

# Primary Point



Volume 39 • Number 1 • Spring 2022

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Kwan Um School of Zen  
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MUSANGSA 2022-2023

# Kyolche

Summer

MAY 15, 2022 - AUGUST 12, 2022

Winter

NOV 8, 2022 - FEBRUARY 5, 2023

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PROVIDENCE ZEN CENTER  
CUMBERLAND, RI

# Summer Kyol-Che 2022

JULY 2ND - AUGUST 5TH

"WHEN WALKING, STANDING, SITTING, LYING DOWN,  
SPEAKING, BEING SILENT, MOVING, BEING STILL, AT ALL  
TIMES, IN ALL PLACES, WITHOUT INTERRUPTION  
- WHAT IS THIS?"

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Published by the Kwan Um School of Zen, a nonprofit religious corporation. The founder, Zen Master Seung Sahn, 78th Patriarch in the Korean Chogye order, was the first Korean Zen Master to live and teach in the West. In 1972, after teaching in Korea and Japan for many years, he founded the Kwan Um sangha, which today has affiliated groups around the world. He gave transmission to Zen Masters, and inka (teaching authority) to senior students called Ji Do Poep Sas (dharma masters).

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 1,400 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: Nun meditating in a small shrine in Unmunsa Temple, South Korea. Photo by Oriol Casanovas. For biographies of Oriol and other contributors to this issue, please see page 26.

# Are You Kind? A Story from a Solo Retreat

Zen Master Gu Ja

From a dharma talk held at the Berlin Zen Center after evening practice in October, 2021.

## Editor's Note

Edgar Degas, a French Impressionist painter famous for his pastel drawings and oil paintings, once said that "Painting is easy when you don't know how, but very difficult when you do." His assertion rings familiar to a Zen practitioner as it points to that liminal space often regarded in Zen as the "Beginner's Mind"—a mind that is endowed with limitless possibilities and an attitude of openness, untainted by existing preconceptions and ideas. What you are holding in your hands is a culmination of such a process manifesting in a *Primary Point* that, in addition to featuring teachings from our European Zen masters, teachers, and sunims, also offers various art forms—from poems and personal storytelling to drawings and photographs, all the way to the art of wild animal tracking. It is, to borrow from a note by Knud Rosenmayr JDPSN, an "infinite canvas" of dharma, expressed and refracted through the idiosyncrasy of the colorful talents of our European sangha members. We hope you enjoy the exhibition. —*European Editing Team*

This evening on our way here to the Zen center, Roland asked me if I would like to tell you something after the evening practice about my solo retreat. I said, "As you already know, there is nothing to tell." And in fact, there is nothing to report about a solo retreat that words can describe adequately.

You sit on the cushion most of the day and follow the same routine every day, so that you soon lose track of time. Sometimes it feels like you've been there forever, and sometimes you don't even know how long or short the day is.

I find silence to be the most powerful of all forms of practice. The silence enables you to perceive the inner ongoing self-dialog and to perceive the movements of thinking that slosh over you like the waves on the sea, sometimes more or less, sometimes wildly or gently. You sit in stillness, without any sense of time, and watch the inner landscape that is changing. Thoughts come and go, emotions are constantly changing, and the person you thought you are is nowhere to be held and nowhere to be found. At some point you don't know who you are or whether there is even a you. So, you just sit there like a house, the gate and window of which are wide open and through which the wind blows, birds flutter through, the moon and stars shine through.

When I describe a retreat like that, it all sounds harmonious and wholesome, but how would we learn if we had no challenges, no mistakes, and no misery? Didn't Zen Master Seung Sahn say that a good situation is a bad situation and a bad situation is a good one? Without much effort on your part, you will have enough painful experiences about yourself that you'll wish to avoid. But such direct experiences are invaluable because they give you strength and push you to live the insight of the practice in your everyday life. Today I want to share with you one of my experiences of this kind.

My solo retreat location in the mountains of Sierra Nevada in southern Spain belongs to the Tibetan tradition of the Dalai Lama. When I got there, at the entrance of the place I saw a quote from the Dalai Lama, "Kindness is my religion." I thought, "OK. That's easy. I like that." Just like

many of my fellow men think of themselves, I thought of myself that I was a kind person and that kindness as a religion would be an easy form of practice for me. But very soon I had experiences that taught me otherwise.

My hut was located on the upper part of a mountain peak and stood all by itself, snuggled into a rock wall and surrounded by low-growing trees and vegetation. A basket with the daily ration of food was placed under a tree a short walk from my hut. I picked up this basket each day at lunchtime and brought it back the next day with empty containers. That way I didn't have to interact with anyone for the entire three months. My friends and companions were only the wild goats, foxes, lizards, and geckos. I loved seeing these animals and have always been happy to be close with them. Then one day, I met a rat.

I had a so-called dry toilet outside, a little above the hut. That means, after I pooped, I sprinkled a handful of wood shavings over it. The toilet has a raised wooden box that I could sit on to poop, and above it is a simple canopy. But the toilet has no door. Like an empress, I could sit enthroned on my toilet seat and, in the most relaxed way, see the wide, mostly blue sky above me, far below a village with whitewashed houses, and in the far distance many mountain ridges and peaks.

One day while I was sitting so relaxed on the toilet, I discovered that a rat had quickly slipped out of a small hole in a big rock right next to the toilet and disappeared into it again. Then I saw it sitting in the hole near its entrance, a pretty and cute rat straight out of a picture book: shiny fur, black button eyes, pale pink ears. I then saw her frequently, mostly sitting in the hole in question. I thought, "Oh, a polite rat. Before she continues on her way, she wants to wait for me to finish my business." She became even more sympathetic to me.

Then one day, while I was still on my "throne," I heard noises below me where a pile of shit lay. Some rats ran under me with squeaking noises. Suddenly it dawned on me. The

likeable rat was waiting in its hole for its meal, which I was just delivering at body temperature. A feeling of disgust at the rat shook me. The rat, which until then had been cute and lovable, turned into an extremely disgusting animal. In fact, nothing at all about the rat had changed. She looked the same, and she eats what she always ate, including maybe my shit. The only thing that changed was my opinion of her. That, in turn, changed everything about the rat for me.

A few days later I almost freaked out when I was sitting on the terrace and saw a rat come through a rain runoff from the low stone wall that safely protects the terrace from the steep mountainside. “No, you don’t come here!” I screamed inside. I then quickly collected large and small stones with which I blocked both of the two rain drains in the wall. I worked carefully and took a long time to hermetically seal the holes, knowing full well that this would not prevent the rats from coming and going at will. They could climb the whole wall or make other detours. But my strong resentment urged me to make life as difficult for the rats as possible. I wanted to build obstacles for them and see them suffer. But why?

In fact, it’s absurd that I should be disgusted with the rat for eating my feces. What is my poop? It was my nutritious and delicious meal at the end of the process of change. If the rat wants to ingest this as food, it is quite natural. In nature, without exception, all are sources of nourishment or growth for others.

Only my judgment of my feces, that it is dirty and that the rat that ingests my feces for food is automatically disgusting, has generated this aversion and aggression that led me to take action against the rat.

After some time, I completely forgot about this incident. Then one morning it rained after over two months of dry heat. It was pouring hard. I enjoyed hearing the rain patter and feeling the humid air during the morning meditation session with all my heart. But then, when I opened the hut door after meditation, my heart almost stopped. The terrace was flooded knee-deep with water. Two of the three stairs to the hut entrance were under water and the water level threatened to rise even more. All of the rainwater on the mountain slope above the hut was dammed up by the stone wall. After a brief moment of incomprehension and panic, I hurried to the rain drains and started to blindly pull the stones out of the holes under the water. Soaked from the rain and trembling with shock, I had to painfully admit that I was mean. I had a strong dislike for the rats, held on to my feelings, and wanted to harm the rats. I wasn’t kind. Certainly not. And the damage I was trying to do to the rats hit me nearly in full. I almost flooded the hut and, in that case, I would have had to break off the retreat.

Real kindness is not a sentiment that arises depending on the situation and the people we are dealing with. Nor is it a reciprocity with which we show our affection to those who are sympathetic to us. Nor is it a mood that is sometimes there and sometimes not there. Kindness is

a fundamental attitude in life that is based on letting go. That means, even if I have opinions, judgments, and feelings, I do not hold on to them. The truth is, whenever this I-my-me loses its focus, the connection with all beings that is already there is expressed in kindness.

The first vow of the four great vows in Zen reads: “Sentient beings are numberless, we vow to save them all.” Oddly enough, we often need to save innumerable living beings from our own ideas, opinions, and judgments rather than from their own misery. Seen in this way, the work of saving sentient beings begins with becoming aware of our own delusions.

Retreats help us to become aware of the cause of our inadequacy in this world, which is rooted in our self-centered belief that we are separate. In a retreat, all alone in seclusion from the world and undisturbed by everyday life, we have the opportunity to touch the deeply hidden layer of our being, which we call “don’t know.” This don’t know reveals the fundamental unity of all beings in every moment of what is. And so, it unveils the hidden wonder and the mystery of being alive in this world.

