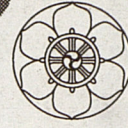


Primary Point



Summer 1999 • Volume 17 • Number 2 • \$4.00



**ZEN MASTER SEUNG SAHN'S
ELEVENTH AND TWELFTH GATES**

INKA IN SINGAPORE

ADVENTURE IN SLOVENIA

HAPPY BUDDHA'S BIRTHDAY!

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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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ELEVENTH GATE

Man Gong's Net

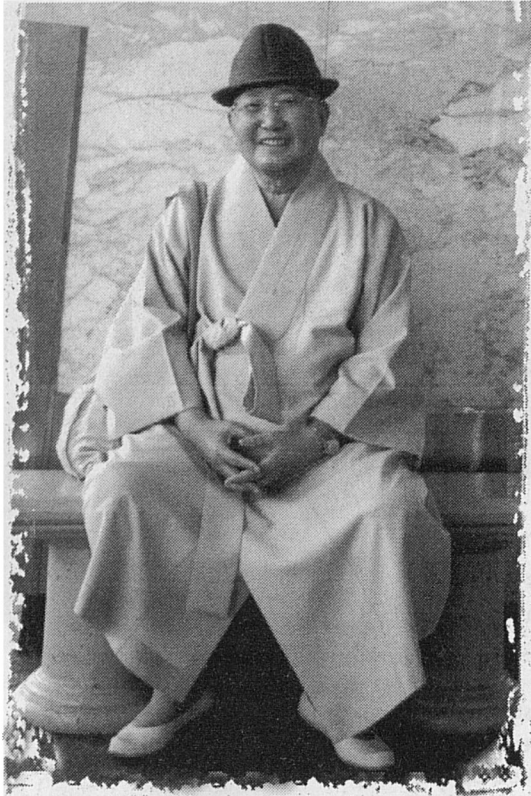
Zen Master Seung Sahn

One day, Zen Master Man Gong sat on the high rostrum and gave the speech to mark the end of the three month winter retreat. "All winter long you monks practiced very hard. That's wonderful! As for me, I had nothing to do, so I made a net. This net is made out of a special cord. It is very strong and can catch all Buddhas, Patriarchs and human beings. It catches everything. How do you get out of this net? Some students shouted, "KATZ!" Others hit the floor or raised a fist. One said, "The sky is blue, the grass is green." Another said, "Already got out; how are you, great Zen Master?" From the back of the room a monk shouted, "Don't make net!" Many answers were given, but to each Man Gong only replied, "Aha! I've caught a BIG fish!" So, how do you get out of Man Gong's net?

This is a very famous kong-an. Zen Master Man Gong always taught his students not to make anything. If you practice strongly, don't make anything and don't want anything, then you can attain no hindrance. Then this kong-an is not a problem. But if you are thinking, if you still have I, my, me and checking mind, then you cannot get out of the net. This net is life and death and includes everything. Even if you are a Buddha, if you have thinking, you cannot escape the net.

Man Gong's net is an attack kong-an. "I caught a big fish" is a strong teaching style. It drops down a large (000 size) hook for you. If you touch this fishing hook, you will have a big problem! It's just like a boxing match: hit, hit, hit... then you must defend yourself. So, how do you hit Man Gong's net? How do you take away Man Gong's idea? Man Gong's idea made the net. So, you must hit that.

Kong-an practicing is very important—it means, put it all down. In Zen, we say if the Buddha appears, kill the Buddha; if an eminent teacher appears, kill the teacher; if demons appear, kill them. Kill everything that appears in front of you. That means don't make anything. If you make something, then you have a hindrance. If you can completely put it all down, then you have no hindrance and your direction becomes clear. So, our practicing direction is to make our situation, function, and relationship in this world clear. Why do you eat every day? If that is clear, then our life is clear and we can help this world. Moment to moment our job is to do bodhisattva action and help all beings. Man Gong's net makes our direction and its function clear. Only help all beings. But that is just an explanation. Explanations can't help you! An answer is necessary.



THE TWELFTH GATE

Three Men Are Walking

Zen Master Seung Sahn

Three men are walking. The first man makes a sword sound, the second man waves his hands, and the third man picks up a handkerchief.

1. If you were there, what would be your correct function?
2. What is the relationship?
3. And lastly, what is the situation?

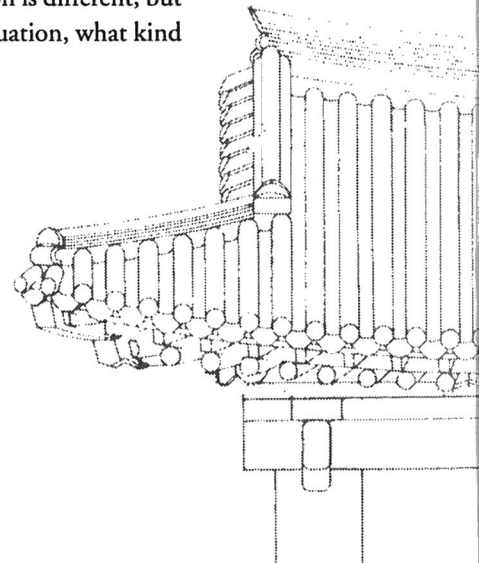
Commentary: The function of each is different, but the situation is the same.

A long time ago Zen Master Cheung Sahn would ask his students this kong-an frequently. Nobody understood. Sometimes he would use wild actions or shout, “Yahhhh! Why don’t you understand?” Still, they couldn’t answer completely.

This kong-an is very important. It is an object “just like this” style kong-an. There are two kinds of “just like this” kong-ans, subject and object. Subject “just like this” means when you are hungry, what? Eat! Object “just like this” means if someone is hungry, what? Give them food! That is object “just like this” style. So, in this kong-an, what is your correct function? These three men do different actions, but the situation is the same. Their function is different, but it is the same situation. What is their relationship? What is the situation? Same situation, same condition, same relationship, but the function is different: one makes a sword sound, one takes out a handkerchief, one waves his hand—different actions, but the meaning is the same.

Here’s a hint: you go to a theater where somebody is doing a one-man show. He tells a very funny story, he acts funny, talks funny, and then everybody laughs. Everybody is happy. Many different people are laughing with different styles. Somebody is laughing, “Ha, Ha, Ha, Ha.” Somebody else is laughing, “Hu, Hu, Hu, Hu!” Somebody else is laughing, “Ho, Ho, Ho, Ho!”—different laughing styles. The action is different, but the condition and the situation are the same. So, what kind of condition, what kind of situation, what kind of relationship? You must attain that. That is the object “just like this.”

If you don’t understand, just don’t understand. If you keep this “don’t understand” then your Don’t Know mind becomes very strong and a big Don’t Know is possible, which means great question and great doubt. If you completely don’t know, then you will get complete enlightenment. If you have only a small question, only small enlightenment is possible. There are many kinds of enlightenment—small enlightenment, middle enlightenment, big enlightenment, and then finally, no enlightenment. No enlightenment is complete enlightenment.



PLENTY OF NOTHING

*Opening speech by Zen Master Wu Kwang
at Buddha's Enlightenment Day,
Providence Zen Center, December 5, 1998.*

Once a student, while in a particular mind set, said to me, "If I hear one more talk about Buddha's enlightenment, I think I'll scream." This raises a question as to the purpose of our coming together to celebrate, commemorate, and recollect Buddha's enlightenment.

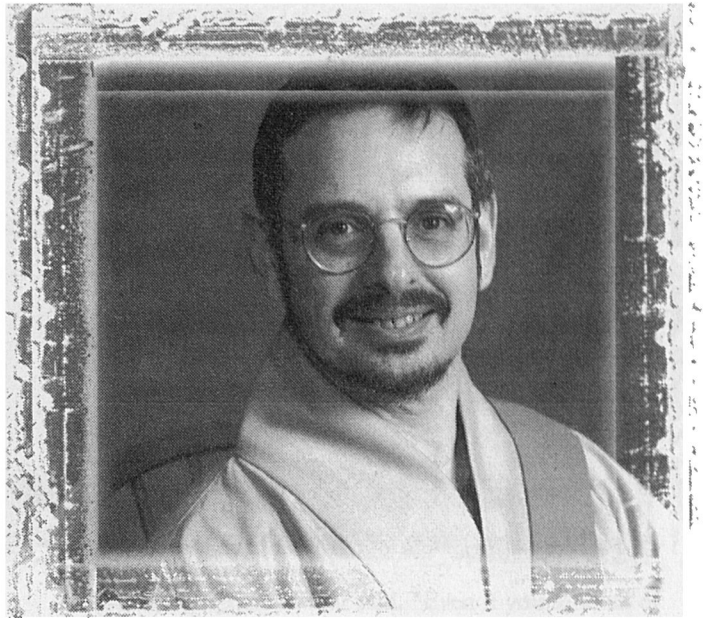
At Providence Zen Center, there hangs a calligraphy which reads:

*Buddha went to Snow Mountain.
Sat, don't know. Six years passed.
Saw a bright star, got enlightenment.
Without thinking, full universe.*

The essence of Buddha's enlightenment is in the last line: "Without thinking, full universe." Two aspects are pointed out here: "full universe" and "without thinking." "Full universe" means "nothing" is not nothing. To think "nothing" is nothing is like the old Gershwin song from the opera, *Porgy and Bess*: "I got plenty of nothing." That means you are carrying a big bundle of nothing around with you, *i.e.* you are clinging to nothing. However, the second line of the song says, "And nothing's plenty for me." "Nothing" truly perceived and practiced means that without holding or grasping, we clearly connect with everything we encounter or touch, moment by moment, and that truly is the practice of manifesting Buddha's enlightenment as "full universe."

As for the second part, "without thinking," there is a poem by an ancient Zen Master named Shu An:

*With incense burning, I sat quietly on the south terrace
all day long with mind collected and all worries
forgotten. I had not ceased my mental activity with a
view to removing delusions, but there was not a thing
to think about.*



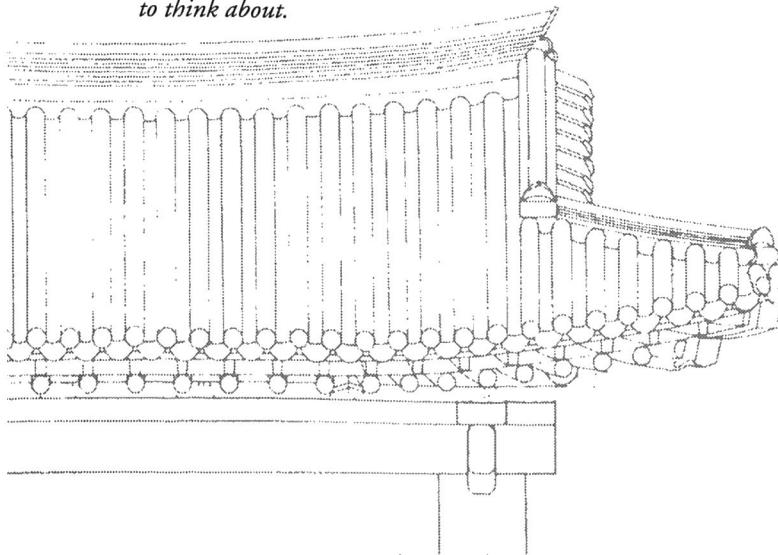
When we truly come to that place where we perceive, "I don't have to get rid of anything," and "there is not a thing to think about," then we attain "without thinking, full universe," and that is Buddha's enlightenment.

