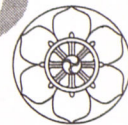


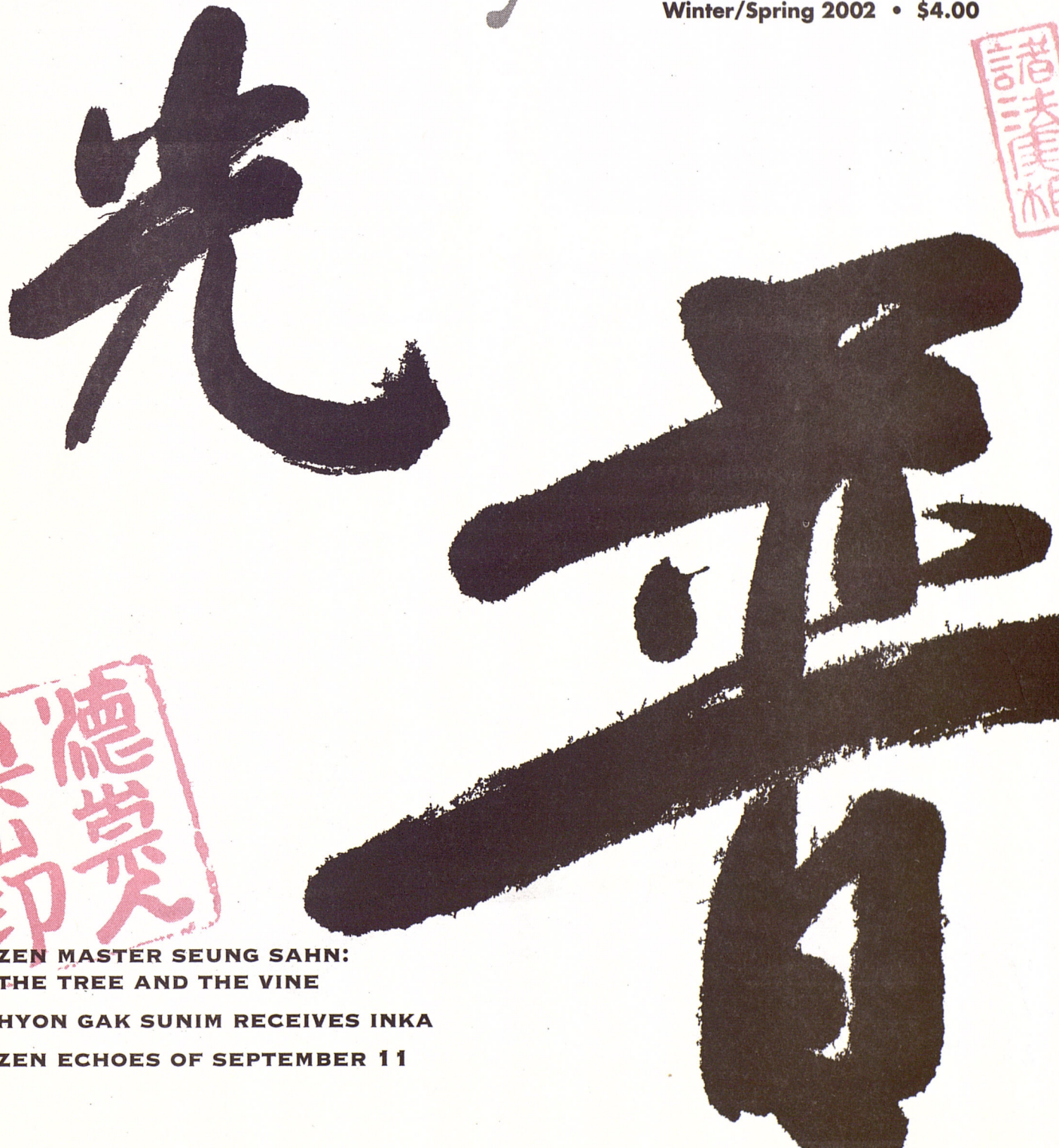
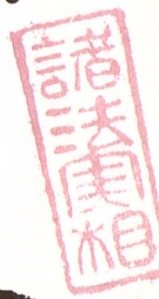
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# Primary Point



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ZEN MASTER SEUNG SAHN:  
THE TREE AND THE VINE  
HYON GAK SUNIM RECEIVES INKA  
ZEN ECHOES OF SEPTEMBER 11

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## PRIMARY POINT

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The calligraphy on the front cover reads "Great Universal Light" and is taken from an original calligraphy by Zen Master Seung Sahn (left) which hangs at Providence Zen Center.



## the tree and the vine

*Zen Master Seung Sahn answering questions at Kye Ryong Sahn International Zen Center/Mu Sang Sa on July 26, 2001.*

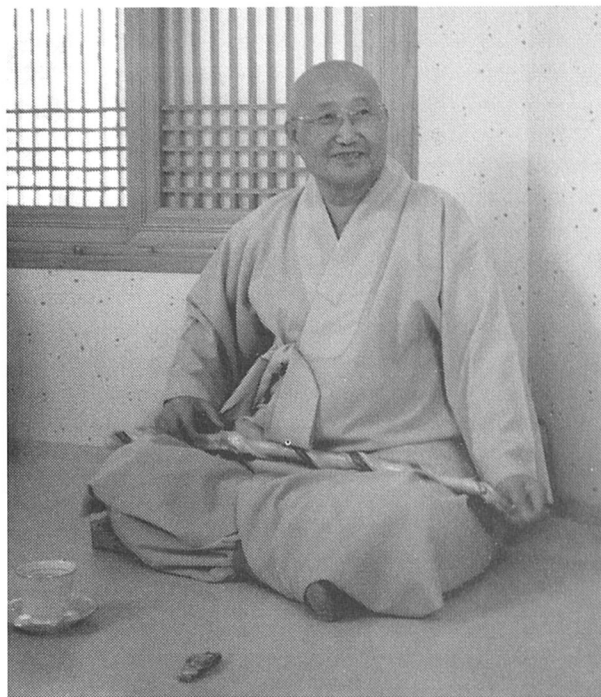
**Student:** The Heart Sutra says that there is no suffering, no origination, no stopping or path, while early Buddhism teaches that these things do exist. Why is that?

**Zen Master Seung Sahn:** If you have mind, than you need suffering, origin and end of suffering and the path. But if you have no mind, then you don't need those things.

**Student:** Some Buddhist texts talk about different levels of attainment on the bodhisattva path. They also say that it is possible to regress from the path if you are not at a very advanced level. But in Zen we never talk about these levels. In Korea everybody is addressed as a bodhisattva (bosal) as if it is easy to become a bodhisattva. Why the difference?

**ZMSS:** In Mahayana Buddhism the starting point is complete emptiness—nothing at all. Zen proceeds from emptiness to bodhisattva action. Early Buddhism starts with desire and suffering and then moves towards emptiness. It is like this: If you want to go from here to Pusan [*a city in the south of Korea*] you can take a non-stop direct flight and get there straight-away. On the other hand, if you decide to go by car or bicycle then you have to take a road. Along the road there will be signs showing you the way. Mahayana Buddhism and Southern-style Buddhism are like that; you go step by step, carefully following the signs so that you end up in the right place. But Zen is like taking a plane—you fly directly. “Mind is Buddha!” Zen Masters teach their students by pointing directly to mind: “Dry shit on a stick,” “Three pounds of flax,” and so forth.

Before the talk today the head monk gave me this beautiful Zen stick. This stick is beautiful because—as you can see—the tree from which it was made was entwined by a vine. As they grew, the vine and the tree were struggling constantly. Because of that fight we now have this beauti-



ful Zen stick. Our minds are just like that. We go around and around this world, trying to make some sense out of life, trying to attain the correct way. But our minds are usually very complicated, so it's only after a big struggle—after a fight—that we become like this stick, very beautiful. Also notice that this Zen stick only points one way. The vine and the tree both kept the same direction. They grew together. Our practice is also like that: as we practice, we struggle, we fight, and go through a lot of suffering, but if the direction remains clear, then this beautiful treasure appears. So in any situation, any condition, if you don't lose your direction, you make your way up, up, up and you become like this stick, a treasure for all beings.

**Student:** Dae Soen Sa Nim, today I received a calligraphy from you that says: “What is this?” But I heard a teacher in our school say that “What am I?” is a better question. Is there a difference?

**ZMSS:** Zen teaching directly points at mind, without attaching to words and speech. So, if you are attached to words, these two questions are different. If you don't attach, then all things are the same. A great Zen Master once said: “Ten thousand questions all return to one, ‘What are you?’” So, they all become one big doubt.

**Student:** What is freedom?

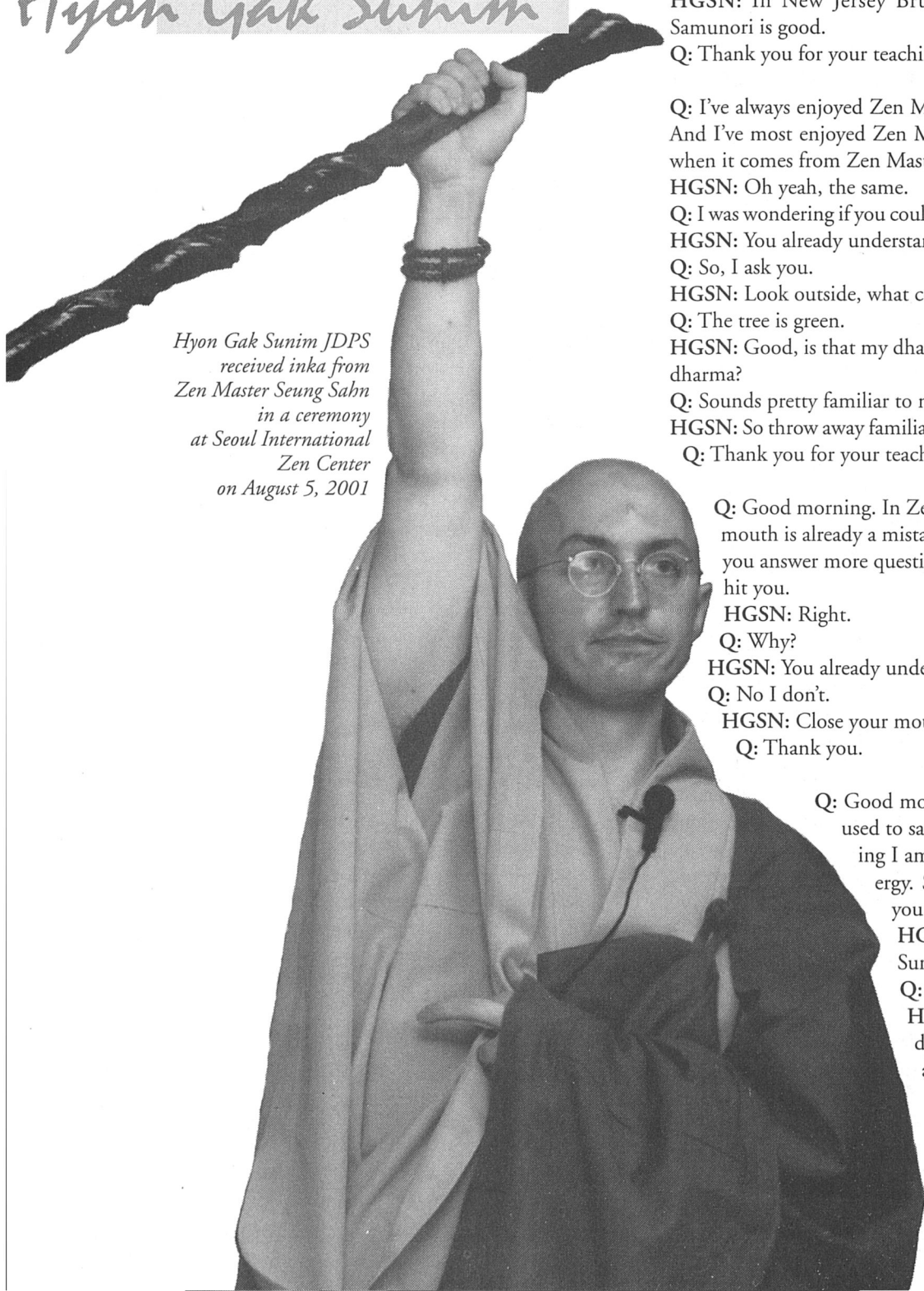
**ZMSS:** No attachment, no hindrance.

