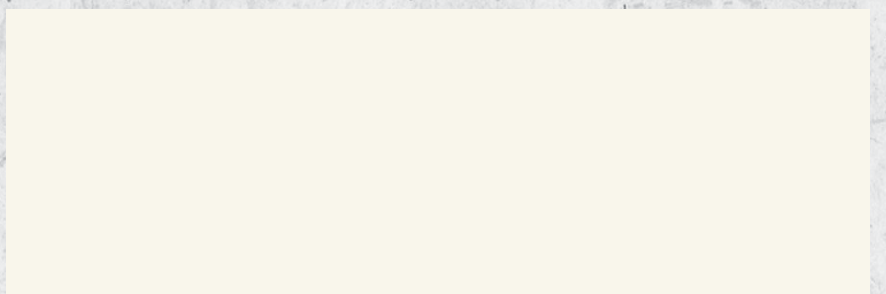


# Primary Point



Volume 31 • Number 1 • Spring 2014





# SUMMER KYOL CHE 2014

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## Summer Kyol Che 2014

May 13 ~ August 10, 2014

At Seung Sahn Int'l Zen Center Mu Sang Sa

Mu Sang Sa is located on an energy point of Gye Ryong Mountain which is renowned in Korea for its strong mystical energy .

Zen Master Dae Bong Sunim will be the Guiding Teacher for the Kyol Che. Also many teachers of Kwan Um School of Zen will join the retreat.

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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 2,800 copies.

The views expressed in *Primary Point* are not necessarily those of this journal or the Kwan Um School of Zen.

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Cover: "Dying of Thirst in the Water," by James Gouijn-Stook.



# Perceive the World's Situation

*Zen Master Su Bong*

This world is changing very quickly. But human beings don't understand the situation they are in. Some people have strong hopes and others have strong fears about the future. But nobody understands what's going on. So: suffering. Everywhere is changing: Russia, the European Economic Community, Hong Kong, and also Africa is changing very quickly. But nobody knows what's going on, and nobody understands their place and their relationship. They only understand their wish. So all human beings always say: "Leave me alone! Just let me live my life and be happy." It is not possible. We are not separated. So if you attain your true self, it means that you can perceive human beings, you can perceive your situation. Then you can understand this world's situation.

So if you keep clear mind you can perceive human beings; you can perceive your situation. If you cannot keep clear mind, you will never understand your situation. We all understand how quickly this whole world is changing.

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## Empty Is Clear

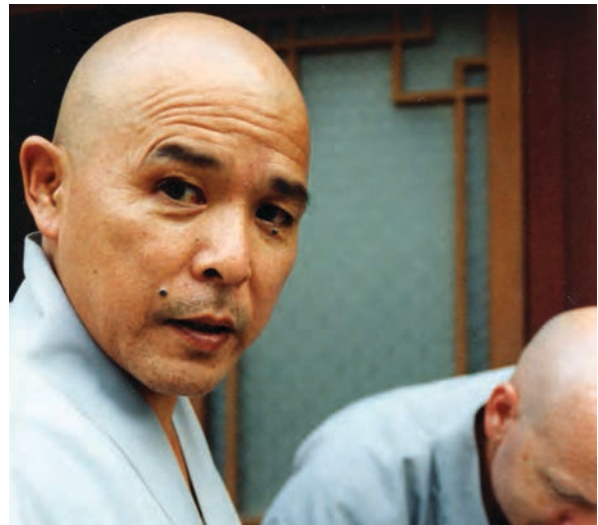
February 1993

Many people try to control their thinking. First, they try to solve their thinking. They try to make bad thinking correct. They try to make themselves right. That's the usual first course. It means, "if I can justify my thinking, I can justify my life."

But after many attempts, they find it doesn't work. So the second course is to blame your friends. But soon you understand that also doesn't work. You become very unhappy. If you keep that condition, then soon you'll have no friends. Why? Because only you are the best. That means you have this strong sense only of "I am." Then if you keep this "I am," you and this world become separate. It means that you become crazy. Crazy people have no idea, only "my action."

But somebody understands: "I cannot fix my thinking by my rationalization." Then they also understand: "I cannot fix my life only by blaming other beings." Separating ourselves from this world has many ways, not only becoming crazy. Good movies, good friends, good books,

We cannot keep up with all the things that happen in this world. It's not possible. Every day, new things, new things, new things . . . changing, changing, changing. The sutras say, "All things are impermanent." Now you are 20, 40 or 50 years old, but this time and space, from the moment you were born till just now, where did it go? There is no way in the world you can show me where this time and space from the time you were born to just this moment is. All that remains is some vague memory even of yesterday. Even 30 seconds ago you cannot remember. So, if you understand that world, you attain moment world. That means moment to moment, clear, clear, clear. What are you doing just now? If you attain that then you can perceive your situation.



*Photo: Kwan Um School of Zen Archives*

many kinds of things, already separate ourselves from this world. Those things are not good or bad by themselves. If we use those things only for ourselves, then we separate ourselves from this world. But if we don't use those things only for "me" they we become in harmony with this world. That means attaining your correct relationship to things.

"Separate from this world" means become empty. Human beings' "empty" is: you and this world separate. Buddha's "empty" means: empty is not empty; empty is clear. In this clarity there is everything. It has you, me, God, Buddha, dog, cat, tree, man, woman, good, bad, like and dislike, because everything is clear. Then how do you use these things? That's important. ♦



# After the Body, Where Will It Go?

Zen Master Dae Kwan

Two students are holding on to their feelings toward each other and cannot let go. They approach Sifu for help.

**Sifu:** Please drink this cup of water.

Both students drink.

**Sifu:** Where does the water go?

**Both students:** To the body.

**Sifu:** After the body, where will it go?

**Both students:** To the toilet.

**Sifu:** Correct! That is the same as our karma and feelings. They are empty because they keep changing.

Both students suddenly can let go of their holding, smile to each other and become friends again.

*Commentary: When feelings and karma appear, this is natural. Our practice is not to attach to it. If we can let go, then we are free from suffering. It is like the water that we drink. First digest it; it becomes energy; and even when we relieve it from our body, it can become something useful: for composting! This is how we correctly use our feelings and karma.*

## Pure Land

Zen Master Dae Kwan

One day, our Zen master visited an elderly person who had been practicing Pure Land Buddhism, chanting Namu Amitabul for years. He had been staying at home since he'd gotten sick some years before, and in recent months his health had deteriorated further.

**Elder:** Master, this sickness really hurts . . . Buddha is not efficacious at all. He isn't taking me to the Pure Land quickly enough . . . I . . . I don't want to keep up the chanting anymore!

**Master:** Is the pain in your body or in your mind? Is it your body going to the Pure Land? Or is it your mind going to the Pure Land?

**Elder:** *[Speechless.]*

**Master:** If your body feels pain, try breathing in deeply, then breathing out deeply. One cannot be in

the Pure Land if only the body dies. Only when the mind is pure can one enter the Pure Land.

The elder immediately felt relieved and smiled. Our Zen master further invited us to chant the Great Dharani and Amitabul.

*Commentary: When your mind is pure the land is also pure.*



Photo: Sven Mabre

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Reproduced from the September–October 2013 edition of the bimonthly newsletter of the Su Bong Zen Monastery.



# Remembering Zen Master Seung Sahn

*Zen Master Hae Kwang*

*Zen Master Seung Sahn, the founding teacher of the Kwan Um School of Zen, died of heart failure at Hwa Gye Sa Temple in Korea on Tuesday, November 30, 2004. He was the 78th patriarch in his line of transmission in the Chogye order of Korean Buddhism. More than 10,000 people attended his funeral in the rain at Su Dok Sa, his lineage temple.*

I remember him best bowing. For years he rose at 3 a.m. to do 500 prostrations before the regular 108 with the group at morning practice. He was a sturdy figure in his short gray bowing robe. His arms swung freely both on the descent and ascent, his forehead pressed against the mat for a precise moment before he rocked forward on his hands to rise. “Much bowing, your center becomes stronger and stronger.”

6] Once, before a retreat in Boulder, I asked him what he did when he sat. He told me he recited the Great Dharani over and over, very fast, one repetition per breath. “Then your mind is like a washing machine on spin cycle, moving very fast. All the dirty water goes out, but the center is not moving.” The Great Dharani (or Dharani of Great Compassion) is a very long mantra— about 450 syllables.

I asked him if he actually pronounced, sub-vocalized, every syllable. He said he perceived each syllable, moment to moment. He was fond of the notion that in Buddhist psychology moments of perception go by at about the same fraction-per-second rate that frames of film must be projected in order to create the illusion of motion. He liked movies, especially Westerns and other action films. Once, during a kong-an interview, he told me. “You must become a Western action hero!” He liked the movie *E.T.* because the children and the alien were so compassionate to each other, but he thought the title character fell short of being a true bodhisattva because he was so preoccupied with going home.

He himself was always on the road. By the early 1980s he had Zen centers dotting the country and several in Europe and Asia. He visited them all regularly. His energy was very strong during the 80s, perhaps due to special practices he did then. Once when he came to Kansas he stayed at our house in a downstairs guest room. That night my wife and I, in bed



*Photo: Kwan Um School of Zen Archives*

upstairs, listened to bloodcurdling yells coming from his room. When dawn broke we went downstairs and found him in the kitchen, bags packed and ready to be driven to the airport, drinking tea and smiling. “Many demons attack last night but I drive all away.” And he explained the various Taoist yells he had used and how the feng shui of our town and the room on the side of the hill under the pine tree attracted demons and restless spirits. My wife, fearing her old teacher had lost his way, said, “Those demons are all in your mind, Soen Sa Nim.” As he opened the car door he waved his stick and shouted up to her, “Yah, you are correct, all in the mind—but you must understand this mind!”