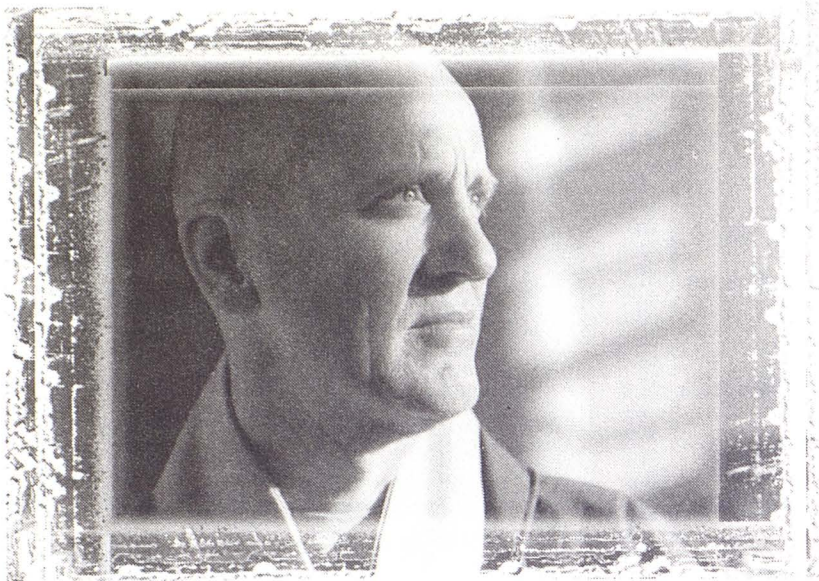
There is an interesting slant on the story of Buddha's enlightenment presented in the "Revelation of the Eternal Life of the Tathagata" chapter of the Lotus Sutra. Essentially, what the Buddha says in this chapter is that "it is only to inspire and encourage practice that I tell the story of leaving home, sitting under the bodhi tree, and attaining complete enlightenment. In truth, that teaching is only to inspire and encourage the practice of people who are of a dull or lesser capacity." Truly, he says (in the way that is only found in the style of Indian sutras), "the time since I actually attained enlightenment is very, very, very long." Then he presents an analogy: suppose you were to take all the sands of the Ganges River—not just one Ganges River, but perhaps a thousand Ganges Rivers—and then start to walk east, and about every third eon drop one grain of sand to the ground, and measure the time it would take to drop all of these grains of sand... "well, actually, my enlightenment occurred long before that!" That means infinitely long ago. To calculate it is impossible, and to think about it within the limitations of concepts like time and space is also impossible. We would say, "already" from the very beginning it was there.

Therefore, it behooves us all to recognize our dull and limited capacity and to feel a sense of gratitude for the opportunity to come here and recollect and celebrate the event of Buddha's enlightenment so as to encourage our ongoing practice.

So thank you all for coming and supporting each other, and thank you Shakyamuni Buddha for recognizing our dullness and pointing it out to us, and pointing us toward the enlightenment of "no enlightenment."

In December, no leaves obscure the bare brown trunk of the tree in the yard.





THE PRACTICE OF LISTENING

Formal dharma speech by Zen Master Dae Gak at Buddha's Enlightenment Day, Providence Zen Center, December 5, 1998.

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

This whole world is turning, turning, turning.

Before listening appeared, there was no "Buddha's enlightenment."

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

After listening appeared, "Buddha's enlightenment" also appeared.

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

Buddha's enlightenment is not separate from listening. Listening is not separate from Buddha's enlightenment.

When listening, Buddha's enlightenment, appearing, and disappearing no longer exist.

What, then, becomes clear?

HO!

Thank you all for coming and listening.

I've been studying Chinese characters. There is something disheartening about studying Chinese characters at age fifty-one. I studied fifty-five characters in a book, turned the page, and it said, "End of first grade." I was proud of my accomplishment—I had achieved first grade level.

The character for "listening attentively" consists of five characters: the character for ear, the character for standing still, the character for ten, the character for eye, and the

聽

character for heart or mind. Chinese characters are really picturegrams: they are pictures that have evolved to describe a certain situation. This picturegram for listening attentively means: "When in stillness, one listens with the heart. The ear is worth ten eyes."

The character for sacred, holy, or saint is made up of three characters: the character for ear, the character for hole (which is taken phonetically to mean clear), and the character for standing still. Thus, a saint is one who, in stillness, hears clearly; or, what is holy or sacred is being able to hear clearly, which evolves to being able to hear the word of God or being able to hear the sound of Buddha's voice.

聖

Listening is fundamental to our practice. Our school is called the Kwan Um School of Zen. "Kwan Um" means "perceive sound," or to listen. Kwan Seum Bosal, the bodhisattva of compassion, realized her enlightenment by hearing the sound of human suffering—through listening, through this human practice of hearing.

In our own lives, we know that we hear clearly relative to the clarity of our mind. When our mind is cluttered or troubled, our hearing is distorted. Indeed all sense data

becomes distorted with an unclear mind. There is a psychological practice, a game, where you sit with ten or fifteen people. One person whispers something in the ear of the first person, and the whispering goes all the way around. When it comes out at the other end, it is very unlike what was said initially. Our practice is to clear the mind in such a way that we can hear clearly. We want to hear clearly so that we can function correctly.

In our Korean tradition, Chinul talks about tracing the radiance back. This is the practice of listening to the very sound of listening itself: to be able to sit with one's own mind, not following the mind and all of the tangents that it offers, but to sit quietly and listen. At first, we sit down and our minds begin to settle like dirt settles on a dirt road after a car goes by. There is some clarity. Then we begin to listen to our own fundamental nature. Having heard our own fundamental nature, we begin to listen to our friend, whoever that is. Listening to our friend is not complete without some action, some response. There is no true listening if our listening is limited to our own particular experience. The true practice of listening requires some kind of compassionate action.

Originally in Buddhism, there was a great emphasis on wisdom, on nirvana. Historically, students were encouraged to focus on their own personal samadhi. Students would sit for long periods of time, have some great experience, and believe that their life was complete. It was believed that seeing into the nature of phenomena was enough.

Christianity, in contrast, has stressed compassion: Even though we can question whether there is true wisdom left in Buddhism or true compassion left in Christianity, the fundamental movement of Christianity is toward helping others, toward compassion. Christ's teaching, "Do unto others as you would have them do unto you," "treat your neighbor as yourself," is a fundamentally compassionate teaching. It was not until Mahayana Buddhism appeared that compassion became integral to Buddhist practice. It is in their meeting in compassion that Zen and Christianity are reconciled.

In the mid-1980s when Zen Master Seung Sahn taught at the Abbey of Gethsemani, a Trappist monastery in Kentucky, one of the kong-ans he offered the monks was the teaching, "Be still and know that I am God." What is the meaning of "Be still—know that I am God"? In stillness, one is able to hear without distortion. The still mind is not cluttered with particular karma, judgment, blame, dissatisfaction with self and other, or feelings of entitlement.

Well before Bodhidharma came to China, the Chinese emperor Wu had already built many Buddhist temples and was supporting the education of thousands of Buddhist monks.

Upon meeting Bodhidharma, Emperor Wu said, "I have built a lot of temples. I have fostered and supported

Buddhism in many, many ways. What merit have I attained from this?"

Bodhidharma said, "No merit. Clear like space."

This enraged Emperor Wu. There was a breakdown in communication, and Bodhidharma left and went north to sit in a cave. Being unable to hear "true merit," having some idea of what enlightenment, merit, or accomplishment was, Emperor Wu became enraged. He was not yet able to hear that no merit, no thing, is better than a good thing.

Emperor Wu went to his spiritual advisor and said, "Who was this guy that talked to me, the emperor, like this?"

His spiritual advisor said, "This was Bodhidharma. He is the avatar of Avalokitesvara. He is the very bodhisattva of compassion himself."

Emperor Wu said, "I'll send somebody to get him! I've made a big mistake here!"

And the spiritual advisor said, "Even if you send all of your armies and all of your townspeople, you cannot bring Bodhidharma back."

Why?

This is the fundamental teaching, that our listening practice does not occur outside of us, or in someone else. Where there is a special one, there is always suffering, whether that special one is one's own self, a teacher, a god, a bodhisattva. When one measures oneself separate from, puts something or someone on a pedestal, there is suffering. There is an old Hindu saying: "The mind of measure cannot know God."

Originally, Zen appeared because of sutra practice. Buddhism appeared because of the Buddha's practice, sitting under a tree and listening to the night noises, listening to his question, listening to his doubt, listening to the demons that appeared—not unlike what we do every day when we practice. Then a religion began to develop around it, and there appeared forms,

**the true
practice
of listening
requires
compassionate
action**

and the forms lost their functionality. We say they became “functionally autonomous.” If you give a monkey a coin every time it does a certain trick, so that it can buy bananas, at some point the monkey begins to do the trick just to get the coin. That’s called capitalism. When they have all the food they need and everything they could possibly want, they begin to amass these coins far beyond any redeemable value.

Rules appear, religion appears, and there is suffering because people are then judged relative to these rules. Rules lose their functional meaning. Bowing stops being a practice of appreciation and becomes a practice of deference. Two ideas appear: one is that we bow to a teacher as a deference, and we put them higher than us and some resentment appears, and we say, “I’m not going to bow.” A sense of dualism. The practice of bowing loses its function, its purpose, as an expression of one’s true nature.

Giving becomes an obligation. We begin to tithe. We see religions now demanding a certain tithe instead of us supporting, out of the generosity of our heart, our particular sangha. We begin to feel obligated. Religion happens when sangha or congregation loses its enlightenment, loses its precepts, in a way.

I came to the Providence Zen Center before it was Kwan Um School of Zen, out of some desire for support to practice. I had practiced for ten years with Japanese-style teachers, and for whatever reason, I never made a particularly strong connection. When I came to the Providence Zen Center, I met Bobby and Linc, George, and See Hoy (Su Bong Sunim), and became a member of a family. Sometimes a difficult family, sometimes a joyous family, but family nonetheless, in the sense of people with a strong direction, and whose direction was luminous to the point where it brightened my path and helped me find my direction. It is not without some nostalgia and sadness that I think back on those times. There was a kind of innocence, of not-knowing and wonder.

