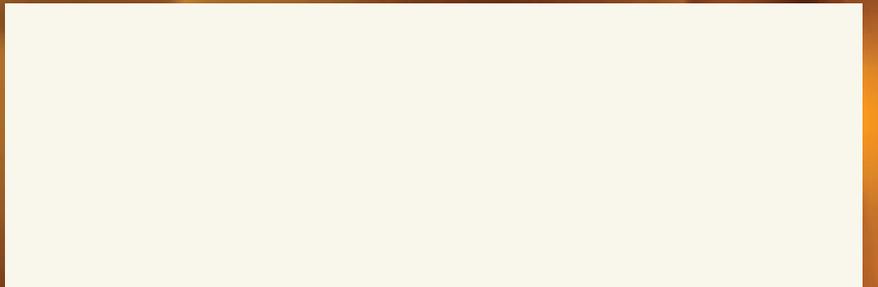


Primary Point



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Winter Kyol Che 2012/13

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The Kwan Um School of Zen supports the worldwide teaching schedule of the Zen Masters and Ji Do Poep Sas, 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 31. The circulation is 2,400 copies.

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We would like to correct a misspelling from the last issue of Primary Point. The sketches of India and Nepal on pages 9 and 10 were done by Jane L. Wechsler.

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Cover: *Buddha's Hand, Kil Sang Sa Temple, South Korea, by Kateřina Grofová.*

Ko Bong's Try Mind

Zen Master Seung Sahn



Portrait of Ko Bong Sunim: Kwan Um School of Zen Archives

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Zen Master Ko Bong (1890–1962) was one of the greatest teachers of his time. He was renowned for refusing to teach monks, considering them too lazy and arrogant to be Zen students. He was also very well known for his unconventional behavior.

Ko Bong Sunim didn't like chanting. He only did sitting meditation, no matter what. That was his practice. One time, as a young monk, he was staying in a small mountain temple. The abbot was away for a few days, so Ko Bong Sunim was the only one around. One morning an old woman climbed the steep road to the temple carrying fruit and a bag of rice on her back. When she reached the main Buddha Hall, she found Ko Bong Sunim seated alone in meditation.

"Oh, Sunim, I am sorry to bother you," she said. "I have just climbed this mountain to offer these things to the Buddha. My family is having a lot of problems, and I want someone to chant to the Buddha for them. Can you please help me?"

Ko Bong Sunim looked up. Her face was very sad and very sincere. "Of course," he said. "I'd be happy to chant for you. No problem." Then he took the bag of rice off her back and they went to the kitchen to prepare the food offering. As they started to wash the fruit he said to her, "I don't know how to cook rice. You cook the rice, and I'll go start chanting."

"Yes, Sunim. Thank you very much."

Ko Bong Sunim returned to his room to put on his formal robes. But, because he never chanted, he didn't know any Buddhist chants. So, he dug out an old Taoist sutra from among his things and brought it back to the Buddha Hall. Then he picked up the moktak and started hitting it while reading out of the Taoist book. Usually it's appropriate to do certain chants for different occasions, like the *Thousand Eyes and Hands Sutra*, but Ko Bong Sunim didn't know about this. He only banged the moktak and chanted the Taoist sutra out loud, right from the book. After an hour or so of this, he finished.

The old woman was very, very happy. "Oh, thank you, Sunim. You are very kind. I feel much better now!" She left the temple. As she was walking down the mountain road, she passed the abbot, who was returning to the temple. "Hello, Mrs. Lee, are you coming from the temple?"

"Yes," she said. "There are many problems in my family right now, so I went up to pray to the Buddha. Ko Bong Sunim helped me."

"Oh, that's too bad," the abbot said.

"Oh, why?"

"Because Ko Bong Sunim doesn't know how to do any chanting. Maybe someone else could . . ."

"No, no," she said. "He did *very* well. He helped me very much!"

The abbot looked at her. "How do you know how well he did? These are very special chants! Ko Bong Sunim doesn't know how to do them—he doesn't know chanting."

"Yes, I understand." This woman used to be a nun, so

she was quite familiar with all the various chants. She knew that Ko Bong Sunim was only chanting a Taoist sutra. “What is correct chanting? He did it very well. He only chanted one hundred percent. Words are not important. The only important thing is how you keep your mind. He had only try mind—only do it.”

“Oh, yes, of course,” the abbot said. “I suppose mind is very important.” They said good-bye and went their separate ways. When the abbot reached the temple, he found Ko Bong Sunim, seated in meditation. “Did you just chant for Mrs. Lee?”

“Yes.”

“But you don’t know anything about chanting.”

“That’s right,” Ko Bong Sunim said. “I don’t know anything about chanting. So I just chanted.”

“Then what kind of chants did you do?” the abbot asked.

“I used an old Taoist book.”

The abbot walked away, scratching his head.



This is a very interesting try-mind story. It means, from moment to moment, only “do it.” Only keep a try mind, only one mind: do-it mind. When chanting, sitting or bowing, only do it. Practicing will not help if you are attached to your thinking, if your mind is moving. Taoist chanting, Confucian chanting, Christian chanting, Buddhist chanting: it doesn’t matter. Even chanting, “Coca-Cola, Coca-Cola, Coca-Cola . . .” can be just as good if you keep a clear mind. But, if you don’t keep a clear mind, even Buddha cannot help you. The most important thing is, only *do* it. When you only do something one hundred percent, then there is no subject, no object. There’s no inside or outside. Inside and outside are already one. That means you and the whole universe are one and never separate.

The Bible says, “Be still, and know that I am God.” When you are still, then you don’t make anything, and you are always connected to God. Being still means keeping a still mind, even if your body is moving or you are doing some activity. Then there’s no subject, no object—a mind of complete stillness. That’s the Buddha’s complete stillness mind. When sitting, be still. When chanting, be still. When bowing, eating, talking, walking, reading or driving, only be still. This is keeping a not-moving mind, which is only do-it mind. We call that try mind.

Editor’s note: We asked Zen Master Bon Shim to choose an article by Zen Master Seung Sahn and to comment on what led her to choose this article. Here is her response:

“Try, try for 10,000 years”—I find this teaching of Zen Master Seung Sahn most essential and compassionate, as every being wants to be happy and get out of suffering, and the only way to achieve this is to try, never giving up.

I use this teaching very often—people have difficult times and, having no patience, they become discouraged and sad very quickly, but the only way for things to get better is to keep trying. If we don’t put enough effort, we cannot expect results.

People are often not satisfied with themselves, so the only way to develop is to keep trying. It also happens frequently that we come back from retreats with a mind clear like space, but soon there are lots of clouds, so again try, try.

Some other time, we decide to make this kind of mistake never again, or we become aware of a bad habit and we really want to get rid of it, but just one moment of not paying attention and we have it back, so only keep trying, patiently.

This is incredible teaching, simple and so helpful—just keep trying and be mindful until your last breath.

The true meaning of this is to never stop. Even if we think “I have already got something,” then try even harder. Practicing this way, our everyday life is to continue, never being deceived by anything—and keep trying, never losing our original job.

Trying mind is also a true spirit of a bodhisattva’s great vow, to never enter nirvana until all sentient beings are liberated. It is not an easy task to just go back to zero or to don’t-know over and over; the only way to do that is to keep trying.

Trying mind is already enlightened mind. If we try then we learn how to stay on this path of only going straight, don’t know. ◆

TRANSMISSION CEREMONY FOR *Zen Master Ji Kwang*

On April 27, 2012, Roland Wöhrle-Chon received transmission from Zen Master Wu Bong at Berlin Zen Center and became Zen Master Ji Kwang.



Photo: Silke Plener

DHARMA COMBAT

1.

Zen Master Bon Shim: Good afternoon.

Zen Master Ji Kwang: Good afternoon.

ZMBS: From the three precious jewels—"Buddha, Dharma, Sangha"—which one is shining most brightly?

ZMJK: You already understand.

ZMBS: I am asking you!

ZMJK: You are shining most brightly!

ZMBS: Thank you! I like your answer!

2.

Andrzej Piotrowski JDPSN: Nice to see you in this position. Thank you for your great practice and effort to become a Zen master. But it can make your life a little bit dangerous, because our teaching says that if you meet Buddha, kill him! If you meet a Zen master, kill him! How will you deal with this danger?

ZMJK: You already understand.

Piotrowski PSN: No, you tell me!

ZMJK: How can I help you?

3.

Question: Many years ago in your inka ceremony your answer to one question was that your haircut that time cost 40 deutsche mark.

ZMJK: It was 60 deutsche mark.

Q: Aha! But now in your transmission ceremony, your position is higher, and your haircut is different. Besides this, there is no deutsche mark anymore. So I am confused. How much is your haircut?

ZMJK: You already understand.

Q: But I am asking you!

ZMJK: This haircut cost only 15 euro. I changed hairdressers.

DHARMA SPEECH

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

The nature of dharma is complete. So we hear in the Avatamsaka Sutra.

The nature of dharma is the name for universal nature, which actually has no name, no words, no speech.

The whole universe is made of it. If the nature of dharma is complete, then all this is complete. That means you are complete, and you, you all, me too. We are all complete.

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

Everything that appears is an illusion. So we read in the Diamond Sutra.

All illusion! You, you, you all. Me too. All of us—illusion.

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

Which do you prefer? The Avatamsaka Sutra or the Diamond Sutra? Completeness or illusion? But take care: if you say completeness, this implies directly something incomplete. And if everything is illusion, it cannot be complete anyway. So what is correct?

KATZ!

Many faces in this room. Talking and listening.

Since our mind is usually quite complicated and we think a lot, and since life is quite an awkward thing anyway, I think we experience ourselves rather as incomplete. But it is also no illusion to us. It feels real. We are alive! Life is sometimes intense and magnificent, and sometimes it is difficult and even hurts. There are sorrows, there is grief, there are problems. We have doubts and self-doubts. Everything seems so real.

This is one side but there is another side as well, and we know that one, too: sometimes we experience deep and great peace and great love. There is a feeling of freedom

and completeness. Sometimes we wake up. This is the other side.

And I think I may be right to reckon that our life oscillates between these two poles. Maybe not with a vast amplitude in our safe Western lives—but sometimes really a long way down. We reach high peaks and sometimes fall into deep troughs. Life is laughter and tears. It cannot be avoided. This was a very important experience for me! That life contains all this, and that it is OK: to allow myself to fail, to allow myself to not succeed, that suffering appears, that self-doubts arise. It is OK! Because all great questions and the big doubts are important for our life. We all practice with one question—you all know that: What am I? Is this not the most profound doubt one can have? It is like our tool to advance and to grow and eventually wake up.

