



Primary  Point

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**Primary Point**

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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*, see page 29. The circulation is 5000 copies.

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# Yong Maeng Jong Jin

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**IN MEMORY OF ZEN MASTER SEUNG SAHN**

Zen Master Seung Sahn passed away on November 30, 2004. He was 77 years old. He spent 57 years as a monk. For thirty years he traveled throughout the world, teaching and practicing with anyone who had a big question about themselves. He once said, "My job is to poke a hole. Others go through." While living and teaching in the West for most of those thirty years, he returned without fail to Korea one month each year to lead the memorial ceremony for his teacher, Ko Bong Sunim.

As his body condition declined during the last ten years of his life, he put more of his energy into developing our international practice in Korea, Hong Kong, Singapore, and Malaysia. He continued to travel as much as he could, visiting China, Tibet, Burma, Sri Lanka, and Vietnam.

In the year 2000, he had a pacemaker implanted to keep his heart beating. In 2002, his kidneys failed and, requiring kidney dialysis, he was not able to leave Korea. Eventually he no longer went out of Seoul. Even as his physical health declined, you could see his sole purpose in living was to help his students and anyone he encountered.

Various people were Zen Master Seung Sahn's secretary and attendant over the years. Mu Shim Sunim JDPS was his secretary for many years. For the last ten years of his life, Chong Shim Sunim, a Korean bhikkuni, was Zen Master Seung Sahn's attendant. When Mu Shim Sunim was sent to open a Zen Center in the southern city of Pusan, Do Kwan Sunim JDPS became his secretary and driver, and the guiding teacher of the Seoul International Zen Center. When Do Kwan Sunim JDPS left for further practice, all the Seoul International Zen Center monks and nuns took turns taking care of Zen Master Seung Sahn. The American monk Dae Soeng Sunim returned from two years of practicing in Korean Zen rooms and on solo retreats and joined in the group helping Zen Master Seung Sahn. One day, our dharma brother from Singapore, Chi Lin Sunim said, "You know, in Asia if the sons do not take care of the father when he's old, it's the shame of the father." That hit Dae Soeng Sunim's mind. On hearing that, he decided to stay "until the fire" (cremation), to help Zen Master Seung Sahn as long as he was alive. At that time no one knew if that would be ten years or one week.

Dae Soeng Sunim's decision encouraged Chong Shim Sunim to continue as an attendant. Much additional support was provided by the Hwa Gye Sah abbot, Soeng Kwang Sunim; the Seoul International Zen Center guiding teacher, Hyon Gak Sunim JDPS; and Zen Master Dae Kwan, the Su Bong Zen Monastery guiding teacher and abbess. Zen Master Dae Kwan's visits particularly always gave him energy. Many older students from around the world also visited.

Zen Master Seung Sahn always turned each situation into practice. Even on teaching trips, he told his students, "Travel is like Yong Maeng Jong Jin. If you hold your opinion, then much suffering. If you put down my opinion, my condition, and my situation, then everything is interesting." The most outstanding feature of his daily schedule was the water dialysis. This was done in his room four times a day, taking about thirty minutes each time. It had to be done very carefully in a sterile manner.

# of the illness

He also had to eat meals at regular times. This became his Yong Maeng Jong Jin.

Just as when we are on retreat and have a schedule of bowing, chanting, sitting, work, meals, and sleep, Zen Master Seung Sahn turned his life into a retreat of dialysis, meals, rest, seeing guests, hospital visits, and dealing with the basics of life when old and ill. Getting up some days was difficult. Bathing was very difficult; it took at least two people to give him a bath. He didn't want to take them, but always felt better afterwards. Much of the day he slept in a chair in his greeting room, a grimace on his face. Obviously, he did not feel well. But we never heard him complain, get angry or express any self-pity.

He liked to go out to lunch and dinner no matter the weather or how he felt. It was part of our daily life practice, and more interesting than staying in the temple. He was not physically comfortable a lot of the time. When out to meals, often he wouldn't speak, so some people thought he wasn't clear.

Sometimes he forgot simple things, like if we had eaten or paid for the meal. In the car he would ask, "Where go for lunch?"

"Sir, we already eat."

"Eat??"

"Yes sir, we ate at the Holiday Inn."

"I eat?"

"Yes sir, you eat."

"Then where go for tea?"

However if something important came along, involving a student or a person with a sincere question, he was very clear. In the last year, Korean monks or nuns often appeared at Hwa Gye Sah and requested to see him. He never turned anyone away. The monk or nun put on their big kasa and bowed three times in the traditional manner. Perhaps they had never met him before, but knew he was a great monk. They wanted to check their practice or ask a question.

One bhikkuni bowed, and after a short conversation, Zen Master Seung Sahn said to her, "Don't attach to only doing good things." She burst out crying, and after some time, bowed deeply and left.

Gum Ha Sunim, a tall American monk, a former army ranger who had practiced in many Korean Zen halls, visited. He had sat with different Masters in Korea, and often got into fights with his teachers. After retreats, he often visited Zen Master Seung Sahn, who would yell at him. But one time during the last year, he visited and explained about his recent retreat. Zen Master Seung Sahn said "Your practice all finished." This was a total change from before, when Zen Master Seung Sahn and other Zen Masters were always clobbering him, and even throwing him out of retreats. As Dae Soeng Sunim said when this monk left, "you could see an enormous question mark over his head."

A Korean monk visited, bowed, and said that while practicing in the mountains, his body disappeared and the universe filled with light for a long time. Looking at the floor, eyes closed, Zen Master Seung Sahn replied "That's good."

The monk continued talking and then asking questions. Zen Master Seung Sahn didn't say anything, but sat with his head down, looking at the floor. The monk asked "Kun Sunim, can you hear me? Can you hear me?" Zen Master Seung Sahn didn't say anything. The monk turned to Chong Shim Sunim, and asked, "Can he hear me?" "Yes, he can hear you." The monk kept talking. After a while his talking got slower and slower. Finally he said, "Maybe I should go back to the mountains and practice more." Zen Master Seung Sahn said, "That's good." Another monk left with a huge question mark over his head. Even though Zen Master Seung Sahn said less and less, he seemed able to give everyone a big question, regardless of how or why they came.

For a few months, Zen Master Seung Sahn did not speak much. He just made sounds. One of his favorites we called the moose call, generally done in restaurants. He had various sounds. We had to figure out what they meant. Dae Soeng Sunim was particularly good at this. "More food." "No more food." "More drink." "No more drink." "Close window." "Let's go." "Shut up!" One time, we asked him, "Why do you make these sounds?" He said, "Balancing my energy."

During this time, his digestion was not working well, and he often farted. When helping him to the car one time, he let out a particularly powerful fart. Dae Soeng Sunim said, "Good dharma talk, sir. Your dharma talks now much better than before." Zen Master Seung Sahn laughed, looked at him, and said "Now you understand."

He did not take phone calls often in the last few months, and even when he did, he did not say much. But one time when an old student called, Zen Master Seung Sahn took the phone and said in a very bright voice, "Mu Sang Sunim! How are you?" Mu Sang Sunim must have answered in Korean, because Zen Master Seung Sahn said "Kwenchansumnikka?" Then right away, "When are you coming to Korea?" As Chong Shim Sunim once said "Any time he sees Western face, very happy." So he obviously still cared tremendously about his students. Although he looked like he might not be paying attention and was obviously very ill, he always came up with a response which gave people a big question.

One of our daily routines with Zen Master Seung Sahn was eating three meals a day together. One time we were out at a restaurant. Zen Master Seung Sahn felt particularly bad that day and ate very little. He only sat with his head down. During lunch, an old student called. He told us how he had just lost his job, and his girlfriend was going to kick him out. He wanted to ask Zen Master Seung Sahn if he could become a monk. "Sir, James is on the phone!" No response, eyes closed, head down. "James wants to know if he can become a monk." Without moving, Zen Master Seung Sahn replied, "James become monk, not possible." I told James, who laughed and asked to speak to Zen Master Seung Sahn. Zen Master Seung Sahn took the phone and said "If your hands open, become monk possible. If your hands closed, become monk not possible. Okay?!" He clearly saved his energy for what he felt was really important.

During his periods of hospitalization, the Zen Center

monks and nuns took turns staying with him around the clock, because in Korea the family provides the personal care, while the hospital staff is only responsible for clinical care. Usually Zen Master Seung Sahn would ask to be pushed around the hospital floor in his wheelchair, as he never liked to stop moving. One time, he was being wheeled in his chair, as usual, up the passageway, and one of his attendants asked him jokingly “Which way are we going?” He answered “Only one way!” which meant “the same way” but he said really loudly “Only one way!” Then he started chanting “Kwan Seum Bosal” at the top of his lungs. One day the Hwa Gye Sah abbot came and asked why he kept getting out of bed, why wasn’t he resting? But we understood he was just doing hospital practice—sitting or lying down meditation for fifteen minutes then walking (riding) around for fifteen minutes.

During one of his hospitalizations his last two years, a close disciple asked him “Sir, what is freedom from life and death?” This monk was concerned that Zen Master Seung Sahn seemed not to have control over his physical condition and had a lot of suffering. Zen Master Seung Sahn looked at him and said “We ARE life and death, this body IS life and death”. This same monk asked him “What is enlightenment?” Zen Master Seung Sahn replied “Only the mind that wants to help is enlightened.”

Although feeling miserable, the only time he showed something resembling anger was when someone inattentively tried to help him in a way that wasn’t helpful. For example, if someone was pulling his arm up too high to help him walk, he would rebuke them. But it wasn’t like, “You’re hurting me!” It was more like, “How can you help someone with that kind of inattentive mind?!”

Taking care of Zen Master Seung Sahn was a great practice of becoming one. Dae Soeng Sunim and I learned to go at his speed. Chong Shim Sunim learned how to speed him up when necessary. Chong Shim Sunim changed over ten years from being a very kind but rather shy person, to being very kind, but also very strong, able to order the Zen Master around when necessary.

Dae Soeng Sunim woke him up every morning without fail for two years. Sometimes Zen Master Seung Sahn would turn over in bed like a teenager. Dae Soeng Sunim would say, “Sir, time to get up, we have to change the water [dialysis].”