Linc Rhodes used to come to Kentucky. Bobby and George and other people came also, but Linc used to come most of all. We would have retreats in people’s homes, and he would come no matter what. If there were three people sitting, he would come; if there were ten people sitting, he would come. We never had many more than ten or eleven people in Kentucky in those times. He would come, and he would come cheerfully and with a great deal of support for what we were doing. I remember Mara and me taking precepts the first time, and Linc’s support, like a brother, just completely present. That’s the meaning of sangha, the true meaning of religion: you have friends who come together, maybe for a short period of time or a long period of time—we come together, our lives touch, and we encourage each other toward clarity and compassion. We support each other in this quest to look beyond our own personal conditioning and our own mind habit, and find what it means to be human

beyond what we have been taught. What it means to be human in some fundamental way.

Bodhidharma went off to the cave and sat for nine years. He sat in the very practice of listening. The marvelous thing about listening is that it doesn’t arise, it doesn’t cease, and it really can’t be brought about. It is our birthright, just as enlightenment is each of our birthright. Enlightenment is not something that a special few have or can get.

Once I met a Zen Master who said, in Japan, he had fifty monks and laymen, and many of them were westerners, and of those fifty he thought maybe one could attain enlightenment. I think you know how many people are here—maybe seventy-five? There is not a person here who cannot realize their true self. It is not dependent on anything. It’s not special. It’s not esoteric. To lose this sense is to lose our practice.

It is not something that someone has, it’s not something someone gets—it is who you are. It’s like waking up in bed and realizing you were there all along, having a dream. One doesn’t have to go to bed, find the bed—you are there, you just have to wake up in it. How much do you believe that? Having realized that, and believing that, how willing are you to help others?

Bodhidharma went and sat in the cave, and Hui Ko came to practice with him. He didn’t read in a newsletter that Bodhidharma was having a retreat. He had a dream that his teacher was in the north, and through great hardship, he traveled north to sit with Bodhidharma. When he got there, Bodhidharma was in a cave, sitting, looking at the wall. Hui Ko knocked on the cave, but Bodhidharma didn’t turn around. The legend says Hui Ko stood there until the snow piled up three feet high on his shoulders. No response. What was Hui Ko doing while he was standing there? What was his practice when he was standing there? He was listening for his teacher. With luminous attention, he was standing and listening. With luminous patience and courage, he was standing and listening, waiting. Getting no response, the legend says he cut off his arm and handed it to the teacher, and at this, Bodhidharma turned around—whether he actually did this or whether this is legend, that Hui Ko gave something of himself away—he got the teacher’s attention. He got one question out of that: one arm, one question.

Hui Ko said, “My mind is ill at ease. How do I put my mind to rest?” Bodhidharma said, “Bring me your mind.” Hui Ko sat and looked with all sincerity: he didn’t think it was a kong-an he had to figure out and get by, he didn’t take it as some kind of trick question, that he had to jump through a hoop in order to get a certain kind of attention from Bodhidharma. He saw it as a true, sincere question that hit the very core of his being. “You say that your mind is not at rest, so please bring it to me.” With all sincerity, Hui Ko looked, and had some opening, and said, “I can’t

find it anywhere.” And Bodhidharma said, “Yes. Now your mind is at rest.”

Later, it is said they were walking. In those days, the student always walked three paces behind the teacher, just outside the shadow. Bodhidharma said, “You understand China. I don’t, I’m from India. Which way should I go?” And Hui Ko said, “Only go straight.” (He was a good Zen student at the time.) Bodhidharma said, “One more step is not possible.” At this, Hui Ko’s final enlightenment appeared. Hearing this, his mind burst open and became the only link in the chain from Buddha to Cumberland. Bodhidharma gave transmission to two people, but one died, so Hui Ko is that one link—but it is a link that is so strong, with such dedication, that it has endured for over two thousand years.

We have this Buddha’s Enlightenment Day ceremony, celebrating enlightenment that has many names: grace, God, Buddha-mind, listening, compassion. They all point to the same without-self, without-idea mind. We celebrate it in our ancestors, we celebrate it in ourselves, and we celebrate it in each other. The practice of this celebration can be the practice of coming together that we have done today; it can also be the practice of everyday mind in Zen. Most people learn fairly quickly how to sit, appearing quiet. Most people learn fairly quickly how to manage the forms. Most difficult is translating the practice from the cushion to your everyday life. One can have enormous, marvelous experiences on the cushion and stand up and be irritable and mean and small-minded. Probably no one here has had that experience! *[laughter]* Certainly, we have all had that experience, and certainly we have judged others. “They are supposed to be a great enlightened being. Why do they treat me this way?” Taking our practice off the cushion is very difficult.

One of the things I have been looking at recently is the practice of appreciation. The word “appreciation” has, in some connotations, the meaning “to like,” but the true meaning of appreciation is merely to accept. I appreciate that you came. Not that I appreciate in a grandiose way—just the acknowledgment of the fact. To meet one’s moment is to appreciate. When the mind is cluttered and painfully self-inflicting torture, it is in that moment that we are tested or encouraged toward the greatest appreciation. Really appreciate that mind—the mind of delusion. The mind of suffering. Can we appreciate it so fully that we realize that it is not “my” mind, but “human” mind? When I am depressed, it is not my depression; this is difficult, but can we appreciate depression itself? When we need a friend, can we appreciate that meeting? When we drink a cup of water, can we be present so that we can appreciate the water? It doesn’t have to be fancy or with lots of thinking in terms of who brought me the water, if the water is pure, if there are people who don’t have clean water (which is political), but just the very act of drinking itself—it doesn’t have to be dualistic in the sense of

**listening
doesn’t arise,
doesn’t cease,
and can’t be
brought about**

“I appreciate having water because I can imagine not having water,” but the very fact of moment by moment by moment.

Try this as a practice on your own: take into your own consciousness the question, “What is it that is the hardest for me to appreciate?” Is there someone in your life? Is there some phenomenon? What is it that is hardest for me to appreciate? I can appreciate almost everything, but not that. It is right there that your practice begins.

In our school, we have these marvelous teachings: put it all down, don’t hold anything, don’t check. The activity of putting it all down, the activity of not checking, the activity of “don’t hold anything,” is appreciation: to appreciate the cushion that is holding you up, to appreciate your breath as it rises and falls—not to adjust your breath in some particular way (“Oh, my breath is really deep now and I must be in some kind of great samadhi,” because you know that when that happens, in the next moment you’re frustrated because your breath isn’t so deep and you are not in a great samadhi). To appreciate both the deep and the shallow, to appreciate both profound and mundane, to appreciate that we are all human and doing our best. That’s the meaning of Buddha’s enlightenment. That’s the meaning of Buddha’s teaching. To sit on the universal sun where moon and sun do not rise and fall. It is only from the position of earth that there is rising and setting. But from the position of the universe, there is no rising and there is no setting. And yet, we still have to live on earth.

So, open your mouth, already big mistake.
Don’t open your mouth, even bigger mistake.
Not opening, not keeping closed, what can you do?

[listens]

Thank you for listening.

On November 8, 1998, Gae Mun Sunim received inka from Zen Master Seung Sabn at Kwan Yin Chan Lin, our Zen Center in Singapore.

Dharma Combat

Question: Gae Mun Sunim, today you have an inka ceremony. I have seen you working and practicing and taking care of many people for a long time. I see you are a great bodhisattva. In the sutras, it says there are ten stages of bodhisattvahood. What stage are you?

GMSN: You already know.

Q: No. I'm asking you.

GMSN: Your nose is big.

Q: My nose is big? That's my stage?

GMSN: Not enough?

Q: Not enough!

GMSN: The dog is chasing the bone.

Q: Thank you for your teaching.

Q: Congratulations and good morning. So, Gae Mun Sunim, you have been practicing for many years now. Now you understand that everything is Zen: sitting is Zen, walking is Zen, talking is Zen, eating is Zen, and going to the toilet is also Zen. So I ask you, Gae Mun Sunim, what is not Zen?

GMSN: You already understand.

Q: Please tell me.

GMSN: Please drink this tea.

Q: Thank you. [*drinks*] But this is hot water, not tea!

GMSN: Are tea and hot water the same or different? That is a question for you.

Q: You already understand... Please drink this water.

GMSN: [*drinks*] It's very nice water.

Q: Thank you.

Q: Good morning, Gae Mun Sunim, and congratulations on becoming a Ji Do Poep Sa. I have a question for you. Soon you will be a great teacher for all students here in Asia. But in Asia, many people are Muslims, Hindus, Christians, Buddhists, and all sorts of other things. My question for you is, how will you teach all these people?

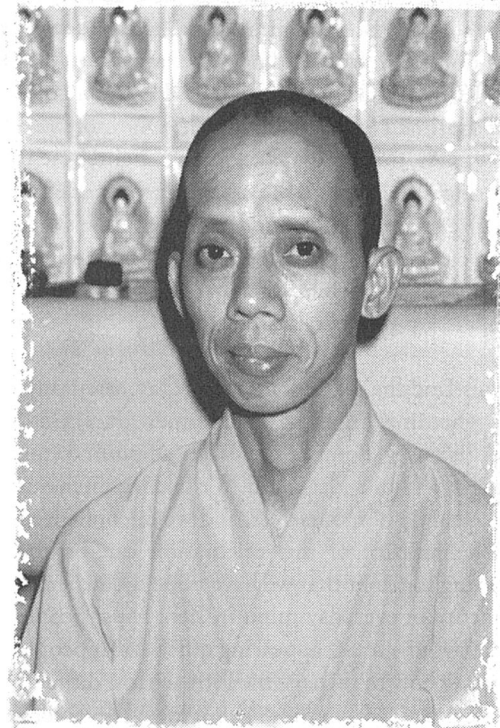
GMSN: You already understand.

Q: So I'm asking you.

GMSN: Chinese people call this shui, Americans call this water, Muslims say ae. Which one is correct?

Q: Thank you, but I'm not thirsty.

GMSN: Then go for a rest.



Q: I am a vegetarian. If I eat one piece of meat, my mind says, "I don't know"—no, sorry, no "I"!

"Don't know!" If I eat meat with a "don't know" mind, then am I committing violence?

GMSN: You already understand... What's important is, why do you eat meat?

Q: I am a vegetarian.

GMSN: So, you're a vegetarian—what for?

Q: I'm asking you to explain Zen mind—don't know.

GMSN: Already!

Q: Congratulations. In Zen teachings, we are told to put down our thinking... I would like to know, what is one hundred percent thinking?

GMSN: You already understand. What are you doing now?

Q: [*hits floor*]

GMSN: Only that?

Q: Sitting on the meditation cushion listening to Poep Sa Nim.

GMSN: Keep this mind. One hundred percent thinking or no thinking, no problem... So, you like thinking or not thinking? You decide: thinking, then suffering. "No problem," then no problem.