Nevertheless, it is related to suffering and we don't like that. Usually we treat our problems like a disease we want to get rid of. Buddha as a young prince had the same questions and doubts like us. It is no surprise that, after having attained enlightenment, the very first thing he realized and declared was: Life is suffering. We suffer, because we hold on to things that are changing and passing, which return to emptiness even though we love them so much and don't want to be without them—even including our individuality, which is so important to us. Everything seems to lead into nothingness. How can we bear this?

We all have our themes. I have my theme as well. The question that always profoundly shakes me is: "Where has everything gone?" The wonderful moments, the people we once felt connected with, the great feelings, people who have died. Where has it all gone?

I am sure many of us have the same questions. The fact that all is impermanent is the basic realization of Buddhism.

But we continue to practice. We go one step further. This is crucial.

One sutra, which you all know by heart, says: "The Bodhisattva depends on Prajna Paramita and the mind is no hindrance." This points to a possible solution: Prajna Paramita, which gives insight into the completeness of the universe and into the completeness of our true nature—the highest form of wisdom. If we wake up, the consequence is a mind that has no hindrance and that is no hindrance. That is our Zen practice!

Maybe you are asking yourself now: this guy Roland here in front of

us—has he attained that? And then you realize that this cannot possibly be true. Sometimes he is short-tempered, and angry, and he also finds mistakes and is vulnerable and sometimes maybe hurtful as well. Highly visible: hindrances in mind!

Let me tell you three stories that are important in this context and have had a strong impact on me.

The first story took place in 1993 to 1994 in Korea, in winter, at Shin Won Sa temple. I participated in the Kyol Che there, and Namhee and Arne were also among the participants. Zen Master Seung Sahn visited us five times in total, including at the beginning and the end to give dharma talks. Each time he came and saw me, he yelled at me and said, "Don't check!" The first time I thought, "Well, what is this? What does he mean?" I didn't realize that this was checking too. The next time he came I had done a lot of bows and greeted him and opened the door for him. He saw all of us, he saw me, he looked at me and said, "Don't check!" I felt so ashamed in front of the others. We are holding by checking and through our likes and dislikes, and our mind becomes a hindrance. In any case, that time in Shin Won Sa I had a sharp-eyed teacher who pestered me vociferously for three months to not check, to not hold, to do nothing. I am not sure whether this has left a strong effect. But in any case I am not bothered so much any more when life tosses me to and fro. Somehow I always get back on my feet.

The second story took place in Korea as well. I was in hospital. I had had a nervous breakdown. Later it turned out that everything was not half as bad as it seemed, but I was in hospital nevertheless. The telephone rang. I picked up the phone. It was Zen Master Seung Sahn: "What's happening?"

"Yeah, well, I don't feel so well and . . . but I also attained



Photo: Silke Plener

some great experiences and insights! I found out that everything is an illusion. Zen, too, is a construct and an illusion we need to overcome. We have to throw it all away! This whole Zen world, too!”

He replied, “Ohhh, now you are very, very clever. Now it is important that you become completely stupid. Very important! You must become a stonehead!”

So, in a deep crisis I had a sharp-eyed teacher who told me not to rely on my knowledge but to think with my belly instead. I am not sure whether this has had such a big impact, but I was released from the hospital soon after, and after all I realize one thing: since then I haven’t had such clever thoughts any more.

The third incident took place about three weeks ago in Paris. We had a kind of commune, a teacher’s commune. Three days, ten teachers: practice, eat, drink, talk. We did everything on our own: cook, do the dishes, dry them. I probably set the table fifteen times. One time Zen Master Wu Bong joined me. We were setting the table: plates, spoons, forks. Zen Master Bon Shim had cooked lasagne. So I asked Zen Master Wu Bong, “Do you think we should put kimchi on the table, accompanying this Italian dish, lasagne? (Kimchi is this Korean pickled, spicy cabbage.) He replied, “Doesn’t matter, the main thing is that the kimchi is in my belly after the meal!” I think this was the best sentence during the whole meeting. I have a sharp-eyed teacher who taught me again and again to believe in myself and to just do it.

These three stories have one common point. And this is the biggest treasure I have ever found in my life, which has saved my life, and is still saving my life up to this very moment. It is the most important gift from my teachers, which I and every one of you—all of us—already always possess.

This treasure is identical with the nature of this whole universe. [*Hits the table with the stick.*] That point. If we keep this mind [*hits the table with the stick*] that doesn’t hold anything—“Don’t know!” [*hits the table with the stick*] then this moment becomes complete, [*hits the table with the stick*] then we are complete. Then everything is complete. And then it is not difficult to understand what is necessary to do and how we can help this world.

It is a weird thing: despite having always already ar-



Photo: Silke Plener

rived, already having everything, the truth lying in front of us, we are nevertheless still always on our way, looking for something that we are missing. At the same time everything is here. We have to wake up. This is our Zen practice. And it is important to have companions. To be a Zen master, a Zen teacher, for me means to be a companion.

Last but not least, I have a gift for you: once a bright monk in Korea asked me, “Which is more important, student or teacher?”

So I ask you: Which is more important, student or teacher?

[*Various answers come from the audience: “teacher,” “student.”*]

If you say student, I will hit you thirty times!

[*More answers from the audience; one student hits the floor.*]

Only that?

[*The student hits the floor again.*]

Good, not so bad.

If you say teacher, I will hit you thirty times, too. If you say both, then I will hit you 60 times! And if you say neither, then I hit you 120 times! One day, find a good answer. Next time.

Can you see that?

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

Can you hear that?

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

Complete.

Can you see that?

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

Can you hear that?

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

Great illusion.

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

Don’t hold anything. Experience the truth in every moment. And help this world. How?

KATZ!

How are you? Now let us eat, dance, and sing. ♦

Please Become Buddha: The Whole World Is a Single Flower Conference 2011 Formal Ceremony

The following talks were given at Dae Sung Sokka Sa, in Lumbini, Nepal, on October 25, 2011, at the Whole World Is a Single Flower conference formal ceremony. The introductory talk was given by the abbot of Dae Sung Sokka Sa, Poep Shin Sunim, followed by a keynote speech by Zen Master Dae Kwang, and finally a formal dharma talk by Seol Jeong Sunim. The first and third talks were given in Korean and translated by Hye Tong Sunim JDPS.

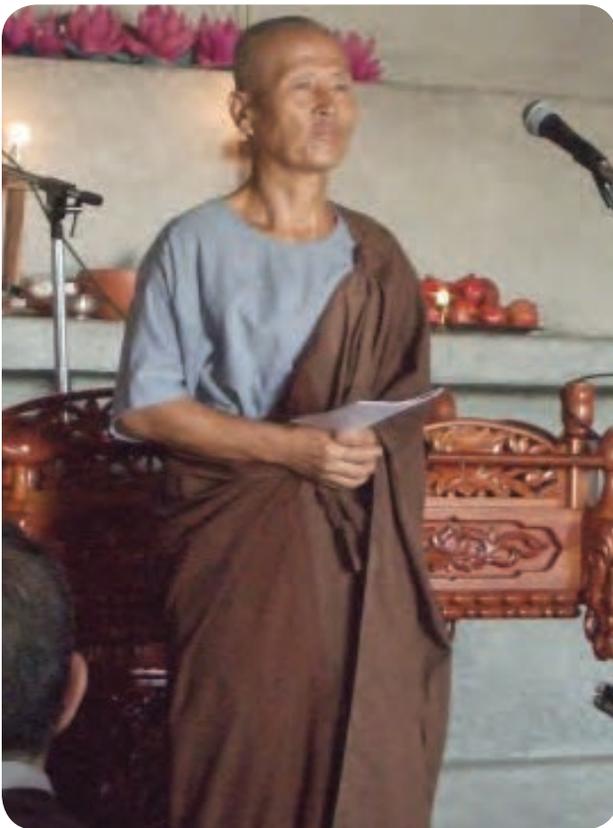


Photo: Renee Dumont

Poep Shin Sunim

Hello everyone. It is such an honor to have all of you here today from all over the world for this Whole World Is a Single Flower conference, especially Su Dok Sa Temple's *bang jang* [spiritual head], Seol Jeong *Kun* [Great] Sunim, as well as all the great Zen masters here. Special thanks to Mu Sang Sa Temple's *ju ji* [abbot], Dae Jin Sunim, for his help organizing this event. I am honored to be able to host everyone for this great conference that takes place only every three years.

As you may know, this temple was established by Zen Master Do Mun, who was a disciple of Zen Master Yong Seong. You can see his portrait on your right over there. In 1995 he got permission from the Nepalese government to establish this temple in Lumbini, so it is thanks to him that we can actually have this conference here now. Further, having met the government's rigorous requirements, our temple has permission to operate for the next 99 years.

For the last ten years my teacher has charged me with running this temple. The distinctive architecture of our temple was based on that of Hwang Ryong Sa Temple in the city of Kyong Ju, Korea. That temple was built during the Silla Dynasty (57 BCE–935 CE),

a time when Buddhism flourished in Korea.

I understand that many things here must be uncomfortable or frustrating for you, such as the bathrooms. But since you came here with a great vow to follow Buddha's teaching, I hope you have a great time and a good conference. I also appreciate everyone making an effort to attend this ceremony. Thank you. ❖

Zen Master Dae Kwang



Photo: Adam Dubroka

Our school's "Whole World Is a Single Flower" conference occurs every three years. Starting in 1987 at Su Dok Sa Temple in Korea, it has convened in many different locations around the world. This year, we are meeting in India, the home of the Buddha. Zen Master Seung Sahn had many reasons for creating this kind of international conference for our school, reasons which relate directly to our practice.

First, it brings together members of our school from all over the world so we can connect with each other as a worldwide school. Zen Master Seung Sahn was a ge-

nus at teaching people of many different countries and cultures. If he had started only one thing here, another there, and over there, it wouldn't have much effect. But by bringing them all together, it can really have some force. Every culture has its own ideas and style, but if we can let go of those ideas and come together, then it's possible to have some effect on the world.

Also, as you've experienced during the conference over the last couple of weeks, we come together in the context of practice. So, it isn't just a talk-talk-talk conference, it's a practice-together conference.