“Don’t know” is kindness, and from “don’t know” the loving-kindness of the bodhisattva is born: “How can I help you?” ♦

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**Editor’s note:** *We often perceive those around us through the lens of their role or the function they perform. But the roles we adopt are only a partial account of our being. Sharing the dharma with Kwan Um teachers exposes us to their role as spiritual guides, which oftentimes carries a note of seriousness (and rightfully so). However, our editorial curiosity prompted us to explore whether we could offer a somewhat more personal glimpse into our teachers’ lives and history, if not for the chance to relate with them on that level, then for a dash of relaxing humor. We hope you enjoy these small nuggets of wisdom served in the form of a teacher’s Dharma Spotlight. —European Editing Team*

#### **Dharma Spotlight**

1. Childhood talent or dream: to become a magician
2. Favorite book: *The Soul of an Octopus: A Surprising Exploration into the Wonder of Consciousness*, by Sy Montgomery
3. What inspires you: your question now
4. Fun fact about you: my deadly seriousness
5. Mountains or beach: sky
6. Favorite dish (to cook and to eat): munch munch...
7. First retreat: still ongoing
8. Most embarrassing dharma moment: this moment when I answer your questions
9. Special (or favorite) chant: Hakuna Matata
10. Special (or favorite) Zen quote: “Human life has no meaning, ... we can change no meaning to Great Meaning, which means Great Love.” —Zen Master Seung Sahn

# Drifting Clouds, Flowing Water

Chon Mun Sunim JDPS

Let's rewind to the mid-1990s. The Kwan Um School of Zen was already established. Several of Zen Master Seung Sahn's older students had received formal transmission and become Zen masters themselves, and a couple of new mountain temples had been established. Locations for both Taegosa Temple (Mountain Spirit Center) in California and Furnace Mountain Center in Kentucky were chosen because of the auspicious feng shui (風水, or in Korean, *pung su*) in those areas.

At that time, one of my closest dharma friends, Hyon Mun Sunim, had just become ordained and took up residence at Mountain Spirit Center to practice there and help Mu Ryang Sunim in his project of building the temple. Following his firsthand experience of the good feng shui in Taegosa, he got the idea of finding a piece of land in the Polish mountains that would be suitable

for building a temple there in the future. He showed detailed maps of both areas to Zen Master Seung Sahn during his visit to Poland in 1997. Zen Master Seung Sahn examined both maps and chose the land in Wisła due to the great feng shui of the area. He showed on the map where the Buddha hall should be located and which direction the Buddha statue should face. After talking more about the land, he looked straight into Hyon Mun Sunim's eyes and told him not to do anything on this land for the foreseeable future because it was not yet the right time; if they moved too quickly, it would not work and they would lose the land.

Hyon Mun Sunim got Dr. Tadeusz Szykowski and his wife, Kasia, interested in the project, and they graciously offered to buy the land in Wisła and hold it until a later time. And that's what happened.

Fast-forward fifteen years. In 2012, three years after my ordination, I visited Tadeusz and Kasia at their home in Massachusetts, and they offered to transfer the ownership of the land to me. The legal work took place in 2013 with the pro bono help of an attorney in Poland. She and many others generously offered their help to us. I guess the right time had come to do something with the land.

After I became the owner, something didn't feel quite right. I did not want to own the land as an individual. Hyon Mun Sunim and I talked with Zen Master Wu Bong about the property's ownership. It did not take us long to decide to establish a foundation that would take over the land from me. My last conversation with Zen Master Wu Bong, a month before his passing, was about that. Later on, some of Wu Bong Sunim's ashes were spread on the land during a simple ceremony.

It took around two years to get the bylaws written and to work out the details of the associated legal work—sunims cannot do much during summer and winter *Kyol Che*, after all. Quite a few people helped us on the way: Tadeusz Mięrowicz from the Kraków Zen Center wrote the bylaws. Anna Kaszewska (the lawyer who helped with the ownership transfer) drew up the articles of incorporation for the foundation. Jurek Pawłowicz (who found the land) became the



Photo: Courtesy of Unsu Foundation

for building a temple there in the future. He spent a couple of months riding in a car with some Polish Zen students around the different mountain ranges in southern Poland. At that time, one of Hyon Mun Sunim's best childhood friends—also a dharma teacher—happened to live with his family in the town of Wisła in the Beskid Mountains in southern Poland. He found two and a half acres of land for sale there. Hyon Mun Sunim found another piece of land in the Bieszczady Moun-

first director and offered constant help and support. And these are just a few people among many who have been helping us.

And so, through all that effort and energy, the Unsu Foundation was established in the fall of 2015 and formally registered in Polish law in February the next year.

*Unsu* is the Korean pronunciation of two Chinese characters, 雲水, meaning “cloud” and “water.” In this case, a better translation is “drifting clouds, flowing water.” This term has been commonly used in Buddhism to describe a practicing itinerant monk who wanders from monastery to monastery seeking a good place to practice and a keen-eyed teacher. (To be clear, Unsu is the name of the foundation that owns the land. The temple itself does not yet have a name, and will get its own name later.)

Who are the members of the foundation? All of the sunims from our worldwide monastic sangha, not just the Polish monks and nuns. Our monastic sangha owns the place.

In 2017, we decided that it was time to start living and practicing on the land. We bought a used camping trailer and Hyon Mun Sunim spent the summer retreat there. He took apart an old shed, and after the retreat it was rebuilt into an insulated garage, and the trailer was moved inside. The place got a new nickname: the “Trailersa.” I did the first winter retreat there with no running water and a wood stove that had to be installed at the beginning of the retreat. After that, conditions slowly improved. A new seventy-meter deep water well was drilled, windows were put in, a tent to store firewood was installed, and a storage container was brought in. A new 150-meter road was constructed, so now the place would be more accessible by car—even though a four-wheel drive is still necessary most of the year. With money raised for us by the Singapore sangha, we bought additional parcels of land, and now we have about six acres. All the work done on the land was made possible by the generous donations of many people.

Throughout those several years, every summer and winter one sunim has been doing a hundred-day solo retreat there. One of my Korean dharma friends, Heo San Sunim, sat there in 2018 in the summer. Il Am Sunim did one winter ango, the time between Kyol Che retreats. Hye Tong Sunim practiced there one summer. In September of 2019, I came for just one winter, and

because of the pandemic I ended up staying there for almost two years. It’s the best place to quarantine, by the way.

Slowly, more and more people in our sangha in Poland have not only become aware of what we’re doing there, but have contributed what they could to help—by offering their time, donating food and necessities, or supporting us financially. And more and more often, people come to visit and join us in work and practice. Members of the Katowice Zen Center (the Zen center nearest to us) are particularly generous with their time and help.

Together with Igor Piniński JDPSN and his Original Buddha Temple project, we planted around 1,300 new trees in the spring of 2021. And this summer, following the idea and the lead of Igor PSN, we held the first group retreat on the land, a one-week forest Yong Maeng Jong Jin attended by eighteen people. Afterward we held a large precepts ceremony.

In the fall, the trailer left the building and took up



*Photo: Courtesy of Unsu Foundation*

residence in a new tent, becoming our guest quarters. “Trailersa” was no more. After some simple adaptations to the interior, this winter (2021–2022) is incomparably more comfortable for the sunim practicing there during Kyol Che.

Things continue to happen and the place keeps changing. Why did we decide to start this project? There were a few reasons.

As of now, there is no place in Europe that sunims

from our KUSZ lineage can call a home temple, that is, a place that is run according to monastic rules and serves first and foremost the needs of the monastic sangha. Sunims can visit Europe only for shorter periods, since it is not possible to take residence in one of our school's centers for an extended time—either because of limited space, financial constraints, or simply because of the difficulty of being the only monastic living among lay students. The monastic and lay lifestyles are quite different. What we need in Poland (and in Europe in general) is a place that European sunims can call home, where they can keep their possessions and—most important—practice. In light of the growing community of European sunims in Korea and the absence of a monastery in Europe, we intend this mountain place in Poland to address this need.

When talking about that, I find it helpful to use the example of Musangsa—the main temple of the Kwan Um School in Korea. Although it is a part of the school, it is owned by the monastic sangha. And the rules in

unique nature of this place and of the fact that we do not intend it to become another Zen center in Europe “competing” for students with local centers. The main idea of the project is well-received in the European teachers group and has the full support of the other Polish teachers and the Polish sangha in general. We also made it clear from the start that we will not do any fundraising within the Kwan Um School because that could divert already scant financial resources away from our Zen centers.

Our founding teacher, Zen Master Seung Sahn, generously spread the seeds of dharma throughout the world. Some of the seeds took root in Poland: it was the first country in Europe where our Kwan Um School of Zen established centers. His efforts and widespread teaching would not have been possible without his great bodhisattva vows. But the realization of these vows to help all beings was possible on such a vast scale only because he was a Buddhist monk. To have the dharma flourish and manifest in a complete way, a fourfold sangha is needed, consisting of bhikkhus (monks), bhikkhunis (nuns), upasakas (laymen), and upasikas (laywomen). Sunims could not exist without the support of the lay sangha. And while it is hard for laypeople to devote so much time to practice, study, helping others, and together action, sunims don't have anything else to do.

So what is the plan or the goal? Immediately, there is none, at least not in the strict sense. Establishing a temple is called in Korean *gae san* (開山), “opening the mountain.” One just goes to the location and begins practicing, and continues to practice there until the mountain opens up. How does one know when that happens? The place will start accepting you. The local community will start accepting you. It is a process, and it is impossible to sidestep. And it has been slowly happening—for example, in a couple of instances local people referred to me as “our monk.” One just has to live there for a while to gain their trust.

In the meantime, we have patience: patience to practice and just be there. All that's important is to maintain a clear direction and keep a strong practice and try mind. The mountain will show us. If it opens up a little—the result will be a small temple. If it opens up wide—a bigger practicing place will appear. Just follow the situation. And, as Zen Master Seung Sahn used to say: “Only try, try, try for ten thousand years, nonstop.” Please come and visit. ♦



Photo: Jeff Hazlbauer

Musangsa are a bit different than in our Zen centers. Everybody is welcome there, but while at Musangsa one has to follow the rules established by the monastic sangha. Sunims are the hosts; laypeople are the guests. When monastics come to any of our Zen centers it is the other way around—they are the guests, and they have to follow the rules established by the lay sangha.

