

# Primary Point



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Kwan Um School of Zen  
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# Winter Kyol Che at Musangsa

November 14, 2016 - February 11, 2017

Experience sitting Zen meditation this winter with a community of international monks, nuns, men and women at Musangsa in South Korea, the head temple of the Kwan Um School of Zen in Asia.

Minimum participation 7 days, up to 90 days. Experience in a KUSZ center required.

Guiding Teachers  
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Hye Tong Sunim JDPS  
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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 2,100 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: Oil lamp on the altar at Su Bong Zen Monastery in Hong Kong.  
 Photo by Francis Lau.

# How Can Sitting Save This Hungry World?

*Zen Master Seung Sahn*

**Question:** What can we in America do to stop the starvation of the world?

**Zen Master Seung Sahn:** Did you have dinner?

**Q:** Yes.

**ZMSS:** Did you clean your bowl?

**Q:** Yes.

**ZMSS:** Good. So why is there this kind of problem? In this world, cause and effect are very clear. Everything has a primary cause. If you understand it, and remove it, then the problem will also disappear. We can save money and send food over to Africa and India; that's OK. But many problems will remain. Taking away the primary cause is very important. It's like a game of pool. You hit the ball directly into the pocket, and that's one ball in the pocket. But the high-class technique is to hit this ball and that ball and other balls, so that all of them go into the pockets. Zen-style action is like that; we can give money to help hungry people, but if we hit people's hungry minds, we can help change their minds so that they can help their own country. The high-class technique is to help people help themselves.

There are two kinds of hunger in this world: body hunger and mind hunger. Body hunger is easily solved: just feed people. But mind-hungry people need food

for their minds. People with mind hunger do not die. They want power, and then they want more power. They say things like "My way is correct, your way is not correct!" They want to control this world. They don't want to lose their good situation.

Nowadays, many of the people who say they want world peace are afraid of nuclear weapons. What they want is not to die, not to lose their good situation. That is not correct world peace. Most of the politicians talk about world peace that way. Russia says "We want world peace." America says "We want world peace." Which world peace is correct? These are mind hungry people, who make bombs and nuclear weapons. They talk about world peace, but it's only a world peace of the tongue, not a true world peace. There are also many people in this world who don't want world peace. They think the world is so evil that it should be destroyed. They also only want to keep their own good situation, so their world peace is only for themselves, not for other people. This is also not correct world peace.

"I want world peace only for myself"—this kind of mind is unbalanced. Take away this mind hunger, and the problem of body hunger will also disappear. If we love each other, help each other, and become harmo-

nious with each other, then world peace is possible.

You must understand this world. America makes many bombs and nuclear weapons. Why? It is not at war. If these weapons are not used, they eventually decay. But because America makes them, Russia must make them. The communist countries have less money, so they must take money from other things in order to make weapons. Eventually their economy begins to break down.

The American idea is not to fight, but to break down the economies of communist countries. When economies break down,

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*Photo: Francis Lau*

hungry people appear. Now many people are hungry. This mind-set is very bad. Do you understand? Perceive this world clearly, and you will understand where hunger comes from. Everything happens by natural process. In Africa and India (and America as well), there is much killing of animals for food. There is not so much eating of rice and vegetables, as there is in East Asia. It takes more land to raise animals for meat than it does for raising grains and vegetables. Why are many people starving? This is the result not just of this life, but of causes begun many lifetimes ago. Buddha said, if you want to understand what happened before this life, look at what you are getting now. Being very hungry means that in a previous life, one gave much suffering to other people and animals, and also took food. Today's suffering is the result of those actions. There is great imbalance now between hungry people and people with a lot of food. At mealtimes we make a great deal of food, then throw away what we don't eat into the garbage. There are many thousands of restaurants in America that throw away food. If we were able to send all the wasted food to Africa and India, those people would not be hungry.

Also, if you want to understand the future, you must look at what is occurring now. Our mind-set at this moment is the primary cause of what will happen in the future: tomorrow, the next life, generations after that. Right now your mind is making the future. Right now people are killing animals for food, people are wasting food, people are spending money on weapons instead of food. Thus we make the future with our current actions. There are many articles appearing in the news about Africa. Many people are talking about the suffering and expressing feelings about it, so a "How can we help them?" mind is appearing. If this helping mind gets wide enough, it will find and remove the primary causes of the world's suffering. Many people getting this helping mind means they will get energy together, and will be able to solve the world's problems.

There is a famous American who has created many groups to raise money for Africa. I thought this was wonderful until I read that when he gets money, 30 percent of it goes into his own pocket, and only 70 percent of it goes abroad. He has this idea, "I am wonderful because I do this." He has become much admired, but it's not correct. He only looks wonderful from the outside, not the inside. Because of the publicity about Africa, many such groups have been formed in America that are concerned with helping. They raise money and send it abroad, but it's like putting on makeup. If you are hungry, you don't need cosmetics. This kind of action is like cosmetics; it creates a sense of "I am good, I am helping," but this "I" does not really help other people. It doesn't address the primary cause of world hunger. It's like a room in which many little insects ap-

pear. After cleaning the room, it's OK for a day or two, then soon the insects appear again. Cleaning once in a while doesn't help. Why do these insects appear? We must look for the primary cause. In this case, we find the room is very damp. If it were dry, no insects would appear. So we must make it dry by using a heater or building a fire, and making the room very hot and dry. Then the insects will not appear again. It's the same with the problem of hungry people.



**Q:** Does our sitting in meditation take away the primary cause for Africa's hunger?

**ZMSS:** When I came to this country fourteen years ago, I was alone. There were no Zen centers in our style. Now there are many of them around the world in our school, with many people practicing. Many people in these Zen centers are beginning to understand the correct way and the truth. Maybe in the future, our Zen centers and the many others around the world will grow and be able to teach all the people with hungry minds. Take away mind hunger, and body hunger will soon disappear. Then world peace will be possible. You want results quickly. You want to send something to the hungry people and have the problem solved tomorrow. That's not possible. In this world, cause and effect appear sometimes slowly, sometimes quickly. This particular great suffering has taken hundreds of years to appear. So perhaps in this life it will not be possible to solve it, nor in the next one or the one after that. But we must try, life after life. That is our great vow: "Sentient beings are numberless; we vow to save them all." For that we must each develop a strong personal center, not just in this lifetime, but life after life. Try, try, try for ten thousand years nonstop!

This is a time of complete change in the world. We are at the end of an old cycle, and the beginning of a new one. As a result, there are many imbalances and great suffering. Hunger appears because of these imbalances. Now there are entire countries with lots of food, and countries with very little.

Imbalance is our world's sickness: how can we cure it? Balance means understanding the truth. If you have no wisdom, you cannot become balanced. It is very important for everyone to find their human nature. That is why we sit Zen, to find our true human nature. So we are in a very important position, sitting in meditation. We must find our human nature, then together help each other become world peace. As human beings, we are all equal. We all have the same love mind, so why must hungry people appear? We must find the primary cause of this world's sickness and remove it. If we don't, we can never help the hungry people. ♦

# Ethics Policy

The Kwan Um School of Zen  
Asia • Americas • Europe

## Introductory Note

Igor Piniński JDPSN

Why does the Kwan Um School of Zen need an ethics policy? We already have the precepts; we have the temple rules. Why another document?

One of the most important factors affecting our spiritual practice is harmony and a good atmosphere in the sangha. From the experience of the Buddhist schools in the West, including our own, we have learned that unethical and unclear behavior of sangha members, especially prominent ones, may do a lot of harm and destroy trust and harmony within the sangha.

On the other hand, being human, all of us make mistakes, and we need to learn how to deal with them. So the ethics statement is not only a set of guidelines on how to lead an ethical life in the sangha, but also how to restore harmony when something goes wrong, and how to deal with conflicts.

This two-page document took quite a few years, countless drafts and a big effort by teachers from America, Europe and Asia to put it in its final shape. If you read it carefully, you may notice that it consists of three parts—the general ethical guidelines, based on the basic precepts; the more detailed rules for dealing with situations that create the majority of ethical problems in spiritual schools like ours; and the grievance procedure outlining how to properly address our complaints and resolve conflicts.

The ethics policy document is only a start. Now it needs to be digested by the sangha—individually and with the help of workshops, which have already been initiated in different temples of our school. We offer it, not for the sake of simply having a document, but as a support for the heart, voice and breath of the sangha.

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May 2016

The Kwan Um School of Zen encourages ethical behaviors that support a safe, trustworthy environment for spiritual development. This document outlines recommended behaviors and describes a process for resolving ethical concerns.

Some of the recommended ethical behaviors arise naturally from the five precepts. Others arise from decades of experience within spiritual communities. We encourage everyone who practices within the Kwan Um School of Zen, students and teachers alike, to follow these guidelines:

1. Speak and act with care. Treat others with respect. Avoid gossip and complaining. Employ honesty and transparency in all interactions. Avoid sexual misconduct.
2. Treat everyone fairly. Let go of likes and dislikes.
3. Manage financial affairs responsibly and openly.
4. Use alcohol or other substances in a restrained way. Honor abstinence as a choice.
5. Respect the planet and the web of life upon which all beings depend.

When the entire sangha follows these guidelines,

wisdom and compassion can emerge and guide us. Failure to follow these guidelines may result in ethical misconduct and a subsequent ethical grievance.

