

Primary Point



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*Stanley Lombardo—
Zen Master Hae Kwang*

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*Ji Do Poep Sa Nims
Judy Roitman
and Paul Park*

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*European Sangha
Turns Twenty*

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The Kwan Um School of Zen supports the worldwide 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 24. The circulation is 4500 copies.

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Losing It

Is

Getting

This is an excerpt from a talk given by Zen Master Seung Sahn to the members of Hwa Gye Sah, our temple in Seoul, on the evening before Buddha's Enlightenment Day. Traditionally Buddhists will stay up all night practicing meditation on this night in emulation of the Buddha before his great enlightenment. Part one of two.

[Raises Zen stick over head, then hits podium with stick.]

Attaining enlightenment is losing enlightenment. Losing enlightenment is attaining enlightenment.

In our world everything has name and form. Everything that has name and form follows the flow of time and space—changing, changing, always changing. Not one thing remains the same. Buddha taught us that our world is impermanent. If we completely attain impermanence then we can find the one unchanging thing, the one unmoving thing. Since everything is changing, mountain becomes water, water becomes mountain. Everything appears and disappears. We call that the law of appearing and disappearing. So, attaining enlightenment is losing enlightenment. Losing enlightenment is attaining enlightenment.

One hundred years ago all the people gathered here today were not alive. Over the last one hundred years you all were born and appeared as a Korean person or as a Western person. But a hundred years from now, will you

still be alive? No! you will have to die. So we see that everything is changing, changing. Your body will soon be gone. Where is the master of this body? Where will the owner of this body go? In order to find the answer to that question you have come here to Hwa Gye Sah. You've become a member of Hwa Gye Sah. You chant and practice Zen here with other people.

[Raises Zen stick over head, then hits podium with stick.]

What is the meaning of this hit? This means no enlightenment to attain, no enlightenment to lose. A long time ago an eminent Patriarch said, "keep a mind which is clear like space." If we look ever more deeply into our true self and try to find it, then we see that it is completely empty—empty and clear like space. "Complete emptiness with nothing to attain" is our original mind—our original substance. That's where we come from and that's where we go. For that reason there is nothing to attain; nothing to lose. All opposites are

cut off: good, bad, right, wrong, holy and unholy. If all opposites are cut off, we call that complete emptiness. That is our original face, primary point.

In order to attain that point we've all gathered here to stay up all night practicing until Buddha's Enlightenment Day. You see many Western people here with big noses. They have been staying up many nights during Kyol Che practicing very late into the night. There are also four Russian people here practicing. How come our Hwa Gye Sah members don't come here and practice more? Even if you stay up this one night, is that enough? We have to do it. We have to attain where we came from and where we go. We gather here to enlighten ourselves.

If you practice hard then the true way appears in front of you very clearly. Then even though you lose your body, still your way is clear. So we must attain that. We must attain our true selves. All of us should stay up tonight and ask ourselves, "What am I?" After all, who is carrying around this body? If we always keep this great question we will attain one clear and pure thing. If we attain that, then we attain our true selves.

[Raises Zen stick over head, then hits podium with stick.]

What is the meaning of this?

This means that enlightenment is just enlightenment. Getting enlightenment is just getting enlightenment. Los-

ing enlightenment is just losing enlightenment. Not so long ago, the great patriarch Song Chol Sunim said, "Mountain is mountain, water is water." First we said that mountain is water, water is mountain. Next we went to the place where there is no mountain, no water. Now we say, "mountain is mountain, water is water." This is the place of attaining my true self. So, mountain is just mountain, water is just water. Our true self is like a clear mirror—a great round mirror. In this clear mirror everything is reflected. Mountain is just mountain reflected; water comes, just water is reflected. If we completely empty our mind it's like a clear mirror. Then everything in our world is reflected in my mind: mountain is reflected, water is reflected, everything is just reflected. We call that "truth like this," the world of truth. We also say that is true form or just truth.

First, we talked about the world of impermanence. Attaining enlightenment is to lose enlightenment. Losing enlightenment is getting enlightenment. Mountain becomes water, water becomes mountain.

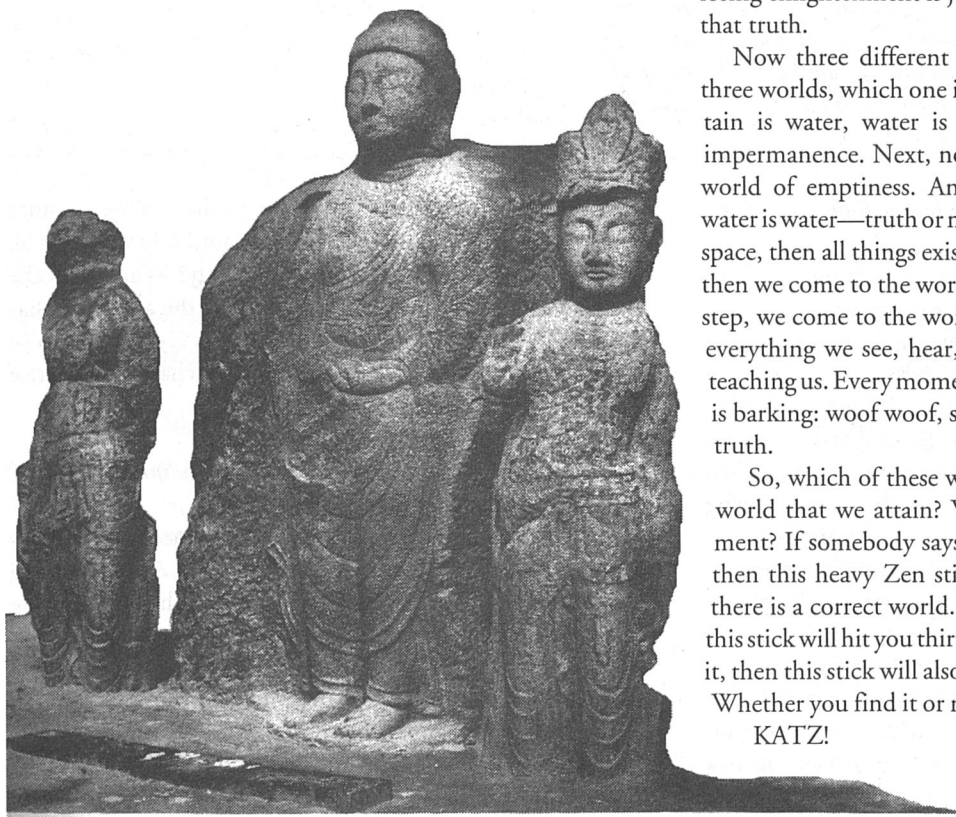
Next we went to the world of emptiness. Attainment is emptiness; also, no attainment is emptiness. Mountain is emptiness and water is emptiness. Complete and true emptiness.

Then, taking one more big step from the world of emptiness we come to the world of truth. Here everything is just as it is. Mountain is mountain; water is water. Attaining enlightenment is just attaining enlightenment; losing enlightenment is just losing enlightenment. We call that truth.

Now three different worlds have appeared. Of these three worlds, which one is the correct? Once again: Mountain is water, water is mountain. That's the world of impermanence. Next, no mountain, no water. That's the world of emptiness. And lastly mountain is mountain, water is water—truth or moment world. If we have time and space, then all things exist. If we transcend time and space, then we come to the world of emptiness. Taking one more step, we come to the world of truth. In the world of truth everything we see, hear, smell, taste and touch is always teaching us. Every moment is truth. The sky is blue, the dog is barking; woof woof, sugar is sweet. This is the world of truth.

So, which of these worlds is the correct? Which is the world that we attain? Which is the world of enlightenment? If somebody says that they found which is correct then this heavy Zen stick will hit you thirty times. Yes, there is a correct world. But, if you say that you found it, this stick will hit you thirty times. If you say you cannot find it, then this stick will also hit you thirty times. Why is that? Whether you find it or not, you get hit thirty times. Why?

KATZ!

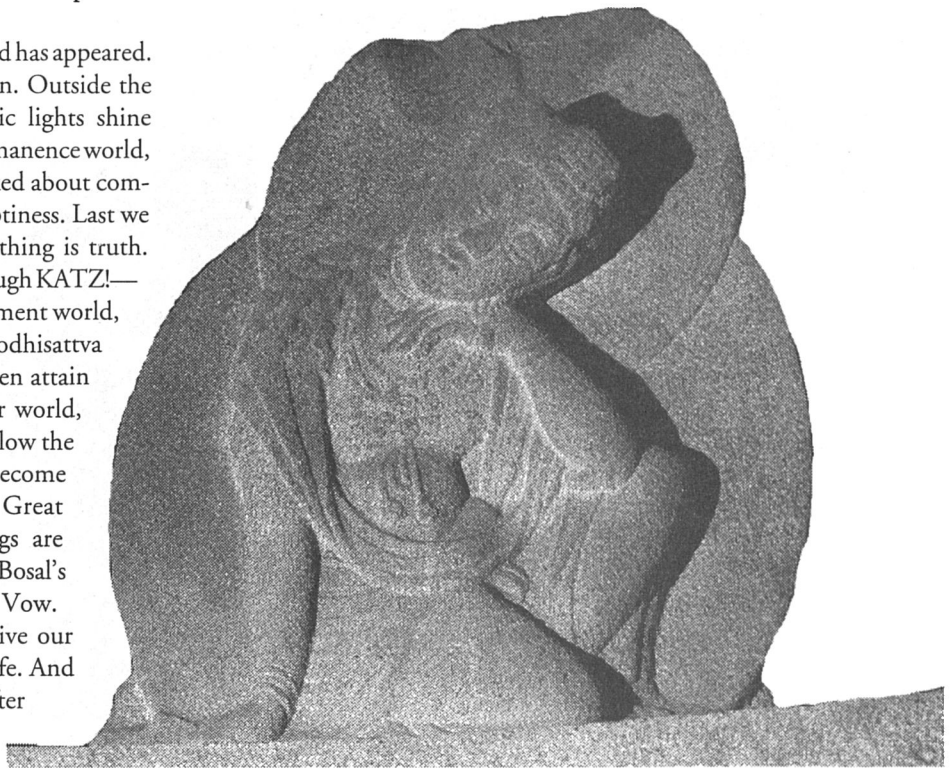


Outside the snow is shining white. Inside the electric lights make it possible for us to see each other very clearly. With this my dharma speech is finished.