He learned English when he came to this country in 1972 at the age of 40. At the age of 21 he received dharma transmission from the brilliant, eccentric Ko Bong Sunim, and went on to direct temples both in Korea and in Japan. Ko Bong had told him, “I am the flower, you are the bee. You must spread this teaching throughout the world.” So in 1972 he landed in Providence, Rhode Island, and began living with and teaching a group of Brown University students who had found out that



*Photo: Kwan Um School of Zen Archives*



a Zen master was working in the local laundromat. Even though he took English classes at Harvard, his use of the language was always shaped by the directness and urgency of his Zen teaching. “What are you? You don’t know, so only go straight, don’t know, always, everywhere.” This don’t know epitomized his style, a masterful use of colloquial English to translate, in this case, the Chinese *wu shin* (no mind) and bring it to life, manifesting the concept and instilling it rather than explaining it. He taught us to breathe in “What am I?” and breathe out “don’t knoooooow.” It became for many of us, certainly for me, the Great Question. He was also telling us “Just do it!” years before Nike picked up the phrase. Also “Don’t make anything,” and “Put it all down,” and “Try, try, try, for ten thousand years, non-stop.” These were not presented as slogans but as sincere admonitions, always in the moment no matter how often repeated.



Photo: Kwan Um School of Zen Archives

He was a master storyteller and delivered much of his teaching through stories, gesticulating and mugging his way his way through tall Buddhist tales and becoming in turn a wise old woman, a proud but naïve sutra master, a bewildered Manjushri, a stern Nam Cheon killing the cat. Many of these stories can be found in his books, *Dropping Ashes on the Buddha* and *Compass of Zen*, but of course it was his living presence that kept us enthralled. It was not just his energy. There was a dearness about him in everything he did, but especially when he spoke. Interviews with him were warm and clear, “water flowing into water,” as Barbara Rhodes (*Zen Master Soeng Hyang*) put it.

My first retreat with him, in 1978, was a three-day kido, a chanting retreat, at a house on the coast at Big Sur. I helped him build an altar out of scrap lumber, and he placed on it a beautiful, delicate, ornate, golden statue of Kwan Seum Bosal (Kwan Yin in Chinese). When someone asked him



Photo: Kwan Um School of Zen Archives

why we were using such an elaborate statue for the retreat instead of a plain Buddha, he replied that Kwan Seum Bosal made herself beautiful to help all beings. We followed the standard retreat schedule, early morning until late evening, but instead of sitting we chanted Kwan Seum Bosal for hours on end, each of us equipped with a percussion instrument, Soen Sa Nim setting the tempo with a huge moktak. Assigned to clean his room during one of the breaks, I went in and found him not resting but listening intently to a tape recording of the previous session, moving his lips. His talks during that retreat were all about the Bodhisattva of Compassion, and the spirit of compassion as the heart of Zen practice. “When you are thinking, your mind and my mind are different. When you are not thinking, your mind and my mind are the same. That is Zen mind. The name for that is Kwan Seum Bosal, Great Love, Great Compassion, the Great Bodhisattva Way.”

He believed in chanting as the easiest form of practice and the best form of “together action.” His own chanting was like a great bell. It seemed to reverberate directly from his gut into ours. He was absolutely still when he chanted.

When he was 21 years old, disenchanted with politics and philosophy, he undertook a 100-day solo retreat in the mountains, chanting with a moktak 20 hours a day, taking cold baths at night, and eating only pine needles. At the end of the retreat he wrote this poem:

*The road at the bottom of Won Gak Mountain  
Is not the present road.*

*The man climbing with his backpack  
Is not a man of the past.*

*Tok, tok—his footsteps  
Transfix past and present.*

*Crows out of a tree,  
Caw, caw, caw.*

His diet on that retreat may have given him the diabetes he had to cope with the rest of his life. It did not slow him down; rather it was simply another vehicle for his teaching. He always spoke of his body as a rental car, and he would say that when something is ripe it will soon be rotten.

Toward the end of his life he was given the title Dae Jong Sa (Great Elder Teacher), the highest title bestowed by the Chogye order. When he was presented with the accoutrements of this position—which include a large fly whisk—he said, “This whisk is heavy.”

*(Continued on page 14)*



# This Is the Bodhi Tree

Zen Master Wu Kwang

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

I thought I would talk about three different versions of Buddha's enlightenment story. But first I want to tell a little anecdote.

Quite a few years ago at the Providence Zen Center we invited a teacher named Stephen Levine to come and give a weekend workshop together with Zen Master Seung Sahn. Stephen Levine, as some of you may know, wrote a number of books on death and dying, and he did a lot of work with people who were dying. His practice is mostly from the Vipassana tradition.

During this workshop he told a story. At the time of the Korean war, the American Zen poet, Gary Snyder, was trying to get into Japan. But immigration, because of the Korean war, was very tight there. They kept him waiting for many, many hours before they would let him go through. While he was there sitting, he wrote a short Zen poem. The poem said:

*Making a cup of green tea  
I stopped the war*

So then Stephen Levine elaborated on what this poem meant. He said, "If you want to understand what 'making a cup of green tea, I stopped the war' means, it would be something like this: Mindfully I pick up the kettle, mindfully I walk to the sink, mindfully I fill the kettle with water, mindfully I walk to the stove, mindfully I put the kettle down on the stove, mindfully I reach for the knob! Mindfully, I watch the water as the fire begins to make it boil. Mindfully, as the water boils, I lift the kettle from the stove. Mindfully, I pour the water over the tea. Mindfully, I hold the cup to check the temperature. Mindfully, when it's ready, I strain the tea leaves, and then mindfully I drink the tea and feel the taste of it."

I was listening to this, and I thought, "Well, Stephen, that is very good teaching and we should all practice like that sometimes. But the Zen way of 'drinking a cup of green tea, I stopped the war' would be a little bit different than that. So what is the Zen way? It would be: I heat up the water, I pour the water over the tea leaves, I drink the tea. KATZ! Aaaaaaah."

In one version of the Buddha's enlightenment story in the traditional Pali sutras it says that the Buddha sat under the tree and in the third watch of the night he perceived the chain of causation in ascending form and descending form, and then he became enlightened. So what does it mean? The chain of causation is the twelve links of causation in traditional Buddhism, starting with ignorance as the first link. And to be honest I can never remember all of these twelve links. But it goes something like this: starting from primal ignorance I begin to form something, and I begin to conceptualize and begin to make something out of my experience, dualistically. Then desire arises. Like and dislike arises. And then I begin to cling and attach to like and dislike and ultimately that leads to old age and death. So that's the chain of causation in the ascending form. And the descending form would be just the reverse.

If we put that in Zen Master Seung Sahn's language, it means something like this: you make, you hold, you attach, then you get. And if you don't make, and don't hold, and don't attach, then you perceive your primary ignorance of the fact of existence as it is, and you wake up.

In that version of Buddha's enlightenment, you could say that is a psychological individual mapping. I have ignorance, I make things, I begin to cling to something, and I get attached and then the world of desire appears and then I'm caught. If I can mindfully perceive that and let

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go, let go, let go, let go—as Zen Master Seung Sahn used to say, don't make anything, don't hold anything, don't attach to anything—then POW! It all comes down and everything becomes clear. That's a psychological mapping, individual kind of chain of causation from one thing leading to another, and we get caught gradually.

In the Zen version of Buddha's enlightenment the story is a little bit different. It says that Buddha under the bodhi tree fiercely determined not to move until he got awakening. And he sat there so long that weeds began to grow up through his sitting mat, a magpie made a nest in his head, and spiders made webs on his eyebrows. As someone in the New York Zen Center told me once when I told this story, magpies are very loud birds! So if you sit practicing with a magpie nest on your head, you have to really be determined. And according to this story, on the eighth day of December, when he began to get up from his meditation, he perceived the morning star and suddenly—POW!—awoke. And then, according to the story, it says he proclaimed, "Now I perceive that from the very beginning all beings are imbued with the Buddha nature." Another translation of it says, "I and all beings and the great earth together attain the way." So that statement—I, all beings, and the great earth attain the way—is not just an individual psychological mapping. That's a statement of interdependent causation. I and all beings and the world itself all together interdepend and interconnect, and so my enlightenment is not just for me.

In the Zen tradition, at least in Korea and Japan, they set Buddha's enlightenment day in the twelfth month on the eighth day. In some traditions, like the Theravadin tradition, they say that Buddha's birthday, Buddha's enlightenment day, and Buddha's paranirvana day—his death day—all occurred on the same full moon day. That's what is usually called Vesak Day. Prince Siddhartha was born in Lumbini. But Shakyamuni Buddha was born here under the bodhi tree. The great Thai meditation master, Ajahn Chah, said there's a meaning behind the fact that we celebrate Buddha's birthday, Buddha's enlightenment day, and Buddha's death day all on the same day. Ajahn Chah said at the moment the Buddha attained enlightenment, he died as a small being and was born as a great being.

Here's the third version of Buddha's enlightenment. Once at a Buddha's Enlightenment Day ceremony at Providence Zen Center, Zen Master Seung Sahn stood up to give a short dharma talk. He said in the traditional Zen story, it says Buddha perceived the morning star and got enlightenment. He said that was OK at that time but if Buddha was born today, his enlightenment would not be

to perceive the morning star. He said, "This is what Buddha's enlightenment now would be," and he went like this [*gestures*], as if he were crying tears of suffering.

Many of us have come here [to India] and had culture shock. To a certain degree, this isn't new for me. I come from New York City, and there's a lot of homelessness in New York City. At one time, I used to walk to work in the morning, which was about a mile and a half, and I would pass many homeless people begging on the way to work. You began to realize that you couldn't reach into your pocket and help each one of them, it would just be impossible.

Our practice is based on finding your center and making your center steady. Sometimes we say, "make your center strong." I like the word "steady" better. Steady, steady. Not moving. Steady. It's not not-moving in a rigid sense; it's steady.

Part of our practice of don't know means when we are confronted with overwhelming ambiguity and contradiction in the world we live in, we have to be able—if we are going to be helpful both to ourselves and to others—to keep our center steady. As it says in one of the sutras, "the bodhisattva attains tolerance of the inconceivable." To be able to tolerate the inconceivable means to keep your center steady in the midst of many ambiguities and contradictions, and realize that you can't just immediately start to try to help in certain kinds of situations. You have to stay with your own sense of not knowing what to do. To face your own feeling of helplessness. Out of that, something appears. And then we can be helpful to each other and to the world around us.

Thank you all for listening. And I just have one final piece of advice: whatever else you do, don't drink the water.

Does anyone have a question?

*Question:* I have a question about the bodhi tree here. This is the original bodhi tree or a descendent of it. How could we respond to assertions that this happened 2,500 years ago? We don't really know what happened.

*Zen Master Wu Kwang:* That's what I just said. You have to cultivate tolerance of the inconceivable. We don't know what this means. For some people, it means a lot to them.