**Student:** Are you free?

**ZMSS:** I don't care about freedom or attachment. I don't care even if I die here. That is freedom.

Inka  
Ceremony  
for  
Hyon Gak Sunim

D H A R M A C O M B A T



*Hyon Gak Sunim JDPS  
received inka from  
Zen Master Seung Sahn  
in a ceremony  
at Seoul International  
Zen Center  
on August 5, 2001*

**Q:** You know you're a real all-American guy from New Jersey. So what's the secret of your success in Korea?

**Hyon Gak Sunim:** You already understand.

**Q:** Really I don't.

**HGSN:** In New Jersey Bruce Springsteen, in Korea Samunori is good.

**Q:** Thank you for your teaching.

**Q:** I've always enjoyed Zen Master Seung Sahn's dharma. And I've most enjoyed Zen Master Seung Sahn's dharma when it comes from Zen Master Seung Sahn.

**HGSN:** Oh yeah, the same.

**Q:** I was wondering if you could reveal for us, your dharma.

**HGSN:** You already understand.

**Q:** So, I ask you.

**HGSN:** Look outside, what color is the tree?

**Q:** The tree is green.

**HGSN:** Good, is that my dharma, or Seung Sahn Sunim's dharma?

**Q:** Sounds pretty familiar to me.

**HGSN:** So throw away familiarity, dog runs after the bone.

**Q:** Thank you for your teaching.

**Q:** Good morning. In Zen we learn that opening the mouth is already a mistake. So it seems to me that if you answer more questions your new stick ought to hit you.

**HGSN:** Right.

**Q:** Why?

**HGSN:** You already understand.

**Q:** No I don't.

**HGSN:** Close your mouth, then you'll understand.

**Q:** Thank you.

**Q:** Good morning. Oh Jin Sunim JDPS used to say that whenever I am teaching I am connected to universal energy. So what kind of energy are you connected to now?

**HGSN:** You already understand Sunim.

**Q:** No.

**HGSN:** Right now the air conditioning is cool on my face and the light off your face is shining.

**Q:** Thank you very much.



Is this one or not?

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

Not one, not two. Hitting the table is just hitting the table. So opening your mouth to explain or describe it is already an enormous mistake.

If this point is not-one-not-two, if we can't describe it with any kind of speech or words, then how do we show this point to others? How do we save all people with this point if we can't call it anything?

KATZ!

Today is August Fifth, 2001, many Zen students are gathered for Inka ceremony.

So that's actually the end of my dharma speech. But maybe someone here doesn't understand this kind of speech, so I'll say a few more words.

Today I'd like to introduce all of you to my new teacher. I have a new teacher, nowadays. I didn't tell the community yet but maybe some people already understand. *[Points to his left shoulder]* This is my new eminent teacher. A few weeks ago, in the middle of summer kyol che, a few of us were sitting in the Dharma Room in Hyon Jeong Sah Temple, practicing very, very strongly, and really, really with a lot of determination looking into this great question. And one evening, in the middle of the rainy season, I had to go out of the Dharma Room momentarily for an errand. I came barreling out of the Zen room in the pitch dark of a moonless, wet night, and while slipping into these slippery rubber shoes that we wear, kind of popping into them as I turned to negotiate the stairs by feel, I fell on the wet stairs. It was not a big height, but there was an obstruction in the way that I didn't see in the dark, a small gate that was installed to keep temple visitors away from the Dharma Room. And I fell into the gate and my left arm got tangled in the gate and so I couldn't land properly. I landed on my left shoulder directly and with full force. A few hours later we would learn that my arm had been totally dislocated, and an important bone supporting the socket had not only broken off, but was fragmented in pieces inside. Later I would need several hours of surgery for it, a pin and some wires and a week in the hospital. It was very serious. Nothing like this had ever happened to me before. I had never broken a bone in my body.

I yelled out and the monks came out and the bosalnims came up from the kitchen and the worker guys came up from the little room where they were watching TV and I lay on the ground there, kind of pounding the ground and gritting my teeth intensely for a few minutes. I was kind of helped up and brushed off and was brought into the room.

Very suddenly after really incredible sitting practice, weeks and weeks of working up to this kind of intensity of effort, after some "pure" and "clear" engagement with the world protected by the rules and arrangement of the meditation room, the world was teaching back to me something very interesting. And the lessons haven't stopped yet actually. The world was showing me many things about impermanence, and about aspects of my relationship to the world, I believe. So there was obviously that dimension to it.

And yet something else very interesting appeared. I probably can't tell this part of the story as well, but perhaps some of the people who saw it there, maybe Kwan Haeng Sunim or Won Do Sunim could. What's very interesting about this excruciatingly painful experience was that after the shock — the first five minutes or so of the newness and the pain and the intense, intense agony of it — I became very, very, very calm. Something clicked inside and the whole thing became a kind of bliss experience. While the bosalnims and worker guys and temple guests hovered around, wringing their hands and some of them even crying and turning away as they saw my arm sticking up above my shoulder, I was suddenly very, very calm. Unmoving. This physical pain was intense, no doubt about it — it's like having half your body ripped off. It's incredible, my arm was sticking out like this. It was out literally separate from the body. But what was really interesting about it was after that first period, after I settled in and returned to what practicing had been, what I had been connecting to on the cushion up to that event, it was a very, very, very calm and perfect experience. And I remember looking at all these wonderful people hovering around, suffering and making such a fuss over my condition, and I said, "Why is everyone getting so worked up?" It occurred that they seemed to be in worse pain than me. I watched that whole situation with great interest and curiosity.

This intense, blinding pain was just-pain: not "pain", some disagreeable, intrusive, separate, other thing, but it was just pain. Everything was very simple, very clear. There was absolutely no "inside" or "outside" to it. It was beautiful, indescribable experience. There was pain, but that's all: something was not moving behind that, not moving at all. Something was not touched by that, something was not moved or touched by that in the least. Although there were moments of gripping again, suddenly it was again possible to make jokes to people or talk about stuff or even do imitations of several of the people who work there. I would close my eyes, do mantra, and fall back into actually relishing the relief, if you could experience it, of this not-moving experience. It was sweet and liberating. Kwan Haeng Sunim asked me several times, "Why are you laughing?" or "How could you laugh?" A local farmer was called, a man who readjusts the dislocated hips of cows that have stepped into a rivet or soft spot of earth and dislocated some joint.

*continued on page 22*

RESPECTING  
OUR  
ANCESTRAL  
PRACTICE:  
MORNING  
BELL  
CHANT  
PART 3

Zen Master Hae Kwang  
Kansas Zen Center

The first two of these three poems (there are as many as seven in a longer version of the Morning Bell Chant used in Korea) are in origin Zen poems composed in China some time around the 11<sup>th</sup> or 12<sup>th</sup> century. Both poems have a similar structure, moving from an expression of the emptiness and universality of original nature to an acute awareness of this present moment. The second poem is particularly successful in that it combines in its last line the poignant, just-now quality of the cry of the geese with the open experience of the vast emptiness of the sky. The absolute and the phenomenal become one; form is emptiness, emptiness is form. We can only attain this by "being with all beings without hindrance," as the first poem puts it.

▶▶ 6  
Three Poems

(1)

CHONG SAN CHOP-CHOP MI-TA GUL  
blue mountain ridge ridge Amita home  
*The blue Mountain of many ridges is Buddha's home.*

CHANG HE MANG-MANG JONG MYOL GUNG  
blue-green ocean vast vast still extinction palace  
*The vast blue ocean is the Palace of Still Extinction.*

MUL-MUL YOM NAE MU GA AE  
beings beings take come no hindrance obstacle  
*Being with all things without hindrance,*

KI GAN SONG JONG HAK DU HONG  
few see pine arbor crane head red  
*Few can see the red crane's head on the pine tree.*

NA-MU A-MI-TA BUL  
Namu Amita Buddha  
*Become One, Infinite Time, Infinite Space Buddha*

(2)

SAN DAN JONG YA JWA MU ON  
Mountain hall quiet night sit no words  
*Sitting silently in a mountain temple in the quiet night,*

JOK-CHONG NYO-YO BON JA YON  
quiet quiet still still original nature surely  
*Extreme quiet and stillness are original naturalness.*

HA SA SO PUNG DONG NIM YA  
what business west wind shake forest wilderness  
*Why does the Western wind shake the forest?*

IL SONG HAN ANG NYU JANG CHON  
one sound cold geese cry long sky  
*A single cry of the cold-weather geese fills the sky.*

NA-MU A-MI-TA BUL  
Namu Amita Buddha  
*Become One, Infinite Time, Infinite Space Buddha*

(3)

WON GONG BOP-KYE JAE JUNG SAENG  
vow together dharma -world all many beings  
*Vowing together with all world beings*

DONG IM MI-TA DAE WON HAE  
together enter Amita great vow ocean  
*Together into Buddha's Ocean of Great Vows*

JIN MI RAE JE DO JUNG SAENG  
exhaust future come occasion save many beings  
*To save beings of numberless worlds*

JA TA IL SHI SONG BUL DO  
self other one time attain Buddha way (Tao)  
*You and I simultaneously attain the Way of Buddha.*

NA-MU A-MI-TA BUL  
Namu Amita Buddha  
*Become One, Infinite Time, Infinite Space Buddha*

The third poem, in the form of a vow, continues the theme of profound action in unison, plunging us together with all beings into Amitabul's ocean of vows to use every opportunity to work for universal liberation. The last line of the poem (which is also the last line, chanted to a different melody, of the Homage to the Three Jewels) expresses once more the experience of unity and mutuality in our practice. "Self" and "other," "you" and "I," are not separate, and our attainment of the Buddha Way, our enlightenment, can only be simultaneous.

Each of the poems is punctuated with a strike of the bell and followed by a repetition of the mantra Namu Amita Bul, framing each poem as a little meditation exercise, returning us to actual practice, and providing an efficacious moment in which to wake up.



# tethering a blind donkey

*A dharma speech by Dennis Duermeier JDPSN  
at the Buddha's Enlightenment Day Ceremony at  
Providence Zen Center on December 2, 2000.*

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

Shakyamuni Buddha sat the whole night through with no enlightenment. Do you believe that?

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

Next morning at dawn he looked up and saw the morning star and got great enlightenment. Do you believe that?

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

If you say no enlightenment, you wallow in Samsara. If you say enlightenment, you go straight to hell. What can you do?

KATZ!

Even the truest belief is a stake tethering a blind donkey to the ground.

Thank you all for being here this morning. We gather here to celebrate Shakyamuni Buddha's great enlightenment, a solemn and joyous occasion. Oftentimes I think that we do fine with the solemnity but maybe not quite so well with the joy, and that's been on my mind lately for a variety of reasons.