Here we see that one more world has appeared. We call this the world of function. Outside the snow is white, inside the electric lights shine clearly. So, we talked about impermanence world, the changing world. Then we talked about complete emptiness, the world of emptiness. Last we talked about truth world—everything is truth. Then, going from truth world through KATZ!—primary point—we arrived at moment world, function. We call that the Great Bodhisattva Way. So, first attain the truth, then attain the bodhisattva way. World after world, lifetime after lifetime, I vow to follow the bodhisattva way, until all beings become Buddha. I vow to follow the Great Bodhisattva Way until all beings are saved from suffering. That's Ji Jang Bosal's great vow, the Great Bodhisattva Vow.

Carrying this great vow, we live our lives. That's our purpose in our life. And not only this life, but lifetime after lifetime, until all beings are saved. That's how we should live. Then my purpose in life is very clear. I eat breakfast early in the morning and lunch later in the day—for what? Why do I live in this world? Consider this right now. In Dongdaemun market and Namdaemun market many people come and go every day...very busy, very greedy. Aside from the time they spend making money, they have no time. Why do you live in this world? All of you who have gathered here today on the eve of Buddha's Enlightenment Day; you are just like Buddha: you also want to attain to your true self. You gathered here to practice just as the Buddha did under the Bodhi tree. You are here to find out what you are.

So, really ask, "Who am I?" This is my head, this is my hand, this is my body. But is this me? What is the true me? What is the one thing that brought this body to Hwa Gye Sah and is now sitting in this dharma room? What is that one thing? You have to find that thing, the one thing that brought this body here. If you are just attached to some kind of material thing, if you are just emotionally moved by some kind of material thing, than how are you different from a cow or a pig? How are we different from any animal? "This is a person," we say to ourselves. "This is not an animal." But we have to understand our human being's function before we can call ourselves a human being. We have to understand our human being's correct way before we can say that we are not just an animal. The Buddha saw the morning star and



got enlightenment. When he saw the morning star, he attained his true human nature—the way of a human being. If you attain to your human nature, then you can be called a human being.

Buddhism is not really religion. Our Buddhism means attain something, attain enlightenment. Look at this world... look at our country, Korea. Look at all things in this world changing. Recently several people wanted to become President of Korea. They spent a lot of money and time but they could not become President. If we look closely we see many people in this world who are ruled by the five desires of food, sex, money, sleep and fame. Many people live just for those things. If we throw those desires away, then we can find the correct way.

We should ask: "How can I attain to the true way? How can I save all beings?" That is the important question! We need a great vow. We need a great vow and strong will to save all beings. Even though I die, if I make this great vow, this vow will bring me back again as a human being. I will again seek the bodhisattva way; again come to Hwa Gye Sah; again attain to my true self; again save all beings. We have to make a great vow to save all beings. If we don't make this great vow then, after we die, how will we be reborn? What will happen to us? Don't stay in the five desires. Leave the five desires and live in the world of the great bodhisattva vow.

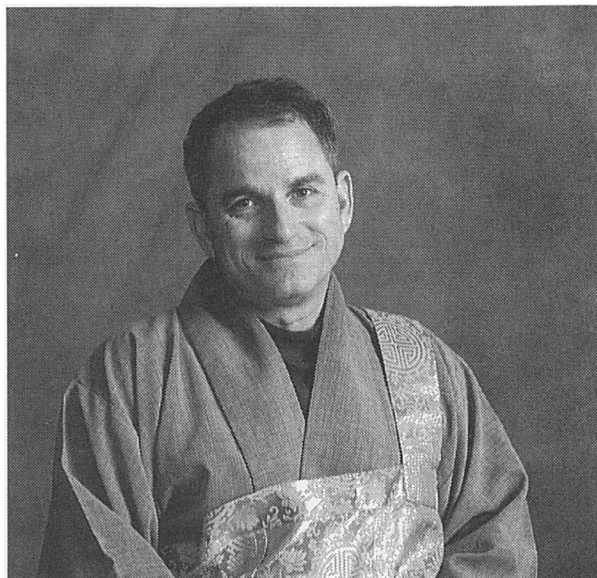
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Stanley Lombardo becomes Zen Master Hae Kwang

*Transmission Ceremony
at Providence Zen Center, April 4, 1998*

DHARMA COMBAT

- Q: So the Tao has no name.
Where is it?
ZMHK: You already understand.
Q: Please teach me.
ZMHK: Go to the bottom of
the pond.
Q: The pond over there?
ZMHK: Your Tao is very deep.
- Q: As one academic to another, I
have a question for you. Zen Master
Seung Sahn teaches that you must
become very, very stupid in your Zen
practice. Yet I look around and see a
Ph.D. here, a professor there, a Ph.D.
there. How did you all become so
stupid?
ZMHK: YOU already understand!
Q: Yes, but I am asking you.
ZMHK: A second offense is not
permitted.
Q: Thank you.
- Q [*a young girl*]: Me and my friend
were talking about the color of
nothing, and she thinks it is black and
I disagree. Could you tell me the color
of nothing?
ZMHK: Yes, I know it very well.
Your jumper is maroon.
Q: OK! [*she laughs*]
ZMHK: Don't forget when you
put it in your closet.
Q: I won't!



DHARMA SPEECH

*[Raises Zen stick over head, then hits
podium with stick.]*

Buddha shared his cushion with
Mahakashyapa in front of the Pagoda of
Many Children.

*[Raises Zen stick over head, then hits
podium with stick.]*

Buddha held up a flower on Vulture
Peak. Mahakashyapa smiled.

*[Raises Zen stick over head, then hits
podium with stick.]*

Mahakashyapa walked around
Buddha's corpse. Buddha's feet broke
through the coffin.

Three transmissions. What did
Mahakashyapa attain?

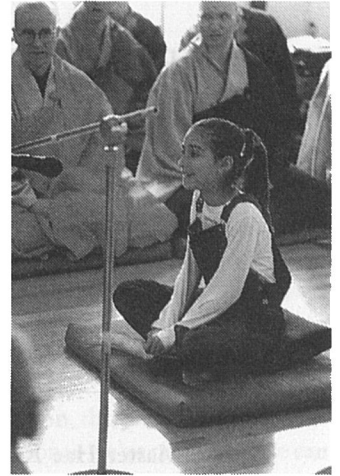
KATZ!

Venus was very bright in the eastern
sky this morning.

When I first met Zen Master Seung Sahn, Venus was in the evening sky, along with all the other planets. This was in the summer of 1978. We were in Big Sur, doing a kido, a three-day chanting retreat in a house overlooking the Pacific Ocean. Practice would end just as twilight deepened, and in the indigo western sky you could see Jupiter low on the horizon and then Mercury above it and then, going up the Zodiac, Venus and Saturn and Mars. It was a pretty cosmic line-up, and I was very excited about everything. This was my first retreat, first meeting with a Zen Master, and so forth. The house had a sauna, and after evening practice a bunch of us crowded into it. My back was really hurting from all the practice, and I stood up against the vent where the steam was coming out. I was standing there soaking in the warmth, and after a while Zen Master Seung Sahn came in. He said, "Oh, this sauna not very warm." Then he saw that I was standing in front of the vent, and he asked, "Why are you standing there?" I explained that the steam felt good on my sore back, and he looked me in the eye and said, "Only for you?" All day long we had been chanting the name of the bodhisattva of compassion, Kwan Seum Bosal, Kwan Seum Bosal, so I got the point and hurried over to the other side of the room and sat down. The only problem was that I took the last seat and there was no place for Zen Master Seung Sahn to sit down. Deciding not to waste any more words on me, he came over and calmly sat down in my lap. We were just sitting there sweating, but I was sweating more than anyone. At that time Zen Master Seung Sahn had a very substantial physique, so everybody started to laugh and make jokes like "Where does a three hundred pound Korean Zen Master sit down? Wherever he wants to. Ha, ha, ha." I sat perfectly still. So that was Zen Master Seung Sahn's first transmission to me.

About ten years later I was sitting a retreat at Bul Tah Sah in Chicago. During the second round of the late morning sitting, I heard someone whispering my name in the hall. It was Zen Master Seung Sahn, and he was motioning to me to come out of the dharma room. I went out to him and he said a car and driver were waiting and we were going for a little ride. I thought to myself, oh no, this is it. When we were in the car he explained that we were going to see a famous Chinese acupuncturist. Zen Master Seung Sahn and I were both recovering from leg injuries at the time. I had sustained my injury a couple of years before when in a moment of utter clarity after a retreat I walked through a glass door. Zen Master Seung Sahn knew I was still having trouble with it. He himself had fallen into an auto mechanic's pit at night. We were a real pair. When I first told Zen Master Seung Sahn about my injury, how I was in the hospital for a week with life-threatening complications, he said, "Oh good, you almost died." The acupuncturist was a wizened old practitioner. He had us both get undressed and lie down on a big bed. He looked me over and said without any prompting, "Glass into leg three years ago, no prob-

lem." Then he got out these huge needles, like knitting needles, and stabbed them into me all over my body until I looked like Saint Sebastian. He did the same thing to Zen Master Seung Sahn. Then he left us there for about a half an hour, groaning and bleeding on the bed. I was in a state of suspended animation, staring at the ceiling, utterly transfixed by the entire experience, listening to Zen Master Seung Sahn's groans. When the acupuncturist finally took the needles out and I stood up I found that almost all the feeling had returned to my right foot, which had been numb since the accident. I gave the old doctor all the money I had on me. When we were driving back to Bul Tah Sah, Zen Master Seung Sahn said, "That's a number-one acupuncturist."