Another interesting aspect of these conferences is they always involve a trip. Maybe the trip is to Korea. Maybe the trip is to China. Maybe the trip is to Malaysia, or now India. One time the trip was even to the United States. But there is a teaching reason behind the trip:

As you probably know, right after the Second World War, Man Gong Sunim wrote a famous calligraphy: "The whole world is a single flower." The concept of "the whole world is a single flower" is actually a description of our original mind. Our true self *is* "the whole world is a single flower." But as you have all experienced, human beings have a tendency to attach to their opinions. Any time you attach to your opinion, your mind becomes narrow. Because of this, Zen Master Seung Sahn always taught us to put down our opinion, our condition and our situation; let it rest! When you put down your opinion, your condition and your situation, then the whole world becomes a single flower, because you have let go of your narrow, small mind. At that moment we can connect to the world around us and help it.

So, why are we going on this trip? Zen Master Seung Sahn once said to me, "It's so people can see what the world is really like." As you know, people mostly live in a small little bubble. Maybe they live in a monk or nun bubble. Or maybe they live in an American bubble, or a German bubble, or maybe even an Indian bubble. So, by traveling around the world for these conferences, we widen our minds by experiencing the world outside of our bubble. Everyone on this trip has said to me, "India is like this, like this, like this—it's *so* different than conditions in my country!" When you have that experience, your mind is already a little wider. Also, you experience the suffering of the world.

For many of us, the bubble we live in is like the Buddha's palace. When the Buddha was born his father created a small bubble, a palace, for him to live in so he wouldn't experience the suffering of the world. But the Buddha was very smart; he knew there was some-

thing outside the bubble. It's just that at first he didn't know what *it* was, what was outside the bubble. Later he had his servant take him outside the bubble so he could see the world. He then saw a sick person, an old person, and a dead body. This direct experience hit him hard—*boom!* He then knew directly that his “bubble life” was not the answer to the great question of life and death. Inside of him at that time there was only a big question: What am I? What is a human being? Where does all this suffering come from?

Buddha only taught one thing: he taught about suffering and the relief of suffering. All the rest is just frosting on the cake. So, when we travel around we also see suffering; our trip is a kind of “coming out of the palace.” Zen Master Seung Sahn wanted us to directly have that experience.

Suffering, as the Buddha taught, is created by our like and dislike mind, by our opposites thinking. This is our desire for a good situation, for a “bubble.” When Buddha left home he was actually leaving behind his opposites thinking and his bubble. Also, our practice, moment to moment, is a leaving home, because our home—our palace, our bubble—is made by our opposites thinking.

You don't have to be a monk or a nun to leave home. What we wear is just a costume, a leaving-home costume. But any human being at this moment can let go of their opposites thinking. When you leave your opposites thinking behind, that's true “leaving home.”

One time the monks of Hyang Bong Zen Center sent a letter to Man Gong Sunim. In the letter they said, “On December 8, Buddha saw a star and got enlightenment. What does this mean?” Man Gong Sunim wrote back and said, “Buddha saw a star and said he got enlightenment. That is sand falling into the eyes.” This statement leads to three very interesting questions:

First, Buddha saw a star and got enlightenment. What does this mean?

Second, what kind of enlightenment did Shakyamuni Buddha get?

And third, Man Gong Sunim said, “Buddha saw a star and said he got enlightenment. That's sand falling in the eyes.” What does sand falling in the eyes mean?

If you can answer these three questions then you, too, become Buddha. And even better than that, you get to be the teacher of Buddha. That's a big job, so be careful.

Finally, I want to thank you all who have attended this conference. It isn't easy, so thank you for your efforts. Let's all practice together so our minds can become clear. Then we can get enlightenment and save our world from suffering. Thank you. ❖

Seol Jeong Sunim

Seong Won Seol Jeong Sunim first came to Su Dok Sa Temple at the tender age of 13, when he left home to become a monk. He went to Hae In Sa Temple's monks' college to study the sutras, and he also attended Seoul National University, where he majored in agriculture. For ten years after that he served as the abbot of Su Dok Sa Temple and later became speaker of the house for the monks' parliament of the Chogye Order. Meanwhile, his Zen practice continued to develop under the guidance of his teacher, the late Won Dam Kun Sunim, and he practiced meditation for several years in various Zen centers throughout Korea. In 2010, he became the guiding teacher for the entire sangha of Hwa Gye Sa Temple—where Zen Master Seung Sahn lived and taught until 2004—and for the Su Dok Sa Temple family of monks and nuns.

His dharma names mean “Relaxed Snow” and “Gentle Pine.” Usually he is always sitting the winter and summer retreats on top of the mountain where Jeong Hye Sa Temple is located. Jeong Hye Sa Temple was the Zen center that Zen Master Man Gong developed and where he lived and passed away. Seol Jeong Sunim follows the tradition of the lineage of Man Gong, Byok Cho, and Won Dam, who all strongly believed that Zen monks should practice farming and working Zen in addition to sitting Zen. Seol Jeong Sunim often will quote the Chinese Zen Master Pai Chang who said: “A day without work is a day without eating.” —Zen Master Dae Jin

I really appreciate that everyone from all over the world made a hard effort to attend this conference. It's especially important that we hold this conference in India where the Buddha was born and taught for all his life.

It makes me very happy that we could have this conference in a Korean temple in India, in Lumbini actually, even though the buildings are not completed yet. I further hope this temple is finished and this great project comes to fruition.

As you already understand, the true meaning of Buddha's teaching is trying to find your true self, and then make world peace, and then help all beings. And now I'd actually like to finish my dharma speech.

Now everyone here in this dharma room is listening to my dharma speech and looking at me. So I ask you, what is it that I'm truly talking to, in this moment? Please don't say “it's my master.” If you say that which is now listening to my dharma speech and looking at me, if you say that is the master, I have a question for you. If you call it “the master,” then is it long or short? Is that big or small? Is it coming or going? What is that?

[1]

Eminent teachers speak this way. This is not Buddha, it's not mind, it's not even a thing. So then what is this truly? If you didn't find the answer, please look at this floor. Do you see? Do you hear? If you have no doubt at all about what is said, you are actually already beyond life and death and will get happiness for your whole life. Please let everything just go and just see what it is in front of you. Then you actually attain the great truth. At that moment, your eye is just like the bright moon. At that moment, wherever you go, whoever you meet, you will meet the truth.

The whole single flower is actually the flower of the mind. That means actually the truth-world of this universe. Where is mind? Even though you see, it can't be seen. Even though you hear, it cannot be heard. If you put your mind down, only then can you find it. However, if you try to find it, the more you try the further it goes away. It used to be said that trying to find mind is compared to cultivating a farm. We always have to make an effort for our mind to be clear and beautiful and kind. Our mind is easily controlled by desire, anger and ignorance, and also it is always infested with the insects of evil. If you don't try to clear your mind like cultivating a farm, it always happens that the three evils of desire, anger and ignorance will control your mind instead.

On this trip your clothes and your body have probably gotten dirty very often. It is important to clean your clothes and your body, but the more important thing is to clean your mind. What is the mind, really? It's just like a clear mirror. It's just like the lake that reflects everything in the world—stars, moon, trees. It just reflects everything as it is. That's all. No hindrance, no thinking there. That could be actually your original mind, but now I ask you, are you hindered even by this speech? If you are hindered then you have to practice harder. Without practicing Zen, you never reach the point. Anybody can practice Zen, and actually practice sincerely, and anyone can attain the result.

As you know, Buddha taught for about 45 years after he got enlightenment. Likewise, Zen Master Seung Sahn devoted his whole life to teach just what the mind is, the same as what Buddha taught. Where is the life? Where is the true, peaceful life? You wish only to have freedom forever and just be happy for your whole life. We call that, in Buddhism, true peace and getting enlightenment. We call this nirvana, that you have no hindrance and just have peace and just get true pleasure for your life. And that is what Buddha tried to find out.

So I ask you, what is the purpose of your life? If you want true freedom, true peace, true happiness,

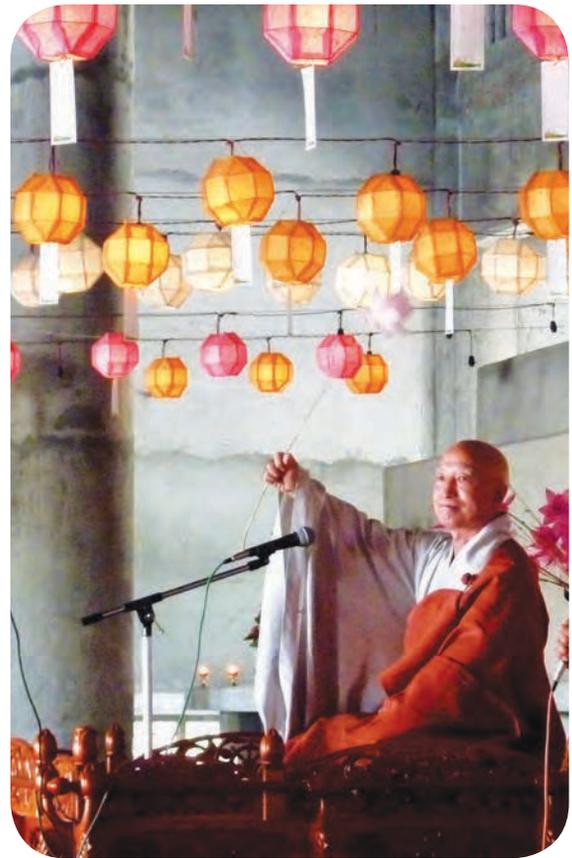


Photo: Francis Lau

then you already know the answer: practice. Once you attain the true nirvana, then you can be truly compassionate. The most important thing in life is how you can help others. You can give things like money, housing or material things to other people and make them happy. That's actually what some great people can do in this world. It's because actually giving and offering—helping—is the most precious thing in a human's life. An even more precious offering is the truth that Buddha taught all beings. Not everyone can offer this teaching—only those who practice hard and discover their true self are able to offer their teaching to all beings. That offering is actually the true path of your life. That's actually what all human beings are supposed to attain and carry on in their life. And practice is the way to attain that.

I really hope that you practice Zen hard, just like you have been doing in your life, find your true self, and help all beings. Please become Buddha.

Let's have a round of applause for the abbot of this Dae Sung Sokka Sa Temple. I hope that this temple is completed as soon as possible, so that if there is another event like this we can have better facilities. Let's all clap our hands again for this great abbot. ♦

There's Got to Be a Horse in There Somewhere!

