

Common Ground: A Christian-Buddhist Dialogue

Primary Point

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*Robert Moore
Receives Transmission*

*Mu Shim Sunim
Receives Inka*

*Beyond Buddha:
From Dae Gak Zen Master's
New Book*

Inside: Man Bites Dog!



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PRIMARY POINT

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The Kwan Um School of Zen supports the world-wide teaching schedule of the Zen Masters and Ji Do Poep Sa Nims, assists the member Zen centers and groups in their growth, issues publications on contemporary Zen practice, and supports dialogue among religions. If you would like to become a member of the School and receive PRIMARY POINT free of charge, see page 30. To subscribe to PRIMARY POINT without becoming a member, see page 29. The circulation is 5000 copies.

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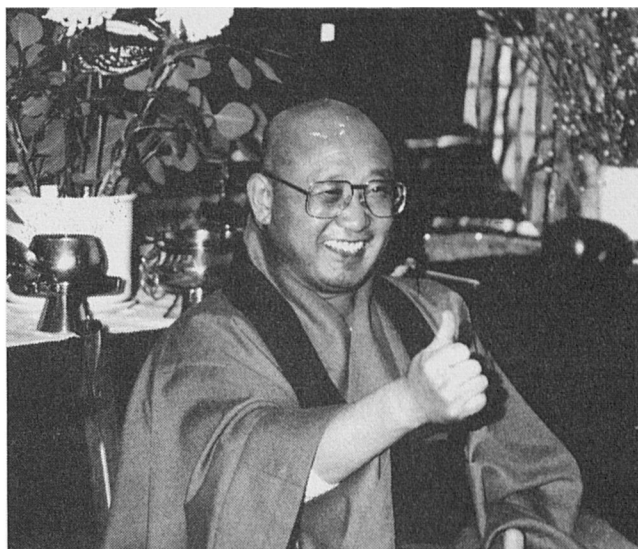
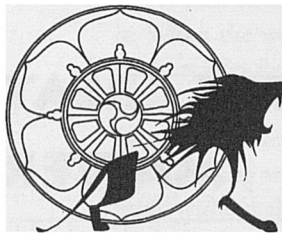
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Finding Your Lion Body



Special Dharma Speech given by Zen Master Seung Sahn during the Opening Ceremony of the Centre Parisien de Zen-Kwan Um, Paris, France, April 12, 1997.

[Holding up the logo of Centre Parisien de Zen Kwan Um, above.]

Has everybody already seen this picture? If not, look closely. Here is the lion's head. Here is the lion's tail. But in the middle there is no body. *[Laughter from the assembly.]* Who made this mistake? *[Sustained laughter from the assembly.]* If you find the missing part, then there is no longer any mistake. But in fact we do have a mistake. The reason for this is because nobody understands why they came into this world. It was a mistake to come into this world, because this world is a suffering world. So does anybody understand why they came into this world?

Everybody needs a body to connect their head to their tail. That is very important! *[Loud laughter from the assembly.]* If you connect your head and tail, then your life becomes wonderful. But if you cannot connect them, then your head is always in the East while your tail is in the West. Then a problem appears. "Oh, goodness! Where is my head? Where is my tail? I don't knowww..." *[Loud laughter from the assembly.]*

So even by being born in this world, we have already made a big mistake. Then for our whole lives we cannot connect our head and our tail: that is another mistake. How do we make our life correct? How can you connect your head and tail and make a correct life? Today's Opening Ceremony for the Paris Zen Center means that the answer is very clear: Come to a Zen Center and practice.

But let us return to this logo for a moment: Behind the image of a lion we see the logo of the Kwan Um School of Zen. This logo is a very interesting design. Its meaning teaches us the Buddhist Way: the Zen Way, the Mahayana Way and the Hinayana Way. Inside this logo are many kinds of teachings. So if you come here to practice, there are

many ways that you can find your lion's body. Today we begin to try *that* way, the practicing way, OK?

Nowadays this world is too complicated. This comes from the fact that human beings have too much desire, anger, and ignorance. Human beings are the number-one bad animals in this world. Cats, dogs, and even lions are not so bad. Only human beings make problems: they make nuclear weapons, political problems, all the while polluting the earth, the air and the ocean. Human beings really are the number one bad animal. So it is very important for us to clean this world. Perhaps everybody understands this kind of speech. Yet exactly how do we clean this world?

We have a "cleaning mantra." Everybody place your hands together in front of you in a prayerful position, or "hapchang," and please say together OM NAM. We'll chant this mantra seven times together.

[The Assembly stands and chants together, slowly:]

OM NAM... OM NAM... OM NAM... OM NAM...
OM NAM... OM NAM... OM NAM.

Thank you very much, everybody, for practicing hard and helping to clean this world.

*The sky is blue.
The tree is green.
The ground is yellow.*

*If somebody is hungry, give him food!
If somebody is thirsty, give her something to drink!
If suffering people appear, help them!*

That is all.



THE GREAT MATTER

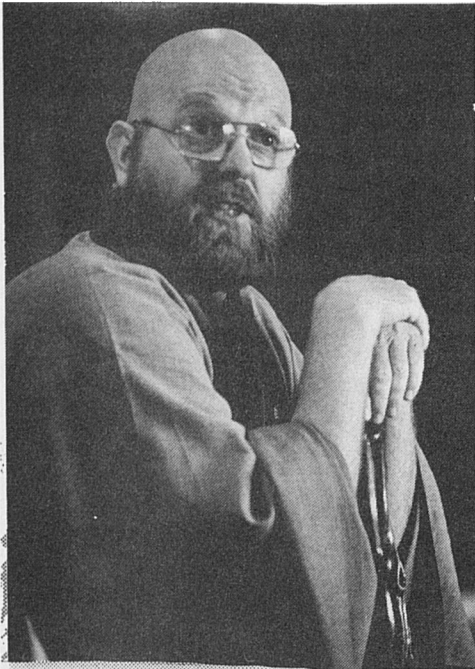
Zen Master Kyong Ho

*Zen Master Kyong Ho is Zen Master
Seung Sahn's great grand-teacher. His
name means "empty mirror."*

of
Life
and
Death

CONTINUED FROM PREVIOUS ISSUE

12. Once Zen Master Dong Sahn wrote: Do not seek noble titles nor wish to have possessions nor ask for prosperity. Wherever you happen to be, just live in accord with your karma here and now in this life. If your clothes wear out, patch them again and again. If there is no food, barely even search for it. When the warm energy under your chin grows cold, suddenly you become a corpse. What remains after death is only a hollow name. After all, how many days will this transient body live? Why work hard only to acquire useless things? That only makes your mind dark and causes you to forget your practice.
13. After awakening one's own mind, one should always preserve its purity and tranquillity. Cultivate this mind without allowing it to be tainted by worldly things. Then plenty of good things will happen. Faithfully trust in this. When you have to die, there will be no more suffering or sickness. You can go freely to Nirvana or anywhere else you choose (i.e., you control your own life as a free person in the world).
14. Shakyamuni Buddha said that if anyone—man or woman, old or young—has faith in these words and practices, each will become a Buddha. Why would Shakyamuni Buddha deceive us?
15. The Fifth Patriarch, Hung Jen Zen Master, said, "By examination and observation of mind, one will become enlightened naturally." Then he further promised us, "If you don't have faith in what I say, in future lives you will be eaten by tigers over and over again. On the other hand, if I have deceived you, I will fall into the dungeon of hell with no exit." Since the Patriarchs have said these words, should we not take them to heart?
16. If you take up this practice, do not agitate your mind; let it be like a mountain. Let your mind be like a clear and empty space and continue to reflect on enlightening Dharma like the moon reflects the sun. Whether others think that you are right or wrong is not your concern. Do not judge or criticize others. Just be at ease and go on mindlessly like a simpleton or a fool. Or, be like one who is struck deaf and dumb. Spend your life as if you cannot hear a thing, or like an infant. Then, sooner or later, all delusion will disappear.
17. If one wishes to accomplish Buddhahood, it is useless to attempt to understand and master worldly life. It would be like one trying to fix food out of dung, or like trying to cut jade out of mud. It is totally useless for accomplishing Buddhahood. There is no reason for occupying oneself with worldly affairs.
18. See your own death in the death of others. Do not put your trust in this body. Rather, remind yourself again and again not to miss a moment to awaken your own mind.
19. Ask yourself repeatedly, "What does this mind look like?" In your daily rounds, continue to ask yourself, "What does this mind look like?" Reflect upon this question so intensely that you are like a starving man thinking of nothing but good food. Do not lose hold of your questioning at any time.
20. Buddha has said that whatever has a form—that is, everything—is all delusory. He also said that everything that the ordinary human being does is subject to life and death. There is only one way for us to be a true person and this is Realization of our own mind.
21. It is said, "Do not drink liquor," since it will intoxicate and make your mind dull. Also, do not speak lies, since it will only accelerate delusive states of mind. Furthermore, do not steal, since it only helps to make your mind jealous and full of desires. You should observe these and all the precepts. Breaking the precepts can be very harmful for your cultivation and for your life itself. You should not cling to or incline yourself towards breaking any of them.
22. Master Ox-herder Mokguja (Chinul) once mentioned that the desire for money and sex are like vicious, poisonous snakes. Watch your body and mind carefully when such desires arise and then understand them as they are. Detach yourself from them as much as possible. These words are very important and they should be remembered. They will make your study more effective.



Providence Zen Center, April 5, 1997. Robert Moore — professor of music, guiding teacher of Dharma Zen Center in Los Angeles, student of jazz, and teacher of t'ai chi and chi kung — received a ceremonial whisk, wooden bowls and an embroidered gold kasa from Zen Master Seung Sahn, the symbols of formal Transmission of Dharma. The following are excerpts from his formal dharma combat with students at the ceremony and his first formal dharma speech as Zen Master Ji Bong (“Wisdom Peak”).