I am very grateful to be fully clothed on this occasion—and in this fine gold brocade at that. Something is transmitted in a ceremony such as this, but it's impossible to say exactly what. Buddhist practice is a relentless search for mind and its correct function. Kyong Ho Sunim, the great-great grandfather in our teaching lineage, gave a famous dharma talk about the necessity of letting go of all our petty concerns and trivial preoccupations and devoting ourselves whole-heartedly to realizing our mind and helping this world. Zen Master Seung Sahn let me know this ceremony was going to take place by writing me a very simple letter, just two sentences. The second sentence was, "When you become a Zen Master, how will you save all beings?" This hit me very hard. I thought of my family and friends and teachers and how much they have helped me, and I am grateful to have so many of them here today. What is finally passed down is a job, the great work of life and death. We all have that job, and the only way we can do it is all together, family and friends guiding us along the ancient way.

[Raises Zen stick over head, then hits podium with stick.]

I take refuge in the Buddha, the Precious One, which is the original brightness of our mind.

[Raises Zen stick over head, then hits podium with stick.]

I take refuge in the dharma, the Precious One, which is the universe in all its purity.

[Raises Zen stick over head, then hits podium with stick.]

I take refuge in the sangha, the Precious Ones, and that's all of you, in all your shining perfection.

TWO NEW JI DO POEP SA NIMS APPEAR!

Inka Ceremony at Providence Zen Center, April 5, 1998

DHARMA COMBAT

Zen Master Hae Kwang: A lot of people think that I founded the Kansas Zen Center but I know that it was you who brought Zen Master Seung Sahn's teachings and practice to Kansas and founded the Kansas Zen Center, so I want to thank you for that and ask you: "Why did you do it?"

Roitman PSN: *[hits the floor]*

ZMHK: Only that?

RPSN: For you!

ZMHK: Oh, thank you very much!

Q: So, now this great poet becomes a great teacher. I have a question for you. "What is the unit and how can we find it?"

RPSN: *[laughter]* This is the first line of a very long series of poems I wrote about Bosnia—that is where she is taking this from.

[To the student] You already understand.

Q: Please teach me.

RPSN: The wall is white, the floor is brown. That's it.

Q: Thank you very much.

Mu Sang Sunim: Hi, Judy.

RPSN: Hi.

MSSN: You are a wife and mother and now becoming universal mother. So, usual mother and universal mother—are they the same or different?

RPSN: You already understand.

MSSN: So, I ask you.

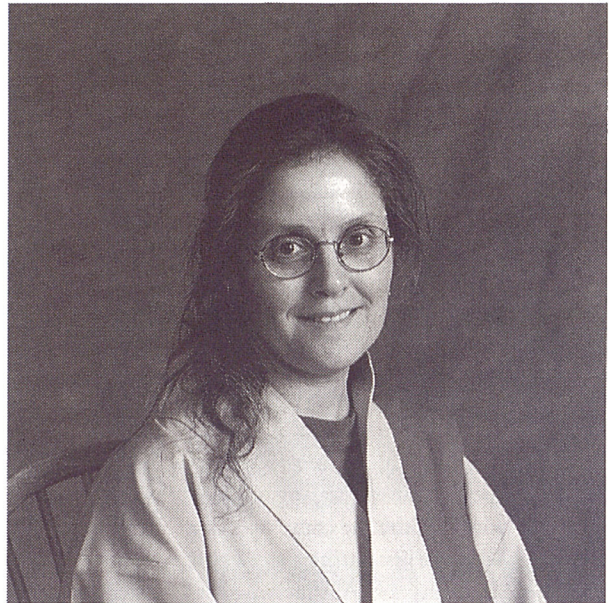
RPSN: Ben, did you take a shower today?

[laughter; Ben is the son of Roitman PSN and Hae Kwang Zen Master.]

MSSN: That is not correct.

RPSN: Oh, very correct. *[laughter]*

MSSN: OK.



Judy Roitman, JDPSN

DHARMA SPEECH

[Raises Zen stick over head, then hits table with stick.]

When Buddha was born he said "in the heavens above and the earth below only I am holy." But William Blake said "Everything that lives is holy."

[Raises Zen stick over head, then hits table with stick.]

Bodhidharma said "No holiness, clear like space."

[Raises Zen stick over head, then hits table with stick.]

When holiness shatters and no holiness is eaten by dogs, how will you find your true home?

KATZ!

Here we are, sitting or standing in the dharma room.

On October 6, 1976, on Yom Kippur, twenty-one years and six months minus one day ago, I first came to the Cambridge Zen Center.

Yom Kippur is really special, really holy. It's the day when God decides who will live or die. We fast—no food or water—for over twenty four hours. We are reminded of how much suffering there is in the world, and recite long lists of sins over and over. Very impressive.

Even when I had essentially stopped practicing Judaism, I still tried to honor Yom Kippur. So, on October 6, 1976, I thought I'd check out Zen.

I expected a bunch of solemn folks with shaved heads. Instead, Mark and Dyan were in full dharma teacher robes, chasing each other around the house squirting water at each other from plant sprayers. Paul asked me if I practiced any form of meditation, and when I proudly said I'd been counting breaths for the last two years, Peter whirled around from the sink where he was washing dishes and said "how many have you counted?" There was a big temple bell, and during the first chant we did full prostrations like my father the cantor did every Yom Kippur.

It was like coming home.

Nice little story, that, but, you know, it's really completely bullshit. Whenever things are that comfortable, you know something's coming up.

So a month or so later I've been practicing pretty regularly and Mark tells me that this Korean Zen Master is going to give a talk a couple of days before a retreat. Wow! A Zen Master! (although since he's Korean I'm not really sure of that). So I go, ready to be enlightened. At any minute, in fact. And two things happen.

The first I've told a lot of people: I didn't understand anything he said. Not just the English pronunciation (although there were places where this was a problem) but even when I knew the words they didn't make sense. "Is this a watch or not a watch?" "It's 8:15." What was going on? For the first time in my life I couldn't understand a thing.

The second I'm pretty ashamed of, so I'll tell it. There was this woman in the front row who asked a question and Zen Master Seung Sahn said "You are a very good Zen student. You must come to this retreat." And I thought: No! I am a very good Zen student, you want *me* to come to this retreat.

Call on me! Recognize me! Me me me!

Between the two things I just flipped out. I called a friend and said "come meet me right away, I'm flipping out." So she met me somewhere and we walked the streets of Cambridge, my arm chopping the air while I said "I don't know *anything*. I just don't know *anything*." She got this bemused

expression on her face and said "I had a friend who was hospitalized in Tangiers with a diagnosis of existential confusion."

So one type of sin we list on Yom Kippur—these are communal sins, no one can wiggle out of any of them—it's kind of hidden in the long lists, not in italics and boldface like it ought to be, is "the sins we commit by confusion of mind." This is very much like the first link in the chain of co-dependent origination: ignorance.

But this existential confusion, this is something else. We touch truth and it hurts. But once we've touched it we can't avoid it.

Because we really do know nothing, absolutely nothing. But who wants to admit that? So you taste that and freak out.

And when that *me me me* mind becomes so strong, somehow there is a taste of: wait a minute, this doesn't make sense, who is this "me" anyway? And when that question appears—well, that's it, you might as well spend the rest of your life practicing because it won't let you alone no matter how hard you try to avoid it.

Then what?

I know a man who is ninety-one years old. His goal is to live as long as possible. Why do that?

But when Su Bong Zen Master asked "What is the shortcut to Zen?" Zen Master Seung Sahn said "Not for me."

This "not for me" is very important. Why are we in this world? What is our purpose? Not for me.

So I would like to thank Zen Master Seung Sahn for his wonderful teaching, my husband and son for supporting my practice, and the sangha for everybody's hard training together.

[Raises Zen stick over head, then hits table with stick.]

Hui K'o, desperate, cut off his arm and gave it to Bodhidharma, saying "My mind is restless, please calm it down."

[Raises Zen stick over head, then hits table with stick.]

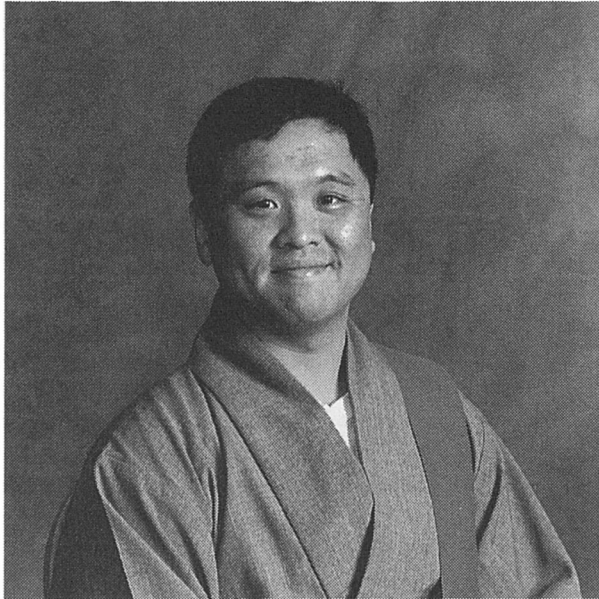
Bodhidharma said "Bring me your mind and I will calm it."

[Raises Zen stick over head, then hits table with stick.]

Hui K'o's mind and Bodhidharma's mind, are they the same or different?

KATZ!

The baby cries, the mother feeds her.



Paul Park, JDPSN

DHARMA COMBAT

Park PSN: Ji Bong Soen Sa, how are you today?

Ji Bong Zen Master: I am fine. I have only one question for you.

PPSN: That's all I need! *[laughs; audience laughs]*

JBZM: My question: What took you so long? *[laughs]*

PPSN: You already understand!

JBZM: No, I don't.

PPSN: Thank you very much for your teaching!

