallenged religion; as a result, the interests of monks and court officials converged to such a degree that it is

often difficult to separate the two. The monk Chinul (1158-1210) has been the only notable monk in Korean Buddhist history to escape this dilemma.

The second part of the book, "The Collected Sayings of Taego" introduces us, for the first time in English translations, to the wide range of Taego's poems and insights. It is pure pleasure. As a sample:

Hermitage of Realization

No wall in any direction
No gate on any side
Buddhas and patriarchs do not get here
Sleeping at ease among the white clouds

The Path of Emptiness

This emptiness is not empty emptiness
This path is not a path that can be considered a path
Where peaceful extinction is totally extinct
Perfect illumination is complete and final

No Attachments

Going on this way, fundamentally without seeking
Going on otherwise, also independent
East, west, south, north, the road of perfect
penetration
Every day exultant, free to go or stay.

Both for its explanation of the historical background and for its translation of Taego's Zen teachings, Cleary's book is a wonderful and welcome addition to the Buddhist bookshelves in the English-speaking world.

Errata

We inadvertently left out two lines in "The Adventures of Frog and Duck", which appeared in the June 1989 issue of PRIMARY POINT. Our sincere apologies to Robert Genthner, Ji Do Poep Sa Nim, author of the story. The last section should read:

"Frog sat and sat determined, half crazy, but unable to let go. What is real? What is real? What is real? The question deepened.

When all of a sudden.....Crack!!!

The bathroom door burst open as a child struggling with his pants flopped onto the toilet.

Frog jumped.....Splash!

A voice cried out "Dad...dad, could you please give me a wipe?"

It wasn't long before Frog emerged soapy, wet, and a little dazed. He towed off, helped his son finish, put on his shirt and tie, and went to work.

Full reprints are available from the KUZS office.

Glossary of Terms

For the benefit of readers unfamiliar with the terminology of Zen Buddhist tradition, we will now be including a glossary of words that commonly appear in PRIMARY POINT.

Avaloketsvara: Bodhisattva of Compassion (see Kwan Seum Bosal.)
Avatamsaka Sutra: Also called the Flower Garland Sutra, one of the great Mahayana texts. Basis for schools in China, Japan and Korea.
Bodhi: Awakening.
Bodhisattva: One who vows to postpone his own enlightenment in order to help all sentient beings realize liberation.
Buddha: An awakened one. Refers usually to Siddhartha Gautama (6th century BC), historic founder of Buddhism.
Ch'an (Sanskrit: Dhyana): Meditation practice.
Dharma: The way or law; the path.
Hinayana Buddhism: Literally "Lesser Vehicle"; also referred to as Theravada. The Southern School of Buddhism, including Sri Lanka, Thailand and Burma.
Ji Do Poep Sa Nim: "Guide to the Way"; Refers to an individual authorized by Zen Master Seung Sahn to teach kong-an practice and lead retreats.
Kalpa: An eon; an inexpressably vast period of time.
Karma: Cause and effect, and the continuing process of action and reaction, accounting for bondage into samsara.
Kasa: Brown piece of cloth worn around the neck or over the shoulders, symbolic of Buddhist vows and precepts.
Kong-an: A paradoxical or irrational statement used by Zen teachers to cut through students' thinking and bring them to realization.
Kwan Seum Bosal: "One Who Hears The Cries of the World"; The Bodhisattva of Compassion.

Kyol Che: Literally "Tight Dharma"; In Korean Zen tradition, an intensive retreat of 21 to 90 days.
Mahayana Buddhism: Literally "Larger Vehicle", the Buddhism practiced in Northern Asia. Encompasses schools in China, Korea, Japan and Tibet.
Mantra: Sounds or words used in meditation to cut through discriminating thoughts so the mind can become clear.
Moktak: A wooden instrument used to pace chanting in Korean Zen tradition.
Nirvana: A state of perfect inner stillness and peace.
Noumenon: The Unconditioned; the absolute state of undifferentiation reached in deep samadhi.
Prajna: Wisdom.
Samadhi: A state of intense concentration.
Samsara: The continually turning wheel of suffering in life and death.
Sangha: The community of practitioners.
Shakyamuni Buddha: The historical Buddha, literally "Sage of the Shakya Clan".
Shikantaza: The practice of "Just Sitting" in a resolute posture, usually being aware of the rising and falling of the abdomen.
Sutra: Buddhist scriptures, consisting of discourses by the Buddha and his disciples.
Yong Maeng Jong Jin ("YMJJ"): In Korean Zen tradition, a short retreat. Literally, "To Leap Like A Tiger While Sitting".