## Ethical Responsibilities of Teachers

Teachers (Zen masters and Ji Do Poep Sas) have a unique obligation always to act in the best interests of the sangha and, in so doing, serve as models of wisdom and compassion. At the same time, the sangha can bring its wisdom and compassion to teachers, recognizing them as human beings who make mistakes.

The titles of Zen master or Ji Do Poep Sa confer both authority and responsibility. Teachers must not abuse the trust and power that come with their position. In particular, teachers should not manipulate the intimacy and vulnerability that can develop with students. Similarly, teachers must never use for personal gain the resources of a Zen center or the Kwan Um School of Zen.

Some teachers or students may work as therapists, carpenters, landlords, lawyers, physicians, or in another profession that creates a client relationship. When a teacher and student work together in a professional capacity, it creates a dual relationship. Teachers should



Photo: Sven Mahr

be very careful about entering into such relationships, as they may conflict with the student's Zen training.

In situations where a senior dharma teacher, abbot, or other senior practitioner assumes leadership within a sangha, they accept the same ethical responsibilities as a Zen master or Ji Do Poep Sa.

### Teachers and Intimate Relationships

The recent history of Buddhism demonstrates that sexually intimate teacher-student relationships can produce great suffering for individuals and significant discord within a sangha. For this reason, the Kwan Um School of Zen does not encourage intimate teacher-student relationships.

However, some teachers and students have successfully entered into loving, long-term relationships. Therefore, no simple rule can govern such intimacy. The sangha has the right to expect that teachers entering into such relationships will act with the highest standards of care, mindfulness and transparency. Should a teacher and student wish to begin a sexually intimate relationship, three steps are required:

1. The couple should suspend the teacher-student relationship for a minimum of six months at the earliest recognition of mutual attraction and prior to any sexual contact. Prior to reentering into a teacher-student relationship, they should discuss the relationship with the regional Head Zen Master.

2. At the earliest recognition of mutual attraction and prior to any sexual contact, the teacher should discuss the relationship with another teacher and receive guidance. In this way, the second teacher can witness the relationship from the perspective of concern for the student, teacher and the entire sangha.

3. The regional Head Zen Master should be notified about the relationship at the earliest possible date.

In some circumstances, a teacher may wish to begin a relationship with a sangha member where no prior teacher-student relationship exists. The teacher should follow steps 2 and 3.

### Grievance Procedure

1. If you feel that a sangha member has violated the Kwan Um School of Zen ethical guidelines, first bring your concern directly to the individual(s) involved. If needed, and with agreement from both parties, another person can mediate the dispute.

2. If you cannot resolve your concern through direct discussion or mediation, then you may present your grievance to your center's guiding teacher, who will attempt to mediate or resolve the grievance. However, if the guiding teacher is a party to the grievance, or if one of the parties is dissatisfied with the guiding teacher's resolution, then the grievance at this point should go directly to the Regional Teachers Group, as described in step 3.

3. If one of the parties is dissatisfied with the guiding teacher's resolution, that party can ask the appropriate Regional Teacher's Group to resolve the grievance. In most cases, the Regional Teachers Group will send the grievance to a standing or specially formed ethical grievance committee. This committee may attempt to mediate the grievance or it may propose a resolution. Possible resolutions may include, but are not limited to, dismissal of the grievance, apology, amends, suspension, or expulsion. The Regional Teachers Group may ratify the resolution proposed by the committee, or send the case back for further examination.

4. Should one of the parties remain unsatisfied with the decision of the Regional Teachers Group, they can appeal to the School Zen Master. After review, the School Zen Master may ratify the Regional Teachers Group decision or ask for a reconsideration. Following reconsideration, if any, the decision of the Regional Teachers Group will be final.

The membership of a grievance committee (both standing and special) can vary by region and circumstance, at the discretion of each Regional Teachers Group. In general, both teachers and students should be represented, and it should be gender-balanced. If a grievance involves a sunim, then at least one monastic should be included on the committee. Parties to the grievance cannot be members of the grievance committee or take part in decision-making leading to resolution within the Regional Teachers Group. ♦

# *Hermitage of the Five-Year-Old*

*Zen Master Su Bong*

*August 1993*

Each moment is preparation for the next moment. Every moment in our life this universe is telling us what to do. This red man on the stop light said, "Don't walk." Then the green man said "Go." The green man said "Go" but the bus is coming and is not stopping. This bus said to you "Stop."

There are two little dogs. One dog is a very nice dog and said, "Touch me on the head." Another dog has rabies, a kind of dog sickness, with foam coming out of his mouth. This foam on the dog's mouth is telling you to climb a tree. Every moment, this world is telling us what to do. If human beings can see that, then our life is very easy.

Long ago, on the highest mountain in Korea, there was one hermitage where only one monk and one small

boy, a five-year-old boy, lived together. Even today, to come down from this mountain to buy rice takes about six hours, and eight hours to go up. Only this monk and small boy lived there three hundred years ago.

One day, the monk said to the orphan boy, "Today, I must go down to the village to buy some rice and food. Very early in the morning, I will be going, and then late in the evening, I will come back. In the kitchen, I have made for you some lunch, so if you are hungry, go to the kitchen and eat. Also if you are afraid of anything, you chant Kwanseum Bosal, Kwanseum Bosal . . . then Kwanseum Bosal will come and help you." Then this boy said, "Yes, I will do that."

The monk went to the village to get supplies. In the afternoon, he wanted to return to the hermitage to the

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*Photo: Francis Lau*



orphan boy, but a storm appeared and snow was coming down. Then he said, "Oh, very difficult, but I must go." He put all the supplies on his back and began walking up the mountain. The snow was very thick and he could not see where he was going, but he only tried. Very soon, the snow was taller than him, so he could not continue. The next day he tried again, but it was also very heavy snow. Then he thought to himself, "What shall I do? I cannot go, but what is my orphan boy doing?" In his mind, he was only thinking about this small boy.

One week passed, two weeks passed, three weeks passed, one month passed. Then two months, three months passed. Finally came springtime, the snow was melting a little bit, and he could leave. All the way up the mountain, he was only thinking about this boy, and inside him he was very sad. He also thought, "What will I find when I get there? I made a big mistake, and what can I do?"

As he got to the small hermitage, he heard noises inside, "dong, dong, dong . . ." and one voice. This voice said, "Kwanseum Bosal, Kwanseum Bosal, Kwanseum Bosal . . ." Then he heard that sound, he was very afraid, thinking that it was a demon that came to punish him, because he did not take responsibility for the boy.

But he must go in, so as he opened the door, the young boy came rushing outside, "Sifu, Sifu . . ." This monk was very surprised. First, he thought it was an illusion or maybe this boy's ghost, and was very afraid, but this boy jumped onto Sifu's neck and hugged him. Then this monk touched him. "You're real!" and the boy said, "Yah, this is me, this is me, this is me." The monk asked, "How did you survive this winter? You have no food. Also, you have no fire."

The young boy said, "Sifu, you said that if I'm afraid, only chant Kwanseum Bosal, Kwanseum Bosal, Kwanseum Bosal . . . I was never afraid. When I was hungry, I was chanting Kwanseum Bosal, Kwanseum Bosal, Kwanseum Bosal . . . and Kwanseum Bosal gave me food. When I was cold, I was chanting Kwanseum Bosal, Kwanseum Bosal, Kwanseum Bosal . . . and my body became warm."

This boy's speech hit, even shocked his teacher's mind. This monk said to himself, "I always give this advice to everybody, but I never really believed that myself 100 percent. Yet this young boy just did it 100 percent." So they changed this temple's name to "Hermitage of the Five-Year-Old" in honor of this five-year-old boy. Even today once a year, many people make a long journey to this "Hermitage of the Five-Year-Old." If they want something, they only go to this hermitage and chant Kwanseum Bosal, Kwanseum Bosal, Kwanseum Bosal. That's a true story.

Now you have a good life and you don't have any problem and that's a treasure for you. This Kwanseum Bosal is a treasure for you, which you keep in a treasure box. Someday when you need this Kwanseum Bosal treasure,

you use it, OK? Only chanting Kwanseum Bosal, Kwanseum Bosal, Kwanseum Bosal . . . and because Kwanseum Bosal is free, you can use it anytime.

I hope sometime if you need that, you don't forget it. Then you can use it any place, any time. If you use it, don't check. "Oh, now I did that for 10 minutes, what is the result? Is it working, not working?" Don't check, just do it. Then it becomes very clear for you. That's Kwanseum Bosal's present for you. ♦

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Excerpt from *Wake Up! What Am I? The Teachings of Zen Master Su Bong*. Su Bong Zen Monastery, 2012. Reprinted by permission.