I had a chance to talk about this situation with other teachers in Europe, and everybody is well aware of the



# Painting Inside

Knud Rosenmayr JDPSN

In these days of the pandemic, there is a strong connection between us humans that can be felt. Of course, on one side we may notice it on a superficial level, but also deep down there is a close bond. We hear that the coronavirus doesn't stay within any kind of borders. Politicians, family, and friends say, act, and do things that have a palpable effect on every one of us. However, there is also a connection that is beyond our opposites-thinking abilities. What is that? Humans have been living on this planet for many years. What have we learned? Why don't we live together in peace?

## SOCIAL CREATURES

Recently, I watched the movie *Into the Wild*. The film is based on a true story of a young man who escaped humanity in his later years to live alone in the wild. Before he died, he wrote something interesting in his notebook: "Happiness is only real when shared." Don't know if this really happened, but it doesn't matter. Humans seem to be social creatures that have a strong urge to connect, relate, and share.

However, when we meet, when we live together in our countries, cities, and homes, every so often it doesn't work out. Why is that? The other day, I asked my six-year-old nephew to draw a picture of his family. He drew a tall house with many windows, the sky, the ground, his mother, his father, and himself. He drew himself a bit smaller than his parents. One window had a different shape than all the others. He explained that this is the window in the cellar. After he finished drawing, he showed the drawing to the whole family.

## PAINTING ON AN INSIDE CANVAS

Are we drawing our world the same way? Maybe a bit more sophisticated, but in general is it similar? It seems like we are painting on an inside canvas and taking the picture for reality. We paint a husband, a wife, a family, a vaccinated person, an unvaccinated person, a king, a queen—and soon an entire kingdom appears. We paint some things bigger than others, give them roles, point out specific shapes, compare and judge them, making them good and bad, right and wrong, better and worse.

At some point, the drawing becomes our drawing, our picture, and we hurt each other and ourselves, get angry, upset, or depressed. We are in love or hate and protect our picture. Through spending a lot of time together, we accumulate an enormous amount of shared history in our relationships. This may pile up like layers of colors, which can be felt like thick glass walls between us. All those layers of past joys and hurts, pain and pleasure. We are usually so much closer to our picture than to anything else.

## RELATING TO

How do we relate to this world? Not only with people, but with the "world." Is there a chance that we meet like it was for the first time? Whether it's a tree in the garden, a politician on TV, a family member, or a friend. Our clever or ignorant thoughts may still come up, but can we see them and not necessarily follow their lead at that very moment? Maybe that is the last thing that we would like to do at that moment. It feels like our opposites thinking is in fear of dying out and wants to prevail under all circumstances.

On the cushion this is what we are doing during sitting: thoughts come up, we see them without judging, and we come back to our breathing, mantra, or *hwadu* (a short phrase or question, often from a kong-an). At times, we call this coming-back "practice," and we do it over and over again. In retreats, sometimes people who start intensive practicing experience a fear of dying. They report a feeling of tightness, an urge to leave, and a strong question arises: "What am I doing here?"

What is it that feels that? Can this be seen like watching a painting? Every little detail of it, without suppressing or denying it or being swept away? Noticing all the nuances without hindrance?

## NO HINDRANCE

Speaking of no hindrance, once a nun asked Zen Master Song Sahn (*A seventh-century Zen master, not to be confused with our founding teacher, Seung Sahn. —Ed.*): "What does 'no hindrance' mean?" Song Sahn replied, "Why do you wear clothes?" At this, the nun stripped naked and walked to the door.

I remember when I first read this kong-an, case 13 in *The Whole World Is a Single Flower*, a thought came up: "That's a pretty cool nun." I remember during a precepts ceremony, Zen Master Wu Bong once said, "I will tell you two stories, one about keeping the precepts strongly and one about breaking them." Then he added, "most people prefer the stories about breaking the precepts." Why is that? Do we admire that particular kind of no-hindrances energy?

What is Zen Master Song Sahn's job here? If he doesn't do anything, he is similar to that nun in the story, and that would have a big effect on the whole monastery. When we see this kind of pattern in our everyday life, what should we do? No hindrance doesn't hold any kind of energy; there is no attachment to any kind of no hindrance. If we are attached to a particular energy then we are in trouble, and so is our society. We may like it or not, find it less exciting or colorful, but it's necessary to see that. How do we do that?

(Continued on page 20)

# Wide Action

Bo Haeng Sunim

After several unsuccessful attempts at bearing children, my mother finally managed to give birth to me, her first child, and I breathed in some Lithuanian air on September 14, 1961. At that time, my parents lived in Ramonai village near Vilkija, about twenty miles from Kaunas city. My mother was at the Kaunas city maternity home. My father at 5 a.m. heard that his son was born, so he immediately sat on his “buzz”—as my mother called his super slow moped, which could go no faster than twenty miles per hour—and buzzed to Kaunas city to greet his wife, a young mother. She was twenty-seven years old.

My first foggy memory: I am sitting in a stroller, painted in a typical Soviet style, and I have a pacifier in my mouth. Suddenly a huge collective farm car drives past through a puddle and splashes my mom and me. My mother was so frightened and panicked that I remember this clearly even now. From that time I have always been afraid of cars—maybe for that reason I am still not able to drive.

My second childhood picture: We are visiting Vytenai castle, not far from our home. My dad, a bit boozed, suddenly lifts me—a four-year-old tot—and here I am, hanging out of the window of a tower. It was very high. My mother saw me hanging and fainted, nearly rolling down the stairs. From that time I have been afraid of heights.

Another flash of memory: The pain of my grandmother spanking me with a birch branch. She had forbidden me from climbing among the ruins of that same castle. The pain was unbearable. Even now, when writing, I can physically remember the pain. From that time I have been sensitive to anything but the lightest touch.

My father died when I was five years old. He died in Vytenai, and we buried him in Veliuona, in the Jurbarkas district. I followed the hearse alone. In the back was the coffin with my father’s body, surrounded by wreaths of flowers. I remember my dead father’s face the most. He was handsome. At the time, I didn’t understand why he wasn’t moving, or what death means. From my mother’s crying, I understood her wish for something to be different, but I could not realize what, exactly. But nothing changed, even though she cried a lot. She even wanted to fall into the grave with my father’s coffin. I was standing nearby, and my uncle—her brother—kept hold of her. She was thirty-two at the time.

I registered for the first grade at the Vytenai secondary school. But they didn’t want to accept me because classes started on September 1 but I wouldn’t turn seven for another two weeks. So, I visited a teacher to take an exam to allow me to start school early. I was sitting in my mother’s lap so that I wouldn’t be nervous. The teacher showed me a piece of paper and asked what letter was on it. She asked the question

strictly, like a police officer who had caught me stealing from a shop. I responded to her the same way I would have responded to the officer: “Marciulynas!” My mother said, “No, dear, say the letter; you’re saying your last name.” The teacher laughed in a strange manner. Then she showed another letter and asked even more sternly, “What is this?” I answered with my first name: Kestutis. Well, the exam was finished.

But I was accepted into the class nevertheless. I was even the first of all the kids to learn to read! While my classmates were still struggling to put letters into words, I played with paper airplanes. I finished that class with a reward for good

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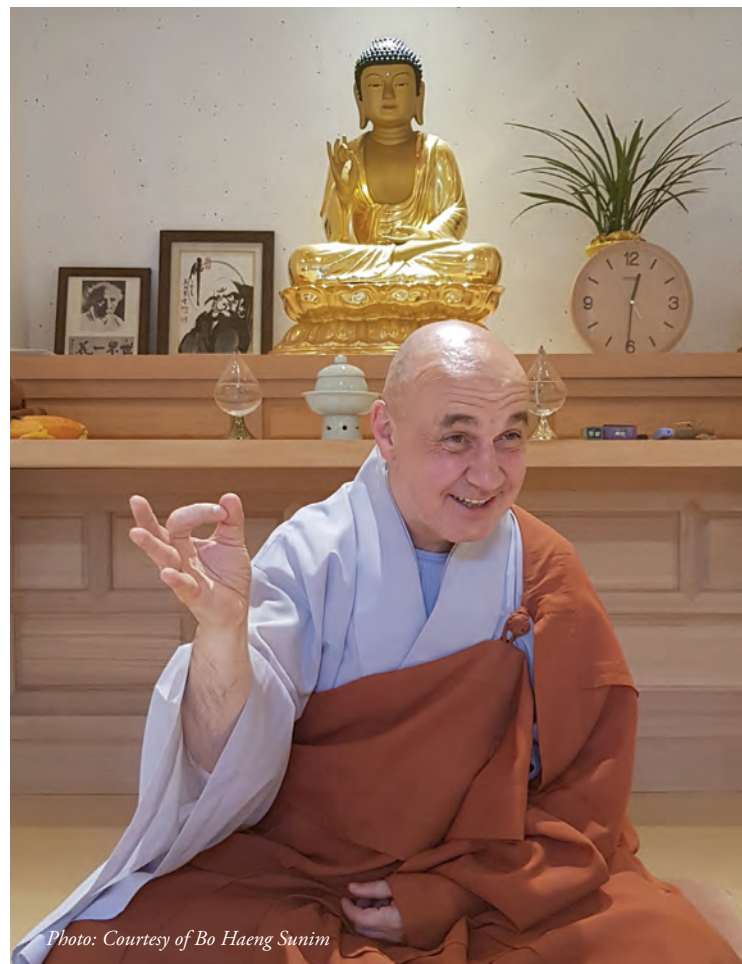


Photo: Courtesy of Bo Haeng Sunim

learning because I had all the highest marks. But it was just one word that held me back: *behavior*. I did not get passing marks for behavior until the eleventh grade, when I was allowed to pass my final exams. I misbehaved so much that my name ended up in the Soviet register of juvenile delinquents. But in my graduation year my mother passed away at the

age of forty-four. The authorities took pity on me, removed my name from the juvenile register, and allowed me to go through with my exams.

I was a bad teenager.

