

Primary Point





Primary Point

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The Kwan Um School of Zen supports the worldwide teaching schedule of the Zen Masters and Ji Do Poep Sa Nims, 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 29. The circulation is 5000 copies.

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Dialogue

between Zen Master Seung Sahn and Songbon Sunim

from *Empty House: Zen Masters and Temples of Korea*, Eastward Publishing, 2002

With the development of science and technology it seems as though humanity is gradually suffocating itself. There seems to be more distrust in the world than ever before and people are gradually becoming more and more isolated and alienated from each other. Human beings are even described by some as mechanical robots living under the yoke of modern society. Dissatisfaction appears to be growing and people are losing what inherent self-awareness they possess. What has made the human being, who ought to be the master of his/her destiny, become like this? What can be done in order to address the problems facing modern society? What role can Zen play in curing the disease of this age? This dialogue on the theme of Modern Civilization and Zen took place between Zen Master Seung Sahn of Hwagye-sa and Songbon Sunim, a professor of Dongguk Buddhist University, in an effort to identify the problems faced by modern society and offer possible solutions to them.

Songbon Sunim: Modern civilization seems to be confronted by five critical problems: war, shortage of food, overpopulation, destruction of the environment and the loss of humanity. Each issue is interrelated, but particularly the loss of humanity appears to be the cause of escalating social problems. It is believed that Buddhism directly addresses these issues. Would you begin with your thoughts about war?



Seung Sahn Sunim: Wars are caused by changes in the balance of power in the world. There are different realms of power which all interact in this world: the power wielded by humans, the power associated with the animal kingdom and the power of nature itself. Of these, the power wielded by mankind has become the most dangerous. It must be evident to all, that mankind is currently responsible for most of the damage being inflicted on the earth.

Within the human realm, it can be seen that the egoism of personal desire is starting to control most of society. Throughout the 19th and 20th centuries, ideology played an important role in controlling society. However, since the early 1990s, with the advent of the age of free market capitalism, it is evident that this is no longer the case. Humans are now the slaves of economics. Human beings are starting to resemble dogs, cattle and horses in that their only concern is survival. So human beings are becoming even worse than animals. Animals at least attack other animals out of necessity when hungry, but humans behave much worse than that, even though they are already satiated. War is brought about by this kind of human being.

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Collective egoism in society seems to be growing irrespective of nationality, religion or political persuasion. Perhaps collective egoism can be viewed as another kind of war at the national level. And as the fire of this egoism rages we see the human being change into an economic animal. How can this issue be addressed by Buddhism?



Humans have two kinds of power, the inherent and invisible power within the mind and the externally directed power to act in the world. When humans focus solely on the material world without, then the outer world becomes collectivized and organized. Grouping together and fighting for food results in war. It is from this that, I think, the destruction of human nature originated. Forming groups for self-protection and fighting each other is the way of animals. This problem can be cured when the true nature of mankind is uncovered. The world was not created for humans only. So in order to live in harmony in this world, the mind of great compassion needs to be generated. In the absence of this quality of mind it is not possible for all human beings to co-exist in peace. For example, animals that are butchered to satisfy people's greed will only be reborn again carrying with them the seeds of war and revenge. The only way to overcome this is to work towards the collective self-realization of mankind.

The world religions of today can be divided generally into two kinds in terms of geographical environments and climates. The religions and philosophies which originated from India and China are categorized as the "religions of the forest," whilst the monotheistic which originated from the Middle East such as Judaism and Islam are categorized as the "religions of the desert". The East seems to emphasize the harmony of both humans and nature while the West tends to emphasize their division and separation. Humans and nature are believed to be inseparable in the "religions of forest." Accordingly there is the conception of "all things are one." So humans tried to live their life in the knowledge that they were an integral part of nature. In the "religions of the desert" on the other hand, a God as absolute maker of the world was created. So people came to believe in and follow this only God, creator of all things, not accepting the existence of other gods and beings. As I see it, the problems of modern society stem from this religious tradition with the dualistic thought structure.

Yes, I believe that you are right. There is no past in the religions of the West. They are heading merely from the present to the future. This blocks people from seeing mankind as a part of nature. On the other hand, Buddhism admits the past, the present, and the future. The present is the result of the past, and the future is the result of the present. When we view things in this way, the balance of the world and nature will be preserved in the correct manner.

This dualistic foundation of western religion, which has the tendency to analyze and divide, seems also to be carried through into western science. Western science, in which the dissecting and analysis of things is regarded as its purpose, tries to break down things which simply cannot be broken down. For example, living things once broken down into their



composite parts will obviously no longer be living things. I think that this is the biggest weakness of modern science. Also I think that the analytic, dualistic way of thinking is the cause of much of the confusion in the world today.

Actually, it is a fact that Buddhism also divides and analyzes. But the difference is that Buddhism proposes a way to return to the origin. This point is illustrated by the hwadu: “Ten thousand things all return to the one; to where does the one return?” As you know well, this hwadu comes from a dialogue between Zen Master Joju and another monk. This hwadu clearly expresses the east Asian idea that the root of everything is one.