Dharma Speech

Gae Mun Sunim, JDPS

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

At this point, receiving inka is losing inka. We say form is emptiness, emptiness is form. Mountain is water, water is mountain. This means this world is impermanent. We come into this world empty-handed, and leave empty-handed. When you are born, where do you come from? When you die, where do you go? Life is just like a cloud appearing in the sky. Death is like a cloud disappearing. The cloud originally has no existence. The cloud comes and goes; it is just like this. Only one thing is always clear. What is this one pure and clear thing? We do not know why we appear in this world. Even what we are doing right here, right now—we don't know. So where are we going after this? We say everything in this world is changing. Before we are born, we are zero; when we die, we return to zero. Before being born, who am I? After being born, who am I? If this one breath doesn't return to us, who are we then? This world keeps changing. In this world, everything comes and goes; it is changing all the time. So we say this is the impermanent world. So form is emptiness, emptiness is form. Mountain is water, water is mountain. At this point, receiving inka is losing inka.

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

We do not receive inka and do not lose inka. At this point, we say there is no form and no emptiness. No mountain, no water. We call this emptiness world. We say that everything around us has its own substance. When we hear this sound [*hit*], the substance of the sound and the substance of the mind are not different. When a thought arises, then your mind and my mind are different. Before thinking arises, your mind, my mind, the Zen Master's mind, Buddha's

mind, are all the same. This point only demonstrates the substance. This emptiness cannot be expressed by languages or words.

One day, a student of Zen Master Seung Sahn went up to him and said, "I have attained emptiness!" So the Zen Master said, "Oh! You have attained emptiness! Then tell me, who attained emptiness?" The student said, "Me! I have attained emptiness!" So the Zen Master took his stick and hit him. The student said, "Ow!" And the Zen Master said, "If there is 'Ow!' then where is emptiness?" This emptiness cannot be expressed in words or languages. We give it a name, however; that name is primary point. This primary point has many names and forms. Some people call it enlightenment. Some people call it mind. Some people call it Buddha. Some people call it God. Some people call it Tao. Some people call it nirvana. Some people call it substance. The Sixth Patriarch said, "Originally nothing." Zen Master Seung Sahn says, "Only don't know." But the true primary point has no name and no form. When you attain this emptiness of pure substance, then your eyes will freely open. Then your ears will hear clearly, your nose will smell clearly, your tongue will taste clearly, and your body will feel clearly; and your mind will be very clear, until it reflects like a mirror. Green comes, we reflect green. This point cannot be expressed by languages.



Inka ceremony at Kwan Yin Chan Lin

So put down all your thinking, all your understanding. Keep this don't know mind. What do you really want? We think we understand ourselves, but as Zen Master Seung Sahn says, human beings are stupid. We cut down all our trees, we ravage the atmosphere, we pollute the water. We must return to primary point and keep this don't know mind. But don't know does not mean don't know. You already understand this point. If you don't know, you are already pointed toward your true self. It is very important to return to this primary point, this don't know—our substance. So in this point, we say no form, no emptiness. No mountain, no water. So in this point we say, no receiving inka, no losing inka.

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

To receive inka is to receive inka. To lose inka is to lose inka. Here we say form is form, emptiness is emptiness. The mountain is a mountain, water is water. The contact between the six senses and the six dusts are very clear. We call this the truth world. The sky is blue, the trees are green. The dogs outside are barking. It is very important to attain this point, so you and the truth become one. You and the sky become one. You and the tree become one. You and the dog become one. You attain the truth world. You and the universe become one. We say, "ta sungil pyun—*[hit]* become one." Then you can do anything. In this point, we say form is form, emptiness is emptiness. Mountain is mountain, water is water. So we say, receive inka is receive inka, lose inka is lose inka.

So we talk about three worlds: the impermanent world, the emptiness world, and the truth world. But which one is the correct world?

If you answer any of these, this stick will hit you 108 times. If you refuse to pick any of these, this stick will still hit you 108 times. What can you do?

KATZ!

High mountain never hinders the floating cloud.
Thick bamboo cannot stop the water flowing.

We call this function world. This means how we make use of our life to function correctly in this lifetime. This Zen is nothing special. On this day, may we attain this point—this primary point. When we attain this point, we see clearly, hear clearly. We attain the truth world and walk the bodhisattva way. Then, when someone is thirsty, you give them water. If someone is hungry, you give them food. When we need help, people come and help us. Actually, when you come here to help, you are not helping me, you are helping yourself. We call this "correct function."

I was very deeply touched by the teaching of Zen Master Seung Sahn, because his teachings are simple

and clear. They have nothing to do with some supernatural or divine force. Everyone here can attain his teaching. How do you attain this clear mind?

[Everyone hits the floor.]

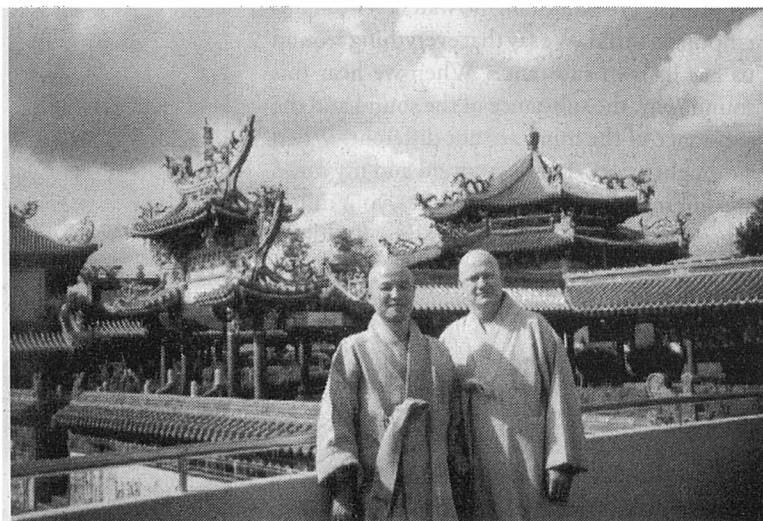
You have already attained it. When we return home, it is important to continue to put in your effort. Everyday get up early, do 108 bows, and try some meditation. The important thing is to put in the effort, find your correct direction, and then just do it. If you do it, then you have it.

Zen mind is original mind. But today when you come, you make something special. Today I also make something special. So we lose this Zen original mind. *[laughter and applause]*

The Buddha said this universe is actually one big stage. Zen Master Seung Sahn wanted me to perform on this stage, to enter this world. So I am receiving this stick. *[showing the Zen stick]* This stick looks very small and light, but, to me, it is actually very heavy!

In these days, human beings don't understand their correct job which means they don't understand the correct situation, function, and relationship. I hope everybody in this lifetime can find their true job, put down I, my, me, all my situation, condition and opinions, only do it and find our original face and help all beings get out from suffering. Attain this point, then everybody can share this Zen stick. Then Zen Master Seung Sahn's stick and my stick are not so heavy.

Now already the time is over. Some people came from very far away and have to rush to their airplanes. Once again thank you very much everybody for attending this inka ceremony. But my having inka is not special. I and you are the same, only a little less hair. That's all. Now let's go eat lunch together. Thank you very much.



Zen Master Dae Kwang and Do Kwan Sunim take in some local Singapore color

ADVENTURE IN SLOVENIA

Grazyna Perl JDPSN, Paris Zen Center

Perl Poep Sa Nim led the first Kwan Um School of Zen retreat in Slovenia, on October 1, 1998. This is her report on the experience.

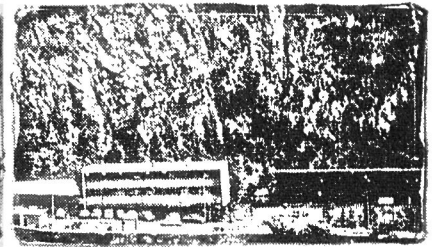
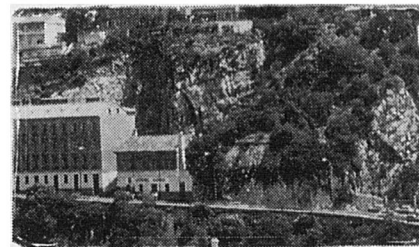
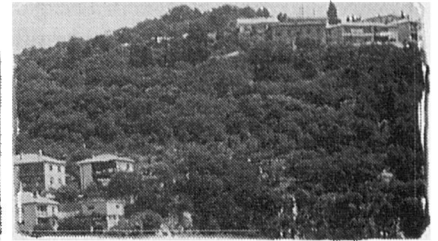
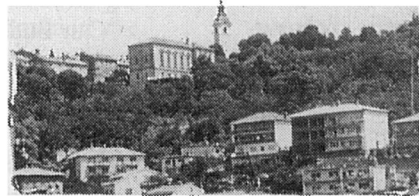
It all started in Paris when the plane was late. I was supposed to go to Zurich, and from there to Lubljana. I ended up going to Sarajevo, and from there to Lubljana.

In Sarajevo I had two hours in a busy but war-zone-like airport. I walked outside and could see a lot of army people and their equipment. I could see houses burned to the ground, and houses with bomb holes. I could see people hurrying to leave that place, and the sad faces of those who have to struggle more. I talked with an American man who said, "I have been here two weeks, and I'm very happy to leave."

You must see how beautiful this country is. Mostly mountains. That day there was great weather; blue sky, sun shining and the mountains covered with the colors of autumn trees. The weather was in contrast to the blackened ruins of what was once the most beautiful city in Europe. Very, very sad... hopeless feeling and anger for such a stupid, nonsensical, unfair war.

Of course I was late to Lubljana and my luggage was lost. After doing whatever was necessary with the Customs, the two students and I left the airport (without my luggage) to go to Maribor, where there was to be a public dharma talk with television coverage. We were two hours late, but everybody waited and the event went very well. At 11:00 pm we left to go to a place in the mountains for a Yong Maeng Jong Jin starting the next morning.

High in the mountains, with a beautiful view over a valley, we stopped in front of a very old house, still under renovation. Eighteen people were sitting this retreat. For most of them it was their first Yong Maeng Jong Jin; only three or four had some experience with our school. The practice was very strong, everybody tried very hard; there was almost a passion to it. I could feel from those people a similar anger, a good-direction anger, to what I had



experienced at the Sarajevo airport. Something has to be changed in this world!

We sat in a very small room in lines. During the meals (wonderfully cooked by Mateja) the pots had to go from hand to hand (no space for servers). During chanting (Dante for the first time in his life was moktak master) I had to chant very loudly and could not make mistakes; everybody followed me in every detail. We laughed afterwards that if I scratched my nose everybody would have done that too, but what a wonderful try mind.

The last day of this Yong Maeng Jong Jin, the chanting was as smooth as in any old Zen center. During the day we did walking meditation in the mountains. After the first walk—lead by Igor—up and down steep slopes, we decided that that was a walking prostration. We came back with a lot of mushrooms and had a delicious mushroom soup for dinner that day.

When the Yong Maeng Jong Jin ended, everybody had a mixture of feeling happy and sad. It was a great retreat and we were sorry to end it. The next one will be in July 1999, and it is planned to have a tent as a dharma room. The Slovenian and Croatian sanghas are growing and very active, and there are some Italians interested in coming to Maribor. We will meet again in the old house in the high mountains, and I'm sure with a much bigger group. Good job, Maribor sangha!