This book can be downloaded for free as a PDF at the following link:  
<http://www.subong.org.hk/sites/default/files/share/files/resource/eng-wake-up.pdf>

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## South Florida Zen Group Fifteenth Anniversary Poem

Host and guest  
 Breathe the same air  
 Walk the same earth  
 In their own shoes

One size fits one  
 No size fits all  
 Originally no movement  
 Inside, everyone  
 Wiggles their own toes

In the land of perpetual  
 Mangoes and alligators  
 Only one question

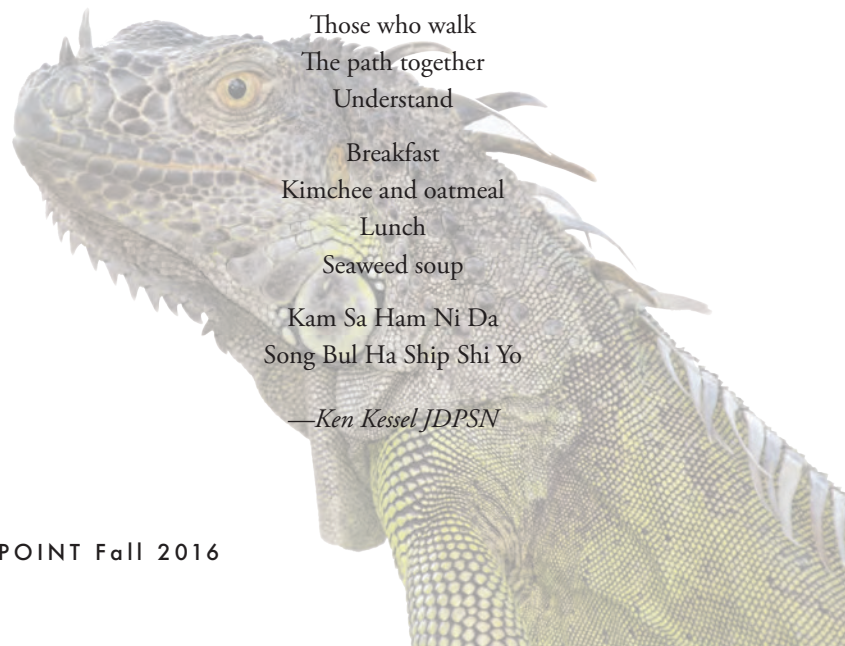
How has it lasted  
 Fifteen years?

Those who walk  
 The path together  
 Understand

Breakfast  
 Kimchee and oatmeal  
 Lunch  
 Seaweed soup

Kam Sa Ham Ni Da  
 Song Bul Ha Ship Shi Yo

—Ken Kessel JDPSN



# Finding the One Thing: Four Short Teachings by Zen Master Dae Kwan

## The Meaning of Precepts

Sifu was in Warsaw for Zen Master Wu Bong's 49th Day Ceremony. After the ceremony, the European sangha went out to eat. Sifu was one of the few monastics at this meal. A student came up to Sifu and offered her a glass of wine.

**Student:** Sifu, Zen Master Seung Sahn always taught us together-action. We do together action. You drink with us, OK?

**Sifu:** I am a nun. I cannot drink alcohol. We do together-action. We don't drink, OK?

## Commentary

Precepts are not about what we can do or cannot do. Precepts are about respecting our life and helping others. We don't give pork to Muslims, or guns to children. We do give morphine to cancer patients who are suffering. A calm, balanced mind is the true precept.

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## Clear Wind, Bright Moon

Zen Master Seung Sahn once said in one of his commentaries:

Going alone, don't call that Zen.  
Sitting alone, illuminate silent Zen.  
This life is my car; hardly, if rarely,  
anything happens.  
These eyes resting peacefully on top  
of the rock . . .  
Why does the wind blow from the  
West?

Zen Master Seung Sahn's whole life was very busy, teaching and leading retreats, traveling around the world nonstop. What kind of wind is the Zen master talking about, so that his eyes could rest peacefully on top of the rock?

Buddha said there are eight kinds of winds, or worldly conditions, that are always blowing in our life: gain and loss, fame and infamy, praise and blame, happiness and pain. Nobody in this universe can escape these worldly conditions or winds. Usually we like to have all the positive winds such as gain, fame, praise and happiness whereas loss, infamy, blame and pain are rejected as they are very negative to us.

When we first started the Zen center in Hong Kong, we had many obstacles and unpleasant comments from all directions. Students who liked our teaching immediately became our students. Some who didn't like our teaching immediately left or prevented other friends from coming.

I asked Zen Master Seung Sahn what we should do. He said to me, "You only practice. One student coming is OK, or ten students come, also welcome. Do not check your students; only practice." What he meant was to return to don't-know mind. This don't-know will help us clear all the clouds of checking our gain or loss, and clear the clouds of society's acceptance or rejection. I told Zen Master Seung Sahn that many people were making bad speech about us. He said, "Bad speech is very good; they help us advertise. At the same time we learn from our shortcomings." So infamy is not



Photo: Francis Lau

pleasant, but for Zen Master Seung Sahn, he could turn this wind into clear wind and bright moon. He always taught us not to follow somebody's speech. Anytime, if one follows or attaches to somebody's action or speech, we are like an arrow. This arrow goes straight to hell. This is suffering. If we do not want to suffer, we have to have the attitude of not attaching to fame or infamy.

There is one essential teaching in our school. Zen Master Seung Sahn always taught us to "put it all down." When we can put it all down, there is one thing that always remains pure and clear, not dependent on any conditions or the coming and going of the eight winds. It does not depend on life and death either. Then what is this pure and clear thing?

If you can find this "one thing" then you will attain Zen Master Seung Sahn's car, and use this car as if hardly anything happens, so our eyes can also rest peacefully on top of the

rock. This is truly Clear Wind and Bright Moon. Wishing you in 2014, Year of the Horse, find this “one thing,” attain Zen Master Seung Sahn’s car, and use this car freely with wisdom and love with fruitful reward.

### Facing Disaster

One afternoon a student came to the Zen center and met with Zen Master Dae Kwan. They talked about the recent disaster in Japan.

**Student:** Sifu, people have many opinions toward the disasters in Japan. I am sad and angry because at this time of great difficulty, someone gave the opinion that, “the Japanese deserve this disaster because of their brutality during World War II and we shouldn’t help them.”

**Zen Master Dae Kwan:** Everyone has his or her own view toward everything. Just like when you are shopping. Different shops and brands are promoting their own products. You buy what suits you and ignore what you don’t need. Others’ opinions are the same. After listening, our job is to just put down what isn’t beneficial to us.

A student once asked Zen Master Seung Sahn, “Someone prophesied that there would be an earthquake in San Francisco. Where should I escape to?” Zen Master answered, “You should put down your own life and death and stay behind to help others.” At another occasion, someone asked, “In a disaster, there are two very hungry people, and there isn’t enough food. What should we do?” Zen Master Seung Sahn said, “If there is one bowl of rice left, each take half a bowl. If there is only one piece of bread, each take half a piece. Each one take equal share and then die together.”

In Japan, the victims faced disasters one after the other; earthquake, tsunami, nuclear leakage and snow, making their suffering heavier and heavier. At these times, it is very important how we look at the things happening in front of us with the right view. If we have the energy of practice, we can transform emotions of anger, fear, helplessness and our discriminating mind into positive emotions and correct action. Then at a critical moment, we can keep a strong center, help each other and share what we have. Then, we can accept that even if we have to die, we will die together.

Zen Master Seung Sahn always warned his students that this world is like a rotten fruit. Our practice is to find the seed inside—our true nature. In this rotten world, we have to find the thing that is not rotten. In fact, the most devastating nuclear bomb is one’s like and dislike mind and those backseat drivers—delusion, selfishness, greed, pride etc.—that keep disturbing the driver that is us, our true selves.

Now, the universe is giving us an alarm, alerting us to find the seed inside ourselves. Not only do we have to help our families and friends, but we also need to help this world.

### Valentine

February 14 afternoon, after 300 bows, Zen Master Dae Kwan said: “Happy Valentine’s Day! If I have no valentine will I be still be blessed?”

This is a very good question. *Valentine* in Chinese is composed of two characters, 情人 “*qing ren*.” A person with *qing* always has a heart as fresh as a green plant. This means your love is always fresh with vitality. If you want to love somebody, you must learn from your heart-mind. Zen means to attain and understand this mind.

Our mind is like a piece of vast land that needs to be cultivated with constant love and care. Without cultivation the land will become a scrubland filled with overgrowths of weeds and creepers. These will weaken the growth of trees, which may then die. Our mind weed is our habitual tendency of being selfish and greedy. If we don’t know how to help ourselves and instead like to depend on others, it is like a creeper. Friendship with no trust or bad speech is like thorny plants. If we leave them unattended, the forest will eventually be colonized by these creepers and thorns.

Actually Nature always gives us lots of teaching on how to take care of our mind. If you understand Nature, then you truly know how to love. Creepers depend on the life of another tree, and they eventually suck up all tree energy so that the tree will die. The love between couples or lovers is also like that. If you choose to marry, you have to take care of your loved one. When a difficult situation appears, you should help and support each other. Too much dependency on others to solve your own problems is like a creeper. Learn how to go through hardship together. To nurture true love is about caring and supporting each other.

Have you noticed that even after a fire, the damaged trees will know how to give lives to young leaves through their unharmed branches, as long as the roots are still alive? The damaged trees never complain about their situation. Trees and Nature have this attitude of never giving up. Even in a very bad situation, they will find a way to grow. This is the *qing* part of *Valentine*. Unfortunately human beings very often choose to be attached to the rotten side of life. They only indulge their emotions and complaints and do not know how to grow from it. If you understand natural love, which is your original mind, then you know how to find balance in your mind. If you know in this world there is love which is your mind, this love is always fresh like green plants.