A few weeks ago, I gave a talk and told a story that I had heard of a woman, a vipassana teacher who had an interesting encounter. She had been to a conference and was being driven to the airport afterwards on a bus. It was very early in the morning and all the other passengers were asleep. She was up front with the bus driver who was also very sleepy. In the interest of self-preservation she was engaging him in conversation. She found out he was from Pakistan and was a Muslim, so they talked about practice for a while. At some point in the conversation she asked the man about prayer and how he prays and what it means to him to pray. He said, "Oh, you have to pray like you've been dropped into the middle of the ocean and you don't know how to swim."

I told that story in the course of my talk and also repeated something Zen Master Seung Sahn had once said: we have to practice as if we owed a million dollars and we don't have a cent. Mmmm, strong. Later on someone came

to me, very disturbed, and said, "That's awful. I feel like I'm drowning. I feel like I'm being crushed by debt. What are you talking about? What is this teaching?" So we talked about it and I was able to reassure her about what I was trying to say, but it really made me think... how does this teaching come across, how are we perceived?

Around the same time, I watched a cop show on television about a crime committed in a Zen Center. The police were investigating and it was fascinating to see how the Zen students were portrayed. They were all very slender, austere, dour, humorless and very resentful that the police were intruding into their "spiritual practice." I thought, "Well, that's not the way Zen is. I've never had that kind of experience with this practice or with anyone I've met in it. Where does that perception come from?"

One thing that occurred to me as I pondered was that none of us, or very few of us anyway, were born into this tradition. Zen Master Seung Sahn came to the United States in 1972 and more or less brought full-blown practice to us. We've been practicing for many years but it's not what we grew up with, so the emotional response, for me, for example, is still grounded in my Catholic upbringing. This became very clear to me when I went to Korea on the first Whole World is a Single Flower trip. We spent one night in a very small temple, apparently that of a friend of Zen Master Seung Sahn... a very small place. It was highly decorated with lanterns everywhere. Zen Master Seung Sahn gave a dharma talk to the Korean sangha there. I was sitting back a ways watching and was very moved by the scene, by the beauty of it. Even without understanding the language, I could see it was obvious the people loved Zen Master Seung Sahn and he was responding to it... lots of smiling and laughter. Watching from afar with another person, I was trying to explain why I was so moved, why it seemed so familiar. Finally I realized it was because it reminded me of Christmas Eve at home. In my family on Christmas Eve when we would go to bed, there would be no decorations, no tree, no presents, nothing. At midnight my parents would get us up and bring us all downstairs and say, "Look, Santa Claus came and see what he did." Pow, there it was in front of us. The tree had appeared, the presents had appeared, the decorations, the lights, everything was there all of a sudden. I treasure that memory, the simple childlike joy we felt going downstairs at midnight. Somehow, watching Zen Master Seung Sahn teach in Korea reminded me of that, created some sort of emotional echo of my earliest experience of magic and the spiritual.

The same emotional resonance came to my mind last week while I was watching Dickens' *A Christmas Carol*... the 1950 version with Alastair Sim. Say what you will about this movie, it's one of my all-time favorites. I still cry every time I watch it. We see Scrooge, and he's just been through hell. If you have any kind of practice, if you make any kind

of ongoing, concentrated effort to look at yourself and to examine your mind, you see everything Scrooge was shown over that one night. You see your suffering, you see the suffering you cause all the beings around you through your anger, greed and ignorance. He saw it all in one night, bang, and is pleading for mercy by the end. But then there is the moment when he wakes up, Christmas morning. He wakes up and suddenly realizes, "I'm still alive! I've still got a chance!" It's a wonderful, rare opportunity. "I've got a chance, I can still change." That's just such a great moment. There is a line of Zen Master Seung Sahn's poetry, "Outside the door is the land of stillness and light." I think of that line when Scrooge throws open his window and sees the quiet street, London, Christmas morning, nobody's about, fresh snow, it's just pristine... he sees it as if for the first time. He's suffused with joy, joy in his life and his chance and his possibility. He begins dancing around, singing, "I don't know anything, I never knew anything." Then he stands on his head, terrorizing his maid, who thinks he's gone mad. However, Scrooge doesn't remain simply joyful. His joy becomes sympathetic joy. His joy becomes joy on behalf of all the other beings he meets. His joy comes from them. If they are joyful, if they are happy, he is happy. If they are sad, he is sad. So it's very clear, there's no problem with anything he does after that. That's how I would like us to approach practice. Anyone undertaking practice soon understands that it's demanding. If you maintain it, you do have to look at yourself very closely and oftentimes that's not easy. But also there is a possibility. Joy, sympathetic joy, compassion can appear. Then you can enjoy your life. Then no problem.

Finally, one more story from the first Whole World is a Single Flower trip. Part of the experience was a week long tour by bus around South Korea visiting temples. It was a real whirlwind. Everyone would get on the bus, drive to a famous temple, see the famous Buddha, get back on the bus, drive to the next temple, see the famous scripture, get back on the bus, drive to the next temple, and so on. People were getting a little tired of the bus. One morning, we were leaving a temple very early. The bus was in a parking lot below a tall wall. Behind the wall was a terrace upon which sat the temple proper. I was standing on the wall looking down on the bus, muttering and grumpy about the upcoming ride. Suddenly, behind me I heard someone calling. I turned around and saw a monk whom I had not seen before. Since there was no one else about, apparently he was calling me. I walked over, a little uneasy, and bowed. Neither of us spoke the other's language. There was a seat beside him which he patted, so I sat down. He split an orange, gave me half, and we ate silently. Then I had to go; it was time to leave and get on the bus. We bowed again, smiled and I left and have never seen him since. But I will remember that five minutes until the day I die, because

walking into his presence I was immersed in a peace and simple humanity that was palpable. Something in me melted and felt "Ahhh, finally. It's okay, I'm who I am, he's who he is and we don't have to pretend anything to each other." It was, simply, a joy to sit beside him. It wasn't teaching in the sense we ordinarily think of it in terms of a dharma talk or a kong-an interview, or anything like that. It was just the fruit of practice manifest in this world... something we can all share. That's really our job as Zen students, as inheritors of this lineage. So I hope, I encourage everyone to undertake your job in a joyful spirit so that your joy can become sympathetic joy. Then you can really feel happy for another person's good fortune without that secret sense of envy that we all have. And you can also feel sad if someone else is sad without that little niggling satisfaction in their misfortune. It's possible. We can all do it. Thank you very much.

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

Shakyamuni sat down and vowed not to get up until... something.

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

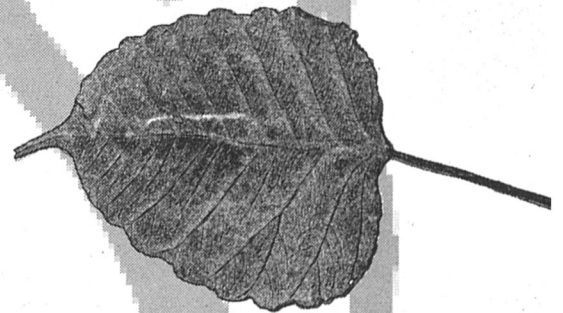
That morning he got up.

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

So is this broken vow? Not broken vow?

KATZ!

Please find out. Thank you.





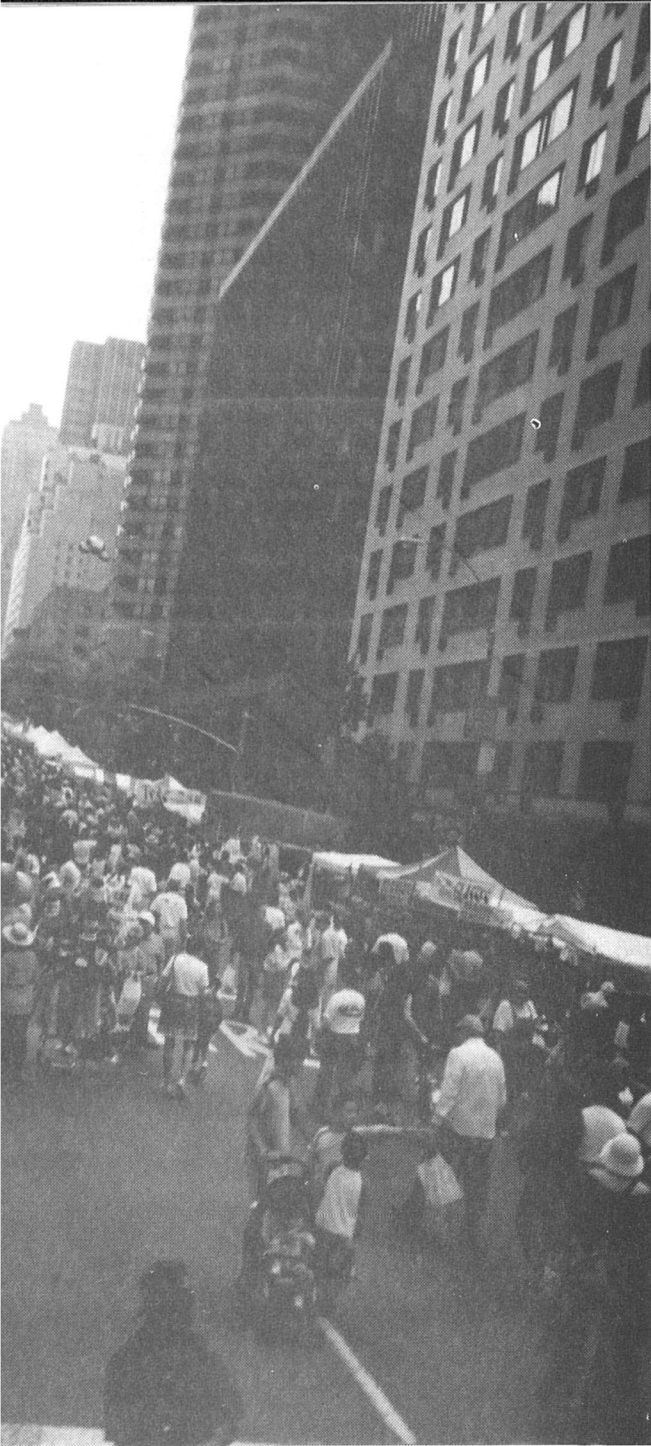
## finger painting

*Zen Master Dae Kwang  
Providence Zen Center*

These days the events of September 11 are very much on everyone's mind. This naturally leads to many questions about the meaning of these events and how they relate to our Zen practice. While these questions are timely, their answers, aside from superficial political ones, seem to lie outside of our grasp. We've all experienced the fact that words fail us in the face of this horrific event. Actually, September 11 is just a dramatic example of something we encounter daily in more "mundane" situations. We look in the mirror one morning and notice that we are aging; a friend who is seemingly quite healthy becomes ill; a relative dies... Aside from the standard things that we say to ourselves and others about these things, there is still, underneath, a hollowness or longing to resolve "it" somehow.

When the Buddha left his "good situation" and went out into the world, he saw three things: old age, sickness and death. At that time he was profoundly struck by the great question of life, which is brought on by suffering. What are we? Why are we here? At that time he didn't start looking for more explanations—he started looking inside for the answer. An ancient worthy once noted that, "the view of all Buddhas and Patriarchs is the same—no view." Zen has no point of view, no opinion. To someone who just wants to understand something, like our present situation, not a lot is offered here. However, in the end this is one thing which draws us to Zen practice: the basic sanity of "no point of view." So, you will be spared one more analysis of the war on terrorism.