DESERT DHARMA

Thom Pastor, Great Brightness Zen Center

At 7:30 pm on April 27, 1998, two events were taking place within a mile of each other. Nestled between the neon and glitter, bright lights and buffets of the Las Vegas Strip, the Aladdin Casino's luck had run out. Nostalgia has no identity in Glitter Gulch, history affords no accommodations. A thirty-year landmark of the Las Vegas Strip was stripped from view, imploded in the name of progress. As one era came crashing down in a heap of metal girders and dust, the second event inaugurated a different age in Southern Nevada. A mile from the change-hungry mob surrounding the ill-fated casino, the dedication and renaming of the Mojave Desert Zen Center was also underway.

Like some Rat-Packed showroom from the sixties, Zen Master Seung Sahn addressed a standing-room-only crowd. The detonations from the Aladdin thrummed in the distance, each a firecracker-like pop of precise destruction. Zen Master Seung Sahn, his Zen stick in hand, hit the table three times, the sharp raps mimicking each explosion. He spoke in his native Korean tongue, with Mu Shim Sunim translating:

"In this desert, an oasis has appeared. If there is no oasis in the desert, there is no place for people to drink water, and

if you have no water to drink, you soon will die. Las Vegas has been called the city of desire, or the city of sin. A Zen Center in this city of desire is just like a beautiful oasis appearing in this very dry desert. We cannot help but say that this gem, this oasis, is the result of hard work by our abbot Thom Pastor and Dr. Ju-Choen Lee. This effort will produce much more dharma water. This dharma water will give great enlightenment to the thirsty students, and will help save many beings.

"Our Buddhism is not just getting happiness for ourselves. Our Buddhism is finding our own mind light and using this illumination to shine on all beings. If we find this mind light together, then this truly can become Great Brightness Zen Center. Dae, or great, means no opposites. Myung, or bright, means no shadow. If we acquire our true nature's light, then there is no shadow. Soen Won means Zen center. This place is Dae Myung Soen Won, meaning Great Brightness Zen Center, or No Shadow Zen Center. I hope that everyone travels to this Great Brightness Zen Center, discovers their true nature light, and saves all beings from suffering."

IN SEARCH OF NEON NIRVANA

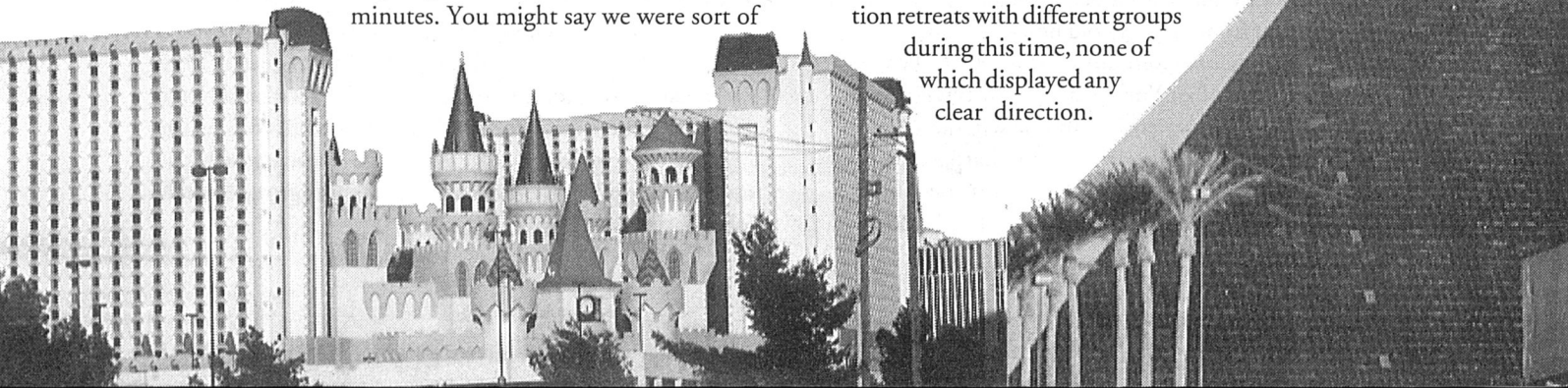
Thom Pastor, Great Brightness Zen Center

"Everybody comes into this world carrying nothing," Zen Master Seung Sahn has said. "Everyone leaves for someplace, also carrying nothing. We cannot take anything with us. Yet in between, everybody wants things, chases things, and is attached to things very much."

Back in 1964, as a young music student in Boston, one of my first acquaintances was David Mott, who in subsequent years has become a lasting friend. David and I shared a common interest in, if not a commitment to, Zen practice in those days. However, two or three nights a week we would enjoy late night green tea, discuss Alan Watts or Philip Kapleau Roshi, and "sit" for twenty minutes. You might say we were sort of

"Zen dilettantes." After Berklee, David left Boston for the Ivy-league lure of Yale University to pursue his graduate degrees. I left Boston to tour with Paul Anka and lead a musician's life. We would speak to each other once every couple of years. David's practice mind grew much stronger. He became the co-founder of the New Haven Zen Center and a world class martial artist, but in those days our infrequent conversations usually focused on music.

By the 1980s, both my parents had died, I was married and had two young children. I attended several meditation retreats with different groups during this time, none of which displayed any clear direction.



I pored through books in a vain attempt to attain this "Zen" mind which seemed to elude me. Attempting to connect with some turning phrase or word teaching that would open the flood gate of understanding was just an exercise in futility. The sudden death of my brother from a heart attack at an early age, however, was the unexpected catalyst for me to break free from this mode of thinking.

Although it is sometimes difficult for us to digest, our karma is our gift. Suppose I had "stayed the course" with this dilettante's approach to Zen? I can envision the scenario with clarity even today. In my seventies and frail with age, I hobble into the Eastern Philosophy section of some local bookstore, filled with the same ambitions for enlightenment. An old Zen saying goes, trying to find mind with mind is like trying to wash off blood with blood. It will always leave a stain. My brother is already dead. Who knows how much longer I will live. There is nothing left to do but to wake. WHAT IS THIS?

I called upon my friend David Mott once again, this question burning inside me. He told me about the Kwan Um School of Zen and Dharma Zen Center in Los Angeles. He spoke of Robert Moore, a remarkable teacher and friend who was guiding teacher for the southwest Zen Centers. Now Zen Master Ji Bong, his blend of compassion and solidity in his teaching style proved David's words prophetic. Within the first year of attending retreats in Los Angeles, I took precepts. My dharma buddy Paul Lynch, abbot of the Ocean Eyes Zen Center, and I got moktak that Mu Sang Sunim had brought back from a recent trip to Korea.

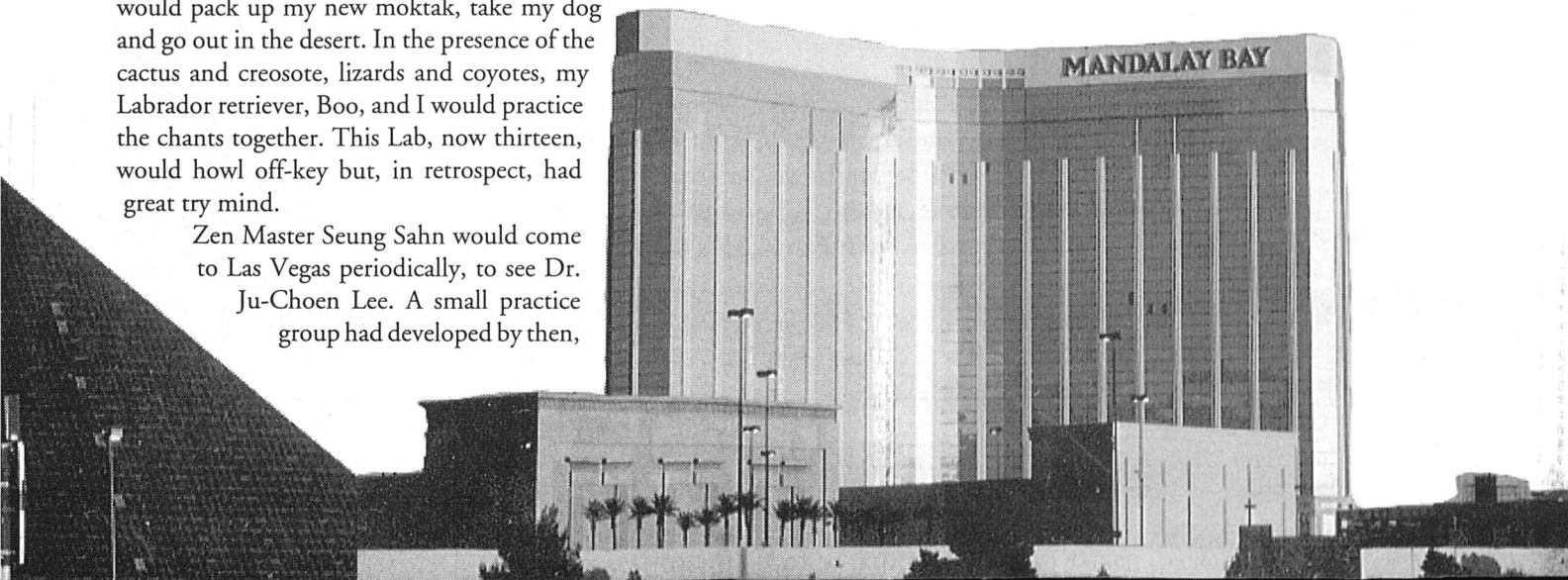
I remember at that time there was a certain amount of self-consciousness about doing bowing and chanting practice around our home. I was certain my wife and children would consider them the indulgences of madness. But with a pervading sense of "don't know" and Zen Master Seung Sahn's gentle admonition "Just do it!" I would pack up my new moktak, take my dog and go out in the desert. In the presence of the cactus and creosote, lizards and coyotes, my Labrador retriever, Boo, and I would practice the chants together. This Lab, now thirteen, would howl off-key but, in retrospect, had great try mind.

Zen Master Seung Sahn would come to Las Vegas periodically, to see Dr. Ju-Choen Lee. A small practice group had developed by then,

and it was at this time that I was finishing dharma teacher training. Mu Sang Sunim called and informed me that the Zen Master would like to have dinner with Dr. Lee and I that evening. At the dining room table he looked up from his meal. "Pretty soon you have long robes, ya?" I answered affirmatively. "Are you sitting Yong Maeng Jong Jin?" he inquired. "Yes sir, every two months in Los Angeles," I replied. "Ah good, maybe a Zen center will soon appear here in Las Vegas," he smiled. "That would be wonderful," I said. I suggested that he might send someone here, a response he acknowledged with a laugh. "Oh, no, no... This is your job." Shortly thereafter, I became a dharma teacher. Dr. Lee was very generous to provide keys to his office, where I and several other students committed to practice met for over three years. We began advertising, and holding quarterly retreats in private homes. Now, ten years after that fateful call to David Mott, this "Great Brightness" Zen Center had appeared. Almost a dozen people have taken precepts, with at least three students committing to dharma teacher training precepts in February of 1999.