[laughter and applause from audience]

Q: Good morning, Paul.

PPSN: Good morning.

Q: I live at Hwa Gye Sah. At the end of last Kyol Che there were some Chinese nuns. They wanted to go to Gang Wal Do (which is on an island) where Zen Master Seung Sahn did a kido. But a Korean nun took them to Kang Wal Do and they ended up at So Rak Sahn (which is a mountain). So how can you help these nuns get to Gang Wal Do?

PPSN: You already understand!

Q: Please teach me.

PPSN: *[rows a boat]*

Q: *[laughs]* Thank you very much.

PPSN: How are you, Poep Sa Nim?

Jeff Kitzes, JDPSN: I am very well. And you?

PPSN: Real good. Thank you.

KPSN: So, I have a question. You live in Los Angeles. I live in the San Francisco Bay area. Both places are in California but, both are very different. I don't understand this. Could you please explain it to me?

PPSN: You already understand!

KPSN: So, please teach me.

PPSN: It takes me six hours to drive up to San Francisco from Los Angeles.

KPSN: Oh, very fast driver!

[audience laughs]

DHARMA SPEECH

[Raises Zen stick over head, then hits table with stick.]

Sky is earth. Earth is sky.

[Raises Zen stick over head, then hits table with stick.]

No sky. No earth.

[Raises Zen stick over head, then hits table with stick.]

Sky is sky. Earth is earth.

Which one of these three is correct? If you say you know the correct one, the stick will hit you thirty times. If you say you don't know the correct one, the stick will also hit you thirty times. Why is that?

KATZ!

Sky is blue. Earth is brown.

Seems I've been practicing Zen for only a few years, but already eighteen years have passed. When I was twelve years old, I remember that my mother and I went to the Korean temple, Dharma Sah, which had just opened in Los Angeles. There, for the first time, we met Seung Sahn Dae Soen Sa Nim. He gave a dharma speech that day. He said, "First you must find your true self. Then attain the truth and the wisdom, and lead a correct life by helping others." I didn't understand what the heck he was talking about. Afterwards, we sat for thirty minutes. You know, for a twelve year old boy, sitting for thirty minutes...it's an awful long time. It felt like an eternity. My body felt like it was on fire. I was just literally burning up. I said to myself, "I don't want to do this! I don't know why I'm doing this." So, I didn't sit meditation for several years after that. I still followed my mom to the temple, but I didn't sit. I just went and played. I remember I played a lot in the temple.

A few years passed; I got discharged from the Army. So, I decided to try sitting again. Again, every time I sat, my body felt like it was on fire. I just couldn't handle it. But, I kept on trying. I guess it was my karma to keep on trying, even though I was having such a hard time with sitting.

After a few years, I had gotten into my own business. It was a small fast food place. One day my mother, my very wise mother, suggested I do some bowing. She said, "It might help you with your business. It may help you with your sitting." I had been watching my mother do 108 bows every morning for several years. She never had any problem sitting, so I reluctantly tried bowing.

I started doing 108 bows in the morning. I had that same question, again. "Why am I doing this? I don't want to do this." But I kept on trying. I kept on trying. I continued

doing bows each morning. Then, one day I heard that Zen Master Seung Sahn does a thousand bows a day. I thought to myself, "Hmmm, if that old man can do a thousand bows per day, maybe I can do at least five hundred bows a day." The next day I woke up at 4:30 in the morning. I had probably never been up that early before in my life. I did my first set of five hundred bows. The one thing I remember is I kept saying to myself, "I don't want to do this. I don't know why I'm doing this. Why in the world am I doing this?" But, I kept on bowing anyway.

I continued bowing daily and I started to feel my center getting stronger. I was able to sit for a little longer period of time. Then, one day while I was sitting, I remembered Zen Master Seung Sahn's speech. He said, "First you must find your true self. Then attain the truth and the wisdom, and lead a correct life by helping others."

I couldn't understand what he meant by "true self." So, I started to sit with "What am I? What is my true self?" I felt my center getting stronger and stronger and I got stuck just like this, just like now. *[laughs]* I was totally stuck, just like now. *[audience laughs]* Boy, was I stuck! So, I sat with "What am I? What is my true self?"

Then, one day I was driving home from work. I finally realized this "don't know" mind I'd been carrying around with myself. I looked up at the sky and realized the sky is really blue. And dogs really bark "woof, woof." And trees are really green. And, then, sugar tasted really sweet. I realized that my true self and nature are not separate, but one.

But going one more step was necessary for me.

My mother, my very wise mother, had me bring her all the leftover bread from work so she could feed the birds and it wouldn't go to waste. I didn't think much of it back then. Now I realize she was teaching me that this was correct function. Our correct job is to help all beings—all sentient beings. That's doesn't mean just human beings, but every living thing in this world, including the birds. I still take bread to my mother's house, but I keep a portion of it because there are hungry birds around my house as well.

So, the first most important thing is doing hard practice and getting your center strong. Then, have that big question of "What am I?", attain your true self and the wisdom to lead a correct life.

For the last eighteen years, I have been practicing Zen. And I still don't know. But now, I know this "don't know."

KATZ!

Chili pepper is hot. Lemon is sour.

How may I help you?

TWENTIETH ANNIVERSARY OF THE EUROPEAN SANGHA

From India to China;
from China to Korea;
from Korea to America;
from America to Poland.

In Poland for twenty years—
a grey robe and white collar dance.
What will be the result?

Buddha does not know it.
Jesus also does not know it.

If you cut off Mind,
the three worlds become clear.
Do you understand this point?

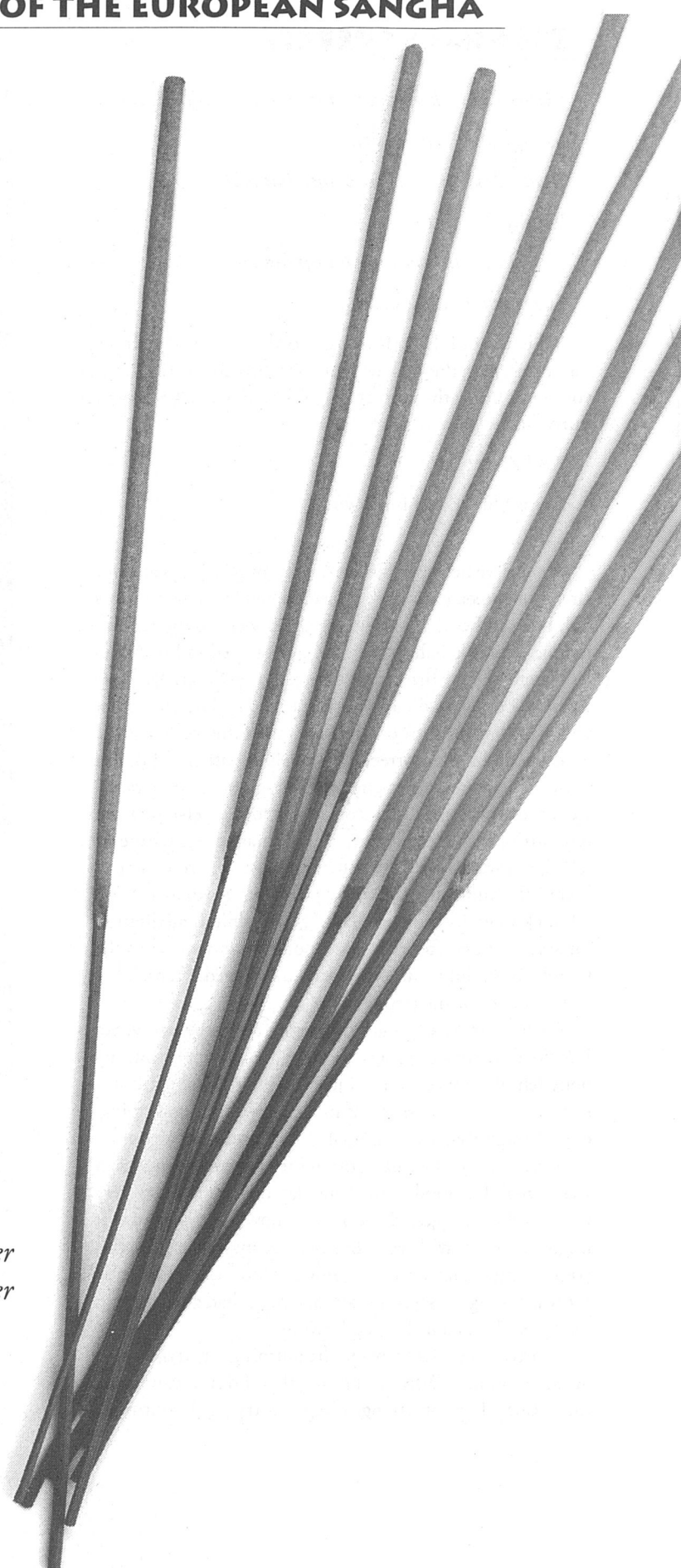
Careful! Careful!

What did you attain?

KATZ!!!

Today is Sunday, April 19, 1998
Happy Twentieth Anniversary!

*Wu Bong Zen Master
Warsaw Zen Center*





BOMB

ENLIGHTENMENT

Dharma speech by Zen Master Dae Kwang

[Raises Zen stick over head, then hits table with stick.]

This point is the birthplace of all Buddhas and Patriarchs, but Buddhas and Patriarchs do not understand this point. So, this point completely kills them.

[Raises Zen stick over head, then hits table with stick.]

This point is the source of all Buddhas and Patriarchs. It is the Absolute in all its purity, but this is just someone's idea.

[Raises Zen stick over head, then hits table with stick.]

This is the Truth. Buddhas and Patriarchs never leave this point. However, things are always changing, changing—so, how can they not leave this point? How can we ever escape this dilemma and be truly free?

HO!

Outside today it is cloudy, inside there are many bright and shining faces.