Furthermore, this hwadu provides a direct insight into the very essence of Zen and east Asian thought. That is to say, the idea that by emptying oneself and completely immersing oneself in nature, one can find oneness with the universe. Also it raises a profound question about the origin of existence. “The ten thousand things” symbolize the positive attributes of affirmation, existence, differentiation and the real aspect of phenomena. On the other hand, “the One” represents the idea of negation, emptiness, non-differentiation and equality. So you can appreciate that Buddhist philosophy also involves an element of analysis and division. However, underneath all this, the underlying intent is always the return to the origin.

On the contrary, in Western philosophy one finds the roots of modern society with its obsession with specialization and fragmentation, which is leading to the systematic mechanization of mankind. So human beings are losing their essential humanness or humanity. Although this is taking place, the damage is not necessarily irreversible. A way back is possible but not through any paradigm offered by western philosophy. Only Buddhism and Zen can offer real solutions.

The difference between eastern and western philosophy is also reflected in the different approaches taken by eastern and western medicine. Eastern medicine is essentially preventative in nature, seeking to protect and strengthen the weaker organs of the body, while Western medicine is reparatory in nature focusing on the surgical removal of the weak and sick parts. A parallel can be drawn in the different concepts of freedom and peace. In the east, punishment consists of exile from society to create a kind of mental freedom. However, in the west punishment consists of confinement, which focuses on the limitation of spatial freedom. So one can see that in the east there's the pursuit of mental and inner freedom and peace while in the west there is the pursuit of material and outer freedom and peace. Many scholars believe that if society is to evolve in the future, mankind must focus on the Eastern concept of inner mental freedom.

Yes, absolutely. I agree. This is not a passing trend. Many western scholars are feeling the limitation of their own studies, and are exploring the eastern approach through Zen practice. This shows the limitation of the western philosophic approach. Why do you think scholars with Ph.D.'s are becoming involved in Zen? It's because they are blocked. They are not finding the breakthroughs and solutions that they expected through the western paradigm. Just as Zen monks do Zen practice to cut through the discriminating mind, they are taking up Zen practice in order to find a way to break through their doubts.

Many scholars are convinced that the principles of Buddhism will be an important instrument in future philosophical studies as well as in bringing about world peace. What do you think about the principles of Buddhism as they relate to world peace?

Well, the first thing is that you should realize yourself. How can peace be found without knowing yourself? In self-realization one finds the state of perfect equanimity. At this stage, you realize the origin of the phenomenal world and the intrinsic meaning of life. You also come to possess the wisdom to discriminate correctly so that ultimately your mind is not disturbed by events taking place around you. In other words, one is able to live one's life comfortably and composedly without worries or anxiety. So when human beings come to know themselves as they really are, meaningless disputes will cease, and there will be peace.

Yes, you are correct. I think this is basically Wonhyo's principle of mutual interpenetration and all-inclusiveness. The power of returning to the origin rather than dividing and analyzing; this is what Buddhism is really about. I agree with your idea that world peace will be attained when the idea

that all people possess the Buddha nature, which is the seed of realization, is established. So in this regard, I completely agree with you.

There is no investigation of the person who is doing the dividing and analyzing in the western philosophical and scientific tradition. In other words, there is no question of who the "I," the person doing the analyzing, is. On the other hand, as I indicated before, Buddhism, being concerned with returning to the origin, investigates the "I." This is the salient feature of Buddhism. Nevertheless we now belong to the scientific and technical age. So we need to consider carefully how to effectively communicate the ideas of Buddhism in order to make Buddhism relevant to the modern world.

I feel that Buddhism in Korea won't become relevant to modern society merely through the reorganization of its institutions. The spreading of the Buddhist message to the rest of the world will only take place when the prevailing thinking changes. So when the education of the Buddhist monks improves in quality, then we'll see the proliferation of the Buddhist ideal.

Humans are not born out of choice, but it is possible to control one's destiny to a degree. This can be achieved by controlling one's mind. This is the most important teaching of the Buddha. If I can control my mind, then my destiny can be changed. Through Zen practice and Yombul (mantra repetition), karma is dissolved and so one's destiny will naturally be altered. Just as a film director can edit the film he works with, destiny can be controlled when one realizes the self. Isn't the essence of Wonhyo's teachings of "Harmonization" and the practice of "No Obstacle" all about controlling one's own action and not discriminating against others?

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*Zen Master Seung Sahn
with Ji Do Poep Sa Nims
Judy Roitman and
Dennis Duermeier
at Mu Sang Sa*

As human beings we need desperately to eliminate our selfishness and consider the welfare of all living beings, including the planet itself, if we are to survive as a species. The planet is being crippled by our own uncontrolled pollution. As an example of this, every day we face the issue of how to dispose of our garbage. So what is the Buddhist approach to dealing with these kinds of mundane issues?

You have a very good point. I think we need to adopt the Zen Buddhist idea of not wasting even a single grain of rice. If we live with this ethic then naturally we'll be able to find a sustainable solution to the issues of food and the elimination of waste matter. In the absence of such an approach it is unlikely that we'll be able to reverse the crippling damage that we are inflicting on our own planet. At the same time we need to train our own minds. Purity and restraint within our own selves will lead naturally to the solution of the mundane problems we face in the material world.