*Question:* You say Buddha was born on one full moon day, and died on another full moon day. What does this full moon mean? Why full moon?

*ZMWK:* I didn't say that. That's what tradition says.

*Q:* Is there some kind of meaning? Why full moon?

*ZMWK:* You can make a lot of meanings out of the full moon. There's a kong-an in the Blue Cliff Record. Zen Master Un Mun one day said to the assembly, "I don't



ask you about before the full moon day, but after the full moon day give me one word!" No one in the assembly responded. So he answered himself, and said, "Every day is a good day."

[*Laughter, applause.*]

*Zen Master Bon Soeng:* Maybe this is some from the last question . . . I think there's a bit of tension: A lot of us Western practitioners, we don't really believe in a lot of the Buddhist stuff. And yet there's also something, some deep meaning in it. I think in our group maybe there's some tension between cynicism and devotion. I wonder if you could speak to that.

*ZMWK:* Cynicism and devotion. I'll repeat the question. In Jeff's opinion—or probably talking to many people he's gleaned this—we don't emphasize a strong devotional faith in something, and so for many people, on the one hand, there's a certain cynicism about all this, and on the other side there is something about devotion. And of course, devotion, if used correctly, is a very valuable thing connected with practice, a very important part of practice. What you're devoted to, you put energy into. You can be devoted to it from an emotional center or from a will center. If I'm devoted to sitting and I love the idea of Zen sitting and Zen teaching, then I have a devotion to that, but I may not have a strong emotional feeling about it in the normal sense of the word.

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If you become cynical about something, then you've already made something and you're already caught. You're not open. You're not having don't-know mind at that time. On the other hand, if you swallow something whole and don't digest it and get some personal connection with it, then it becomes a kind of blind faith or blind devotion. Somewhere in the middle there is something useful here.

Over the years, in visiting many of these places in China and Korea and now here, I've noticed that, whether you believe in these things literally or not, when you come into a place like this there is a certain feeling here. It's undeniable. If you just let yourself be open to that, that is nourishing to your practice.

I'll give an example. One time we were in Korea for one of these Whole World Is a Single Flower conferences. We went to visit the temple where Kyong Ho Sunim got enlightenment. Kyong Ho Sunim was Zen Master Seung

Sahn's great grandteacher.

It was hot that day, like this. It was quite a walk up toward the temple through a lot of people selling this and that and the other thing. We finally got up to where the temple was, and his hermitage was somewhere behind it. I was exhausted by that point and I sat down on the porch of the Buddha hall. I just sat there and suddenly I had this little experience, you know. And then Zen Master Dae Gak came by. I said, "You know, I was sitting here and I just had this very nice experience."

And he said, "You see that mountain over there and that mountain over there and the way the mountains are configured here and here? This is the power point of the temple." He understood geomancy. I don't know anything about geomancy. Geomancy, for those of you who don't know, is like the acupuncture points of the earth. They usually build temples at certain points where there's a meeting of certain mountain configurations and water flowing and I don't know what else. I didn't know anything about that. I just sat down on the steps, and I was exhausted; I just wanted to rest. I think there is something about these places. It isn't just some blind faith that brings so many people to these places year after year after year.

If Buddha actually practiced here and attained something, there's a strong point there to begin with. And if then many, many, many generations afterward enhanced this place, it's like recharging a battery over and over. There is something here.

Maybe one more question.

*Question:* Does that mean we're attached to this location?

*ZMWK:* [*Laughs.*] Are *you* attached to this location?

Don't attach to this location: *use* this location, find something, and then pass this location on to everybody else!

Using the location is different than attaching to this location. If you think that this place is the only place where you can have something, then you're attached to this location. Zen tradition or some other esoteric tradition will say, "What is the bodhi tree?" *This* is the bodhi tree. You can use something like this as an aid, as something helpful.

Thank you. ♦



# Sitting in a Cave . . . in New York City

Nancy Hathaway

Editor's note: We present here two reflections on practicing in a large city environment—one in New York on a retreat, and one in London, in an extended residency. Both writers are experienced students, coming to the city centers from other contexts, and we appreciate their sharing their experiences.

Walls. White walls. Two straight; three zigzagged. A brown wood floor. White walls. Brown floor. A statue of Buddha sits on the altar; nearby is a moktak—a hollowed out wooden drum used to keep a beat during chanting. Kwan Seum Bosal sits close by on the windowsill, holding us all with love and compassion. Photos and calligraphies of Korean Zen Master Dae Soen Sa Nim decorate the white walls, as well as paintings of his teachers and his students who have passed. On the floor, maroon mats and cushions face each other, or face the walls, depending on the activity of the moment and which direction the Zen practitioner is facing. One mat is different from the others, for Zen Master Wu Kwang, our teacher. This is our meditation cave for seven days and nights. Quiet, dark, warm. Sitting, walking, eating, sleeping, peeing, pooping, more sitting, more walking, eating, sleeping, peeing, pooping. In silence, I share this cave with others coming and going to and from jobs and life in the city.

Our meditation cave is in New York City.

I didn't mention the sixth wall, straight with windows. The windows look over a maze of metal restaurant ducts, two storeys above a closed-in courtyard, with four floors of apartment windows looking down toward the cave. Seven floors in all. Two below, then this one, and four above. No sign of nature for this Maine girl, unless I tilt my head and cheek just so while pressing against a window to look up the four stories to catch a glimpse of sky between roof lines. Gray sky. Sometimes blue. Sky, the only nature to be seen. Seven nights and days in a Zen retreat cave in New York City, with a peek of sky occasionally.

There *are* other options to only being in the cave for this week of meditation. We can walk to the farmers' market in Union Square during a late afternoon break, or ride the elevator to the rooftop to walk with views of tops of build-

ings. I choose to stay in the cave.

Why?

I need all the help I can get to cut down on mental distractions. Monks and nuns for centuries have gone to caves for meditation—to focus with few distractions. I am using this rare opportunity to see and study the mind. So, I make this choice to stay in the cave; otherwise, I'm eating chocolate at the little market on the corner or catching myself fantasizing about that red dress in the window, or that guy. It is much easier to study the mind against a backdrop of a white screen—in this case, white walls with only the mind feeding fantasies, thinking. The cave has been set up in a meticulous way so there are few excuses for worry, judging, thinking.

We are well fed, warm, dry, with a relatively comfortable sleeping pad on the floor. This is much easier than traveling thousands of miles to find a romantic cave in Asia.

Himalayan caves were sought after—and still are—for doing intensive three-year retreats. But this retreat is only for seven days. I can do it! Not wanting to take another 45-day trip traveling overland (or these days flying) to Nepal—where my very first meditation experience began 40 years ago in Kopan Monastery, home to Tibetan Buddhist teachers Lama Yeshe and Lama Zopa—I

choose instead the easier route: Mega Bus to right here in the USA.

The romance of cave dwelling and finding a lama dressed in maroon robes, with Tibetan skin and eyes, sitting and not saying a word, chanting in an ancient language of earlier Buddhist times—I've done that. But New York City! A challenge. Maybe not for you, but for me. These walls are not romantic. And, of course, romance is not the point—I need to remember that.

The point is to spend time with myself. Finding a place to study the mind and to study what it means to be human. That's the point. Hanging out with what is. Why go to a cave in the Himalayas when sitting in NYC with a keen-eyed Zen master takes little time to get to and the travel is easy? Well, sort of easy. Coming from coastal rural Maine, living in an almost 200-year-old traditional farmhouse, standing in the center of the farmhouse looking out windows in four directions seeing only trees, stoking wood fires during the long



Photo: Nick Gershberg

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dark quiet winter months, snowshoeing to the compost pile, and quite often spending six hours shoveling in order to welcome guests is a way of life that takes getting used to. And leaving it takes getting used to also.

Traveling 10 hours by bus actually at times seems similar to traveling in Nepal. The Lucky Star going from Boston's Chinatown to New York's Chinatown isn't much different from traveling from Pokhara to Katmandu. No goats or ducks on this bus though; instead the distractions are movies with violence and sex. Is that the difference? The danger feels the same at times: not the fear of tumbling down cliffs on hairpin turns, but of being squeezed while speeding in and out of fast-moving cars and trucks over roads with bumpity-bump deep potholes. Seeing the city from the first look, my country eyes realize that what looks like the biggest ever hay storage silos one could possibly imagine are actually people houses stacked one on top of the other and side-by-side. Actually, this was a Maine joke in the seventies: "Farmer John goes to NYC and sees the biggest corn silos ever!" It was funny when I was a young teen not having been south of the border—the Maine border, that is.

These brown eyes from the coast of Maine begin to widen, with the whites becoming clear with beginner's mind, until soon enough I find myself sitting beside Zen Master Wu Kwang. He sits in full lotus posture quietly facing the gold Buddha, a gift from Zen Master Seung Sahn bringing Zen from Korea. Zen Master Wu Kwang's body appears not to move when sitting. Of course, he doesn't sit the whole time: he too sits and walks and sits and walks, and eats, and sleeps,

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and pees and sits and walks and bows 108 times each morning. He doesn't talk except in one-on-one student-teacher meetings held twice a day. No discourses on fancy Buddhist teachings. Only right now, we are encouraged and supported to keep *clear mind, clear mind, clear mind, don't knooooow-wwww . . .* a before-thinking place. The *hwadu* is its name. Only question. Not questioning from the intellect but with every cell of his body, he watches the layers of mind make everything, all the while inquiring "What is this?" Before thinking, before opinions, before judgments, before anything, and even before that.

If you are looking for pure expression, for the essence of true human original nature, and are willing to let go of the romance of Asian culture, you can sit in a cave in your own backyard right here in the United States, in New York City, with a bright-eyed Zen master who will look you in the eye and ask you, "What are you doing just now?" And, if you know what you are doing, he will hit you 30 times (a Zen expression). If you say "I don't know" he will also hit you 30 times. So what can you do? Ahh . . . Cheek pressed against the cool window; blue sky turning into night sky, with city lights twinkling. ♦

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Nancy Hathaway became a senior dharma teacher in 1984, while a resident at Providence Zen Center from 1979 to 1985, where she served in a number of temple positions. Living with her husband at PZC, Nancy gave birth to her two sons at home. Then she practiced for 15 years at the Cambridge Zen Center. Currently Nancy offers mindfulness courses at colleges, hospitals, schools, and privately. She is a licensed pastoral counselor. Her essays on mindful parenting have been published in anthologies, including *The Best Buddhist Writing 2006* (Boston: Shambhala Publications). Nancy lives on the coast of Maine.