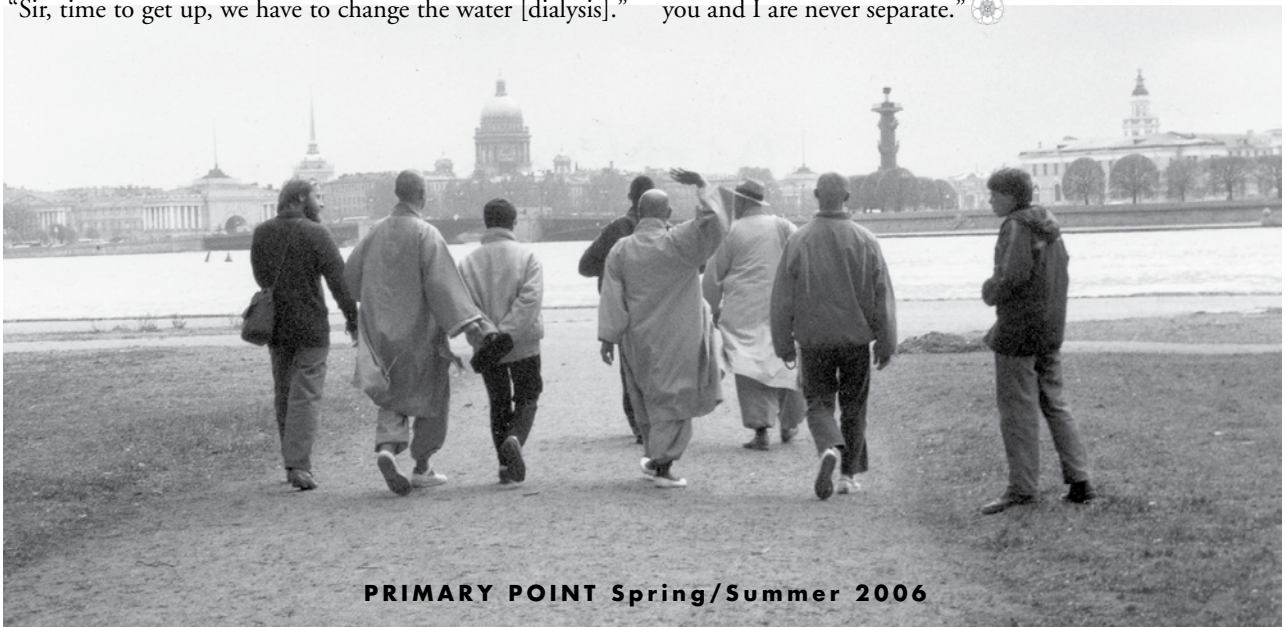
Zen Master Seung Sahn would reply, “Change water not necessary.” “Necessary.” “No, no, I understand—not necessary!” Then after a while Chong Shim Sunim would have to come in and bark at him in Korean, “Get up!” Then he would slowly get up. I don’t know if he was doing this on purpose or not, but he seemed to relate to each person in a way that helped us learn how to be clear and helpful to someone else. Even the night before he died, he looked better than anyone else in the intensive care unit. That night he was very sweet. At one point, he leaned forward, and said, “This job difficult.” It wasn’t a complaint; it was “just like this.”

After he passed away, his body was cleaned in a beautiful and dignified manner, and dressed in full monk’s robes. We walked around him in hapjang. He was smiling.

Months later, many students felt his energy was still here and still is. Jo Bul Sunim verbalized what many of us felt in Korea and at other centers around the world, “Zen Master Seung Sahn died, but he didn’t go anywhere. How did he do that?” His last years demonstrated his practice—only go straight don’t know, try, try, try, and save all beings from suffering.

At what point are we done? We all finished our job together, right at the point when we were able to go on without him. In a way, this experience was teaching us, “How can you really help someone whom you love and who has given you so much love?” And it was wonderful to try to do that. In his quiet way, you knew he appreciated every time we could become one with what would help him. He was clearly doing things that would help us, in ways maybe we did not know. Maybe even just keeping his body as long as he did, we learned how to eliminate more “I,” how to be more compassionate. The last year with him was one of the best years of my life.

I first met Zen Master Seung Sahn at New Haven Zen Center in 1977, at a Yong Maeng Jong Jin. At that time, he was giving interviews to each student every day. At the end of my last interview, he asked, “Do you have any more questions?” I asked, “When will I see you again?” Suddenly he hit me hard on the leg with his stick. I was totally surprised. He leaned forward and said, “When you keep don’t know mind, you and I are never separate.”



**SHIT  
STICK  
GOES  
PUBLIC**



*Dae Won Sunim JDPS*

Every day at 8:00 am, Zen Master Seung Sahn would come and teach a class at the Seoul International Zen Center. On one occasion, along with the Zen students, there were many Korean television news people who came to film the class. The Zen students practiced hard, helping each other, and helping to save the world from suffering. The Buddha said, "Meditation is the best way to help save the world from suffering."

The topic of study on that day was the famous teaching of Zen Master Un Mun:

*A student once asked Un Mun Zen Master, "What is the Buddha?"*

*Un Mun answered, "Buddha is dry shit on a stick."*

Long ago in China, most Zen monks lived in temples high up in the mountains, far away from villages and cities, because peace and calmness foster the the principles that they practice: "Put it all down and attain your true self." Because the temple was so remote, and resources were limited, the monks had to grow their own food. The monks learned to save and reuse everything, even their excrement. They made a mixture good for growing vegetables, composed of ashes from the kitchen, dead leaves from the jungle, and shit from their toilets. They used a long stick for mixing this concoction. This filthy stick was called the "shit stick." No one wanted to touch this filthy stick, except during work time, and they kept it beside the heap of garden refuse.

One day, during the dharma talk, Zen Master Un Mun was asked by a student, "Master, please tell us what is Buddha?" Un Mun said, "Buddha is a dry shit stick!"

During the class, Zen Master Seung Sahn said, "If you attain the true meaning of this teaching, then you realize this is a very high-class teaching. Are there any questions?" After he answered many questions, finally a Zen student asked him, "Master, for more than ten years, I have been studying and practicing from your clear teachings, and was given food and shelter through your generosity. You have saved me from the infinite time and space of my suffering. Today, out of my deepest gratitude, to offer thanks for your great kindness and compassion, I want to make a sincere offering to you. A dry shit stick is all I have. Do you accept it or not?"

All the students present were shocked! "What kind of question is this?! What kind of a student is this monk?! Is he crazy?! This is incredible! Unforgivable! This is completely inappropriate!" Even the Korean television news people were upset. Korean tradition is influenced by Confucianism, where people hold their masters in great respect, the position of the master being even higher than the father's.

Everybody looked in the direction of Zen Master Seung Sahn, in anticipation of what was to happen next. Smiling, he answered firmly, with a smile, "I accept it! And I use it to hit you!"

The student asked, "Will you keep it or not?"

"I will keep it for the garden."

"In the future, can I use this dry shit stick to help people?"

"You have already helped!" Zen Master Seung Sahn answered, closing his eyes without smiling.

After the class, the Korean television news people continued to interview many Seoul International Zen Center students, but not the student whom they believed had offended Zen Master Seung Sahn. They just stared at him and were very upset.

The next day, the student who had made the strange offering said to a young nun, "Zen Master Seung Sahn hit me with the dry shit stick. Do you understand that?"

The young nun immediately exclaimed, "Why did you offer the Zen Master the wrong thing...?" ❀

## BEADED PERSPIRATION



*Thom Pastor JDPSN*

Sometime back in the early 1990s, I remember being at Dharma Zen Center in Los Angeles. Zen Master Seung Sahn had recently arrived from Korea, and was scheduled to give a dharma talk that evening. Whenever Zen Master Seung Sahn was in town, word spread quickly throughout the Korean community. So it was no surprise that when it came time for special chanting at 6:30 pm, the second story dharma room was at full capacity.

It was August, and it was very hot. Back in those days, there was no air conditioning in the dharma room, just ceiling fans, which were very inadequate given a “packed house.” To add to this, we had to close the windows so as not to disturb the neighbors. (Dharma Zen Center borders a residential neighborhood.)

Having sat a number of retreats there before, and being mindful of the large numbers, I skillfully positioned myself near the kitchen exit just in case the close quarters started getting to me. At precisely 6:30 pm, Zen Master Seung Sahn appeared and we began chanting the Thousand Eyes and Hands Sutra. Sure enough, at about 6:50 pm, during Kwan Seum Bosal chanting, I began to feel stifled by the closeness and lack of fresh air. A few people had already exited through the back of the room, beckoned by the cool relief that the outside evening air provided. I looked over at Zen Master Seung Sahn. His eyes were fixed on the altar Buddha. Beaded perspiration fell from his face and neck, creating a moist ring around the top of his robe. His voice was unwavering, actually the strongest in the room. He embodied what we’ve heard him say many times: “Don’t check, just do it.” It was also eminently clear that even if he collapsed right there in Los Angeles on a hot August night from heat exhaustion, still everything was complete, and everything “no problem.” Blue mountain, water flowing. This realization both carried and gave me sufficient energy for the rest of the evening.

For years, I was the designated driver in Las Vegas when

Zen Master Seung Sahn came to visit. He always sat in the front passenger seat. Whether we were going to dinner, to the acupuncturist, or on a drive through the scenic mountains of the Red Rock Canyon area, if he was not speaking, beads were in his hand and the Great Dharani quietly, almost imperceptibly, on his lips.

The monks traveling with Zen Master Seung Sahn were always mindful of his health, and, in a loving way, made attempts to monitor the nutritional value of his menu choices when eating out. One time, immediately after placing a breakfast order, we were all amused to watch Mu Sang Sunim excuse himself, and chase after the waitress, instructing her “to please lighten up on the cheese” for Zen Master Seung Sahn’s omelet, and “to please bring sugar-free syrup for the pancakes!” It didn’t seem to matter, Zen Master Seung Sahn on all occasions was undaunted, laughing, teaching, telling stories. When it came time to leave, he always saw to it that we left a generous tip, and invariably complimented the restaurant personnel, in this case, “Yah, number one good breakfast.”

On one of his visits, the registration line for hotel guests at the Las Vegas Hilton was unusually long. Even though the line was moving steadily, while waiting for Mu Shim Sunim JDPS to complete the registration process, the rest of us looked for available seating in the lobby area. Zen Master Seung Sahn and I conveniently found seats next to each other at nearby slot machines. After a few brief moments of observing the gaming action, he asked me about my “homework.” It was surreal. Here I was, having a kong-an interview in the midst of a large, noisy casino, with our esteemed founding teacher, seated at a video poker machine! Soon, a tall, leggy waitress appeared, and, assuming we were players, asked us for our cocktail order! Zen Master Seung Sahn looked up, smiled and politely told her, “Oh, no thank you. Alcohol not necessary.” He then turned back to me and I found myself immersed in the Sixth Patriarch’s poem! 🌀

[7

## The Whole World

Zen Master Soeng Hyang



*[Raises the Zen stick above her head, then hits the table with the stick.]*

Modern is ancient, ancient is modern.