Buddha and the Zen Masters in our tradition do not put forth a religious or philosophical explanation of life but rather point directly to Truth or, as it is said in Zen, "point directly to the human Mind." That's unique in the world of religion. This pointing itself is not an explanation but a means to bring one to a deep questioning about life. Why are we living on this planet? Any meditation practice or spiritual journey boils down to finding the answer to this great question, "Who am I?" As a practice aiming toward attainment, rather than mere un-



derstanding, Zen does not rely on concepts, beliefs, theology or ideology. Zen's method is to evoke our own direct experience of life. After all, these questions cannot be answered by Zen, but they can be answered by you!

The most important dimension of the practice of great questioning is direction—why do it? When the Buddha sat under the Bodhi tree it was not out of self-concern. His questioning was for all of humanity, since he was trying to resolve the question of human suffering and existence. Great questioning is wedded to compassion—it's not for me but for all beings. Of course, you are one of those beings. So, even though we may be concerned with our personal quagmire—emotional, psychological, existential or spiritual—ultimately our direction is to answer the great question which goes before these “smaller,” though not insignificant, concerns.

With the fall of the Soviet Union we all breathed a collective sigh of relief because the threat of nuclear holocaust had been lifted. And now we face another major threat, terrorism and the uncertainty and fear that comes with it. Much of human history is the history of conflict and its horrific results. Desire, anger and ignorance are continually going around and around, on an individual, family, national and international level. This war can contribute to our practice by bringing us to a deeper realization that the mind that creates conflict—this human mind—is also in each one of us.

The finger of blame which historically has been pointed at the bin Ladins of the world can also be pointed at us. Zen Master Seung Sahn was once asked where atomic bombs come from; what kind of person would do that? He said, “They are made by the mind which likes this and doesn't like that.” That happens to be inside each one of us. The mind that wants to go to war or get revenge is us. This same mind also has Buddha nature, though more or less hidden. So, recent events can benefit us if they bring home more than ever the great question in each one of us, “What am I?” If we can resolve this question we have moved towards true world peace and helping others.





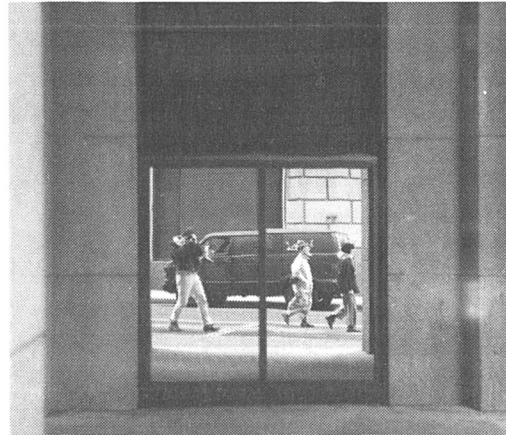
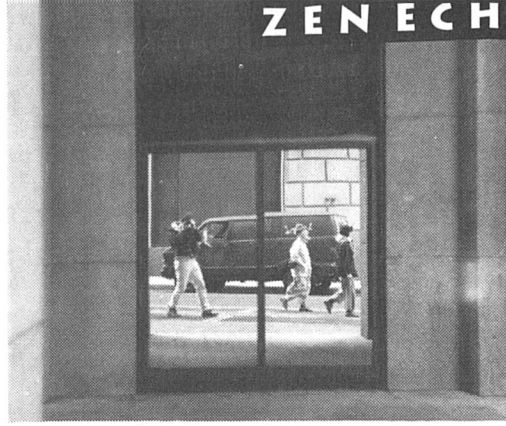
# around and around

Chong Hae Sunim JDPS  
Providence Zen Center

On September 11<sup>th</sup> our country and this whole world experienced a trauma of inconceivable magnitude. In this time of loss and confusion, with all of the emotions that arise, it is important to consider the Buddha's teaching. The following story is reminiscent of Jesus' teaching of turning the other cheek. It comes from the Brahma Net Sutra, a Mahayana sutra which examines the lay precepts. This particular story is in reference to the tenth bodhisattva precept concerning the possession of weapons. This precept says in part, "Disciples of the Buddha must not even avenge the death of their parents—let alone kill sentient beings." It points clearly to the importance of cutting the cycle of revenge and retribution, thereby relieving human suffering.

During the Ching Dynasty in China, in Yang Chou province there lived a man named Cheng Pai Lin. One night he had a dream in which Avalokitesvara Bodhisattva told him, "Tomorrow the Ching army will arrive. Out of the seventeen people in your household sixteen will survive, but you cannot escape your fate. Tomorrow Commander Wang Ma Tze will kill you because in a past life you stabbed him twenty-six times and killed him." The bodhisattva added, "There is still an expedient method that may work. Prepare a fine feast tomorrow and when he comes, invite him to eat with you. Afterwards, allow him to kill you. Perhaps after that things will change."

The dream was vivid and when Cheng Pai Lin awoke the following morning he began preparing the feast as suggested. When noontime came someone knocked at the door. Cheng opened the door and said, "Are you Wang Ma Tze?" "How strange," said the man at the door,



"I'm from the north, how do you know my name?" The host invited him in and said, "You are welcome in my house. I have prepared a feast for you. Please join me." Then he related the dream he'd had the night before. "Last life I killed you with twenty-six stabs of a knife and so in this life you are bound to kill me. After we've finished this meal you may do it." Wang Ma Tze pondered this and said, "But if you killed me in the last life and I kill you in this life, won't you kill me in our next life? It will just go on and on. No, I won't kill you." Then he took his knife and scratched twenty-six marks on his host's back—symbolically repaying the debt. Having settled their karmic debts, they were able to enjoy the feast. Not only did Wang Ma Tze not kill his host, but they became fast friends. Wang said to his host, "The Ching army is following *en masse*. They are not reasonable, so it would be best for you and your family to flee to Su Chou. It's safe there."

This is a case of our innate wisdom perceiving cause and effect clearly, turning grievance into friendship. However, merely understanding this as a concept can't help us. That is why Zen Master Seung Sahn always encourages us to practice so it can become ours.

# A visit

## to the world trade center

Barry Briggs  
*Dharma Sound Zen Center*



Among its many gifts, Zen practice can help us to look directly at life's hardest truths with tenderness, grace, and wisdom. And, when confronted with the horror of September 11 attacks, this ancient tradition can provide a way to help.

So, with the aspiration of offering whatever help my years of practice might allow, on Friday, September 28, I took the # 6 subway from New York's Upper East Side to lower Manhattan and the World Trade Center. This is what I experienced.

Walking up the steps from the last stop on the # 6 line, I emerged into clear air at City Hall and immediately smelled the sharp, lingering odor of destruction. The streets were blocked with barricades and chain link while police and soldiers stopped cars and pedestrians. All but those who lived in the neighborhood north of the World Trade Center were funneled up or down Broadway, the main thoroughfare that runs to the bottom of the island.

Going south along Broadway, and just to the east perimeter of the World Trade Center complex, I came upon two churches, St. Paul's Chapel and, a short distance further down, Trinity Church. St. Paul's is the oldest extant building in New York City while the current Trinity Church is the third church building to stand on its site since the original was built in the mid-1600s. George Washington and the new congress worshipped together in St. Paul's immediately after his inauguration as our country's first president so this area occupies a special place in our country's history.

Both churches were constructed of a rose sandstone so dark that the buildings seem to absorb their own shadows, creating an inward feeling that contrasts strongly with the more assertive man-made materials of the modern structures along this stretch of Broadway. Each church has a spire that towers upward for one hundred feet or more and

traditional churchyards surround the buildings, shaded by tall arching trees. Under the trees stand headstones marking the remains of parishioners from earlier times, perhaps two or three hundred graves at each church.

Green grass covers the churchyards and provides the serenity one expects of a cemetery. But on closer approach (not too close because of the barricades), I noticed how the grass had been recently and vigorously raked right down to the ground. Looking even more carefully, I saw that the ground beneath the grass showed gray, the color of blown-in ceiling insulation—a faint layer of disaster resting on the island's brown earth.

St. Paul's Chapel now houses a relief center for the thousands of police, National Guard, construction workers, federal agents, and others who labor at the site. A row of 20 or so portable toilets screens the front of the church. Trinity Church, further down Broadway, sits quietly by itself.

The eastern side of Broadway, opposite the churches and adjacent to the Wall Street financial district, is open to foot traffic and it brought me parallel to the site of the attacks—16 acres of shattered life. As I looked west down the narrow streets, the full extent of the devastation couldn't be grasped. And yet, even these limited views revealed vast piles of crushed concrete and bent steel mounded several stories high and spilling into the cordoned-off streets. Cranes circled overhead while smoke drifted up 15 stories or more. Occasionally, an invisible particle of grit, carried by the breeze, would catch in my eye.

From this section of Broadway, World Trade Center Building 5 obscured much of the area where the two towers collapsed, but WTC 5 presented a spectacle terrifying enough: a shell of a building, the exterior and interior walls and windows blown out to reveal a five-story blackened steel skeleton.



On this six or seven block stretch of Broadway, the crowds at the barricades resembled the throngs one might see at a parade, eight or ten people deep, with each person seeking a bit of destruction, some rubble, a view of the emergency vehicles, earthmovers or cranes. New York police officers insisted, gently, that everyone move along but many resisted, needing to pause and look, remember, photograph, cry, talk, laugh, eat, think, and sift through their feelings. Some would sit on the shoulders of their friends or stand on cars for a better view or to take a photograph. Some quickly posed in a momentary opening so that someone could photograph them with the wreckage as a backdrop. A few sobbed quietly, slumped against the side of a building or car. Most had the somber and hunched stature of those attending the funeral of a beloved friend.

At one point, where Wall Street meets Broadway, incense filled a small plaza, cutting through the odor of decay, and I saw four Japanese Buddhist monks who had set up a small altar. They wore deeply colored, dark robes in rich silken brocade and were chanting slowly and carefully. I didn't recognize the chant but their presence seemed to still the crowd. Above the monks, on a tall flagpole, an American flag waved in the breeze, its fabric torn with small holes. Later I saw three Catholic nuns praying alongside a chain link fence. Prayer was needed and prayer was why I went to this site.

From the corner where Trinity Church sits on Broadway, I began working my way west down Rector Street. As I did, the crowds diminished almost completely. Finally, I came to the intersection of Rector and Washington, 4 short blocks directly south of the remains of World Trade Center Building 2. There were a few cars on the street, their windows blown out and the insides filled with ash, paper, and unidentifiable objects. An inch or more of ash remained on the car bodies, even after several rains. Unexpectedly, just inside the perimeter fence set up by the police, I saw a Tibetan Buddhist temple with golden deer, Dharma wheels, flags, and other symbols on the front and top of the five-story brick building. Now the temple appeared as deserted as the rest of the buildings on the street, the monks or nuns evacuated, its façade and ornamentation covered in ash. The only civilians in the area were residents under police escort who were retrieving personal belongings.

From this intersection, the collapsed 110 story south tower appeared as a compressed and rounded hill of debris backed by the blasted and broken framework of the building's outer shell reaching 4 or 5 stories into the smoke. As I stood there, one of only five or six people, the sun broke through the clouds and illuminated the façade's great crenellated shard as it loomed over the darkened ruins. This twisted gothic shell spoke of its dead as eloquently and sadly as the pale headstones in the yards of St. Paul's Chapel and Trinity Church speak of their deceased.

Looking across the expanse of broken concrete and steel, my imagination failed and my heart filled with nearly unbearable pain. I simply couldn't grasp how thousands of bodies could be lost within the mounded rubble. Although enormous, these piles seemed far too small to contain the remains of so many lives. As we live day to day, our human life can seem so large and spacious. And yet at death it becomes so small. It hurt deeply to stand next to this yard with its eerie, skeletal marker.