I would first like to congratulate the European sangha on your twenty years of sincere and strong effort. Also, congratulations to the Polish sangha on this wonderful new dharma hall. I'd especially like to thank our teacher, Zen Master Seung Sahn, whose tireless efforts around the world made all this possible.

Last night Zen Master Seung Sahn said that Zen started in China, then it went to Korea, then to the United States, and then to Poland. Receiving this great gift requires more than just thanks, but also a responsibility to practice, and to continue spreading this teaching.



Cutting the ribbon at the new dharma hall at Warsaw Zen Center: Zen Master Dae Kwang, Zen Master Wu Bong, Heila Downey JDPSN, Zen Master Seung Sahn, Grazyna Perl JDPSN, Mu Sang Sunim, Aleksandra Porter JDPSN

I'm very happy to be here in Poland. Actually, you don't know this, but for twenty years I've been secretly visiting Poland. For many years I've been seeing Polish faces at our Zen Centers around the world; so my eyes have visited Poland many times. Also, I've heard many people speaking Polish; at Providence Zen Center, Polish has become our second language. So, already my ears have visited Poland. Providence Zen Center also serves up some really good Polish food: lazanki, pierogi, barszcz, *[laughter]* prepared by the Perl family. So, my tongue too has visited Poland many times. However, better than all of that, this Friday I actually came to Poland.

So far I've had two exciting experiences. The first thing I saw were these strange, round balls in many of the trees. I'd said I'd never seen anything like that in my life. The driver laughed and said, "That's mistletoe." I always thought that mistletoe was just something that you hung from the doorway at Christmas which gave you an excuse to kiss a girl. *[laughter]* Now I know where mistletoe comes from. The other thing I saw was storks. Wow, I had no idea how big storks really are. And their nests are even larger—in fact, huge would be an understatement—even bigger than an apartment in Hong Kong!

The Buddha taught that our world is always changing, changing; that's impermanence. Poland is a perfect example of this. Someone recently told me that twenty years ago you had very little... no food, no nothing. Then the government changed. Suddenly, within days, there was plenty of food for sale in the stores. That's our life—always changing. Good,

The Polish sangha heartily expresses thanks to everyone who so generously contributed the new Dharma Hall building. There's still work to be done on the bathrooms, robe room, and main entrance, so donations to finish the project would be wonderful!



Inside and outside the new dharma hall at Warsaw Zen Center

bad, up, down, all around. Changing is not the real problem; the problem is that human beings want something. One time I was discussing a little problem at the Zen Center with Zen Master Seung Sahn. He leaned over and shared a "secret" teaching with me: "Everybody wants something." [laughter] This is also the Buddha's teaching. Buddha said that everybody wants something; because of that, they suffer. Therefore, change is no problem if you don't want anything for yourself. However, if you want something, all the suffering in the world appears from that point.

A couple of days ago we had a very interesting experience in Lodz. After finishing a two-hour session of sitting and interviews, we all went downtown to have lunch. We had just parked the car when there was loud noise—BOOM!—glass and debris were blown all over the street. A bomb had

gone off in a small bar. Soon there were police and firemen everywhere. We went on to dinner. That night during a public talk we had just begun three minutes of meditation, when—BOOM!—another bomb went off. At that moment, everybody got "bomb enlightenment." [laughter] These bombs are no good or bad; that's our world's karma, cause and effect. But these bombs mean suffering, because they come from a mind which wants this and doesn't want that. Our teaching is very clear: cut off all likes and dislikes, then your Original Mind appears, very clear—then helping this world is possible.

Our European sangha is a very clear example of that. Indeed, this twenty years is not twenty years. This is just the beginning of our big job, because in our world there's still a lot of suffering. I have a kong-an for you: One time Man Gong Zen Master was walking past the temple garden. It was Kyol Che time, so there were many monks in the Zen hall. In the garden was an old man working, hoeing the ground. The old man looked at Man Gong Zen Master and said, "Master, what are those monks doing, sitting in there looking at the wall?" If you were Man Gong Sunim at that time, how could you answer this old man?

Now our sangha has a new dharma hall here in Warsaw—that's wonderful. But most important is, what will you be doing in this dharma hall? That's a big question.

A twenty year celebration is great. But how can you really attain twenty years of practice?

[Hits table with the Zen stick three times.]

Happy Twentieth Anniversary to all of you. Thank you very much.

Sounds of loud shouting, heavy jackboots thumping along the corridor—CRASH! CRASH! as big fists hit our compartment door, a voice screams out in Russian. From behind, I fumble to open the closed door. More shouting! At last I open the door. My gaze falls on three huge Russian military men in olive tan great coats, fully armed, demanding, as far as I can make out, our passports. I hesitate a moment—big mistake. The front giant shouts at me and extends his gloved hand in my direction. Welcome to Belarus, where the Soviet Empire still lives. Traveling with Poep Sa Nim sure has its moments!



ON THE ROAD WITH HEILA DOWNEY JDPSN

by Rodney Downey, The Dharma Centre

It all started at the end of February, when I flew from sunny hot South Africa to join Downey PSN in cold, cold Poland for the last few days of Kyol Che there. Then we were to travel by train to Lithuania where Poep Sa Nim would lead a three day retreat. Then to St. Petersburg, Russia for another three day retreat, after which, still by train, we would travel back to Warsaw for a day, then fly home.

It was wonderful to be able to join in the last three days of Kyol Che and experience the much talked about “Polish try try mind.” About thirty people from all over Europe attended the last week. So many voices for the circle talk in two languages that it took over two hours to complete! Then we had a special last lunch with lots of goodies and of course present-giving to Downey PSN. She is much loved by the Polish sangha and this is echoed by the Czech, German and Slovak sanghas.

That evening about ten of us who were still at the center sat around a bonfire drinking hot beer and herbs, talking and, for me, getting to know some of the sangha. It was really funny sitting next to the fire as the temperature was below 0°C, so the front half of your body roasted and the back half froze!

The next few days were spent exploring Warsaw and getting to know Aleksandra Porter PSN, her husband John, and a few of the sangha. Then, we “hit the road” in a manner of speaking. We in fact caught an ex-Warsaw Pact train for Vilnius.

Vilnius, the old capital of Lithuania, is one of those rare and beautiful cities that you suddenly find when you least expect it. We were met by Hubertas and Agne, who lead the Kwan Um School in Zen in Lithuania, together with Rita

and many of the sangha. We left the station and drove into the old city to our luxury apartment. Bedroom, sitting room and bathroom in an old building that is being renovated and turned into a small hotel, then to our first meal and Zeppelins! Traditional food of the region. Later that afternoon we drove to Kaunas, about 150 km away, to give our first talk. Downey PSN so inspired a man who attended the talk that the following month he gave a double-decker bus to the sangha, free of charge, in order that they could drive to Poland to be at the twentieth anniversary.

The following day we explored Vilnius and that evening gave another talk, and at 5:00 a.m. the next day started Yong Maeng Jong Jin. The Zen Center building is deep inside a pine forest, no running water, and half the building without heat (which at -5°C is cold!) The loo was a real “dry shit on a stick” type, a hundred meters from the building and by the end of the first day under thick snow! But as Zen Master Seung Sahn always says, “Difficult situation, good practice; easy situation, poor practice.” How true. Here practice is strong and the students all eager, not only in their sitting but according to Downey PSN, “they all have very strong try minds” in the interview room. By the end of the retreat it was obvious that the Lithuanian sangha and Downey PSN had “hit it off.” The Kwan Um School of Zen started in Lithuania the same year as in South Africa, 1991—but under much more difficult circumstances. However, the Lithuanians are a proud and many-talented people who care a great deal and I have a feeling that the sangha will grow and grow. We left late one night bound for St. Petersburg—ten hours away—but far far away from what were used to!

continues on page 18

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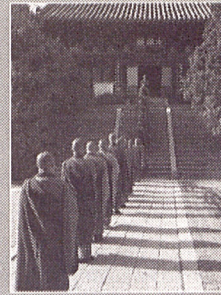
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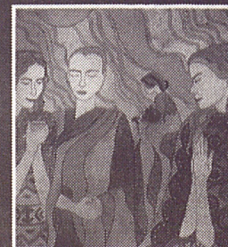
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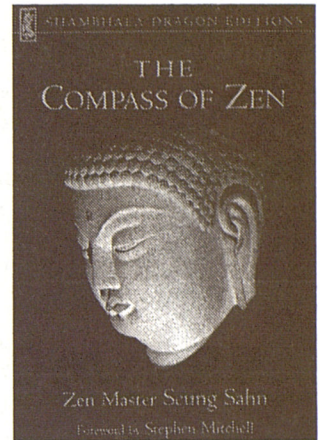
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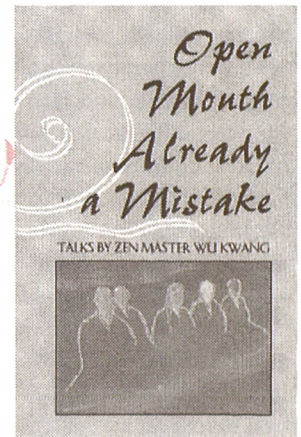
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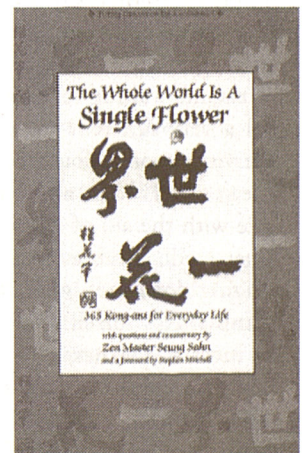
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continued from page 15

Russia! One pictures a land as seen through the eyes of history—Ivan the Terrible, Catherine the Great, Napoleon's great retreat from Moscow, Stalin's purges, "Barbarossa" (Hitler invasion 1942), May Day parades in Red Square and Lenin's tomb. It's all that and more! We arrived at about midday in thick snow at Warsaw station in St. Petersburg, and were met by Boris and Olga, who are leading the group in St. Petersburg, and five other members. We all jumped into taxis and drove across the city to Olga's flat in Sleep City.