In the world of name and form, things are always coming and going. This is also true of what we consider to be ancient and old, or new and modern.

*[Hit.]*

No ancient, no modern.

Today we are meeting for the Whole World is a Single Flower conference. This point means the whole world is a single flower. This is our original nature, and the original nature of the whole universe.

*[Hit.]*

Ancient is ancient, modern is modern.

Everything is just like it is. At this moment, everything is the Tathagata. We just “think” that it isn’t.

Each of these three statements is very good Buddhist teaching. Which one is the best?

KATZ!

Outside the sun is shining brightly. Inside, hundreds of faces are also shining brightly.

Twenty-five hundred years ago, Buddha was born to save all people from suffering. Now, we live in the modern world. How is he doing?

Two thousand years ago, Jesus Christ came to earth to save all people from suffering. Now, two thousand years later, how is he doing?

Our founding teacher, Zen Master Seung Sahn, said that if Buddha gave transmission to Mahakasyapa now, it would not be “flower” transmission.

Long ago, Buddha held up a flower on Vulture Peak. Twelve hundred people had gathered there to hear him speak of the dharma, and he said nothing. He only held up a flower. This was one of the Buddha’s strongest and most profound teachings. Only one of those twelve hundred people understood.

Mahakasyapa looked at the flower and smiled.

This is “whole world is a single flower” transmission. Zen Master Seung Sahn said that if Buddha gave transmission to Mahakasyapa today, it would not be “flower” transmission. It would be “tear” transmission. That’s because, in our world today, there is so much suffering.

When I first met Zen Master Seung Sahn in 1972, he was a 45-year-old man. He already understood how much suffering people can create for each other. He became a Zen monk because he wanted to find a way out of this suffering for himself and for all beings.

By the time he went to the United States, he had not just found the way out. He had also very generously, and very brilliantly, found simple and profound ways to teach Zen practice.

When I first moved into the Providence Zen Center, I had many ideas about many things. That is the human condition: many ideas about many things. One of my attachments was around the idea of “ancient” and “modern.”

I was attached to natural foods, clothes made from natural fibers, no plastics, no synthetic products, and so on. At one point, I tried using only candles and kerosene lamps in our Zen Center instead of electricity. I insisted on patched clothing, and eating only brown rice. White rice was removed from Zen Master Seung Sahn’s diet!

A good Zen Master knows how to use good timing when teaching students. After I had been living in the temple for a few months (and after he couldn’t stand the brown rice and kerosene lamps any more), Zen Master Seung Sahn called me into his study.

He told me he had a gift for me. He said, “You like very old things, yeah?” Then he gave me a paper fan with the Heart Sutra written on it. It was maybe thirty years old. I was delighted! What a beautiful old thing, and it was made of natural paper and wood.

Then he said, “I have a *really* ancient gift for you.” I thought to myself, “Wow, this must be a very special present.” He handed me a small round rock. He looked at me with his twinkling eyes and said, “Now, *that* is old!”

The well-timed lesson hit my consciousness, and my habituated attachment to ancient and modern was blown away.

I wish to publicly thank Zen Master Seung Sahn for all that he did for his students, for his very clear vow and direction, and for his immense generosity.

We are here today to celebrate the Buddha, the dharma, and the sangha. We are here to thank not only Zen Master Seung Sahn, but also to thank each other for just showing up today. Our vow and direction must be to keep showing up, unconditionally. Show up when things seem difficult and complicated. Show up when we are tired and perhaps discouraged. Our job is to attain enlightenment and help this world.

Attaining enlightenment and helping this world is not an ancient idea or a modern idea. It is not an idea at all. It is our



# is a Single Flower

original job. It was Buddha's job, Jesus' job, and Zen Master Seung Sahn's job. Now it is our job. Actually, it was always our job.

In Zen, great love and great compassion are our original teacher. So, our job is very clear: How can we help this world?

In Zen, there are three kinds of enlightenment: first enlightenment, original enlightenment, and final enlightenment.

First enlightenment is, attain the substance of this world, its original nature. We call this "the whole world is a single flower."

Original enlightenment is keeping our whole world is a single flower mind, and perceiving that everything, just as it is, is the truth.

Final enlightenment is correct situation, relationship, and function. That means, how can our original nature, how can we ourselves, function to help this world?

In Buddhism, this is not just a good idea, but the function of our true self, which has no idea, only does it. So, "the whole world is a single flower" means, just do it.

[Hit.]

Everything is one. Also, everything is not one.

[Hit.]

No one, no different.

[Hit.]

Things are different. That's the truth.

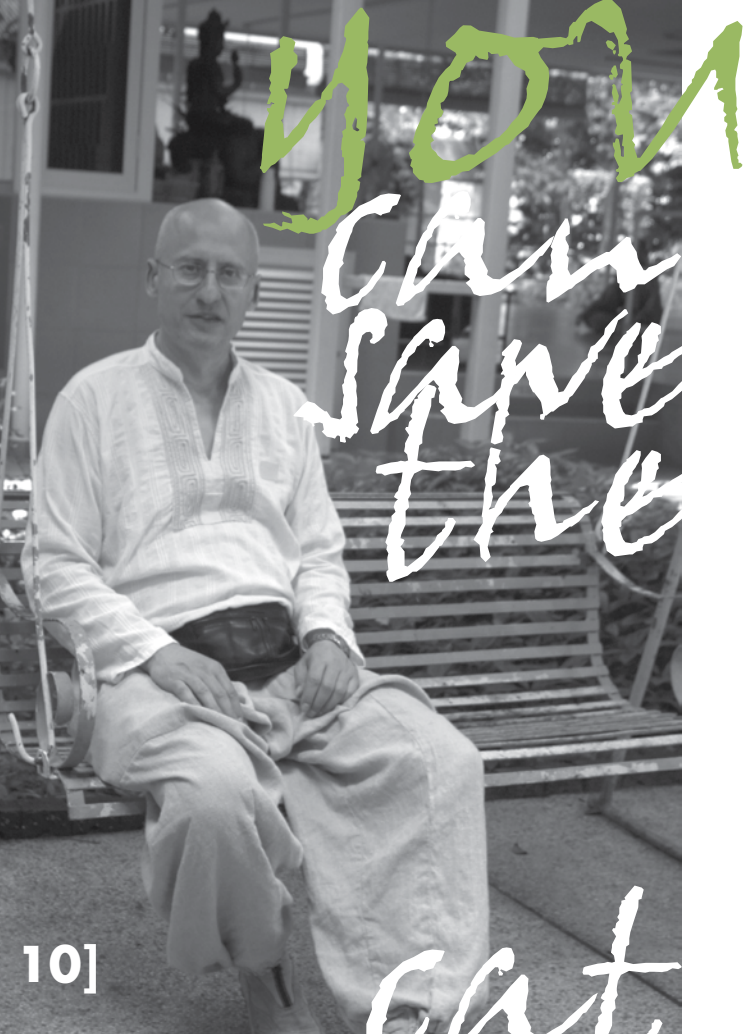
Everything is one thing. That also is the truth.

Which one of these teachings helps the world the most?

KATZ!

Today we celebrate the Whole World is a Single Flower Conference. Please have a good time with your sangha friends.





Zen Master Wu Bong

Good morning everyone. Ni how?

I want to express my gratitude, just as did the previous speakers, to the organizers of this conference. I know it took a lot of effort to bring all of us together yesterday and today, and I want to join in special thanks to Gye Mun Sunim JDPS for his “just do it mind.”

As you have noticed, many speakers have been using a script, and reading from it, except for Ajahn Brahmavamso, who lost his in somebody’s handbag. Well, I also lost mine. It is somewhere in the black hole of computer space where I cannot reach it. As a result, if my talk veers from the printed materials, please forgive me. We’ve heard already, yesterday and this morning, many recipes. And actually, yesterday’s session especially brought to mind a little story, which has nothing to do with my topic, but I hope you will overlook this digression. There was a community which was quite happy until some kind of disease arrived among the members. As people became sick, they called in many doctors, but the doctors were baffled by the disease and were not able to help. Finally, they heard of a very good doctor some distance away, so they sent their leader to get some advice, hoping that finally there was somebody who understood this sickness. This leader went away, and returned after a period of time with very good news. Yes, they found somebody who really understood this sickness. Not only understood the sickness, but also was able

to cure it, and in fact, gave the leader the appropriate recipe telling him how to cure their sickness. So the people were very happy. They called a big meeting that evening, and then the leader of this community read out the doctor’s recipe. Wow! That recipe sounded correct. Everyone agreed it was great. So everybody was very happy, and they decided that OK, next day we will meet again and we will go about making this medicine, implementing this recipe. Everybody went to sleep very happy, but also thinking about this recipe, repeating it in their minds. The next day when they met, somebody had an idea: “You know, actually, maybe we can make this recipe a little better. Why not take the time, discuss this a little more, and make some improvement.” They thought about it, and yeah, that’s maybe a good idea, OK; why not make the best recipe possible? Of course, there were many people there, so it was difficult for everybody to work on the improvement, therefore they decided to make a committee. They called it the “recipe improvement committee.” Then they decided that in three days they would meet again. After three days passed, they had a meeting, and indeed this committee came out with some very, very good ideas. But, it just so happened that in this group, there were a couple of people who, although they were not on this committee, thought a lot about this issue and they came up with even better ideas. OK, they decided to make another committee to study the difference between the two sets of ideas. Well, a few days later, they met again but somehow, the original committee did not agree with the new committee in their choice of which recipe was the best, the one true and perfect recipe. I don’t have so much time, but you can imagine that this went on and on, and soon there were twelve committees, each fighting each other about the recipe. Finally, everybody died. [Laughter.] End of the story. This weekend you also heard, and will continue to hear, a lot of recipes. I encourage you just to take one and apply it, and perhaps it is not so important which one is the best.