Nevertheless, I stayed at this quiet intersection for two hours, quietly and quickly repeating the name of the bodhisattva that aids travelers and the deceased, Jijang Bosal. Buddhist art depicts this bodhisattva in human form but as with all bodhisattvas, the name actually signifies a powerful energy that resides within each of us and throughout the universe. By chanting Jijang Bosal with an aspiration to help all suffering beings, we can harness and direct this energy. And there are few places on the planet where help could be needed more than at the World Trade Center. Jijang Bosal Jijang Bosal Jijang Bosal Jijang Bosal.

My fingers worked quickly through the mala beads. As the chanting became stronger my focus at last softened and I became steadier. Occasionally one of the police standing at the gate leading to the remains of the south tower would ask people to move along but nothing was ever said to me. I just did my practice and the police seemed to understand and support it. I've never seen policemen with sweeter faces.

Many New Yorkers refer to this location as "Ground Zero," but I don't understand this phrase. 'Zero' signifies nothingness, emptiness, a vacuum, and this site is anything but zero. This ground in lower Manhattan contains inconceivable hurt and love and suffering and fear and need...and, of course, the countless remains of ordinary human beings. So, not zero. For me, 'World Trade Center' stills seems the right name, a place where change and exchange can occur, a center for the exchange of grief and sorrow and anger and a place to begin a profound change for the whole world.

In the days since the attacks, I've experienced a tremendous opening in my heart and other people have spoken to me of similar experiences. It's commonplace to say that after these events, nothing will be the same. But it's true. The power of this destruction has given us a way to look deeply into our hearts, to see both the love and the anger that we carry within us. I hope that each of us can practice hard and nurture this opening so that, after the shattered sides of the south tower come down, we can erect a lasting monument to kindness and wisdom and love. A monument that will deliver true justice to the innocent lost human beings of the World Trade Center.

one kind word

Michael Schutzler  
Dharma Sound Zen Center  
9.11.01

In one instant, all we knew  
Assumed, hoped, or dreamed  
Had collapsed.

A thousand brother's aspirations  
A thousand mother's adulations  
A thousand sister's ruminations  
A thousand father's hard won stations

Washed away in a sea of fire,  
Concrete and steel,  
Dust and tears.

Haunting cries of electric armbands in the darkness  
Screeching, shrill alarms  
Sole witness and testimony  
To heroes lost.

Twin towers of Babel  
Monuments to the one language  
That covers humanity;  
Mighty fortress,  
Brought down with blood of innocents;  
Pride bedashed lying at our feet;  
Stench of smoldering death  
Draped on a late summer breeze.

Ten thousand eyes burned dry for life;  
Ten thousand hands scraped raw from moving rocks in vain;  
Ten thousand hearts broken while searching in the rain.

Cries of vengeance!

Calls for revenge tip-tip like rain on a thin glass roof;  
The question Why? bursts in desperate, choking, breathless despair.

But the soul of the world knows  
What is softly whispered in the quiet corners  
Of our solitude:

Violence sown is violence reaped.

*Michael was in New York on business on September 11. He notes, "We were on the 40th floor of a building in midtown Manhattan about a mile away from the World Trade Center. We watched it all from behind a glass wall. It was a terrible, surreal experience."*

Oh the mother of hatred is an empty belly;  
And her husband is neglect.

Yet one act of kindness  
Marks the end of suffering.  
One act of kindness,  
Born of humility,  
Propelled by faith.

The time to act is a twinkling;  
A challenge that flickers,  
Fleeting and swift.

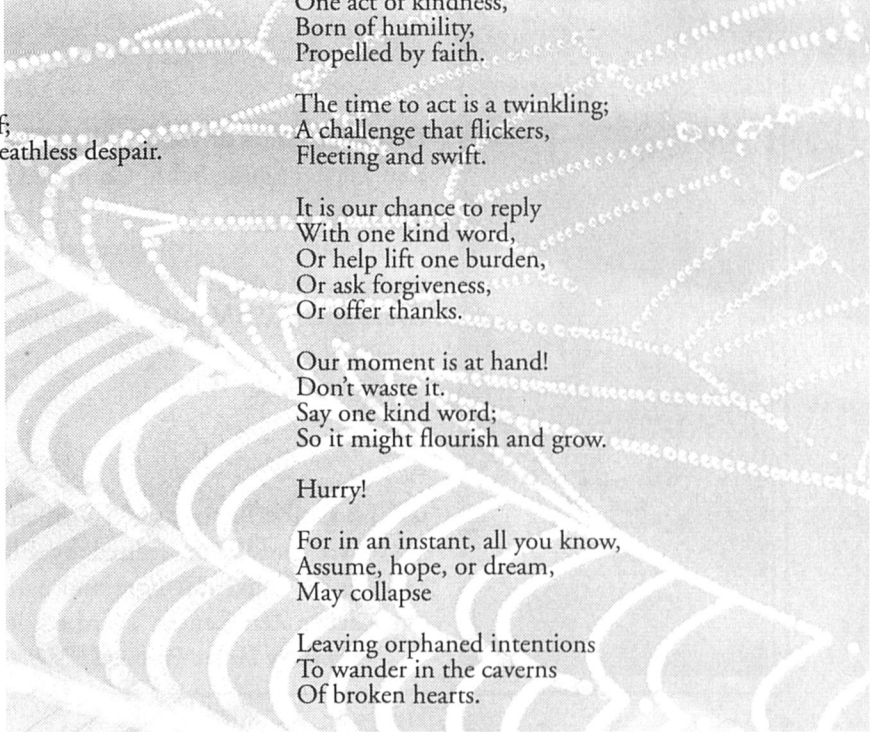
It is our chance to reply  
With one kind word,  
Or help lift one burden,  
Or ask forgiveness,  
Or offer thanks.

Our moment is at hand!  
Don't waste it.  
Say one kind word;  
So it might flourish and grow.

Hurry!

For in an instant, all you know,  
Assume, hope, or dream,  
May collapse

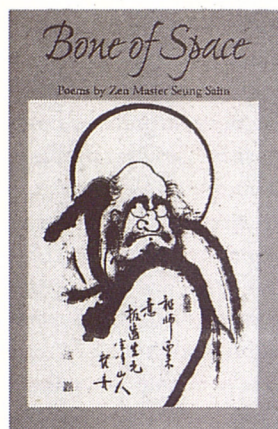
Leaving orphaned intentions  
To wander in the caverns  
Of broken hearts.





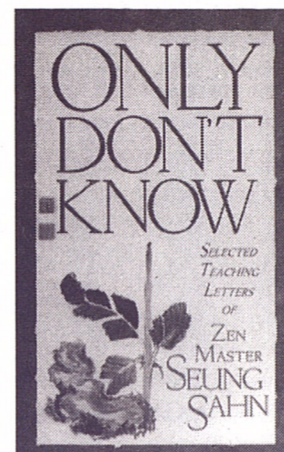
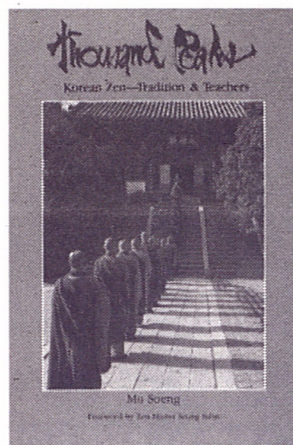
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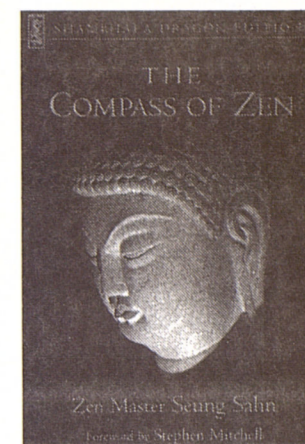
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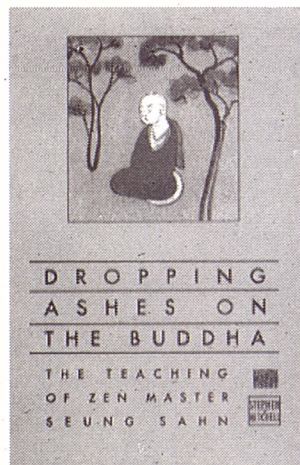
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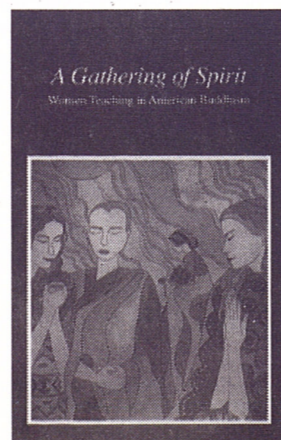
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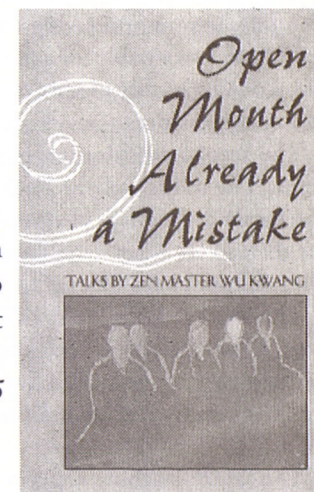
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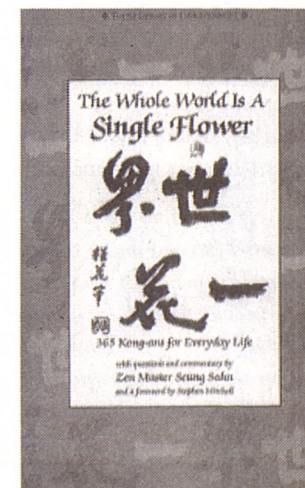


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A review of Shunryu Suzuki Roshi's  
*Branching Streams Flow in the Darkness*

Ken Kessel JDPSN  
Still Water Zen Center

There are many good teachings in Shunryu Suzuki Roshi's *Branching Streams Flow in the Darkness*, a collection of talks given at Tassajara on the Sandokai in the summer of 1970. The first teaching is the wallet-sized photograph on the inside back page. It is a picture of Roshi and his wife Mitsu Suzuki Sensei at a wedding at Tassajara in June of the same year. In the lower lefthand corner of the picture, he leans away to the left, a devilish grin on his face, while holding up a closed fan with his left hand, over his face. The rest of the picture is Mitsu, her face beaming with mischievous and loving laughter, as she is about to strike him, presumably for something outrageous he's just said. Looking at that picture, no words are necessary; you understand at once.

The second teaching appears by taking off the book jacket. The outside of the book cover is a shade of gray. The inside is deep red. Human beings are also something like that; so are other vertebrates, and if you stretch it, all living things. Not different. That's very important.

The third teaching is the Chinese calligraphy on the cover. Most Westerners don't know the meaning, but when you look at it, it's beautiful. Even for those who read Chinese, the beauty goes beyond the words. That mind is Zen mind.

The fourth teaching appears clearly by leafing through Roshi's talks and his repartee with students following each talk. It's abundantly clear that he loves his students and they love him. As Mel Weitsman notes in his introduction, Mitsu once chastised him for his continuing manual labor of stone masonry: "Hojo-san! (Abbot) You are cutting your life short!" His response: "If I don't cut my life short, my students will not grow."