Zen Master Seung Sahn says that everyone wants things, chases things, and is attached to those things. These are the maxims which command Las Vegas. The spiteful snakes of sex, money, rich food and power are the deities of choice here, insulated by an industry that not only tolerates them, but, in fact, exalts them. The mouth of the lion is a wonderful place to practice. We invite you to join us.

*Views from the front door
of the Great Brightness Zen Center in Las Vegas*



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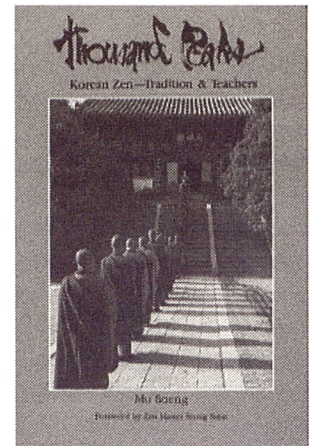


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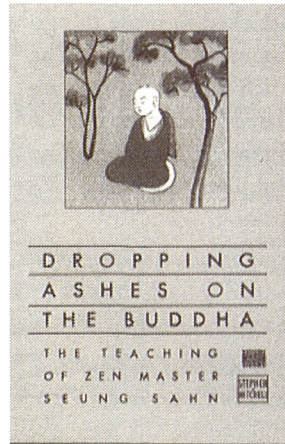
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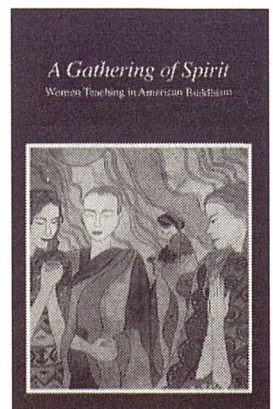


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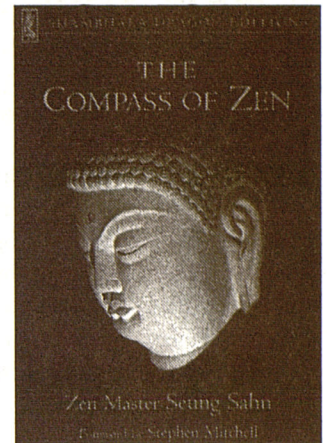


JUST OUT!
New edition of
Zen Master
Seung Sahn's
Only Don't Know.
See page 25



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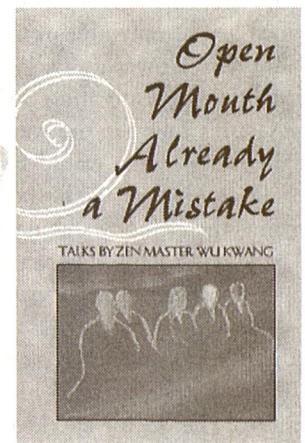
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A NEW YORK STORY

Liz McGuinness

Chogye International Zen Center of New York

Michael O'Sullivan—the kitchen master whose retreat-time cooking is so good it can make you forget your sore knees—began coming to Chogye back in the old meet-at-someone's-apartment days, when Chogye wasn't yet known as Chogye. And Michael was only making it to practice sporadically, trying to fit an occasional sitting into his rotating, round-the-clock schedule as a New York City policeman, plus his duties as a single parent to three growing youngsters.

The apartment, he said, was on 16th Street near Park Avenue. A friend of his sister Trish knew about it, “so one evening the three of us went and practiced. When I left, there had been some kind of experience with the meditation.” It was enough to keep him coming back when he could.

But there were a couple of pre-Chogye situations that also helped set the stage for his current practice, he believes—one when he was only nine or ten years old. “We lived up near Columbia University back then,” he explained. “No air-conditioning or anything. So in the summer everybody went to Grant's Tomb in the evening and watched the sun set, a daily thing. Some would bring sandwiches, maybe camp chairs. It was a neighborhood meeting place. I'd be just sitting there, just watching the sun, the different colors. Then I'd just stare, kind of a contemplative thing. It was like that sunset was inside of me somehow.”

Michael was already a cop when the second event occurred. He'd been injured on duty and sent to the hospital. “That was mandatory,” he said, “even if the injury was minor. The doctor checked my blood pressure and said, ‘This is really high! I'm going to give you something for it.’ But after he left the room, the nurse said, ‘Don't take it. Meditate!’” And it was the nurse's advice that he followed. “I wound up with a book on Transcendental Meditation and started practicing on my own.” Soon after that, he discovered that early Chogye group.

“Then I found a new place on 31st Street right off Park Avenue,” Michael said. “It turned out it was Chogye again! They met early in the morning. I would run in, bow, practice, then run out to move my car. Practice ended at 7:00 am and that's when I had to move the car.”

But that—plus the practice he managed at home—was having an effect. “I began noticing a change taking place,” he said. “An awareness slowly crept in. I was becoming more sensitive to what was going on around me, of other people's attachments and suffering.”



“It actually made the job easier in some ways, but a lot harder in others,” he said. “Back in those days I was working in high crime areas: Spanish Harlem, Harlem, Bedford Stuyvesant and East New York. It was very hard to go someplace every single day and see people taking advantage of other people, really doing some brutal things. And it was hard to detach from that. Some who are in law enforcement fall into the trap of becoming what they're trying to eliminate or change.”

“One thing I realized was that when you look at the victim of a crime and then at the victimizer—they're both victims, both suffering, and you must have compassion for people on both sides.”

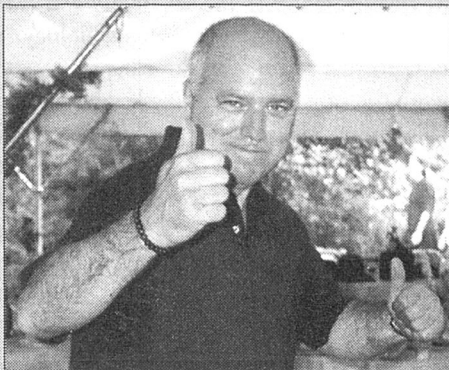
Still, as soon as he was eligible—in 1989, after twenty years on the force—Michael retired.

Soon he was practicing regularly at the current Chogye center, and Trish joined him. He began working with pottery and did some volunteer work with developmentally disabled children, did some work for a book publisher, even wrote and published his own cookbook.

“Cooking is something you can lose yourself in,” he said. “For me, the ingredients are intuitive. Sometimes, though, it's hard to keep it simple. That's the trick, when working on anything. Alone it's already OK, but we're always putting something on it, around it, near it.”

“That goes, I guess, for food, or life, or Zen.”

Reprinted from Woodfish, the newsletter of Chogye International Zen Center of New York.



Michael's Tofu with Mixed Vegetables

Marinade:

1/2 cup soy sauce

1/2 cup dry sherry

1/4 cup seasoned Oriental vinegar

1 clove crushed garlic

3 tablespoons brown sugar

2 cakes firm tofu

6 cups shredded Chinese cabbage, bok choy,
kale or Chinese mustard greens

1/4 cup vegetable oil for frying

2 1/2 tablespoons fresh grated ginger

3 tablespoons fresh lime juice

3 tablespoons cilantro

In a small saucepan, bring the marinade ingredients to a boil. Simmer for 2 minutes and remove from heat. Cut the tofu into 1-inch squares. Place the squares in a single layer in a heatproof pan. Pour the marinade over the tofu, sprinkle some of the oil on top, and let it sit for about 20 minutes.

Preheat the broiler. Prepare the remaining ingredients before you start stir frying.

Broil the tofu for 7 minutes, until lightly browned, then turn it over and brown the other side. While it is cooking, stir-fry the ginger, and add the vegetables in 2 tablespoons of oil. When the vegetables just wilt, add the lime juice and cilantro (you could add some nuts), toss in the tofu, and serve.

BOOK REVIEW

Tony Somlai, Original Root Zen Center

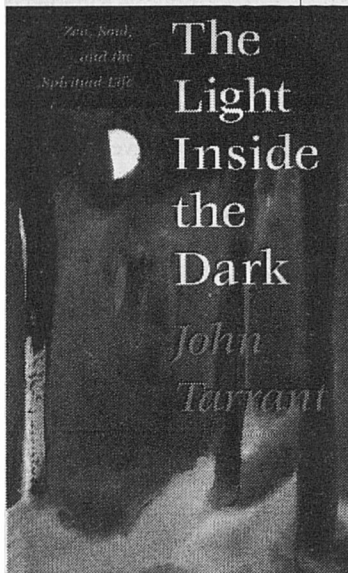
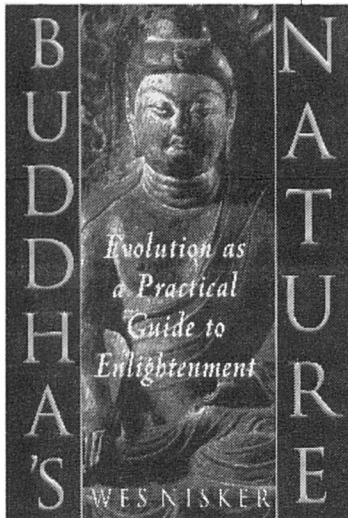
*Buddha's Nature:
Evolution as a Practical Guide to Enlightenment*
by Wes Nisker
Bantam Books, New York

*The Light Inside the Dark:
Zen, Soul, and the Spiritual Life*
by John Tarrant
Harper Collins, New York

Over the last 2500 years, Buddhist history reveals innovative constructions of relationships between the Buddha's teachings and the culture of each country it visits. This Buddhist "sociology of religion" is filled with examples of how the "new" belief affected societal aspirations, values, and ideology. For example, our school, the Kwan Um School of Zen, has the strong flavor and influences of the Korean people, as brought by our founder Zen Master Seung Sahn. To this day, many Korean flavors (like Kim Chee!) have a positive valuation in defining the identity of our practice.

Unlike our Korean spiritual parents, we Western students are in the infancy of this process of Buddhist enculturation. Two important points need to be addressed as we look at Buddhist teaching through "American" eyes. First, the power of our technological culture translated Buddhist teaching at an incredibly rapid pace. Where Buddhist teaching may have taken centuries to move from one region to the next, in our culture (with the internet, publishing, radio and TV) we are looking at much shorter times. Second, we Americans cannot discuss Buddhism without a focus on contemporary social life. The American field, in which Buddhism is being planted, is deeply entrenched with a strong belief in the power of the social sciences. Thomas Szasz, the eminent American psychologist, once suggested that psychology had become the religion of America and psychologists were now the high priests. *The Light Inside the Dark* and *Buddha Nature* are two of the current genre of books attempting to marry Buddhist teachings with American social life and sciences.

In *The Light Inside the Dark*, John Tarrant brings the Asian tradition of inquiry and experience to the Western method of



exploring the life of feeling, thought, and stories. Wes Nisker in *Buddha Nature* draws on several of the social sciences (neuroscience, evolutionary biology, and psychology). He views the Buddha as a spiritual scientist of the self.