Now back to my topic. The title is “Ecology of Mind,” and the topic was inspired by a trip made by Zen Master Seung Sahn to Moscow many years ago, at the invitation of the then first secretary of the Soviet Communist Party, Mikhail Gorbachev, a trip on which I had the privilege of accompanying my teacher. This was for what was called at that time, “Global Forum of Parliamentary and Spiritual Leaders for Human Survival.” The forum brought together people from various fields—politicians, scientists, artists, spiritual leaders—to talk about human beings’ relationship to nature, the destruction of the environment, the causes for such destruction, and what we can do about it. Well, it’s kind of interesting, this question of relationship to nature. Actually, what we are talking about is ecology. According to Webster’s dictionary, ecology is the study of the relationship between living things and the environment. That means all kinds of relationships, our relationship to the earth, to water, air, plants, and animals. Now, in Buddha’s time, that was not the topic of the day. I think there were not so many people, there were many animals around, many forests, so actually in

one way, Buddha didn't talk about ecology as we think of it today. But in another way, that's all Buddha ever talked about. If we look at Buddha's teaching, it was really all about ecology, what someone might call ethical or spiritual ecology. And in our Zen tradition, via the many Zen patriarchs, we can also talk about ecology, or moment-to-moment, correct situation, correct relationship, correct function.

At this Global Forum, the most common theme that people talked about was love. Love was seen as the one force that could save all of humanity. Now, this is interesting, because actually for me, the very title of that event somehow lacked love. It was "Global Forum for Human Survival." Not for the survival of animals, or trees, or plants, or mosquitoes, no, it was about human survival. So, only when we are threatened by some disaster do we become concerned about our surroundings. Nonetheless, everybody agreed that love was the one thing that is necessary. It was never, however, stated clearly what is love.

So let's examine that point right now. Long ago in China, one day a cat wandered into Zen Master Nam Cheon's monastery. Now at that time in this monastery, there were two residences for monks, the eastern residence and the western residence. And when the cat appeared, the eastern monks decided that this cat was their cat. Unfortunately, the western monks came to the same conclusion. So, over a period of some time, this became a source of great contention between the eastern monks and the western monks. One day, when the Zen Master was resting in his room, he heard a great commotion coming from the main hall. Already understanding what the problem was, he went over there with great energy, opened the door, and walked in. Immediately, all argument ceased, and silence appeared. Noticing the cat present in the room, the Zen Master walked up to the cat, picked it up, took out his knife, and said, "You! Give me one word. If not, I will kill this cat." Nobody responded. He waited, waited, waited, finally "Pooghh!" killed the cat. That evening, his number one student returned from some business in town. The Zen Master called him to his room, then told him what had happened that day, and asked him, "If you had been there at that time, what would you have done?" Now this student, called Joju, replied in a very strange way. He didn't open his mouth. He just took off his slipper, put it on his head, turned around and walked out of the room. Then Zen Master Nam Cheon said, "Ahh, if only you had been there, I would not have had to kill this cat." It's a very interesting story, because this is a story about love. Yeah, actually, ever since this happened, this kong-an helped many students attain enlightenment, attain great love, and attain great compassion. Why? At that time, the Zen Master was only trying to test his students. Do they only have desire for this cat, or is there somebody who truly loves this cat? So when we work with students, we have two questions associated with this story. The first question is, if you had been there, what would you have done to

save this cat? The second question is, what is the meaning of Joju's answer, of putting the slipper on his head and walking out of the room? If you don't understand, don't worry. You have already heard it many times: only keep don't know. Then from this don't know, someday great love and great compassion will appear. Then, not only can you save the cat, but you can save all beings, also.

Now, at this Global Forum, Zen Master Seung Sahn also talked. His teaching was always very simple, very concise. He talked about cause and effect, and then he gave his recipe to everybody. Basically, what he said was very much in line with Buddha's teaching, also. Because what Buddha taught us was to take away the three greatest pollutants, which he called anger, desire, and ignorance. In fact, it can be said that until we get rid of these pollutants, there is no way that we will be able to save our environment. When I was a young person, before I even heard about Buddhism, in order to help this society, I was very much involved in political action. That was the time of the war in Vietnam, and I was involved in the antiwar movement. One day, however, I had a very painful realization. I saw in myself a lot of anger, a lot of desire, and I realized that I would not want to be in a country where I was the leader. In other words, I was no better than the people I was protesting against. Actually, that moment, that very painful moment, was the end of my political activity. And then, I was also looking for a recipe, a recipe to change myself. So before changing the world, let's do something about ourselves. The recipe I liked at that time was called Buddhism. And, finally, in Buddhism also, there are many kinds of recipes. It happened that somehow I ended up with the Zen recipe. In particular, it was the school of Zen Master Seung Sahn. Let's call it the Seung Sahn cuisine.

Earlier, there was some talk about sutras. So, oh, I'm being given the signal that my time is up, OK. So let me forget the sutras. *[Laughter, applause.]* But I just wanted to tell you that my favorite sutra is called the BBC. Sometimes I stray from the true path and I watch CNN. *[Laughter.]* So I want to also encourage you to maybe try this don't know recipe in your own life. If it doesn't work, then it is not a problem.

Throw it into the garbage. OK? But if it works, then please use it and share it with everybody in this world. Thank you for your attention. ☸

[ 1 ]

# THE ATTAINMENT OF

*Zen Master Wu Kwang*



In the Lotus Sutra, Shakyamuni Buddha makes two points:

12] First, that essentially, whatever practice someone is doing, there is ultimately only one vehicle, one goal, or one path; and, whatever route is chosen, that is the path to becoming Buddha. Whether one practices the Four Noble Truths, looks at cause and effect, or whatever, ultimately they all point toward the attainment of Buddhahood. All beings partake of this universal Buddha-nature, the Buddha said, and because everyone partakes of it, that is our true substance. Even our apparent moment-to-moment existence comes from that true substance. At any moment, then—at any instant—it is possible to perceive clearly the source of what our being is, and to wake up. And that is to become Buddha.

The second point is that, in the future, each of his major students and disciples would become Buddha.

He makes the first prophecy to Shariputra, who is considered his main disciple, saying, “In an age in the future”—which seems almost infinitely in the future, eons and eons and eons from now—you, Shariputra, shall become Buddha Such-and-Such, in such-and-such land, and etc., etc., etc. But the way he describes it makes it all seem, simultaneously, infinitely, remotely in the future, yet intimately close at hand: a paradox. Shariputra, of course, is happy to hear the prediction.

Then, the Buddha makes similar prophecies to his other main disciples: Mahakasyapa, Subhuti, and people who appear in other sutras. For each, he says that many eons from now, in such-and-such a place, you will become Buddha. And each prophecy carries that same feeling: it may happen in some infinitely distant, almost unimaginable future, and

yet it feels right here at hand, somehow, very, very close. After that, the Buddha makes a prophecy that all five hundred arhats who are in the assembly will also attain Buddhahood. He goes on and on and on and on, taking many chapters. All of it is written in ornate, sutra-style language with a cosmic quality.

Finally, he says, “My cousin Devadatta will also become Buddha.” Now, Devadatta had been a monk in the assembly. At first, he was a strong practitioner, very clear in many respects. But then he became jealous of Shakyamuni, the Buddha, and tried to kill him several times. That meant, in the orthodox view, that Devadatta was already in hell somewhere, because he had tried to kill the Buddha. Still, Buddha says, “At some time in the future, infinite eons from now, Devadatta, my cousin, will become Buddha, also.” The meaning is that everybody—from the best to the worst, from the most noble to the most wicked—will share in the same quality of awakened nature. Each and every one will realize that, recognize that, and express that.

At that point, a bodhisattva named Wisdom Accumulation Bodhisattva—who has come from another realm somewhere—thinks that the Buddha has finished, and says he will now return to his own realm. Buddha, however, urges him to stay, saying that Manjushri will appear in a moment and that the bodhisattva should talk with Manjushri about the Lotus Sutra.

Now, this bodhisattva’s name is interesting: Wisdom Accumulation Bodhisattva. That name is a contradiction in terms. From our standpoint, when you drop it all in the wastebasket, then wisdom appears; you do not accumulate anything.



There is a story that might illustrate that “do not accumulate” idea. It is about a university professor who came to call on a Zen Master in Japan. The Zen Master offered to serve the professor some tea. But, once the Zen Master began to pour tea into the little Japanese-style teacup, he just kept pouring. Soon, the tea was overflowing the cup, and spilling onto the floor. Finally, the professor exclaimed, “It’s overflowing! No more will fit in there!” And the Zen Master replied, “Yeah, just like your mind. I can’t fit anything more in there, either.”

That could also describe Wisdom Accumulation Bodhisattva.

Shortly after the Buddha urges this bodhisattva to wait, Manjushri suddenly appears out of the ocean. Now this is almost a sci-fi kind of vision: Manjushri is sitting on a lotus flower as the flower rises into the air, almost like a space ship, and comes to Vulture Peak, where the Buddha is giving his sermon. Once Manjushri lands, he gets off the lotus flower and bows to the Buddha, who directs him to Wisdom Accumulation Bodhisattva. Once they begin to talk, Wisdom Accumulation Bodhisattva asks Manjushri, the bodhisattva of primal wisdom, “Where have you been teaching lately?” Manjushri replies, “I’ve been teaching at the bottom of the ocean in the realm of the dragons.” Then, Wisdom Accumulation asks, “Do you have many students there?” Manjushri answers, “The number is uncountable, more than I can mention with my mouth. But I will show you.” Immediately, a multitude of bodhisattvas arise out of the ocean. All sit on similar flowers, which fly up in the air and come to Vulture Peak. As soon as they land, all the bodhisattvas bow to the Buddha.

Wisdom Accumulation Bodhisattva is very taken by this. He says to Manjushri, “What is it that you’ve been teaching at the bottom of the ocean?” Manjushri replies, “I only teach the Lotus of the Mystic Law Sutra.” Wisdom Accumulation Bodhisattva says, “Oh, that sutra is very, very subtle. Is there anyone there who is close to attaining Buddhahood?” Manjushri says, “Yes, the daughter of the dragon king, who is an eight-year-old girl. She is a very high-class student and attained enlightenment in an instant. She can become Buddha very quickly.”

Wisdom Accumulation is surprised by this. He says, “It’s hard to imagine that an eight-year-old girl could so quickly attain to Buddhahood. When I think of the many, many, many, many lives that Shakyamuni passed through on the bodhisattva path, making huge sacrifices and offering his life over and over again to finally attain unexcelled perfect enlightenment, it’s hard to imagine that this eight-year old dragon girl could so quickly attain it.” Just at that moment, she appears.