Zen Master Soeng Hyang

This dharma talk was given in Lumbini, Nepal, during the Whole World Is a Single Flower tour in October 2011.

We talk in our teaching about great faith, great courage, great question. To be born takes a lot of faith—if you have a bodhisattva vow, you're born because you want to help. You're born because you want to develop your practice and also teach other people how to practice, very simply put. Why else be born?

I've been reading a book by an Indian author on this trip, and there's a joke in the book. The joke was very interesting. There was a man that had two children—two sons. One son was always negative. He didn't like anything; he was very hard to please. The other son was always happy, very optimistic, very helpful. It was the time for Diwali [the festival of lights], and he needed to get gifts for his two sons. For his unhappy son, to make him happy, he got a beautiful carpentry set, a magnificent telescope and a brand new bicycle. The son said, "I don't do carpentry; I don't want that carpentry set. This is not the highest class telescope; I don't want this telescope. And I don't like that bicycle." The father was not surprised.

He had also given a present to his happy son, his giving son, his kind son, his anything-goes son. For him, he piled about two tons of horse shit in his bedroom. So, after seeing his first son disappointed with his presents, he went into his second son's bedroom. In the bedroom was his son with a shovel, and he was just throwing the shit all over the room, just digging and digging and digging in this horse shit. The father said, "Son? What are you doing? What are you doing?"

The son said, "Well, all this shit, there's got to be a horse in here somewhere!" That's our faith. There's



Photo: Donald Boudreau

got to be a horse in there somewhere!

When we first sit down to meditate, it's hard to find the horse. We think there's some horse, there's some enlightenment, some kind of gift from this meditation. We quiet our minds. But sometimes it's difficult.

Once while I was doing a solo retreat, I got lost in the woods. It was late afternoon, and it was wintertime, so by 4:30 or 5:00 it was getting dark. It was cold and nobody knew I was out on a walk. There was nobody around. I started to panic. I'm not used to being lost in the woods and it was very scary. The Boy Scout manual says "don't keep going in different directions because

you'll get more disoriented." But I wasn't a Boy Scout, and I started in this direction, this direction, that direction—even though I knew I wasn't supposed to. I was getting more and more lost. I had my mala beads in my hand on this walk and after three minutes, five minutes, seven minutes of getting more and more scared, more and more confused, all of a sudden I looked at my beads. It was like they were strangers! My faith wasn't so strong that day. I said, "Well, nothing else is working. I'll try this. I always just did what Zen Master Seung Sahn told me to do, so I'll try these beads."

So I started doing *shin-myo jang-gu dae-da-ra-ni namo-ra da-na da-ra ya-ya na-mak ar-ya ba-ro-gi-je sae-ba-ra-ya*, and I closed my eyes. And my body just went—and started walking. I still had my eyes closed. We have a saying in the United States, "feet don't fail me now!" My feet were doing clear mind. I kept doing my mantra and my feet were going. No idea! No idea. I was scared

and just wanted to get out of there, so I only followed the feet. And I got to the path! It was not too far away.

As soon as I hit the path, I said, “Boy is *that* a dharma talk! I have to tell people about this!” That wasn’t *me* that found the path, it was *shin-myo jang-gu dae-da-rani*. No idea. Put down the idea. It doesn’t even matter what mantra. *Coca-Cola Coca-Cola Coca-Cola Coca-Cola Coca-Cola* . . . Then, this mind can come to your center, come to your gut. That faith takes time to develop. A lot of shoveling sometimes, a lot of shoveling.

It’s wonderful for each of us that we’re together. Zen Master Seung Sahn gave us a beautiful map, very generous, very wide and open. If he could see this now he’d be so happy. But all the time, it’s up to you. Each one of us. Grab that shovel, shovel that shit. Trust that mantra. Trust it.

Jeff mentioned that we’re traveling in a funny order on this trip. Almost in reverse. At the end of the retreat, we’re at the place of birth. Last time we were at the place of enlightenment—no death. We were also at the place of death. But we went to the enlightenment place also. How do you get enlightenment? How do you do that? That’s exactly the point. What *is* this? What *is* enlightenment? Having a great question. The enlightenment always comes with the question. If you feel confused, maybe you feel like “I don’t understand. What are they doing? I don’t get this. What is my prac-

tice?” Just stop right there: what is my practice? All you have to do is breathe out “don’t know.” Don’t know.

We are very blessed with having had a teacher who emphasized more than anything a great question. That question will take you home. Even though it feels like a pile of shit, or it feels confusing. You have the question, and you look at it; not inside, not outside, just be that question. Then: don’t know. Then: [*imitates the chattering of a nearby monkey*] *Eeeeh eeeeh eeeeh eeeh!* Right? *Eeeeh eeeeh eeeeh eeeh!*

So simple!

Yesterday when we came out to get on the bus, there was a big elephant. In the eastern United States where I live, a small town called Pawtucket, Rhode Island, there was an elephant too. Everybody’s favorite zoo exhibit was this elephant, and her name was Fannie. Fannie the elephant—not such a good name, really. She had been there since about 1952 and they were very proud of this elephant.

She was tethered to a 10-foot chain. Ten feet. This huge, magnificent animal, tethered.

In 1996, an animal rights group in Rhode Island started a campaign to liberate Fannie, to get her off that 10-foot chain. She had been in a building on this chain for forty years. The movement picked up speed. It got stronger and the national animal rights movement started to support the Rhode Island animal rights movement. It got bigger. They were talking about it on the talk shows. Big arguments! “Oh! I went to see Fannie with my grandmother when I was five! She’s *always* been here! Fannie belongs in Pawtucket!” And the other side said, “This is a magnificent animal that deserves to be returned to her own species, to have some space to walk, air to breathe. She’s not an exhibit, she’s an elephant.”

The animal rights people won. They came to get her at two o’clock in the morning to avoid a big fight. They put her on a truck and they took her to a large animal preserve in Texas where there were many other elephants. When Fannie was let off the truck she came to the field and saw the other elephants. Then she did something that she had never done in her whole life. She got on her knees and she trumpeted. When elephants are really happy, they throw up their trunk and they trumpet. People were photographing and videoing, witnessing this. They changed her name and they gave her the name of Tara! I’m driving around listening to this on the radio, crying.



Photo: Scott Dumont

Great faith, great question, and what's the correct relationship, function and situation for this elephant? Ten feet of chain, or being with her own species? Yesterday when I saw this elephant, I was tired and I didn't remember where I was. I got back into the bus and looked at the elephant through the window. All of a sudden this incredible grief came. I felt so much grief. This was as if my mother had just died, my daughter had just died. I was embarrassed a little bit because I was standing on the bus and everybody's laughing. I could have checked myself and said "Oh, you shouldn't feel that way! Come on, get with it! Happy time, we're on the bus!" But I just let myself go into it.

I just breathed into that grief, and then of course I felt more grief. Through the window there was a little baby and the baby's brother and the mother doing something with the drums and the harmonium. There was an old man next to them with a little tambourine. They're in the dirt. The baby wasn't walking yet and it was putting dirt in its mouth and rolling around. The grief was growing and I felt embarrassed and I asked, "Who feels embarrassed? Just go with it. Don't make 'I feel embarrassed.' *What* is this? *What* is this? It's OK to have a cry. Why not? That's how great love and great sadness come together.

That takes courage. That's not easy. You know that. It's not easy to feel that grief, to enter that grief, allow the grief to teach you. Then what do you do? Do you let that elephant keep picking up the rupees and the apples that are offered to it? Maybe, maybe, just an idea, maybe if we just bowed every time we saw that elephant rather than giving it apples and money, the man would get a different elephant. "Nobody cares about this elephant!" I don't know, but somehow we have to find correct relationship to this begging and to this pain and to this sorrow.

How can we help? Sometimes I check. "I'll go home and join a big animal rights group! I'll go home and make sure I send money to that orphanage that we were at yesterday; I'll pledge to that and I'll pledge to this."

But then I say, "Why don't you just go to more retreats? Do more teaching? That's your job. Just try to help people wake up. Then if they wake up maybe they'll give money to the animal rights group." They will—we all will wake up to compassion and generosity. That's our job.

I have been so moved on this trip. I've been on two buses where the group leaders had people come to the front to talk about themselves and their practice on the PA. These often became informal dharma talks. What dharma talks! Someone said, it's only sharing, but it was more than sharing to me. People were giving these great dharma talks. And I'm like, "Wow! We have some great sangha members in this Kwan Um School of Zen." Incredible that we're all able to have that confidence to give some teaching. A lot of places you never get to give teaching because you're a student. But let's give that teaching and help people.

And then there is death. The question of death is what brought me to practice. I was scared to death of death. Since I was little I thought I would jump off a cliff and go into an abyss. That's what I thought death is. You jump off a cliff and then you fall forever. I had that

image. I must have had a difficult death before. I don't know. What is death? Even the Buddha died, ate some rotten meat and died. The fact is, it's all impermanent. We have to hurry up. Hurry up. Try, try try—hurry up!

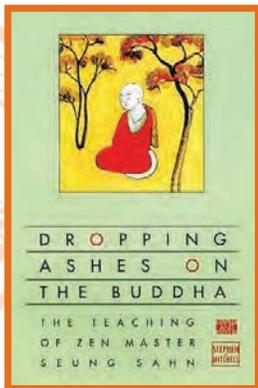
When we'd go to Korea—Dae Bong Sunim must have heard it a billion times—Zen Master Seung Sahn would say, "*Palli palli! Kapsida!* Hurry up! Let's go!" But it's also that way with our practice. Hurry up, let's go! I very much encourage all of us to continue to find the path. Find the way that can get us to really start, to light that match. I encourage you to do long retreats. Come to Kyol Che. Do long solo retreats. It's not easy, but you must come to Kyol Che. You must take three weeks out of your life and do a solo retreat. Take a hundred days out of your life and do a solo retreat. You can do it. You can do it.