In *Buddha Nature*, Nisker draws upon the works of other people who have tried to bring science and meditation practice together. He finds that the “modern self lives in a ‘culture of narcissism,’ with very little sense of being part of either a grand cosmic design, the unfolding processes of nature, or even a communal or historical destiny.” Nisker finds the Buddha’s Third Noble Truth a significant biological insight where “nature has given us the ability to train our minds to bring us new levels of satisfaction and freedom.” The remainder of his book follows four foundations of mindfulness (body and breath, first impression, states of mind, and thinking) as a guide to help “fully realize our human condition and develop its potential.”

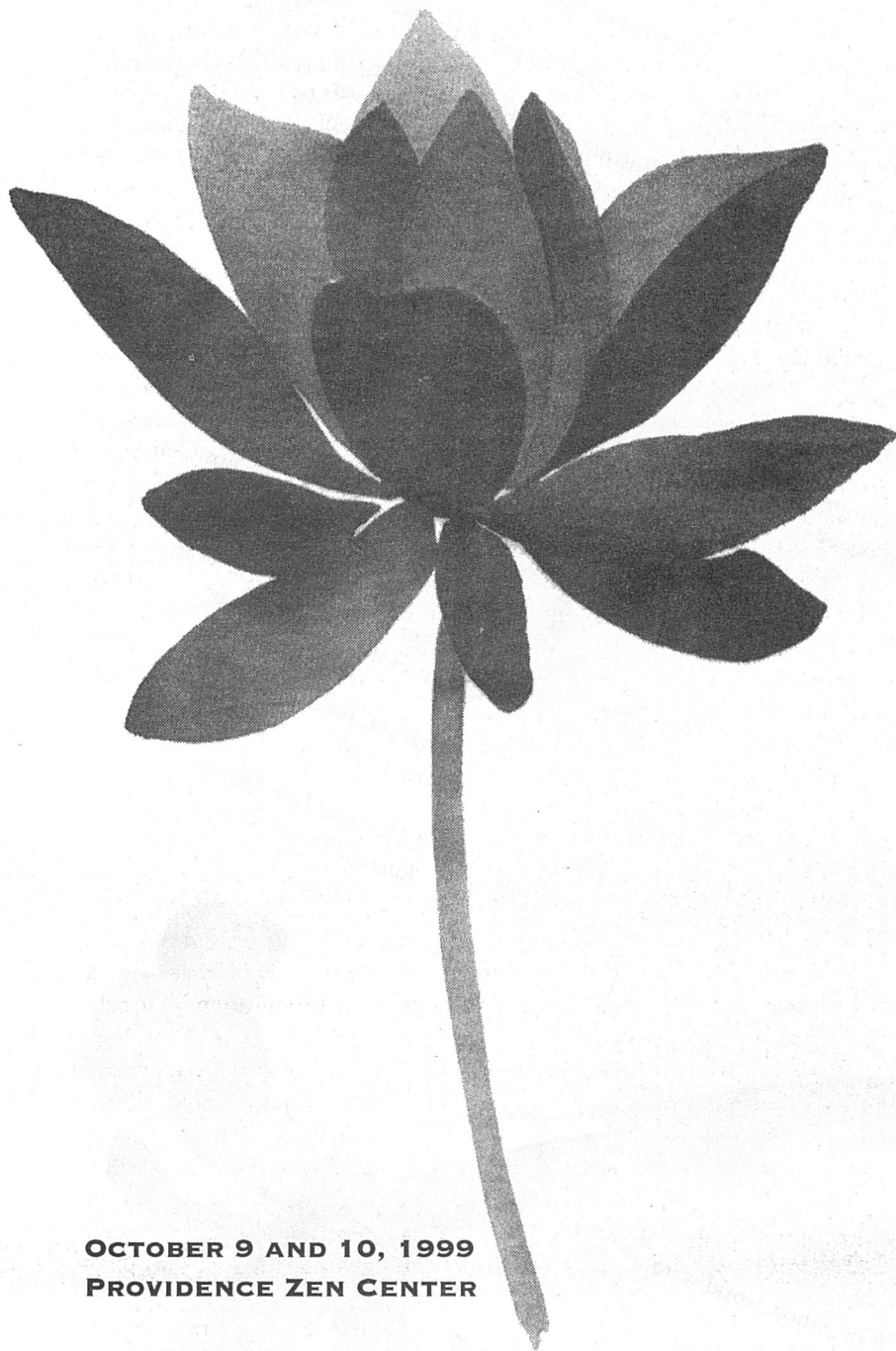
Perhaps the most interesting insight provided by Nisker is his interpretation of how the Buddha’s teaching on the law of karma works in our lives and is related to our current understanding of evolution. He finds that our ignorance of the twelve links of “dependent co-arising” are the root cause of human suffering. For Nisker, the evolutionary process offers a new idea of reincarnation in that the human condition can be seen as “our shared incarnation, part of our common ‘evolutionary karma.’” Through the study of life reincarnating “form after form” Nisker believes that we can clearly see the forces that have come together to create this temporary life.

While investigating similar ideas to Nisker, Tarrant in *The Light Inside the Dark* relies more heavily on the field of psychology to provide insights into Buddhist teaching. He finds that human existence at times loses “the upper levels of consciousness,” sinking into personal grief. He finds that the inward and outer voyages have a heroic aspect to them in which they both make new connections that help achieve many ends. He begins this journey into “a life of awareness” at the “moment of helplessness.” For Tarrant, when life goes well there is not much need to change things. However, the belief in a good life falls apart and breaks away whenever a personal crisis appears. Tarrant believes that this crisis is the “gift” that begins a new life.

Tarrant investigates the mysterious, that place where nothing is said directly. Yet he believes that everyday, “we move into it and through it and are sustained by its graces.” He finds that in not-knowing we begin to trust our blindness and therefore are not blocked by seeing. He finds this ability to let go important, so that “we can embrace whatever comes.” This is one of the many ways that Tarrant attempts to help the reader find the light inside the dark.

It is important to remember that these two authors did not write definitive textbooks on Buddhism or science. Instead, they brought together several fields and theories reflecting their own individual beliefs. These two books, as well as the genres they represent, attempt to enlarge the reader’s understanding of these fields rather than provide valid explanations for them. Both books have a sense of urgency, of hurrying us through the marriage of Buddhism and American social science, never giving us a complete picture. At times, their stories lack precision and depth in translating Buddhist teaching and practice.

Buddhism in America is a baby in the first few moments following birth. It arrived in the delivery room of the behavioral sciences. However, we are still left with a simple question: has the marriage of Buddhism and the social sciences given birth to a healthy baby? Yes, or no? In some ways it’s like trying to solve a problem—how does it fit? All generations have believed that theirs is the one in greatest crisis. This generation has added Buddhism to its repertoire of responses to the crisis of mind suffering. For Americans today, the puzzle pieces of life’s suffering fit into a Buddhist social science paradigm. *The Light Inside the Dark* and *Buddha Nature* will help future American Buddhists understand how the baby took its first steps.



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On Not Seeing Michael Jordan's Last Shot

The shot that we missed

when the screen was forced so rudely off
is still in the air, the wrist still arched
like a heron watching the widening circle
on the dark water forever grow wider

"the moment you see what the defense
wants to do"

in the dying seconds of eternity
like a ghost behind his great adversary
one final sleight and all the lesser gods gasp
and beg for their lives

"I saw that moment"

and stopped and lifted off, the greater god
the greater glory
And the shining furrow
the arc of the ball made still hangs in the air

It is still in the air
It is still there
It is still

Oh what a great awakening

Zen Master Hae Kwang
Kansas Zen Center

Posed

The portrait photographers posed me
with a bust of Homer

adjusting the lighting, arranging
wisps of hair for a magazine cover,
everything just right, but the light

from Homer's chest

reflected too strongly off my right ear
and the photographers fussed
with the glare, finally draping
the bust in black velvet,

and I held my hands in hapchang,
fingertips to my lips, listening
to the metered light from his lips,
remembering the modelled sound

idmen gar toi panth' hos' eni Troiè
caught in the unstopped ear

"That's it, just that expression,
hold it now"

Zen Master Hae Kwang
Kansas Zen Center

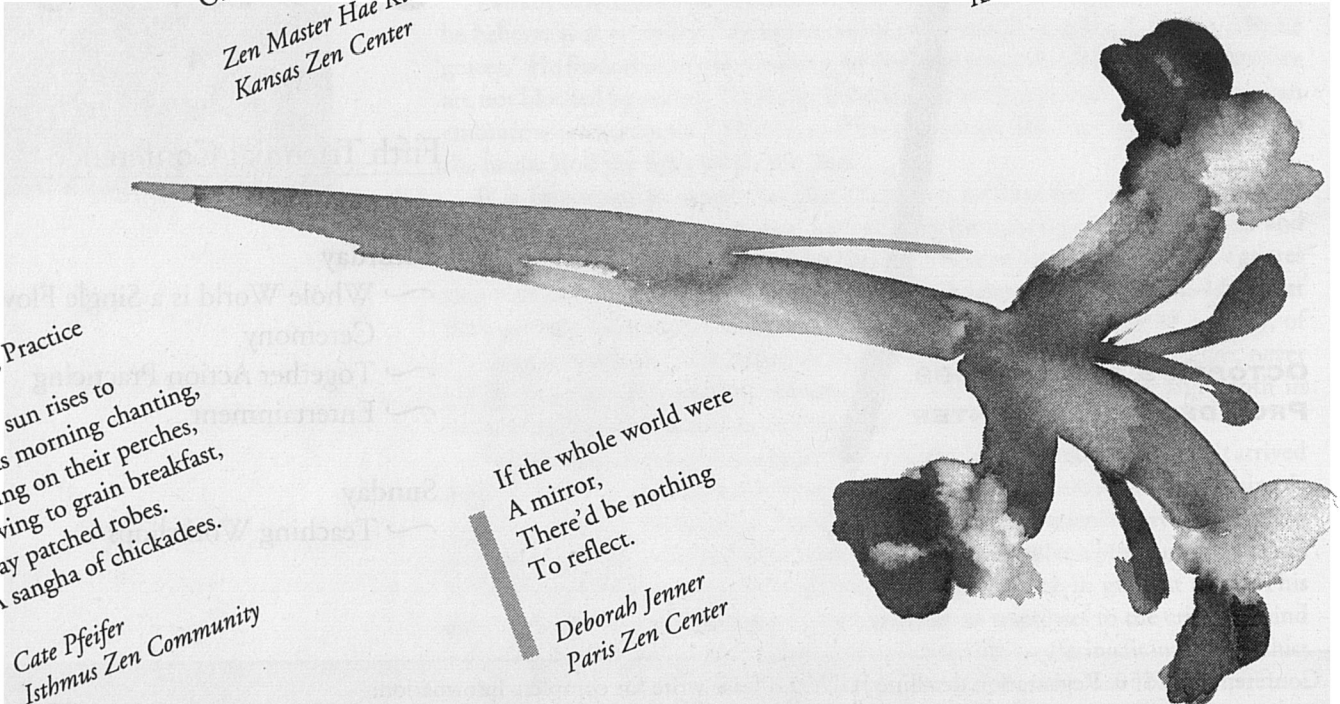
Morning Practice

Yellow sun rises to
ruckus morning chanting,
settling on their perches,
bowing to grain breakfast,
gray patched robes.
A sangha of chickadees.