Zen practice, meditation, 300 bows, chanting with a blessing mind is to nurture our mind. When the mind becomes independent, you will know how to support those around you and progress together toward completion. Someone asked a Zen master, “What is sudden enlightenment?” The Zen master replied, “*Sudden* means at this moment take away all illusive thinking. *Enlightenment* means having nothing to attain.” So if you know how to come back to this moment and let go of your attachment, this happiness will appear naturally. This is the correct view to turn our illusion into correct life. If treated properly, even dried weeds can become a beautiful decoration.

May Valentines Day also be your Day of True Love for All Beings! ♦

# 'It Should Be Disturbing'

Zen Master Soeng Hyang (Barbara Rhodes)

Zen Master Bon Yeon (Jane Dobisz)

Excerpted from a workshop at the Whole World Is a Single Flower Conference

**Zen Master Soeng Hyang:** It's great that so many people came for the kong-an discussion. For me, kong-ans are the root of our practice. Kong-ans are like receiving a gift. There's the package: it's beautifully wrapped, there's a ribbon, wrapping paper, a beautiful box, and when you open the box there's tissue paper. But what you really want is the gift inside, which is our true self. The very heart of the gift is to ask "What is this? What am I?" until it's totally unfiltered, totally present and intimate. Zen Master Seung Sahn has done an excellent job of making it palatable—making it possible for us to learn how to practice with the kong-an.

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The first time I had an interview with Zen Master Seung Sahn, I was very frightened. I had read all these books about Zen, mostly from the Japanese tradition. In 1972 that was all that was available, mostly translations from Japanese or Chinese. The masters were very severe. They were hitting people with staffs and shouting, "KATZ!" I was very afraid he was going to do that, too. But what he did was teach about hit [*hits floor*]. He just kept saying, "What is Buddha?" [*hits floor*] Boom. "What is dharma?" [*hits floor*] Boom. After drilling that into my head for about five minutes he asked me, "What is Buddha?" I tried a timid little tap on the floor [*hits floor softly*]. I was so afraid, but he said, "Wonderful!" If I were to look at it from the outside I'd say, Oh God, he's just trying to prop her up and make her feel good—but it worked. I felt as if I got something. I felt a little bit of that hit. Something was communicated with that hit. That was important.

**Zen Master Bon Yeon:** One of the things that I always appreciate about kong-an practice is the great relief it is to at last meet somebody in your life who asks you, "Who are you?" You're stuck and you don't know, but you're happy. I think other people feel this relief too.

I recall one funny example of seeing this relief in a video clip of Zen Master Seung Sahn's teaching in Europe. In the film he's giving a first or possibly second interview to several people at once, all from different countries. With his Zen stick in hand he pokes them each in the belly, asking them one by one, "When you

die, where do you go?" Of course nobody could answer. There's a tension in the room which is visible on the faces of these Zen students. After none of them can answer, he says to the group, "OK. You ask me." They look puzzled, like, "You're gonna *tell* us?" Then they all look at him and ask together, "When you die, where do you go?" With those bright eyes of his, he says, "To the cemetery!" You can hear the laughter and see this relief come over their faces as if to say, "Oh my God! Is that all?" In that moment they realized they don't have to try and figure it out, and they could just be with "don't know." If you keep it really simple and in this moment then the questions we have about life and death are quite approachable. You allow yourself to just see, or hear, or smell. Then it's very wonderful and for that moment the question and the



Photo: Jiji Hazlbauer JDPSN

answer dissolve in the act of you just doing something 100 percent. When you give up the feeling that you have to be right or you have to have the answer, then it's fun and great to have the "gift of the question itself," as Zen Master Soeng Hyang just called it. That's the thing—it's not about finding the answer to some question such as "When you die, where do you go?" or "Who are you?" It's the question itself that is the gift.

**Student:** I've had the experience of having the answer appear; that is very satisfying.

I understand the idea of keeping in your mind the question without thinking, but it still makes me angry and frustrated that I have this question that I'm working on.

**ZMSH:** When I was working on the kong-an about hanging from a branch by your teeth, I was working in a nursing home. I was in charge of a unit housed in an area that had really long hallways. I had to walk for a minute and a half just to bring medication to a patient. I was walking down this corridor one morning after I had had an interview with Zen Master Seung Sahn. It was the same thing you express: part of my mind was wrestling with the kong-an. Suddenly, I was just stuck with the kong-an and it really was a great experience, because I thought, "That's don't-know!" I was just right there with not having the answer. Then I woke up to the hallway. I was just walking down the hallway. I thought of the patient's name, what he needed and what I was going to do. And that was the kong-an. This is now. Asking that kong-an opened me up to now: How are you? What do you need? How may I help you? And whatever I had to do in the room. The kong-an brings us to that question.

**ZMBY:** One of the things about kong-ans is how you take that hit that Zen Master Soeng Hyang was talking about as the substance of your original question—"What is this?"—and then find out how it works with each situation and relationship. How does it function? A dog has its specific situation, relationship and function that is quite different from a cat's. Interviews allow us to take our experience and try out how our spontaneous true self functions in certain situations. What if I was in that monastery with Nam Cheon on that day? What would my true self do? Could I save the cat? For me, this is the great breadth of Zen Master Seung Sahn's particular style of doing kong-ans, exposing us to all these different scenarios. Like Zen Master Soeng Hyang said, maybe this one is easy for me, but that one I don't know what to do with. Just as in life, that's how we learn: through all these different stories, through trial and error, how to use this point [*hits floor*] in our everyday life.

**ZMSH:** To me, interview-room training is very valuable because you are vulnerable. The teacher has the stick and the bell and the title and the experience behind them and then you walk in and you usually have less experience. It's a setup. But you can rise to the occasion. You

just face it. And you just might face it with [*hits floor*] don't-know and that's totally valid and totally perfect just to do that. Keep the eye contact. Keep your chest open. "I haven't answered that one; don't-know; it's just not clear to me yet." Don't know. I love it when students do that.

I'm talking about courage to stay open. In order to have courage, you have to have faith. You have to have faith that it's not a bunch of teachers trying to look good and carry their title around and get their honorarium and then go back to the plane and go home. If you feel with a teacher that there isn't some authentic vow to teach clearly, then you should hit the teacher with that. You have to try to find that courage to say, "I don't trust you," if that's how you feel. If the teacher is worth their weight as a teacher, they will be able to meet you in that place with honesty and integrity, and not overpower you, because that's not what it's about.

**Student:** There are two types of mind sets: there's one that is rational-centered and there's one that is intuitive. I'm not into solving things intuitively.

**ZMSH:** All I can say to you is just try to be kind. That's the biggest kong-an. How can I be kind in this moment? That's correct relationship, function and situation. That's what all these kong-ans are trying to point to. All of them.

**Student:** I'm screwed again because I'm not a very kind, compassionate person. It's really difficult because I

**ZMSH:** Don't make I, only do I.

**Student:** I would love to be able to solve some of these . . .

**ZMSH:** So, just do. Don't be you—just exist—don't make you. "I am not": that's what we call checking. "I am not this. I am not that." Don't check! When you get up, put on your underpants and brush your teeth—only that—don't check.

**Student:** I struggle a lot with kong-an practice too. It disturbs me.

**ZMSH:** I know. It should be disturbing. I was in Korea once with my three-year-old daughter, my only child. We were at Hwa Gye Sa Temple, the main temple. At that time, if a bus or a car pulled up, they would pass between the outhouse and the main temple gate. We had been at the outhouse and were going to cross over to the main gate. So I crossed ahead of her. All of a sudden this bus is barreling up this driveway at about thirty miles an hour. I just wasn't expecting it. She hesitated, right in front of the bus. She looked at me and she looked at the bus. I said, "Come on!" but she hesitated.

I had already answered Nam Cheon's cat, this great-compassion, great-love kong-an. I had already answered it, but for a second I too hesitated, instead of running in front of the bus and grabbing her. I completely owned it. But I thought, "You shit! You did not pass that kong-an. It's your own kid and you're not going to even try to get her out of danger, let alone get a cat out of danger." I did get her, but I checked for a second. That was a beauti-

ful experience for me because I felt like such a hypocrite. Especially between a mother and a child, I'm supposed to be the epitome of compassion. That wasn't good or bad—it just made me think: you didn't pass that kong-an yet, honey. But don't check; just wake up to the fact that this is deeper than you thought it was—a lot deeper.

**ZMBY:** We don't come up with hitting the floor ourselves. Somebody tells you to hit the floor, so you do it. Then they say, "Wonderful!" Then you think, "Oh good, that's done." But you could spend your entire life on just this point alone! Zen Master Guji used just one finger his whole life and never exhausted it. The kong-ans are opportunities, one after another, to pass something on, to realize it, to communicate it, or to perceive one thing over and over from different points of view. For example, "The sky is blue." That's a famous Zen sentence. You could spend twenty, thirty, forty years, ten thousand years practicing with that and it would always be fresh and new. Over time, it becomes more and more your own. When you see the moon in the sky, its light reflects exactly the same way in a million rivers all over the universe. It doesn't change, and nobody owns it. We're like those rivers: the clearer we become, then that reflection is going to look the same in you as it does in me as it does in the next person, because that's the way the truth is. So I think of it like an opportunity to keep learning or experiencing that kong-an in my life, over and over.