Of course, there is a lot here about birth and death, and about life after life after life that goes along with this. Even the earliest Buddhist teachings offer images of birth and death having to do with momentariness. From the most basic point of view, in Buddhist teaching, birth and death means the appearance and disappearance, momentarily, of all phenomena. Simultaneous with the appearance of all phenomena is the appearance of the consciousness that recognizes these appearances. All these things are momentary; they last only a moment. According to the Buddhist philosophical view, consciousness is no more permanent than anything else; it arises and passes away. The only constant thing is momen-



tariness, the flashing into existence of one thing after another. From that standpoint, birth and death are occurring nonstop: life after life after life are occurring nonstop. The past life is past moment. Present life is this moment. Future life is the next moment. That was the teaching of the Sixth Patriarch about reincarnation: past moment is past life; this moment is this life; next moment is future life. And if you perceive that clearly, then you perceive what birth and death are really about.


So, this young girl, the dragon king's daughter, appears. She immediately goes in front of the Buddha and offers him a pearl that is priceless. The Buddha readily accepts this gift, and the girl returns to her place. Just at that point, Shariputra feels the need to stick in his two cents, stating the orthodox view. He tells the little girl, "It's not possible for a woman to attain Buddhahood. Therefore, you are mistaken." At that time in India, there was a strong bias against women. The view was that women could only progress so far in their practice. They would have to be reborn as men to complete their training and attain enlightenment. But, of course, the teaching of this sutra is that all beings from the beginning share Buddha nature. So, there is a sense of equality being established here. The girl says to Shariputra and Wisdom Accumulation, "Did you see how quickly the Buddha received my offering of the priceless pearl?" And they agree, "Yes, very quickly." She says, "Even more quickly will I become Buddha. Just watch." Suddenly she transforms into a golden, radiant Buddha, and goes off to some realm far south of there. With their psychic vision they see her sitting and preaching the dharma to many beings.

Let us consider a few points here. First, why is the image of an eight-year-old girl used? That she is eight years old, of course, suggests that she is straight-forward and guileless, with a beginner's mind. She is not expert about anything, as compared with Wisdom Accumulation, who is somehow top-heavy.

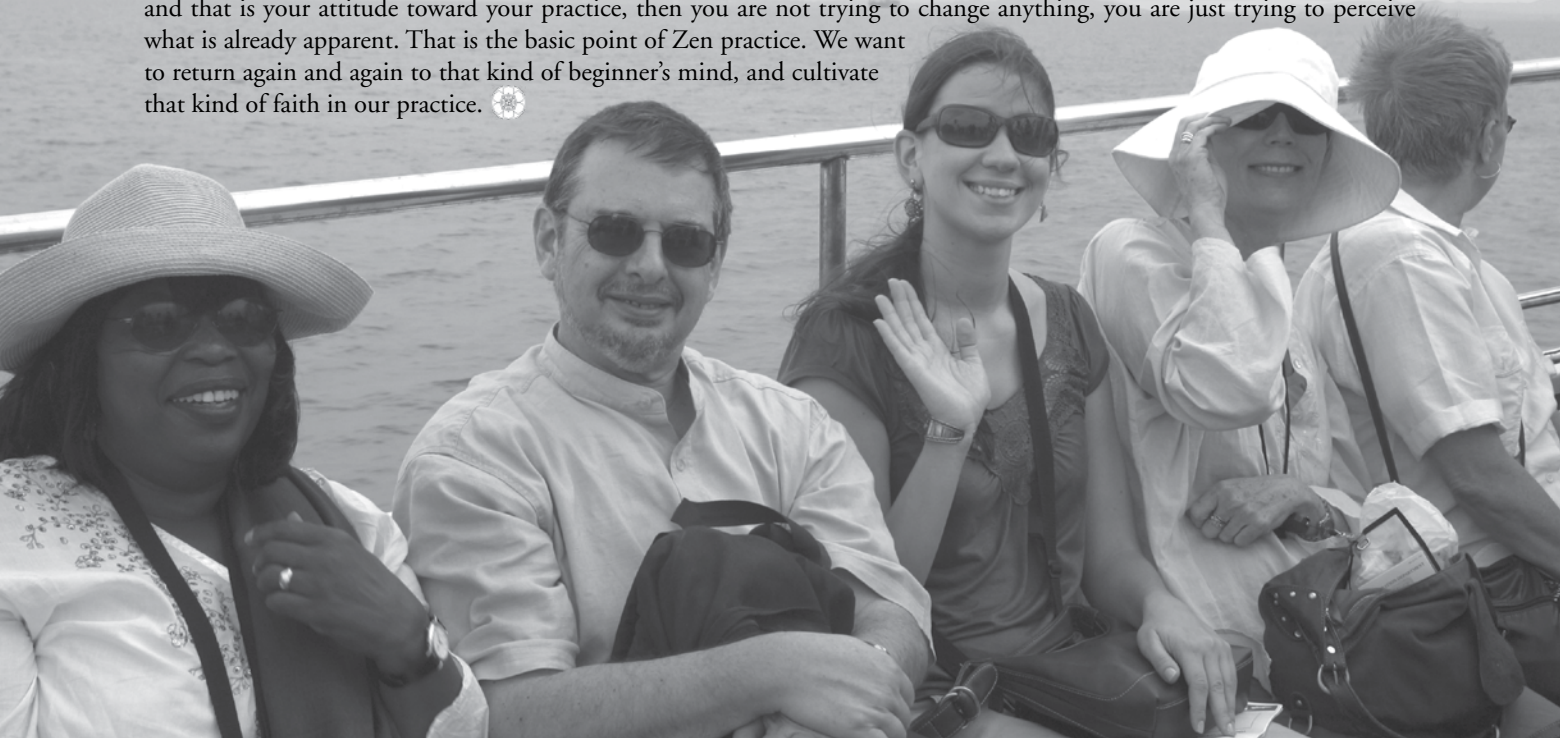
Then, what is the meaning of her offering this pearl to the Buddha? As many commentators say, the meaning is that she offers her faith to the Buddha, and in that moment of offering her faith to the Buddha, she is awakened.

That leads to another question: What is the meaning of faith in the practice of Buddhism—and in the practice of Zen in particular? Sometimes "faith" in Buddhism means to have faith in the law of cause and effect. That means, if I do good things with faith that a good cause leads to a good result, then, over a long period of time, those actions will lead to attaining enlightenment. That is one view. Another suggests that because everything is transitory, changing, changing, changing, even if I am completely blocked, completely hindered, completely stupid, completely a rockhead, if I have faith in transitoriness, the process of change, then I will not be stuck, as I am now, in this current situation; I can evolve and can progress and can become awakened and enlightened. That is the general view of faith in Buddhism.

But that has to do with before and after, and time and progression. Faith from a Zen standpoint is a little bit different. Zen Master Ma Jo said, "Mind is Buddha, Buddha is mind." One point of faith in Zen is that this very mind that we all possess already—is Buddha, is already Buddha, and that Buddha is just this mind. That suggests that if we look into ourselves and into the essence of our minds, we find our true meaning, and our true nature; there is no need to look elsewhere for it. Also, because we already possess everything we need, we—just like this eight-year-old girl—can immediately awaken at any moment. Already, without cultivation, before we even sit down and assume this posture or chant the Heart Sutra or do anything like that, we are already complete; already we are one with all the Buddhas of the past, present, and future.

That is the primary point of faith in Zen. If you have that attitude, it influences the way you practice, because you are not trying to become something other than what you already are, you are not trying to get to some place other than where you already are, so you are not relating to yourself in time and space. If you relate to time and space, then you think, "I'm here and it will take X number of lifetimes to get over there to something called enlightenment." However, if already you are complete and that is your attitude toward your practice, then you are not trying to change anything, you are just trying to perceive what is already apparent. That is the basic point of Zen practice. We want to return again and again to that kind of beginner's mind, and cultivate that kind of faith in our practice. 

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# Harmony and Zen

Mu Shim Sunim JDPS

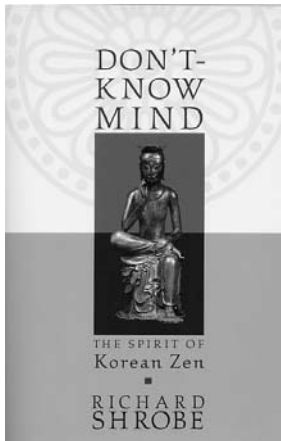


Thank you everybody for coming here, and especially I would like to thank the organizers of this event, Gye Mun Sunim JDPS in Singapore, also Zen Master Dae Kwang, and many other people who have worked hard to realize this Whole World Is a Single Flower opening today. It's not even been one year since our great teacher Zen Master Seung Sahn passed away, so in some sense, his words are still ringing in our ears, and I remember doing many of these Whole World Is a Single Flower conferences with him. And, especially what I remember was his teaching to become in harmony with all people. So, with this in mind, I would like to talk about harmony in Zen, harmony between people, and how to achieve that. Because many times, even among Zen teachers and students, there's a difference of opinion about things. So, how do we get to be in complete harmony? So, first, I would like to ask, what is harmony? What does that mean, what does it mean to be in harmony? What I understand as harmony is to reconcile all opposites, to be in agreement or to become one with something. Also, agreement in feeling or opinion, to be in accord, to live in harmony—how do we use the concept, or how do we use that in Zen? For example, we often tell beginning Zen students their body, breath and mind should be in harmony. This means, very simply, that they need not try to separate the body, the breathing and the mind—they are all part of one continuum. We use these words when we instruct students who begin meditation. We say, keep your body like this, sit up straight, keep your back straight, look down at the floor at a 45 degree angle, follow your breathing, keep your mind like this. But these are only teaching words. We have to bring our body, breathing, and mind into harmony, and this harmony is not something that we can

buy outside—it's not something that we can find in a store, or attain by reading about it. We have to get it ourselves. We have to attain that ourselves. So how do we find that? How do we attain that? Whether we practice with simple breathing, whether we practice with a mantra, or whether we read a sutra, or whatever kind of practice it is, whether we just do chanting practice, it's very important that we can get this harmony, this inner harmony. Already, we heard the Singapore head of state's representative talk about our inside job, and the importance of our inside job. And more and more, our belief in that is what we have to address. What is our inside job? A human being, as we understand human beings in the older way of understanding, was that a human being is kind of a marker in time and space. So when we look at the old physics, the physics of Newton and others, we see that the human being is at some point a marker in time and space. So we call that a human being. Some result from cause and effect. But nowadays, we understand from the newer physics, from Einstein's physics and also from the teachings we have gotten from the Buddha, that time and space really only exist relative to where a person is, or in our particular relation to somebody else; time and space are completely relative. So your time and space and my time and space are only relative to what we are doing with our minds moment to moment. And we find that our time and space are always changing as our mind is changing. As our mind changes, our time and space changes. If we are very busy taking an exam, for example, it seems like we never have enough time to get done. If we are waiting for somebody that we really long to see, somebody we haven't seen in a while, waiting for them in the airport seems like we have too much time. Time is too much on our hands.