Later, Suzuki Roshi responds to a question about the student/teacher relationship:

*If I have no students, I may goof off every day. Because I have so many students watching me, I must do something; I must study so that I can give a lecture. If there is no lecture, I will not study. But at the same time I shall be very much ashamed of myself if I study just to give the lecture. So usually, when I study for a lecture I go off in another direction, following something interesting, and most of the time I don't study for the lecture. But still, if I don't study, I don't feel so good. Because I*

*feel it is necessary to prepare for the lecture, I start to study. But as soon as I start, I go off on my own and study for the sake of studying, not just for giving the lecture.... My teacher always told me, "Even though it doesn't help, before you lecture you should study."*

The fifth teaching is about time, space and non-attachment to conceptual thought. If you see the first four teachings, then this teaching appears by itself. But since this one is carried in words, it also carries more danger.

*Sandokai* is a short poem by the eighth century Chinese master, known in Japanese as Sekito Kisen, more familiar to others by his Chinese name, Shih T'ou. Shih T'ou was a contemporary of great Master Ma, (Ma Jo or Ma Tsu, Baso in Japanese). While they may never have met in the flesh, they undoubtedly had seen eye-to-eye and together were responsible for the flowering of Zen in China. Students traveled from one to the other on their own, or with encouragement, to sharpen their practice:

A monk from Ma Tsu's community announced his intention to visit Shih T'ou. "Be careful," said Ma Tsu, "the way to Shih T'ou is slippery."

"Don't worry," replied the monk. "I will follow the way of rivers and trees."

The monk arrived at Shih T'ou. "What teaching do you follow in this place?" he demanded.

Shih T'ou responded, "It's a fine day! It's a fine day!"

The monk couldn't respond and returned to Ma Tsu. When he told Ma Tsu the story, Ma replied, "If he says that again, you should just sigh."

The monk returned to Shih T'ou. "What teaching do you follow in this place?"

Shih T'ou sighed deeply.

The monk was unable to speak and again returned to Ma Tsu. When he recounted the incident to Ma Tsu, Ma replied, "I warned you, the way to Shih T'ou was slippery!"

Shih T'ou's intent is direct and simple: help the student be free of conceptual thought. Encourage sincere practice by word and example, and help students to see their own Original Nature. Shih T'ou and Ma Tsu's time was characterized by two streams. One was the blossoming forth of the seeds planted by the Ancestors and cultivated by Ma Tsu and Shih T'ou. The second was the inevitable sectarianism that arises when the teachings flow widely. *Sandokai* is Shih T'ou's response to that sectarianism.

People are like that. We often want to believe our path is the best; maybe we need to believe it, or we won't give ourselves wholeheartedly. So we want to believe that our teacher is the best, or else why give ourselves so fully? Yet as

the teaching is to become yourself fully, how could its expression from teacher to teacher not be different? And when we attach to the expression, we lose the original point. So a good teacher points away from the words, away from the forms: see mind, become Buddha. Then each moment, each phenomenon is the dharma. What is there to contend about?

The shadow of our Buddhist tradition, even from the time of the Buddha, is contention for legitimacy between schools and sects. Buddha presented his teaching in different forms at different times to different audiences, according to capacity and circumstances. Many traditional Zen stories involve teachers pointing students past the forms of the teaching to its original meaning. As Suzuki Roshi says,

*Originally, Sandokai was the title of a Daoist book. Sekito used the same title for his poem, which describes Buddha's teaching. What is the difference between Daoist teachings and Buddhist teachings? There are many similarities. When a Buddhist reads it, it is a Buddhist text, and when a Daoist reads it, it is a Daoist text. Yet it is actually the same thing. When a Buddhist eats a vegetable it is Buddhist food, and when a vegetarian eats it, it is vegetarian food. Still it is just food.*

As Roshi points out, from the time of the Sixth Patriarch Hui Neng and his contemporary Shen-hsiu, the contention was about distinctions between the southern school of sudden enlightenment and the northern school of gradual cultivation. Both Hui Neng and Shen-hsiu were clear: there is only one dharma, and distinctions in form honor the capacity and the karma of the students. But people are people, and contention continued for generations — even beyond the time of Shih T'ou. Hence the start of the poem:

*The mind of the great sage of India is intimately transmitted from West to East  
While human faculties are sharp or dull the way has no Northern or Southern Ancestors.*

The mind of the great sage of India is now being transmitted from East to West. Our time is much like Shih T'ou's, so the appearance of Suzuki Roshi's words from thirty years ago, here and now, has deep significance. When Suzuki Roshi delivered these talks, there were not so many Zen Masters teaching in America, not so many Buddhist teachers at all, not so much in the way of availability of spiritual practices as there is now.

Zen, Buddhism and the number of spiritual paths have grown tremendously since that time. We now see a subtle and sometimes not-so-subtle contention for legitimacy.

At times it may be unconscious, based on the wish to be following the right path. At other times, it appears to be more conscious, as a means to attract students, to attract support, to attract money, perhaps as a reflection of other needs as well. You see it in magazine articles, Buddhist, New-Age and mainstream. You see it on book jackets, flyers, websites, newsletters: This is the most famous teacher in (pick your country). This lineage is genuine. This teacher received transmission from so-and-so, studied for ten kalpas in a frozen cave at the top of Mount Sumeru. Everyone is a second coming of someone else. This is how people are. We do some of it here, too. We think it's what attracts others. We think it makes our way genuine. This is very human. This is very funny, and very sad. We need to be careful in our search for what is genuine, or we will end up fighting each other in a battle over legitimacy and slandering the dharma in the process.

From the time of Buddha to the time of Shih T'ou to the time of Suzuki Roshi to the present, the genuine teacher points past the teaching to the heart of the student. We know our teacher is genuine when we see ourselves, for ourselves, see past the method to the function. When the student becomes genuine, the teacher becomes genuine.

Suzuki Roshi

continuously  
uses

Shih T'ou's text and the ensuing dialogue with his students to point to Original Mind. Going beyond the words of the text and his own words, he says that his is a teaching of "Yes, but." Yes, but don't be attached to the words or the forms. The question for us as students, the question for us as readers, is not so much is Roshi's teaching good or clear (and for this reader, it is), but how will we use it?

Shunryu Suzuki



BRANCHING  
STREAMS  
FLOW IN THE  
DARKNESS

Zen Talks on the *Sandokai*  
By the author of *Zen Mind, Beginner's Mind*

"A wonderful manifestation of Suzuki Roshi's fresh insights and teachings—small, plucky, wild nuts delicious to anyone who chooses to taste them." Peter Matthiessen



# IS

## MEDITATION

# IN

*Father Kevin Hunt OCSO  
Saint Joseph's Abbey  
Spencer, Massachusetts*

*From a talk at Providence Zen Center in March 2001*

Why meditate? Why get involved in this wonderful thing called meditation?

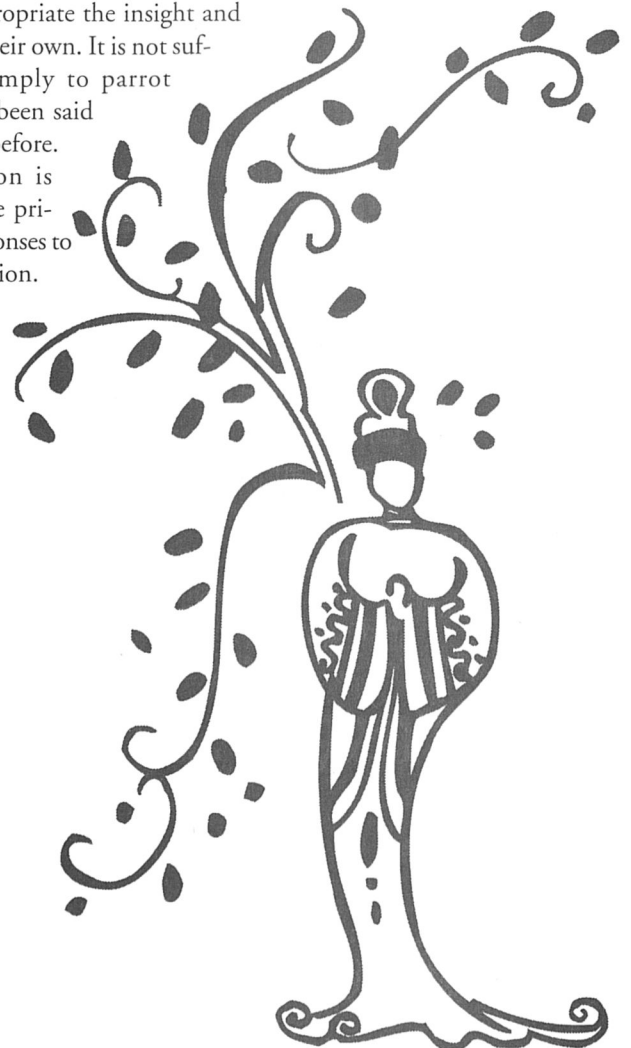
Especially on a bright Saturday morning, and there are so many other things I could be doing. Why meditate? Here I am sitting in this large room on the floor, on some cushions... and it is beginning to get uncomfortable. Wouldn't it be easier if we sat on chairs, or had lazyboys available to us?

There are a lot of other things I could be doing. This is one of the two days that I have to myself; I only get two days off in a week. There are so many things that I put off to Saturday so that I can give them the time they need. So what am I doing here?

Do these thoughts find a certain resonance in you?

And there is a growing movement to meditate for non-religious reasons. It is recommended for health, for stress relief, for realizing one's full potential. Earlier this year news magazines such as *Time* and *Newsweek* even ran cover stories on meditation. They said that meditation is a natural desire and function of the human person. All the major religions have strong traditions of meditation. I think that we can discover a simple statement which can be agreed on by anyone who meditates or who is thinking of meditating. Who am I?

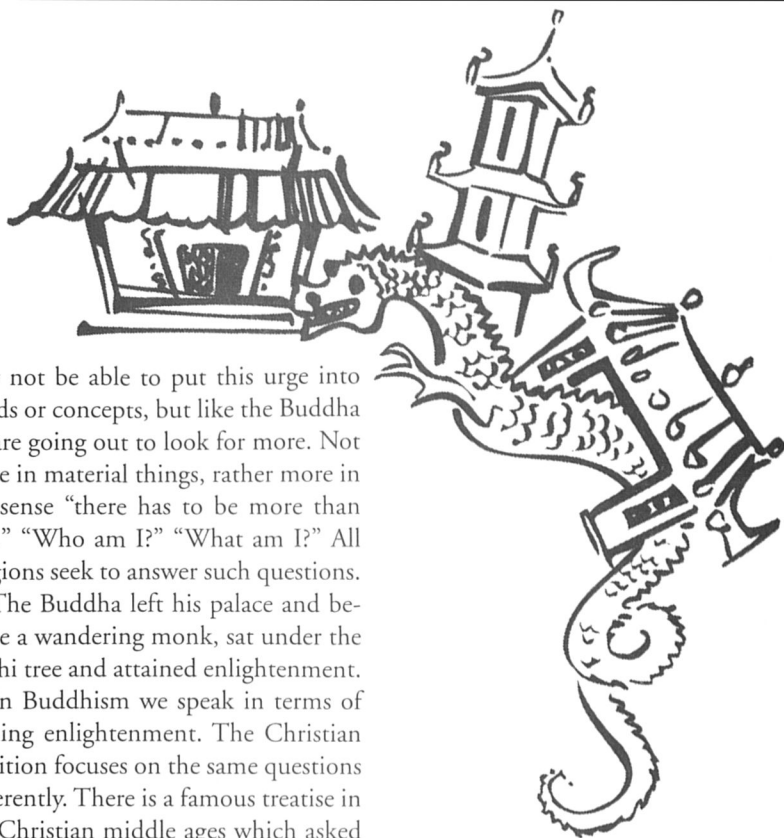
It is easy to give an off-handed response. I'm Kevin Hunt, 68 years old, fat and bald. Or, I am Kevin Hunt, a Trappist monk, and I wear a white robe and a black scapular. But is that all I am? Who really am I? Much of the modern existential angst found in our philosophy and literature today is due to our inability to answer that question. Yet the question itself is not new, nor are we the only age which confronts it. That question is at the basis of all philosophical and religious endeavor. It is the question that all the great religions say that they have answered. However it is not sufficient for any philosophical or religious tradition to answer it once. The question must be asked and answered in every generation and in each one's life. Each religion answers that question in a different way. These answers are expounded in ways that are culturally and time conditioned. That does not mean that the insight is not adequate or untrue, but that each age and person must appropriate the insight and make it their own. It is not sufficient simply to parrot what has been said or done before. Meditation is one of the primary responses to that question.



