

Primary Point



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The Kwan Um School of Zen supports the worldwide teaching schedule of the Zen Masters and Ji Do Poep 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: One of six devas (Buddhist deities) making an offering to the giant Tian Tan Buddha on Lantau Island, Hong Kong. Photo by Nick Gersberg.

Winter Kyol Che 2014/15

DECEMBER 6, 2014 ~ MARCH 5, 2015
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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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Cover: One of six devas (Buddhist deities) making an offering to the giant Tian Tan Buddha on Lantau Island, Hong Kong. Photo by Nick Gershberg.

A Time of Complete Transformation

Zen Master Seung Sahn

Everything that happens in this world is correct. Things go in cycles: spring, summer, fall, winter. Every year this cycle of seasons occurs. But there are longer cycles too, and this year is the beginning of both a 60-year and a 360-year cycle. It is a very interesting time.

There is a very large insect called the cicada, which grows very slowly inside a cocoon fastened to a tree. The transformation from cocoon to winged creature takes a long time, about 17 years, and is very difficult. During this time in the cocoon, the cicada's internal body appears disrupted. The skin, the organs, the wings, all appear not to be working. They aren't moving. The body looks as if it were confused and broken.

Then slowly the cocoon breaks open and the new body begins to appear. A wing emerges, then a leg stretches forth. At first the cicada's movements are slow and difficult. It crawls out of the cocoon and falls to the ground. At this stage the cicada never thinks about the sky or about flying—it only thinks about how to get food, any kind of food. Sometimes it takes three or four hours between the time it leaves the cocoon and the time it is able to fly. But this is a time of complete transformation. One moment it tries to fly and it flies!

We are very worried about the future. How can we ever fly? How can our wings possibly appear? How can we get enough food? Many problems are appearing. If we buy a business, we want to know if the future will be good for sales or bad. So we have many worries. But human beings are part of nature. Like the cicada, even if we have already emerged from our cocoon, it still takes time before we understand how to stretch our wings out and fly. Finally we will fly.

There is always change, but changing means not changing. Moment to moment, everything is complete. Everything that happens is correct. If you are attached to name and form, it means that your thinking appears and disappears. If your thinking does not appear and disappear, everything is complete. If your center is not moving, you will have no difficulty even though many new condi-

tions will appear. If you have no center, you will always have problems. Think of it like this: not much happens in the winter months, the season of cold and ice. No leaves or flowers appear from the frozen ground. When spring comes, the ground thaws. Water goes into the soil and starts working. Everything erupts. The grass grows. Leaves appear and get bigger. Flowers appear. All the colors are changing. Everything is changing, quickly changing.

It's the same in our minds, in our "inside" world as well as the "outside" world. During winter, for three or four months everything stays the same, so we experience no difficulty. In the spring there are many changes, so our minds move and we experience many doubts and problems. Just at this time of the end of an old set of 60-year and 360-year cycles and the beginning of a new set, many things are happening "inside." A strange, complicated mind is appearing.

Just now we need to practice more strongly and make our direction clear. If you are not doing hard practice

or your direction is unclear, any kind of demon might take you. When you die, you will not understand where you go. What kind of hell will you go to? There are many kinds. If in this life you have killed many animals, when you die, these animals will appear to you saying, "Give me my life!"

It is necessary to die every day, and every day to give life. If in one day you die ten thousand times, you are ten thousand times alive. This life is maybe 70 or 80 years long. Many things happen in one life. We think it is so short, but to some beings, even one second is very long.

Buddha went to heaven to save his mother. He only stayed three days, but in this world, it was 90 days. During this time the king missed the Buddha. He went to see the Buddha, expecting a dharma speech, but the Buddha was not there. The king was unhappy. His mind could not rest. So he invited a very good sculptor to make a gold Buddha, and he put it on the Buddha's seat.

Then the Buddha came back. He looked at the gold Buddha—its face and his face were the same! The king ex-



Photo: Sven Mahr

plained, “We missed you, so we made this statue just like you and put it on your seat. Is this good or bad?”

The Buddha said, “You understand form is emptiness, emptiness is form. If you think this Buddha is truth, that is me.” So Buddha statues appeared at that time.¹

Just like that story, if your mind—your center—is strong with no thinking, then you already have infinite time and infinite space. If you have thinking, then even one hour can seem like many years. Sometimes our thinking makes many years seem like only one second. So it’s important how strong your center is. In a changing time, a time of beginnings, it’s very important to have a strong center. At this time, if your direction is clear, then the beginning goes this way and that way. If you are not clear, the future is not clear.

Some people say the end of the world is coming. But when an old age is finished, a new age appears. Human beings are part of the natural cycle, and this is a changing time for all species. This year is the beginning of the age when women will control everything, just as men have up till now: the house, the family, politics, the economy. Soon there will be many more women leading their countries. Women will become as strong as men, as it was thousands of years ago. This change from yang to yin has already begun.

When Bodhidharma came to China, he became the

first patriarch of Zen. As the result of a “marriage” between Vipassana-style Indian meditation and Chinese Taoism, Zen appeared. Now it has come to the West and what is already here? Christianity, Judaism and so forth. When Zen “gets married” to one of these traditions, a new style of Buddhism will appear.

Perhaps there will be a woman matriarch and all dharma transmission would go only from woman to woman. Why not? So everyone, you must create Western Buddhism. Get enlightenment!

In this new age time, a strong center is necessary. Are you clear, everyone? No? Then more hard training is necessary. Also, your direction must become clear. Why do you eat every day? Why do you study Zen? Why do you sit? These are important questions.

Notes

1. In the Avatamsaka Sutra, Buddha goes to the Tushita Heaven to preach to his mother, Queen Maya, who has been reborn there. Tradition has it that all Buddhas go to the Tushita Heaven to preach to their mothers. He spends the entire rainy season retreat there, 90 days, and then returns to Sankashya, which has become a Buddhist pilgrimage site. Although only three days passed in Tushita Heaven, 90 days passed on earth. Before his return, he allowed himself to be seen by Anuruddha, his cousin, who convened an assembly and had a statue made.

Commentary by Jo Potter JDPSN

It is astonishing to me how fresh and indeed how alive Zen Master Seung Sahn’s words still are, even though he has been gone for 10 years now. No matter how often I read his words, I still feel as if I am reading them for the first time.

In this dharma talk, Dae Soen Sa Nim covers immense territory: cycles of seasons, cicadas, cocoons, transformation, our ability to confront problematic life situations, constant changes, the possible emergence of a new style of Buddhism . . . all the way to the transformation from male to female leadership in the political world of today and the coming future. Indeed, he mentions the possibility of matriarchs with dharma transmission from woman to woman.

As I considered this last interesting possibility, I remembered that Dae Soen Sa Nim was one of the leading teachers who moved beyond gender and could without hindrance freely contemplate matriarchs and female leadership. I had

been greatly inspired by this. But then I reflected that I had already experienced a kind of matriarchy. I once lived in a well-known spiritual community where all leadership positions were held by the women. The women decided where the buildings would be placed and the men put them there. Interestingly, the community went to hell, not because the women were not capable but because neither the women nor the men were practicing. We had lost clarity and our centers were definitely not strong. Dae Soen Sa Nim inspired us to open our minds to any possibility, even matriarchy. But any leap forward can be reversed if clarity is lost. There is always one more step.

Dae Soen Sa Nim emphasized what is needed for this one more step: “Strong center is necessary! Direction must become clear!” This is definitely the heart of his talk. He gave us his heart in every possible way. ♦

Fresh Breeze Every Step

Gye Mun Sunim JDPS

One day before lunch, Zen Master Yao Shan hit the drum himself. Following the beats of the drum, the novice monk Gao held a bowl in his hand and danced into the dining hall.

Yao Shan put down the drumstick and asked, "Which section is this?"

Novice Gao replied, "The second section."

Yao Shan asked, "Then, what is the first section?"

Novice Gao took up a scoop of rice and left, coming as wind and going as smoke.

Analysis and Appreciation

Ah! Dancing into the dining hall for a meal. Novice Gao must be the first in Buddhist history to do so! There is an interesting story about Novice Gao. Why didn't he take the monk's precepts, remaining a novice monk instead?

When he first met Yao Shan, the Zen master asked him, "Where are you going?"

Gao said, "Going to Jiang Ling to take the full precepts."

Yao Shan said, "What's the purpose of taking the precepts?"

Gao replied, "To be free of life and death."

Yao Shan said, "There is a person who is free of life and death without taking the precepts. Do you know that?"