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 "Dae Soen Sa Nim" (Honored Zen Teacher) by his students.

Zen Master Seung Sahn has founded over 60 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; its Head Temple is the Warsaw Zen Center. In 1985 a Kwan Um Zen School of Europe was established, with its Head Temple at Centre Zen de Paris.

Zen Master Seung Sahn 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, as well as a biography); and *Bone of Space* (a book of poetry).

He has given "inka" - authority to lead retreats and teach Kong-an practice - to nine senior students. Called Ji Do Poep Sa Nims ("guides to the way") they regularly travel to Zen Centers and affiliates here and abroad, leading retreats and giving public talks. They are: George Bowman and Mu Deung Sunim, Cambridge Zen Center; Robert Genthner, Lexington (KY) Zen Center; Jacob Perl and Barbara Rhodes and Lincoln Rhodes, Providence Zen Center; Robert Moore, Dharma Sah (Los Angeles); and Richard Shrobe, Chogye International Zen Center of New York. Do Am Sunim, of Warsaw Zen Center, leads retreats all over Poland.

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 a local Ji Do Poep Sa Nim.

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 "to leap like a tiger while sitting"): The Zen Centers regularly hold silent meditation retreats of one to three days, under the direction of a Ji Do Poep Sa Nim. Zen Master Seung Sahn leads three or four three- to seven-day retreats each year, including at least one on each coast. The daily retreat 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 generally requires a deposit. (Check with Zen Center for details.)

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 usually for 90 days, 21-day periods or a one-week intensive. The School offers three long Kyol Che's (annually in Poland, Korea and the United States) and a three-week summer Kyol Che at Providence Zen Center. (The Korea retreat is open for 90 days only.)

Chanting Retreats (Kido): Chanting retreats are offered occasionally. 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 a 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 Office. 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 quarterly NEWSLETTER and the international newspaper, PRIMARY POINT (three 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.

Kwan Um Zen School

Administrative Offices at 528 Pound Road, Cumbeland, RI 02864
(401) 658-1476

United States and Canadian Zen Centers

Cambridge Zen Center
199 Auburn Street
Cambridge, MA 02139
(617) 576-3229

Chogye International Zen Center
400 East 14th Street
Apartment 2E
New York, NY 10009
(212) 353-0461

Dharma Sah Zen Center
1025 South Cloverdale Ave.
Los Angeles, CA 90019
(213) 934-0330

Empty Gate Zen Center
1800 Arch Street
Berkeley, CA 94709
(415) 548-7649

Lexington Zen Center/Furnace Mountain Retreat Center
(Furnace Mountain is a retreat facility of Kwan Um Zen School)
c/o Robert and Mara Genthner
345 Jesselin Drive
Lexington, KY 40503
(606) 277-2438

New Haven Zen Center
193 Mansfield Street
New Haven, CT 06511
(203) 787-0912

Providence Zen Center
Head Temple U.S. & Canada
528 Pound Road
Cumberland, RI 02864
Office: (401) 658-1464
Personal: (401) 658-2499

Seattle Dharma Center
c/o Tom Campbell
2920 NE 60th Street
Seattle, WA 98115
(206) 783-8484

Affiliated Groups

Ann Arbor Zen Center
6 Geddes Heights
Ann Arbor, MI 48104
(313) 761-3770

Alkido Ai Dojo
6727 South Milton Avenue
Whittier, CA 90601

Asheville Zen Circle
c/o Bruce Sturgeon
5 Devonshire Place
Asheville, NC 28803
(704) 254-8140

Borimsa Zen Buddhist Temple
3529 Abdy Way
Marina, CA 93933

Bul Tah Sah Zen Group
4358 West Montrose Avenue
Chicago, IL 60641
(Ron Kidd) (312) 327-1695

Chicago Meditation Center
c/o Dhanajay Joshi
1807 North Stoddard
Wheaton, IL 60187
(312) 653-7388

Cypress Tree Zen Center
c/o David Jordan
2011 East Indian Head Drive
Tallahassee, FL 32301
(904) 656-0530