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## Morning Bell Reverberates Throughout the Universe:

### *Notes on a Residency at the London Zen Centre*

*Pedro Dinis Correia*

Living in a Zen center in the heart of London is a wonderful and tough experience. This is the perspective of a residency of five and a half months, all while keeping a full-time job.

#### **Daily Practice**

Bowing (108 bows). Such a simple movement, yet I found it effective in calming the mind and making the body fit

and healthy.

Sitting meditation. I was used to sitting meditation, and it was great to have long periods of sitting in silence.

Chanting. It took me a while to get used to it, but it brought great moments of beauty and synchronicity. It's a wonderful practice to chant together in a group for someone in need, like we did for a friend of mine who was going through a tough moment in her life.

Kong-an interviews. I found it a great way to check the “inner practice,” to test the intuitive capacity and my attachments (to form, concepts, ideas). It became clear that my pattern is to be caught up in “emptiness” and to discriminate against form. In a way it’s also an interesting method to establish the teacher-student connection. Kong-ans felt close to daily life in a sense that challenges and activates the thinking mind, alleviating stress. I found it to be a somewhat similar feeling to taking an exam or job interview.

I had already seen kong-ans in daily life before, without much formal kong-an practice. But investigating a kong-an together with a particular situation in daily life helped me put clarity into that situation.

To be honest I found it difficult at times, to understand the kong-ans and to play along with them in the interview room. Even when knowing what to do, I resisted playing the game. Eventually my mind lost interest and I stopped actively trying to practice with kong-ans, but they nonetheless surfaced eventually in daily life.

### **The Schedule and Temple Rules**

I would wake up at 5 a.m. and have two hours of morning practice with the teacher. Then I would have breakfast, shower and get ready in time to leave the house around 8:20 for work. Usually it would take just over an hour of public transport—packed like sardines—to southeast London to start work at 9:30 a.m. I spend the whole day on the computer as a Web designer until 6 p.m., with a one-hour lunch break.

Leaving work I would return home, arriving around 7:30. Bedtime was at 9:30, which gave me less than eight hours sleep each day. In the two hours “free time” after work during the week, I scheduled one activity each day: shopping for food, cooking food for several days, washing my clothes, cleaning the house and extra Zen practice when possible, such as more bowing or qigong.

Wednesday nights I would join the group practice as soon as I arrived from work. Practice would start at 7 p.m., so I would enter mid-practice.

Sometimes on Fridays I stayed after work with colleagues for a quick drink and to socialize.

Then the weekends would go fast. Wake up was at 5:30 a.m. I would spend around three hours cleaning the house, dharma room, kitchen or bathroom to compensate for the little time available for chores during the week, as temple residents are required to do 40 minutes a day of cleaning.

Outside work I avoided using the computer as much as possible because my eyes were tired from working at a computer all day. I would use the computer on week-

ends mainly for e-mail, banking, shopping and making travel arrangements.

On Saturday afternoons I would practice with the North London Soto Zen Group, where I had practiced Zen for the first time in 2002. Afterward, I would socialize and go for a pub dinner with sangha members

On Sunday we would do morning practice together at the Zen center until 1 p.m., and afterward I would go for coffee, walk in the park, go shopping or see some of my London friends. Every month on one of the weekends there was Yong Maeng Jong Jin, a day-and-a-half retreat with intense practice.

Besides all that, I would also travel, generally once a month on weekends, to see friends outside London.

### **Full-time Job as a Web Designer**

Work was also intensive, as we have many websites to create. Like working in a fast-food restaurant, the focus was on streamlining and making websites quickly.

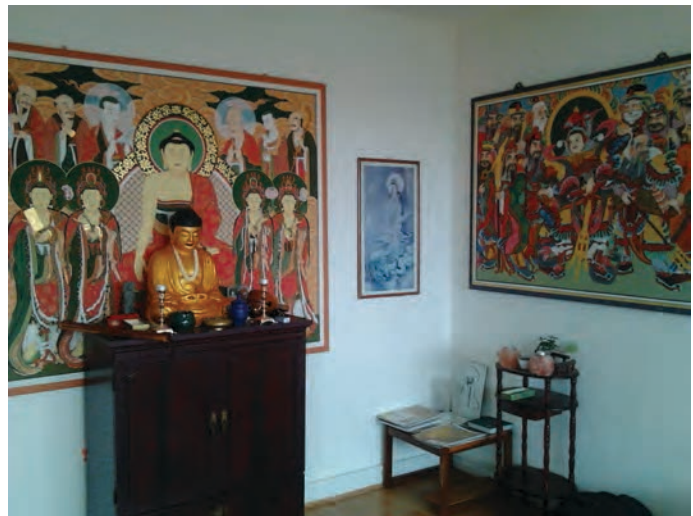
Around August or September I had big difficulties at work, arguing with the finance man during the project development meetings. During this time it was difficult, but at the same time interesting to see one of the kong-ans I had worked with come to life, and it helped ease the suffering I had created for myself.

I feel fortunate to have been allowed to stay longer at the Zen center, and I feel that those 5 and a half months helped me to maintain focus and go through some difficult moments at work and in my big-city, stressful life.

### **The Teacher: Ja An JDPSN (Bogumila Malinowska)**

I can see the great courage and dedication that our teacher has in order to accept a residency student such as myself to live in her house, a small flat shared with her young

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*Photo: Bogumila Malinowska JDPSN*



adult son, who doesn't take part in the practice but nonetheless contributes greatly to the sangha simply by accepting and supporting Ja An JDPSN and the Zen center in their house.

I felt impressed by her willpower, perseverance and determination, as well as her ability to manage both the Zen center and her daily life, adding on top many more hours of nightly practice, working full time in London and travelling for teaching retreats and meetings. This is no doubt the result of authentic, strong, continuous practice.

I feel that I established a good connection within the household. We were harmonious and learned to respect each other's space.

### Conclusion

I see that my practice strengthened during my residency and that I was also a support to the sangha, albeit in the last months my energy went low and I felt tired. This residency program is very tough and a great experience, especially in London where everything is fast-paced and there is a huge mixture of people and cultures in transition. Many people don't stay long, and changes in housing, jobs and life all come fast. Add to it a full-time job and two hours commuting daily, and the challenge becomes a great opportunity to practice Zen in daily life and to try to harmonize temple and city life.

Before my residency started, it was good to meet the

teacher and experience a little of Kwan Um practice. Three weeks seems like enough time to get used to the practice and to go a bit deeper. But then, it's also nice afterward to return to having more space and time in one's life.

It would be interesting if the Zen center were in a bigger house, with a more established sangha giving greater support to one another. This would allow having several students in residence, giving more people the chance to live this extraordinary experience.

*There I was, in a cement gray tower block with a green patch of big trees down below, at night the planes flying overhead and ambulances rushing by . . . on those summer nights the moon would show up behind the clouds and the fresh gentle wind would bring all sounds, mixed up together.*

*It would still be night when morning practice started, the sunrise would gently light up the dharma room, while the morning bell would reverberate throughout the whole universe . . . the big city awakening with golden rays and foggy sounds. There I was, and I am grateful. ♦*



Pedro Dinis Correia comes from a small town in southern Portugal. At the age of 20 he lived in London for a time, where he discovered Zen practice. He returned to Portugal and practiced with a small Soto Zen group for some years. Last year, at the age of 35, he returned to London, found work as a Web designer and lived at the London Zen Centre for five and a half months.

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*(Continued from page 7)*

The last time I heard him teach was at a precepts ceremony. He told two stories at precepts ceremonies to illustrate the importance of correct direction, knowing when the precepts are open and when they are closed. First he told the story of Hae Chung, a precepts-keeping monk who would not even uproot grass in order to save his own life and was made national teacher by the emperor in recognition of his virtue. Then he told the story of Nam Cheon killing the cat, a kong-an that has opened many Zen students' minds. When he came to the part of the story where Joju puts his sandals on his head, he took the brass hand bell from the table and put it on his head. Balancing it there he looked at the sangha serenely and said, "So keep precepts, become the national teacher. Break precepts, become a great Zen mas-



*Photo: Kwan Um School of Zen Archives*

ter. Which one do you like?" He always left us with a question. But when Su Bong Sunim, his dharma heir who died in 1994, asked him "What is the shortcut to Zen?" he answered, "Not for me." This was how he lived his life—not for himself, but for all beings. The poem on the precepts certificate reads:

*Good and evil have no self-nature.  
Holy and unholy are empty names.  
In front of the door is the land of stillness  
and light.  
Spring comes, the grass grows by itself.*

Originally published as "Spring Comes, the Grass Grows by Itself: Remembering Zen Master Seung Sahn (1927–2004)" in *Buddhadharma: The Practitioner's Quarterly*, Spring 2005.

# Teaching the Little Buddhas

Ed McCarthy

It's a quiet Sunday morning on the Providence Zen Center's first floor in Cumberland, Rhode Island, USA. Members and visitors practice sitting and walking meditation in the main dharma room, with a dharma talk scheduled for later that morning. But it's a different story in the upstairs dharma room, where a dozen young children are participating in PZC's dharma school. They are learning a lesson on patience and impermanence by building a house of playing cards. The group's excitement is barely contained as the house grows taller and they shriek collectively as it finally collapses under its own weight.

## Why a Dharma School?

Apart from Asian immigrants, most Americans come to Buddhism from another faith. Although there is growing interest in Zen and other Buddhist practices, the Pew Research Center's Religion & Public Life Project estimates that only 0.7 percent of Americans identify themselves as Buddhists. That number may grow as more adults start practicing Buddhism, but it's likely to be slow growth because American Buddhists have one of the lowest rates of children practicing their parents' faith.

That's not completely surprising, because relatively few current practitioners outside of Asia were born into Bud-

dhist families. Consequently, first-generation Buddhists often lack the cultural imprint that other faiths pass to their children, both formally and informally. For example, most Christian churches in the United States have ongoing religious education programs, popularly known as Sunday school, for their members' children. Other religions, such as Judaism and Islam, provide similar learning opportunities. These programs can draw on a wealth of resources for teachers to help young children learn their parents' faith and morals. In contrast, teaching resources for young children of first-generation Buddhists are scarce, and each organization must develop its own program.