Gao said, "That being so, I don't need to take the precepts!"

Indeed, after his enlightenment, Novice Gao did not take the monk's precepts!

We can see that Novice Gao had completely returned to origi-

nal substance and was not bound by external forms. As in this kong-an, a meal could have begun with a joyful dance. Why is it necessary to perform the ritual meal chanting until the dishes are cold before we eat?

When Yao Shan asked "Which section is this?" he was actually asking Gao, "At which level is your current expression?"

"The second section" means the expression of the worldly truth. So, Yao Shan's query "Then, what is the first section?" means "What is the expression of the first truth or ultimate truth?"

Take a scoop of rice and leave. This is an ordinary affair. That is the ultimate truth! There is no need to talk about it. Talking about it falls back into the second or worldly truth.

The beginning of Diamond Sutra says, "After taking the meal, the Buddha kept his robe and bowl, washed his feet, and then sat in meditation." In fact, the Diamond Sutra is already complete at this point. Whatever follows is just like the Chinese idiom, "painting feet on a snake." Out of compassion, the Buddha had to keep talking.

The theme of today's celebration is "Fresh Breeze Every Step."

What is "Fresh Breeze Every Step?"

KATZ!

Watch your step.



Reproduced from the September–October 2014 edition of the Zen Mirror, a bimonthly newsletter of the Kwan Yin Chan Lin (Singapore Zen Center).

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That's Not a Bad Business Deal, Yah?

Zen Master Dae Kwan

In 2003, Zen Master Dae Kwan visited Zen Master Seung Sahn in Seoul. One time he said out loud, to no one in particular, "Much pain! Much pain! My body have much pain!"

Hearing this, Zen Master Dae Kwan said to him, "Sir, please give your pain to us. We want to take your pain."

But Zen Master Seung Sahn only waved his hand in refusal. "No, no, no, no, no! It's enough only I experience this. Never give to you—only I keep!"

But Zen Master Dae Kwan persisted, "No, sir. We want to take your pain away!"

"You cannot," Zen Master Seung Sahn replied. "My pain is very expensive!" "My pain is so expensive, you cannot buy it!"

Zen Master Dae Kwan said, "Then maybe I will sell Su Bong Zen Monastery, get lots of money, and give to you. Then you give us your pain!" Zen Master Seung Sahn only kept silent. "If we give you all of this money, then what will you do with it?" Zen Master Dae Kwan finally asked him.

"I take your money, rent another Zen center, and save all beings from suffering!" At these words, everybody burst out laughing. Zen Master Seung Sahn also laughed and said, "That's not a bad business deal, yah?"

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Nothing That Is Not There and the Nothing That Is

John Holland

In *The Compass of Zen* our founding teacher, Zen Master Seung Sahn, admonished us:

You make your world. You make your time and your space. You also make the cause and effect that controls your life. All these things come from our minds. First, what is time? Past, present, and future do not exist. Where is the past? Where is the future? You cannot find them anywhere. Everybody knows this, and contents themselves with the belief that at least the present exists and is real. Yet if you even say that the present exists, it is just as great a delusion. Where is the present? Saying “present,” it’s already past. The moment you say that word—“Present!”—it has already become “past.” Your thinking makes past, present, and future, so you have time . . .

Our thinking also makes space because originally space, too, simply does not exist. America is here, and Korea is over there. America has north, south, east, and west; Korea also has north, south, east, and west. But America’s north, south, east, and west are different from Korea’s north, south, east, and west. “I am here. I have north, south, east, and west. When I disappear, where is my north, south, east, and west?”

And yet we may recall Zen Master Seung Sahn’s presence in the kinetic memorial to him designed by the artist Mark Mendel facing North America’s nor’-nor’-west. The 8-foot-by-9-foot slab of granite, now set vertically upon a Virginia slate plinth, was once a well cover that for two hundred years kept the feet of families dry when they came to the well. Through the circular hole where once water was drawn we see an 8-foot stele:

*In emptiness the two are the same,
And each holds the ten thousand things.*

The hole itself resembles *taeguk*, the symbol used in the South Korean flag that contains a balanced *ying* and *yang*. For some it may appear as an *enso* or the Zen Circle.

Mark Mendel has embellished the rugged well-stone by limning it with a golden glass aura that dramatically catches sunlight or moonlight. It reminds us of the fiery aspect of our Founding Zen Master. On the opposite side



Photo: Barry Briggs JDPSN

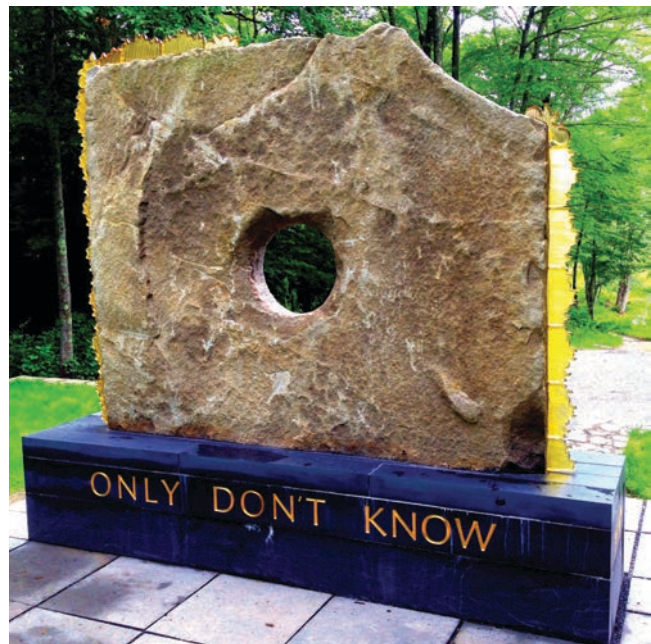


Photo: Barry Briggs JDPSN



Photo: Barry Briggs JDPSN

of the stone, Mark invited Karin Sprague Stone Carvers to hand letter and gold leaf “ONLY DON’T KNOW.” The handsome letters, as on the front of the monument, are each 5 inches high in the style of Palatino Nova Sans. This typeface was released in 2005 by the esteemed typographers Hermann Zapf and Akira Kobayashi. Karin Sprague says that she chose this typeface because of its clarity—“Clear mind, clear mind—Don’t know.”

At the unveiling of the monument on August 2, 2014, at the Providence Zen Center, Mark Mendel said that he had seen the spectacular well cover in Maine fifteen years ago. He purchased it for his stoneyard, where he also had the stone that would become the stele. He liked the two stones so much that he put a high price on them, thus managing to hold on to them until their purpose became



Photo: Barry Briggs JDPSN

clear. This happened soon after Zen Master Soeng Hyang gave a dharma talk at the Zen South County Center in Great Barrington, Massachusetts, a year ago. When she met Mark there, he told her that he had read many books by Zen Master Seung Sahn and that he was a stonemason. She asked to visit his yard and saw the two stones.

Mark has linked the stones with a narrow fieldstone pathway that resembles a mandala. Behind the stele, which reminds one of a pagoda, a more traditional Asian monument, are meditative trees. He believes that this monument is the most important artwork he has yet created. At the unveiling Mark quoted Shunryu Suzuki Rōshi as describing some stones as alive, some as dead. These stones, Mark vouchsafes, are alive.

Zen Master Seung Sahn selected the site for the nearby monastery because of the pond, hills and ridges surrounding it. The flat space on which the memorial sits was recently created. The whole site is considered to have Kwan Seum Bosal energy, that is to say, soft energy.

In front of the memorial the fieldstones embrace the steps that are like a brook of a dry garden that eventually plunges with telluric energy into the pond below Diamond Hill Monastery and to the Providence Zen Center. It is purported that *ki* rides the wind and scatters, but is retained when encountering water. The steps lead up to the stupa. Ultimately, however, the steps are just steps.

Thank you, Zen Master Soeng Hyang, for your perspicacity in obtaining the talent of Mark Mendel for this memorial to Dae Soen Sa Nim.

Note: The title of this piece comes from “The Snow Man” by Wallace Stevens. For Zen Master Seung Sahn’s admonishment to us, see *The Compass of Zen*, pages 89–91. The two-line quotation is from *Trust in Mind: The Hsin Shin Ming of Tseng Ts’an, Third Patriarch of Zen*, translated by Zen Master Hae Kwang (Stanley Lombardo). David Chadwick recounts the comment about alive and dead stones on page 344 in *Crooked Cucumber: The Life and Zen Teaching of Shunryu Suzuki* (1999). Reference to *ki* (*qi*) is from *The Zangshu*; or, *Book of Burial* by Guo Pu (276–324), translated by Stephen L. Field (2009; fengshuigate.com/zangshu.html).