As women, it's important to remember the strong lineage of women who practiced before us. Unfortunately, we just don't hear about them. For thousands of years we've been there beside the men practicing. Because history didn't record it, we don't have a lot of female role models. There might be a couple of teahouse owners on the side of the road somewhere, but we don't even know their names. Young women who want to practice see that all the major spiritual role models are male. The Pope is a man, God is a man, two of the three parts of the Trinity are men. Buddha is a man. Most traditions are like that. One of the things that I appreciate about the "combat" side of dharma combat is the way it teaches us to trust our experience. A great example of that is to go in for an interview with someone who, in our case, is very male and very strong, like Zen Master Seung Sahn. He asks you a simple thing like, "What's your name?" But he has such a strength and clarity that you're stunned—you can't even answer! Then he teaches you, "Your name is Jane." Ha Ha! Oh Jane, yeah, good. The next day you come in and he says "What's your name?" and you proudly say "Jane!" and he says "No good!" Then what happens? You fall down. You think, "Oh, something's changed, today

is different. I must be off the track again." Then he pokes you and says, "You were right! I'm just seeing how much you believe in yourself!" Can you imagine—Buddha gets up from six years under the bodhi tree and somebody asks him a question and he says, "The sky is blue," and they say "No good!" Will Buddha stumble and say, "Oh, was that not a good answer?" No! Why? Because he believes his eyes, he can trust his experience. Both women and men in today's complex world have been so beaten down by all the thinking and all the different choices we have that we fall down very easily. Zen Master Soeng Hyang, who is a woman, was one of the first teachers to teach me that I, too, can be strong. I, too, can believe in myself. I can see that blue sky. I know my name, it's Jane. Twenty years later I can really say that. If somebody says to me, "No, it isn't," I'm not going to fall down. Very basic stuff, not about winning or



Photo: Lubor Kosut

losing, and not about fighting—it's about trusting in yourself. As women, this kind of teaching has been lacking in our society. If you want to be a great bodhisattva you have to have a big toolbox. You can't just always use a feather duster, and you can't always use a hammer; sometimes you need a screwdriver. You need different types of things for different situations. As women, why lock ourselves out of the ability to be strong?

**ZMSH:** Kong-an practice gives you the ability to see what you don't have in your toolbox in a positive way. It's good to get stuck! Because you can become complacent. "Oh, we're cool." If you've got somebody to pull the rug out from underneath you once in a while, that's good.

**ZMBY:** To utilize skillful means, you need to be able to be anything. A dragon, a demon, an angel, a bodhisattva, whatever. You learn, slowly, clumsily, through trial and error, all those skills, for others. It's not about ourselves. ♦

# Zen Mind

## Zen Master Dae Kwang

The monk Damei Fachang once asked Mazu Daoyi, “What is Buddha?”

Mazu replied, “Mind is Buddha.”

Zen mind is just another name for our original Buddha nature. Buddha nature has many names. In the sutras it says that there are 36,000,119,500 names for Buddha and they are all the same! When I first encountered Buddhism in the United States, one of the most popular books about Zen was *Zen Mind, Beginner’s Mind* by Shunryu Suzuki Roshi. I don’t remember much about the book, but the title is quite striking. During its history Buddhism has used many terms to talk about our Buddha nature: nirvana, pure land, original nature, true nature, mind . . . many, many names. Mazu’s student, Nanquan Puyuan, even called it “everyday mind.” The intent of these terms is not to define but, rather, to point us toward a direct experience of what we really are. In the above example our Buddha nature is likened to a “beginner”: it doesn’t have any predetermined idea about how things are or how they should proceed. It’s not attached.

Buddha taught that the reason we suffer is because we don’t know what we really are—we’re ignorant of our true nature (another name for Zen mind). We are attached to our thinking. If we can just let go of our mistaken idea then we can return to what we already were, our Buddha nature. The Sixth Patriarch got enlightenment when he heard just

one line from the Diamond Sutra: “When thinking arises in your mind, don’t attach to it.”

Our original Buddha nature is not a thing, so applying a term to “it” can just increase the problem. People can easily become attached, even to the term that is designed to free them. However, we do have to talk about “it” if we are going to help the world. Buddha talked about it a lot—that’s where the sutras come from. Their purpose is not explanation. Their job is to point us toward what we truly are. That’s why Zen is known for its iconoclasm. It wants to remove every idea, even a good Zen idea, so you can have an authentic experience.

A monk once asked Mazu, “What is Buddha?”

Mazu answered, “No mind, no Buddha.”

Here is a kong-an for you: Bodhidharma sat facing a wall. The Second Patriarch, standing in snow, cut off his arm and, handing it to Bodhidharma, said, “My mind cannot rest. Please, teacher, rest my mind!”

Bodhidharma replied, “Bring me your mind and I will put it to rest.”

The Second Patriarch said, “I cannot find my mind.”

“There,” said Bodhidharma, “I have already given your mind rest!”

So, the question is: What is rest mind? If you want to attain that you have to do what Zen Master Seung Sahn said: “Throw your mind in the trash can!” ♦

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# If the Ancient Barbarian Could Do It, So Can You—Letter to a Student

## Ken Kessel JDPSN

Thanks for your letter. Your strong intention to practice is marked with despair at the persistent habits that reflect and cause discomfort. Intentional practice makes anchor points, so that you have an experience of persistent effort. You have an anchor that reflects this, even if at times it feels like the rope has detached from the anchor. Even at the end of your rope, you still have the rope. So find something to connect it to. Having an anchor point in the midst of despair is one core element of practice.

Bodhidharma speaks of bearing the unbearable. Now you know what he’s talking about. If the ancient barbarian could do it, so can you. One suggestion—don’t increase formal practice beyond what your daily routine allows in order to fix this. That has several errors.

First, the idea that there’s something to fix.

Second, the belief that doing something at one point in

time will fix something that either already happened or hasn’t happened yet. Sometimes that may be possible, but that doesn’t dispel demons. Rather, gain strength by practicing ordinary things. Find simple everyday tasks and make them your practice as well. That cultivates a mind habit of continuous practice. At the moment of attentive engagement, there is nothing to fight. There is not a thing to hold on to and not a thing to push away. Just be with what you’re doing. If you take that mind into other moments, they become that way too. When you see that your demons are originally your own true self, their power becomes your power. Don’t be deceived by power; it’s only swallowing juice, when you drink it. Refrain from looking for truth. Just see. Then your mind, my mind and Buddha’s mind are the same. If you feel like your own worst enemy, consider that that’s also what makes you your own best teacher. ♦



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# Closing the Gap Between Yoga and Zen

Zen Master Hae Kwang (Stan Lombardo)

There doesn't seem to be much in common these days between yoga and Buddhist meditation practice. Buddhist meditators tend to regard yoga as a system of Lycra-clad stretching exercises that might help them sit better and perhaps relieve tension on a long retreat, but that otherwise have little or nothing to contribute to their meditation practice. On the other side, the current distance between yoga and Buddhist meditation practice has been expressed with delicious irony by yoga teacher and author Richard Rosen in *Pranyama Beyond the Fundamentals* (Shambhala Publications, 2006):

. . . we yoga people leave meditation  
to the Buddhists, whom we then  
look at askance because we consider  
their posture to be deplorable.

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But what yoga has largely become during the last hundred years or so—a highly developed system emphasizing scores of physical postures called asanas (a term that means “seat” and originally referred only to a handful of sitting positions)—is not what it always was. Nor was it at all unrelated to early Buddhism. Quite the opposite.

Yoga began as a meditation practice. By the middle of the first millennium BCE yoga was already established as one of the major philosophical and spiritual schools in northern India. When Shakyamuni Buddha left his life as palace prince to lead the homeless life, it was to prominent Yoga teachers he turned, first Arada Kalama and, when he mastered his teachings, to Udraka Ramaputra. We know their names and a little about their teachings and practice techniques from various sources, including early Buddhist sutras. The teachings pointed to reality as consisting of matter and spirit. Spirit, or atman, pure and clear in itself, has become enmeshed in matter and lost its identity. The yogic meditation practice he learned was designed to lead to higher and higher levels of samadhi, culminating in the atman, or self, becoming liberated from its identification with matter and attaining its original state of absolute independence.

The Buddha mastered the levels of samadhi that his teachers had attained, but found that this experience did not resolve the great question that led him to the spiritual life: Why is there suffering and what can be done about it? So he moved on, first joining a small group devoted to extreme ascetic practice. When he found this too to be unsatisfactory, he set out on his own, devoting himself to a seated meditation practice, some of the details of which

are echoed in the *Bhagavad Gita*, the earliest Yogic text we have and one that quite possibly existed in oral form during the Buddha's life:

Having set up in a clean place  
A firm seat, neither high nor low,  
A seat of kusha grass covered  
With deerskin and soft cloth on top,  
Let him sit there and train his mind  
On *one point*, controlling his *thoughts*.

It seems clear that Buddha did not abandon his early Yogic training in the final stages of his quest. But the liberating insight he attained was in contradiction to an essential Yogic teaching. According to the Buddha, there actually is no atman in the sense of a permanent, individual self but rather a dependent co-origination of all phenomena, all of which possess a nature perfect in every way. It is ignorance of original completeness that is the fundamental cause of suffering.