Cate Pfeifer
Isthmus Zen Community

If the whole world were
A mirror,
There'd be nothing
To reflect.

Deborah Jenner
Paris Zen Center



Today is Thursday

Today is Thursday.
Unlock door.
Door chimes, footsteps on the stairs.
Tie robes.
All clock hands point down.
Open altar.
Bang wood, ring bell.
Hit moktak.
Swelling chants.
Close altar.
Three hits.
Sit still.
One hit.

I want to unfold
Not to change,
Change stubbornly
Just to remain
The same
Through time.

Deborah Jenner
Paris Zen Center

Walk.
One hit.
Sit still.
Three hits.
Everyone reads aloud the *Compass of Zen*.
Untie robes.
Arrange kitchen.
Boil water.
Steep tea.
Drink tea, eat cookies.
Footsteps on the stairs, door chimes.
Lock door.
Wash dishes.
Today is Thursday.

Cate Pfeifer
Isthmus Zen Community

chinese philosophers garden

snug harbor
lies still
quiet fog
sleeping breeze
ghostly buildings
quietly asleep
dream granite dreams
heads hidden
cloud and mist.

cradled
by pensive woods
embraced
by winter sleep
unborn garden
waits for life's
multicolored
touch of spring.

Guillermo Echanique
Chogye International Zen Center of New York

Possum lying in the road
Like a broken clown—
A grin that promises
Someday, soon...

Algernon D'Amassa
Providence Zen Center

winter storm warning

Snow, wind, cold
and bitter memories:
tug of war at
February's door.
Above a distant horizon
of roses

the moon arises
silvery and pure
to greet the sleeping
lions of March.
Tornadoes in the Midwest,
Rain in the South,
Fog in the Northeast,
Nostalgia in my heart.

Outside, a cold wind
whips up anxiety
in the bare trees.

Guillermo Echanique
Chogye International
Zen Center of New York

Cycle of Three

One:
stepping forward,
the tree knows my secret.
The sky hears my voice
The grass is my footsteps.

Two:
Coming to stand by the stream,
The sun shines on me,
Green-sister leaf opens the sun,
unlocks its heart.

Three:
Reaching down to the water,
Willow branches touch the surface.

Debora Orf
Furnace Mountain



The monks file into the Buddha Hall to celebrate Buddha's Birthday...

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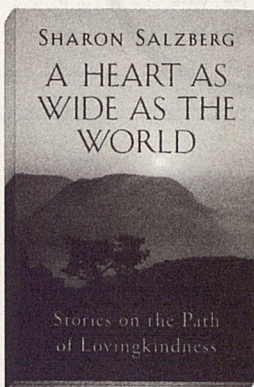
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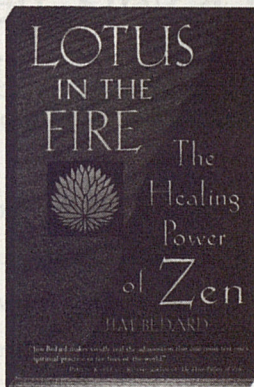


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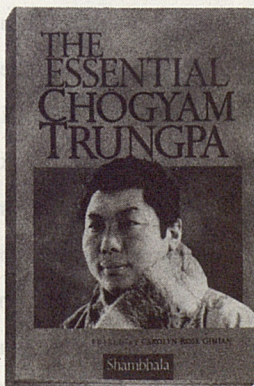


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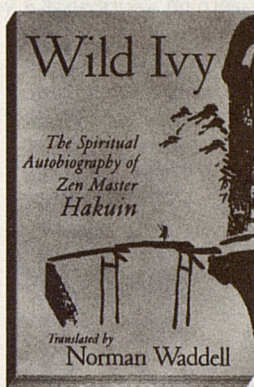


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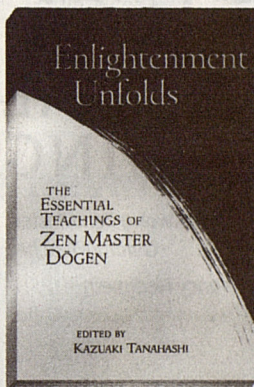
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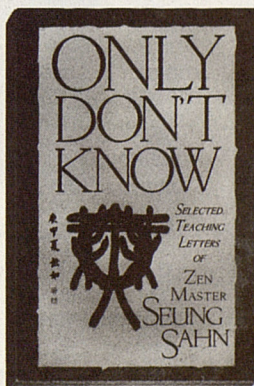
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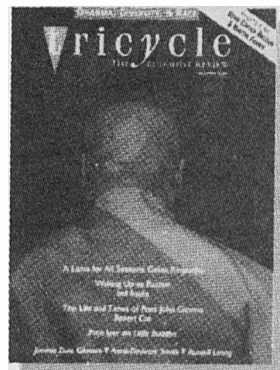
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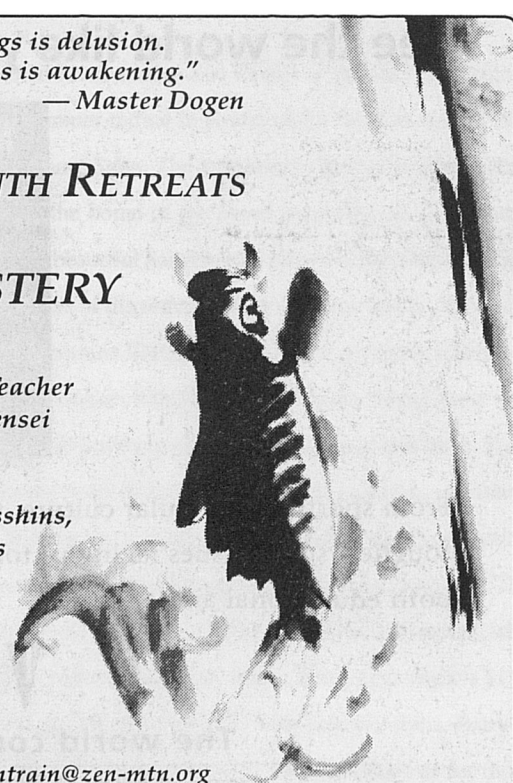


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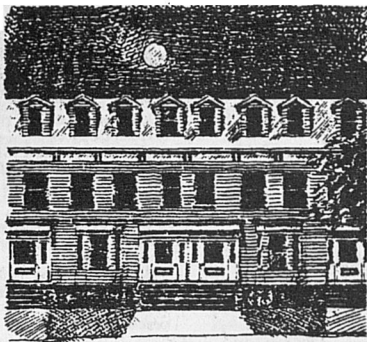
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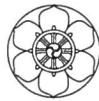
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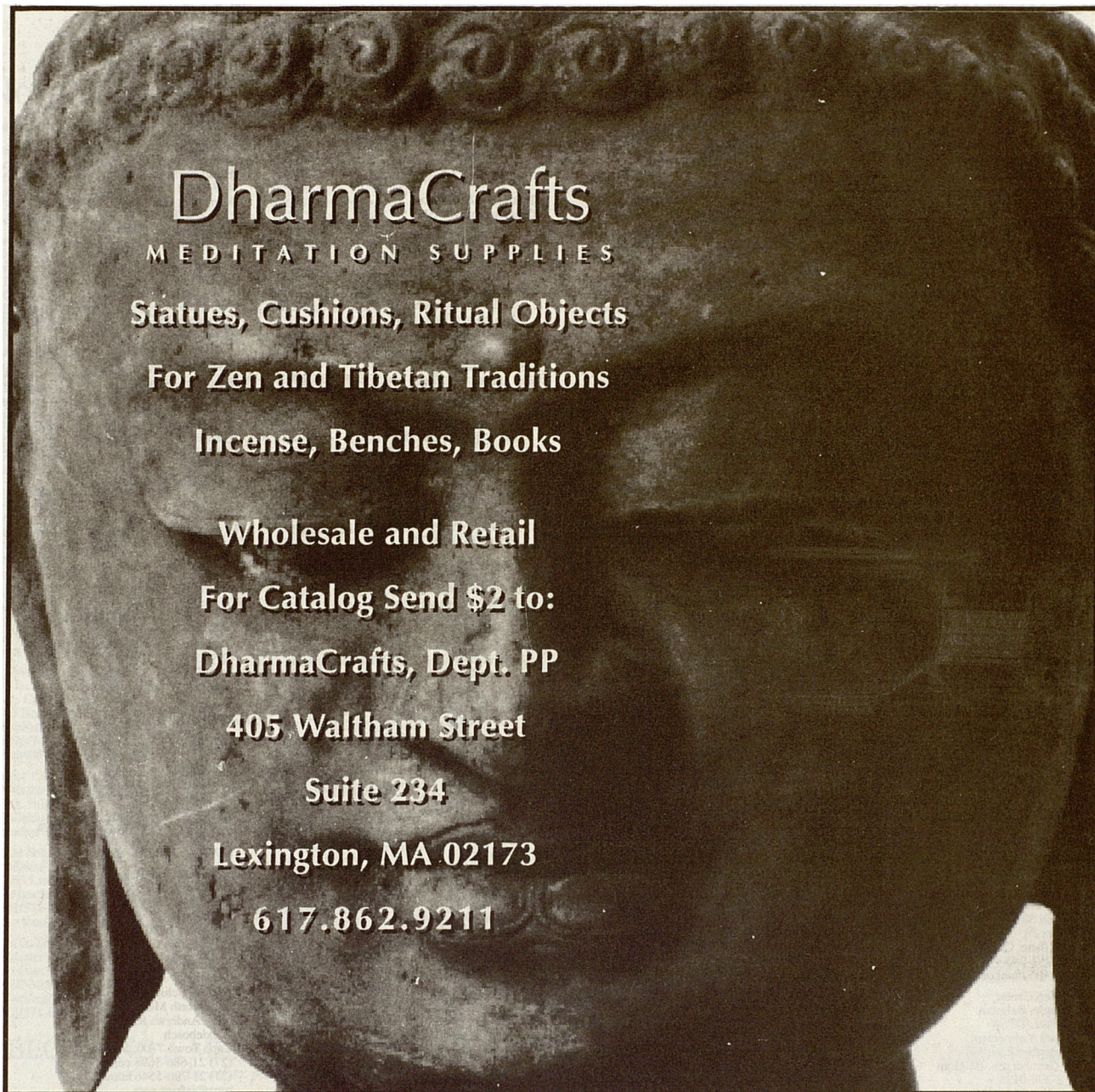
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