John Holland is a long-time member of the Chogye International Center of New York. After training in the New Haven Zen Center, he became a dharma teacher in 1995. In 2008 he took the vows of a bodhisattva teacher. John has taught meditation at Union Theological Seminary of New York, Columbia University, and for extended periods at the Institute of Omega for Holistic Studies, as well as at New York Chogyesa. For many years he was an active member of the Buddhist Council of New York. John was the coeditor of *Don’t-Know Mind: The Spirit of Korean Zen* and *Elegant Failure: A Guide to Zen Koans*, by Zen Master Wu Kwang. In addition to Zen, John also practices tai chi and bird-watching.

Pilgrimage in China: A Trip to Jiu Hua Mountain

Editor's Note:

In April of 2014, a group of monastics and laypeople from our Asian sangha visited root temples from our Chinese heritage at Jiu Hua Mountain in China. The tour was documented in photographs by Teresa C. H. Tao, who was kind enough to share them with us, along with some captions about the sites. Visits to sites such as these have the feel of a pilgrimage, which is also part of the Zen tradition. We've asked Zen Master Ji Kwang, who has gone on pilgrimages in India and elsewhere, to say something about the spirit of pilgrimage. Mengxiao Wang and Guo Gu Yu provided translations of some of the calligraphies seen in the photos. I've chosen stories about encounters between the ancestors to add to some of the photographs. It may help us appreciate why these sites have been preserved and the reason for visiting them. When Dizang asked Fayen why Fayen was on a pilgrimage, Fayen said, "I don't know." Dizang responded, "Not knowing is most intimate." May this essay help us become intimate with our ancestors.

Going for a Pilgrimage

Zen Master Ji Kwang

Some years ago I experienced many inspiring days and weeks together with my wife at Buddhist and Hindu pilgrimage sites in India, Nepal, Burma and Thailand. I clearly remember how overwhelming it was walking, sitting and chanting at the Mahabodhi Temple in Bodhgaya. We were touched by the energy of the place and

spent many hours each day at the temple compound in a state full of peace, bliss and good feelings.

But why and how does visiting particular Buddhist places help us? India, China, Korea, Thailand and Japan are full of temples and holy places. Do those locations indeed have special powers that benefit us as pilgrims? Here is a story dealing with this.

Once a successful businessman from China was about to leave for a business trip to a place in another part of his country. When his old mother heard about this, she immediately was reminded of a holy shrine near his destination, where bones from Buddha Shakyamuni were stored—at least this is what Buddhist people believed. So the mother asked her son to bring some relics from this place. The man went there, had a successful business trip, and only when he arrived back at his hometown he remembered his mother's



wish. But alas, he had completely forgotten about the relics. By chance he saw some bones from a dead dog at the side of the road near the railway station and picked them up, wrapped them in a nice cloth and went home.

When he entered the house his mother immediately asked him whether he had been able to bring some relics with him. He handed the beautifully wrapped bones to her; the old lady was overwhelmed with joy and tears were flowing down her cheeks. The same day she went to a Buddhist shop and bought a small golden pagoda in which she placed the holy bones from Buddha and placed it prominently on her altar. Soon the neighbors and the whole village heard about the relics. They all came to the house, did many bows and practiced there together in front of the altar. When the house became too small, they built a temple there with all the donations that appeared. Finally this place became a famous pilgrimage site in the area. The old lady was very happy and attained great enlightenment due to her persistent and intense practice in front of her altar with the holy relics. She also helped and served all the pilgrims and spent time together with them like a great bodhisattva.

There is no doubt about one thing: what we usually find at pilgrimage sites are old stones and bricks,

maybe old bones or teeth connected with old stories. Is a pilgrimage just a sentimental deceit, brainwashing and self-deception?

As the *Avatamsaka Sutra* says: Our mind makes everything. If we believe in holiness, we see holiness. If we open ourselves to something we believe is special, it becomes special. Then it is possible that this “special” affects us, nourishes us, inspires us and generates a special experience.

Zen Master Seung Sahn once said that Un Mun’s shit stick has already broken all temples. The message is clear: don’t hold on to “special,” don’t attach to holiness, don’t even keep any ideas. Then everything is Buddha—even dog bones are Buddha. Our practice means to become clear, attain freedom and help all beings. In this respect a pilgrimage tour may become a wonderful part of our practice. Everyone who has been to Bodh Gaya or to famous temples in China or Korea knows how much inspiration such a visit can induce. We meet new comrades on the path, practice with full endeavor and experience supportive energy. We get free from our situation, condition and opinions, and we attain “Sky is blue over the old pagoda.”

Photos and captions by Teresa C.H. Tao

Day 1, April 15, 2014



Zen Master Dae Kwan (abbot of Su Bong Zen Monastery, Hong Kong) presented a gift to Ven. Zhong Zue (abbot of Da Jue Temple and Nan Quan Temple, China). The couplet reads:

三日修身千載寶
(Three days of self-cultivation—a jewel that lasts for thousands of years.)

百年食物一朝塵
(A hundred years worth of provisions—mere dust of a single day.)

Day 2, April 16, 2014



Thousand-Buddha Hall in the Third-Ancestor Temple, Qian Shan County, An Hui Province. The calligraphy “Thousand Buddha Hall” on the horizontal board was written by Mr. Zhao Puchu (1907–2000), a religious and public leader who promoted cultural progress and religious tolerance in China. As president of the Communist Party of China, he supported the Buddhist Association of China. He was also a renowned calligrapher.



Bai Sui Gong Temple, Jiu Hua Mountain. (Bai Sui means “a hundred years old.”) Ven. Wu Xia’s corporeal body (mummy) is located inside. (Wu Xia means “flawless.”)

欽賜百歲宮

(The Imperially Decreed Hall of Hundredfold Age.)

護國萬年寺

(The State-Protection Monastery of Ten Thousand Years.)



The corporeal body (mummy) of Ven. Ren Yi, who was the abbot of Tong Hye Zen Temple, Jiu Hua Mountain. (The name Ren Yi literally means “humanity justice.”)

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The Sutra Hall of Hua Cheng Temple, Jiu Hua Mountain.



Five-Hundred-Arhat Hall on Jiu Hua Mountain. It is located right beside Bai Sui Gong Temple. After Shakyamuni Buddha entered Nirvana, the Venerable Mahakashyapa led 500 arhats to compile the Tripitaka (“Three Treasuries,” the Buddhist scriptural canon) at the Seven-Leaf Cave.

Day 3, April 17, 2014



Da Jue Temple, Jiu Hua Mountain. (Da Jue means “great enlightenment.”) The abbot is Ven. Zhong Zue.



Jiu Hua Mountain Da Yuan Buddhist Culture Park. (Da Yuan means “great vow.”) Behind the gate is the 99-meter statue of the Earth Store Bodhisattva (aka Ji Jang Bosal).

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Zen Hall of Da Jue Temple, Jiu Hua Mountain.

Day 4, April 18, 2014



Nan Quan Zen Temple ruins, Tong Ling city, An Hui Province. (Nan Quan means “south spring.”) The temple was named after Zen Master Nan Quan (aka Nam Cheon), best known as the protagonist in the kong-an “Nam Cheon Kills a Cat.”

铜陵市郊区文物

(Historical preservation site in the suburb of Tongling City.)

南泉寺遗址

(Relics of the South Spring Temple.)



Cave of the San Zu, Qian Shan County, An Hui Province. (San Zu means "third ancestor.")

The left line reads: "Shen Kwang mind-to-mind transmission to Sengcan." (Shen Kwang is the Second Ancestor's secular name. He is more commonly known as Huike. Sengcan was the Third Ancestor.) The right line reads: "Dharma transmission in the sacred site of Si Kong Mountain."

Third Ancestor Sengcan's Enlightenment

A layman whose name is not known [who would later become Sengcan, the Third Ancestor] came to Huike and said, "My body has been wracked by a terrible illness. I ask that you help me absolve the transgression I've committed that has caused this."

Huike said, "Bring me the transgression you've committed and I'll absolve it."

The layman said, "I look for the transgression but I can't find it."

Huike said, "There, I've absolved your transgression. Now you should abide in Buddha, Dharma, and Sangha."¹



The abbot of the Fourth-Ancestor Temple, Ven. Ming Ji, gives a gift to Zen Master Dae Bong.