From these beginnings Buddhism and Yoga went on to influence each other over the centuries, sharing teachings and debating philosophical differences well into the sixth century CE. The best evidence for this is the *Yoga Sutras* of Patanjali, which were composed in the second century CE, and the extensive commentaries on them that began soon after and continued for centuries. The *Yoga Sutras* themselves consist of 195 brief aphorisms, or threads (the word *sutra* literally means “thread”), arranged in four chapters: “Meditative Absorption,” “Practice,” “Mystic Powers” and “Absolute Independence.” The terseness of the Sanskrit text suggests that the sutras are mnemonic devices summarizing an older oral tradition. The very first sutra, “Yoga is the stilling of the fluctuations of the mind,” sets the tone: Yoga's primary concern is meditation.

The most striking example in the *Yoga Sutras* of cross-influences between Buddhism and Yoga can be seen by comparing the eight limbs of Yoga (*yogashanga*) as presented by Patanjali with Buddhism's traditional noble eightfold path (*aryashtangamarga*) (see table on page 19).

Both systems have similar overall structures, foregrounding moral and ethical practice—how we live our lives—and then listing progressive stages of meditation practice culminating in samadhi. It's worth noting that the moral restraints in the first limb of Yoga as detailed in the *Yoga Sutras* are almost identical to the traditional Buddhist five precepts and are presented as allowing no exceptions whatever. Yoga limbs 3 through 8 begin with

The Noble Eightfold Path (Aryashtangamarga)		The Eight Limbs of Yoga (Yogashtanga)	
1. Samyak Drishti	Right View	1. Yama	Moral Restraints
2. Samyak Samkalpa	Right Intention	2. Niyama	Ethical Observances
3. Samyak Vac	Right Speech	3. Asana	Seated Posture
4. Samyak Karmanta	Right Action	4. Pranayama	Breath Control
5. Samyak Ajiva	Right Livelihood	5. Pratyahara	Sense Withdrawal
6. Samyak Vyayama	Right Effort	6. Dharana	Concentration
7. Samyak Smrti	Right Attention	7. Dhyana	Meditation
8. Samyak Samadhi	Right Samadhi	8. Samadhi	Samadhi

the basics of meditation—this is how you sit, this is how you breathe—and then take us through deepening stages of sensory and mental absorption.

There are many other indications in the *Yoga Sutras* of common ground between Buddhism and classical Yoga. A few examples must suffice:

- YS 1.33 recommends cultivating an attitude of friendship (*maitri*) toward happy persons, compassion (*karunā*) toward the distressed, joy (*muditā*) toward the virtuous and equanimity (*upekshā*) toward the vicious. These four virtues are identical to the four brahma viharas in Buddhism.

- YS 1.41 compares samadhi to a transparent jewel taking on the form of whatever is before it. Compare this with the familiar Buddhist trope of mirror mind.

- YS 1.49 states that samadhi has a different focus from that of discursive reasoning or scripture. Compare Bodhidharma’s “direct pointing to the human heart/mind, without reliance on words or scriptures.”

- YS 2.3 lists as impediments to Yoga practice the *kleśhas*, referencing especially desire, aversion, ignorance and a sense of self. Compare this with the second great vow of Mahayana Buddhism: “Delusions are endless; we vow to cut through them all.”

There are significant differences between the two traditions as well. In addition to their already-mentioned divergent positions on selfhood, there is in classical Yoga no real equivalent to Buddhism’s bodhisattva ideal. Nevertheless it is clear that Yoga was originally grounded in meditation practice and remained so for centuries. The process by which it has been transformed into a largely postural practice in modern times has been definitively laid out by Mark Singleton in his book *Yoga Body* (Oxford University Press, 2010). One promising way modern yoga might recover its meditative origins has been suggested by Edwin Bryant, whose magisterial edition of the *Yoga Sutras* (North Point Press, 2009) I have used freely in this essay. In his commentary on YS 1.39, which states that anything whatsoever can be used as the object of meditation, Bryant calls attention to a

proposal by the great yoga teacher B. K. S. Iyengar in his own book (*Yoga: The Tree of Knowledge*, HarperCollins, 2012), that the yoga posture itself be the object of meditation. Here is Bryant:

Approaching *asana* in this way—as a bona fide support for fixing the mind (and one for which many people in the West might be best suited)—is thus fully within Patañjali’s system, *provided it is performed with this intent* rather than some other superficial motive. Indeed, this approach constitutes a unique contribution not just to the history of Yoga as it has been transmitted over the centuries but, more important, also to the participational possibilities of the practice of yoga as it is being transmitted in a present-day mainstream context. People who might otherwise be disinterested in some of the other truth claims of Yoga are very attracted to *asana*, albeit often for physical rather than spiritual reasons. Even if this is the case, if the mind is fully fixed and absorbed *without distraction* on the practice of *asana*, for whatever motive, it can still attain fixity and stillness.

This seems like a promising approach, one that could draw current yoga students into a congenial but serious meditation practice, and one that could possibly be useful for Zen students who are interested, as we all should be, in bringing our practice off the cushion and into our lives as a whole. In any case, it is always worth remembering that just as Buddha was a yogi and made full use of the resources of the traditions of his time, so should each of us make best use of whatever traditions in which we participate. ♦

# Success

Andrzej Stec JDPSN

Excerpt from Q & A at Kwan Um Daejeon Zen Group July, 2016

**Question:** There's one word in this life that has been helping me but at the same time also giving me suffering. That word is success. What is success? And what is a successful life?

**Andrzej Stec JDPSN:** What do you want? [Silence]

I heard that that 95 percent of people don't know what they want. Maybe 3 percent know what they want but can't get it. There's 2 percent left. The next 1 percent know what they want, and they get it, but are not happy. The last 1 percent of people know what they want, know how to get it, get it and they're happy with it. A teacher in our school taught, "Be careful what you want because you might get it. When you get it, you might not like it."

What is true success? If you ask Buddha, the greatest success is to become Buddha. The main Buddha halls in Korean temples are called, "Dae Woong Jeon", which means "Hall of Great Heroes"—the hall of first-place winners. From Buddha's point of view, you cannot get anything higher than becoming Buddha. Before getting enlightenment, Shakyamuni Buddha was the biggest loser in India. He had a kingdom and he lost it. He lost his wife, who was considered the most beautiful woman in India. He lost all his wealth. He lost his son. He didn't get enlightenment and he lost all his Dharma friends, five friends who just deserted him. When he finally sat alone under the bodhi tree, he was the number-one loser in India. That's the point. To become a great winner, one has to become a great loser first.

If you know what you want, it will become your dream. If it's a small dream, when you get it, it comes with small success. If you fulfill your small dream and get success, you should be happy with it. If you have a big dream, you get big success. Actually, you can get anything you want, but there's a catch—you cannot keep it. You will lose it and all your effort will be for nothing. That's why desire makes so much suffering.

Nowadays, some people make money by teaching others how to get what they want with less work. After World War II, if you were busy doing many things and multitasking, it was considered successful. Nowadays, this is number-one bad advice. If we are busy, maybe we are somewhat efficient. We are doing many things but they are not necessarily important. We are not necessarily productive. Being productive means doing less but doing the right things.

That means, first, what we want has to become clear.

We can decide: do many unimportant things and get busy, get tired, get stressed, get sick. We call that "living in

Shallowville"—nowadays we live in Shallowville. Of the six billion people on the planet, most of us are mediocre. In the end, perhaps we can get some small success but cannot keep it.

Or, do that one thing and do it well. Few people can do one thing and go really deep, do the deep work and a find very big success. Yet all those actions take a lot of energy and time. Maybe money and fame come along with it. Maybe also prestige and respect but still in the end, we cannot keep any of them.

In Zen we say, "Don't want anything, then you get everything"—but nobody believes that. Most people want some-



Photo: Sven Mahr

thing, not knowing that the very thing they want is not good for them. Now you have a choice—don't know what you want and get busy; know what you want 100 percent, go for it, get it and then lose it; or, don't want anything and get everything. Three kinds of success—which one do you like?

This is a serious question. Many of us here today [*indicating audience*] are mostly middle-aged, right? Nobody here today just graduated from high school. I see that some of us are getting gray hair. In the West, we say "over the hill." Einstein said, "A person who has not made his great contribution before the age of 30 will never do so." But I don't believe that because he didn't know about meditation. If you meditate, it's possible to keep young and fresh. It helps. Your brain's age

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Picture courtesy of Barry Briggs JDPSN



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doesn't matter. The question is, how do we want to spend the rest of the time that's left for each one of us?

Those who came here at six o'clock in the evening or later, all of us got closer to death by two hours. Actually that's true for everybody. Other people in this city spent these last two hours in different ways and this is a fact. This body will not stay forever. When we die and how we die, nobody knows, but time doesn't wait for anybody. We all got closer to our end on this planet by two hours. Then, for what kind of success will we spend the remaining precious time of our life? Where do we want to invest? In becoming famous? Making a little more money? Getting a house? Putting our energy into our children to help them get married well? Maybe you want to give the rest of your life to your country? That's a little better than just for yourself. Or maybe put the rest of our life toward stopping wanting anything, and to find the truth. Not the relative, human "truth," which is always changing. Everybody's confused because there are so many truths. One day a scientist will say, "Coffee is bad for you, don't drink it." Next a new researcher says that coffee is good for you and you can take two cups a day. Who will you believe? Even what we're saying now is also Buddhist truth, right? Subjective truth. Anybody can say anything. In Zen we say, "The tongue has no bone." Whatever I say now, don't believe it either.