Thank you. ♦



Photo: Allan Matthews

A FRESH APPROACH TO ZEN



The Teachings of Zen Master Man Gong. Translated and edited by Zen Master Dae Kwang, Hye Tong Sunim, and Kathy Park. Zen Master Man Gong (1872-1946) received transmission from Zen Master Kyong Ho, and is one of the truly towering figures in modern Korean Zen. He and his students played a central role in re-establishing the Buddhist tradition in Korea after centuries of suppression during the Chosan dynasty. Zen Master Man Gong was the grand teacher of Zen Master Seung Sahn. 56 pages. *Kwan Um School of Zen. ISBN 962861015-5. \$10.00*

Don't-Know Mind: The Spirit of Korean Zen. Zen Master Wu Kwang uses stories about Korean Zen Masters from Ma-tsu to Seung Sahn to present Zen teaching applicable to anyone's life. 128 pages. *Shambhala. ISBN 1-59030-110-2. \$14.95*

One Hundred Days of Solitude. The story of Zen Master Bon Yeon's solo retreat is threaded through with Zen teaching and striking insights into the human mind when left to its own devices. 144 pages. *Wisdom Publications. ISBN 0-86-171538-1. \$14.95*

Dropping Ashes on the Buddha: The Teaching of Zen Master Seung Sahn. Compiled and edited by Stephen Mitchell. A delightful, irreverent, and often hilarious record of interactions with Western students. 244 pages. *Grove Press. ISBN 0-8021-3052-6. \$14.00*

Wanting Enlightenment is a Big Mistake: Teachings of Zen Master Seung Sahn. Compiled and edited by Hyon Gak Sunim JDPS. Foreword by Jon Kabat-Zinn. 199 pages. *Shambhala, 2006. ISBN 1-59030-340-7. \$15.95*

Only Don't Know: Teaching Letters of Zen Master Seung Sahn. Issues of work, relationships, and suffering are discussed as they relate to meditation practice. 230 pages. *Shambhala, 1999. ISBN 1-57062-432-1. \$16.95*

A Gathering of Spirit: Women Teaching in American Buddhism. Edited by Ellen Sidor. Talks and discussions from three landmark conferences at Providence Zen Center. 156 pages. *Primary Point Press, Third Edition 1992. ISBN 0-942795-05-9. \$11.95*

Elegant Failure: A Guide to Zen Koans. Drawing on over 30 years of practice and teaching, Zen Master Wu Kwang has selected 22 cases from *The Blue Cliff Record* and *Wu-men-kuan* that he finds deeply meaningful and helpful for meditation practice. In *Elegant Failure*, he provides a wealth of background information and personal anecdotes for each koan that help illuminate its meaning without detracting from its paradoxical nature. 256 pages. *Rodmell Press, 2010. ISBN 1-93048-525-5. \$16.95.*

Compass of Zen. Zen Master Seung Sahn. Compiled and edited by Hyon Gak Sunim JDPS. Simple, clear, and often hilarious presentation of the essential teachings of the main Buddhist traditions—culminating in Zen—by one of the most beloved Zen Masters of our time. 394 pages. *Shambhala, 1997. ISBN 1-57062-329-5. \$24.95*

Ten Gates: The Kong-an Teaching of Zen Master Seung Sahn. Zen Master Seung Sahn. Presents kong-an practice in action, through real interactions between the beloved Korean Zen Master and his students as they work via letters. 152 pages. *Shambhala, 2007. ISBN 978-1-59030-417-4. \$14.95*

Open Mouth Already a Mistake: Talks by Zen Master Wu Kwang. Teaching of a Zen Master who is also a husband, father, practicing Gestalt therapist and musician. 238 pages. *Primary Point Press, 1997. ISBN 0-942795-08-3. \$18.95*

The Whole World is a Single Flower: 365 Kong-ans for Everyday Life. Zen Master Seung Sahn. The first kong-an collection to appear in many years; Christian, Taoist, and Buddhist sources. 267 pages. *Tuttle, 1993. ISBN 0-8048-1782-0. \$22.95*

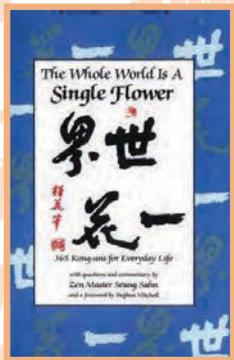
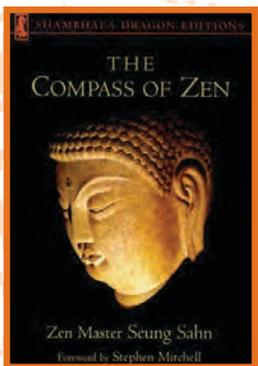
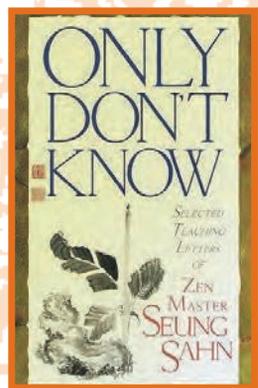
Wake Up! On the Road with a Zen Master. An entertaining documentary that captures Zen Master Seung Sahn's energy and presents the core of his teaching. 54 minutes. *Primary Point Press, 1992. VHS: ISBN 0-942795-07-5. \$30.00 DVD: ISBN 0-942795-14-8. \$30.00*

Chanting Instructional CD. The morning and evening bell chants, daily chants, plus special chanting. If you're ordering this CD to learn the chants, we suggest that you also order a copy of the chanting book if you don't already have one. *Primary Point Press ISBN 0-942795-13-X. \$10.00. Chanting book: \$12.00.*

The Whole World is a Single Flower: 365 Kong-ans for Everyday Life. Zen Master Seung Sahn. CD-ROM version for Mac and PC. Audio recordings of Zen Master Seung Sahn's commentaries together with the full text of the kong-an collection. 2 discs. *Primary Point Press, 2006. ISBN 0-942795-15-6. \$30.00*

Zen Buddhist Chanting CD. Chanting by Korean monk Hye Tong Sunim. Includes Thousand Eyes and Hands Sutra, Kwan Seum Bosal chanting, Sashi Maji chanting, Homage to the Three Jewels, The Four Mantras, and an extended version of Kwan Seum Bosal chanting. *Primary Point Press ISBN 0-942795-16-4. \$15.00*

Perceive World Sound CD. Historic recording with Zen Master Seung Sahn of the morning and evening bell chants and the daily chants done at Kwan Um School Zen Centers. *Primary Point Press ISBN 0-942795-12-1. \$15.00*



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The blue mountain of many ridges is the Buddha's home.
The vast ocean of many waves is the palace of stillness.
Be with all things without hindrance.

17

The Human Route

Coming empty-handed, going empty-handed – that is human.

When you are born, where do you come from?

When you die, where do you go?

Life is like a floating cloud which appears.

Death is like a floating cloud which disappears.

The floating cloud itself originally does not exist.

Life and death, coming and going, are also like that.

But there is one thing which always remains clear.

It is pure and clear, not depending on life and death.

Then what is the one pure and clear thing?



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ZEN IN A WILD COUNTRY SOLO WILDERNESS MEDITATION



Anne Rudloe

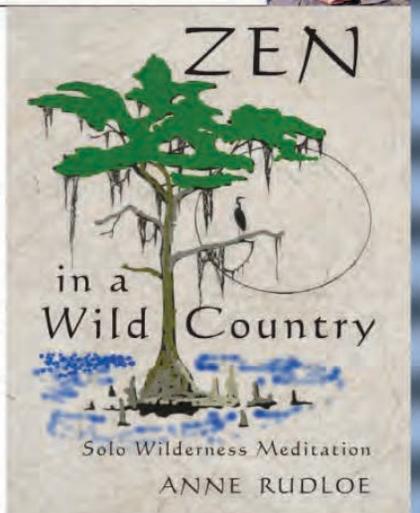
PRAISE FOR Anne's last Zen book, *Butterflies on a Sea Wind: Beginning Zen*

Writing with a haunting beautiful appreciation of the natural world...Rudloe reveals her maturing depth...has merit for anyone on any stage of the Zen path...can also articulate ineffable mysteries with easy grace. *Publishers Weekly*

ZEN IN A WILD COUNTRY takes the reader deeper into this spiritual path with descriptions of solo wilderness retreats, long monastic retreats and a marine ecologist's Zen of sharks, sea turtles, and starfish that share an ocean practice space.

Anne received Inka, permission to teach Zen, from the Kwan Um School of Zen, and holds a doctorate in Marine Ecology.

Her writing has also appeared in *National Geographic Magazine*, *Smithsonian Magazine* and many other national publications.



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Ten Thousand Demons and Ten Thousand Buddhas

Zen Master Wu Bong

This dharma talk was given in Lumbini, Nepal, during the Whole World Is a Single Flower conference in October 2011.

18]

Years ago, in 1973, Zen Master Seung Sahn asked me to do a 100-day retreat. That was kind of a big thing. I had never done anything longer than one week in my life in terms of retreats. It was kind of like jumping into a swimming pool without having a swimming lesson. Just to make it more interesting, he told me, “One of three things will happen. Either you will die—that’s the worst thing that can happen. Or you become crazy. Maybe that’s not so bad. Or, you get your wish!”

So I said, “Oh? It’s like some kind of magic? I can have a wish and I get my wish?”

He said, “Yes, you get your wish. Practice means you can get anything.”

I said, “OK, that sounds good.” So I went to do the retreat.

During the retreat, many things were happening. Actually, looking back on it, I clearly got the second thing out of three. I think if there are any psychologists here they would certainly say it was pretty psychotic if I told them about my experiences at that time. Then the middle of the retreat came, which is actually—I understand much better about these things now—is the worst time. The worst time. I was completely bonkers by then. This was a solo retreat, so no contact with anybody, no smart phones in those days, no computer, no internet, no newspapers, no radio, no television. I had a window in the little retreat house and the window looked toward a temple that was a little bit

below. What I did, just so I wouldn’t be tempted to go and look at the people and so on, I covered up the window. So I was kind of cut off from everything.

But in the middle of the retreat, I got a letter. Somebody slipped a letter under the door. I opened it, and it was a letter from Zen Master Seung Sahn. He sent me a poem.

The beginning was very nice. It said:

Great man goes on a hundred-day retreat. (I thought, OK, so far very good!)

Then he continued:

He makes ten thousand demons and ten thousand Buddhas.

I thought wow, he really understands what this retreat is about. Because I saw so many really crazy things for most of the time, I was just terrified. It was so strange, what was happening. It was scary.

And then it went on, and at the end he asked me a kong-an. He ended this thing with the “dropping ashes on the Buddha” kong-an.