Memorial Hall of the former abbot, Ven. Jin Hui at the Fourth-Ancestor Temple, Huang Mei County, Hu Bei Province.

八解六通心地印

(The eight liberations and the six spiritual penetrations are the seal of the mind-ground.)

六度萬行體中圓

(The six paramitas and the myriad practices are perfected in [the mind's] essence.)

Fourth Ancestor Daoxin's Enlightenment

The novice monk Daoxin, only fourteen years old, came to pay respect to Sengcan.

Daoxin said, "I ask for the Master's compassion. Please tell me of the gate of emancipation."

Sengcan said, "Who has bound you?"

Daoxin said, "No one has bound me."

Sengcan said, "Then why are you seeking emancipation?"²



The-Fifth Ancestor Temple, Huang Mei County, Hu Bei Province.

上接達摩一脈

(Inheriting upward the single lineage of Bodhidharma.)

下傳能秀兩家

(Transmitting downward both lineages of Huineng and Shenxiu.)

Fifth Ancestor Hongren

Legend has it that Hongren is the reincarnation of an ancient Daoist master who, as an old man, met Daoxin. Asking for the Dharma, he was told that he was too old to pass it along, and that he should seek him out in the next life. Subsequently born to a poor village woman, he was called the "No-Name Child" and was said to have all but seven of the marks of the Buddha. Daoxin encountered the child while walking to Huangmei. He asked the boy, "What is your name?" The boy answered, "I have a name, but it isn't a permanent name." Daoxin said, "What name is it?" The boy answered, "Buddha." Daoxin said, "You don't have a name?" The boy said, "It's empty, so I don't possess it."³



The Sixth Ancestor's working area, the Fifth Ancestor Temple, Huang Mei County, Hu Bei Province.

慧能舂米處

(The place where Huineng pounded rice.)

祖師遺物

(These are the relics of the Sixth Ancestor.)

嚴禁觸摸

(Touching them is forbidden.)

Sixth Ancestor

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I then went to pay homage to the Ancestor. He asked, "Where are you from and what do you want?"

I replied, "I am a commoner from Xinzhou in Guangdong. I have traveled far to pay my respects and ask for nothing but Buddhahood."

"You are a native of Guangdong, a barbarian? How can you expect to be a Buddha?" asked the Ancestor.

I replied, "Although people may be from the north or south, Buddha-Nature originally has no north or south. A barbarian may be different from the Ancestor physically, but there is no difference in our Buddha-Nature."

He was going to speak further to me, but the presence of other disciples made him stop. He then ordered me to join the others to work.

Then I said, "May I tell you, Venerable, that Prajna (transcendental Wisdom) often rises in my mind. When one does not stray from True Nature, that is called a 'field of merit.' Venerable, what work would you ask me to do?"

"This barbarian is too bright," he remarked. "Go to the stable and speak no more." I then went to the rear of the monastery and was told by a lay brother to split firewood and pound rice.

More than eight months later the Ancestor saw me one day and said, "I know your knowledge of Buddhism is very sound; but I have to refrain from speaking to you, because bad people may harm you. Do you understand?"

"Yes, Sir, I do. To avoid people taking notice of me, I dare not go near you."⁴

Notes

1. From Andrew Ferguson, *Zen's Chinese Heritage* (Somerville, MA: Wisdom Publications, 2000), 21.
2. *Ibid.*, 24.
3. *Ibid.*, 27, 30.
4. From *Platform Sutra of the Sixth Patriarch*, translated by Dae Kwang Sunim and Dae Kwan Sunim (Hong Kong: Su Bong Zen Monastery, 2007), 151–52. Please note that in this quotation we have changed *Patriarch* to *Ancestor*, for consistency with the rest of this article.



Dr. Teresa C. H. Tao works for the Department of Geography at the University of Hong Kong. She has practiced at Su Bong Zen Monastery for several years.



Book Excerpt: Who Is Singing in Chinese? Notes from a 100-Year Zen Retreat

David Peters

Popular wisdom has it that Zen is some kind of “chill-pill.” Feeling tense, keyed up, stressed out? Plagued by sleepless nights and circling thoughts? Just take up meditation, turn off your thinking, and bask in feelings of tranquility and bliss. Or so the theory goes.

If that was all there was to it, Zen might help, but it could hardly transform your life. It turns out that Zen has little in common with popping pills, but is a discipline more akin to running marathons, becoming a concert pianist, or swimming the Florida Straits to Cuba. Or more to the point: To emptying a shuttered house of all its contents and fixtures, making your way inside again and again, to carry out each shadowy item, one by one, and carefully place them on the lawn in the full light of day—every spoon, every sock, every nail, every dog hair. Oh yes, and the house is on fire.

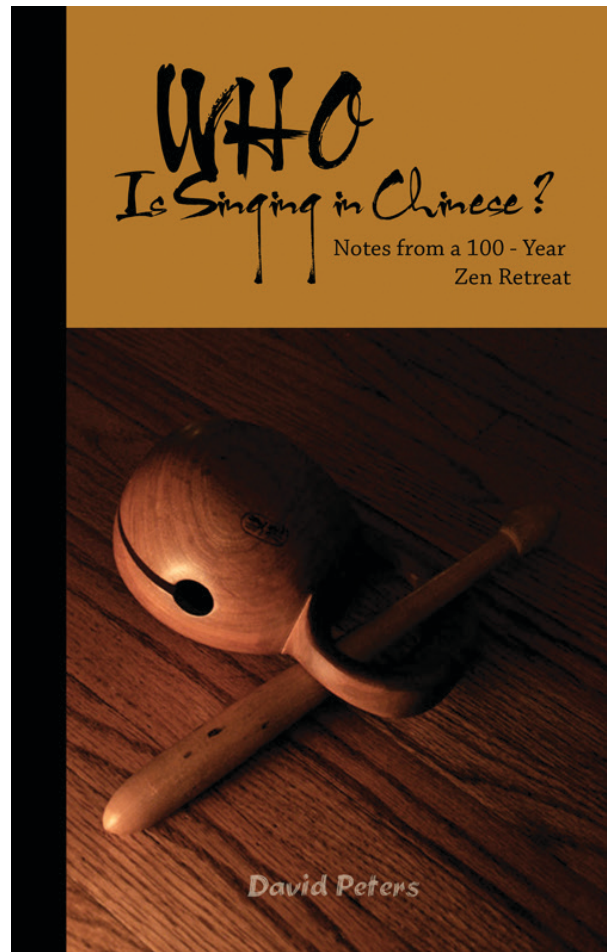
This is hard to appreciate unless you have taken up the discipline yourself—and not so easy, even then. So much of our work in Zen seems to take place behind a curtain.

Zen is interested in what lies beyond the curtain. In the beginning, of course, I had no inkling of any such thing. I only knew that I wanted whatever it was that these Zen people had. In those days our guiding teacher used to make the long drive from eastern Iowa to Madison a couple of evenings a month, to sit Zen with us and give *kong-an* interviews or a *dharma* talk. Bill Brown’s talks were not to be missed. They were warm, sweet, funny—like Bill himself—and for those of us new to this teaching, deeply encouraging. But this was Zen, so they could also be a bit baffling.

One evening Bill gave a talk from which I recall only a single point. He said, “Somehow you have to make this practice real.”

Somehow . . . Now let me just say, nobody wants to hear that. You look at the man seated before you, wearing the teacher’s robe and *kasa*, turning the lacquered Zen stick in his hands. He has more than thirty years of Zen practice under his belt and the honorific “Master” appended to his name. You have to think he knows his way around this practice, knows his way around this *mind*. I remember thinking at the time: What the hell?! This is lousy teaching! “Somehow” is not very long on specifics, you know?

But after many years of Zen practice, I feel that this is



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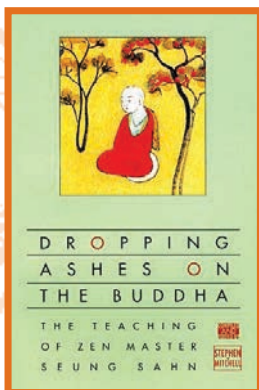
very good Zen teaching, maybe the best kind.

Our small self is all too willing to settle for a pill. Or if not a pill, then perhaps a brief technical manual, with easy-to-follow, step-by-step instructions disclosing every relevant detail of Buddhist practice and stipulating delivery of the promised goods—“enlightenment”(whatever that means)—within a specified time frame. But the remedies we want may not be the ones we actually need.