After passing my final exams I was accepted into the Kaunas polytechnic institute to study electromechanics, but eventually I was thrown out. Then I applied to a different department at the same institute and studied machine production for a while—but I didn't finish the program.

I married really young, and afterward my daughter was born.

To be honest, I had attended the polytechnic institute mainly to escape my compulsory Soviet army duty—even though the army got me later anyway. I didn't care about electromechanics or machine production. I had always wanted to be an actor but lacked faith in myself. Yet one night I went to a restaurant, ordered a beer, and saw an advertisement in a newspaper, an invitation to a theater group. I went and was nervous, but they allowed me to join them.

That's when my double studies began, at the polytechnic institute and in the pantomime group. I knew in my heart that it was only a matter of time before I would eventually choose theater for my career. I have always felt at my core that what really matters in life is not any position or career, but what's *within*. I had the sensation that I already had everything I needed within, and I had only to realize it. This gave me immense joy.

Other actors' performances seemed to emerge from thin air, and that transformation in them—happening in split seconds—used to shock me. It was pure magic. What could be stronger?

My experience of theater began in early childhood when in the evenings I watched my mother act in a local theater. Even during performances, I kept the script in my hands, and my mother used to run backstage, read a forgotten phrase, and then go back to the stage to say it. It seemed interesting for me: which mother was real—the one onstage, or the one who came backstage to read the script? The difference was huge. I was even somewhat afraid of her. She was an enigma.

In Veliuona, when our doctor walked down the street, holding his head high in an uncommon posture, I would follow him, imitating his funny gait, and the neighbors would laugh. Later, in the collective farm's directors' meeting, when my mother asked for some grain, the director asked me to demonstrate the doctor's walk. And I walked! All of his colleagues laughed, and my mother got twice as much grain for my performance.

My first true public performance was in Raudonė Castle, near Veliuona. There was another secondary school, and kids from our school performed there too. The play was called *House of the Cat*.

So, in reality, theater was always inside me—or I was in theater.

Eventually I applied to train in professional acting. I was

accepted to the Kaunas pantomime theater study in 1982 and finished the program in 1984. I became a real working actor, part of the pantomime group in the Kaunas dramatic theater, and my studies at the polytechnic institute fell away completely, along with all the schematic drawings. The only thing left from there was my honest love for higher mathematics, of which I had finished the entire course.

In theater, I would secretly watch the performances of J. Vaitkus, G. Padegimas, and other well-known dramatic actors from Kaunas. Tickets were limited, and people would wait for them starting early in the morning. I learned about scene lighting, decor, equipment, sound—in truth I absorbed all the best theater education in Lithuania directly, by watching these masters in action.

I eventually had to do my compulsory military service in the Soviet army in the late 1980s in Vorkuta City—the coldest city in all of Europe. We were quartered in the tundra. I performed pantomime studies in the Vorkuta drama theater's youth study, as well as in our barracks—even in subzero temperatures.

Theater broadened my worldview, leading me to read other kinds of books and meet different people.

In 1990, a Zen Buddhist monk from Poland, Do Am Sunim (Andrzej Czarnecki, who has since then returned to lay life), was going to visit Lithuania. A friend of mine suggested that I help organize the meeting. I was thrilled because I felt that to truly discover what I already had inside I needed a guide. I was not good at dealing with my thoughts and actions. I needed some kind of technique. In pantomime, we were already seeking and experimenting. We would do yoga and some meditation in our daily training—some “magic tricks.” So, I already had some sense in me, some experience of practice. When Do Am Sunim came, I sat the entire night in meditation. We had only a brief nap in the sports hall. His teaching on don't-know mind just opened my heart! That was it. And of course, even apart from teaching, the monk himself made a great impression on me. He was quite disciplined, and also a master of martial arts. Everything fell into place and I became his student. He gave me the task of taking care of our newly formed meditation group until he returned.

He came back on January 9, 1991. On January 10 I took the five precepts and became a member of the Kwan Um School of Zen. I was looking forward to meeting Do Am Sunim's teacher, Zen Master Seung Sahn, who planned to visit from South Korea in the springtime.

The first time I saw Seung Sahn Sunim and his students, such a bizarre feeling arose in me. It was as if they all came from a home that I remembered from the distant past. That sense of union, of being so familiar, had to come from somewhere, from a specific and concrete place where they slept, meditated, ate. Where is that miraculous place? I already felt that I wanted to be with them.

Yet at the same time my theater life was going well. While most other actors were taller than me, I was short—

the same height as our lead actor, Slava. So I started preparing to be Slava's understudy, rehearsing for the lead roles in Franz Kafka's *The Trial* and Samuel Beckett's *Krapp's Last Tape*, among others.

And I kept reading literature, wondering if theater was just a stop on the way to something else. My colleagues and I already practiced meditation, and our life was quite ascetic. Audiences and critics seemed to think we had magical powers—pantomime in itself was exotic in those days, with so many peculiar actions, creating something out of nothing.

One day I discovered Herman Hesse's novel *The Glass Bead Game*. What a work of art! It sucked me fully in. That was the life that I wanted. In that novel there were no women—only men, which is rare. A real monastery. Determination to strive, for something higher. It seemed as if the author himself had disappeared and was not in control of the situation. The main character had escaped the boundaries of the author's imagination. Perhaps that's why Hesse killed him off in such a strange way. I thought, "That's OK—I'll carry on in the same vein."

When I started my own pantomime group, our first performance was an excerpt from that book. That is when I realized that theater is also a sanctuary, a spiritual practice. It comes from the same place as the monks in Hesse's story. And so later, when I was playing the part of Cash in Faulkner's *As I Lay Dying*, I didn't need any explanation for why that character makes holes in his mother's coffin so that she could breathe. It was self-evident for me. My mother was already dead—and I knew already that mothers never die, as I know now still.



Looking back, I see this was a big step toward my monastic life. Again, it was only a question of time.

For a while still my colleagues and I enjoyed a successful life in theater—winning awards, showing prospects for the future. But the routine of theater can sometimes feel like sinking in quicksand without actually seeking the Source. I didn't yet realize that theater wasn't going anywhere, but was always inside me. Career is within, not outside.

It was then, in 1998, that I met Zen Master Seung Sahn for the second time. We took a bus to Poland, where I requested a personal meeting with him. I had already tried to become a monk some time before then. I went through haeng-ja training, but I didn't go through with the ceremony afterward; theater won over then, like sand pouring over my life. At that point I felt that the older students had already written me off. Now everything depended only on the Zen master. When we met, there was an interpreter from Lithuania, along with many students. Everyone thought that Zen Master Seung Sahn would scold me.

I bowed down and he asked, "Why didn't you come to the ceremony?" I said that I was sick, and my mind was not yet ready for it. Then he asked how I felt now. I answered that

I felt great being able to be there, and that I wanted to be a monk. After a long pause he finally told his secretary—to everyone's surprise—that I would be accepted in South Korea, at Hwa Gye Sa Temple. In my eyes there were only tears.

My life changed 100 percent. Of course, it took me some time to finally get to Hwa Gye Sa, but when I had bowed to the Zen master, he told me "Wonderful, wonderful. Just *do it!*" I didn't think that any other teaching was needed.

In the summertime, we used to always celebrate Zen Master Seung Sahn's birthday, usually at a large restaurant with hundreds of people. In the summer of 2000 our head monk asked me to perform something on that occasion. He said that many monks would perform something they were good at, like singing, and many of them had heard that I was once an actor. So, show something . . . But I objected. Isn't that karma? Becoming a monk, one must strictly cut ties with all of one's personal past—especially with being an actor. Yet he politely told me that it wasn't exactly a request that I could refuse.

So, without preparation, without music, I performed a short pantomime piece, *C'est la vie*. It was less than five minutes, showing the entire journey of human life. And oh, what applause and shouts of approval I got! The monks and students there showed more appreciation than any audience in Lithuania. And Zen Master Seung Sahn said loudly that here it is—talent! That was the main event. And, after that, I had to perform that same piece innumerable times. The most interesting thing for me was that my meditation practice changed the quality of my work as well. So, why not? That's how acting came back into my monastic life, with a blessing.

These days I am the head monk at Hwa Gye Sa Temple International Zen Center. I visit Lithuania often. People in my homeland accept me warmly, many gather to meet me, and we have beautiful exchanges. I feel after years of meditation I have more to offer than I did when I was just an actor in a theater. Lithuania is a Christian country, and my path is Buddhist, but we understand and enrich each other. I have friends among Catholic monks, and we participate in conferences together. As Zen Master Seung Sahn said, practicing Buddhism in Christian countries can make Christianity itself even stronger.

In 2011 we published my first book about my spiritual search, *Letters from the Dragon Mountains*. It quickly sold out and was reprinted. I also created two solo theater performances, *Temple of the Golden Pavilion* and *Letters from a Monastery*. In 2021 my second book, *Nabi*, came to life. All this social-creative work for me is deeply related to meditation mind. You are alone, and you cannot be different. Cannot escape. You are exactly what others see. I improvise.

So, this mental state—when, after jumping out of the airplane, you suddenly understand that you forgot your parachute—it exists. There is no way out. This state of mind is very common for the people who are watching you as well. They also don't know what will happen. It is the same in life. ♦

# Why Don't You Enter the Stream, Shariputra?

Leo Liebenauer-Welsch

Several years ago, I did a three-week solo retreat. During the first few days this question appeared: “Why don't you enter the stream, Shariputra?” I started the retreat with my own messy baggage from my everyday life, so I wondered if the question was about the stream of everyday life or the stream of reality itself?

I cannot remember if I had been working on some kind of kong-an “homework” at that time. Nevertheless this question attracted my attention right away and drew more and more energy, just like water leaking through a hole. Obviously there is one person asking another person. The person asking was Shakyamuni Buddha, and the person being asked was one of his disciples, Shariputra. The purpose of the question would lead to a discussion beyond the scope of this article.