So I was thinking about this today because I wanted to talk a little bit about practice and encourage people to do as much

formal practice as possible. As Zen students, we understand everything can be our practice, and we try to do that. Especially most of my life I was practicing as a layperson. In fact, all the monks that you see here were laypeople at one point or another. So I understand well. I had a family, I had several businesses. I understand how difficult it is and



how complicated and how messy things can become. In the midst of this, we're supposed to be clear. Sometimes it's not so easy. What I notice, especially with older students who actually sooner or later get some ability to deal with all these complications in life, this idea appears: "Everything's practicing! So no matter what I do I'm already practicing! I don't need retreat. I don't need to go to Providence Zen Center for a one-week retreat. I don't need more kong-ans, I already understand many kong-ans. I got the idea, I don't need kong-an practice, I don't need sitting. Just continue as I'm doing. My family life, that's very high-class practice."

The problem with that is it's really true in a way. This kind of thinking is not bad. Ultimately, that's the ideal, that's the true way. But thinking like that or talking like that and actually really 100 percent *doing* like that is not the same thing. As we say, the tongue has no bone. It is easy to say but very difficult to do.

The reason I told this retreat story is that it was a crucial moment in my own practice. Just like the story we heard about Zen Master Seung Sahn: he went to do this retreat when he was very young, and several times he packed, he was ready to leave, and then he didn't leave. I had exactly same experience. I didn't pack, but several times I decided, "Tomorrow I'm gonna go." But then tomorrow came, and "OK, today I stay, but tomorrow I will leave!"

I remember clearly one incident. There was an airplane flying very low. This is kind of shameful, but I admit to this: I really thought, "Wouldn't it be cool if he just hit this little house, just did enough damage that I would have to leave! And I could leave with a clear conscience! No choice, yah?" But the airplane, I guess he was circling around looking at some views, and then went on and—"well, there's always tomorrow. Tomorrow I will leave."

I did this long practice and, it wasn't right away, I didn't know immediately, but eventually I realized this had completely turned my practice around in some ways. Because I always had many, many obstacles. From the beginning, I liked Zen very much. On an intellectual level, it was great. When I met Seung Sahn Sunim it was like a dream come true. This was the kind of teaching that suited me very well, but I couldn't do Zen practice at all. I wasn't able to practice. So I was in the Zen center, and he used some skillful means in the sense that he was teaching me in a dif-

ferent way, not classical Zen teaching. Not sitting, keeping don't-know, or walking and keeping don't-know, or whatever. I came from Tibetan Buddhism, so he used that and let me practice using some special kinds of practice, which were more yogic in nature, maybe just to keep me going, not to discourage me. I think if I had tried Zen practice the way we teach it nowadays, I wouldn't have lasted very long. But this retreat changed it all.

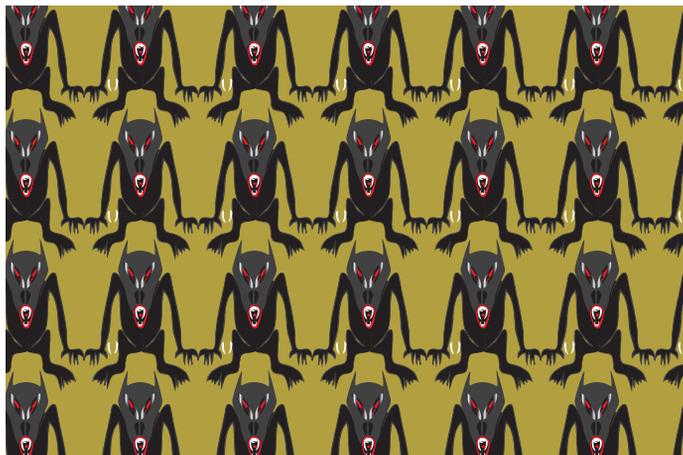
Then, slowly, as I went on, I noticed that practicing is not really a chore. It's not something hard. I can't remember when it happened, but at some point it really happened: practicing was great! It's joyful! It's fun! I discovered what I called the joy of practice. I don't think I'm unique, because I see around me, with practicing people, they have this kind of joy of practice. They may not call it that, may not talk about it, but they have it and they project it. That's why it's so nice, it's so comfortable, it doesn't matter if they're from the Zen tradition or another tradition. When you meet practicing people you can feel this inner joy.

So now the final thing. We talked a little bit about practice, so why is this important? Because this is the Whole World Is A Single Flower conference. I think when Zen Master Man Gong took a flower and dipped it in ink and then made this beautiful calligraphy which has inspired our meetings, this calligraphy, this statement, "The whole world is a single flower," points to something very wonderful. But it's not something that can happen without us taking part in it, without us realizing this single flower inside of ourselves.

So I'd like to quote something that a dear friend of our school used to like to say. His name was Maha Ghosananda. He was a Cambodian monk, a Theravadin monk. I think his statement was very wonderful. He said, "A man is practicing and practicing and practicing and finally gets a peaceful heart. He becomes a peaceful man, a man of peace. Then this man can make his family a peaceful family, a family of peace. All it takes is one person, then the whole family can become a peace family. Then one peace family can make a

peace community. Then a peace community can make the whole city become a peace city. Then the peace city can make the whole country become a peace country. Then this one country can make the world become a peace world." Amen. I'm quoting him, that's not original.

That's all I have to say, thank you very much. ♦



Please Come Back

Zen Master Bon Haeng

This dharma talk was given at Vulture Peak in India, during the Whole World Is a Single Flower tour in October 2011.

The Buddha said if you rub sleeves with somebody walking down the street, you've had an energy interaction with that entity for ten thousand generations. So, not much happens by chance. Even the monkeys—yeah, they're listening to the dharma talk. They're here for two reasons: one, we're very interesting; two, they're hungry.

I heard this story about Zen Master Seung Sahn one time when he was in Los Angeles. Everybody came down to do prostrations in the morning and he quickly stopped everyone. And he said, "Please, please, come over. We must bow." So everybody stood up, including Zen Master Seung Sahn, and went over and stood in front of the teacher's seat. Three prostrations. Then he went over very carefully and picked up this big beetle and carried it out the door and said, "Please come back when you get human body, OK?" Very interesting.

I was flying to Europe and I opened a magazine and it said for every human being on this planet there are more than two million bugs. More than two million bugs for every human being! We've been meeting some of them this trip. But the point is, for us even to get a human body and be able to come here and practice is just an extraordinary gift.

There's a story about a colt. When it was very young they put it in the pasture with the cows. So this horse



Photo: Allan Matthews

grew up all the time thinking, "I'm a cow!" You know, a cow doesn't do much. Eating, shitting, standing. But this horse had lots of energy. It wanted to run and gallop and be a horse. So this horse started to think, "Ugh! I'm not a correct cow! There's something wrong with me! I have a problem!"

Then one day this horse walked down to this little pond and went to get a drink of water. Just as it started to drink it looked in and saw its reflection. Gasp! "Oh! I'm a horse!" Sometimes people do pilgrimages or travel to spiritual places and have a similar experience. "Ah! I am OK just the way I am!" We are already Buddha, just the way we are.

Before studying Zen, I studied yoga. In yoga, they don't have dharma talks. They have what they call *satsang*, which is a Sanskrit word. *Sat* means truth, and *sang*—I didn't know what it meant. As I have been traveling around I've been asking some people. I said to Tin Le, "What is this *satsang*? What is this *sang*?" He said *sang* means "suchness." So, "truth-suchness." Then I also made friends with one of these young children. And I said to him, "What does *satsang* mean?" And he said, "This *sang* means 'sharing.'"

When the Buddha came here to speak, at first he was expounding the eightfold path, the twelve links of dependent origination, the four noble truths. At that time there was much explanation. But when he came to Vulture Peak to give perhaps his most famous sermon—which happens to be the primary point in Zen practice—not so many words. As a matter of fact, when he did use words, he sort of screwed it up because he tried to explain it afterward. As we



Photo: Francis Lau

sit here today, then, our job is not about explanation. Nor is it about understanding. It's always about attaining the same insight that the Buddha attained.

What I wanted to do today was just read the sermon, the short kong-an, that was given.

And as I read it, let your energy come down. Let your mind rest a little bit. We're here today with the Buddha. Maybe as I read it I'll explain just a little bit as I go along, too.

When the Buddha gave this speech, he didn't say, "Now we will sit for ten minutes," and then held up the flower. He only sat down and was still. Then everybody's mind moved. This is a long walk up here. At that time, twenty-five hundred years ago, maybe you walked two miles, three miles, five miles to hear a dharma speech. Then this famous teacher sits down to give a speech and doesn't say anything. "This is no good! I walked all this way! I want something!" Desire mind comes up. But the Buddha didn't say anything; he just sat. Nobody knew how long. One minute passed. Two minutes passed. Five minutes passed.

Then, when Buddha held up a flower, only Mahakashyapa smiled. So this is very interesting, because most people talk about Buddha holding up a flower. But it's not just about holding up the flower. First, he sat. Primary point. Next, the situation was clear for him. There it was. And out of the twelve hundred people—some sto-

ries say five hundred, some say five thousand—only one person smiled. Only one person made this mind-to-mind connection with the Buddha.

Long ago on Yeong Sahn mountain (Grdhrakuta), Shakyamuni Buddha sat down to give a Dharma talk before a vast assembly of followers. After sitting for several minutes in silence, he held up a flower. All were silent. Only Mahakashyapa smiled.

Shakyamuni Buddha said, "I have the all-pervading true Dharma, incomparable Nirvana, exquisite teaching of formless form. Not dependent on words, a special transmission outside the sutras, I give it to Mahakashyapa."

1. Why did Mahakashyapa smile?
2. Why did the Buddha pick up the flower?
3. What kind of Dharma transmission was given to Mahakashyapa?
4. The Buddha gave his Dharma to Mahakashyapa. But what if Mahakashyapa had said, "No, thank you, I already have Dharma. [You already saw the smile.]" If you were the Buddha, what could you do?

Commentary: The flower smiles. The Buddha's face is red.¹

So this teaching is so simple. So direct. And even for the Buddha he had to comment on it at the end. In our school, we call that putting legs on a snake. Not necessary. So if you were the Buddha at that time, recognizing Mahakashyapa's insight, how could you do it in a very simple, clear way? No need for words or speech, but from your heart, from your action, from your clarity.