Wisdom Peak

ROBERT MOORE BECOMES ZEN MASTER JI BONG

DHARMA COMBAT

JBZM: Good afternoon, great computer man!

Student: Good afternoon, Poep Sa Nim. For many years now you've told me off and on that you and I are very much alike. You said it again at lunch today. And I know we both come from the same neck of the woods and have a few other things in common, but I really don't know how we actually are alike. Maybe you could help me understand.

JBZM: You already understand this!

Student: No, I actually don't.

JBZM: Kwan Seum Bosal, Kwan Seum Bosal, Kwan Seum Bosal, Kwan Seum Bosal.

Student: Thank you so much!

JBZM: Good afternoon, great new monk! How are you?

Student: I'm very well, thank you. A couple of years ago we were talking about music, and you said, "Oh, you must pick up this CD by a great guitar player named Sonny Sharrock; the album is called 'Ask the Ages.'" It's a very interesting title. So I wonder, if you ask the ages, what kind of question would you ask?

JBZM: *[Makes loud guitar noises.]*

Student: Very strange answer.

JBZM: You've already attained.

Student: Congratulations.

JBZM: Thank you.

Student: Often in your talks, you quote Jesus Christ, and you talk about God sometimes. So my question is, if God is so all-powerful, can he make a rock so large that he himself can't lift it?

JBZM: You already understand.

Student: Please tell me!

JBZM: *[makes grunting noise and motions lifting rock]*
Oooooogr....Boom!

Student: Thank you.

JBZM: Maybe I can lift a rock, but not you. *[Student is a very large man.]*

Student: Oh, great teacher.

JBZM: My other Bridget.

Student: You had a heart attack almost a year ago. So, you seem to be on the repair. How do you mend a broken heart?

JBZM: You already understand.

Student: So I ask you.

JBZM: *[hugs Bridget]* Thank you for taking care of me when I had a broken heart.

Student: You're welcome.

JBZM: She sat with me all night the first night that I was in the hospital. When I didn't know whether I was going to live or not, she was there holding my hand. That's how one helps in mending a broken heart.

FORMAL DHARMA SPEECH

[Holds stick over head then hits table]

In ancient times, Buddha once went to Vulture's Peak to give a speech. But rather than giving a speech, after a long pause, he simply plucked a flower and held it up. Everyone was astonished.

[Hits again]

At that time, Mahakashyapa, one of his senior students, cracked a smile.

[Hits again]

Then the Buddha said to Mahakashyapa, "I give to you my all-pervading true dharma, incomparable nirvana, exquisite teaching of formless form. Not dependent on words, a transmission outside the sutras, this I give to you." So the Buddha delivered a lot of bullshit talk: I, incomparable nirvana, all-pervading true dharma. Much, much bad speech. But something did transpire between these two people. What was it that actually happened?

KATZ!

Today is April 5th and I see before me many, many smiling faces.

Today obviously marks an important signpost in my life, and it most specifically indicates a climax, not the end, but an important landmark in a forty-three year search that began when I was just thirteen years old. At that time, I was trying hard to make the junior high basketball team. I started to feel bad. I thought that it was because the basketball practices were very long and that was so exhausting. However, one morning I woke up and my body had begun to swell. I had gained almost forty pounds overnight as fluids started to collect in my body. I was very, very sick and I was rushed to a hospital. They later told me that I actually died before they could get a specialist from Chicago to come and work on me. During that process I had one of these experiences where I left my body and sort of observed the doctors running around and doing all this work on me. After some period of time I rejoined my body. I remember not being particularly interested in doing that, but it seemed like the thing that I should do given the circumstances, so I came back into my body. But during this I had a strong sense that everything in this universe is constantly in flux, coming and going, and literally that we as human beings are thrust into this time and space and later yanked out of it into some other place in an ongoing process.

This initiated a great search for me. At first I thought that since this had happened to me, it must mean that I was destined to become a preacher. (Please remember that this was Texas in 1954.) So I decided that I would become a Baptist preacher. I began to go around to all of the Baptist preachers in my hometown of Marshall, Texas. I had interviews with them, but none of them had any idea what I was talking about. Eventually, I got very disgusted with the preachers and decided that I would become an atheist instead of a preacher. (While preparing to come here this weekend my wife looked at me sardonically and said, "Well, it's forty-three years later, and I guess you now get to be a preacher!")

Several years after this experience, during my freshman year, I

was in the college bookstore when I saw one of the very early translations of Zen writings. There was a story that I'd like to share with you:

Great Master Ma Tsu was once in the mountains late at night with three of his senior students: Shi Tang, Pai Chang, and Nam Chuan. It was a very, very beautiful summer night and the moon was shining brightly. He turned to the students and said, "This is such a beautiful evening, how can we use it properly?" Immediately Shi Tang started bowing and said, "I think that we should do many bows of supplication to honor the Buddha for giving us this wonderful evening." Then Ma Tsu turned to Pai Chang, who merely sat down in a meditation pose and said, "I think we should use the evening for hard training. We should sit for three or four hours, clearing our minds with hard meditation." Finally he looked at Nam Chuan, who took the sleeves of his robe, shook them three times and began to walk down off the mountain. Ma Tsu said to Shi Tang, "To you I give the lineage of the sutras and the great knowledge and wisdom of Buddhism." To Pai Chang he said, "I give you the task of starting a monk's order and establishing the methods of correct meditation." Then he said, "But I have a very special transmission for Nam Chuan, because he has already transcended all things."

So when I read that story as a nineteen year-old anarchist, I decided what I really wanted to do was study Zen. I searched for many, many years after that, going around the country to visit various teachers. Finally in 1974, I took a teaching position at Yale University. A couple of months after my arrival in New Haven I went to a talk at Berkeley College on the Yale campus. That was where I met and heard Zen Master Seung Sahn for the first time. It was a revelation because after reading Zen books for almost fifteen or twenty years, I actually heard that evening this person do dharma combat and utter all of these wonderful insights that I had loved to read in the Zen literature. Dae Soen Sa Nim invited me to attend a retreat in Providence shortly thereafter. During that retreat he showed me how to hit the floor and taught me about primary point. I thought that this teaching was the best thing since sliced bread because for twenty years I'd been trying to intellectually figure everything out. Dae Soen Sa Nim showed me that genuine insight was not dependent upon intelligence. And it was great to just keep returning to primary point.

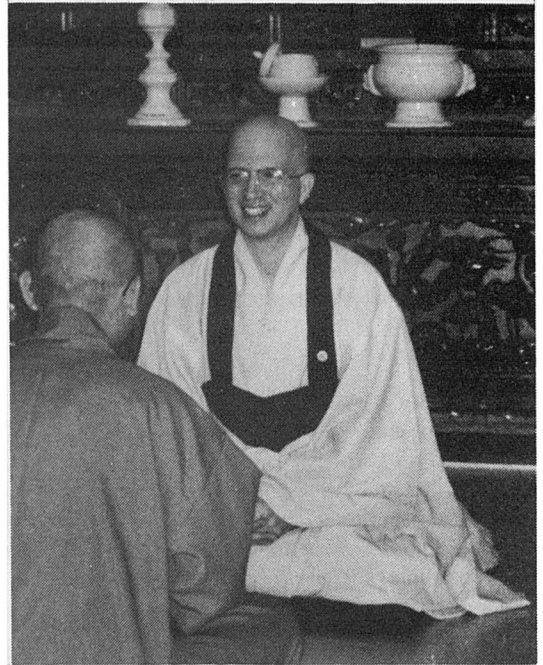
Once Dae Soen Sa Nim and another Zen master in the Japanese tradition were asked to co-lead a retreat at the Ojai Foundation. Dae Soen Sa Nim had to go back into the city during the middle of the retreat and I was the senior student in those days in Los Angeles. So he asked me if I would come out and help him with the retreat. Jane McLaughlin-Dobisz JDPSN and I drove up to Ojai after I finished teaching at the university one evening. It happened that on that particular weekend we had one of the worst rainstorms in California during the entire decade. Jane and I arrived at Ojai in the middle of the rainstorm at about one o'clock in the morning; there were no lights and we couldn't find anything. We tried to walk down a hill but we slipped and fell in the mud and rolled down to the bottom of the hill. Eventually we found the yurt where we were supposed to stay, and we went in and changed our clothes. I had brought two sets of clothes. Now one set was already ruined. Finally we were able to try to get some sleep—the four-thirty wake-up call was going to come very soon.

CONTINUES ON PAGE 25

On February 23, 1997, Ven. Mu Shim Sunim received inka from Zen Master Seung Sahn at the Seoul International Zen Center, Hwa Gye Sah Temple, in Seoul. His dharma combat with members of the assembly, and a formal dharma speech, follow.

Mu Shim Sunim

GETS A Zen Stick



DHARMA COMBAT



Student: Good morning.

MSSN: Good morning.

Student: Sometimes when two people look at the same color, they see a different color. One person maybe sees blue while the other person believes it's green. What can you do?

MSSN: You already understand...

Student: I don't understand. Please teach me.

MSSN: The cushion you're sitting on is red. My cushion is also red.

Student: *[Bowing]* Thank you.

Student: *[Holding a camera]* Good morning, Sunim.

MSSN: Good morning.

Student: I take your picture, and is it past, present, or future?

MSSN: You already understand.

Student: Please teach me.

MSSN: Give me your camera. *[Takes picture of student]*

Student: A teacher once said that by wearing a kasa, you are wearing the whole universe. Right now you are also wearing a kasa. But how can you carry the universe if you're not wearing a kasa?

MSSN: You already understand.

Student: Please teach me.

MSSN: *[Takes off kasa]* How may I help you?

Student: Thank you.

FORMAL DHARMA SPEECH



[Raises stick and hits table]

Every morning before bowing, we recite four great vows, the first of which is: Sentient beings are numberless, I vow to save them all.