The lack of transmission between generations raises a problem for Buddhist groups because it means that "organic," intergenerational growth is unlikely to generate continuity. That means most Buddhist organizations, including PZC and other Kwan Um Zen groups, must rely largely on retaining current adult members and recruiting new ones to sustain themselves.

There's another issue, though, one that's perhaps more important than membership rosters. Learning about meditation, mindfulness and the Buddhist tradition can provide valuable lessons for children. Even if the children eventually leave the practice, the teachings can help prepare them for the challenges they will face in life.

## A Brief History

Before the dharma school started, it was common at PZC to see parents splitting their time when attending ceremonies like Buddha's Birthday. One parent would attend the ceremony while the other parent walked their child or children around the center to keep them occupied. Mark and Karen Dennen, PZC members and parents, realized that offering children's activities during these ceremonies could simultaneously teach the children about Buddhism and allow both parents to attend the ceremony.

Classes started on a small scale in early 2010 and launched officially in December 2010. The Dennens conducted a class during the Buddha's Birthday Ceremony in 2010; their children were two of the first class's four participants. The PZC abbot at the time, George Hazlbauer, then connected Mark with PZC-member Jim Chung-Brcak. The two devised a plan to organize a

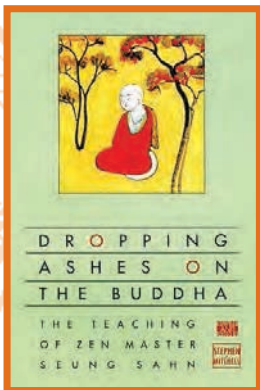
*(Continued on page 18)*



Photo: Brenton Sheehan



## 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*

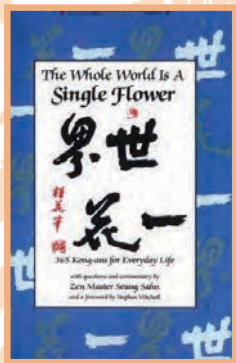
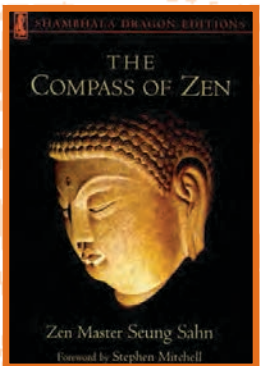
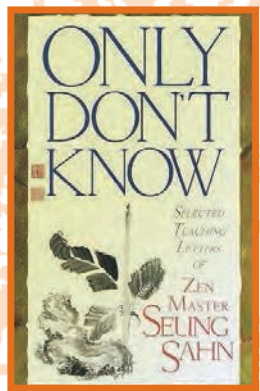
**Wake Up! On the Road with a Zen Master.** An entertaining documentary that captures Zen Master Seung Sahn's energy and presents the core of his teaching. 54 minutes. *Primary Point Press, 1992. VHS: ISBN 0-942795-07-5. \$30.00 DVD: ISBN 0-942795-14-8. \$30.00*

**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 Whole World Is a Single Flower

2014  
KOREA

*The 2014 Whole World Is a Single Flower conference and tour celebrates Zen Master Seung Sahn's great vow to save all beings. We will deepen our own vows through together action and commemorate the 10<sup>th</sup> anniversary of Dae Seon Sa Nim's passing into nirvana.*

*Learn more at [wwsf2014.org](http://wwsf2014.org)  
or on Facebook and Twitter at [wwsf2014](https://www.facebook.com/wwsf2014).*

**Great Vow, Life After Life.**

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(Continued from page 15)

dharma school, offering regular monthly sessions to coincide with PZC's Sunday morning practice, so parents could attend practice without having to worry about childcare.

### Class Structure

Originally there were two classes: a younger group (4–11 years old) and an older group (12–18 years old). Over time, though, almost all the children were in the younger group, so the teachers modified the format to focus on younger children and increased its frequency to twice monthly. The number of students grew and classes nowadays often have over 12 students with most parents participating, as well.

Christian Sunday school classes in the United States usually combine spiritual practice (prayer), an activity (craft or game) and a written story (usually from the Bible) around a central theme. The dharma school teachers decided to adopt a similar format. But while there are similarities between Buddhism and Christianity, there are some major differences. Most important, there are many weekly curriculums available for Sunday schools of all ages, but the dharma school instructors had to make up their materials as they went along.

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Teachers typically pick a theme for a series of classes, such as Eightfold Path or the Four Noble Truths, and develop classes based on the themes. They vary activities to hold the children's interest. For instance, children bake cookies and plant bulbs in the garden to learn about patience and impermanence. To learn single-mindedness,

they practice tai chi.

Each year has had a general theme: the paramitas in year one, Jataka tales in year two and the historical Buddha in year three. The theme for the current 2013–14 year is service. Using stories has proven to be an excellent way to teach, and the program uses two books, *Buddha at Bedtime* and *Prince Siddhartha: The Story of Buddha*, which provide short stories teaching the value of the virtues.

Each class follows the same format so there is consistency for the students. The children recite a modified version of the Four Great Vows (see sidebar) and there is typically a meditation or mindfulness practice. That practice, which lasts for about 10 minutes, might include sitting, watching the breath or using objects to focus concentration. "Then there is a lesson component," says Chung-Brcak. "It's usually some sort of story or fable tied into the more immediate theme of the class or the theme of the year that we're working on and there's usually a discussion and activity around it."

Zen is about responding to what's in front of you, right here and now, so teachers enliven the stories with experiential learning to illustrate that point. For example, in one class students read a story about a boy saving a panda from a forest on a wet and stormy night. "We then had one volunteer blindfolded and she played the part of the boy from the story," Chung-Brcak explains. "The other students arranged chairs in the room to resemble a forest, and the girl had to listen very carefully to the instructions of her peers as they verbally guided her to the stuffed panda toy at the other end. Doing so, we talked about how practice involves paying attention to those around you and keeping motivation to help someone else."

In another example of presenting the teachings, students were discussing Great Question, Great Faith and Great Courage. To enliven the concept, teachers made "mystery boxes," an idea from the school's fundraising chair, MiNa Chung-Brcak. Students had to feel inside boxes and write their guesses for the uniquely textured items hidden in each box, such as pomegranate seeds or cornmeal. It took one-pointed effort, total concentration and a constant question of "what is this?" to engage with the task, and students experienced the three essential elements of Zen in one practice. "Building off that exercise the students then tried getting their parents to guess what was in the box based only on their descriptor words and not by experiencing what was in the box," says Jim Chung-Brcak. "We used this to illustrate how difficult and cumbersome it is putting experience into words. It was much easier for the kids to 'know' what was in the box by experiencing than it was for the parents by hearing

### Starting a Dharma School

Mark Dennen

- Take Zen Master Seung Sahn's advice and just do it—procrastination won't get you anywhere.
- Start small and build. Hold the school once a month or every few months to gain experience. Use the Web and social media to publicize the school. The PZC dharma school is online at [www.facebook.com/PZCDharmaSchool](http://www.facebook.com/PZCDharmaSchool).
- Get the right resources. A book on meditation for children is a great way to start with a dozen different techniques. Include a children's book about Buddha or Buddhist stories and you have much of the material you need for multiple classes.
- Look for lessons and activity plans from children's education programs in other faiths, depending on what's available in your country and language. If those resources teach the same values of compassion, forgiveness, and so on, why not use the same activities?
- Keep meditations relatively short to accommodate the children's attention spans.
- Ask the students' parents to help with the program. Many Buddhist parents welcome the opportunity to serve and contribute ideas.



about the experience.”

### **Building Community Links**

The Flat Buddha is an ongoing project. This activity is based on the popular Flat Stanley project that started in Ontario, Canada in 1965. Schoolteachers use the project to teach their students about geography by having students mail a drawing or image of Flat Stanley, a young character in a series of novels, to other participating students around the world. The recipients photograph themselves with Flat Stanley and pose him for pictures in their homes, schools, and so on. They then return the photos and a letter to the senders. (There is a Flat Stanley website with additional information at [www.flatstanley.com](http://www.flatstanley.com))

Dharma school students have taken the same approach but with a Flat Buddha. They mail the Flat Buddha to different Zen centers. Members at those centers take pictures of the Flat Buddha at different locations and mail him back to the students with a letter. It's not just a fun project—it also teaches the students that they are members of a national and international sangha. “Not only are the kids connected to the kids in their dharma school class but they're also connected to the people at the Providence Zen Center and the Providence Zen Center is connected to something bigger,” says Chung-Brcak. “It expands their horizons about how big the community is and its different aspects.”

Students also participate in selected PZC ceremonies, such as bathing the Baby Buddha during the Buddha's Birthday Ceremony, and in occasional special projects. In August 2012, the school hosted a retreat for students and their parents that drew 19 families, including participants from other Kwan Um Zen centers around New England. Unlike a meditation retreat for adults, it was more activity-based. Activities included martial arts, stories, art, cooking and yoga, with mindfulness and meditation sessions interspersed during the day.

The school's theme for the 2013–14 year, selfless service, gives students another opportunity to see their role in the larger community. The students were asked to suggest ideas for a service project and they decided to help children in need, especially those in hunger. That led to a fundraising effort in the form of a bow-a-thon that will be held at the next Buddha's Enlightenment Day ceremony

at PZC. Students will collect contribution pledges for each bow they make; 50 percent of the proceeds will go to support the dharma school and 50 percent to a community service agency in Rhode Island that helps poor families.

### **Organization**

The school's organization has evolved since the first classes. Originally Mark Dennen served as teacher for the older students with Chung-Brcak teaching the younger group. After the groups combined, both served as teachers for the one group. In an effort to follow PZC's administrative structure, Chung-Brcak became the school's director, responsible for communications among parents and with PZC. Dennen is now the head teacher with responsibility for overseeing the curriculum. José Ramírez JDPSN is the guiding teacher and several parents serve on additional committees for gardening and arts and music.

### **Multiple Benefits**

Parents say that attending the school has a positive impact on their children. Kimberly Testa first brought her son Ijah, now age 9, to the school in December 2010. Testa, a Cumberland resident who is not a PZC member, learned about the program from a website article on local activities for children. She had read about Buddhism when she was younger and thought that the school might interest Ijah. They have been attending regularly since then and Testa reports that Ijah continues to enjoy the sessions. “He said they teach you how to be nice, respectful, how to meditate and how to be mindful,” she says. “He said it's fun, you do activities and they read you books. And I notice that he does pay attention. A lot of times the kids are sort of shuffling about and wiggling in their cushions but it's sinking in. I really feel like the seeds are being planted.”