Every human being has one big responsibility, though—you have to attain your truth. Have no doubt. Don't run around asking other people for advice. This is my personal definition of success. Everybody is different. Each of us who came here came with a different reason. Small happiness is better than big suffering. Zen doesn't say, "Don't go to work tomorrow, don't take care of your research, don't care about your company, give away all your money, or stop talking to your parents or your children." You can have it all. You can have small happiness and big happiness. Just follow Dharma. When you get small happiness, enjoy it but don't get attached to it. Don't stop working for the great success. Don't settle for small happiness. Go for the big one. Small happiness, big happiness: both are better than big suffering, and this practice will help you. If your mind is clear, you'll enjoy a cup of tea. It will give you great joy. If you share this cup of tea and nice conversation with your parents, husband, wife, children or friends, it will become bigger happiness. But don't forget to meditate, don't forget to practice. Then, whatever this world is going through, you will be able to deal with it and even use it to get more happiness and help others. You can get it all. It is said that in a revolution, there are always winners and losers. We have to become winners of our own revolution. The one thing that will help us is by keeping our bodhisattva direction—"not for me." ♦

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One million distractions.  
Ten thousand Dharmas.  
All come to one.

Where is one?  
Click.  
What is one?  
Smile.

Gate Gate..  
opinion  
Paragate...  
noise  
Parasamgate..  
tension  
Bodhi svah . . .

Come back.

—*Joanna Gruchot, Wrocław, Poland*

### Poem of the Garden Master

Sleep, eat, weed, walk,  
sow, watch, listen, think,  
feel, sense, laugh, dream,  
observe myself, look . . . . . inside . . . . .  
i am happy with this having nothing  
and be everything.

There is no I.

Only air, wind, light, drop of rain,  
croak of frog, whistle of bird,  
silent wingbeat of multicolor butterfly,  
seed that breaks and become sprout,  
moon that digs with silver light  
the dark night.

Brilliant sun that becomes drop of sweat...  
hands of soil and leaves on the plate,  
taste of fruit in the palate.

Silence . . . . .

Who am I?

Just don't know.

—*German Linares*  
*Musangsa Temple, Korea*  
*Summer 2016*

# Book Review

## *Don't Be a Jerk*

By Brad Warner

New World Library, 2016

Review by Zen Master Hae Kwang

Brad Warner is a Soto Zen priest, founder of Dōgen Sangha Los Angeles, punk rocker, Japanese monster movie marketer, and author. The full title page of his sixth and latest book says it all: *Don't Be a Jerk: And Other Practical Advice from Dōgen, Japan's Greatest Zen Master*, and the reading line continues, "A Radical but Reverent Paraphrasing of Dōgen's Treasury of the True Dharma Eye." As the author himself tells us, all of his previous books are to a greater or lesser degree based on Dōgen's *Shobogenzo* (Treasury of the True Dharma Eye), the fundamental classic of Soto Zen, and a work to which Warner's teacher, Gudō Wafu Nishijima, devoted his life. Nishijima's multivolume translation (with Michael Chodo Cross) of the complete *Shobogenzo* appeared in 2006, the first of only three complete (or nearly complete) English translations. There are a number of partial translations as well. Warner often quotes from several different translations to clarify a difficult passage (and often takes us through bits of the original Japanese and Chinese). His own treatment of Dōgen's text is best characterized as an abbreviated, colloquial paraphrase rather than a complete, scholarly translation. And therein lies the considerable virtue of this book. Warner makes Dōgen (1200–1253) come immediately alive for the contemporary reader and practitioner in a way that a scholarly translation, even one that aims for sensitivity to the original's style and tone, simply cannot.

Here is a sample of how Warner works, from his chapter 16, which corresponds to chapter 9 in the *Shobogenzo*, the title of which provides the title of Warner's book. (Warner's text also includes the Chinese characters as well as the Japanese pronunciations given below.) After a few introductory paragraphs on Buddhist precepts, he explains:

The title of this chapter is four Chinese characters that break down as follows: *sho*, meaning "various," *aku*, meaning "bad" or "wrong" or "evil," *maku*, meaning "don't," and *sa*, meaning "do." So the phrase I'm translating in this chapter as "don't be a jerk" would probably be translated by a more philosophical type as "do not enact evil" or more generally as "don't do wrong things."

After a little more explanation of the title phrase



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Warner gives us his paraphrase (in a different typeface) of chapter 9 in the *Shobogenzo* in about six pages. Other translations average about 10 pages. Warner has been selective but seems here and in general to be true the promise he makes in the introduction, that he has given us at least an abbreviated account of every paragraph, if not every sentence, in the original. He then goes on to provide his own commentary:

My favorite line in this is "Even if the whole universe is nothing but a bunch of jerks doing all kinds of jerk-type things, there is still liberation in simply not being a jerk." When I posted this online, some people asked me what Dōgen "really said." Dōgen did not speak English. So asking what he really said is problematic. What he actually wrote was [*Dōgen's Japanese text is quoted here*]. Here are three translations: "Even if wrong upon wrong pervade the whole Universe, and even if wrongs have swallowed the whole Dharma again and again, there is still salvation and liberation in not committing" (Nishijima/Cross). "Even if unwholesome action fills worlds upon worlds, and swallows up all things, refrain from is emancipation" (Kazuaki Tanahashi). "Even if evils completely filled however many worlds or completely swallowed however many dharmas, there is

(Continued on p. 25)

## Book Review

### *Myths and Legends of Buddhist Temples in Korea*

By Gyeongchan Mok

Jogye Order Publishing, Seoul, 2014

Review by Zen Master Bon Hae

In 1970, in Bayside, Queens, New York, the Virgin Mary appeared to Virginia Leuken and commanded her to establish a shrine at St. Robert Bellermine Catholic Church. Thousands of pilgrims soon appeared, but shortly thereafter the Church declared the visions illegitimate. The pilgrims were sent elsewhere and there is currently no mention of Virginia Leuken or her visions on St. Bellermine's Web page.

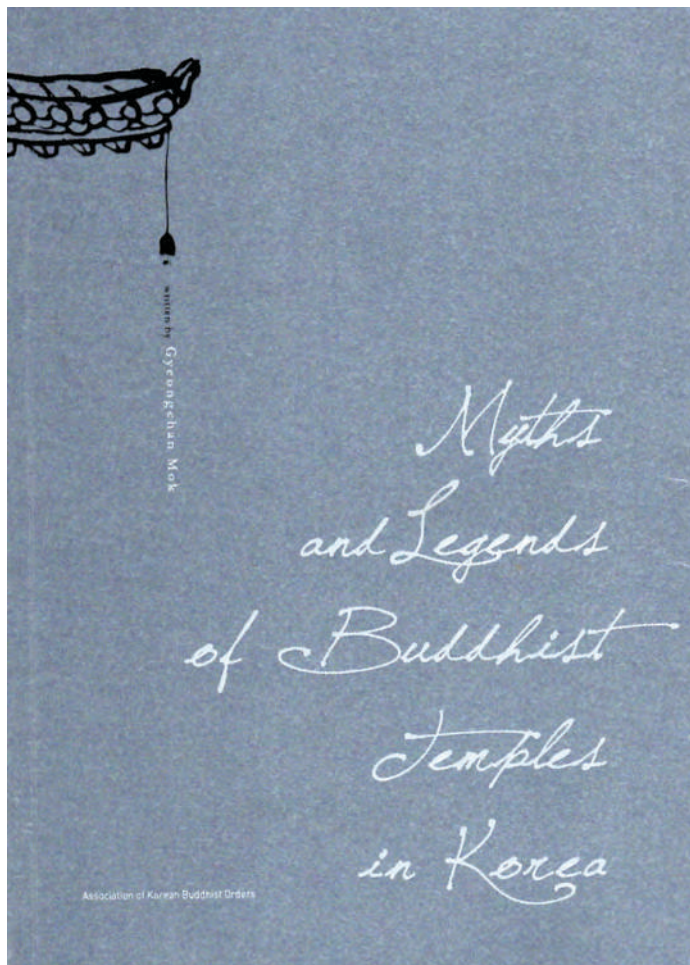
In Korea, this would have played out differently.

*Myths and Legends of Buddhist Temples in Korea* is a compilation of stories connected with Buddhist temples. Many of these are supernatural: a monk is reborn as a snake; a dharma hall is painted by a mysterious stranger who turns out to be a tiger; a temple fire is extinguished by a flick of rice water from a novice monk far away; ghost ships appear with Buddha statues; buddhas and bodhisattvas disguise themselves as human and suddenly disappear; and so on. In contrast to what did not happen at St. Bellermine's, many temples and hermitages are founded on visions and dreams.

These stories go back to the earliest days of Buddhism in Korea, but also forward to the late 20th century—for example, the statue of Amitabha Buddha in the main hall at Songgwang Sa Temple was soaked in sweat for nearly two weeks just before the Korean currency crisis of 1997.<sup>1</sup>

Mok himself at times expresses mild skepticism: "Whether there is historical truth to these stories or not<sup>2</sup> . . ."; "Today such a story . . . would not be accepted."<sup>3</sup> But historical truth is not the point. Mok is introducing the reader—one assumes this book is part of the Chogye Order's outreach to the West—to Korean culture, Korean history, Korean practice. And not just to the facts, but to the emotional heft.