Without focusing much on the background of the question, during the retreat it was the question itself that fascinated me, and I wondered what an appropriate Zen response would be. I tried to apply the teachings I've received over time, such as “Put it all down”—which I couldn't. Or, “Any kind of mantra is possible.” During sitting I used the mantra *Coca-Cola, Coca-Cola*, and it worked in some sense.

Over time, different answers appeared out of the blue, most likely from the same source as the question—a knowledge which didn't help much. Some answers that appeared fit and some didn't. Answers that were appropriate inspired a feeling of lightness and relief. But this feeling lasted only a short time, after which it gradually faded until it vanished. The question kept reappearing, along with another that I longed to answer: “How to resolve it?”

Questions and answers. An answer cannot exist without a question—otherwise it would be a statement. A question doesn't make much sense without an answer, although a question could already be the answer. Basically, questions and answers are mutually bound to each other.

I ended up with the question “What qualifies an answer as a good fit for a question?” Focusing on answering the question would lose the focus on questioning itself. I guess an appropriate response is one that doesn't lose this focus. How can question and answer fit perfectly together? All of these ideas have a common ground, which I would call *acceptance*—acceptance that the pieces are perfectly matching. Accepting cannot come from outside, regardless of how convincing it might seem.

There is a nice story about the dharma brothers Seol Bong (Ch. Xuefeng) and Am Du (Ch. Yantou). Both of

them appear in the case “Duk Sahn (Ch. Deshan) carrying his bowls.” Both were on a journey and trapped in a hut in the middle of a snow storm. While Seol Bong was practicing sitting meditation, Am Du was practicing sleeping meditation. After some discussion, Am Du was willing to support his dharma brother. Without going much into the details of the story, Seol Bong attained enlightenment by hearing Am Du say, “Haven't you heard it said ‘What comes through the front gate isn't the family treasure?’”

When I first heard the story I started thinking, “What else should it be?” While writing these lines I remember many questions I've asked and many answers received—but still don't know which one is the best.

Some years after that solo retreat I attended a Yong Maeng Jong Jin retreat. It was led by a Zen master and a brand new Ji Do Poep Sa. During one of the interviews, the Poep Sa Nim was teaching on his own—no Zen master around. I asked him about a situation that bothered me some time ago.

A friend of mine had tried practicing a Japanese style of Zen. At that time she told me there is not much sense in working on kong-ans. Perplexed, I asked why she would think that. She responded simply, “They taught me that we are all already enlightened. So there is no need to focus on kong-ans; just sitting is enough.”

Working with kong-ans means investigating situations and discovering appropriate reactions or replies. After practicing with the Kwan Um School for many years, I couldn't imagine another source of inspiration than to work with kong-ans. Her statement simply contradicted my experience. Nevertheless I didn't have any clue how to respond.

So I asked the Poep Sa Nim how he would reply to my friend's statement about kong-ans. He gave me some advice for which I was grateful, and I thanked him. But as I mentioned before, I feel that “answers” are tied to acceptance. I sat inspecting his answer, but ultimately it didn't relieve my doubts; more and more questions arose instead.

The next day, both the Zen master and the Poep Sa Nim were teaching together in the interview room. I expressed my concerns to the Poep Sa Nim, and the Zen master interrupted, saying that what my friend had said was from a famous quote from Dogen, the twelfth-century Japanese Zen master of the Soto school: “We all have Buddha nature. So why practice?” Dogen struggled a long time with this question.

Now my friend's opinion about kong-ans made sense, because I knew she practiced in a Soto Zen sangha. Later I found out that this question was Dogen's big

(Continued on page 24)

# Wild Animal Tracking Down the Eightfold Path

Boaz Franklin

In retrospect, my search for the elusive roe deer began while participating in the European winter retreats. But sometimes you can connect the dots only after the fact.

## BEGINNINGS: WINTER RETREAT AT WU BONG SA TEMPLE, 2015

After breakfast, walking out to the patch of grass outside the main building, the air is cold and crisp; the clouds are gray with the sun occasionally peeking through. Stretching a painful body after morning sitting, my feet take me toward the compost pile at the edge of the field. A silent whisper, I look up at the thicket, and a herd of deer eating from the ground appear before my eyes. Time stops. They notice me; we stare at each other for a brief moment, and then they jump and disappear into the thicket.

## FIRST STEPS ON THE PATH: 2017

An auspicious turn of events brings a wild-animal tracking expert to call me about fixing his website. We end the call with me joining one of his courses, and a new door opens into an unbelievably exciting dimension.

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According to Wikipedia,

Tracking in ecology is the science and art of observing animal tracks and other signs, with the goal of gaining understanding of the landscape and the animal being tracked (the quarry). A further goal of tracking is the deeper understanding of the systems and patterns that make up the environment surrounding and incorporating the tracker.

In many ways I feel that this ancient art is not much different than studying the ecology of our minds, an investigation into our own nature and the nature of things.

Mornings are the ideal time for tracking. The angle of the sun creates sharp, thin-lined shadows on the ground, making it easier for the eye to detect shapes and patterns, inverted stones with colored, damp soil, and fresh paths of animals formed after their intense nocturnal activity.

The wind is strong and the sun is starting to rise. Thorny bushes scratch my legs. My eyes are focused on dry ground, moving from point to point, looking for a familiar recognizable pattern. They stop to gaze when a certain tracklike pattern appears. The senses open up and allow the flow of information to enter: sights, sounds, smells. Every little break of a branch, every trampling of grass indicates a movement in space, a presence that was there moments ago.

Silence is helpful for observation, for out of the silence emerge the signs of what has happened in the past, the base on which tracks stand out. Every sign tells a story, connecting the dots, and zooming out can provide a whole script.

## “DON’T MAKE”

There is no path where we will see the exact same sign; there is nothing that repeats itself; the possibilities are endless. Even the passage of the same animal will give a different encounter with the surrounding terrain. Over time, accumulated knowledge, based on a pool of memory and experience, develops the ability to connect points, decipher traces, and connect with the animal that left the tracks. Just like in our Zen practice, knowledge can also be the obstacle to understanding the track and its origin. Memory and prior knowledge can force a reality on the terrain and do not necessarily explain it. If you hold or force your opinion on their conditions, the observation will get tainted; one must constantly adapt to a state of chaos and change.

## “DON’T HOLD”

It is also impossible to return to the exact same point of occurrence. Expecting the past to repeat itself will blind you from what is in front of you, and you will surely miss the new and the potential of what may be revealed. Surrendering and connecting to this kind of loose and open observa-

Photo: Oriol Casanovas

tion opens up a potential for a feeling of freshness, renewal, connectedness to life and flow.

**“THE SOUND OF THE WATERFALL AND THE BIRD’S SONG ARE THE GREAT SUTRAS.”**

A bird in the distance chirps loudly and warns of impending danger. Old and decomposed manure of a wild boar, dry grass crushed in the form of an animal’s movement creates paths between the bushes. And here is where a gazelle rested at night; you can see the trampling of the fresh grass left behind in the shape of the animal’s body. A pile of *Boswellia* tree seeds are left behind where his head lay while he was chewing on his cud.

Tracking in nature provides a sense of elevation, an intimate connection with something that has not yet been touched, observed, or seen; a temporary story that will be swept away by the wind.

**KEEPING A DON’T-KNOW MIND: TRACKING EXAMINATION, 2018**

From time to time, it’s good to test your experience against reality. A group of enthusiasts meets in the southern Israeli desert for an international tracking examination with a master tracker from Spain. On an early and cool morning, we gather on a sandy dune under the only tree in the area. Without books or guides, no one to give you a hint or advice; under the constant pressure of time and fatigue, we are sent to find and identify dozens of tracks and signs. Each track identification is accompanied by an overwhelming feeling of being lost and confused, similar to the feeling in a kong-an interview when the teacher presents you with one of these peculiar cases from the kong-an collection. The only way to move forward is to surrender to this feeling, set aside any commentary, and begin a methodical investigation into what is in front of you. After that it’s about trusting your gut, setting aside all commentaries—“don’t check”—and making a call with the very good chance of getting it totally wrong.

**MY KONG-AN: “WHERE HAVE ALL THE ROE DEER GONE?”**

Sometimes we go out tracking with a predefined question. During one of my conversations with the tracking master, I was made aware of the declining numbers of roe deer in Israel and the efforts to revive their population. Apparently, the most southern population of roe deer on earth, once prospering in the Carmel mountain range, have been extirpated due to extensive hunting. The last roe deer

was seen in Israel in 1912. Since the beginning of the twenty-first century, attempts have been made to try and reintroduce these deer to Israeli nature. Groups of roe deer were brought from the prospering European population, acclimatized, and returned to the wild so that a sustainable population could form. But the last sighting of a roe deer was in 2017, so everyone is wondering if they are still out there.

The roe deer is an exceptionally sensitive animal. Their sense of smell is five times more developed than a dog’s. They can smell predators from a mile away and can hide in the thicket without being seen, much like the elusive animal of the Zen ox-herding pictures. Because they’re so hard to find, it’s difficult to measure the success of the reintroduction project.

Conservationists have been using tracking for a while now as a method for gathering data on wildlife. It became apparent to me at that moment that I would use my tracking skills to join the efforts in evaluating the success of the roe deer reintroduction.

**ISRAEL, 2018: BEGINNING THE SEARCH**

Just like hiking through the landscape of our minds, not always knowing what we will meet on the path, having faith that it will lead me to an answer, I embark on a search for the roe deer. Climbing a tangled hill in a thick forest. Ivy thorns scratch my legs and arms while moving through the undergrowth. Looking for a sign, any signs. The path becomes narrower and steeper. *Only go straight.* Now I have to crawl on my hands and knees so I can enter a system of paths leading through the lower bush. Maybe here it is possible to find the remains of dung where a deer was resting. Evidence from a few years back indicates that a couple of deer were marking their territory at this spot. I notice more and more fresh wild boar manure, so fresh they seem to have passed here in the past hour. Maybe it’s not such a good idea to get so close. During the day the wild boar hide in a thicket of just this kind. I’m now alert, looking in all directions. I’m listening in strenuous concentration. My heart is beating fast, sensing the danger.