PZC's dharma school format can work in any Zen center, including those in other countries, Chung-Brcak maintains. Zen centers normally focus on providing practice opportunities for adults; having a dharma school allows families to practice together. “It's about the kids having an opportunity to learn about a spiritual tradition that's important to their families,” he says. “It allows them to learn about compassion, thoughtfulness, patience and important lessons about living and life. At the same time, they can feel like they're a part of a community that's out there for them.” ♦

#### **Children's Version of the Four Great Vows**

- Living things are numberless, but I will try to help them all.
- Distractions are endless, but I will try to focus through them all.
- The teachings are many, but I will try to learn them all.
- The path of the Buddha is long and difficult, but I will travel it.

Ed McCarthy is a freelance writer and practices at the Providence Zen Center. He thanks Jim Chung-Brcak, Mark Dennen and José Ramírez JDPSN for their generous help with the article. To learn more about the dharma school at the Providence Zen Center, e-mail [pzcdharmaschool@gmail.com](mailto:pzcdharmaschool@gmail.com).



# Motivations for Practice

Jonathan Earle

My motivations for practice are pretty simple. I think Zen Master Seung Sahn said it best in the Temple Rules: “You must first make a firm decision to attain enlightenment and help others.” My motivation is to attain my true self and save all beings from suffering. We hear that great vow all the time in our school: “Sentient beings are numberless. We vow to save them all.” We hear it after every retreat, and I say it every day when I get up in the morning. I hear it and say it all the time, but it has taken a long time for me to really believe in it. I certainly can’t say that my life is 100 percent in service of all beings, and maybe it never will be, but I do have a direction in my life.

When I first started practicing, I really liked the “get enlightenment” part, but I thought that the “helping others” part could wait. My goal was to get straight to the good stuff: *nirvana!* I thought maybe if I meditated hard enough, for long enough, and answered all the kong-ans right, some day it would just happen: I would be sitting there, looking at the floor, and then . . . *boom!* I would get a sudden realization that the whole universe and I were the same, and I would understand all of the divine truths about God, and reincarnation, and Truth. Then, of course, having attained Complete Unexcelled Enlightenment, I would wander the Chinese countryside looking for other learned masters to engage with in dharma combat. I would build a hut of reeds on top of a mountain, and meditate under a waterfall, and young monks would come from far and wide to study with me and, and . . .

Needless to say, when I first showed up at the Barnstable Unitarian Church (where the Cape Cod Zen Center used to meet) one Friday night four years ago, I had high expectations. The evening started off well: we chanted a sutra about form and emptiness (I had read about that in the *Tao Te Ching!*), and then something in Korean—maybe some sort of spell to awaken the Third Eye? However, after that the night went downhill: We just sat still for 20 minutes, and then we walked for 10 minutes, and then we sat again for 20. Those were some of the longest 50 minutes of my life, and nothing really interesting happened.

No dancing goddesses, I wasn’t attacked by demons, and I didn’t reach any mystical states of being. Yet I have been coming back to the Cape Cod Zen Center ever since.

I started a spiritual quest of sorts, relatively young, when I was about 13. I am not exactly sure why I started this quest at such a young age, but I think somehow I innately understood that desire creates suffering (although I wouldn’t have been able to articulate that insight). When I was little I would beg my parents to buy me a certain toy, and if they didn’t I would feel sad or upset.



If they did buy me the toy, just as soon as it was purchased I would want a different toy. When I got a little older my objects of desire changed from physical things to mental things. For weeks on end I would be obsessed with paleontology, and then my interest would change to aliens and UFOs. My attachment to words and speech caused a lot of suffering for me, so I began studying religion, hoping I could find something to cling to, something that would answer my questions about life. I read books about everything from Islam to Shintoism, and I still couldn’t find the answer that I wanted. Somehow, I found a book called *Essential Zen*. I found the stories, poems and kong-ans fascinating, even though I didn’t understand them. I knew that those old Chinese masters had figured something out. They had figured it out,

they had gotten it, attained it. And I wanted it too.

So that is how I discovered Zen. I understood from that first evening at the Unitarian church that Zen is a completely different way of life than what most of us experience. Although Zen is not separate at all from our daily life, it still offers a way of living that is compassionate, aware and kind. I continue to practice Zen, and I want to become a teacher because I sincerely believe that our practice can help everyone.

If I become a teacher, I can share this practice—and what I have attained, if anything—with others. And I can do my part to save all beings. I have had the good fortune in my life to encounter the dharma, and so becoming a teacher is my way of giving back to the sangha, and the whole world. I understand that becoming a dharma teacher-in-training will be a big responsibility, and I will have to learn the correct forms and how to help people who are new to Zen. But I feel ready. My practice has been going well, and I meditate

whenever possible, at least 20 minutes a day. I try to go to retreats whenever possible (which will hopefully be more frequent once I get my driver's license). I think that becoming a dharma teacher-in-training is simply the natural next step in practice.

Not long after I went to the Zen center for the first time, I was in the bathroom washing my hands. I looked in the mirror, and I suddenly realized what I had gotten myself into with this "Zen stuff." I recognized that, one way or another, I would be doing Zen for the rest of my life. So only go straight. Try, try, try for ten thousand years! ♦



Jonathan Earle is currently a sophomore studying biology at Marlboro College. He took five precepts in 2009, and will become a dharma teacher this April. When he's not in school, he lives in Barnstable, Mass., with his family, and he practices at the Cape Cod Zen Center.

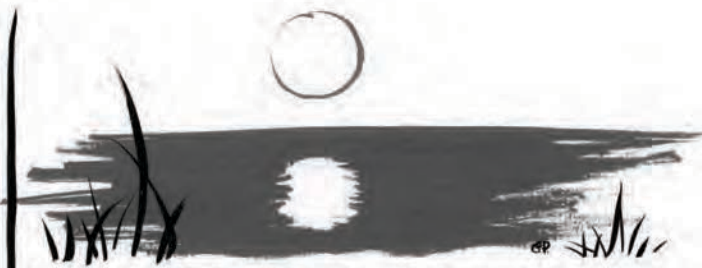


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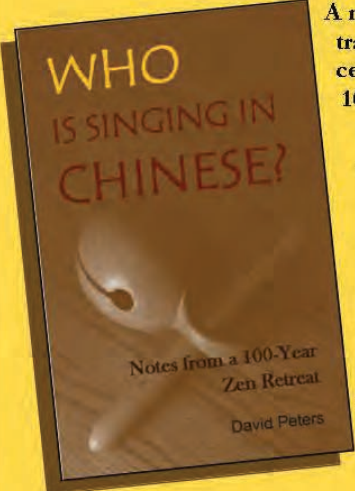
*"Clear mind is like the full moon in the sky. Sometimes clouds come and cover it, but the moon is always behind them. Clouds go away, then the moon shines brightly. So don't worry about clear mind: it is always there. ... Thinking comes and goes, comes and goes. You must not be attached to the coming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

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# Book Review

***All the Garbage of the World Unite***  
(Action Books, 2011)

***Mommy Must Be a Fountain of Feathers***  
(Action Books, 2008)

***Princess Abandoned*** (TinFish Press, 2012)

By Kim Hyesoon

All translated by Don Mee Choi

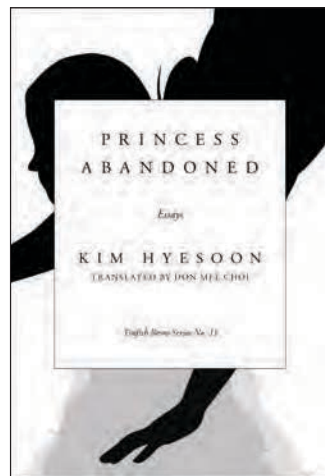
Review by Zen Master Bon Hae

*They are rummaging through the corpses. Those who ignite and hold the torchlights. Outside our sleep, the roads are wet from the rain, and they tear off our nametags . . . Eyeglasses pile up with eyeglasses . . . Babies with babies who are thrown out into the future far, far, away . . .<sup>1</sup>*

Kim Hyesoon (in the Asian tradition, “Kim” is her family name) is an extraordinary Korean poet blessed with an equally extraordinary translator in the Korean-American poet Don Mee Choi.

A poet of astonishing power, Kim does not turn her gaze from things most of us try desperately not to look at, from the realities of political oppression to the realities of the body: *Our skin melts, so anyone can look into anyone’s intestines. Toilets also overflow in dreams . . . Now, I throw salt at you—what little is left of you—inside my heart.*<sup>2</sup> She writes powerfully as a woman from a place of female powerlessness. This cosmopolitan writer, who so easily invokes Western philosophy and global tragedies, is deeply influenced by Buddhism and shamanism. There are a number of online reviews of and homages to her work, which is rich enough that no two people seem to see the same Kim Hyesoon. What I want to draw your attention to here is Kim writing as a woman in a nation with a long Confucian history of prescribed women’s roles—a nation with deep Buddhist and shamanistic roots.

“Not every Asian country is steeped in Buddhist tradition. I was rather raised in a Christian environment. I think Buddhism is more than



a religion, it is first a process of discipline, and Buddha is one who has gained wisdom rather than being a god. In my poetry, I enjoy making fun of Buddha.” This is Kim Hyesoon, in an interview that appeared in conjunction with the *Poetry Parnassus* festival in London, a month before the 2012 Olympics.

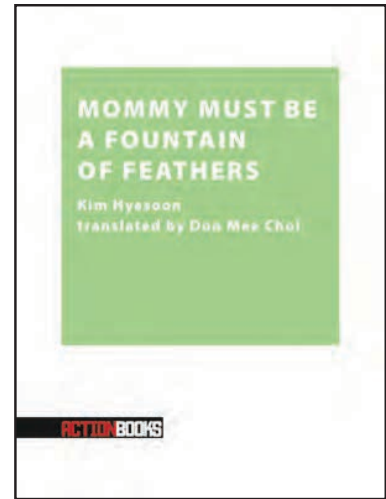
She does not claim Buddhism, but her poems are saturated with Buddhist references: bodhisattvas, asuras, bits and pieces of Buddhist folktales and, of course, the Buddha himself. These are not superficial references. As Jonathan Stalling says in his online review of her work in the journal *LIST*, her poems create “portraits of a vast samsara sea inhabited by countless sentient beings in various forms of death and rebirth [which] appear page after page.”