Bill Brown’s “somehow” undercuts all of that. “Somehow” is big, so much bigger than any remedy or instruction manual. In this vast “somehow” is everything we do not know, everything to which our small self remains stubbornly oblivious. In this vast place of not knowing, we are thrown back upon our own fathomless resources,

(Continued on page 26)

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 Choson 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*

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*

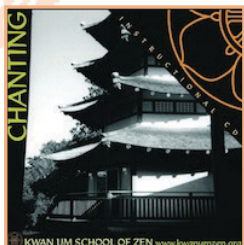
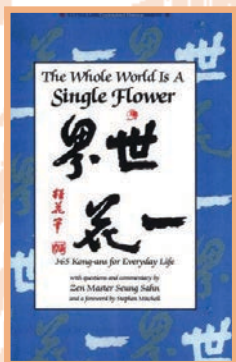
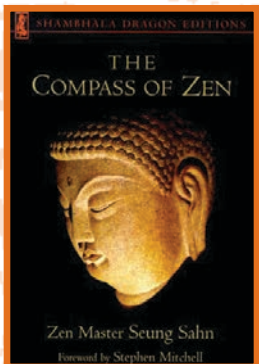
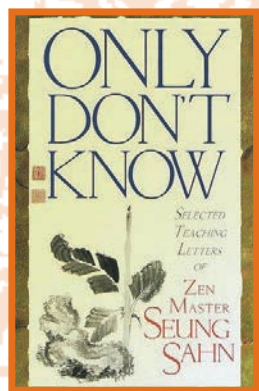
Wake Up! On the Road with a Zen Master. An entertaining documentary that captures Zen Master Seung Sahn's energy and presents the core of his teaching. 54 minutes. *Primary Point Press, 1992. VHS: ISBN 0-942795-07-5. \$30.00 DVD: ISBN 0-942795-14-8. \$30.00*

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*

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Book Review

The Hidden Lamp

Edited by Florence Caplow and Susan Moon

Wisdom Publications, 2013

Review by Barry Briggs JDPSN

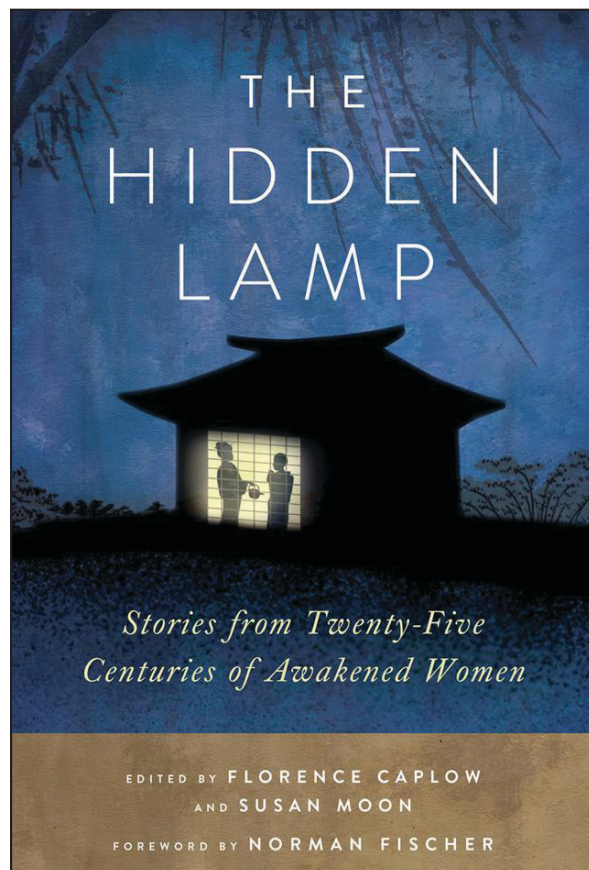
Imagine a favorite lamp. It sits next to a comfortable chair and provides light for reading and conversation. Perhaps it also creates a sense of home. And, if you've had the lamp for a while, it might also evoke feelings of continuity and heritage.

Zen Buddhism, from its earliest days, has provided lamps to guide practitioners. These were known lamp records (*teng-lu*) and originated about 550 CE in the development of lists of eminent monks. Then, in the mid-900s, the teachings of famous masters such as Linji and Joju were collected into "recording sayings" (*yu-lu*) so that practitioners could study their teachings. A few decades later, the first formal lamp records appeared. These works, known as "transmission of the lamp" collections (*ch'uan teng-lu*), gathered together selected sayings of respected masters. Both ancient and modern kong-an collections depend on these lamp records.

As Zen developed in the centuries after the T'ang Dynasty (618–907), the lamp records served several important functions. First, they distinguished "legitimate" Zen masters from various pretenders. Second, they offered criteria for recognizing a master. And, finally, they illuminated—and continue to illuminate—the intimate heart of Zen.

But the historical lamp records shone light only on the lineage of male masters and practitioners. Women were almost completely absent. As Zen literature developed in the later Song period (960–1279), the lineage charts and lamp records became more fragmented. And, coincident with this fragmentation, stories of strong female practitioners began to receive more attention. Odd, that.

I first became aware of the limited attention given to women's stories in 1992 when the Kwan Um School's kong-an collection, *The Whole World Is a Single Flower*, was published. As I read through the cases, I realized that only a handful involved women; to be precise, nine of the 365 kong-ans include a woman as one of the actors. Later, as I looked into the Chinese lamp records (translated into English), I realized that *The Whole World Is a Single Flower* actually was generous in its inclusion of cases involving women—such cases were exceedingly rare in the Chinese collections. In fact, I found only about fifty such cases from the T'ang Dynasty—the period of Zen's Chinese flowering.



Of course, women practiced Zen in the old days. Of course, some were equals of the great male teachers. But for the most part these women and their stories were marginalized in the most prominent Chinese lineage charts and lamp records. These omissions have left women in the dark. It has denied them a place within the tradition, excluded them from authority, and has suggested—not very subtly—that illumination was not for them: women could not serve as bearers of the lamp.

Of course, our shared experience as modern Zen practitioners tells us otherwise. We practice with, and are guided by, women who manifest considerable wisdom, compassion and generosity. These women are neither rare nor isolated—they are the norm in virtually all Western Zen sanghas. So we might ask: Where is the lamp record that accurately reflects the role of women in Zen? With the publication of *The Hidden Lamp*, that collection has arrived.

The Hidden Lamp gathers together one hundred stories of awakened women spanning the history of Buddhism. An essay by a modern female teacher accompanies

each case, conclusively demonstrating the legitimacy of women's place in modern Buddhism. And, as with the old lamp collections, the cases and commentaries illuminate the way for all practitioners.

The commentators in *The Hidden Lamp* come primarily from the various Zen traditions (including some from the Kwan Um School of Zen), but several teach in other Buddhist traditions. This diversity broadens the significance of the primary cases, giving them a resonance that may surprise many readers. Although each commentator offers her own perspective, the commentaries as a whole are personal and intimate, clear-eyed and honest, and point directly at the great matter of Zen.

For example, one case features Charlotte Joko Beck (1917–2011), a dharma heir of Maezumi Roshi:

Joko Beck had finished a talk and asked if there were any questions. A young man raised his hand and bluntly asked, "Are you enlightened?" Her response was immediate. Laughing, she said, "I hope I should never have such a thought!"

Peg Syverson, who studied with Joko Beck, offers a commentary in which she notes, "He [the young man] was no doubt wondering: 'Can this teacher really help me? Can I trust her?'" Syverson then reveals something deeply intimate about her own work with Joko Beck. Early on, Beck asked what had brought her to Zen. After reflection, Syverson said, "I just want to be a better mother for my son." Beck then "tartly replied, 'Well, that's a story!'" Syverson describes how she then lost her bearings, as though Beck "had suddenly tossed a pitcher of ice water in my face." A good lamp shines light onto unseen places.

Furyu Nancy Schroeder reflects on a well-known case involving the great Chinese master, Zhaozhou (Jōju):

One day Master Zhaozhou Congshen was outside the monastery and an old woman came along carrying a basket. He asked her, "Where are you going?" The old woman said, "I'm going to steal Zhaozhou's bamboo shoots." Zhaozhou asked, "What will you do if you run into Zhaozhou?" The old woman walked up to Zhaozhou and slapped him.

Schroeder's commentary delves into the complexity of this relationship

Does Zhaozhou meet the old woman freshly and openly? . . . not just this woman, this meeting, this moment—all meetings, all moments, all women. They've known each other, loved each other, slapped each other before . . .