*(Continued on page 24)*

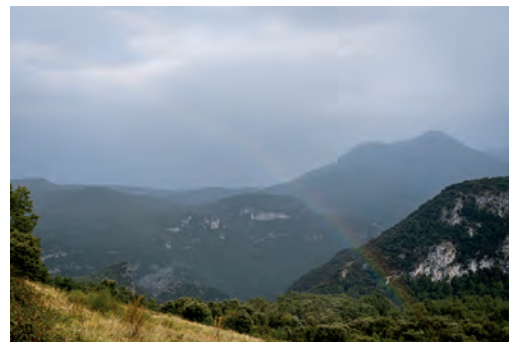
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Photo: Oriol Casanovas

# Blue Mountain, White Cloud

A photo essay  
on the nature of  
impermanence.  
Mountains at  
Bori Sa Retreat  
Center.



All images taken by  
Hector Mediavilla  
during a summer  
Kyol Che at Bori Sa  
Retreat Center in  
Catalonia, Europe.  
Text by Gasper Sopi.

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*“Spring comes,  
grass grows by  
itself. The blue  
mountain doesn’t  
move. White  
clouds float back  
and forth.”*



The Buddha taught *sabbe sankhārā aniccā*—all conditioned things are impermanent. Our bodies break down and wane, and our minds slowly dwindle as we age. Emotions, feelings, and perceptions appear before our mind’s eye in one moment, only to vanish in the next. “Everything is always changing, changing, changing, moving, moving, nonstop,” Zen Master Seung Sahn used to say. The world may appear solid, but even the oceans dry up, mountains tumble down, and stars implode. The entire perceivable universe is in a process of constant change. Changing. Changing. Changing. Even one second of our lives seems full of so much movement—but our mind, says our founding teacher, is “like a lens whose shutter speed is 1 divided by infinite time.” Photography aficionados can relate to this, namely that the quicker the world moves in front of the camera lens, the quicker the shutter speed needs to be to capture it properly. One divided by infinity equals 0. (Reverent mathematicians

might object, but I kindly appeal to their poetic side in letting this one fly.) Zero shutter speed of our mind’s lens gives rise to “moment mind.” Zen Master Seung Sahn says, “if you attain that mind, then this whole world stops. From moment to moment you can see this world completely stop . . . Like the film, you perceive every frame—this moment—which is infinitely still and complete. In the frame, nothing is moving. There is no time, and nothing appears or disappears in that box.” But unlike the camera lens, our thinking mind is always busy projecting, so we experience the world as being in flux—we experience impermanence. When we practice, however, to paraphrase Zen Master Seung Sahn, we can stop our mind-lens and then experience the moment mind, the mind that is actually beyond time and space. Then our mind becomes like a camera lens at 0 speed: Mountain appears, blue. Clouds float by, white. Everything is just like this—complete. ♦



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# Chanting with Crows and Eagles

Sergio Romero

Our dharma room in Granada, Spain, is located on the border of La Zubia in the Sierra Nevadas. We have been open for three years. During these years of practice, and now most especially through the pandemic, I have noticed that every moment starts from scratch. Every circumstance is a new and changing circumstance. Before COVID-19 there was no COVID-19. Before I broke my ankle, my ankle was in great shape. COVID-19 appeared and afterward we protected ourselves against the virus by staying at home. We got vaccinated when there were vaccines, and we took extreme precautionary and sanitary measures to avoid contagion.

When we think we have a situation under control, it changes again and becomes another situation. The same? Different? Does it matter? We do it! We chant with our masks on in face-to-face practice; we keep our safe social distance; we practice online, but we do it because there is something more important beyond the concrete details of each specific historical moment. Our direction of “How can I help you?” comes alive. We make the great effort of keeping connected with our center; we struggle to recognize and keep our correct direction and function. Ultimately it depends on each one of us, on our motivation and our faith to be convinced that what we do is the right thing to do, even if we sometimes find no peace of mind, no immediate profit or benefit from it.

When the pandemic emerged in Granada and we entered mandatory confinement, I decided to initiate an intensive chanting practice outside. I began to ascend a mountain every morning and every afternoon called El Frailecillo, which is located in the Cerro de Las Pipas range at a height of 1,429 meters. I discovered seven caves on the way to the Puente de los Siete Ojos, and the largest of these caves was spectacular for chanting. One day I turned around to look back and realized that this imposing massif of the mountain was a huge dragon that had always been stationed there, majestically hidden.

I did chanting in this place for over a year in rain, snow, and sunshine. I still do it. Mountain goats, squirrels, nightingales, mystery caves, eagles and crows, rock-roses and other flowers, mist in the ravines. I experienced a wonderful freedom, being in the middle of a pandemic, experiencing the teaching that “a bad situation is a good situation, and a good situation is a bad situation.”

Then one day I broke my ankle. Very bad situation. So, I couldn't go up the mountain anymore, I couldn't sit on the floor, and of course walking was out of the question. If I was only a blank page, empty of trust and direction, I don't think I would have been able to do it, but finally my intention took over and I managed to continue my prac-

tice again. I would sit in a chair and keep chanting. You don't have a working ankle—great! But you have lungs and a throat, and a chanting book, and you can hit the moktak! I kept the question: “What is this and what am I?” and discovered the next question: “What more is needed?”

The sangha in Palma, along with other sanghas worldwide, continued from the beginning of the pandemic with online practice: How good that was! Another strong life-saving rope. I participated in the online practice together with the mountain chanting. Little by little, the ankle was steadily following its healing path. First, I could support the foot with the help of a cane, then take a few small steps, then walk. Wow: walking! We don't know what we have until we lose it. I received immense help through my chanting: the universal sangha working for my ankle to get better. I have heard that all buddhas work for each one of us. So true.

It is not always easy, but it is possible to just do things without expecting to receive anything in return—to just do it. I have a developing faith that finally everything has a reward even if we can't figure out how it works or who the reward is for. I have continued steadily with my personal practice and chanting both online and with the crows and the eagles—keeping great faith, great courage, and the great question, with the dragon mountain accompanying me throughout the pandemic. ♦

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*Sergio Romero has been practicing with the Kwan Um School of Zen since 2016 at the Vienna Zen Center, where he took the first five precepts. Upon his return to Spain he requested to open a dharma hall in La Zubia (Granada), where he resides, doing five retreats in Borisa Temple and the Palma Zen Center, where he has taken the ten precepts under the guidance of Tolo Cantarellas JDPSN and Zen Master Hyon Ja.*



*Photo: Sergio Romero*

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# Translating the Compass of Zen: A Healing Journey

Wieneke Olthof

Nine years ago I met a girl from Korea. Seven years ago the girl from Korea told me I might appreciate the Kwan Um School of Zen. Six years ago I spent ten weeks meditating in Wubongsa Temple, Poland.

I then learned: just do it.

Four years ago I was terribly sick. I was so sick that I could not meditate, even just sitting still on a pillow. I created my own version of meditation: I started rereading the *Compass of Zen* and translating it into Dutch. It was a healing journey. It gave me something to commit to. It was marvelous, to be so sick and yet to be creating nonetheless.

## THE PROCESS OF TRANSLATION

With the first page I translated, I was extremely critical. It was horrible what I'd done. That is how I felt. Every word felt awkward, the sentences incorrect. Then I decided that was not going to work. I could not make something perfect at once, if even at all. I would just continue translating, and not look back. Whenever I felt I didn't know (yet) how to translate a word well—capturing its spirit and intent, rather than a literal translation—I would just leave it in English, mark it in red, and continue. Just do it.

## COLLECTIVE WISDOM

A new journey started once Veronique (*Primary Point's* managing editor for Europe) joined me in the project, reading the texts after I'd checked them once more myself. I'd send her a chapter, and she'd send me her input so I could finalize the chapter. Difficult words we would discuss over mail, sometimes with Koen Vermeulen JDPSN. It was great and joyful work, trying to discern the meaning of a combination of words like "mind point." The word *mind* already does not really have an adequate translation in Dutch (in my humble opinion). Even more difficult is the combination of the words *mind* and *point*. And there are so many of these sayings, words, and concepts in the book. We tried to approach their spirit as best we could, with care, consideration, and curiosity.

## TRANSLATION AS PRACTICE

Translating is a systematic practice. Write "Zen Mas-



ter" on page 1, and you need to make sure on all other pages you do not write "zen master" or "zenmaster." One needs to keep track of the brilliant translations found in one page, to repeat and reuse them whenever they pop up again further along in the book, so that the reader can recognize them. Sometimes I choose to deliberately vary the translation of certain words in order to keep the text dynamic, or to keep the rhythm of the sentence. It's poetry.

I loved the commitment of this translation practice: just continue, continue, continue. I loved the discovery and the discussion: is this word better, or that one? Finally, Leen, a sangha member in Brussels, looked over the whole translation. Ultimately, the publisher said the end result was so good, hardly any-

thing would have to be revised.

## HEALING

I had once started to translate because I could not meditate. This alternative form of Zen practice helped me through a difficult year of physical disability and gave me something worthwhile to do when I couldn't do much else. It kept me busy and out of a place of despair, it gave me purpose and trained my "just do it" muscles. Who knew I could translate a book and get it published? And even more so, who knew I could do it while severely ill? Even now, almost five years later, it feels like one of the biggest achievements in my life. Translating the *Compass of Zen* gave me the wisdom that "you can always do something." In December 2022, there will be a Dutch translation in the stores.