For example, consider the Confucian repression of Buddhism that lasted for centuries. It is one thing to have heard about it, even to know some of the specific facts about it. It is another thing to feel the emotional weight communicated through stories in which temples are threatened with extinction and only a sort of miracle pulls them through. For another example,



even if we know about Korean suffering from the several Japanese invasions, the deep wound in the Korean psyche is made clear in the stories connected with these invasions, as is the patriotic attitude that pervades Korean Buddhist practice—one section is called *When Korean Temples Prosper, Imperial Japan Falls*.

An internal thread throughout the book is an excellent introduction to the attributes, functions and iconography of various buddhas, bodhisattvas, and other beings of the Mahayana pantheon. If you sometimes get confused by this it turns out that you're not alone. Several examples are given of major statues whose identity is not agreed upon—Shakyamuni or Baisajyaguru (Medicine Buddha)? Vairocana or Maitreya?

There is interesting material about temple design and building techniques, special practices at various



temples (for example, the salt pot ceremony to protect Haecinsa) and a wonderful chapter on Korean temple bells, which have several unique design elements.

Where can you buy this book? You can't. But it might be lying around your local Zen center. This book belongs to a class of books I think of as unobtainium: never meant for commercial release, sponsored by a generous donor, published by a temple or religious order, given out for free to lucky individuals and groups (your local Kwan Um Zen center or guiding teacher might or might not have been sent two copies by the Chogyo Order). This kind of publishing is common in Asia, in a tradition that goes back hundreds of years. In our school, *The Teachings of Zen Master Man Gong* (translated and edited by Zen Master Dae Kwang, Hye Tong Sunim JDPS and Kathy Park) was published in 2009 as a private edition by the Kwan Um School of Zen.<sup>4</sup> Similarly, Su Bong Zen Monastery in Hong Kong published Zen Master Dae Kwan and Zen Master Dae Kwang's English translation of *The Platform Sutra*, distributed to Kwan Um School centers around

the world,<sup>5</sup> and Myong An Sunim recently printed a Chinese edition (with simplified characters) of the *Platform Sutra* to be distributed in Malaysia.

If you are interested in the Korean heritage of our school, *Myths and Legends of Buddhist Temples in Korea* is an excellent place to start. I hope you're able to find it. ♦

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#### Notes

1. Described in this book as the IMF crisis; the IMF report of March 1999 describes it as the Korean crisis, see <http://www.imf.org/external/pubs/ft/wp/1999/wp9928.pdf>
2. p. 141.
3. p. 250 - 251.
4. Which is only semi-unobtainium—you can buy it at the Pagoda Gift Shop at Providence Zen Center.
5. And which the Sixth Patriarch's Temple in China liked so much that they distributed it in honor of the Sixth Patriarch's 1,300-year memorial ceremony.

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(Continued from p. 23)

liberation in not doing" (Soto Zen Text Project). I think my version is pretty close.

Readers must decide for themselves whether it is close enough. For this reviewer any inaccuracies in the translation are more than compensated for by the liveliness of the style, an exception being Warner's penchant for rendering the occasional poem that appears in Dōgen's text into verse that rises little above doggerel. For all its potential, colloquial expression is sometimes better tempered with a dose of dignity. To Warner's credit, he confesses to be aware of his problem here.

In the remainder of this chapter—about another six pages—Warner goes on to discuss the problem of evil, the nature of cause and effect in Buddhism and modern physics, and Dōgen's view of Buddhist practice as real action in the here and now, referencing Dōgen's treatise *Instructions to the Cook*. Most of the book's 26 chapters follow this general outline: Warner's paraphrase of a chapter of the *Shobogenzo* preceded by some background material and followed by discussion of Dōgen's main points, all presented in an engaging style.

Some chapters are excursions, notably the informative history of the text in chapter 11, "Banned in Japan: The Twisted History of *Shobogenzo*." Also included are two chapters covering two classic essays by Dōgen that do not appear in the *Shobogenzo*. These are Dōgen's "Bendowa" ("Dōgen's Zen FAQ, *A Talk about Pursuing the Truth*") and his "Fukanzazengi" ("How to Sit

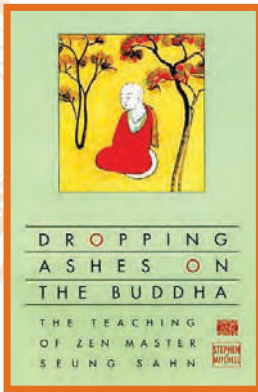
Down and Shut Up, *The Universal Guide to the Standard Method of Zazen*").

The bulk of *Don't Be a Jerk* covers the first 21 of Dōgen's 96 chapters and is projected to be the first of three volumes by Warner covering the entire *Shobogenzo*. Included in these first 21 chapters is Dōgen's famous *Genjo Koan*, which Warner justly calls the most important chapter in the entire work and Dōgen's most important philosophical piece, memorable for its dictum that to study the Buddha Way is to study the self, to study the self is to forget the self, to forget the self is to be actualized by the 10,000 things. Also included are: Dōgen's remarkable tract against religious sexism in 13th-century Japan (Warner's chapter 14, "Was Dōgen the First Buddhist Feminist?"); some of his most profound metaphysical pieces (Warner's chapter 17, "Pyschedelic Dōgen: *Being-Time*," and chapter 19, "The Beer and Doritos Sutra, *The Sutra of Mountains and Waters*"); and a broad selection of other topics ranging from, in Warner's translation, "Zen and the Art of Wiping Your Butt" and "Stop Trying to Grab my Mind" to "The Mystical Qualities of the Clothes You Wear."

Dōgen is one of the transcendent geniuses of Zen, a difficult and subtle author, a philosopher of enormous range, and a teacher original in thought while deeply rooted in tradition. Taking on all of this is both commendable and courageous, and Warner is off to an excellent start. ♦

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## 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. \$15.00*

**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*

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**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*

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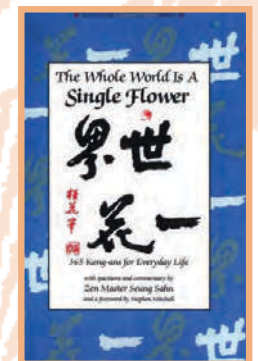
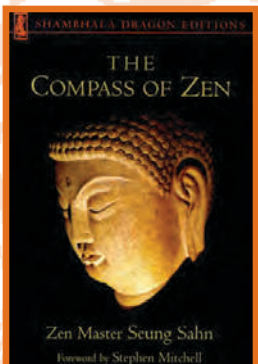
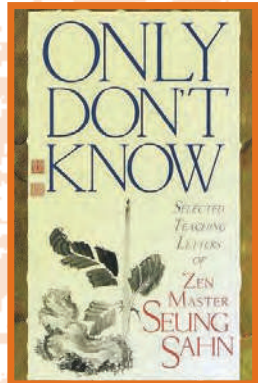
**Wake Up! On the Road with a Zen Master.** An entertaining documentary that captures Zen Master Seung Sahn's energy and presents the core of his teaching. 54 minutes. *Primary Point Press, 1992. VHS: ISBN 0-942795-07-5. \$30.00 DVD: ISBN 0-942795-14-8. \$30.00*

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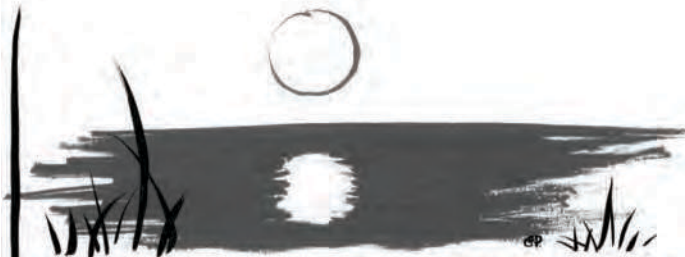
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"Clear mind is like the full moon in the sky. Sometimes clouds come and cover it, but the moon is always behind them. Clouds go away, then the moon shines brightly. So don't worry about clear mind; it is always there. ... Thinking comes and goes, comes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

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).

An **Index to *The Compass of Zen***, prepared by John Holland and Ty Koontz, is now available on the Kwan School of Zen website, under "online resources":

<http://www.kwanumzen.org/compass-of-zen-index-2016/>

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Illes Balears, Spain  
+34 686 382 210 (Tolo Cantarellas)  
palmacentrozen@gmail.com

**Prison Groups**

Arizona State Prison Florence  
East Unit

Lowell Correctional Institution,  
Florida

Lowell Annex, Florida

Florida Women's Reception  
Center, Florida

Northeast Correctional Center in  
Concord, 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.

\_\_\_\_\_

2. Please indicate a membership level and choose payment schedule
  - a. Family \_\_\_\_\_\$480 yearly \_\_\_\_\_ \$120 quarterly
  - b. Individual \_\_\_\_\_\$360 yearly \_\_\_\_\_ \$90 quarterly
  - c. Student/Senior (65+) \_\_\_\_\_\$240 yearly \_\_\_\_\_ \$60 quarterly

3. Please print your contact information

Name \_\_\_\_\_

Address \_\_\_\_\_

City \_\_\_\_\_ State \_\_\_\_\_ Zip \_\_\_\_\_

Phone \_\_\_\_\_ Email \_\_\_\_\_

For Family Memberships, please give up to 5 names to include in your membership.

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

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

If you have any questions, contact the office at 401-658-1476 or email us at [membership@kwanumzen.org](mailto:membership@kwanumzen.org)

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