[Raises stick and hits table]

An eminent teacher once said, "Before the Buddha left the Tushita heaven he had already finished saving all beings from suffering." Then why do you vow to save all beings from suffering?

[Raises stick and hits table]

So if the Buddha already finished saving all beings from suffering before he was born, then, every morning why do we recite these vows?

If one being appears, all suffering appears; if one being disappears, all suffering disappears. If you appear in this world, then you create suffering. But if you disappear from this world, then you lose the Great Bodhisattva Way. Without appearing or without disappearing, how can you save all beings from suffering?

KATZ!

Inside the Dharma room, the Buddha is gold. Outside, Sam Gak Sahn Mountain is white.

So, my Dharma speech is finished, but I still have a few words to say. I've been here at Hwa Gye Sah Temple for, as many of you know, almost thirteen years. And I've seen many changes happen here. Also I have travelled with Zen Master Seung Sahn to many different countries and assisted him when he was teaching. So I have been able to experience many important kinds of teaching by watching how he conducts his life, from moment to moment. One story in particular comes to mind: Zen Master Seung Sahn was invited to Taiwan about seven years ago, and I went with him as his attendant. Our Taiwanese hosts were very kind and gracious. They put us up and fed us their delicious traditional vegetarian food. One day, Zen Master Seung Sahn was invited to officiate at a Buddha's Eyes Opening Ceremony at a prominent temple. We went to the temple where three new Buddha statues were being installed in the Dharma hall, and many people had gathered. There was a profusion of color, red and gold, and all the monks were very well taken care of. We were given gifts and many kinds of different foods and drinks. Zen Master Seung Sahn was given the best room in the house to stay in.

On the day of the ceremony, many people assembled and Dae Soen Sa Nim did the Buddha's Eyes Opening Ceremony, and afterwards more gifts were given and an elaborate lunch was served. After lunch we went back to Zen Master Seung Sahn's room. But when we entered his room a surprise awaited us. During the ceremony, someone had come into the room, gone through his bags, and taken all of his money, and some other things, too. Of course, I was very anxious, but Zen Master Seung Sahn only looked at me and said, "It's already gone, so don't worry!" But this was a lot of money that they had taken, perhaps a few thousand dollars, because he had planned to help some people along the way, giving money to monks and nuns living in this or that city on our itinerary. The interpreter was a Korean nun who spoke fluent Chinese. She was very sad, too. "This is no good," she said. "We have to tell the temple officials and our other hosts!" But Zen Master Seung Sahn asked her not to tell anyone of the incident, and only said to her, laughing heartily, "Don't worry! We just made a big donation to somebody!" But she told them anyhow.

The Taiwanese were upset because they were very conscious of being good hosts and taking such good care of their guests. They were very unhappy! And various things were being said, like, "Mu Shim Sunim, the door should have been locked," and, "You are the Zen master's attendant! This was your responsibility! You should have kept his monk's bag on you all the time!" And so I had a lot of thinking after that. But then an interesting thing happened. This theft occurred in one of the southern cities, a provincial center called Taijung. But after our stay in the city of Taijung, our hosts had also arranged a big Dharma talk in the capital city, Taipei. And so after a couple more nights' stay in Taijung, we went up to Taipei, and we had this big public talk, with many people, and there was a long Dharma speech. Zen Master Seung Sahn taught in his usual style, as if nothing had happened, not referring at all to the grievous incident of a couple days before. After the talk, as is

Chinese tradition, everybody came up and made offerings to the monks, putting money in these little red envelopes. The leader of their association had evidently told everybody, "Oh, this Zen Master suffered a big loss in Taijung, something was taken from him. We should really give a lot." So therefore many people came up. Old people, young people, even little kids, and these old women came up and pulled one coin from deep inside their dress pockets. I was suddenly given this big shopping bag by the president of the lay association, and I was told to hold it out. The people spontaneously formed a long line, and in my head I'm starting to calculate how much money is in this bag, how much will this make up for the money that was lost on this trip. There were young kids, there were very old people, people from all walks of life, rich, and poor, they all came up one by one, bowed to Zen Master Seung Sahn, and put into this big shopping bag many red envelopes; the bag was very, very full!

When it was all over, Zen Master Seung Sahn motioned to the interpreter. "I cannot take this money. This is not my money. This money belongs to all these people!" So he said to the association director, "You take all this money, and use it for monks' education, for hospitals and charitable things." Now I was off the hook! For myself this was very good teaching. In that situation I saw clearly how this Zen Master's teaching was not for any kind of fame or profit, for "getting back" the money that was "lost" on a trip, to get back to a good situation. His teaching was purely about Dharma, only *for* Dharma. So loss or gain did not matter. Only how can you make some situation correct, and save all beings from suffering? So, if you are thinking, if you only try to take care of some being, if you have "I, my, me", then you have a problem. But if you don't even make one being, how do you appear and save all people? That's what I was talking about before.

[Raises stick and hits table]

In the Kwan Um School of Zen, there are many different ways of practicing. We have calling on the Buddha or bodhisattvas' name.

[Raises stick and hits table]

We have reciting some kind of mantra. Om mani padme hum, or shin myo jang gu dae darani, we have this path.

[Raises stick and hits table]

We also have the path of formal Zen practice. Just sitting, just following your breath, just walking, only doing something very completely. So I ask you, which path is best? Which is the best way? Can you find that? *[Someone in the Assembly suddenly hits the floor]* You understand one, but do you understand two?

KATZ!

Thank you all for walking up these stairs today, coming into the Dharma room, and listening to this Dharma talk.

Going Beyond

BUDDHA

Excerpt from the new book *Going Beyond Buddha: The Awakening Practice of Listening* by Zen Master Dae Gak. (Boston: Charles E. Tuttle Co., 1997.)

During my training for a Ph.D. in clinical psychology, I interned for one year at the Cleveland Psychiatric Institute, a state mental hospital in Ohio. My job was to work with the resident schizophrenic patients.

There was a secretary who worked in the main office. In the morning, she would come in and sit in a chair, and she'd stay there all day long, typing away. She had been there for years, knew everything there was to know about hospital politics, and shared her knowledge willingly. Her office was two or three doors down from mine, and we became good friends during my time there.

The offices were small. Mine was five by ten feet. So it was quite close quarters. The office had a desk, a large window, and two wooden captain's chairs with slats in the back. The ceilings were quite high, perhaps twelve feet, so one had the sense of being in a column. I would sit, and the patient and I would be quite close, almost knee to knee in these wooden chairs in this little office. If you have ever worked with schizophrenia, if you have ever known a schizophrenic or been schizophrenic, you know that sitting knee to knee with somebody in a little office is not paradise.

There is an interpersonal tension that develops between patient and doctor in those circumstances. In this tension of intimacy, in this intrusion of personal space, psychotic persons are put under such great stress that their typical dysfunctional adaptive behavior becomes exaggerated.

One day I was sitting with a woman who jerked and twitched as I tried to give her the Rorschach inkblot test. She asked me, "What is that noise?" I could hear nothing. It was silent.

She again insisted, "What is that noise? It is so loud in here! Can't you make them stop?"

I at once concluded that she was having an auditory hallucination, which is a key diagnostic sign of schizophrenia. She

became more and more agitated.

She said, "I want to get out of here. This is terrible. I don't have to take this test. I don't have to do this. You can't make me. And besides, it is so noisy in here, I can barely think."

From my point of view, it was extremely quiet. Our offices were on the quiet end of the hospital; it was like a morgue. Dead. Not much happening. People who did move around were so medicated that they didn't make too much noise. They just shuffled about quietly.

There we were, knee to knee, she, twitching and jerking and I, having to complete this Rorschach test so that it would be in her chart. I finally stopped the test and listened with her a moment.

I asked her what it sounded like. She said it sounded like a machine gun. Like somebody was killing somebody in the next room with a machine gun. So I listened. I said, "When you hear it, could you point it out?"

She said, "It's constant."

"OK, if it stops, would you tell me when it stops?"

So we sat together, listening. Just the two of us, listening. Test put aside; "she's the patient, I'm the psychologist" put aside because I was truly interested in finding out what was going on with this woman. I was no longer ready to dismiss her perceptions as auditory hallucinations. So we listened together.

She said, "There, it stopped. No, it started again."

Finally, I discovered, based on the rhythm of her stopping and starting, that the sound that was so intrusive in her consciousness was the secretary's typing, three offices down.

It took an enormous amount of effort for me to listen, to hear what she was hearing. When I finally discovered it and got in some rhythm with her, she was extremely pleased. No one had ever believed that the sounds she was hearing were real. People simply dismissed her, deciding that the sound she was hearing was a product of her own fantasy.

Since the early seventies, elaborate theories of schizophrenia have been developed regarding information-processing. One of the theories on certain kinds of schizophrenia is that the schizophrenic doesn't develop filtering mechanisms as "normal" individuals do. Nonschizophrenics are able to filter out irrelevant sound or memory. For example, you are able to read these words while filtering out the sounds around you, without even knowing it.

Each one of us has tones, firings, in our ears. There is a form of meditation where yogis listen to the sounds of their own vibrating eardrums. Yogis claim that if you focus on the sounds of your own vibrating eardrums, they become like trumpets, heaven's trumpets. With careful listening, time slows down. With the letting go of discriminating consciousness, sound becomes quite slow, wonderfully melodic.

But for some schizophrenics, this process requires very little meditation. Sound is so loud, and their ability to filter is so impaired, that they hear quite strongly what is normally filtered out.

I sat with this woman and listened and said, "That's the sound of the typewriter the secretary is typing on down the hall."

"Really? I don't believe you!"

"Yes, you don't believe me, but it does not have to be something bad."

"I still don't believe you."

"OK, but let us find out so you do not have to believe or not believe."

We walked down the hall slowly and we listened. Sure enough, she realized that it was simply the sound of the typewriter.