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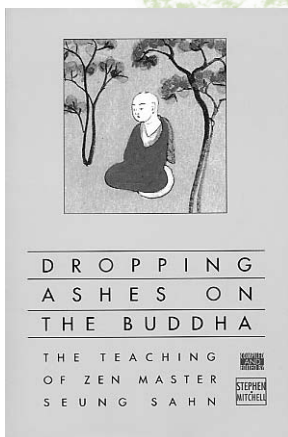
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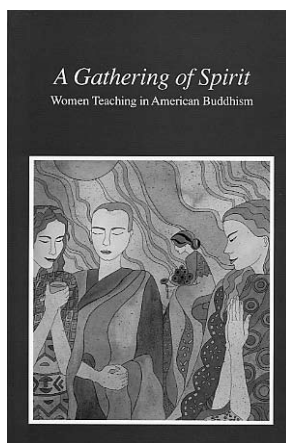
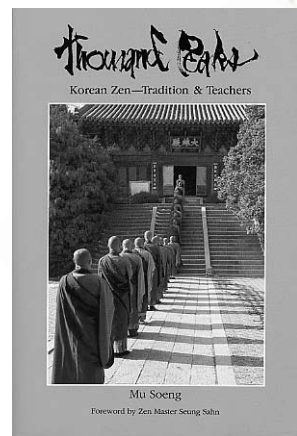
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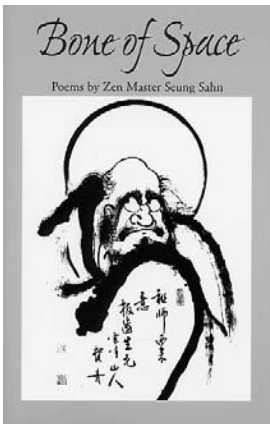
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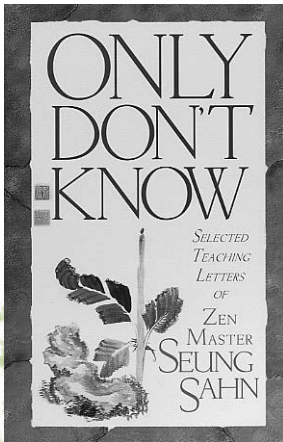


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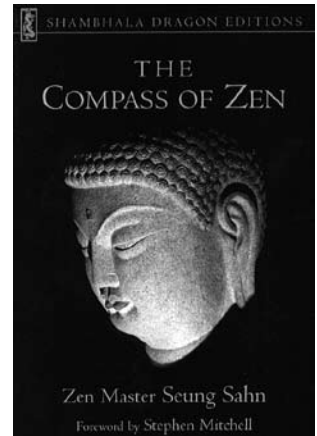
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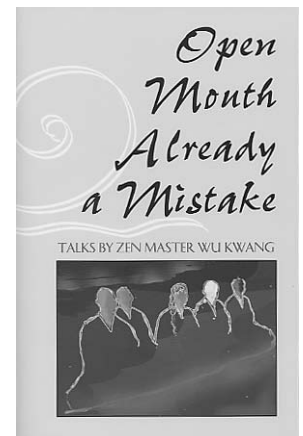
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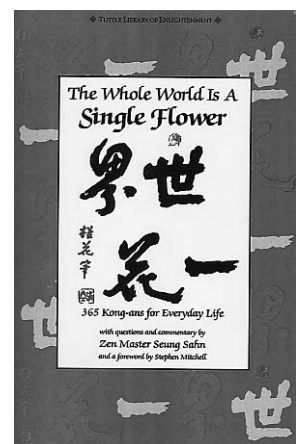
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So time and space are completely relative. And our modern science also corroborates that and confirms that. So how do we become in harmony with all people? Everybody has a different kind of mind, a different frame of reference. And when we practice Zen, it's possible to become in harmony.

What is this Zen itself? The word Zen is actually Japanese for 'meditation.' In Korean we say "Soen," in Chinese it's know as "Chan," in Sanskrit also as "Dhyana." As it was practiced originally in India, "Dhyana" meant to go deeply into the nature of reality and realize three important insights: insight into impermanence, insight into impurity, and insight into non-self. The early disciples of Buddha were capable of practicing very intensively until they mastered these insights and were no longer hindered by notions of self, and others. They were free of the bonds to the material world and enjoyed the bliss of nirvana, or shall we say the spiritual world. Nirvana means the end of all attachments, the absence of any abode or the blowing out of anything at all. However, even though one person may succeed in throwing off the bonds to the material world and enter nirvana, there are numerous beings who are not yet free from their bonds, and are struggling day and night to free themselves from their suffering. How does a person who has left the material world, and who only stays in nirvana, harmonize with those who are still living within their desires and their attachments? Even though we may experience some peace and some harmony within ourselves, how do we save those who are still in the world of opposites, the world of us and them, the world of high and low, the world of rich and poor, man and woman, the world that is fighting, the opposites world. Even though we may reconcile that through our own practice, our own insights, there are still many who are suffering because of these opposites. These opposites, how are they taken away? We cannot just take them away so easily. In order to take them away, we have to come to the root of the problem which is our strong ego, our I, my, me. Zen

**18]** Master Seung Sahn always pointed that out to us, that until we take away this I, my, me, we cannot experience this infinite time, infinite space. We cannot experience this freedom. But if we take away this strong I, strong ego, then we can experience this infinite time, also this infinite space. This means we cover the whole universe. We and the whole universe become one. Then also the suffering of the universe becomes our job. So we get this very big job.

When Buddhism first went from India to China, it took a change from emphasizing just the salvation in the individual to the salvation of many beings over many lifetimes. The influence of Taoism and Confucianism on Buddhism resulted in changes that became what we now know as Zen Buddhism. The influence of Taoism cannot be overstated. Taoism sees all things in a state of flux, with harmony and stability arising from the balance of opposite forces called yin and yang. In the Tao Te Ching, Lao Tzu says "all things in the universe achieve harmony by embodying yin and yang." Which means good and evil, right and wrong, holy and unholy are all opposite concepts that only come to harmony when seen as part of one whole. Most people seek to get happiness and avoid misfortune in their lives. What exactly is true happiness? What is misfortune? Or sadness? When I first actually met Zen Master Seung Sahn, I heard him tell a story that was very inspiring for me. Long ago in China, there was a famous student of Zen master Ma Jo named Han Ung. People always said to him "You are lucky, you are happy." And then he would always reply, "What is luck? What is happiness?" He always spoke like this. He had a very good horse which he liked to ride everyday. One day, the horse disappeared, so everyone said "Oh, are you unhappy, are you sad?" He said "What's happiness? What's sadness?" No feeling—this horse ran away but he only said, "What's sadness, what's happiness?" Everyone said this man has no feeling at all. Usually, if someone is attached to something that they lose, that means they are very sad. But Han Ung only said, "What is sadness, what is happiness?" And a week later Han Ung got a new horse, a very good horse. The best horse. This means it only has to see the shadow of a whip and it runs. This is a very clever horse. Then everyone said, "You are very happy, you are lucky." He said, "What is luck? What is happiness?" Only this, no feeling. NO feeling at all. Then everybody said this man is very lucky. His son liked the horse and rode it everyday. He only had to mount the horse, and it would go round and round, and he was very happy. Then, one day, he fell off the horse and broke his leg. Then everyone said, "Oh, I'm sorry your son broke his leg. Are you sad?" He said, "What is sadness? What is happiness?" No feeling at all. Soon after this, there were many wars, with North China and South China fighting each other. All the young people had to go to the army. But Han Ung's son had a broken leg, so he could not go. He stayed at home and only helped his parents. His leg was not so bad, so he could work in the garden and help them with their chores. Everybody said: "You're lucky, oh you are happy." So he said "What's luck? What is happiness?" This is Han Ung's style of speech, "What is sadness? What is happiness?" Any situation, his mind was not moving. His mind was just still, and his mind was clear. He didn't presume to understand everything, but he always kept his mind very clear. That was very wonderful. So, after Buddhism changed in China, it became very popular for people to practice and follow the Zen Masters of the time. However, even though Zen flourished greatly in China during this golden age, it eventually lost its power and influence to other kinds of Buddhism, such as the Pure Land school. Finally, Zen almost disappeared in China with the changed Communist control in the last century.

Before Buddhism was introduced to Korea, the Korean people had strong roots in nature and shamanism. There was a strong

influence from native animism and also shamanist influence. This influenced and compelled the Buddhism of Korea to become very close to the people and adapt to the needs of the people. Of course, there was the transmission of the Zen school from China to Korea. But within Korea, it took its own particular form, and Korean Zen Masters tended to be more syncretic, allowing themselves the freedom to adapt the teaching to the times. In particular, the great Zen Master Won Hyo was an example of a monk who announced that all opposite discriminations only obscure the experience of truth. It is said that, during his lifetime, he played many different roles; that of a monk, national teacher, of Zen Master, and also that of a father. This is an example of the eclectic role that Korean monks could and still do play. Recently, it has been the object of many scholars to separate fact from fiction, and determine who the true Won Hyo really was. However, it's not the topic of this talk to determine that here. It's enough to say that his contribution in history was to make the name of the Buddha and the bodhisattva Kwan Seum Bosal household names in Korea, and give the common people some great hope and inspiration that they, too, could become a bodhisattva or even become a Buddha. So, when I look at the Buddhism of Korea, I see that many times, it's adapted itself to the needs of the people. It's been very flexible. It's adapted itself in many different ways to meet the people just where they are. Our teacher, Zen Master Seung Sahn, was in many ways just like that. In America he adapted his teachings to the needs of the people there, and he met them where they were in the work place, where they were in the kitchen, in the dharma room, wherever they were, he met them and he taught them in those places, moment to moment, how to just do it. Later, when he became older, he came to Asia, and he was teaching people in Hong Kong and Singapore, and also in Korea. And when he was teaching people there, he tried not to break their tradition. He tried to become in harmony with their tradition, and follow their forms, and to do correct function with them. So, in any kind of culture, he tried to become in harmony with people. I remember going to Egypt with Zen Master Seung Sahn a few years ago, when he was still healthy. We arrived in Egypt at the Cairo airport, and were going to see the pyramids. When we arrived there, one of the immigration control people looked at the Zen Master and said, "Oh, you are from Korea? Then you must know Korean martial arts, Tae Kwon Do. You must be a Tae Kwon Do master." Without any hesitation, Zen Master Seung Sahn looked at him, and went "Haaa!" Like that, made a big fist right in the air. That was beautiful, because rather than trying to explain "I'm a Zen master, I'm not a Tae Kwon Do teacher," he only followed the situation and became one with the person who was asking him. That's what I really appreciate about our Zen Master and our teaching, the dharma that he gave us.