Just do it. ♦

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*Wieneke Olthof found the Kwan Um School of Zen in 2015. She practiced with strong commitment for two years, including two months at Wubongsa Temple in Poland. She lives with her cat in Zevenaar in the Netherlands, works in local government, and translates articles, workbooks, and books as a passion.*

# When I Hear the Siren of an Ambulance, I Practice Mantra

## Zen reflections on working with Lithuanian COVID-19 patients

*Migle Simanaviciute*

“Wish you health,” says a COVID-19 patient, coughing, breathing with difficulty, trying to answer my epidemiological investigation questions. “Sorry for coughing,” says the patient for me, a meditation school student who should be a living example of compassion.

When the COVID-19 pandemic started around the globe, I remembered a retreat two years prior at Musangsa Temple in South Korea. “Put on a mask, please,” said the housemaster before work period, because that day I had felt cold symptoms. So in 2018 I tried a medical face mask for the first time. And I even bought a Korean face mask for my mother, who is a doctor, after seeing ten kinds of masks in the pharmacy.

The housemaster’s job is to instruct Zen students; the student’s job is to comply with the temple rules. Our Zen teachings tell us that the direction that the rules point to is compassion for all living beings.

When I listen to patients, I have to apply our moment-to-moment teaching. It means staying attentive and not being distracted by my own thinking. If I lose attention for one moment, the epidemiological investigation could be incorrect. So I have to listen carefully, just writing down the answers, and only after the conversation do I analyze what is necessary. Compassion here means not only empathy, but also focusing on the exact moment.

“I am her daughter; she died an hour before in the hospital,” she says to me. I have to write dead. These moments I try not to cry. And I cannot cry, because the daughter is crying, and I am trying to stay strong and answer epidemiological questions. In this situation my work is to kindly listen to her. And to silently think, “Thank you for your teaching.”

Zen practice this way reminds me of our correct path as living beings, with its direction for all sentient beings. I repeat *Kwan Seum Bosal*, the mantra of compassion. While walking, while sitting during evening and morning

meditation, before and after work with patients, after my lunch hour. It’s almost the same as in a meditation retreat.

Our guiding Zen master, Joeng Hye, says two days are the most important in our life—the day when we are born, and the day we find out why. Every day we should try to answer this question inside us.

After a recent online and live meditation retreat, I did an epidemiological investigation in our Zen community. And this situation confirmed our direction strongly. Participants tried to coordinate their efforts for common health purposes.

Zen teaching is based on our sincerely taken precepts. Because of precepts and daily individual practice, our search for compassion seems more real.

When patients ask why they should answer epidemiological questions, I have to explain in a strictly legal “to protect yourself and others” manner. After a calm and attentive explanation, most of them answer correctly. If people try to answer sincerely, the result of their actions is more helpful to all of society.

In our school, individual daily commitment practice is called Heart Kyol Che. So maybe we could try to apply stronger individual practice in these extreme times. For some minutes, with our heart, for all sentient beings.

Kwan Seum Bosal. ♦

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*Migle Simanaviciute (Do Kwang), has been practicing with the Kwan Um School of Zen since 2014 at the Vilnius Zen Center in Lithuania under the guidance of Zen Master Joeng Hye. Migle took ten precepts in 2016 to become a dharma-teacher-in-training. In 2018 she practiced in South Korea at Musangsa Temple’s haengwon program—work-practice for laypeople and a required course for monastic aspirants. She has also attended several Kyol Che retreats in Poland. She works as an English translator and public health specialist.*

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*(Continued from page 9)*

### INFINITE CANVAS

Can the canvas be so big so that the painting can include everything? The trees, the mountains, the CO<sub>2</sub> emissions, our favorite drink, our hurts and fears and our opinions on politics and society. Can it be so big so that it will display everything, all sentient beings? If we find that canvas inside, that infinite canvas, then true peace and

freedom are possible.

Right now, it’s already dark outside; the monitor is bright, illuminating the desk and the keyboard. There is a subtle humming coming from the ventilation. Breathing remains. ♦

*From <https://www.zen-meditation.wien/en/knud-rosenmayr-jdpsn-painting-inside-dharma-note/>*

# What Is It You Are Going to Do There?

*Pavel Kryl*

It is shortly after the middle of August and a working week finishes. Before leaving I make a classical farewell round and I walk around to see my colleagues. One of them has been ready to ask me a question. He smiles slyly and asks me his prepared question: “What is it you are going to do this weekend?” I pleased him greatly by answering: “Sit against the wall.” He laughs.

Another colleague turns away from the monitor while looking up something on the Internet and looks at me incredulously. And so I add to my previous reply these words: “We are not going to sit all the time. One of us will look after the children while the other practices—sitting, having an interview with a teacher, and singing Buddhist chants. Sometimes we both sit, letting the children look after each other. And other times another parent is willing to babysit them.” The second colleague still looks at me incredulously but he calms down, as a father of small kids, glad to hear that the kids are well looked after. He says goodbye and returns to his monitor. The first one manages to add with a gleam in his eyes, “Enjoy it.”

Yes, we shall enjoy it. We pack our things and travel for three hours to the end of the world, to a Zen monastery where you generally sleep in a worse bed than at home or in a hotel, where you can't do what you want, where you are sometimes hungry and where it is often not possible to speak normally. Perfect. Furthermore, I learn that someone else will be staying in “our” house, where we have enjoyed privacy on our previous four retreats. We don't have the smallest children anymore, so we can stay with others. Super. I am really glad. So we set off on our journey. After a short while of traveling, the kids fall asleep, and we parents have a moment to talk to each other. That's our precious and favorite moment. This is the first calm from the usual savage rhythm.

Our conversation and the flat countryside pass along as the telephone rings. Who the hell wants something now again? What? Whether we want to stay in the same place, as usual? Yes, of course! Hurray! We stay in the same place, as usual! I am a little ashamed for this joy, as someone has gotten ill and cannot attend the retreat. But this news has improved my mood. I accelerate.

We reach the place after some time. The usual scenery awaits us—plenty of shoes behind the gate before the entrance to the monastery. Obviously we are not the only ones who have gone nuts. Then the broad smile of the local abbot appears. And then the faces I used to be afraid of (as who normally would travel here?) and today I am glad to see them. I and the abbot go around the monastery to see how it has grown successfully. I and the abbot go around the monastery to see how it has grown successfully, as well as the big family around this special retreat, which has also grown slowly. We are simply at the retreat. I drink the tea and arrange with my wife that I will go to chant the evening chants and she will read to the kids until they go to sleep. Morning practice will be hers. I don't know whether the desire not to read to the kids or get up early drives me. Anyway, shortly afterward, I sit on the cushion and chant the chants I don't understand. I marvel at how anyone could remember the foreign words. I am in the middle of the chants themselves. Our combined voices drown out the wild monkeys' voices inside my head, at least for a while. Bowing, a quick glance at the sky full of stars, and bed. It is necessary to get up early.

I can't help going to practice in the morning as well. My wife and I get dressed quietly and we step past our sleeping kids as we both head toward practice. The kids will manage. At worst, they will come to us.

Sitting and talking with a teacher is my favorite part of the weekend. And it is not spoiled even by the fact that I have been trying to solve the same kong-an for four years. When we get to it, I and my teacher start laughing. So what?

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*Photo: Courtesy of Vrážně Zen Center*



Photo: Courtesy of Vrážně Zen Center

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Nothing again, but it doesn't matter. I leave with a bit of disappointment in my imperfection, but in fact, I really don't mind so much. I return to the meditation room and sit. Our kids can be heard outside. They ask where their mom is. Mom sits for a while and tries to continue sitting. Our daughter opens the door of the meditation room carefully, and my wife can't help but stand up and leave the room. Phew! Can I stay? Other kids who dare to enter the room will disturb the sitting. Some of them even try doing practice for a while. Their wiggly dance doesn't resemble sitting very much. However, they make all of us happy. They leave after a while and play with others in front of the monastery. I try to listen carefully to the noises of their game. I get used to them after a while and continue sitting. Many masters say that one can do the best practice even in the middle of a busy New York avenue. Fortunately, it is not so busy here.

A common dinner is a challenge, especially for children. Despite the fact that it is not as formal this year as it used to be, it is still a challenge. Children partly succeed and partly fail in controlling their voices and their desire to move. Then they sit next to their parents as they are told to, cuddle, and whisper whether they can eat a piece of cake. Parents will eat a couple of spoons of rice, but then they give way to their kids' wishes. Hurrah! Pss! But not totally. After years of practice by both parents with kids—from toddlers to adolescents—it has been shown that it is not possible to obey too many

rules, especially those concerning the ban on speaking. It is sufficient if you try to cut down on chatter. From time to time, there is a person who doesn't like the occasional noise made by kids during practice. Most participants perceive unusual conditions in a positive way. It is because this environment is much more similar to real life. I am thinking about all of this as I empty my rice bowl and watch the kids that are running to play another game holding a piece of cake. Even though I am actually an outsider here (I am not a formal member of the Zen school), I feel at home here. That is why, every year, I get over the unpleasant Friday that usually starts the retreat. After a few days spent in this peculiar community where kids even like working, and I am willing to clean the toilets and bathrooms despite my personal habits, and where I don't spend evenings searching through the Internet wasteland in vain, there comes a reward: silence on the drive back home afterward. And especially the feeling that all of it makes sense. I don't want to understand it and explain it. It's not even possible. Experiencing the retreat with kids is an experience of another kind that's simply worth it. ♦

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*Pavel Kryl has been a friend and outside supporter of the Kwan Um School of Zen since 2017, when he visited the Vrážně Zen Center for the first family retreat. He lives in Prague with his two small children and his wife, Noemi, who is a member of the Kwan Um School of Zen. Pavel works as an attorney and an actor.*

*Poem for Buddha's Enlightenment Day Ceremony  
at Borisa Temple, December 11, 2021*

*Arne Schaefer JDPSN*

What is Buddha?  
Is it the green tree, the blue sky?  
Is it the rainbow on the horizon?  
Is it the mine deep in the mountain?  
A mouse is chasing the vulture in the ocean.  
When will they ever get married?  
  