I don't know that it made any difference that she and I explored that sound. I never saw her again. That was the nature of my internship. People came, I spent a little time with them, and they went away. I never knew whether she was discharged or what happened. But we spent an afternoon listening and discovering each other. One human being stopped and listened with another.

The Zen school in which I teach is called Kwan Um. The school was founded by Zen Master Seung Sahn and is named after the Bodhisattva of Compassion, Kwan Se Um Bosal. *Kwan Um* means "perceive sound." Kwan Se Um Bosal is the bodhisattva who attained enlightenment when hearing the sounds of the world, listening. The story of her enlightenment is that she came to complete realization hearing the cries and sufferings of all beings. In iconography, she is often depicted riding a cloud and pouring the waters of compassion over the world.

A bodhisattva is any person or being whose life-direction is to help others. Kwan Se Um Bosal is the Korean name for the archetypal bodhisattva of compassion. In Sanskrit her name is Avalokitesvara; in China her name is Kwan Yin; and in Japan her name is Kanzeon or Kannon. In the West, this archetype is represented by Mary, the mother of Jesus. Mary also came to realization of the compassionate mind through listening. When



the angels came and told her she was to bear the child of God, she said, "Be it done unto me according to thy will."

Can we take a moment and listen, without listening to something in order to get the meaning out of it? Not making a discrimination, just listening. When someone talks, listen and perceive what is said. Are these three actions, two actions, or one action?

When a gong is struck and the vibration is heard, or when the stick hits the floor [*whack!*], there is sound, particular sound and hearing, particular hearing. Without the hearing faculty, there can be nothing heard. Hearing and sound are one movement. Perception of sound (hearing) and sound depend on each other.

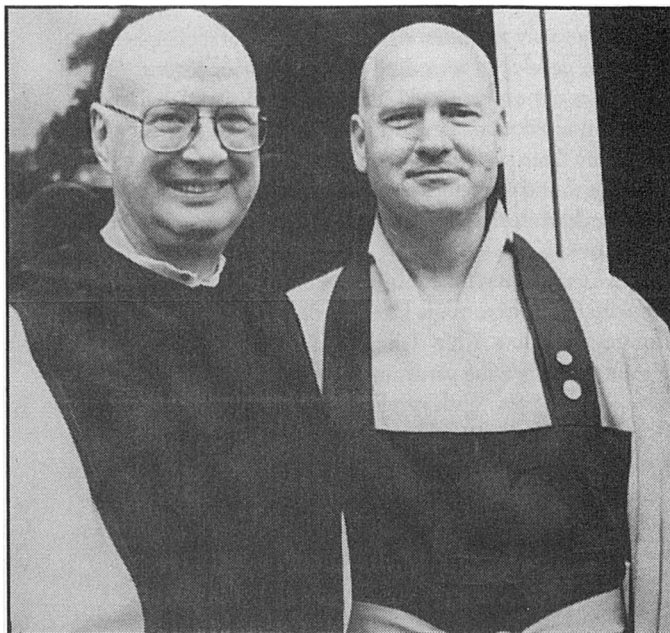
Listening depends on nothing.

The mistake of *identifying* with the content of listening (what is heard) is continuous. And thus, there is belief in a solid, stable self. But the stuff of listening, which is sound (things heard), arises, dwells, and falls away. It is impermanent. Just as these words that are being read are arising, dwelling, and falling away. Just as all sensation arises, dwells, and falls away. So to create a fixed self by identifying with the stuff of listening—or for that matter, with the stuff of seeing, smelling, tasting, touching, or thinking—is to make a most grievous error. And yet the tendency to identify with the impermanent continues, and suffering is unending.

Last summer, the Institute for World Spirituality in Chicago hosted a weekend Christian-Buddhist retreat led by Father Kevin Hunt OCSO and Zen Master Dae Kwang. Two days of silent meditation, with both Christian and Zen chanting. These are excerpts from the Saturday evening question-and-answer period.

Common

Ground: A DISCUSSION WITH FATHER KEVIN HUNT AND ZEN MASTER DAE KWANG



Question: In Christianity, what is important for many people is devotional type experience—thoughts, hymns, psalms all directed to a personal God. This brings much warmth and comfort to many Christians. Now this is a dimension which is not apparent in Buddhism. I am wondering how to understand that. Is this devotional spirituality, which involves thinking and images and relating to a personal God, *extraneous* in Buddhism—say, something Christians do because they do not have a correct understanding of the Still Point or Buddha-Nature?

Father Kevin: In Christianity, you have to consider what is the meaning of “God.” Speaking about God is not the same as knowing God. If you ask me, “What is God?” I’ll answer, “God is a three-letter word.” When it comes down to what these words and images really mean, you run up against a blank wall of Unknowing. There’s an old Christian saying that any affirmation of God is a denial of God. So the question of theistic devotion in Christianity is not a simple one.

Also, the whole question of God in Buddhism is not simple either. When Buddhists talk about God are they talking about the same God that Christians do? No. In Buddhism, the gods are still in the wheel of *samsara* (karma, rebirth). If Christianity had a wheel of *samsara*, we would never be able to place God on that wheel.

In the West, most Christians would not be comfortable with a term like *Shunyata*—the void or infinite emptiness. But these words may be closer to God than many of the concepts and images we use!

Question: I’m still wondering about the whole devotional area.

Father Kevin: These are ways most people have to relate to God. You have devotional sects in Buddhism. Zen is just one small sect in the whole Buddhist tradition.

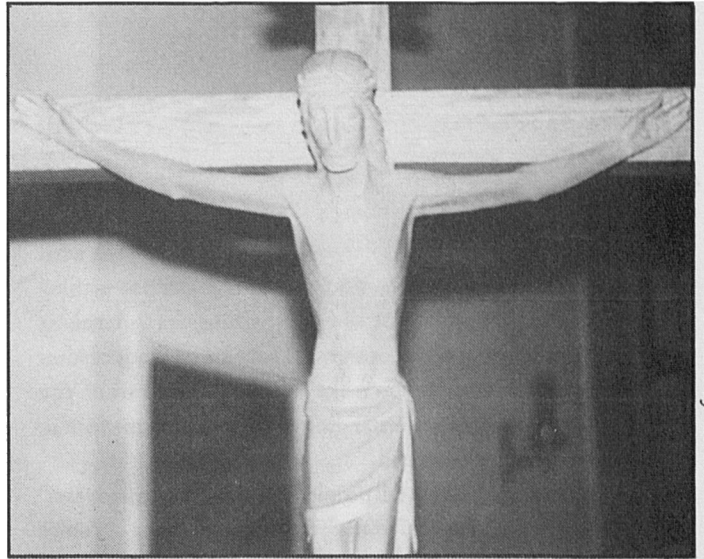
Question: Bowing in Buddhist practice is devotion.

Dae Kwang Sunim: When your mind is clear, *everything* is devotion. When you bow, just bow. When you eat, just eat. People need help, help them. Just do it! That’s true devotion.

Question: But take the Stations of the Cross, for example. If I do that, I’m thinking in very concrete images about a personal God and his *sufferings for the redemption of all human beings*...

Father Kevin: Let me tell you about a monk I once knew who was, I think, a very enlightened man, although he would never have articulated his life in those terms. He would make the Stations of the Cross a dozen times a day. I used to get mad at him—we’d get up at three o’clock in the morning, I’d rush down to church in the dark (this was in South America, so we did not have electricity) and at that hour of the morning, I’d trip over his body, prostrate in front of one of the Stations. To say that what he was doing was thinking about Jesus’ redemptive suffering is, in my opinion, a very superficial way to describe what was happening in the heart and mind of this monk!

The point of a vehicle is to be a vehicle—to take you



Pictures by: Elizabeth Sout

somewhere. For many people it's a devotional kind of thing; for some people it's more apophatic. A vehicle is anything that helps you.

Question: In our retreat schedule, we have large blocks of free time. What do you do for periods of up to two hours without reading?

Dae Kwang Sunim: We continue to practice all the time. The reason for not reading during the retreat is so that we can focus on the Book of Wisdom here [*points to his chest.*] This is the most important book you'll ever read. If you spend time here [*pointing to his head*], reading *other people's* ideas, that just takes you away from yourself.

Question: I can understand conceptually the issue of not reading [*laughter.*] But the arising of a concept in the mind is an arising of the Buddha mind, too. If you see clearly the nature of a concept, then conceptual thinking is no problem, even on a retreat.

Dae Kwang Sunim: Usually what we do in Zen is read for encouragement rather than for understanding. The two purposes are different. So, for instance, you don't read lives of the saints in order to understand God. Rather, you read lives of the saints to work yourself up to having enough guts to actually *do* something!

Father Kevin: Remember, too, that the time we are devoting to this retreat isn't all that much. It's only about forty-eight hours. You have a lot to pack in, in that time. What you want

to concentrate on is your own experience, your own awareness. To be sure, concepts are not evil; in the Christian tradition we say the Word is God. Concepts come from God. But in a retreat like this the awareness you have to have is *your* awareness—not his awareness, not my awareness, not the awareness of an author of a book. It's very easy to fall into the attempt to get somebody *else's* realization.

My first Zen teacher was a Japanese Master, Sasaki Roshi. He would give *koans* to his students like, "How do you realize Buddha-nature when you're taking a shower?" or "How do you realize Buddha-nature when you're driving a cab?" Once he saw me making the sign of the cross, which we do when we start a prayer, and soon my *koan* was, "How do you manifest God with... what do you call it? Yes, sign of cross! With that how do you manifest God?"

So two of his students were talking, comparing *koans*. One was very concerned—he had no answer for his *koan*, "How do you realize Buddha-nature when you're driving a taxi?" The other had passed the *koan*, so he told him the answer. (Of course, you're not supposed to do that, but...). So the first student goes into Sasaki Roshi for his interview and gives him the same answer the other student had given. Sasaki Roshi's eyes got big, he stared at the student and said, "Oh, wonderful answer! Wonderful answer! [*Pause.*] Now give me *your* answer!"