In the Koryo period (918–1392), and through the first hundred years or so of the Choson, upperclass women had a literary presence. But as Confucianism took hold, from around the middle of the 16th century, women were actively discouraged from learning Chinese—the language of Korean literature—and their poetry, if written down (much of it was oral), was written in hangul and only circulated privately. Women were effectively kept out of the literary tradition.

In the early 20th century, when women began again to have a public poetic presence, they were shunted into using a passive, “feminine” voice. Kim, born in 1955, was a leading figure in smashing through that voice, reinventing language in order to speak from a woman’s lived experience, including the realities of birth and menstruation. But this description is inadequate to Kim’s project. Her reinvention of language is not in the service of any political or social agenda. To quote from the *Parnassus* interview again: “Poetry is language but it also lies outside the realm of language. Poetry is written in the mother tongue and yet it transcends the mother tongue.”

This transcendence is not the transcendence of the Western saint, eyes rolled up to heaven, communing with God. It is the earthy transcendence of the shaman, transcending the human by inhabiting (or, more accurately, being inhabited by) the worlds of animals, ghosts, gods, demons and the dead.

Most Korean shamans are women. They are understood to be performers, learning elaborate dances, rituals and drum patterns. But the efficacy of their performances rests on having undergone a lengthy period of physical illness and mental torment that nobody would plan or wish for. Shamans are considered low-class,





but their services were (and to some extent still are) considered necessary. Shamanism is the oldest religion in Korea by far, and this helps to explain the relatively strong emphasis in Korean Buddhism on magic and the supernatural.

In her remarkable short book of linked essays, *Princess Abandoned*, Kim links the woman shaman and the woman poet: “. . . the books of such poetry are the records of the process of pulling out life from death . . . like the way the boundary between life and death is mashed inside the performance-space [of the shaman] . . . she [the poet] begins to realize that she stands at the center of death rather than at the center of life and that she cannot maintain her life if she does not embrace death.”

Kim’s poetry embodies this process, perhaps most starkly in her remarkable long poem *Manhole Humanity*, in which the word *hole* evokes the emptiness of Buddhism, the holes of the body and, as the translator notes, the physical situation of a bombed-out Korea after the Korean war, as the poem lurches from dream to doctor’s office to a child in a subway station to an intensive-care ward to wherever Kim is looking/remembers/attending to.

“I” is a name for a place of confinement in my body!

“I” is a name for all the things that don’t appear outside the body’s hole!<sup>3</sup>

And, two stanzas earlier, the shamanistic *Today’s dish—put several roots of hatred, add my mashed hole, and mix in shadow powder. Then boil the mixture down.*<sup>4</sup>

In some sense that last sentence encapsulates Kim’s project: embracing everything and boiling the mixture completely and entirely down.

This review was first published in *Galatea Resurrects* #20, May 10, 2013 (galatearesurrection20.blogspot.com)

#### Notes

1. From “The Saints—Mr. and Mrs. Janitor” in *Mommy Must Be a Fountain of Feathers*.
2. From “When the Plug Gets Unplugged” in *Mommy Must Be a Fountain of Feathers*.
3. From *Manhole Humanity*, in *All the Garbage of the World Unite!*
4. From *Manhole Humanity*, in *All the Garbage of the World Unite!*

## Book Review

### *The Lankavatara Sutra: Translation and Commentary*

By Red Pine

Counterpoint Press, 2012

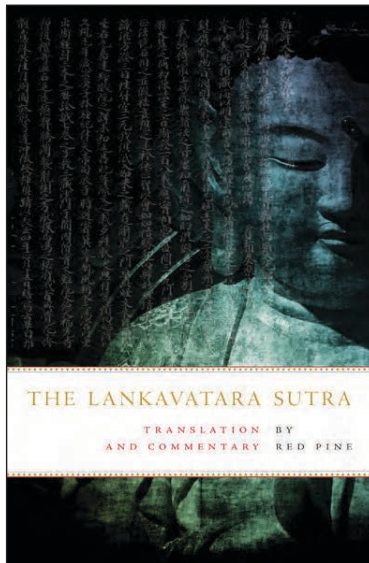
Review by Jess Row

In one of the earliest histories of Chinese Zen, the *Xu gaoseng chuan* (Transmitted Biographies of Eminent Monks) there is a famous passage about Bodhidharma:

In the beginning dhyana master Bodhidharma transmitted the four-fascicle *Lankavatara Sutra* to Huike, saying, “This sutra is the only one that is suitable for China. If you base your practice on it, you will attain salvation.”

Other entries in the same history elaborate this story, claiming that Bodhidharma’s study of the *Lankavatara* carried on for generations among the early Zen masters. Indeed, another history of early Zen is called “Record of the Teachers and Disciples of the *Lankavatara*.” On the face of this evidence, it seems fair to conclude, as Red Pine’s publishers have, that the *Lankavatara Sutra* is “the holy grail of Zen” (this phrase appears prominently on the dust jacket) or “The only Zen sutra spoken by the Buddha” (the title of the book’s press release).

Unfortunately—at least for the publicists—these claims are only a fragment of the story. Most students of Zen know that, in point of fact, there are few references to the *Lankavatara* in traditional Zen texts—and not because the sutra was lost or



somehow “hidden.” (The Chinese translations have remained in circulation from the fifth century to the present.) Even in these historical texts, there’s almost no evidence that any of the early Zen masters actually drew from the *Lankavatara* in their teachings, because no quotations from the sutra are included in their records. After an exhaustive search in his book, *The Northern School and the Formation of Early Ch’an Buddhism*, the scholar John R. McRae concludes that “although the scripture apparently had some kind of mysterious appeal to the followers of early Zen, there is no evidence that its contents had any particular impact on the development of the school.”

So why would the eminent translator Red Pine—who’s published important new translations of the *Diamond Sutra*, teachings attributed to Bodhidharma and the complete poems of Han Shan, among many other texts—set out to translate this admittedly difficult, obscure (and long) sutra, which has no reliable Sanskrit source, and which in Chinese is full of what seem to be copying errors and other textual imperfections? In his preface, he argues that the “mysterious appeal” between Zen and the *Lankavatara*, however historically tenuous, is crucial: “[The *Lankavatara*] is unrelenting in its insistence in the primacy of personal realization and is unlike any other teaching in this regard.”

How is this so? To begin with, let’s look at the basic structure and narrative of the text. *Lankavatara* means “descent to Lanka,” that is, the island we now call Sri Lanka; the sutra tells us that the Buddha has come to Lanka to deliver teachings at the palace of

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the serpent king, Sagara, and that among those in attendance are Ravana, the ten-headed demon king, and the great bodhisattva Mahamati. Ravana asks the Buddha to present his “immaculate teaching,” the teaching that leads to Buddhahood, and the Buddha responds by conjuring up a delightful fantasy—“peaks covered with jewels . . . cities, groves and sunlit forests”—which disappears in an instant. Reflecting on this experience, Ravana asks the Buddha to explain a kind of logical paradox: how can we simultaneously give up attachment to what we think of as reality, *and* what we think of as illusion? “What do you mean,” he asks, “when you say we should abandon these two kinds of dharmas? Wouldn’t this result in projecting the existence of something or the nonexistence of something, something that is real or something that is not real?”

The Buddha’s answer—extended over the whole body of the sutra in a long dialogue with Mahamati—is the fundamental teaching of *cittamatra*, or “mind only”: everything we experience is a projection of mind; the universe as we know it is created by mind. This includes our perception of reality, which largely arises from our seventh, or discriminating, consciousness (*manas*), and our experience of dreams, fantasies and magic, which often emerge from our eighth consciousness—the storehouse consciousness, or *alayavijñāna*, which (somewhat like the Western concept of the unconscious) contains the seeds of our habits, tendencies and karma. The eighth consciousness is key to understanding how Mahayana Buddhist practice works, because the only way to access it—to perceive its workings and its illusory nature—is through meditation as part of the bodhisattva path. As the Buddha says in the *Lankavatara’s* second chapter:

Practitioners who enter dhyana or samadhi but who remain unaware of the changes of the subtler forms of habit-energy think they enter dhyana or samadhi only after consciousness ceases. But in fact their consciousness does not cease . . . because the seeds of habit-energy are not destroyed. The full extent of the subtlety of the repository consciousness remains completely beyond the ken of practitioners of other paths . . . likewise how to get free from the projections and fabrications that are perceptions of their minds.<sup>1</sup>

In the teaching of the *Lankavatara*, the bodhisattva finally becomes free from the workings of the storehouse consciousness by transforming it, through practice, into Buddha nature, the *tathagata-garbha*, or “womb” of the Tathagata.

The problem with learning these complex teachings through the *Lankavatara* is that the text itself is so tricky—full of repetitions, contradictory passages, questions that aren’t answered or passages that are (as Red Pine admits) simply unreliable. (Even the term that he insists definitely links the *Lankavatara* to Zen practice is an ambiguous one: *pratyatma-gati*, or “self-realization,” according to the Digital Dictionary of Buddhism<sup>2</sup> means “personal realization without a teacher,” and is an esoteric term associated with Vairocana Buddha, not influential in Chinese Zen.) Thus this book is a wonderful resource for students who are already familiar with the foundations of Mahayana philosophy, but not a good entry point. For that, I would recommend Paul Williams’ textbook, *Mahayana Buddhism: The Doctrinal Foundations*, which not only provides a clear outline of the teachings but pulls important quotations from a large number

of sutras and commentaries that would otherwise remain almost intractable. Also, because Cittamatra (also called Yogacara) thought forms a large part of Tibetan Buddhist scriptural training, we can rely on our friends in that tradition for resources, too: a great place to start is Andy Karr’s *Contemplating Reality: A Practitioner’s Guide to the View*. A good detailed exploration of the eighth consciousness in particular is William Waldron’s *The Buddhist Unconscious*.