Schroeder then goes to the heart of the matter:

We don't see the word "love" used so often in the Dharma. In fact, there seems to be a fear of it. In particular, the body of it: the lovely body,

at every age, of the child, of the woman, and of the man. But if what's happening in this story isn't love, including, dare I say, "sex," then I'm a monkey's uncle.

I once corresponded with James Green, translator of *The Recorded Sayings of Joshu*, to see if this case's original Chinese contained any suggestion of sexuality. Green said that the Chinese text did not, nor did it seem to him even to point in that direction. I believe Schroeder's commentary comes closer to the mark. A good lamp accurately illuminates history.

Several of the cases come from the Korean Zen tradition, including this one:

One day a nun asked Manseong Sunim, "How do I cultivate the Way of the Buddha?" "No cultivation," answered Manseong. The nun persevered, "How, then, can I obtain release from birth and death?" "Who chains you to birth and death?" Manseong asked in return.

In her commentary on this exchange, Barbara Rhodes explores the student-teacher relationship. She asks, "What if she [the nun] hadn't had a teacher? Then what would she do? What did the Buddha do?" From this, Rhodes explores the importance of looking into the great questions of life and death with unstoppable effort. For Rhodes, doubts and questions were "my ticket home." She goes on to write:

The koan says at one point, "the nun persevered." That is exactly what we need to do . . . When student and teacher sit down together, the student speaks, the teacher listens; the teacher speaks, the student listens . . . The Way has already appeared.

Who chains you to birth and death? Look in the mirror, then go have a cup of tea. Only you know if it's hot or cold.

A good lamp always reveals the essential matter.

Many of the classical kong-an collections, such as *The Blue Cliff Record* and *The Wu-Men Kuan*, expand upon the kong-ans themselves with introductory instructions, commentaries and verses. In this spirit, the editors of *The Hidden Lamp* have followed each of the commentaries with their own "pointers"—questions designed to stimulate a deeper investigation of the cases. For me, these questions distracted from the heartfelt commentaries, but other practitioners may find value in them.

Despite its claim to a transmission "outside the scriptures," Zen teaching has always depended on literary sources and texts, especially the lamp records. Now, with the publication of *The Hidden Lamp*, women join as full partners in the transmission of the lamp. May this light shine brightly on all beings. ♦

Book Review

Korean Buddhist Nuns and Laywomen: Hidden Histories, Enduring Vitality

Edited by Cho Eun-su

State University of New York Press, 2011

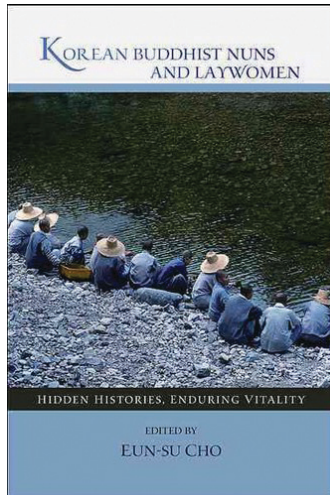
Review by Seon Joon Young

When *Korean Buddhist Nuns and Laywomen: Hidden Histories, Enduring Vitality*, edited by Cho Eun-su, was published in 2011, I was excited to see an academic book in English focused exclusively on the under-examined role of women in Korean Buddhism.

Finding English-language material on Korean Buddhism can be difficult enough; what research has been done has focused on two main areas: (1) major (male) figures of Korean Buddhism and their personal contribution to Korean Buddhist thought, and (2) overviews of Korean Buddhism in historical contexts, such as the series on Korean Buddhism in Korea edited by Lewis Lancaster and C.S. Yu. If we were to only read about Korean Buddhism and never actually visit or engage its complex and multifaceted world, our picture of Korean Buddhism would be at best misleading, and at worst an ignorant erasure of half its contributing members. This book proposes to begin the long process of reshaping our understanding of Korean Buddhist history by highlighting research on the lives of Korean Buddhist women.

This is not an easy task, however. As Eun-su Cho herself notes in the introduction to *Korean Buddhist Nuns and Laywomen*, one large reason why nuns—individually or as a community—are not an object of study in the same way as their male counterparts is because nuns are underrepresented in historical records. These include the two major indigenous historical Korean works, the 12th-century *History of the Three Kingdoms* (*Samguk Sagi*) and the 13th-century *Memorabilia of the Three Kingdoms* (*Samguk Yusa*), dynastic annals and epigraphic records, and firsthand narratives such as personal diaries. As a result, when looking at Korea's past as represented in the remaining material, nuns seem to have literally disappeared.

Cho is quick to point out, however, that if the sangha of nuns were as absent in actuality as they are textually, it is unlikely that the strong and vibrant community of contemporary Korean nuns would exist as it does today. The



historical foundation for the current nuns' community has always been there, simply hidden beneath selective histories and obscured by what Cho calls the "most formidable obstacle to our research of the near past . . . Buddhist women and monastics' own writings about their lives and religious practices are almost nonexistent." Cho locates this lack of firsthand accounts in Korean women's own reticence and seclusion:

This absence [of material] is largely due to a widespread reaction of Korean nuns in their personal attitudes in which they developed common outlooks on practice that had a significant impact on their presence in the historical record. Specifically, one of their key

coping mechanisms was to seclude themselves entirely from the outside world. . . . Because Korean nuns in the past five hundred years experienced both the oppression of Buddhism and the ideology of male primacy, later nuns seem to have accepted the fact that seclusion was their traditional, normative lifestyle. Determined to preserve such a tradition and to avoid revealing their personal abilities, nuns have virtually quarantined themselves in their meditation rooms and lecture halls in the mountains of Korea, even up to the present day. Hence, it is an urgent task for researchers to document nuns' achievements in modern Korean Buddhist history and record oral interviews with elderly nuns before they die.

In large part, then, this book is a call to arms for those who study Buddhism: knowing that the lack of historical materials has skewed the present understanding of Korean Buddhism, it is necessary to work toward two goals. Researchers need not only to rectify our view of the past through more careful examination of what materials we have, but also record the materials that now and in the future will give an accurate account of the role of women



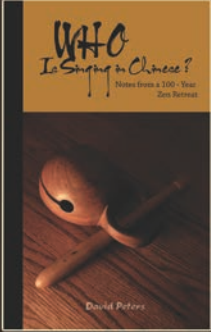
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in contemporary Korean Buddhism.

Despite Cho's urgent request for thorough ethnographic work focused on the lives and contributions of women within the contemporary Buddhist community, the two chapters focusing on the contemporary nuns' sangha are little more than overviews, rather than examples of the kind of ethnographic work Cho insists is critical to research. The first-person accounts that would have made the material come to life are lacking, and in some instances the data is slightly out of date.

Cho's chapter, "Female Buddhist Practice in Korea," is an excellent introduction to the contemporary situation. She simply touches on some subjects, especially the Choseon era (1392–1897) and the establishment of specific communities or temples, in part because other chapters in the book cover much of the same material with more depth. Cho's brief biographies of some of the major female figures during the Japanese colonial and postcolonial periods of the 20th century is particularly welcome (as is Pori Park's in her own chapter), because it brings historical movements to a focus and grounds general social or religious trends in the people who lived them.

Nuns such as Myori Pophui (1887–1974) and Mansong (1897–1975) should be as well known as their male contemporaries, and Cho's chapter is a first step toward accomplishing this. In addition to being a student and recognized dharma heir of the renowned monk and Zen Master Man Gong, Myori Pophui was responsible for making Zen practice as central to nuns' spiritual training as it was to monks' training. Mansong was another of Man Gong's students, and helped to build an important Zen centers for nuns, Taesong Am Hermitage in Pusan.

The one weakness in Cho's chapter is one that recurs in Pori Park's chapter: when discussing the current situation for women in Korean Buddhism, the research and analyses already feel dated. Although Cho correctly highlights the remarkable and laudatory growth of the nuns' sangha over the past 60 years and attempts a general explanation of the factors that gave rise to that success, she does not mention the challenges some of those very same factors now pose to the nuns' sangha. In particular, the change in women's status in general Korean society, which at one point was the foundation on which nuns gained status and support, has now become a reason why women are unwilling to leave society for monastic life.