Question: *Lectio divina* is a practice of reading in a way which invites me into silence; to take the step into silence, into contemplation, I begin with reading. So to me there should be no fear of that kind of reading during a retreat.

Father Kevin: It's not a question of fear; it's a question of what you're doing. Are you reading or are you focusing on your own experience moment to moment? A weekend like this is a weekend for the practice of silence—mind-silence, too. When you leave there will be plenty of time for *lectio divina* as well as other kinds of reading.

Dae Kwang Sunim: In Zen we say you have to digest what you learn in order to understand; that means taking something you've learned from a book or from someone else and making it really and completely your own. There are all kinds of ideas in the world. How do you make any of them your own? You have to digest your understanding so you become one with it, like a cow chewing its cud.

My teacher will often tell people, "Don't read for three years" or "Don't read for five years." By this he's saying, "You've already read enough books, so just get on with it!"

Father Kevin: It's like a kid who wants to be a professional basketball player. He can read every book in the world on how to play basketball, he can read all the lives of the best basketball players, even books of physics on the trajectory of the ball when you throw it with this or that amount of force. But at some point he's got to go out and start bouncing the stupid ball!

Dae Kwang Sunim: There once was a person whose professional life was very secure. But as he got older a spiritual questioning arose in him. To satisfy this urge he got interested in Buddhism and read all the books he could, until he *understood* everything about Buddhism. The man then became anxious about his financial situation. After reading extensively in the area of investment, he *understood* everything about retirement plans. Next he started to worry about his body. He wasn't getting any younger and perhaps some exercise like swimming would help him. Again, he went to the library. After reading every available book he *understood* everything about swimming, even the theories regarding rigorous competitive training. He then went down to the lake, jumped in and drowned. [*There are several moments of silence.*] That's the end. So *understanding* cannot help you. It's a Zen story!

Question: In Christianity, the deepest level of experience is described as an I-Thou relation between you and God. Can you explain why there is no I-Thou relation in Buddhism?

Dae Kwang Sunim: In Buddhism, we say that everything is one, so there is ultimately no I-Thou. If you take away the idea of "I" and take away the idea of "Thou," then what is there?

Question: So there is no ultimate relationship in Buddhism as there is in Christianity?

Dae Kwang Sunim: Everything is relationship. Everything *is* direct connectedness; you just *think* that it isn't. Our job is simply to become one with everything. That's *being* relationship. So if you take away the idea of "I" and take away the idea of "Thou," what do you get? Quick! Tell me! [*No answer.*] I'm sitting here answering your question. That's better than any *idea* concerning "I-Thou" relationships.

Question: Would you describe how you became interested in Zen practice?

Father Kevin: I didn't get interested in Buddhism and Zen as something I wanted to study. I basically got into it because the traditional Christian explanations of what my practice was didn't quite satisfy me. Like a drum, to get the right tone, you have to tighten the skin on the drum head. So, too, in order to firm up my practice, I learned some of their ways of doing things.

Dae Kwang Sunim: I was raised Christian. The reason I went to Buddhism is much like what Father Kevin said. The Christian tradition I was raised in didn't have any contemplative practice. I became interested in Zen Buddhism because it contained a very strong tradition of practice. I saw it not so much as an alternative to Christianity but as offering something I had never encountered before.

Question: Were you dissatisfied then with Christianity?

Dae Kwang Sunim: I wasn't dissatisfied. I wanted something different. Actually, many people use Zen meditation to realize what Christianity is all about. Zen, you may have noticed, is very generic. It's like drinking pure, cool water when you're thirsty. Zen points to something *before* thinking, before all your ideas. Actually God is before your idea of God, and so is Buddha. And what is that? What are you? That's the question! And how do you *attain* that?

Buddha likened the human situation to a man who has just been shot in the chest by an arrow. Before he gets treated for the wound, he wants to know who shot the arrow. He also wonders which tribe made the arrow. How strong was the bow and what trajectory did the arrow take to pierce his chest in such a manner? While he is asking these questions, he dies. The most important thing in this situation is getting treatment.

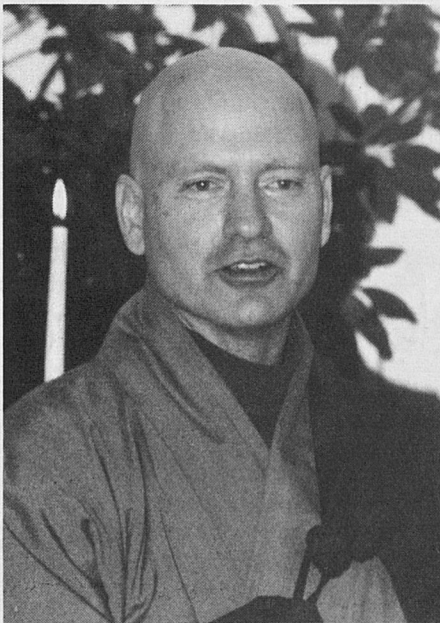
The Buddha was only concerned with one thing: human suffering and taking away human suffering. He refused to talk about anything else because it was not helpful to people. He went instead right to the heart of the matter, the matter of life and death. Christ, too, was not a scholar; he was not a theologian. He pointed directly to the human condition and how to relieve it. If you look at it that way, everything else pales.

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如是

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with

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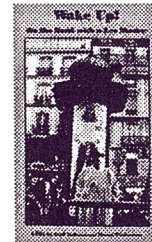
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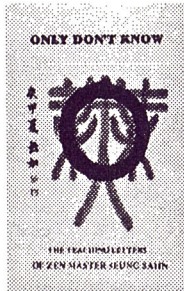


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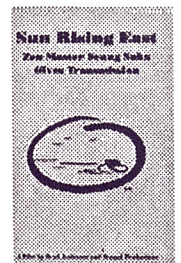


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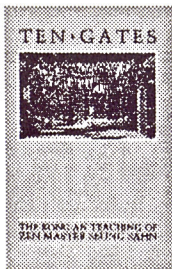


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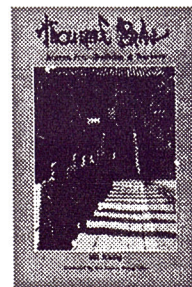
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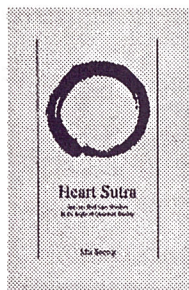


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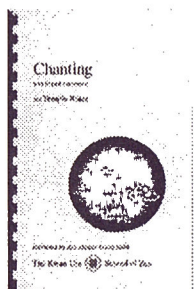
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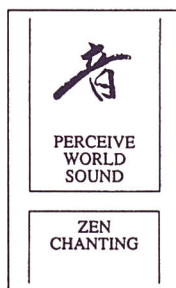
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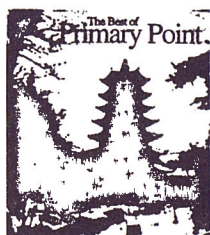
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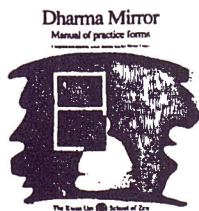
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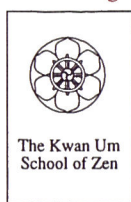
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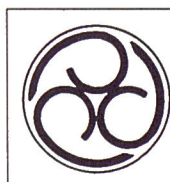
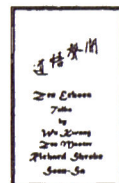
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Free-Lunch

THE VIEW FROM
DIAMOND HILL

Monastery

BY ROBERT A. F. THURMAN

One of the most interesting aspects of Zen Master Seung Sahn's transmission to the West has been his promotion of a traditional celibate monastic order. While modifying many out-dated Asian cultural forms and styles that have accrued to the teaching of the Dharma, encouraging lay practice, and even modifying the day-to-day expressions of monasticism to some extent, Zen Master Seung Sahn's maintenance of the traditional bikkhu/bikkhuni ordination becomes ever more noteworthy, especially nowadays as many discuss how to somehow "Americanize" Buddhism. From time to time Primary Point will present a section of views on the monastic experience in the Kwan Um School of Zen. Our first offering comes from the esteemed Professor of Indo-Tibetan Buddhist Studies at Columbia University, Robert A. F. Thurman, recently designated (in Vogue, of all journals, in an article about his daughter, the actress Uma Thurman!) as "the most famous American Buddhist". It is a talk which he delivered at the first conference of Western Buddhist teachers with His Holiness the Dalai Lama, in Dharamsala, India, March 1993.

Hyon Gak Sunim



I was the first monk that His Holiness ordained. I was his first experiment and, of course, I was a failure because I resigned my vows about a year and a half after I was ordained, although I had lived several years before that as a celibate. I therefore have about three and a half years of monk-time logged, but only one and a half of formal ordination. Then, being an ex-monk, I became a kind of “anti-monk” intellectually; I decided that the New Age had dawned—it was the late ’60s—and there was no more need for monks and nuns or monasteries or any of that. Shambhala was just around the corner and all these monolithic institutions could be swept away... I then had a long time of studying different things, thinking about engaged Buddhism and teaching things over and over again, as a Buddhist academic does.

In the process of studying the history of Buddhism, I discovered, in the early ’80s, that monastic institutions were to me the most revolutionary and the most important of institutions. When I reported this to His Holiness he just laughed and laughed. “What is this?” he said. “An ex-monk is now going on and on about monasteries? You can afford to do that now. You know, with your beloved wife and your four children, that now you’re safe—you’ll never be back! You can go and promote them as much as you want, knowing you won’t have to go there—ha, ha, ha...” He thought that was very funny.