All of us know that Zen Master Seung Sahn taught situation, relationship, function. Each moment, a situation is appearing. We have a relationship with it. Then, an action appears out of that. For the Buddha, twenty-five hundred years ago, situation-relationship-function was that. But we have this beautiful altar, so our situation is a little bit different. The transmission has already taken place. We have already received it. So then we have some flowers here, first to hold up and then to function correctly and offer to the Buddha. Jo and Grace will pass them out. Thank you very much. ♦

Note

1. From Seung Sahn, *The Whole World Is a Single Flower* (Rutland, Vt.: Tuttle Publishing, 1992).

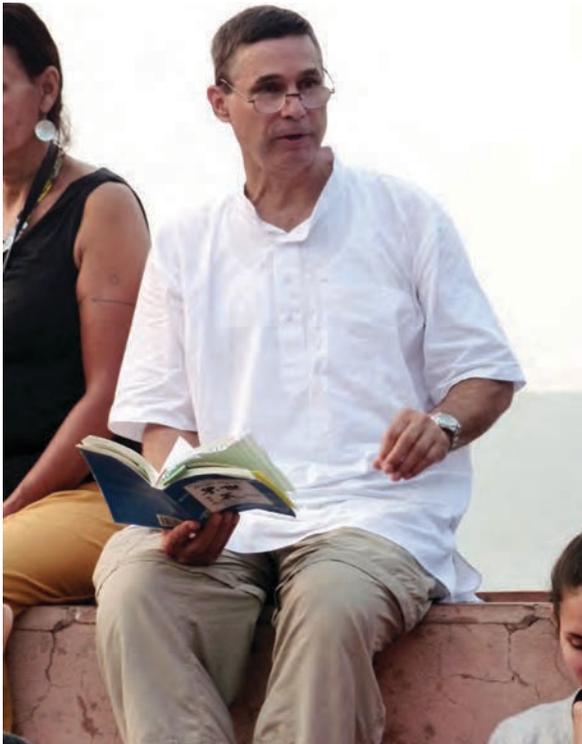


Photo: Francis Lau

Only the Mind That Wants to Help

Dae Soeng Sunim

This article originally appeared in the newsletter of Cheong Am Sa Temple in Korea.

This article focuses on how the practice of Korean Zen Buddhist meditation can profoundly help all people to realize their true self. Many people can benefit deeply from Korea's long Buddhist tradition if it is made more culturally accessible for Western people.

In today's world it is of the utmost importance that human beings change their views of where contentment, satisfaction and overall happiness can be found. My own journey through the process of becoming a monk has changed my view as to what is important for a healthy and meaningful life.

I was raised in an upper-middle-class family where I was expected to take over my father's business, get married and have children. At an early age I was enrolled in Catholic school, where I arrived early every day to help the priest perform the morning services. I was an altar boy, so I put on the robes and performed the mass with the priest; I looked forward to this time every morning—it gave me a sense of peace and connectedness with something inside myself.

Growing up in America, we had all sorts of pressures, such as “What kind of car do you drive? Where did you go on vacation? What neighborhood did you grow up in? What college are you going to?” I decided that I wanted to study music and the arts, but was soon discouraged because of all the pressure of performing and producing, and the inevitable comparisons of good to bad. Achieving success was a bittersweet experience for me. There was always something inside of me that was never satisfied.

In 1972 I met Zen Master Seung Sahn, and the first question he asked me was “Who are you?” I had visited many yogis and other spiritual masters, but I was never directly challenged with such a simple question. I said, “My name is Carl.” He said, “That is the name your mother gave you. *Who are you!*?” He said it with such force that I replied, “I don't know!”

He then said, “Correct!” I was puzzled—how could “I don't know” be a correct answer? He told me to come back to the temple the next morning at 5 a.m. to begin practice.

The following morning it was just the Zen master and me; he hit the morning bell and chanted the Homage to the Three Jewels beautifully. We then meditated for 40 minutes.

I went and told my friends about this Korean Zen master who was in town and the next day there were five of us for morning practice. He told the women of the temple to go out and buy an American-style breakfast. After morning practice was finished there was a table prepared with Korean soup and rice, kimchi, peanut butter, cereal and milk. None of us had ever seen Korean food before—the idea of eating rice and soup in the morning was completely foreign to us. The Zen master perceived our hesitation and promptly mixed everything together in one bowl; this made everyone laugh. He put kimchi, rice, soup, cereal, peanut butter and milk all together, mixed it up and began to eat it with a big smile. We all tried to do the same, and laughed as we ate. This was the beginning of the Los Angeles Zen Center, which later was named Tahl Mah Sa and finally Dharma Zen Center.



In 1994, after getting married and raising a family, in a short period of time several of my family members died, which caused me great sadness. I was in L.A. visiting my friend and decided to go see Zen Master Seung Sahn at the Dharma Zen Center, where he was giving a series of lectures on his forthcoming book *The Compass of Zen*.

As he perceived my condition, and being a great bodhisattva, he asked me if I would like to become a monk. Without hesitation I agreed to go to Korea and become a monk. It had always been a dream of mine to become a monk; at an early age I wanted to be a priest, and then as a teenager I wanted to go to Thailand to become a monk. On December 27, 1994, I boarded a plane to Seoul, Korea, to start training at a Buddhist temple named Hwa Gye Sa.

My first day at Hwa Gye Sa I exchanged my street clothes for a set of brown haeng-ja (postulant) clothes, and proceeded to wash dishes for the 300 people who came to lunch. It was a grueling job that involved sitting on a small stool and washing everything that came to me in a tub of water. Every time any thought of regret passed through my mind, a bosalnim (Buddhist lay woman) would put some food in my mouth. It is not everyone who gets hand-fed while washing dishes.

After six months I went to haeng-ja training at Hae In Sa Temple. In my 45 years of living I never worked so hard, endured such hunger, slept in the same room with so many men or showered with so many men.

The ordination ceremony, during which the novices receive their precepts, was officiated by ten senior monks. I was overwhelmed with gratitude for my teacher, Zen Master Seung Sahn, and all of Korean Buddhism. I felt like I had returned home.

Inspired to continue my training, I went to Jeong Hye Sa Temple, the Zen hall above Su Deok Sa, and asked for permission to sit the spring retreat for one month. The head monk of the Zen hall told me it was full, but that if I came back on the first day of the retreat a monk might have canceled, so it could be possible to join the retreat. Fortunately there was a monk who did not show up, and I was able to join the one-month retreat.

I learned more about living in harmony with other people during that one month than I had in a lifetime of lay life. Eating, working, sitting, walking in the mountains, and sleeping together—all the monks were willing to share with me their years of experience in the meditation rooms.

By eating nutritious Korean food and walking up the mountain after every meal, I lost weight and never felt

better in my life. As I did well at that retreat I was taken to Dae Seung Sa Temple in the city of Mungyeong to ask permission to sit the three-month winter retreat. The abbot of the temple said that if I could sit the 21-day no-sleep (that is, no lying down) meditation retreat, where you sit in meditation 22 hours a day, then he would let me sit the three-month winter retreat.

There is not enough space here to talk about what finishing that retreat did for my self-confidence. At the end of the retreat the abbot said with a smile, “Dae Soeng, you are welcome here anytime.” That was a wonderful moment for me.

I went on to sit many retreats in Korean Zen halls during the next 10 years until my teacher became sick and needed my help. I took care of him for the next two and a half years until he passed away. The funeral was held at Su Deok Sa—a big ceremony where we all watched his body burn all night. It’s hard to explain the feeling when a person dies who has unconditionally helped you—a truly great bodhisattva like Zen Master Seung Sahn.

I returned to Seoul and stayed at my friend’s temple to continue practicing, after which I went back to school to study the Korean language. Two years later I was asked to go to America to help the Korean temple Won Gak Sa in upstate New York. After two years, I finished my job there and was asked to teach meditation at Bul Kwang Sa Zen Center in Tappan, New York, where I currently reside.

We have meditation classes three times a week at Bul Kwang Sa. The classes are well attended, with a wide variety of cultural and religious backgrounds represented among the members. Our common bond is this question, “Who am I?”—the investigation into our self-nature. Jewish, Catholic, Hindu and various Protestant faiths all come together with this same question.

We sit two 40-minute periods with walking meditation, and then share our experiences after I give a short dharma talk.

There is a great thirst for Buddha’s teaching in America; my dream is to be able to lead retreats like the three-month ones they have in Korea—with modern, ecologically friendly buildings and broad multicultural acceptance.

This world now is suffering, like it has always been, from desire, greed and anger. Meditation can bring our minds to equanimity; great joy and happiness will follow and one will naturally want to share it with others.

I once asked Zen Master Seung Sahn, “What is a monk’s job?” He replied, “Only the mind that wants to help is truly enlightened.” ♦

A Zen Motorcycle Odyssey: Women and Children in the Jails and Prisons of our Nation

KC Walpole

24]

Seldom in a lifetime, if ever, arises the opportunity of a physical challenge coupled with a meaningful experience. Last summer, I had the opportunity to ride a motorcycle on an odyssey to the four corners of the nation to speak on women and children in our jails and prisons. On the surface, it was a 10,585-mile ride, done in 59 days, with more than 20 talks.

The motivation for the journey came from a group of nine female youthful offenders I had in a mind-body stress reduction program at the women's prison in Lowell, Florida. Seven of them had at least one child, and two of the children had been born to women shackled behind bars, and they had been taken from their mothers within an hour of being born.

As I came to know these kids, I learned that none were incarcerated for violent crimes, nor were they a threat to society. There were three questions that came from the experience for me. The first was, why? The second was, what

is the impact on the children? And finally, what could be done about it?

The tragedy is that, according to national statistics,¹ 60 percent of those released from prison will return within three years, and about 70 percent of their children will end up incarcerated too.

Statistically, three out of five of those youthful offenders with babies will return to prison within three years, and their children will be without their mothers for a second time. Multiply that by maybe 100,000 and you can see we have a real train wreck headed our way.

I am often asked if there is a thread that runs through the non-Zen classes I teach in prison. The truth is that the bones come from *The Compass of Zen*. The backbone rotates around Jon Kabat-Zinn's Mindfulness-Based Stress Reduction (MBSR), which was developed at the University of Massachusetts Medical Center. Frequently I will refer to these threads as "stealth Buddhism."

Jon Kabat-Zinn is clear in his book *Full Catastrophe Living* that ". . . it is no accident that mindfulness comes out of Buddhism, which has as its overriding concerns the relief of suffering and the dispelling of illusions." However, I build on this concept in two classes I developed, "Inward Journey" and "Success in College," by constantly coming back to *The Compass of Zen* for a consistent set of bones that supports both classes and builds on the experiential practice of MBSR.

The basic dynamic I use in teaching reentry into the free world emphasizes building a plan based on one's direction, which translates into "What is the cosmic glue that gives meaning to our life?"