It is not so strange that meditation has become an "in thing" at the end of the 20th, and beginning of the 21st centuries. When I was a young man, if you were at a party and were asked what you did, if you replied that you were a meditator, the reaction would be: "Huh?" Today the response probably is: "Yeah, what kind? Tibetan? Zen? Hindu?"

As a people we find ourselves in a condition similar to that of Shakyamuni Buddha. He lived a life that was the best that his time and culture could offer. (Still it is so primitive to us.) But even Shakyamuni might envy how so many of us live today. Here in the first world nations we have a pretty secure and easy life. We have a lifestyle that is the envy of most of the world; one that was undreamt of just a few generations ago. My grandparents were happy to have a roof over their heads and food on the table. My parents had a roof and food and were able to give their children an education. We are not satisfied with a roof, food and education. I might have a car: Ford, BMW, Jaguar? Would that satisfy me?

Shakyamuni found himself unsatisfied with the best that his world could offer. Many of us feel somewhat the way he did. Just as Shakyamuni, we have an impulse that is moving us to seek more. More what? We might not know. We



may not be able to put this urge into words or concepts, but like the Buddha we are going out to look for more. Not more in material things, rather more in the sense "there has to be more than this." "Who am I?" "What am I?" All religions seek to answer such questions.

The Buddha left his palace and became a wandering monk, sat under the bodhi tree and attained enlightenment. So in Buddhism we speak in terms of gaining enlightenment. The Christian tradition focuses on the same questions differently. There is a famous treatise in the Christian middle ages which asked that question as "Why did God become man?" Its author, Anselm of Canterbury, responded with a very traditional Christian answer: "God became man so that man could become god."

Meditation is one of the keys to experiencing what the Buddha experienced; it is one of the keys to grasping what Anselm's response means. In and through meditation we find out who and what we are.

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## HYON GAK SUNIM RECEIVES INKA

*continued from page 5*

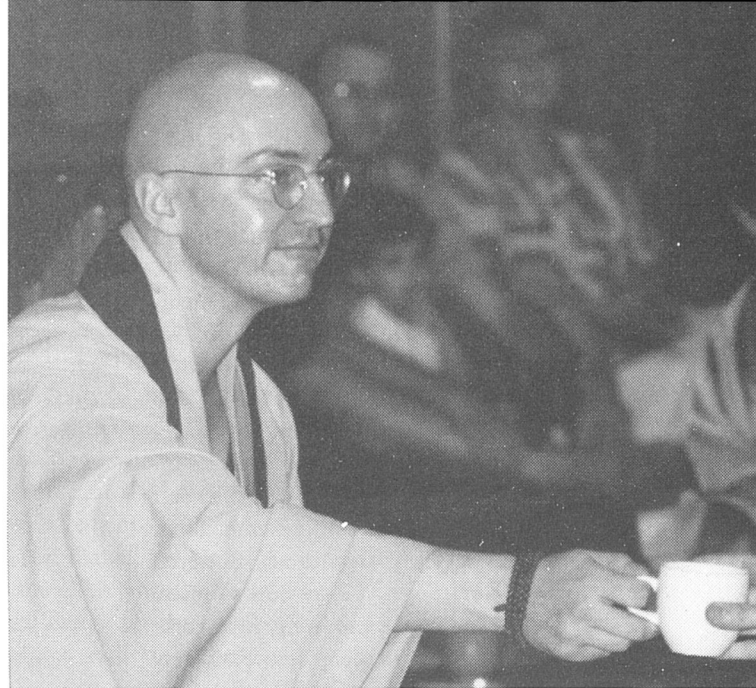
He also fixes farmers with the same problem. His specialty on that mountain is the man who fixes those things, so they called him. When he came in the room, he took one look and said it was too serious for even him to touch. And I was just laughing the whole time, joking with people. As he turned away, he said to the bosalnim who was literally cradling my body, "How can this guy be laughing?" Stuff like that. But I guess you really had to be there.

In that experience appeared another face of my one, true teacher. That is our true teacher. And that's what our great Zen Master Seung Sahn is always pointing us towards—to *that* experience. All these sticks and books and certificates and robes and kong-an interviews and speech and form and everything are tools he's used to unlock our stubborn minds to that, to that experience that we can all have of our fundamentally unmoving and immovable true nature. You see it on the cushion, when conditions are contrived and controlled to enable that kind of insight. But do you ever see your one true teacher's luminous face in the bustling crowd of day-to-day life? Can you do *that*?

Zen Master Seung Sahn has struggled for fifty-five years to open so many people's minds to the fundamental nearness of *that* experience, which is nearer than your nose. And it takes form, it takes books, it takes kong-ans, it takes beatings and people agreeing and not agreeing and still we don't see that. We think the teaching is him. But instead it's moment-to-moment not-moving mind—*that's* our true teacher, *that's* what we bow to, and *that* is where our teacher has always pointed us, relentlessly. He uses some expedients to show us one way and then the very next week, totally goes against what he showed us last week to show us from another way. He has relentlessly employed the shock of our own attachment to his teaching's myriad forms to point us right back to *that*, right back to that fundamental thing.

There is an interesting story that will explain a little bit how I appreciate the way in which Zen Master Seung Sahn has accomplished this. A few years ago I translated from Korean to English a book of Zen Master Ko Bong's life and teachings. Some Korean friends helped, and so we translated this book together every day, morning to night, every day except Sunday, over the course of about one month. At the time, I was also deep into putting together *The Compass of Zen* at Hwa Gye Sah Temple, so there were sometimes opportunities to go into Zen Master Seung Sahn's room to go over questions for that project.

One morning in particular, after finishing what had to be asked about *The Compass*, I took this Ko Bong Sunim



manuscript out to show him. And it was very small in manuscript pages. It was all written in notebook pages and he looked at it and—as can be expected, since he likes very, very big things, usually vast things actually—he said, "Too small, that's too small, cannot publish. More into necessary."

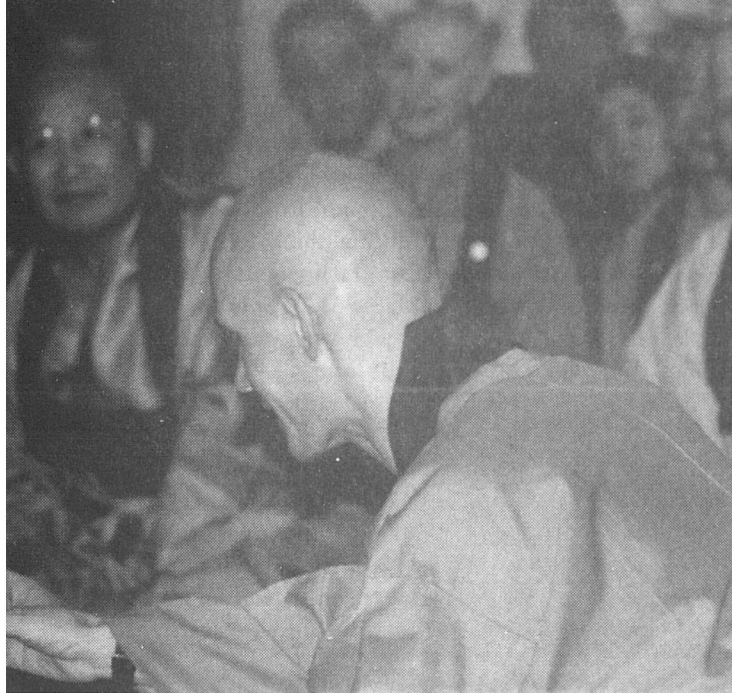
"Well, sir, that's it," I said. "That's all there was. We don't have anything else to translate."

Then pointing back over his shoulder, in the direction of the area behind his room, he said, "We behind have this old bhikkuni sunim. She understands my teacher's stories, long time together with him, so many stories, more than me, more than I remember. You talk to her, she give you many stories, then into this book, can publish."

So here's the point. I decided to ask her help and Mu Shim Sunim was helping to translate at the time. We got her into Mu Shim Sunim's room. You know how she is, very regal, with this perfectly starched and ironed bowing robe with a silk cravat that comes out in this elegant way, with a single curl you know pinned in the middle of it with a single pearl pin, and that stunning face with this extraordinary beauty and elegance and style—a very, very dignified, beautiful woman.

I said, "Sunim, we have translated your teacher, Ko Bong Sunim's book, and we want to bring it to all over the world. But it's a little small. Kun Sunim said you have many stories about Ko Bong Sunim. So maybe you tell me some of these stories, we can put it in the book, then this book can go all over the world and his teaching can help many, many people. But we need to hear your stories about Ko Bong Sunim, or tell us some of the things he said. Only you know these things, Sunim. Please help us."

She sat there, not saying anything, like we weren't even there.



Then I thought well, maybe we aren't getting across to her, and of course she's hard of hearing, so I put it again, and really loaded it. Mu Shim Sunim translated it to her. "We want to put this book all over the world. Zen Master Seung Sahn's teaching went all over the world, but Zen Master Ko Bong's teaching really, we don't know much about it. Many people can be inspired to practice by it. He's dead and we can really save the world with it..." This kind of thing.

After a few moments, finally, she replied, very firmly, "I forgot everything, I forgot everything, I don't know anything. I don't remember any of that stuff, no, no." And then I thought, well OK. We're only going to get this woman in a room one time, I'll try one more time. So we tried one more time, we asked. Maybe Mu Shim Sunim on his own kind of pushed her a little bit, I pushed her. But she just sat there in her elegant silence, for several more moments.

And then she blew up.

Like an elegant little volcano, she just exploded. She said "My teacher never said *anything!*" Then referring to our Zen Master Seung Sahn by the dharma name given when he first became a monk, she said, "Haeng Won Sunim is always making something! Haeng Won Sunim is always making temples, making pagodas, making books, making students, making Zen centers, making this, going to this country, going to that country. Always making something!! But my teacher Ko Bong Sunim never made *anything*. He never...even...opened...his...*mouth*." She said that, and would not be stopped. "He never said anything. But Haeng Won Sunim always making this, making that, making something, making something, making something. My teacher never made anything." So she sat there, and began to smile, finally, as she recalled the memory of her teacher's severe presence. We could have put a gun to her head and she wasn't going to move.

The story is really interesting. On the surface there is some apparent disconnect between the teacher and the student. A great teacher taught a certain way and his student didn't seem to follow much of that style or form, if you look at it on the surface. But the truth of that story is deeper than appearances. When I heard that story, my love and respect for Zen Master Seung Sahn went even higher. Because what I saw was, this old nun was just as legitimate a student of Ko Bong Sunim as our Zen Master Seung Sahn. She had a certain memory, a certain idea, a certain expectation from her teacher, of what the teacher's teaching and style should be. She knew this elegant, aristocratic, quiet, severe, deep presence. And the student—the only student that he really gave transmission to—is very active and very lively.