It is our typical Western thing to think, “Oh well, yes, meditation, we’ve got that from Buddhism but we’re Westerners and so we know about organizations, and of course about intellectual matters.” We may find that Buddhist civilization has a lot to contribute to us on both of those other levels, just as it did on the meditational level.

Shakyamuni Buddha was an engaged Buddhist—there cannot be any question. He was “unengaged” for about a week or two under the trees in the Bodhi forest. In the Tibetan tradition they have him saying this thing about “How profound, deep, peaceful, untroubled... clear light... how neat, I love this... like an elixir of immortality... I’m totally stoned out here in the woods.” And then he says, “Oh, I don’t think I should tell this to anybody because whoever I tell it to certainly won’t understand it.” That was his unengaged Buddhism; he had about five minutes of it. Then Brahma and Indra showed up and said, “Hey, come on, get down there.” So he walks to Saranath to found a monastery—this is engaged Buddhism. We think of a monastery as a place for dead people. We have to realize that our culture is formed by Protestantism. Martin Luther slammed the monasteries, saying, “Shut down all the monasteries in northern Europe.” So you shut down the counter-

force against militarism on the planet in those countries of northern Europe and what happens? The planet gets conquered by a bunch of berserk militarists. That is what we have been doing, and America is the most rabidly berserk militarist country in history; even with our ideals of liberty, we have the biggest army and defense system and the most nuclear weapons. It’s totally unbelievable. Look at the business in Iraq.

I admit it’s a weird analysis (and my sociological colleagues blink when I tell them about it) but if you remove monasticism from a social mix, what happens is that all the productive energy of people has nowhere to go but into over-production of everything. So they go out and conquer the whole world. No one wants to produce a spiritual state to invert and internalize the energy, to produce a different, higher world, so they just transform this world and they wreck the whole place—it is within an inch of being wrecked, as we know.

Therefore, the Buddha was like the founder of a Peace Corps. We have to stop seeing him as some pious person in the hills, just speaking in dulcet tones. The Buddha was founding a Peace Corps and was risking being burnt at the stake. He said, “Hey, go out and tell everyone that the gates to Nirvana are OPEN. Tell people from any caste.” Don’t forget that the Buddha was a West Point-er. He was 29 years old; he was a military cadet in a palace. Princes in India studied in the army, in warfare; they were Kshatriya—the warrior-nobles. So naturally when he wanted to conquer the world for the Dharma he wanted an army.

Remember how one was originally ordained by the Buddha—the Buddha just said, “*Ehi bhikkhu*”—that’s all. “Come here, beggar. Come here, mendicant.” Now, enlightenment is the deconstruction of identity. If you attain enlightenment, in a way you don’t even know who you are any more, much less “where am I going to wash the dishes?” You might even wonder “what is my name?” If you have no idea of what your name is, you might as well have no hair and wear a weird robe because you don’t even know who you are.

If the Buddha is going to teach you something that will give you the realization of the total deconstruction of identity, he has to take care of you and reconstruct some sort of useful pattern within your own relativities—because otherwise he is not fulfilling his responsibility.

This is the purpose of the Vinaya [the code of monastic precepts established by the Buddha]. He can’t just deconstruct your identity and leave you standing in the middle of the traffic. So he would say, “*Ehi bhikkhu*,” and your hair flew off and your robes would change. There you were, floating around happily living your life as a monk, and

BUDDHA WAS FOUND- ING A PEACE CORPS AND WAS RISKING BEING BURNT AT THE STAKE.



people would give you a free lunch.

So we have to go back to the primary thing and forget all that nonsense about hierarchy and who is the big boss—that is all nonsense. The Buddha was deconstructing the serious Brahmanical family/father/patriarch/serious authority/guru business and was liberating people. He was not putting them under rules and authorities at all. In all of the cultures where it has become like that—if you feel that the Buddhist monastic orders are solely trying to prop up the culture—I am sure that we are just seeing corruption in the tradition. Essentially, the monastic orders are all trying to unravel the culture they are in.

My appeal to you is, in the process of your work, please try at least to entertain what is, I grant you, this slightly demented vision: that the most activist thing the peace movement, the engaged movement, in the west could do would be if one group of Westerners could crank up the generosity to provide a permanent free lunch to any group of people who want to take serious ordination—even if they're not that brilliant, not that great a yogi, not a great intellectual scholar. Remember that the key to monasticism is that you can be useless. You can be honored and supported for simply restraining certain negativities. By [supporting] that, you represent a channel to Nirvana for other people and the generosity they devote to you is an essential practice for them—it is not just some side thing they do now, and then later they do real practice. *Dana* [giving] is the first *paramita*; it is practice.

If you build a monastery, I hope it will be called “Free Lunch Monastery.” There is almost no such thing in the West. Everyone in a monastery is justifying their existence—“We are offering services; we are going to do ‘Dying’; we will help you; we will have therapy...” It is always the production thing of our barbaric Protestant civilization. Everyone has to work and justify themselves because there is no source of Dharmakaya anywhere—that’s “elsewhere,” out there with Jehovah, some place outside. You have to “do” something all the time—so if you are going to be a monk, [people believe] you have got to “do” something and produce.

But the beautiful thing about Buddhist monasticism is the acknowledgment by people that any human being is like a flower and of total value in itself. Even if they do not do anything positive but just genuinely and sincerely restrain their negativities—put the iron wall of the monk’s robe of corpse cloth around themselves—they will be developing and they will represent a point of positive development for the whole community.

That is a deep, foundational vision, not a superficial, social vision, and I hope that you will all work with His Holiness over the next 40 years of conferences and we will develop one free-lunch monastery in the Protestant West. That would be a turning point for this battle between monasticism and militarism which monasticism, at the moment, has lost—the planet is totally devoted to militarism.

[As a monk] your life is on the line, you are not going to produce anything but a spiritual state and therefore people will feed you. That way they recognize the value of you as an individual achieving a spiritual state. That is the foundation of real individualism, real generosity and social Dharma practice, to which individual Dharma practice must lead in order for it to have any positive result.

The role of modern lay people is just as it is—go straight ahead, gung ho. But they are also empowered by having monastics. They can move back and forth between them and they are empowered by that.

Lay people are ready to meditate, to live differently, be eccentric and non-conformist in their Western countries. They are ready to challenge their own mind and go into their unconscious. Why can they not explore the *paramita* of *Dana* and try to break out of the mold of the Protestant culture where you never give anybody something for nothing? You give them something for nothing—just let them wear a rag or two, that’s something. Shave their hair and look grubby and then give them something. There are a lot of homeless people in Western countries and the monastics can be like honored homeless people. That kind of generosity will enrich the Western people immeasurably.

“I” am not IT—“I” am not the center of my community. Why are we supposed to be the center? In Buddhism we are learning not to be the center of everything. We are learning to de-centrify ourselves. Even to have a person who is an idiot and support them with a free lunch because they are doing some minimal, exemplary self-restraint activities and cutting down on the usual reactionaryism of people, is of tremendous benefit to us. To proclaim “I wish to be useless” in the world of samsara is the beginning of liberation. To allow people to do nothing—in a society that is collectivist and demands production and obedience from all of its members in some rigid type of control system—is a kind of total liberation.

MAN BITES DOG!

Hyon Gak Sunim

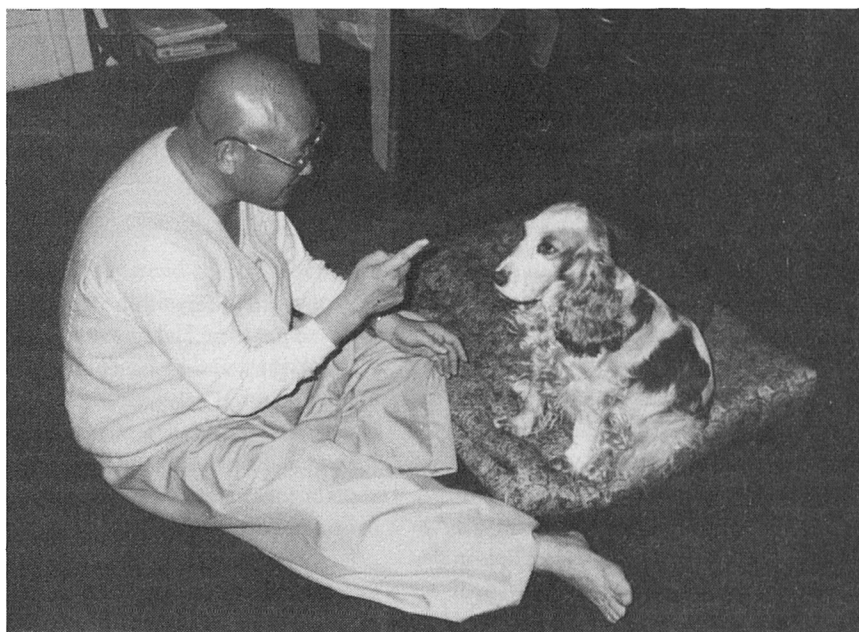
This picture shaves about nine hundred ninety-nine words off the old cliché about a picture's worth. Boil it down to one, and multiply that one word by a factor of three: "Try, try, try." The balance is ten thousand years of nonstop teaching to sentient beings in this world.

A witness to this spontaneous and intimate event in a hustling, bustling teaching career was

the inimitable Ven. Hyon Mun Sunim. Zen Master Seung Sahn was visiting Poland in 1987 with Do Mun Sunim (then Abbot of the Paris Zen Center) and Do Ryun Sunim. After his usual stop in Warsaw to deliver dharma talks and give interviews to a following of students which regularly packed the Warsaw Zen Center to the gunnels, even spilling out into the yard three-deep and peering through windows into a packed Dharma room, they arrived in Krakow.