The question of direction is put to students on the first class of each cycle, and there is a full two-hour block of instruction built into the two-month cycle of instruction. The key to direction is that they need a benchmark for every decision they make, not just in planning for reentry but



Photo: Joseph Vivona



Photo: Joseph Vivona

in the daily moment-to-moment decision making process when they get out.

One challenge in particular is that those people who knew them before they went to prison have no reason to change their own behavior, because they did not go to prison. However, clarity in direction and knowing that circumstances have changed often means the difference between living a meaningful life or going back to prison.

There is a reason why 60 percent of the women that come out of prison go back. Those women sitting in the Inward Journey classes give vocal testimony to the importance of understanding change and direction.

My experience of riding through the highways and byways of the country has been that the mind operates on two levels. There is the mechanical level of “what if” coupled with processing all the what ifs. Then there is a deeper level of processing that goes on at an unconscious level.

Essentially in the last 15 years, I had been teaching in prisons without a break. The 60 days I spent on the road afforded me the opportunity to process a lot of stuff I had not yet processed. My talks were in a constant state of change as I was verbalizing all that I processed. Also, each day I blogged, I was verbalizing a lot that I was processing between talks. The best description of the odyssey was ride, blog and talk, with scenic breaks in between.

I have been asked a ton of questions about being on the road and the particulars of how and what we did. I tried to put together as much as I could, and a lot came together in no particular order. However, at the core of a road trip, as at the core of life, is just the direction.

You cannot plan such a trip simply by getting a tent and sleeping bag and having a vague destination. The characters

in the movie *Easy Rider* traveled without direction, and that ended most tragically. Aside from that, a Peter Fonda or Dennis Hopper I am not. I was a retired soldier in the summer of his 69th year who was on a mission. Essentially, *Easy Rider* was just a bike trip from California to New Orleans.

Our trip had a clear direction. It was to raise the level of awareness of women and children in the jails and prisons of the nation, and to do it, we took motorcycles to the four corners of the country as a vehicle to spread the message.

Even though a lot of people opened their homes and organizations to our presence, it was still an expensive project. In an effort to reduce expenses I chose a combination of camping, staying at people’s houses and at nonprofit organizations, and occasionally sleeping in motels when the situation demanded.

Beside that, in many respects, motorcycles are not only hard but most inefficient. It takes time to load and unload them with camping gear—about an hour or two at the end of each day’s ride. Loading a bike is a mindful exercise, and the price of carelessness is becoming instant roadkill at highway speeds. In addition to camping gear, we packed computers and projectors, as well as clothes to wear during the presentations.

We created a blog to generate interest in the trip (<http://gatelessgatezen.com>) and to help students prepare for the talks beforehand, as well as review them afterward. Although this sounds nice, it also required from me at least two hours a day.

The blog did serve its purpose, and by the time we got to Cambridge there had been more than 5,500 hits on it. I decided to continue the blog after the odyssey, based on requests from ex-offenders as well as from volunteers at talks around the country. Also, we had to expand our Web server’s bandwidth during the trip as the visits and downloads exceeded our existing contract.

I think the biggest surprise of all was crossing the Florida-Georgia state line on the last day. The question that occupied my mind was, do I really want to come back to my life of teaching in prisons? The simplicity of life as a motorcycle vagabond has a great deal of appeal. However, return I did, and when I went to the prison to give my first class of the 19th cycle, I knew I had done the right thing.

Know then, that I will ride anywhere to speak to any audience in any venue on the issue of women and children in the jails and prisons of our nation.

Note

1. See, for example, www.ncjrs.gov/pdffiles1/nij/grants/216950.pdf.

Book Review

Everything Yearned For: Manhae's Poems of Love and Longing

Translated and introduced
by Francisca Cho
Wisdom Publications, 2005
Review by Judy Roitman JDPSN

*My love, take my life, a small bird in an
endless desert
without a single tree to perch upon, and
hold it tight.
And then lift each crushed fragment of
life to your lips.*

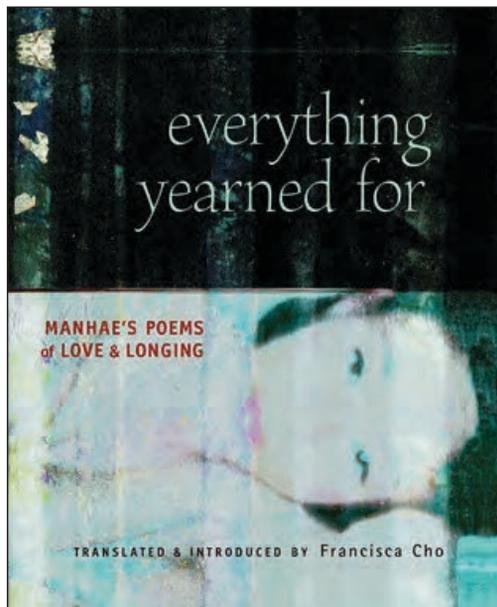
This is a book of love poems, some in a woman's voice, some in a man's, originally published in 1926, written by a famous Korean Buddhist monk. Clearly, there's a backstory here.

Manhae was born in 1879 and became a monk in the Chogye order when he was 18. Today he is best known for his tireless work against the Japanese occupation—"the patriot monk!" a Korean member of our sangha exclaimed delightedly when she heard I was writing this review—and for his attempts to reform the Korean Buddhism of his time. There is a Society for the Promotion and Practice of Manhae's Thoughts, a Manhae Foundation, and a Manhae Prize. And, while this book was not widely read when first published, for decades every Korean schoolchild has read at least some of these poems.

"Mind and matter cannot be independent of each other," Manhae wrote in *My Buddhist Beliefs*, and his extensive Buddhist writings developed this theme in many contexts, from abstract and theoretical to highly practical; he is considered a precursor of engaged Buddhism, and even explored a notion of Buddhist socialism. He argued against celibacy for monks (he himself married in 1933, seven years after his Chogye order allowed it), feeling it cut them off from the broader sangha and limited their spiritual development. He died in 1944, and both the (again celibate) Chogye order and the (non-celibate) Taego order claim him as their own.

The poems in *Everything Yearned For* are saturated with longing, claustrophobic in their obsession. But who is the beloved? A standard Korean interpretation (and one reason for their modern popularity) is that the beloved in these poems is the nation of Korea. Another interpretation is that the beloved is Buddhist enlightenment. But the translator urges us to read each poem without preconceptions. Yes, in some of them the beloved is Korea, and yes, Buddhism permeates many of them, but forcing either frame on these poems distorts them just as surely as the many blurbs forcing them into the standard frame of mystical love poems, which seek to unite with God. (With what God would a Buddhist monk unite?)

In some sense Manhae does *not* wish to be united with the beloved; love is deepest when the beloved is absent. It is absence that



creates the remarkable intensity of these poems, and in one of them he explicitly argues with Rabindranath Tagore (regarded as a hero throughout Asia because of his 1913 Nobel Prize) on this point, even though his poetic form of long and winding lines is deeply influenced by Tagore. To Manhae, consummation (*samadhi*) is not the end; it is the beginning. How do you function?

Manhae's poetic form was revolutionary. Until after the First World War, Korean poetry was either written in Chinese (Manhae himself wrote more than 150 poems in Chinese) or constrained by strict song forms (think of English ballads, or classic blues). But despite the formal innovation, these poems are saturated in classical imagery, and their historical references are several hundred years old. Even gender-bending is part of the classic tradition: poets often spoke

of exile in the voice of an abandoned wife, and some of these poems are modeled on those of medieval Korean courtesans. We are steeped in a world that reaches back to the Tang dynasty, with no trains, guns or automobiles; no movies, telephones or even telegraphs.

Korean is a very different language from English, and Francisca Cho, a Korean-American scholar of Buddhism, has had to grapple with some difficult issues. The first is that indications of gender may be too subtle to survive translation. I was only able to identify the gender of the speaker in about a quarter of these poems; in Korean almost all would be identified easily. On the other hand, this gives a wonderful ambiguity to most of the poems—longing is longing, no matter who the speaker is.

There is the matter of pronouns. In Korean many of these pronouns would be implicit, unstated. But they can't be left out in English. So these poems bristle with "I" and "you," which can't be helped, but changes the poems greatly.

There is the title. The Korean title half-translated is "the silence of *nim*." What is this *nim*? We are familiar with it as an honorific—*soen sa nim*, *poep sa nim*. But it turns out to be much more: *beloved*, *honored*, or, as Cho writes, "anyone or anything that is held in loving esteem." Thus Cho uses *The Silence of Everything Yearned For* as the title of the book (the publisher uses a different title), and in her translations of the poems she often leaves the word *nim* untranslated. That is a wonderful solution to a difficult problem: *nim* begins to gain the penumbra of associations it has in Korean, rather than being restricted by English approximations.

An important aspect of this book is Cho's commentary, in the translator's preface, and in several chapters of notes after the poems, giving a clear picture of the complex political, religious and poetic context in which Manhae lived and wrote these poems.

Note: I would like to thank So-young Kim for her helpful comments on the Korean language. ♦

The Human Route

Coming empty-handed, going empty-handed – that is human.

When you are born, where do you come from?

When you die, where do you go?

Life is like a floating cloud which appears.

Death is like a floating cloud which disappears.

The floating cloud itself originally does not exist.

Life and death, coming and going, are also like that.

But there is one thing which always remains clear.

It is pure and clear, not depending on life and death.

Then what is the one pure and clear thing?



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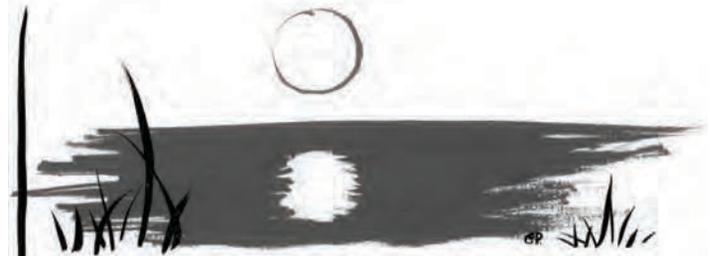
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"Clear mind is like the full moon in the sky. Sometimes clouds come and cover it, but the moon is always behind them. Clouds go away, then the moon shines brightly. So don't worry about clear mind: it is always there. ... Thinking comes and goes, comes and goes. You must not be attached to the coming or the going." -Zen Master Seung Sahn

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means in each moment we open unconditionally to all that presents itself to us. By doing this, our innate wisdom and compassion will naturally breathe and flow into our lives.

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