The Dharma Buddhist Temple of Hawaii
1294 Kalani-iki Street
Honolulu, HI 96821
(808) 373-3408

Gainesville Zen Circle
c/o Jan Sendzimir
562 NE Second Avenue
Gainesville, FL 32601
(904) 373-7567

Kansas Zen Center
1423 New York Street
Lawrence, KA 66044
(913) 843-8683

Kettle Moraine Zendo
c/o Jon Sanfilippo
PO Box 385
West Bend, WI 53095
(414) 644-8211

The Meditation Place
168 Fourth Street
Providence, RI 02906
(401) 274-4026 or
(401) 861-3646

Nashville Zen Group
3622 Meadowbrook Avenue
Nashville, TN 37205
(615) 298-3754

Ojai Foundation
PO Box 1620
Ojai, CA 93023
(805) 646-8343

Ontario Zen Center
515 Logan Avenue
Toronto, Ontario M4K 3B3
Canada
(416) 482-9168

Chogye Order

Diamond Hill Zen Monastery
528 Pound Road
Cumberland, RI 02864
(401) 658-1509

International Headquarters

Centre Zen de Paris - Dharma Sah
Head Temple, Europe
26 Rue Bergere - 4E
75009 Paris, France
(33)(1) 47-70-44-70

Ko Bo In Zen Center
Head Temple, Japan
2-23-5 Kasuka Bunkiyoka
Tokyo, Japan

Seoul International Zen Center
Head Temple, Korea
Hwa Gye Sah
487 Su Yu 1 Dong
To Bong Ku, Seoul 132-071
Korea (82) 02-902-2663

Warsaw Zen Center
Head Temple, KUZS of Poland
04-962 Warsaw Falenica
ul. Malowiejska 24 Poland
(48) 22-15-05-52

Retreat And Special Events Calendar

(Events not otherwise identified are retreats)

1989

October

- 26 South Africa retreats begin (ZMSS)
- 27-29 Cambridge (MDSN)
Fayetteville, AK (BM)

November

- 3-5 Providence (RS)
- 4 Dharma Sah (no teacher)
- 5 Cambridge (GB)
- 10 Korea 90-day Kyol Che begins (ZMSS, MDSN)
- 10-12 Seattle (GB)
- 17-19 Cambridge (JP)
Empty Gate (BM)

December

- 1-5 Lexington (RG)
- 8 Ji Do Poep Sa Nim Meeting, Providence
- 8-10 Winter Sangha Weekend, Providence
- 9 Enlightenment Day Ceremony, Providence
- 11-17 Providence (JP)

ZMSS	<i>Zen Master Seung Sahn</i>
GB	<i>George Bowman, Ji Do Poep Sa Nim</i>
RG	<i>Robert Genthner, Ji Do Poep Sa Nim</i>
BM	<i>Bob Moore, Ji Do Poep Sa Nim</i>
MDSN	<i>Mu Deung Sunim, Ji Do Poep Sa Nim</i>
JP	<i>Jacob Perl, Ji Do Poep Sa Nim</i>
BR	<i>Barbara Rhodes, Ji Do Poep Sa Nim</i>
LR	<i>Lincoln Rhodes, Ji Do Poep Sa Nim</i>
RS	<i>Richard Shrobe, Ji Do Poep Sa Nim</i>

1990

January

- 2 Providence 90-day Kyol Che begins (BR)
- 5-7 Providence (JP)
- 13 Cambridge New Year Ceremony and Skits

February

- 2-4 Cypress Tree (BR)

March

- 2-4 Providence (GB)
- 16-18 Dharma Teacher Weekend, Furnace Mountain, Kentucky
- 23-25 Kansas (ZMSS)

April

- 6-8 Buddha's Birthday Sangha Weekend, Providence
- 7 Buddha's Birthday, Providence (ZMSS)
- 9-15 Providence (ZMSS)
- 19-22 Furnace Mountain, Kentucky (ZMSS)

May

- 4-6 Empty Gate (ZMSS)
- 4-6 Providence (JP)

June

- 1-3 Providence (MDSN)
- 16-28 Providence Summer Training Period

July

- 20-22 Summer Sangha Weekend, Providence
- 24 Providence 21-day Kyol Che begins (MDSN)

PRIMARY POINT

Kwan Um Zen School
528 Pound Road
Cumberland, RI 02864

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