Sleep City is a dorm of St. Petersburg—about three million people live in this space in vast impersonal high rise apartments with not a tree, park bench or kiddies playground in sight, and until Russia opened up a few years ago, there were no shops, restaurants or anything. Russian life is difficult, hard and crowded. But the people are warm, hospitable and eager to learn about everything. At the flat we got to know each other over tea and cookies. That evening we left the flat, walked through the thick snow to the main road to try to stop a car to take us to the Center where we were going to give the talk—yes, just stop any car on the road and ask, for a fee, if he/she will drive you where you want to go!

Sounds crazy but it works. We traveled to and from the Center for three days this way. The Kwan Um School of Zen sits in the only Buddhist temple in St. Petersburg, a Tibetan temple built in 1916 and taken over by the Soviets in 1924, who used the building as a laboratory. It was returned to the Tibetans only three years ago and now houses twenty monks and two lamas. Our school is very welcome and practices there twice a week.

The retreat started the morning after the talk. Poep Sa Nim and I stayed the night in Olga's flat, getting up at 4:15 a.m. and after dressing in what seemed like a hundred layers of clothes, left the apartment and walked through snow about forty centimeters deep to the roadside to "pick up a car." Arriving at the Center, we were amazed to find forty-five retreatants waiting for bows! For interviews, Poep Sa Nim had a very different room to what we normally call the interview room—four meters by three meters, but over fifteen meters high, and very cold. The cold we could fix a little with the aid of a heater—but the shape of the room! What made it more interesting was the live electric wires hanging down one wall; if you got close you could have electrocuted yourself. Still, for Poep Sa Nim this was home for most of the next three days as, with so many people needing to speak through an interpreter, most of the day was taken up with interviews. Out of the forty-five who attended the retreat, thirty-eight had never done a retreat before, and those who had, had only sat one or at the most two retreats.

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Nobody was familiar with the form, so I was asked to be head dharma teacher, which was a tougher job than I expected as, when I walked with the encouragement stick, everyone asked for it! By the time I returned to my seat I was covered in sweat despite the coolness of the room.

The abbot of the temple (a wonderful man) had given permission for one of the monks to attend the retreat. He participated in everything, *including the interviews*, bowing, sitting, chanting, walking and eating—but you could see by day two, his legs were suffering which I thought was strange, until I found out that the monks there can only start meditation after eight years and this was his first retreat. Something really special must have happened to him on the last day, as coming out of the interview he did three full prostrations towards the room before returning to his seat.

Three days passed in a flash. My admiration for the Russians grew and grew. Such strong practice. Many of the retreatants had to sit on bits of carpet, rolled up sweaters, or sleeping bags as the sangha had no zafus. To sit like this on your first retreat takes some guts! At the last meal at the end of the retreat we were joined by the abbot and Tantra Master who had kept a quiet eye on this retreat. The abbot said to Downey PSN that this was the most powerful retreat that had been held at the temple and invited her back, also inviting her to teach at their new temple being built in Butan when it is finished.

That evening we held a party at Olga's flat—eleven people packed into her tiny kitchen (six square meters) plus the stove, sink, table and cupboard. Great fun, eating and drinking Russian tea. The next few days we spent exploring St. Petersburg—vast churches, museums and stately palaces. The first day the sangha drove us around to show us the layout. The next day Sasha, the abbot of the Russian sangha, took us to "the Hermitage" and other great buildings. The following day we went exploring on our own via the great metro system which is the deepest metro I have ever been on. It takes ten minutes by escalator from top to the bottom. Each station is a work of art—clean and not a sign of graffiti.

We left Russia by train late at night. In fact the train left Warsaw station at 11:00 p.m. Notwithstanding the lateness of the hour, eighteen sangha members turned up to wish Poep Sa Nim and me farewell and express love from Russia. "Please come back to Russia for another retreat," were their parting words. The train rushed off into the night. As we turned into our bunks the only sound was the "clackety-clack" as the wheels hit the rails.

What an adventure, what an experience; so many new friends...what a wonderful thing is the dharma!



Before (1978): Diana Lynch, Ezra Clark, Zen Master Seung Sahn, Sherry Rochester, Mu Sang Sunim (David Gerber) and Merrie Fraser



Twenty years later (1998): Front row—Enrique Iranzo, Diana Lynch, Zen Master Seung Sahn, Mu Sang Sunim; middle row—Myo Ji Sunim, Ji Soen Sunim; back row—Piotrek Bogdanowicz, Jo Potter, Leo Steindl and Mu Shim Sunim

Zen Master Goes to Europe, Twenty Years Later: Some Subversive Thoughts

Mu Sang Sunim, Dharma Zen Center

*I am only poking open a hole;
my students will go through.*

Zen Master Seung Sahn

Twenty years ago I was one of six Zen students who accompanied Dae Soen Sa Nim on his first trip to Europe. We saw a lot of sights, met a lot of people, ate a lot of food, and, in passing, watched in awe as Dae Soen Sa Nim began the transmission of Zen to Europe. (I chronicled the trip in *Zen Master Goes to Europe*, which I am hoping to publish soon.)

One story from that time: we are all sitting with a group of Zen students in Poland. Dae Soen Sa Nim, as he has done so many times before, picks up a cup and says, "If you say this is a cup you are attached to name and form. If you say it is not a cup, you are attached to emptiness. So is this a cup or not?" One student gets up, walks in front of the Zen Master, picks up the cup and smashes it to the floor where it shatters! Without batting an eye, Dae Soen Sa Nim says, "Ah, too strong! You understand one, you don't understand two." Then he proceeds to show that the proper answer is just to pick up the cup and drink it—breaking it is not necessary.

Last April senior dharma teacher Diana Lynch from Berkeley and I went back to Europe on a two-week trip with

the Zen Master to attend the Twentieth Anniversary Ceremony of the European sangha, where we were joined by Zen Master Wu Bong, now guiding teacher for the European sangha, who had also been there at the beginning. Zen Master Dae Kwang, our school abbot, Grazyna Perl JDPSN, abbot of the Centre Parisien de Zen Kwan Um, Mu Shim Sunim JDPS, who lives at Hwa Gye Sah in Seoul with Dae Soen Sa Nim, Heila Downey JDPSN, abbot of our South African sangha and Myo Ji Sunim, abbot of our Korean temple in Queens, New York, came as well.

The ceremony could be seen as celebrating our school's appearance in Europe as a whole. Now twenty years later we have a European head temple in Paris; the Polish head temple in Warsaw; and (alphabetically) centers or groups in Amsterdam, Barcelona, Berlin, Beograd, Bratislava, Brussels, Budapest, Cologne, Gdansk, Krakow, Palma de Mallorca, Prague, Riga, St. Petersburg, Vienna, Vilnius, Zurich—and other cities too numerous to mention.

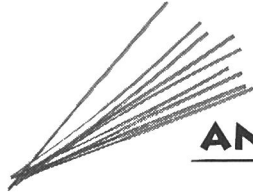
Rather than chronicle the short, if exciting, history of European Zen, I will just jot down some thoughts which appeared on the trip and which I hope the reader will find interesting. These will fall under the categories of teachers and students, Europe and America, and Zen Master Seung Sahn in action.

*If I had come here [to Poland] to teach people,
I couldn't do anything.*

Zen Master Seung Sahn

An interesting remark. What does it mean?

Going to Europe, seeing hordes of Zen students and lots of second-generation teachers as well, makes any competitive Zen student think: why not me? Why aren't I out there teaching and getting bowed to. Maybe this is Dae Soen Sa Nim's big trap for us all, teachers and non-teachers alike. If you think you need a title, or even some level of attainment, to be complete—then you're not complete. That's clear



enough, isn't it? As Dae Soen Sa Nim told me long ago, "Just put it all down right now, then you are already complete."

There's a documented sickness in the literature called "waiting for enlightenment." We can wait and wait, wondering when we'll have a "big experience," when we'll finally get certified and recognized. Meanwhile our life is passing us by. As Strether says in Henry James' *The Ambassadors* (a novel about Americans and Europeans, by the way) the most terrible thing in life is never to have had one's life. What a pity that is!

As for the teacher-student question, a student once asked Dae Soen Sa Nim: "Some people become teachers and then seem to think, 'I am a teacher; you are (only) a student.' Is this correct?" Dae Soen Sa Nim answered, "Teacher means having no I. So 'I am a teacher' is not so good."

Another time a newly-minted Zen Master once remarked that it was a shame people didn't realize that his transmission meant that he had the same mind as Dae Soen Sa Nim. On hearing of this Dae Soen Sa Nim said, "That's O.K., but I have no mind." He also remarked that Zen Masters come in many different levels.

But of course I, in the middle of drinking wine (dreadful thought!) and eating cheese in Paris, after a blissful day of walking among French gardens and being transfixed by the paintings of Van Gogh, had to come up with the idea—wouldn't it be fun to return here some time and teach people. Suddenly I felt my mind sag—I had made myself another project, and it wasn't really going to be that much fun after all. Then I realized that what is really wonderful about traveling to Europe is learning from everyone there—and not wanting to teach anybody anything. Just to come and live in a Zen Center and do together-action with all who come, experiencing directly the history, traditions and traits of character that make the people of each country different from those of another and all of them different from our own—that is the really great experience. *That* is enlightening. Our practice together makes this "grand tour" a real education, makes it possible to digest and learn from it all rather than have our experiences calcify in some split-off corner of the mind, only to emerge in old age as the "long-ago memories of my youthful European adventures."

I shared these ruminations with Grazyna Perl JDPSN, who told me she had had a similar experience. When she first came to Paris and established the Centre Parisien de Zen Kwan Um she felt called upon to be a teacher. "I must teach them!" Then she felt like she was butting her head against a wall. Finally she relaxed and began enjoying her life—the everyday life which Zen Masters have talked about from

Nam Cheon onwards—and things began to fall into place—including, of course, her teaching.