Like Cho, I can only speak from a subjective and anecdotal perspective and say that monastic life is difficult even under ideal circumstances, and social pressures and environments exert influence on the growth and decline of the monastic world. In the past six years we seem to have reached a tipping point in which women sometimes perceive monastic life as a step backward, in terms of personal autonomy, status and economics. Compared to the current life women can lead within Korean society, monastic life is no longer a space of freedom in the same way

it was decades ago. Although thoroughly investigating this aspect of Korean monastic life and women is beyond the scope of the book as a whole or any single chapter, still, given that it was published in 2011, I would have liked to see some gesture toward the complex and shifting landscape of Korean Buddhism for contemporary Korean women that was already evident by that time.

Pori Park's chapter, "The Establishment of Buddhist Nunneries in Contemporary Korea," gives a strong account of the historical background on which Buddhist nunneries, including meditation temples (sonbang) and doctrinal schools (kangwon) were founded. The Purification Movement of the 1950s in Korea was one of the most critical events of contemporary Korean Buddhist history. Lasting from 1954 to 1970, the Purification Movement was started by the celibate monastics of the Chogye Order. They fought to remove noncelibate monks from the order and were ultimately successful, resulting in the current division between the Chogye Order (which requires celibacy of its monks) and the Taego Order (which does not require celibacy). Park does a good job of introducing the movement and broadly outlining its role in shaping the contemporary sangha. My reservations about her research come from knowing perhaps too much about her subject, and being able to see where mere data or a chronology of dates and important figures fails a complex and involved subject. I was a student-nun at Unmun Monastic College from 2008 to 2012, and noticed that although Park correctly notes the increase in the student-nun population at Unmun Sa Temple between its establishment as a nuns' doctrinal school and 2008, she did not note the dramatic and alarming decrease in the student population from 2008 onward. Beginning with my class at Unmun Sa, and the same incoming classes at the other nuns' schools, the student-nun population decreased by half or more. The picture that Park's chapter and the book as a whole paints of the contemporary nuns' sangha is one of past strength and projected growth, when the actuality is far more complex and not entirely positive.

Park also mentioned the standardization of the monastic curriculum by the Chogye Order in 1984. She does not mention the Chogye Order's most recent major overhaul of the curriculum, beginning in 2009 and fully implemented around 2011, which was controversial within the monastic sangha and inspired furious debates over the purpose and substance of monastic education and the role of monastics in society. Again, knowing these things from the inside, I felt that some recognition of the rapidly shifting reality of the sangha was needed to round out the current history she presents, even while I appreciated having the major aspects of nuns' life over the past century put into historical context and brought to a wider audience.

The chapters focusing on historical figures or periods and using literary material, court annals and epigraphic material have a solid foundation in terms of the

methods used to examine the source materials and the source materials themselves. I was glad to see that Gregory Schopen's pioneering treatment of Indian epigraphic material has made its way to analogous situations, like that of Korea. Like Schopen, researchers in Korea are closely examining inscriptions on stelae in order to tease out histories that not have made it into official histories or other recorded materials. Young Mi Kim, in her chapter "Male Son Masters' Views on Female Disciples in Later Koryo," puts this method to good use. She closely examines stelae inscriptions as well as letters and other records from the Koryo period (918–1392) to challenge the historically prevalent belief that women cannot attain awakening in a female body, but must be reborn in a male body first. (This view is still common among nuns and women in South Korea today, and the aspiration to be reborn as a man forms part of the repentance ceremony that aspiring novice nuns do each night during ordination training.)

She makes a careful analysis of a major master from the late Koryo, National Preceptor Chin'gak Hyesim, to show how his support of his own female students' efforts toward awakening was a result of his belief in the full spiritual capacity of women. Chin'gak (1178–1234) was the student of the great 12th century master Chinul, whose synthesis of sutra and meditation into a unified path of practice and awakening became the standard approach to training in Korean Buddhism. As Chinul's student, Chin'gak inherited Chinul's teachings and his role as a leader of the sangha. The attitudes of Zen masters from 900 years ago are deeply relevant today, given that there are still men and women who hold that enlightenment is impossible in a female body. To combat a belief with roots sunk as deep in tradition as this, we must bring history and tradition to bear upon it, and Kim's chapter is one step in this process.

Heung-sik Heo's comparative look at two teachers in "Two Female Masters of Two Eras" is also an important step in shifting the inertia of a male-centered history of Korean Buddhism. Heo's examination of two female masters, Chinhye (1255–1324) and Chongyu (1717–1782), is crucial not only because it brings to light relatively unknown biographies, but also because in the telling of those biographies we get a sense of different social situations for women in different eras and some of the tensions at play in the lives of women, especially those from eminent families (in the case of Master Chinhye). Both Chinhye and Chongyu were nuns, but Chinhye was from a prominent noble family of the Koryo, whereas Chongyu was from a common family during the Choseon. The differences in both time and status allow Heo to examine multiple aspects related to women, nuns and Buddhism at the same time. Heo also avoids the easy narrative and includes the problems inherent to the particular materials he used, namely memorial stelae and tomb inscriptions, in his analysis of these two figures. His analysis is the more nuanced and responsible as a result.

The chapters by John Jorgensen and Jiyoung Jung are interesting for their exploration of Buddhism and women in Choseon-era Korea. Thoroughly grounded in Neo-Confucianism, the last dynasty of Korea established a religious and moral culture which continues to exert influence on Korea to this day, and in looking back at its particularities we can better understand its legacy. In "Marginalized and Silenced: Buddhist Nuns of the Choseon Period," Jorgensen's analysis of individual histories through court records and popular gazettes illustrates the ways in which Buddhist nuns were, in his words, "marginalized and silenced" by Choseon policies and enforced cultural norms. Jung's chapter provides a nice balance to Jorgensen's by examining the "alternate spaces" Buddhist nuns found outside of the oppressive Confucian rule of the Choseon. Her challenge to established understandings of women in Choseon society is refreshing:

We may ask whether all women living under this Confucian ideology [of proscribed subordinate relationships] actually succumbed to these requirements and lived as wives and mothers of sons in contentment. . . . It is true that numerous restrictions on the activities of women outside the home were legislated during the Choseon period. . . . Yet I wonder if we should view these many restrictions not as proof that women led primarily domestic lives, but as evidence that so few women in fact submitted willingly to a life restricted to the domestic sphere. There is a need for scholarship to go beyond generalized descriptions of Choseon women and to focus specifically on the detailed context, process, and contents of Confucianization.

Her chapter, "Buddhist Nuns and Alternative Spaces," does go beyond generalized descriptions. If Jorgensen's chapter uses the records and materials remaining to us to describe the severely limited sphere in which Buddhist nuns operated, Jung manages to use the same materials to point to the impossibility of absolute control, giving some hint as to how Buddhist nuns and women managed to maintain themselves with the "enduring vitality" of the book's title.

Ultimately, this book is a welcome first step toward more mature research into the lives and continuing role of Buddhist women in Korea. In particular, it is my hope that scholars heed Cho Eun-su's call for rigorous efforts to record the living history that still exists in the memories and lives of the oldest members of the Korean nuns' sangha and the lay community. *Korean Buddhist Nuns and Laywomen* is an important book for anyone interested in gaining a more complete understanding of Korean Buddhism, past, present and future.



Seon Joon Young was a nun in the Chogye Order of Korean Buddhism from 2005 to 2012. She has served as an advisor for Buddhist life at Yale University and is currently a candidate for a master's of divinity at Harvard Divinity School, where she studies Buddhist ministry.

Poetry

Buddha's Enlightenment Day Poem

Barry Briggs JDPSN

December 7, 2013

Days came and went,
and the Buddha never moved.

Mara, with his armies and daughters, came and went,
and the Buddha never moved.

The morning star came and went,
and the Buddha never moved.

Traveling around India for 35 years,
the Buddha never moved.

But the whole world comes and goes non-stop
and enlightenment is never separate from this.

So . . . a big mistake.

The iron girl dances across the waves.
The cloud boy floats motionless in the sky.

How do we go beyond the mistake of movement
and stillness?

KATZ!

The gold Buddha sits unmoving on the altar.
Clouds of incense float through the air.

Happy Buddha's Enlightenment Day!