All of the canonical Mahayana sutras have something to say about the importance of personal realization, and most of them—even very difficult and immense texts like the *Avatamsaka Sutra*—are in some ways more appealing, and more consistent, than the *Lankavatara Sutra*. If I were speaking to a new student who hadn’t yet started studying the Mahayana sutras (other than the summaries in *The Compass of Zen*) my own reading recommendations might run in this order of importance and accessibility:

1. *Vimalakirti Sutra* (Burton Watson translation)<sup>3</sup>
2. *Diamond Sutra* (Red Pine translation)<sup>4</sup>
3. *Platform Sutra* (Philip Yampolsky translation)<sup>5</sup>
4. *Lotus Sutra* (Burton Watson translation)<sup>6</sup>
5. *Entrance to the Realm of Reality* (the last section of the *Avatamsaka Sutra*, Thomas Cleary translation)<sup>7</sup>

The *Lankavatara* in this new translation would come after that, along with the *Sutra of Complete Enlightenment*, a text of Chinese origin which had a much larger impact on later Chinese Zen.

As Zen students it’s important for us to read and study sutras, not just to gain deeper and more systematic insight into the buddhadharma, but also to become acquainted with the parts of the Buddhist tradition that Western Zen doesn’t emphasize—the ritualistic importance of texts, the ways the teachings could be manipulated for political or cultural or personal purposes, the messiness and unpredictability of translation between largely incompatible languages and civilizations and the fact that we are encountering a very ancient tradition replete with questions we can never answer and gaps we cannot fill. I like to keep my copies of the sutras on a shelf near where I sit for my daily practice, and read a little bit every few days, becoming accustomed to them as artifacts that offer new insights—and sometimes open up new puzzles—over time. Their nonlinear, repetitive, sometimes opaque language and structure is part of the mystery of the transmission of the dharma itself. On that level alone the *Lankavatara Sutra* is an important text for us to recognize and understand. ♦

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## Notes

1. *The Lankavatara Sutra*, p. 74.
2. <http://www.buddhism-dict.net/ddb/>
3. Burton Watson, trans., *The Vimalakirti Sutra* (New York: Columbia University Press, 2000).
4. Red Pine, trans., *The Diamond Sutra* (Berkeley, CA: Counterpoint Press, 2002).
5. Philip Yampolsky, trans., *The Platform Sutra of the Sixth Patriarch* (New York: Columbia University Press, 1978).
6. Burton Watson, trans., *The Lotus Sutra* (New York: Columbia University Press, 1993).
7. Thomas Cleary, trans., *The Flower Ornament Scripture* (Boston: Shambhala Publications, 1993).

# Poetry

## For Gloria

(After a long absence)

Great teachers have said:  
Fullness of heart is delusion.  
Wherever we look, whatever comes  
Is only emptiness.  
What does this mean?  
“No eyes, ears, nose,  
tongue,  
body,  
mind;  
No color, sound, smell,  
taste,  
touch,  
object of mind.”  
But I answer otherwise,  
Because I know these things:  
The sight of you glowing  
with our son in your arms;  
The sound of you singing quietly when  
you think no one can hear;  
Your fragrance as you pass,  
like a whole mountainside of flowers;  
The taste of your back,  
In morning dark,  
Like fine silk;  
The feel of you in my arms,  
Searing your image upon my mind and  
heart  
Forever.  
That is my answer to the heart of  
wisdom.  
Not enough?  
Hah!  
The complete fullness of your being in  
my arms,  
The absolute emptiness of my heart  
When you are gone,  
Are shouted to the boundless cosmos  
By green tree  
By blue sky  
By bushes blooming  
That would not wait for  
—Robert Lockridge



Photo: Sven Mahr

## Retreat Poem at Gaksu Temple

Red ferry boat crawling  
up the foggy mountain  
Yellow butterflies flying  
away from wooden  
typhoon's eye  
Did the black cow eat  
the single flower?  
Or the flower chanted  
Great Dharani in the  
cow's dream?  
Bei Kap Hao Fu Kap Kap Bei Fu\*  
Happy ice cream time  
after the retreat!  
—Kwan Shim (Nozomi Kobayashi)  
Summer 2013

## Retreat Poem

On ridges of blue mountains  
Clear winds blow  
Autumn cicada is calling  
When evening bell rings  
Teacher's teaching printed in my heart  
Clear Don't Know  
All worries have no trace  
—Katherine Lau  
(October 1, 2013)

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\* Qi Gong breathing exercise during retreat: “Breath in nose, breath out mouth, breath in, breath in, breath out nose.”



Silver moon drapes across deep blue snow  
 And through the open door  
 Spills onto the wooden floor  
 At midnight  
 Fingertips of silver upon these feet  
 Silver moon inside the eyes  
 Silver moon outside the eyes  
 Does not  
 matter  
 Bow upon the floor now  
 His golden radiance like lace upon these  
 shoulders,  
 Gold inside the eyes  
 Gold outside the eyes  
 Who cares?  
 ALL the Heart has ever prayed for  
 While the Mind was Silver, Gold and  
 neither,  
 Is not inside, not outside and not in the  
 middle either.  
 And yet . . .  
 Silver moon spins slowly into the mid-  
 night sky.  
 Golden Buddha sits upon the altar.  
 Stand. Bow. Stand and bow once more,  
 Upon the wooden floor.

—*Jo Potter JDPSN*

### november dawn practice

sitting dawn practice, beside the harbor. a myriad of sunrise pastel, changing moment to moment. in november, only a handful of songbirds singing. a v-shaped group of ducks fly by; their wingbeats break the near silence; they know they are safe, at least here. a lone fishing boat lumbers out to sea. suddenly, in the distance, three shots ring out; kwan seum bosal, kwan seum bosal, kwan seum bosal . . .

—*Jim Calvin*



*Photo: Sven Mahr*

### Where'd It Go?!

Damn! Where'd it go?  
 How could I lose it again! It was just here.  
 When did it leave?  
 I didn't notice.  
 I won't let it happen again.  
 I'll buy a key chain or a leash.  
 Maybe I can find something with a Zen  
 circle on it.  
 And I'll buy that magazine and finish  
 that book.  
 I know, I'll track it on GPS.  
 I'll download the latest version and—

*Shhhhh.*

Excuse me?!  
 Who's that?

*Clear Mind. Don't Know.*  
 Sounds familiar.

*clear mind, don't know . . .*  
 Okay.

*clear mind dont know*

*found it*

—*Craig Coatney*



*Photo: Jan Sendzimir*

## CAMBRIDGE ZEN CENTER

IS A FOCUSED, RESIDENTIAL  
PRACTICING COMMUNITY BASED ON  
THE TEACHING OF  
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## Residential Training at the New Haven Zen Center



The New Haven Zen Center invites Buddhist practitioners looking to deepen their practice to participate in its residential training program. The program includes daily morning Zen practice in community. Senior residents and center teachers provide support for new residents. The New Haven Zen Center has served Connecticut's Buddhist community for four decades in the heart of one of the world's great university cities. Come practice with us.

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[info@newhavenzen.org](mailto:info@newhavenzen.org)

[www.newhavenzen.org](http://www.newhavenzen.org)

## Richard Shrobe

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## Is Residential Training For You?



Current residential training centers include:  
Cambridge, Chogye International Zen Center of NY,  
Dharma Zen Center, Indianapolis, Providence, New  
Haven, and Zen Center of Las Vegas. Please contact  
the Zen centers directly for availability and  
qualifications.

A complete listing of Zen centers can be found  
beginning on page 28.



*"When you understand sitting Zen, you understand  
yourself. In your mind there is a diamond sword. If you  
want to understand yourself, take it and cut off good  
and bad, long and short, coming and going, high and  
low, God and Buddha. Cut off all things."*

-Zen Master Seung Sahn

If you would like to become a member of the Kwan  
Um School of Zen, please fill out the form at the back  
of this issue, or visit [kwanumzen.org/members](http://kwanumzen.org/members).



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For the most current list of centers and web addresses, please visit [www.kwanumzen.org/centers](http://www.kwanumzen.org/centers)

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Buenos Aires Kwan Um Group  
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Morning Star Zen Center  
*Zen Master Hae Kwang*  
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Dharma Zen Center  
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info@dharmazen.com

Empty Gate Zen Center  
Gong Mun Sa  
*Zen Master Bon Soeng*  
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Berkeley, CA 94704  
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Orlando Zen Center  
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*Zen Master Bon Hae*  
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Prairierth Zen Center  
*Lincoln Rhodes JDPSN*  
c/o Rebecca Otte  
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Topeka, KS 66614  
785/224-4678

Tallgrass Zen Center  
*Lincoln Rhodes JDPSN*  
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Chogy International Zen Center  
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*Zen Master Wu Kwang*  
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Three Treasures Zen Center  
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*Hong Poep Won*  
*Head Temple, North America*  
*Zen Master Bon Haeng*  
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## Prison Groups

Arizona State Prison Florence  
 East Unit  
 Lowell Correctional Institution,  
 Florida  
 Lowell Annex, Florida  
 Florida Women's Reception  
 Center, Florida  
 Concord is Northeast Correctional  
 Center, Massachusetts  
 Roslindale Pre-Release Center,  
 Massachusetts  
 MCI Shirley, Massachusetts



# Join Our Sangha Today!

The Kwan Um School of Zen

The heart of the Kwan Um School of Zen is our practice. Zen Master Seung Sahn very simply taught "Don't Know". This

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.

The Zen centers of the Kwan Um School of Zen around the world offer training in Zen meditation through instruction, daily morning and evening meditation practice, public talks, teaching interviews, retreats, workshops, and community living. Our programs are open to anyone regardless of previous experience.

The School's purpose is to make this practice of Zen as accessible as possible. It is our wish to help human beings find their true direction and we vow and to save all beings from suffering.

## Becoming a Member in North America

Your membership in a participating center or group makes you a part of the Kwan Um School of Zen sangha (Buddhist Community). Your dues help support teaching activities on local, national, and international levels. Membership benefits include discounted rates at all retreats and workshops at KUSZ member Zen centers and a subscription to Primary Point Magazine. *(In other parts of the world, contact your local affiliated Zen center or regional head temple.)*

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*To set up a monthly membership with your credit card, visit [kwanumzen.org](http://kwanumzen.org) and select "Donations & Membership"*

1. Please choose a North American Zen Center (see preceding pages). If you are not located near a Zen Center, you may become a member of the head temple, Providence Zen Center.

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\_\_\_\_\_  
\_\_\_\_\_

Send to: Membership: Kwan Um School of Zen, 99 Pound Road, Cumberland, RI 02864

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