Hyon Mun Sunim remembers: "There were two rooms prepared for Dae Soen Sa Nim in the home of Marzena Magdon. Huge ceilings. Do Mun Sunim asked me for a nice mat so that the Zen master could do his usual thousand bows that he did every day, even when travelling. When Dae Soen Sa Nim first entered, there was a dog in the apartment already; it belonged to the owner. Of course, the dog was moving around a lot when we arrived, because there were many people, and everyone was very excited, as usual when Dae Soen Sa Nim came. There was a lot of energy in those times. The dog was very nervous, you know, like the way dogs become in these sorts of spontaneous situations in the human realm.

"We set out this wonderful golden mat and cushion while Marzena made tea. Suddenly, out of all the coming and going, the many, many human legs going out of rooms and stirring up this poor dog, the dog came up and sat right on the mat in Dae Soen Sa Nim's room. We wanted to remove the dog, because



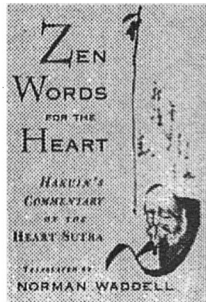
after all this was the great Zen master's cushion where he would do his bows and receive students. I was always pissed at dogs, especially this one sitting on the mat of Zen master. In Poland, dogs are not special like in America.

"Dae Soen Sa Nim was at this moment coming out of the bathroom, and saw the dog, which we were trying to pull off the cushion. He

stopped us, and sat down on the bare floor, facing the dog. Suddenly, the dog calmed down and seemed very peaceful. He looked right in the Zen master's eyes, with big attention. Everyone was still coming into the apartment, swarming in the doorways to catch a glimpse of the Zen master, hoping for some kind of big interaction. But as Dae Soen Sa Nim sat there in front, all was total silence and stillness. I remember the Zen master did not touch the dog; he did not treat it as something cute or anything. And he didn't push it away from this meeting with his students. This was strange, because when he first arrived at the Zen center, while Dae Soen Sa Nim was greeting us, the owner's cat walked up and tried to crawl into the Zen master's lap. And Dae Soen Sa Nim pushed him away, kind of pulled him by the tail and moved him back. Many people laughed. But what he was doing with this dog was different, so we were surprised when he just sat and the two made such strong eye contact. Dae Soen Sa Nim was very serious for a moment, and then opened his mouth and started to talk, right to this dog: 'Listen to me, form is emptiness, and emptiness is form. Why come back like this again? Next time don't keep your dog's body. Even this is very comfortable for you, don't hold this dog's body, OK? Next life you again become human being, get enlightenment, and help all beings. That's your job. Understand?'"

Try, try, try for ten thousand years nonstop.

Book Reviews



Zen Words for the Heart: Hakuin's Commentary on the Heart Sutra, translated by Norman Waddell. Boston: Shambhala, 1996. Reviewed by Stanley Lombardo, JDPSN.

This is the first English translation of this classic commentary, the Japanese title of which is "Poison Words for the Heart." The original title (which Norman Waddell had

retained in a manuscript version I saw about five years ago) is very much to the point. This is poison for our thinking mind. Here is Hakuin's first take on the heart of the Heart Sutra, the teaching that form and emptiness are not different: "A nice hot kettle of stew. He ruins it by dropping a couple of rat turds in it. It's no good pushing delicacies on a man with a full stomach."

This caustic and ironic style takes us back to Mu Mun's live words in his *kong-an* commentaries and to the spirit of other old Ch'an masters, a spirit which Hakuin (1689-1769) did much to revive centuries later in Japanese Zen. It's pretty potent stuff, if you can get it down. As Hakuin himself says, "One bellyful eliminates hunger until the end of time." As in the *Mu Mun Kwan*, the often acerbic prose commentary is set off by verse that can take quite a different turn. Hakuin follows his characterization of form and emptiness as "two rat turds" with a subtle poetic evocation of the elusiveness of form:

*A brush warbler pipes tentatively in the spring breeze;
By the peach trees a thin mist hovers in the warm sun.
A group of young girls, "cicada heads and moth eyebrows,"
With blossom sprays, one over each shoulder.*

Coarse satire and exquisite lyric (and there are other modes)—Hakuin gets us coming and going. We never

know quite what to think, and this creates the opportunity just to perceive. Hakuin never apologizes for the poison he is giving us, and he never explains anything. This inspires trust. Hakuin composed this commentary when he was sixty years old; his comments clearly flow from hard practice and are directed towards everybody who has intentions of practicing hard. We know we are in good hands when we read the opening credits:

*Edited by HUNGER AND COLD
Revised by COLD AND HUNGER*

And by the time we get to the end we have passed through

A black fire burning with a dark gemlike brilliance,

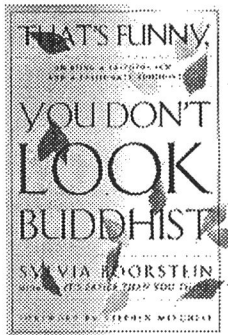
have marvelled at

*Ten worldfuls of ungraspable red-hot holeless hammer
Shattering empty space into boundless serenity,*

and can only agree when the author admonishes us:

*And don't try to tell me my poems are too hard.
Face it: the problem is your own eyeless state.*

Actually, although the bone of Hakuin's poetry is always clear, it is, with its occasional obscure allusions, sometimes too hard for us. But Waddell, a consummate scholar, elucidates all the references to Chinese poetry, history, folklore and philosophy in Hakuin's commentary, and explains as well the main points of the Heart Sutra itself. Waddell's translation is clear and vigorous, his notes and brief introduction right on target and at the appropriate scale for this slim volume, which is attractively produced and illustrated with fifteen or so samples of Hakuin's calligraphy and ink paintings. The paintings especially take their place as teaching vehicles alongside the text, reflecting its dry humor, piercing gaze, and deep compassion.



That's Funny, you Don't LOOK Buddhist by Sylvia Boorstein. Harper, San Francisco, 1997. Reviewed by Myong Wol Sunim

One Friday evening at *oneg shabbat* (coffee and pastry after the synagogue service), the large, round tables full of strangers and acquaintances finally started humming with conversation. Someone at my table mentioned attending a Buddhist retreat. Sudden-

ly there was an awkward silence.

Coincidentally, on the following Sunday, two Israeli teenagers dropped by the Cambridge Zen Center. They had recently come to this country to attend college. They were at the Cambridge Zen Center to do research for a comparative religion course. When someone suggested to them that meditation often enhances one's religious experience, one of the Israeli students took exception. "You can't be a Buddhist and a Jew at the same time," he told us adamantly.

What is the problem in these two situations? Although Jews have been prominent among those bringing Buddhism to this country, there is a tension, a question. Can there be a true synthesis of Buddhist practice and Jewish belief, or are we seeing merely a temporary dialectic, where diverse traditions converge briefly before an inevitable separation?

In her new book, *That's Funny, you Don't LOOK Buddhist* Sylvia Boorstein does much to clarify the murky waters of Jewish/Buddhist coexistence. Her approach is refreshingly personal and insightful, falling into neither the intellectualism nor the emotionalism with which this important topic is usually treated.

This fast-paced book is infused with first-hand knowledge of the many problems arising from opposites-thinking. The either/or assumption is not limited to the many Jews who are surprised at the interest in Buddhism within our communities. Many American Buddhists are surprised at the need of one of their own to take part in a traditional religion. After all, so many were moving away from tradition when they found Buddhism. As Sylvia Boorstein puts it, "Why," [my Buddhist friends] wondered, "would you want to complicate yourself with Judaism?"

And her answer: "It's not a question, for me, of *deciding* to complicate myself with Judaism. I *am* complicated with Judaism... the complication nourishes me. I love it."

Though especially pertinent to a Jewish audience, observant members of any tradition will find that Ms Boorstein's work addresses their concerns about the viability of dual membership as well. Can you be a Buddhist and still believe in God? Does meditation change your image of what God can be? Can a Buddhist have a *personal* relationship with God? Is Buddhist practice after all just a New Age form of assimilation?

In detailing many of her own experiences, Ms Boorstein tells of how her meditation somehow makes more tangible and immediate the very building blocks of traditional faith. She asserts, "I don't think it's possible to love God with all your heart and not love everything else. Complete loving mandates and rejoices in complete acceptance. I learned that doing Buddhist *metta* meditation."

The author shares with us intimate details of her own practice. In them, we find a mind which goes beyond mere coexistence of practices. We find strong evidence that all paths are ultimately the same. "I am sure," she says, "that the essence of clear mind is impartial lovingkindness and unwavering compassion. My experiences of intensive practices have included instances of being so bowled over by a rush of loving feeling for a person walking down the hall toward me—even a person I didn't know at all—that I've needed to lean against the wall to keep from falling over."

This work might have been enhanced a bit by the inclusion of some demographics. But then, it does not pretend to be the story of "How the Jews Found the Swans in the Lake."

The book is reminiscent of Rabbi Herbert Weiner's work, which demonstrated an especially wide, inclusive practice of Orthodox Judaism. One could almost hear him recite the *brocha*, "Blessed art Thou, O Lord our God, Who has sustained us, brought us to this place, and given us meditation practice so that we can know ourselves, and help others."



DO NOT
PUT YOUR
TRUST IN
THIS *body*.
RATHER, RE-
MIND YOUR-
SELF AGAIN
AND AGAIN
NOT TO MISS
A MOMENT
TO AWAKEN
YOUR OWN
mind.