In any situation, you can become one, and can harmonize with, and teach, all people, and all beings.

So, I want to share one final story with you which I really like, and since there are three minutes remaining, maybe I can get it in. Especially because I'm here in Singapore, with many Chinese people from the government, I'd like to share this with you. There was once a government official in Sung dynasty China who had a constant interest in Zen teachings, and in particular, he wondered if Zen teaching had something to offer people in their last minutes, just before death. So he traveled to various Zen Masters, and he asked, "I heard that a true Master's mind attains great freedom at the time of death. Is there any special secret to it?" And one Master said, "Yes, there is a secret teaching, but I cannot give it to you now. First, you must become my disciple, and study with me for many years, and then I'll hand it down to you." And he didn't really believe in that Zen Master. And then he went to another one, and he asked, "Are there some final words for the last moment that you are alive?" When he asked that Master, the answer came back, "There cannot be any special secret to it. Only once you become awakened, will you come to understand such things." He also did not believe that was the complete teaching. Then he heard of a really great Master who lived in the south, and heard that he was very sincere. So he traveled to see this great Master, and asked him the same question again, whether there is a special secret to attain freedom at the time of dying. The Zen Master just said, "Of course there is." And the government official was taken aback. He didn't expect that. Then he said, "Please teach it to me!" And the Master looked at him, "All right—I will teach you. When you come here at the moment that you take your last breath, just then, I'll give it to you." The government official was deeply awakened by this, stood up, and bowed three times. He said: "Master, thank you very much. Only today have I learned the special secret!" That's a beautiful way that we give our Zen teaching. It's not just for free, you have to attain something. You have to try for it. I hope that all of you put this teaching into practice, and just do it moment to moment. Thank you. ☸





20] Thank you for attending this Whole World is a Single Flower international Zen conference. “The Whole World is a Single Flower” is a high-class teaching by the Korean Zen Master Man Gong. After World War II, Zen Master Man Gong picked up a flower, dipped it in ink, and wrote the calligraphy “The Whole World is a Single Flower.” The meaning is equality, harmony, and peace. This means that you and me, the sun and moon, the sky and the earth, all have the same root, and are fundamentally not different, nor separate. It is the great hope and teaching of Zen Master Man Gong that all human beings return to this common root. From this root, a single, beautiful world flower of equality, harmony, and peace may again blossom. With the aim to propagate Zen Master Man Gong’s teaching, our teacher, Zen Master Seung Sahn, started this Whole World is a Single Flower conference. This is a triennial event, and the very first conference was held in Korea in 1987. It has already been held six times in countries like the United States and China. It is our great honor and merit that this conference is held in Singapore this time.

When we talk about the birth of Zen, we have to start from our founder, Shakyamuni Buddha. According to historical records, the Buddha was born in Kapilavastu, India. His father was King Suddhodana, and mother was Queen Maya. The young prince led a life of luxury in the palace. Most of us would envy the luxurious life of the prince. However, the young prince had a doubt, “What is life?”, “Why must people be born, grow old, become sick, and, finally, cannot escape from death?” When he deeply realized the importance of the great affair of life and death, and that impermanence occurs swiftly, he decided to renounce worldly life, and lead a wandering life of an ascetic, in search of truth. First, he tried extreme asceticism, and subjected his body to harsh tortures. However, he was not able to attain liberation through such means. Finally, famished and weak, and nearing death, he realized that austere practices only lead to death. Therefore, he accepted some milk offered by a devotee, slowly regained his health, and decided to practice the middle path, one that avoided the

extremes of a life of luxury, and a life of self-mortification. After that, he sat underneath the bodhi tree for six years, meditating. Finally, on the morning of eighth day of the twelfth lunar month, the moment he saw the morning star, he attained enlightenment. This is what was recorded in historical records.

At that moment of enlightenment, the Buddha spontaneously exclaimed, “Wonderful! Wonderful! All beings possess Buddha-nature, it is only their illusory thoughts and attachments that prevent them from realizing it.” This means that all human beings, whether male or female, clever or dull, beautiful or ugly, all of us are fundamentally complete, just as we are. This also means that the original nature of every being is, by nature, without flaw, complete, and is no different from that of the Buddha. This proclamation by the Buddha is the highest conclusion in Buddhism. However, people nowadays lead stressed, hectic, and troubled lives. Our minds are covered by layers and layers of delusive thoughts that make our worlds upside down. Hence, we need to penetrate our false view of guilt and unsatisfactoriness, and awaken to our original purity and completeness.

The most effective way to achieve this point is through meditation. Not only did Shakyamuni Buddha himself achieve this, but also many of his disciples attained enlightenment through meditation. Moreover, since the Buddha’s parinirvana over two thousand five hundred years ago, many Buddhists in India, China, Korea, Japan, the United States, and other regions have attained enlightenment through meditation. They obtained the key, and unlocked for themselves the answers to these fundamental questions, “What is birth? What is death?” Even now, there are still many people who have attained liberation through meditation, and are able to discard suffering and worries.

### **Buddha held up a flower, Mahakashyapa smiled**

One day, the Buddha was teaching on Vulture Peak. Many of his disciples gathered there, all ready to listen to his dharma talk. But the Buddha just sat there in silence.

Many disciples were puzzled. After a while, the Buddha lifted up a golden lotus that had been offered to him by the great Brahma king. Nobody understood the Buddha's meaning; only Mahakasyapa smiled. The Buddha then said, "I have the eye of the true dharma, the secret essence of nirvana, the formless form, the ineffable realm of dharma, not depending on words, a special transmission outside the sutras. This is already transmitted to Mahakasyapa." That day, the Buddha only held up a flower and showed it to his disciples. What exactly did he teach? A smile broke across the face of Mahakasyapa. What exactly did he attain? This kong-an marks the beginning of Zen Buddhism.

that are spoken by Zen Masters, are meant to treat the sickness of a particular person in a particular situation. The Buddha taught all dharmas to treat all minds, so if there are no minds, what use are the dharmas? Practicing Buddhists should view the "dharma as the teacher, and oneself as the light." Hence, Zen Master Ma Jo said, "The plum has ripened."

Da Mei attained enlightenment upon hearing Ma Jo's words, "Mind is Buddha," but he did not attain the words, "Mind is Buddha." These words are like a key that helped him open the door to his Buddha-nature. For another person, maybe Ma Jo would say, "Not mind, not Buddha." This is because different people require different keys.

Once the door is opened, the key can be discarded. Da Mei said, "I don't care about 'Not mind, not Buddha,' I only care about 'Mind is Buddha!'"

Once again, I would like to express my gratitude to all the Zen Masters, monks and nuns, friends along the path, and honored guests from different countries, for coming to our Whole World is a Single Flower conference. Also, I express my gratitude for Zen Master Seung Sahn's many years of teaching. Although he is no longer with us, his dharma has already been passed on, and is teaching us the correct direction moment to moment; teaching us to clearly perceive our correct situation, function and relationship; and is helping all beings attain happiness. ☸

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### The plum has ripened

One day, Zen Master Ma Jo heard that Da Mei (Big Plum) lived in the mountains, and sent a disciple to ask Da Mei, "What did you attain from Ma Jo, that led you to decide to stay in the mountains?"

Da Mei replied, "Ma Jo told me 'Mind is Buddha', so I came here to stay."

The disciple said, "Ma Jo no longer teaches that."

Da Mei asked, "What is his teaching now?"

The disciple replied, "Recently, Ma Jo teaches 'Not mind, not Buddha.'"

Da Mei then exclaimed, "This old man is confusing people. I don't care about 'Not mind, not Buddha,' I only care about 'Mind is Buddha!'"

Once Ma Jo heard of this, he exclaimed, "The plum has ripened."

We say there is no fixed, unchanging dharma. Words



**Kyol Che**

*Finding it is losing it, losing it is finding it*

Where is that enlightenment?  
I know I left it around here somewhere.

Maybe it's slipped into the sink  
drowning in sudsy water  
with the breakfast dishes.

No.

Maybe it's trapped in the sterilizer  
roiling around with steam demons.

No.

Maybe it's fallen under the table  
or crept into a corner.  
Maybe I can coax it out with a broom.

No.

Where is it?

KATZ!

Dust pan's in the closet,  
bucket and mop are on the porch.

*(For Lerch PSN)*  
—Christina Hauck

My wedding ring got lost in the tall grass.  
I couldn't stop looking until Dave said, *It's okay.*  
And even if we find it now, it won't be mine for long.

Finally, You and I and this moment, Coincide.

—Jean Murphy

**For Bassara, On His Ordination**

Broken television and a cloth  
Make a decent altar;  
Boundless light Buddha  
Waits for us in Sukhavati.  
No Detroit, no L.A.  
How will we meet in the pure land?  
KATZ!  
At the bottom of Clinton Street  
Stairs lead to Echo Park.

—Mu Mun  
Los Angeles

**Night, I**

the pond dark  
with ice,  
roof tiles  
drip moonlight

—Diamond Hill Zen Monastery

**Night, II**

Boats move across the city harbor;  
A thousand lights reflected in the water.  
Trucks move across the expressway, green and red;  
minibuses skip between them like crickets.  
Distant squeal of train brakes;  
sweet smell of mosquito coil  
drifts down from the groundskeeper's shed  
and the mountains  
keep watch over the city  
deep into the night.

—Shatin, Hong Kong

*Ji Hyang Sunim*

Whatever you think you have—  
You have not.  
Whatever you strive to be—  
You already are.  
If you completely put it all down—  
You can play with Galaxies as with toys.  
At that time what place can you sit on?  
On the frozen branch  
The flower buds are sleeping.

—*Myong Gong Sunim*

Two limitless mirrors are facing each other.  
Looking inside—see outside,  
Looking outside—see inside.  
If without inside and outside,  
What is it?  
In the evening wind  
Small tree branch sways.