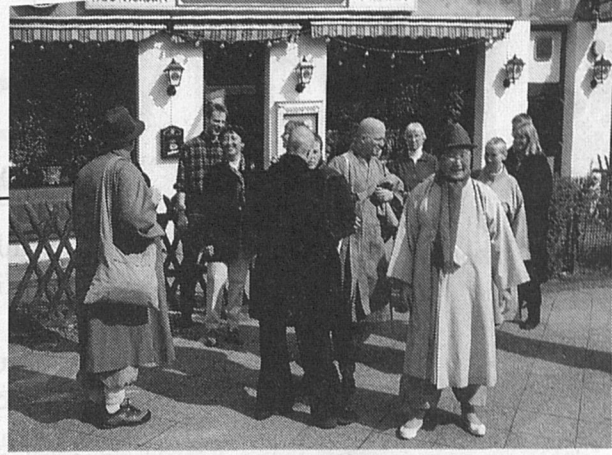
The history of the past century—think of Vietnam—doesn't show that we Americans like to learn very much from other peoples, and maybe as Zen students we are not so different from our compatriots. Political imperialism can give way to spiritual imperialism—what a thought!—although our spiritual imperialists are more often identified with Disney and Spielberg than with the Kwan Um School of Zen. We all like to think we know it all, we have all the answers, and other people should listen to us. But Europe has been a school for Americans for a long time, since well before there were any Zen students in America, and there are well-known lessons that Europe has to teach us. The wine, the cheese, the gardens, the paintings and sculpture—all are talking to us—wake up, o ye sons of Puritans! Live! Relax! Enjoy!

For if we Americans are to attain true freedom, perhaps we must throw off the awful cloak of Puritanism which has covered our emotional lives, without embracing the much-feared (at least by us) license of "Dangerous Liaisons." Maybe it seems anachronistic to be talking of Puritanism in the post-Playboy era, but aren't Puritanism and Playboy just two sides of the same coin? If we think we can practice and get enlightenment without confronting our true emotional nature, we will have an awful shock when we die, if not sooner. My experience of Europe is that it can help us to see sides of ourselves that we have repressed and help us become whole. Then we can truly help others. "In the three worlds, all Buddhas of past, present and future simultaneously become the path. On the ten levels, all beings on the same day enter into Nirvana."

So I have to thank all of our European students, and especially the Polish sangha, which has practiced so hard for the past twenty years. In Poland we are always greeted by great crowds of Zen students, eager to see Dae Soen Sa Nim and receive his teaching. The Polish students this time were also quite pleased to meet Zen Master Dae Kwang, who was visiting Poland for the first time and gave interviews together with Zen Master Wu Bong. Dae Kwang Soen Sa for his part was overwhelmed by the sincerity and strength of the Polish Sangha. Aleksandra Porter JDPSN is presently the only Ji Do Poep Sa residing in Poland (Myong Oh Sunim JDPS, Dorota Krzyzanowska, is currently practicing in Korea) and her burden has been quite heavy. But she and her family and all the sangha were unfailing in their hospitality to Dae Soen Sa Nim and all the visitors from many countries, making us all feel incredibly lucky and welcome.



Before (1978): Mu Sang Sunim (David Gerber), Merrie Fraser, Ezra Clark, Louise Stanton, Sherry Rochester and Zen Master Seung Sahn



Twenty years later (1998): Mu Sang Sunim, Jo Potter, Mu Shim Sunim, Diana Lynch, Zen Master Seung Sahn, Ji Soen Sunim

In five weeks time the Warsaw sangha built a new dharma room at its headquarters in Falenica, an industrial-suburban area of Warsaw. The dharma room was just ready for the Twentieth Anniversary Ceremony on April 19. One hundred square meters large, the room was already filled to overflowing at ceremony time with Polish Zen students and friends, visitors from many European countries, our American group, and even a group of Koreans posted to Warsaw by their businesses and quite fascinated by Polish Buddhism.

In addition to visiting Warsaw, our group took a quick trip to Crakow, where Dae Soen Sa Nim gave a dharma talk, and we visited the Crakow Zen Center, as well as the Wawel fortress and the beautiful market area of the town.

We also spent time and had ceremonies and dharma talks on this trip in Paris and Berlin, both of which had opening ceremonies for the new Zen Centers just last year, and both of which have only been able to function due to the dedicated efforts of their teachers, Wu Bong Soen Sa and Grazyna Perl JDPSN, as well as the abbots, directors and many dedicated students I haven't the space to name here. (I might mention that a good number of these students are Polish!—their influence spreads far and wide.)

It is a measure of Dae Soen Sa Nim's greatness as a teacher, I believe, that the European sangha has been able to function these last several years largely in his absence. He has never wanted to be, although we have often considered him, indispensable. He has always pushed us to learn to function on our own. Still for me Dae Soen Sa Nim remains as wonderful a figure as ever, and as ever full of surprises. Just before leaving for Europe, while visiting the publishers of his *Compass of Zen* at Shambhala, he told them, "I am an atom bomb." Watching him, I am sure that nobody doubted it.

I have a story of my own about Dae Soen Sa Nim on this trip. One morning we returned from Crakow on a very early train to Warsaw so we could make a particular social lunch

obligation that I was not at all interested in attending. But the Zen Master wanted me to go, so I said I would. Meanwhile however, on the train Dae Soen Sa Nim also decided he would give a formal dharma speech at the Warsaw Zen Center that night, making for a rather full day. Well, after the lunch I had already had my fill of togetherness, so before the dharma speech, during evening chanting, I felt sick and left, happy to walk back alone the forty minutes to our hotel, where I immediately recovered. The next morning Dae Soen Sa Nim confronted me. "Why weren't you there?"

"You made me go to lunch, so I got sick!" I hissed angrily.

"Oh, you ate too much so you were sick. That's *your* problem."

"No I didn't eat too much. I was angry."

"Then you must control your feeling and condition!" the Zen Master shouted.

"I am sorry," I said softly.

"That's O.K." the Zen Master said. "No problem." He gave me a big smile. And that was the end of it!

Dae Soen Sa Nim, in my experience of him, never holds onto anything and is always so precisely in the moment that he makes the supremely difficult look easy. That is why his teaching has spread to so many different countries; that is why so many people love him; and that is the example that all of us, teachers and students, Americans, Asians and Europeans, will have to live up to in the years ahead. I hope we can enjoy ourselves and each other as we try.

A postscript: I apologize for "the American angst and explaining the whole world through only American cultural icons and experiences," as one European friend remarked on reading a draft of this article. But, European Zen students—I must invite you to please contribute your own points of view here, since for myself I am stuck with being indelibly American.



Only This— !

While in quiet meditation
my listening became so acute and clear
that I recognized my thoughts
in the bird's staccato chatter
punctuating the swelling strain
of the cicadas,
and in the bare, slender silence
of my surroundings
before they thundered forth
as a crashing storm,
and too, within the erratic groans
of the passing cars and trucks
and the nuance of the Autumn breeze
faintly fluttering the falling leaves.
Each sound alone and all together
wordlessly echoed everything
there was to know and not to know
until this thought was again
just this thought,
and this sound,
only this— !

Nooy Bunnell

It's alright!

There's no one home—
you can spend the night

outside the rain

remembering

to not be there
when someone

knocks on the door

Victor Sessan

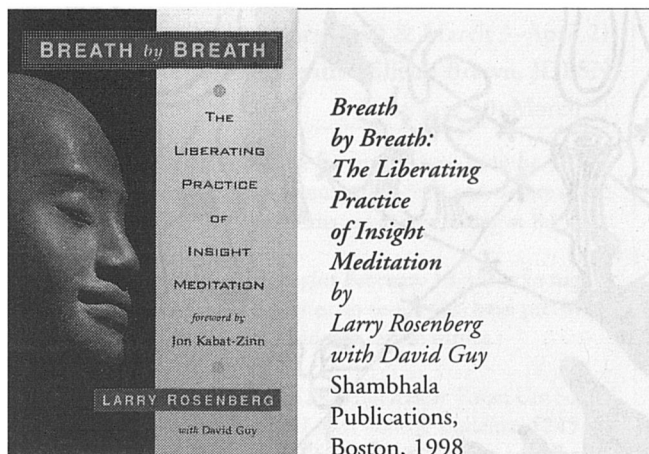
The Secret of Joy

All the teachers say, "Wake up!
Life is right here: inside you,
in front of you, all around you!"
What good is all their talking?
The part of you that's awake is already awake.
The part that's asleep is still sleeping.
What can a few more words do?
Almost every day I remember the secret of joy.
That will do.