Continued from page 5

23. The Buddha teaches that becoming angry even once raises ten million vicious sins. A student must simply endure and tolerate the angry mind. Many masters have also said that because of anger, one becomes a tiger, a bee, a snake, or some similar stinging or biting creature in a future life. From foolishness, one becomes either a bird or a butterfly. Depending upon his degree of low-mindedness, one becomes either an ant, mosquito or the like. From craving things, one becomes a hungry ghost. The type of desire or anger molds the nature of the hell into which one will accordingly fall. Each and every state of mind determines the kind of creature one is to become.
24. However, if one's mind is unattached, one becomes a Buddha. Even a "good" or positive state of mind is useless. For although such a condition of mind can create a heavenly future life, it is still limited. As soon as one reaches heaven, he immediately begins descending to the hellish or animal realms in successive rebirths. If no intention is held in the mind, then there is no place to be born again. One's mind is so pure and unconfused, it cannot go to the dark places. This pure and quiescent mind is the way of Buddha.
25. If one questions with one-pointed determination, then this mind naturally settles down and becomes tranquil. By this one automatically realizes one's own mind as quiescent and tranquil. This is the same as becoming a Buddha.
26. This way is very direct and goes right to the point. It is the best way one can practice. Read and examine this talk from time to time and, on the right occasions, even tell other people. This is as good as reading eighty-four thousand volumes of scriptures. Practicing in this manner, one will accomplish Buddhahood in this lifetime. Do not think this talk to be some contrived encouragement or expedient deception. Follow these words with whole-hearted determination.
27. In the deep canyon where the clear stream is flowing continuously, all kinds of birds are singing everywhere. No one ever comes to visit this place. It is the so-called Sunim's place (monastery), and is quiet and tranquil. Here is where I sit and contemplate and examine what this mind is. Now, if this mind is not what Buddha is, then what else is it?
28. You have just heard a very rare talk. You should continue to look into this great matter enthusiastically. Do not hurry, otherwise you might become sick or get a terrible headache. Calm yourself, then ceaselessly meditate. Most of all, be careful not to force yourself. Rather, relax and let your right questioning be within!

Continued from page 7

As I laid down, I put my glasses next to the place where I was sleeping, thinking that they would be safe there. A few minutes later, Jane had to get up to use the bathroom. She lost her balance and stumbled, stepping on my glasses. She crunched them and absolutely smashed them. I don't think I ever told her that. So anyway, four-thirty the next morning comes, and it's time for interviews, so I put on my robe and go to practice, broken glasses and all! The interviews were in a yurt up on the top of this hill and the hill at this point had turned into a mudslide. It was very, very treacherous. My shoes had gotten ruined the previous night, so the only thing I had left were some sandals. Dae Soen Sa Nim rang the bell, and I began to trek up the hill for my interview.

Now the first thing that you have to understand is that Dae Soen Sa Nim and I are not alike in some ways. I am what in the South is referred to as a "rumpled person." I can put on brand new clothes, with pressed creases and the whole nine yards, but I will still look rumpled. And Dae Soen Sa Nim is always so elegant and properly creased and all of that. So when I'm around him I try very hard to be meticulous, but nevertheless he's still always adjusting my collar and fixing things for me.

So anyway, I got almost to the top of the hill, maybe two steps to go, when, suddenly, my feet went out from under me. I proceeded to slide twenty feet down this mudslide of a hill. When I got to the bottom, not only was my kasa and my robe all full of mud, even my underwear was full of mud. Everything was full of mud. And Dae Soen Sa Nim was continuing to ring the bell. Finally, I crawled my way back up and went into the interview room. Dae Soen Sa Nim looked at me and said, "What happened?" And at that moment, I just didn't give a damn anymore. He and the other Zen Master both tried to jump on me, and I just didn't care at all. So not only did I fight recklessly with them, but I actually finished a koan that morning that I'd been working on for nine years. As I left, I sat down to put on my sandals and the sun came out. It was shining brightly and the clouds had parted. I thought, "Gee, this really is a very beautiful morning." Then I heard Dae Soen Sa Nim laughing. He said to the other Zen Master, "Not bad."

That's the first kind of transmission. For me that process started a long time ago, it started when I was thirteen. That's transmission of the Buddhadharmā by direct experience.

Earlier, Jeff Kitzes JDPSN asked me about old hippies. When Dae Soen Sa Nim first came to this country, many of the early students were basically hippies. In some of the old photographs, you can see it; everybody's hair is down to their shoulder and so forth. But when one looks at a photograph taken ten years later, the students nearly all look like me, all of the hair has disappeared. We begin to look like him. Dae Soen Sa Nim told us in the early days, "You are all outside hippies, but you still have no freedom inside, so you must attain inside-freedom."

What finally convinced me to become a teacher in our School and eventually to love doing it so much was the model of Dae Soen Sa Nim himself. There's a wonderful story, it's one of my favorite Zen stories about Nam Chuan, the man who shook his sleeves in the story I told a few moments ago. This dialogue occurred about twenty-five years after the other. Nam Chuan was visiting one of his student's temples. They were preparing for a big ceremony to honor his teacher, Ma Tsu, who had died several years earlier. It was late at night and there were some young monks helping Nam Chuan to prepare the temple. Nam Chuan, in an off-hand manner, mused aloud, "I wonder whether Ma Tsu will actually show up for

tomorrow's ceremony?" One young monk, who was later known as Dung Shan, was working at the altar. He turned around and said to Nam Chuan, "I think that if he finds a companion, he might show up." Nam Chuan said to this young monk's teacher, "This fellow is a little green, but I think with some carving and polishing, we might make something out of him." To this Dung Shan replied, "Why do you want to put shackles on a free man and make him a slave?" Dae Soen Sa Nim's teaching is like that. He lets each one of us be Bob Moore or Barbara Rhodes or Richard Shrobe or Mark Houghton or whomever. So the bone of his teaching is always the same, but the freedom to express that teaching comes through each one of us as individuals. And that's second kind of true transmission. That's the transmission from master to the student.

Now I have taught in our School for ten years. But last year I also had a major heart attack. After I was moved out of the intensive care unit and put into a place where I could have flowers and so forth, I found this room with thirty-two bouquets of flowers waiting for me. And over a hundred telegrams and letters were sent to me. One nurse who had been on this ward for a long time said to me, "I've been working on this ward for nine years. I've never seen anything like this. What do you do?" And I said, "Well, I'm a teacher." And she said to me, "That must really be a wonderful job. I've never seen anything like this in this hospital." I have thought about her comment a lot. The sangha raised money so I was able to take the whole of last summer off from work and recover. I was able to keep my daughter in college and all sorts of other things because of the generosity of the sangha. One of the things I want to really make clear today is how much I appreciate all of you. I thank all of you from the bottom of my heart for your generosity and kindness. The process also made me realize why I had to be here today: I am here today to begin to pay all of you back. And that is also the final transmission, perhaps most important of all. It is the transmission from sangha to teacher.

I began this talk with the story about Buddha holding up a flower. He didn't hold that flower up just for the crowd at Vulture's Peak; Buddha held up that flower for this assembly, too. If our eyes are open and we can perceive directly that flower, it will never wilt, and it will last for ten thousand *kalpas*. The only thing that makes Buddha's flower wilt is if we check it, want it, think about it, analyze it. Then we will surely kill it. If we just perceive the flower, then we get everything. Mahakashyapa smiled: how wonderful!

[holds stick above head and then hits table with stick]

Zen Master Sol Bong went to Kung Sahn Hermitage to see his teacher, Zen Master Man Gong. Sol Bong asked, "Buddha held up a flower on Vulture's Peak in ancient times. What's the meaning?"

[hits again]

Man Gong held up one finger and Sol Bong bowed deeply before him.

[hits again]

Buddha held up a flower and Mahakashyapa smiled. Man Gong held up a finger and Sol Bong bowed. Are they the same or are they different?

KATZ!

Today is Transmission Day. "Bob" thanks you from the bottom of my heart; I hope that we're all together for ten thousand years, and that we can make this world not only a single flower but a single smiling flower.

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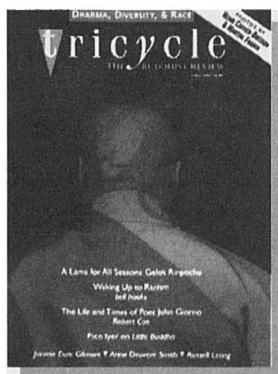
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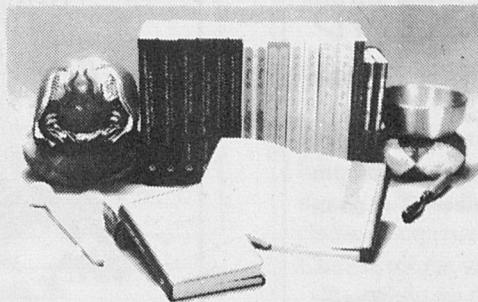
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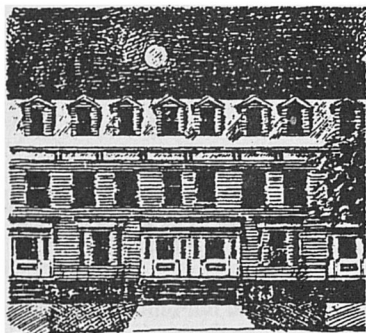
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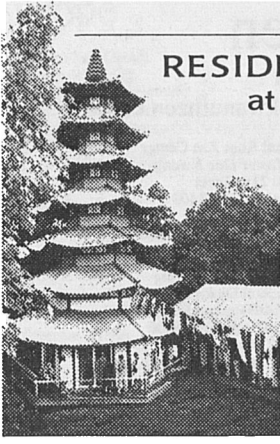
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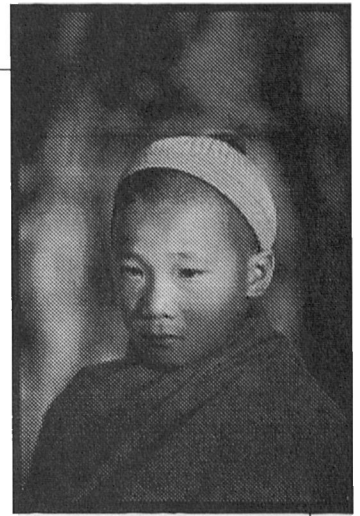
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