Put it all down, then Buddha appears clearly:  
Outside white snow on the meadow,  
Inside warm hearts in the Dharma room.

*Lake Double Sky*

*Elżbieta Lipińska*

*Some sentient beings say they can see the sky  
But how can you see the sky?*

The water has swallowed up clouds.  
Fish sleep soundly on soft pillows,  
and we wade with difficulty  
across the dry sky.  
Birds learn to fly in the water,  
the order turns around, jumbles,  
a little fish cuts up worlds  
and joins them together again.

*From Stillness Mountain*

*Tonda Horek*

The mountain smokes,  
The rocks drink,  
Trees dance,  
Clouds make love.  
The party is on,  
Where are you?  
Only now can you enter  
The stillness palace without a gate.

*Great Love, Great Suffering*

*Genís Poch*

Leaving, at dusk, the hermitage,  
heather, kermes oak, maple trees, and a single  
juniper.  
Why do they hurt love, peace, and goodness?  
The Sun sets in the west; in the east, the Moon  
is floating.



➤ *Tonda Horek is a senior dharma teacher and started practicing in the 1990s at the Prague Zen Center. In 2001 he moved to Korea and lived at Musangsa Temple until 2010. Since then he has been watching clouds in Borisa Temple in Catalonia, Spain.*

➤ *Elżbieta Lipińska has been practicing with the Kwan Um School of Zen since 2011 at the Wrocław Zen Group in Wrocław, Poland, where she took the first five precepts. She lives in Wrocław; she is a lawyer, and is now retired. She is also a poet who has published six poetry books.*

➤ *Genís Poch, twenty-seven years old, has been a member of the Catalan sangha since 2016. He's a dharma-teacher-in-training and works as a copy editor.*

(Continued from page 13)

inquiry, his big doubt for which he hadn't found an answer. But even though I knew some background now, I was still sitting with the question of how to respond to my friend.

The Zen master continued, "Well, you have to know that the quote is not complete." Somehow I really needed to hold my horses back while listening to his answer, waiting about how it would resolve. "The complete quote is: We all already have Buddha nature—but nobody believes in it!" This was the perfect match to my friend's statement, which I thankfully accepted.

Acceptance obviously cannot enter through the front door—as wide and open as it might be. Neither can having trust in or believing in something enter through this door—and not only trust in something but trust in *oneself*. If it cannot enter through the front door, then how else can it enter? I think each of us has our own approach.

One of the jobs of a Zen teacher is to test our approach to acceptance. But we're tested not only by Zen teachers, but also by our daily meetings with friends, random persons, and life partners (or ex-partners). Especially with ex-partners, the ability to stay in contact with oneself is tested in the hardest way. Try to get an answer by asking them "What kind of improvements

should I make to be of benefit for others?"

To return to my initial question with an understanding of acceptance: If you find a way of trusting yourself, then entering the stream of reality wouldn't be that hard. Finding a way of entering would answer the question of "How do you enter the stream?"

One way to enter is to be thankful for the cup of tea you've received. Mine is to thank you for reading to the end of my article.

And all of these words—did they clarify the question "Why don't you enter the stream, Shariputra?" One question was raised, many doubts are following. If holding the question with acceptance is possible, then finding an answer is also possible. Not only finding an answer—it's also possible to bring it into everyday life for the sake of all beings and for the whole world. ♦

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*Leo Liebenauer-Welsch got in contact with Kwan Um School of Zen 1993 after already practicing Zen for three years. The breakup of his personal relationship in 2014 led him to do a three-week solo retreat. He found love again not only with his new wife (within a challenging patchwork family), but he also found it with his newly intensified practice. He now holds sixteen precepts and lives in Vienna.*

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(Continued from page 15)

Advancing on my knees in the bushes, I suddenly hear a loud sound of branches breaking a few feet away from me. A moment after that something very heavy starts to run and trample the ground. Without thinking, a strong *one mind* takes over, and I just start running. I had reached his lair. Luckily, I and the wild boar run in opposite directions.

### GREAT FAITH

Every week I travel to the forest, stroll along trails, climb hills, and get into a thicket. Each time before setting out on a tour, the hope of finding the deer's footprints resurfaces. Maybe they're in an area I have not yet searched. Maybe they will show up in the winter when they come out of the thicket to eat pine leaves, mushrooms, and grass. Or rather in the summer when they go down the slopes to the peach groves to eat the young leaves. In the summer, the paths turn to powder, and it is much easier to notice the shape of the footprints.

### "WHERE ARE YOU GOING? WATCH YOUR STEP."

Many tracks are discovered during the months of search: the badger tracks with the rounded pads and long claws, the heavy wild boar leaving deep hoofprints, the heart-shaped gazelle footprints, its pile of dung midden, niches of the nightingale and of a band of partridges, the foot of the porcupine which is shaped like a human baby, leaving behind signs of its dragging spines. Researching the deer's behavior in an attempt to figure out their habitat. Random conversations with the farmers who own

the plantations, and with park rangers. A particularly moving encounter with the caretaker responsible for raising the deer before releasing them into the wild, tears in his eyes as he recounts raising the herd.

Two years of searching without a trace. The park ranger who was in charge of the deer's reintroduction lost hope long ago, estimating that they were probably preyed upon by jackals.

### BORISA TEMPLE, SPAIN, 2019: WINTER RETREAT

Afternoon walk in the damp forest, the path winding between the tall pines. Walking in a column. The ground is wet with melted snow. My eyes carefully follow signs on the ground. Suddenly a beautiful pair of distinct roe deer footprints appear before my eyes. A brief moment of joy. A smile. The walk continues.

### ISRAEL, 2021

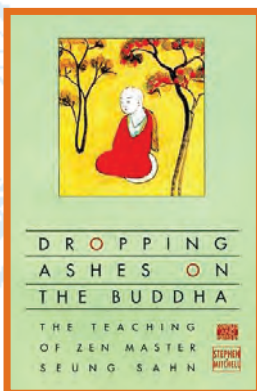
A random conversation with a close friend and park ranger. He mentions rumors of a planned roe deer reintroduction attempt planned for the near future. Fingers crossed. "How can I help?" ♦

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*Boaz Franklin has been studying animal tracking since 2017 and is certified as a tracker by the Cybertracker organization. He has been practicing with the Kwan Um School of Zen in Israel since 2006. He is a dharma teacher and the abbot of the Pardes-Hanna Zen Group.*



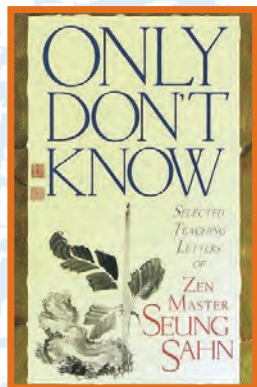
# A FRESH APPROACH TO ZEN



**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

**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

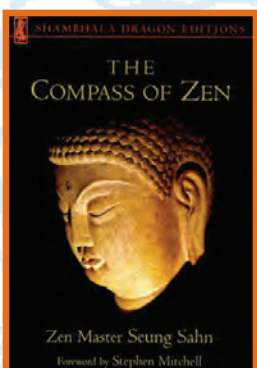


**Dropping Ashes on the Buddha: The Teaching of Zen Master Seung Sahn.** Compiled and edited by Stephen Mitchell. A delightful, irreverent, and often hilarious record of interactions with Western students. 244 pages. *Grove Press.* ISBN 0-8021-3052-6. \$14.00

**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

**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. *Reprinted by Primary Point Press 2015.* ISBN 978-0-942795-17-2. \$17.95



**Butterflies on a Sea Wind.** Anne's compelling narrative describes both the physical and mental demands of retreats and the challenges of integrating Zen concepts into modern day life. 179 pages. *Andrews McMeel* ISBN 0-7407-2721-4. \$12.95

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

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

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



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

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

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Comic by Martha Muñoz



**OTHER CONTRIBUTORS TO THIS ISSUE:**

**Oriol Casanovas's** photography has been published both nationally and internationally in a variety of diverse publications. In 2015 he received the Humanity Photo Award, and that same year he also received the Hotusa award at the Fifteenth International Eurostars Grand Marina photography contest, as well as an honorable mention at the International Photography Awards (IPA) in 2016. He began practicing in the Kwan Um School with the Catalan sangha in 2006, and has been practicing and volunteering at the Borisa Zen Center ever since. Learn more about Oriol at [www.oriolcasanovas.com](http://www.oriolcasanovas.com).

**Héctor Mediavilla** from Barcelona is an internationally awarded visual storyteller, photographer, director, curator, and educator with twenty years of professional experience. His work has been featured across the globe—including Bilbao's Guggenheim Museum, the French Institute in Kinshasa, and the Spanish Cultural Center in Mexico. Héctor has been a Zen practitioner since 2010 and is currently a dharma-teacher-in-training at the Borisa Zen Center in Barcelona. Learn more about his work at [www.hectormediavilla.com](http://www.hectormediavilla.com) or on Instagram at [@hectormediavilla](https://www.instagram.com/hectormediavilla).

**Gasper Sopi** has been contributing to the Kwan Um School of Zen in various capacities (primarily in Europe) ever since his heart and mind were touched by the generous sangha of the Su Bong Zen Monastery in Hong Kong, which he considers to be his spiritual home.



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# 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 the Americas

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 membership with your credit card, visit <https://americas.kwanumzen.org/membership>*

1. Please choose an 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, two adults and children up to age 26 in the same household are included in your membership. Please list names below.

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

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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