Wu Bong Sa, Autumn 2013

Ja An JDPSN

(Bogumila Malinowska)

At the End of the Road in the Garden
Home where whole Europe's Don't know was born:
Deep, deep Silence inside green trees, songs of birds,
dance of squirrels
Paid by all Colors of Pain
Thousands of hours up and down looking for this very
moment
Deep silence slowly swallows and digests Everybody
Anger
Desire
Ignorance
Stillness Home
Great hope for many in the Future
Where does this Clear, deep silence come from?
Where will it go?
KATZ!
Colorful leaves moving by Golden Autumn Wind
warming up and feeding the Earth

August 21, 2013

London

Around, Around, Around

10-Year Memorial Poem for Zen Master Seung Sahn

Ken Kessel JDPSN

Birth man, sick man, old-age man, death man
Which one is the true you?¹

Two empty hands teaching
In the ten directions
And the six realms
For 55 years²

Who knows where
You are now?³

Lofty Mountain
Pierces heaven and earth
Universe explodes⁴

(All Together): KATZ!⁵

Endless blue sky
Somewhere someone is thirsty
What can you do?⁶

Commentary:
The first time I saw you
The last time I saw you
Who sees who see what?
Clear, clear
White snow in winter. Blue sky in summer.

Notes

1. Why make birth, death and true? Still, there's something to teach.
2. No time. No space. No teaching. No poem. No problem.
3. Never mind the Zen master. Where is his attendant? If you find the attendant, you can find the Zen master.
4. Aigo! Aigo! Whose dream is this?
5. Now you're talking!
6. Sentient beings are numberless.

Buddha's Birthday Poem 2014

Zen Master Bon Hae



Photo: Barry Briggs JDPSN

The baby walks! 7 steps, no waiting,
each step a flower/field of flowers/universe/multiverse.

Pavilions springing up and flowers
always flowers springing up raining down
(who can keep up with this)

Within each pavilion a Buddha. Within each flower a Buddha.
Within each moment a Buddha. In all the vast Mahayana sky: Buddha!
Buddha Buddha Buddha Buddha $\times 27 \times 1,000$ and I'll raise you several powers . . .

Little chubby-faced gold-diapered miracle baby 7 steps—
yes, you got it! You always had it! You never lost it!
(wait, that's us)
(wait, what is this "got"/who is there to get anything
& what is there to get)

Oh, and dead mother.
Please do not forget dead mother.

Do not forget dead mother/elephant dreams/
bloodless exit = entry from a bloodless hole in a bloodless side.
And always a convenient tree appearing—what a trope!

"This very body is"
what? whose? where is it going? & for whom?

Complete complete always complete & never ending.

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Notes

1. The baby walks: When Siddhartha Gautama Shakyamuni was born, he immediately took, according to some sources, seven steps north and spoke (see note 6 below); other sources say he took seven steps in each of the four cardinal directions and spoke.

2. Each step a flower . . . Pavilions . . . : In each of his footsteps a lotus flower bloomed. In the more elaborate Mahayana sutras, on auspicious occasions flowers and jewels cover everything and rain down from the heavens, upon innumerable pavilions in innumerable worlds, with Buddhas in every one.

3. Buddha Buddha Buddha Buddha $\times 27 \times 1000$. . . : 4×27 is 108, and then there is the fondness for ridiculously large numbers found in many Sanskrit Buddhist texts. (Ancient Indians loved number theory).

4. Gold-diapered: the standard baby Buddha statue.

5. You got it . . . : One version of what Buddha said when he awakened—all beings have this Buddha nature but they don't know or remember or believe it.

6. Wait that's us: One version of what baby Buddha said upon being born and taking his seven steps: "In the heavens above and the earth beneath only I am holy." (Which makes sense if all beings are Buddha. Also, see note 11 below.)

7. Dead mother: His mother Queen Maya died seven days after giving birth.

8. Elephant dreams: She dreamed that a white elephant's tusks pierced her side to impregnate her.

9. Bloodless exit . . . : Baby Buddha sprung from his mother's side—no vaginal delivery or even Caesarian section for him.

10. Convenient tree . . . trope: About to give birth while on the road to deliver in her parents's house, Queen Maya grabbed onto a sala tree. Her son attained enlightenment under the bodhi tree. (You can think of this as the helpful tree trope.)

11. "This very body is": Hakuin's "Song of Zazen" ends: "This very body is the body of the Buddha."

12. Complete: Another version of what Buddha said when he awakened—how wonderful, each thing in itself is already complete.

Note

Providence Zen Center has been holding a monthly Dharma School for children on Sunday mornings since 2010. The school teaches Zen practice and tradition as well as promoting a sense of community with the children and families. Near this past Easter, the children had an egg hunt. Mina, one of the organizers, came up with the idea of hiding words inside the eggs. Afterward, the children got together in two teams and composed these poems.



Photo: Barry Briggs JDPSN

Dharma School Poem 1

Zen Buddha has awesome kids
Flowers dance with trees
Hunt wet dirty eggs
 Love big blue birds
Parents shout very loudly

Dharma School Poem 2

Calmy water swiftly moves quickly
 to pagoda. Clouds grow
standing silently. Silly friends hug
 garden. Meditation look funny.
Bow is cool looking.
Bright blue sky has fast
whispering winds.
Kids search for bright colored
eggs covered in green leaves

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(Continued from page 15)

our True Self and deepest potentiality.

Of course nobody wants to hear that. Because this “somehow” also contains the hard spiritual truth for grown-ups: Zen is entirely up to you. No one can do it for you.

Oh, to be sure, Zen teachers can give practice pointers, offer encouraging words or a stern rebuke, poke and prod you along through the long years of kong-an practice, maybe even keep you from blundering into the weeds. And your fellow practitioners can provide their love, camaraderie, and support.

But sooner or later, by one means or another, you have to wedge your foot in the door and make your way into the shuttered, smoldering house of the mind. It is yours alone, after all. Only you can grope your way along its dreary corridors and pry open the bolted doors. Only you can climb into its stifling attics and descend into its crumbling cellars. “Somehow” means that it will not be enough to merely read about it, talk about it, or think about it. “Somehow” means that you will actually have to *do* it.

Let’s suppose that we do just that. Even if, in the beginning, we are only seeking a remedy for what ails us, some kind of pill. Then “make this practice real” means take it personally. Take it to heart, make it your own. Not in the sense of having Zen your own way—far from it! But by making Zen practice part of your life in such a way that it takes on a life of its own. Then Zen is no longer held at arm’s length, a hammer taken up to pound down a particular nail; no, eventually it lets us realize ourselves

as both the hammer and the nail, with the power to transform our lives and the lives of those around us.

Then the burning house stands transfigured. We may be startled to find the shutters gone, great tree limbs in full leaf jutting over the windowsills and into vacant rooms, and all the interior doors blown open. Or maybe the roof suddenly goes missing, leaving nothing but blue sky overhead. Or the four walls topple outward, like the sides of a flattened cardboard box, with nothing but green fields extending in every direction. Then all of those items so laboriously carried out of the house and placed on the lawn are entirely beside the point. Or better still, they can be put to new uses.

Who Is Singing in Chinese? Notes from a 100-Year Zen Retreat by David Peters will be available Summer, 2014, from Firethroat Press and from online and main street book vendors. www.firethroatpress.com.

Dave Peters is abbot and senior dharma teacher of the Isthmus Zen Community in Madison, Wisconsin. Dave began practice in the Kwan Um School of Zen in 1997 with Zen Master Dae Kwang and William Brown JDPSN and in 2007 received bodhisattva teacher precepts from guiding teacher Thomas Pastor JDPSN (now Zen Master Ji Haeng). Dave was employed for 26 years by a Wisconsin-based insurance company until his retirement in 2013. He and his wife Marilyn make their home in Fitchburg, Wisconsin.



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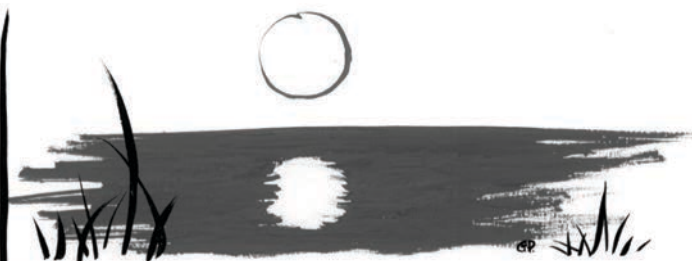
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"Clear mind is like the full moon in the sky. Sometimes clouds come and cover it, but the moon is always behind them. Clouds go away, then the moon shines brightly. So don't worry about clear mind: it is always there. ... Thinking comes and goes, comes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

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Flowers in Springtime, Moon in Autumn,
Cool Wind in Summer, Snow in Winter.
If you don't make anything in your mind,
for you it is a good season."

Mumon's Comment: Everyday Life is the Path

Everything that happens in
this world is correct. Things
go in cycles: spring, summer,
fall, winter.

Zen Master Seung Sahn

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