Our teacher's courage is supreme and his attainment complete, because he was so unlike his teacher and yet completely the same mind as his teacher. The same mind, but different action. Different action but the same mind. That's a very instructive point for us. It teaches about this courage and about the completeness of what he digested from his teacher. And the courage, the truly believing in himself, to let that teaching manifest itself fearlessly according to what his karma was, which was active and teaching, and liberating, and in that way only was he different from his teacher.

If you look at our whole line, all of our teachers, there is some respect for this quality. Ko Bong Sunim was totally unlike his teacher. His teacher Man Gong Sunim was a real straight arrow and organizational and into monk's society. That is why Su Dok Sa was able to protect Korean Buddhism and preserve the monk tradition because of Man Gong's power to protect the bhikku tradition through organization and institution. But Ko Bong Sunim had nothing to do with monks. He didn't like them. And Man Gong Sunim was nothing like his teacher, the no-hindrance Kyong Ho Sunim—completely different style, completely different method, completely different everything. But the mind is the same, all the way back to the Buddha. None of them copied the teacher. None of them felt compelled to duplicate what had come before, or felt that by not being exactly or completely or even remotely like that teacher they were failing his dharma. That's a really important point.

The Buddha said, "Don't follow the teacher, attain the teaching. Don't attach to the teacher, but become the teaching." So Zen Master Seung Sahn has always been pointing us to that point, always pointing us to this point of don't know, which is our true nature, in any country, in any language, attaining that. And he has given us forms and teachings and styles and ideas and encouragement in many different ways and shapes and forms. But those things themselves are not *it*, that *teacher* itself is not it, it's merely *pointing* us to "it." It's pointing us to it, but if we attach to the pointer we never find it. Maybe until it hits us at some point in our life.

As I was going through this Ji Do Poep Sa preparation thing, there are lots of interviews with different teachers and different styles that you have to experience in a very short time. It kind of puts in very short form something that we sometime experience over a very long time, different teachers, different styles, different forms. We found that even Zen Master Seung Sahn's kong-ans, sometimes the way he's taught them one way, he will years later teach in another way. We know about that, this is no secret. This is something that we have all experienced and we struggle with.

When I first started entering this training thing, I struggled with that. Because in some areas my mind was still too active. But what's real interesting about him is that he has used any kind of tool to take that mind away. And so hopefully we will return, not to the forms or things that we agree with or don't agree with, the things we like or don't like, but that original thing that he has used all those things freely to show to us and he'll depart caring nothing about maybe in the future, just as his teacher did. So let's have that mind together. Let's really keep that spirit of doubt, that real spirit of really looking in and not needing these certainties, these formal certainties to give us some sense that we are actually studying, actually doing and experience that. So that's my encouragement talk to all of you

today. More than attaching to the forms in which it is all delivered and made clear to us, let us instead remember that that teaching is supposed to point us to something. If it doesn't point to this fundamental thing, let's throw it out and not bother with it. The stuff that points us back to our fundamental job that Zen Master Seung Sahn has given us, let's do that and keep that doubt and together help all beings. And don't worry about the form.

So today I talked teacher, teacher, teacher, teacher, good teacher, bad teacher, this kind of teacher, and no teacher, But I have a question for you that I want to end with. How do you find your true teacher? We have good teachers and bad teachers, teachers we believe in and don't believe in, Korean teachers, Polish teachers, American teachers, Jewish teachers, Irish Catholic teachers, lots of kinds of teachers. But actually how do you find your true teacher right now?

How do we find our true teacher and save all beings from suffering?

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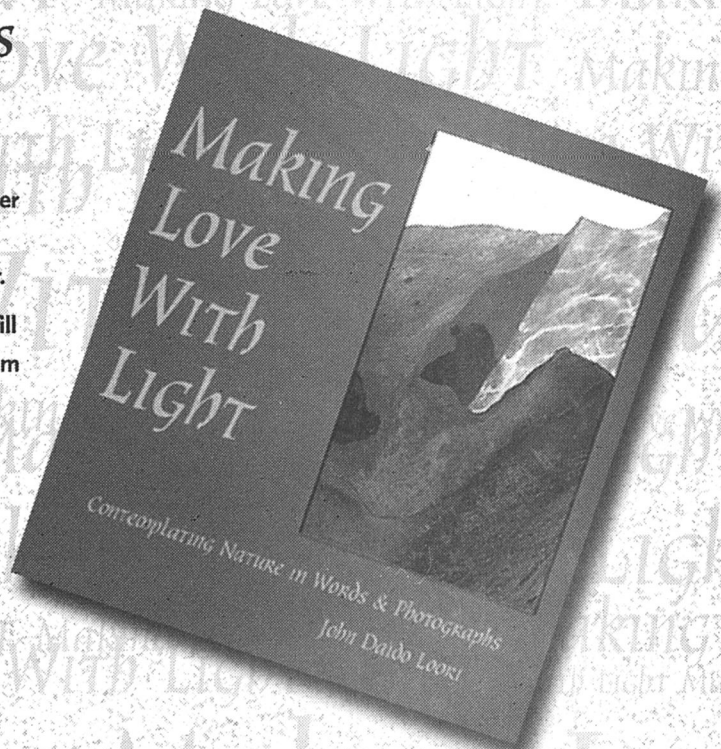
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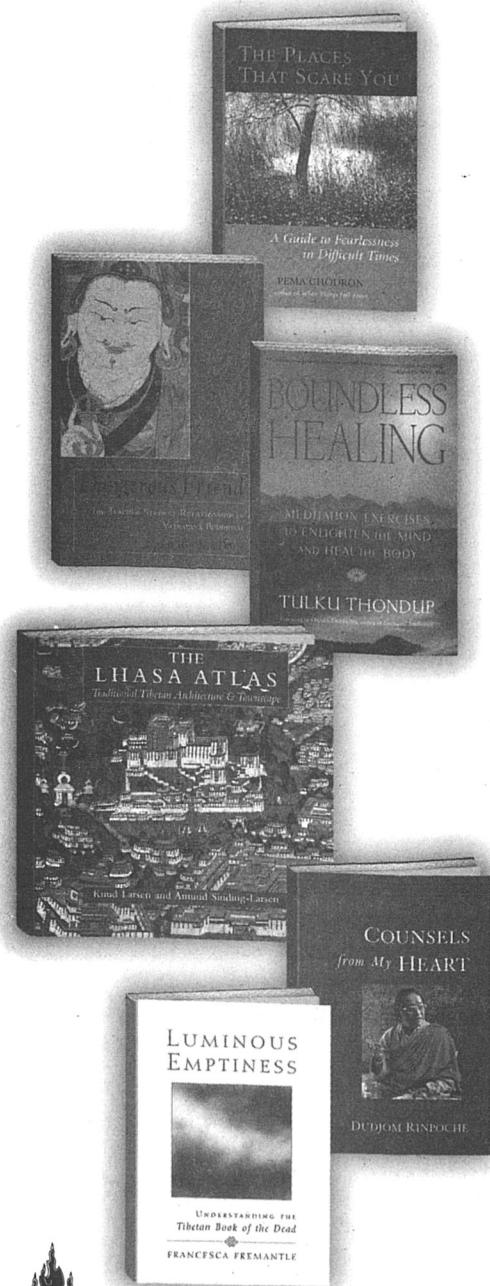
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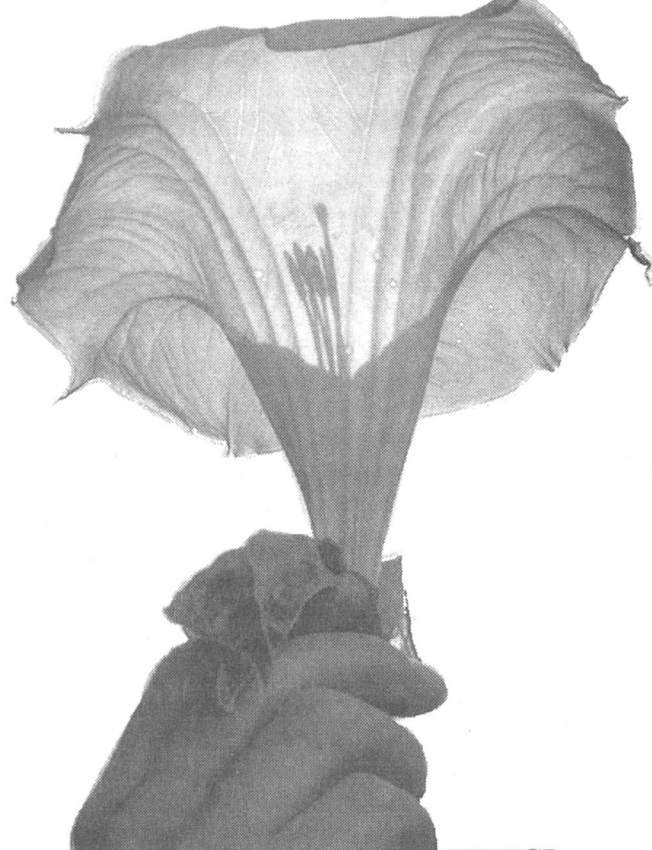
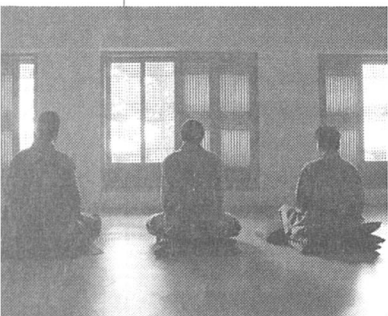
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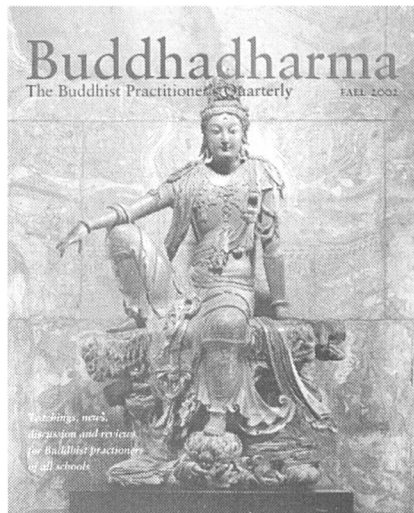
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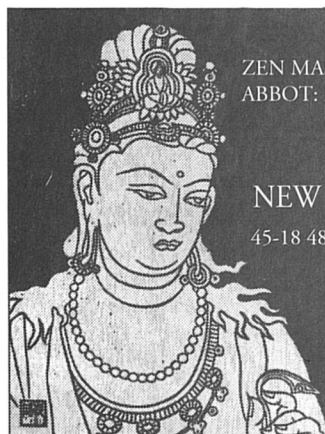


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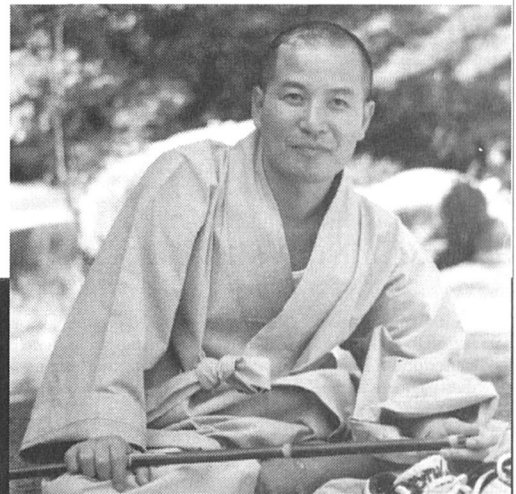
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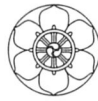


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