Roger Keyes

BOOK REVIEW

~~~~~ Tony Somlai



*Breath  
by Breath:  
The Liberating  
Practice  
of Insight  
Meditation*  
by  
*Larry Rosenberg  
with David Guy*  
Shambhala  
Publications,  
Boston, 1998

Larry Rosenberg, author of *Breath by Breath*, is a meditation teacher who draws a clear practice map for students on the path of insight meditation. He uses the four tetrads (body, feelings, mind, and wisdom groups) of the Buddha's Anapanasati Sutra as the compass to aid meditation students in their practice. The book is drawn from a series of forty talks given over a three year period and is particularly flavored with stories and insights for western students. Larry Rosenberg acknowledges the influences of his spiritual teachers: J. Krishnamurti, Vimala Thakar, Zen Master Seung Sahn, Ajahn Buddhadasa, and Thich Nhat Hanh. This acknowledgment of the teachers who influenced him is a strength of *Breath by Breath*. Larry Rosenberg is an honest teacher who has deep respect for his "roots."

The "Breathing with the Body" tetrad investigates the relationship of the breath with the four postures of sitting, standing, walking, and lying down. He instructs his students to "disappear into the breathing and leave all the bones behind, all the preoccupations, worries, plans, fears, all the stuff that makes up the mind." He likens this mind to a "yenta" that gossips about others, berates itself, and continuously makes things. Breath meditation helps us to accept life as it is. What is more important, Rosenberg has students "use that calm mind, even the joy that comes from it, to look deeply into ourselves." He points to a direction that is always toward knowing.

"Breathing with Feelings" was the one section of the book where I made very few notes for this review. Perhaps it comes from my prejudice and biases as a psychologist against a culture that spends way too much time investigating (read becoming attached to) emotions and feelings. Rosenberg clears this up best when he says, "You can learn everything

I've said just as well by cleaning the toilet." His "daily life" teaching is presented as a way to break through the ethereal theories of highly educated and intellectual students found in the West. So, no matter what the feeling, when it's time to clean the toilet— clean the toilet. That takes care of feelings!

The tetrad of "Breathing with the Mind" is focused on the Buddha's teaching that "everything is right where you are right now: your suffering, and the end to your suffering." Everything in "Breath by Breath" has been building to this chapter on studying the mind as the source from which everything comes. Rosenberg points to thoroughly experiencing the mind, moment by moment. He says, "What you need to do is look into your mind, which is itself a space, in fact an infinite space."

The final tetrad, "Breathing with Wisdom" is best expressed from Zen Master Lin Chi's term "true person of no rank." Very simply, there is no meaning. Rosenberg describes this wisdom and no meaning as practicing with emptiness. "The mind gets silent, with effortless alertness. The observer falls away. There is no separation from the object. You're not trying to pay attention; you're just doing it." He sees human problems as not some exercise in problem-solving but simply dissolving through the awareness that comes from practice. "We stop suffering because we have stopped grasping."

The final portion of *Breath by Breath* brings all the tetrads to functioning in our daily lives. Rosenberg gives respect to Zen Master Seung Sahn as his first Buddhist teacher who introduced him to this way of practice. The teaching was that at sitting time, 100% sit, and at washing dishes time, 100% wash dishes. The activities were not to be separated and life was to be treated as one "seamless web."

Rosenberg provides a helpful guide in making Buddhist teachings and practice our own, a part of our everyday lives. But don't let him fool you. He is always pointing at practice. The package is exquisite, but the message is straightforward. "It is important to sit even on days when you don't feel like it. If you sit only when you want to, you will know only the mind that likes to sit." It doesn't matter if, during this life, you have been practicing only one week or twenty years. *Breath by Breath* conveys the clear teaching of making this breath function moment-to-moment.

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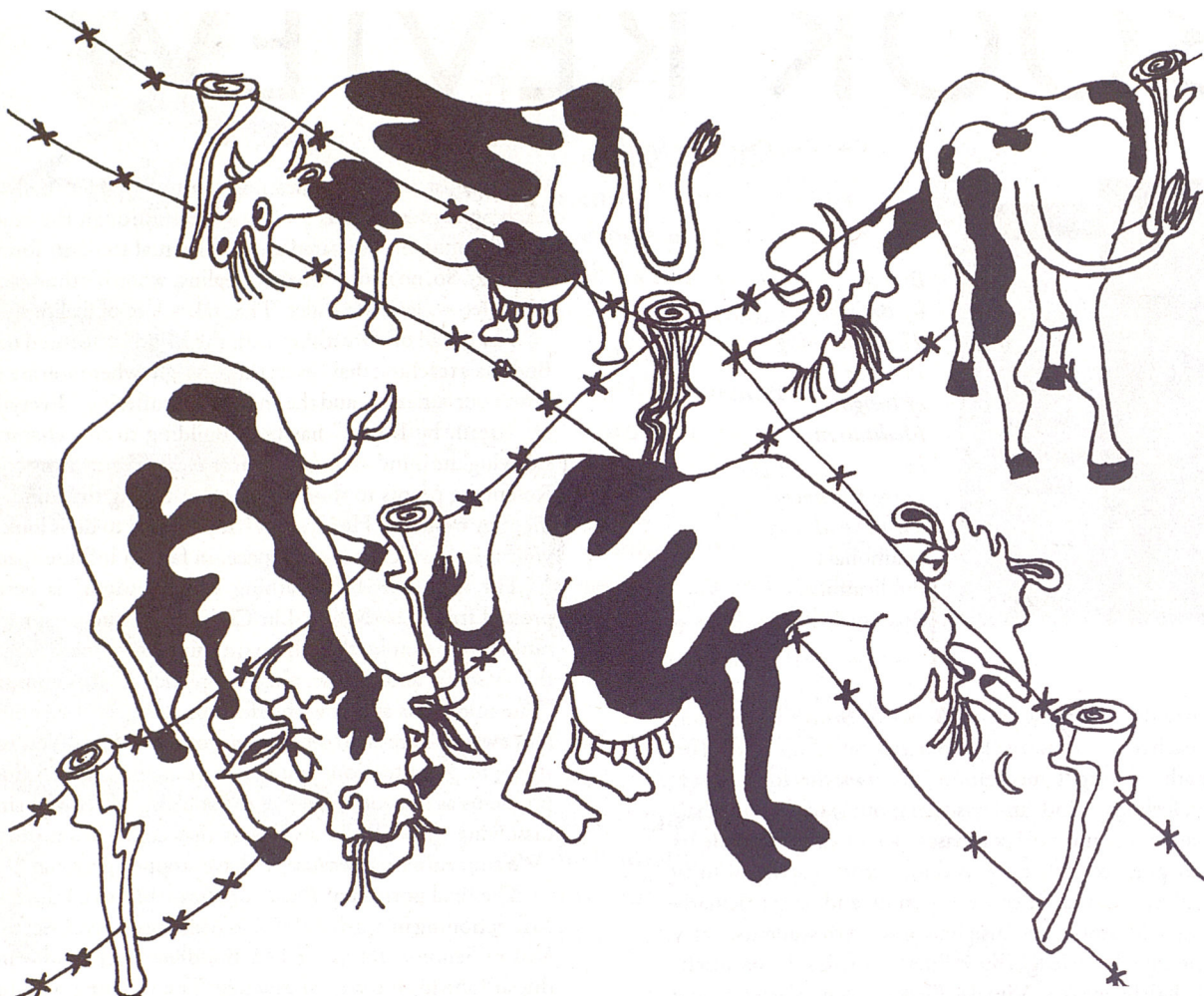


DIAGRAM OF THE HUMAN MIND

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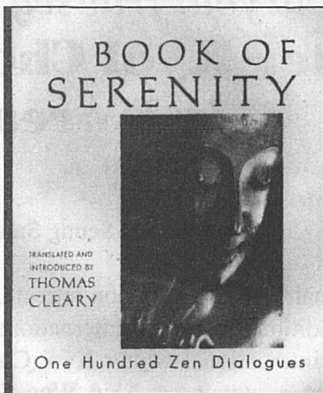
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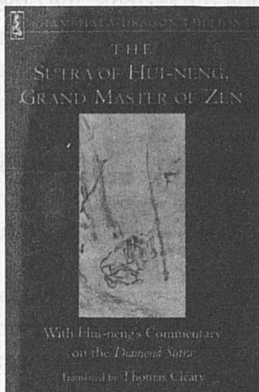
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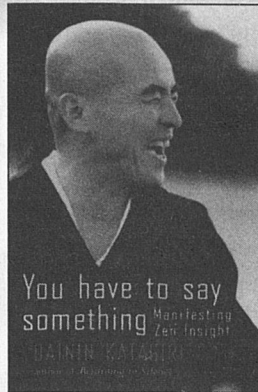
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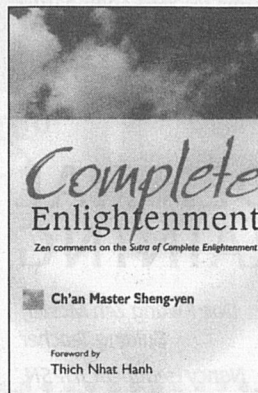
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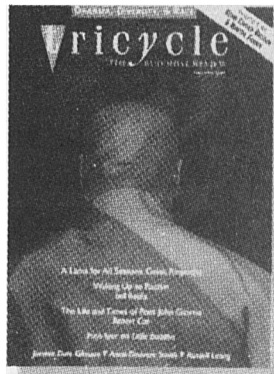
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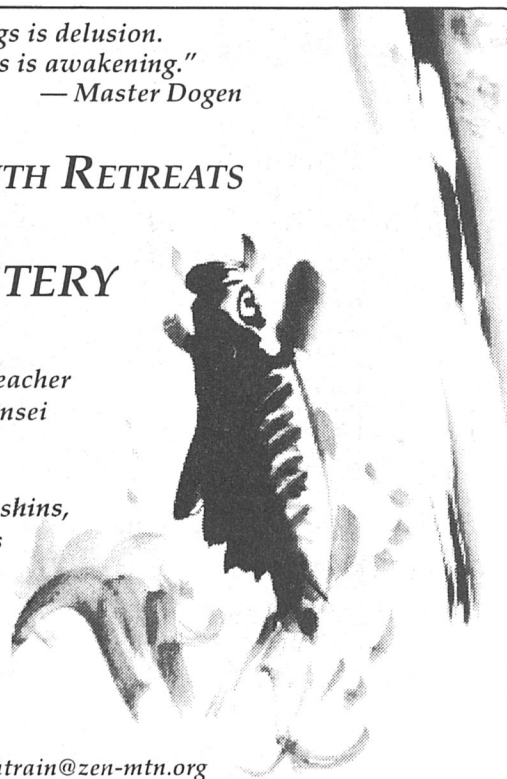


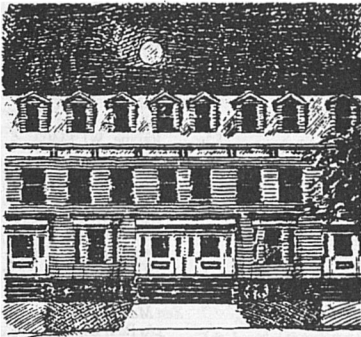
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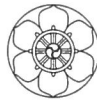


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