—*Myong Gong Sunim*

### seasons change their ways

seasons dance under ozoneless sky  
and month cycles morph to days  
our discontent as skittish

sunday we villianize a frigid spring  
and wednesday drip sweaty road rage

birds care little  
live and die short lives  
in the grand ecological sweep  
absorbed by consumption of insects  
and the feel of small brown feet  
balanced on knobby limbs;

the planet adapts—  
our complaints irrelevant to the seasons  
who perform their costumed dance  
with whatever props  
monsoon or dandelion  
way outside the intellect

—*Paul Bloom*

### Epigrams

#### Life

The cat sits sunning in the heat of day.  
I glance again. I find she's slipped away.

#### The Threshold

Through many doors Unknowable *I am*.  
Once through, who cares for knob, hinge,  
molding, jamb?

#### Beyond Stonington, Connecticut

Sign: "Cemetery  
(Nonsectarian)."

How could it not be  
at the very end?

—*Mark Bauer*

#### Seven Words on Bicycling

Bodhisattva wind pulls silence stunning my heart.

—*Hank Kalt*

# Books



*Hardcore Zen:  
Punk Rock, Monster Movies,  
and the Truth About Reality*  
by Brad Warner  
Wisdom Publications, 2003

Reviewed by Judy Roitman, JDPSN

My introduction to Brad Warner was in the pages of the Fall 2003 issue of *Buddhadharma*, which published a brief description of his awakening experience: “The universe was me and I was it... I had no need to confirm it with anyone.”

Who, I wondered, is this egomaniac?

As it turns out, on the evidence of this book and his web page, Brad Warner is not an egomaniac but a serious (and seriously funny) practitioner and Zen Master, living in Tokyo, in the Soto Zen line of Gudo Nishijima. This book is a combination of autobiography, encouragement to practice, and commentary on Buddhist teachings. A man whose teenage years in Ohio were dominated both by the notions of authenticity that drove the punk rock movement, and by a consuming love for Japanese rubber costume monster movies, should not be expected to simply explicate something he heard somewhere else, and Warner speaks from his own experience not because he is an egomaniac, but because he wants you to deeply touch your own deepest experience—yours, not someone else’s. He speaks scathingly of teachers who encourage students to be reliant on them. Against the impression of the extract in *Buddhadharma*, the notion that enlightenment is a special state to strive for, and the notion that those who attain it are special beings, are anathema to him. He clearly prefers questions to answers and exhorts everyone to question everything deeply. He promises nothing, and tells his readers that when they open to the truth it will necessarily be unlike—not better or worse, but radically unlike—anything they imagined. He writes well and crisply, and his explications of traditional Buddhist topics are both colloquial and clear. For example, here is a small part of his chapter on the Heart Sutra (he is discussing the phrase “in the three worlds,” the three worlds being past, present and future):

So what about that present moment? The Diamond Sutra tells us that the mind of the present is unknowable. What’s that mean? We think we know the mind of the present—after all, here it is! But we don’t really know it. We can’t really see it.

Wholly in the midst of something, you can’t possibly see it. As I write this my eyes look at the keyboard (if I’d learned to type correctly, they’d be watching the screen) but I can’t see my own eyes any more than I can bite my teeth. I can only see their reflection and experience their effects. Trying to see one’s present mind is just like that. I can only see the reflection of my mind in the universe or in my own past.

In keeping with his roots in pop culture, he heads each chapter with terrific quotes from non-standard sources, from various punk rockers, to Raymond Burr’s character in *Godzilla*, to Bart Simpson, to—how could he not appear here?—Philip K. Dick... and that’s just the half of it. “Wickedly funny, profane, and iconoclastic,” says the reviewer in *Publisher’s Weekly*, and s/he’s right.

Japanese Soto has a notion of priesthood which allows for a substantially lay life. Nishijima, who spent much of his life working in finance, is in this tradition, as is Warner, who is lucky enough as an adult to work for the heroes of his youth, the Tsuburaya family, creators of the rubber costume hero Ultraman. Much of *Hardcore Zen* is organized autobiographically, and since Warner has had an interesting life (I learned a lot about both the business of punk rock, and the business of Japanese pop television and movies), these sections will sustain the interest of people who come to the book from somewhere other than experience with, or interest in, practice. The autobiographical sections of *Hardcore Zen* have additional interest in their description of the development of deep practice done in the context of a decidedly lay life. Which, to Warner’s credit, he nowhere seems to see as special.

Warner also has a web page (<http://hardcorezen.org>) in which he posts dharma talks, has links to his music, a link to Nishijima’s web page, a link to the late Kobun Chino’s web page (which, strangely, doesn’t mention his death), and, rather generously, a link to a PDF introduction to Zen practice by another student of Nishijima, Mike Leutchford.

All of which brings up a question: why doesn’t everybody like this guy? Clearly, not everyone does. Two examples that I’ve run across are a one-star (and that just barely) reader review on Amazon.com, and the review in *Buddhadharma*, which did not seem entirely happy with this book.

One reason is his rhetoric, which I find refreshing but other folks might find a little bit, shall we say, over the top. For example, a piece on the web, about the dangers of thinking other people have it and you don’t, is named *Whack the Dalai Lama*. This is clearly not to everyone’s taste. But Buddha spoke of 84,000 kinds of expedient means, and surely one of them is a rhetoric which appeals to people who (as one of the blurbs put it) are “put off by the placid lake-and-lotus-blossom tone of everything [about Zen] I’d read.” Placid lake-and-lotus-blossom isn’t to everyone’s taste either.

A second reason is the one thing that I wish he would change: his tendency to put down all traditions except his own. Despite occasional disclaimers, in his enthusiasm for his own tradition, he shows a lack of respect for monastics, for other Zen traditions, for other non-Zen Buddhist traditions, and more generally for the concept of religion and most of its manifestations. This is more than a little jarring, especially in the context of the deep respect he has for his own teachers and lineage. ☸



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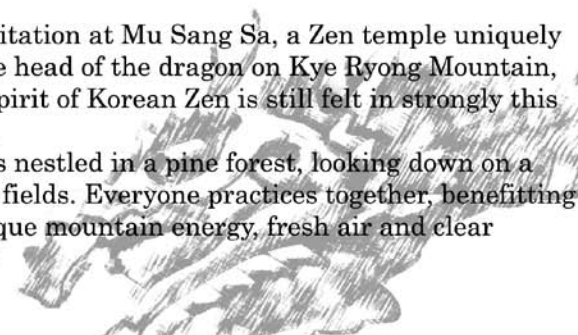
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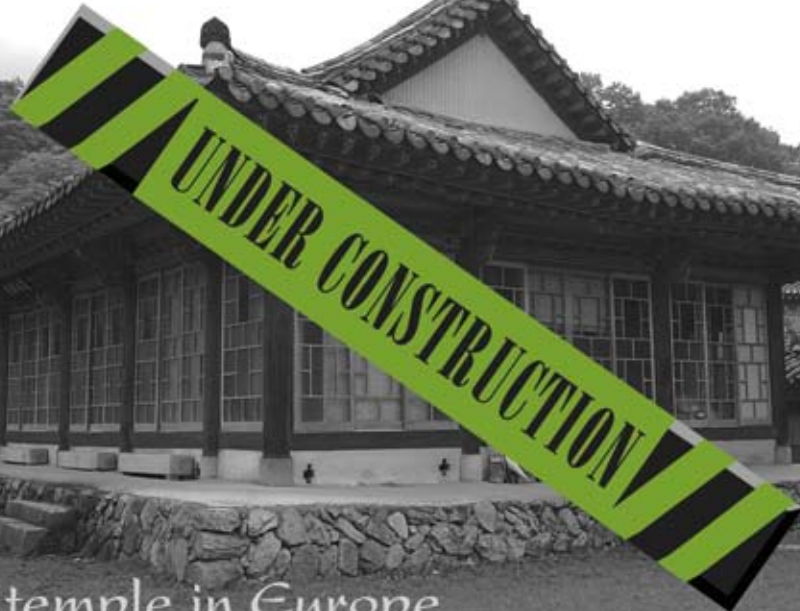
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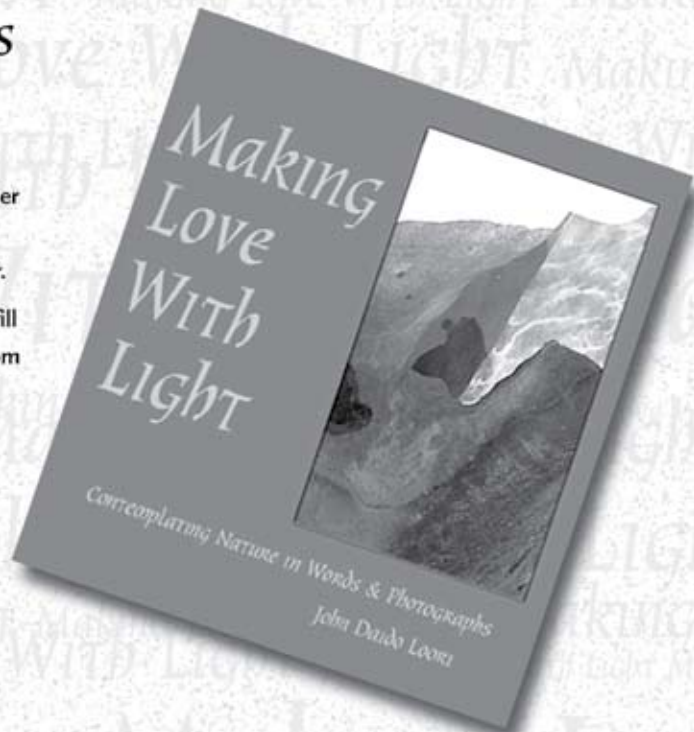
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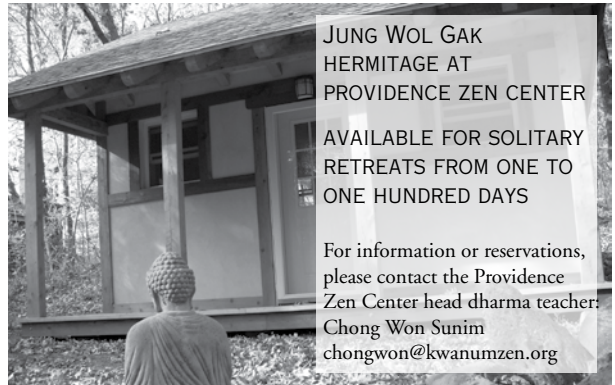
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