It seems that those with genuine spiritual understanding will have to assume many roles and do many things in this age. Only if Buddhists assume the mantle of responsibility in this way, can we avert the inevitable disaster being brought on by the modern life. Technological civilization with its mechanized industrial structures has gradually been consuming the humanity of the individual. I think for those brought up in the theistic social and religious traditions of the west, the spirit and culture of Zen Buddhism will bring a fresh impetus.

Of course what you say is correct. We need to perfect ourselves first, and at the same time we should endeavor to transmit the Buddhist teachings to our neighbors. This is the way to benefit not only our own country but also society at large, and the whole world. No matter how much science develops, it will never be able to fathom the secrets of consciousness itself. So ultimately, through empirical scientific investigation, the understanding of the human being is impossible. The human being is a composite entity of both body and mind. Consequently the intrinsic desire for the improvement of life can only be fulfilled through the spiritual life. One of the main tenets of Zen Buddhism is that the individual must experience and affirm the truth for himself or herself.

It might just be that the significance of Zen to the modern age will be to enable the individual to find the wisdom to live his/her life resourcefully and confidently. The spiritual world cannot be seen or affirmed through the physical eyes. It can only be comprehended through the mental eye of realization. Buddhism is useful in that it can help people internalize the problems of this modern age through their individual experience. We must come to realize that civilization will not be saved by God or Buddha, but by ourselves. With the help of the wisdom of Zen Buddhism we can recover our humanity and lead meaningful lives in harmony with each other and the world we inhabit. So we must all become bodhisattvas in order to save the world.☸

Un Mun Sa (top and bottom); Zen Master Seung Sabn's hermitage (middle)



good

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Opening speech by Zen Master Dae Kwang at the Whole World is a Single Flower Conference at Mu Sang Sa, October 2002

[Holds Zen stick high over head, strikes table.]

Teacher is student and student is teacher.

A long time ago in China, Joju Zen Master said, “If I meet a seven year old who can teach me, I will listen. If I meet a seventy year old man who needs instruction, I will teach him.” That’s our original nature, it can take any form—student or teacher, it doesn’t matter. Just like water it takes the shape of any vessel.

[Holds stick up high over head, strikes table.]

This point means no student, no teacher.

Our original nature has no name, speech or words. But I already opened my mouth too much, so my dharma speech is a mistake.

[Holds stick up high over head, strikes table.]

Teacher is teacher, student is student.

This is the truth of our everyday life. Some people are teachers, some people are students. But this truth is not enough. More important is: How does this truth function?

Ho!

Outside the rice is ripe. Inside, many shiny faces from around the world have come to Mu Sang Sa to attend the Whole World is a Single Flower conference.



teaching

Human beings are very attached to name and form, and because they’re attached to name and form, they suffer. The Buddha taught that all suffering comes from this one point. He practiced very hard for a long time and completely let go of name and form. Then he got up from under the bodhi tree and used name and form for 45 years to help our world. That’s our job too. One time Zen Master Seung Sahn said that to be attached to the teacher and to follow the teacher are two different things. If you’re attached to the teacher, then this just makes more suffering, and the wonderful message that a good teacher has becomes suffering.

One time there was a man who was lost in the woods. As the days went by he became weaker and weaker and more frightened. Then one night a person came by with a flashlight and said, “Come follow me, I’ll show you the way out of the woods.” The man was very relieved and followed him. That’s interesting because at the time he was lost, he didn’t care what color the person was with the flashlight. He didn’t care if the person was female or male. He didn’t care if the person was a Buddhist or a Muslim. He didn’t care if the person had ever given a dharma speech or not. Instead, he only wanted one thing—out. The true meaning of the teacher/student relationship is also very simple; it means just one thing, “What are you?”



Zen Master
Dae Kwang
and
Thom Pastor
JDPSN

At the time of the Sixth Patriarch, Hui Neng, there was one other famous teacher of Zen in China, the monk Shen Hsui. Hui Neng lived in the south at Nam Hwa Sah temple while Shen Hsui taught in the north. At one time Shen Hsui sent one of his top students, Chih-ch'eng, to visit the Sixth Patriarch and report back about his system of teaching. When Chih-ch'eng asked Hui Neng for his dharma, he said something very interesting, "I have no dharma. If I said I had a system of dharma to teach you, I would be lying." Hui Neng said he had nothing to teach, he only liberated people according to circumstances. Buddha said in the Diamond Sutra that in his whole life he didn't say even one word. Zen Master Seung Sahn said that our school's teaching is only one thing: Don't Know. Thank you very much Zen Master Seung Sahn for this wonderful teaching.

There is a very interesting teaching phrase in Zen: If you meet the Buddha on the road, kill him. One time Zen Master Seung Sahn said that if you want to attain something in Zen you must first kill your parents. Then you must kill the Buddha and finally you must kill your teacher.

[Strikes table with Zen stick.]

Good teaching is bad teaching. Bad teaching is good teaching. That point has already taught us.

[Strikes table with Zen stick.]

This point means, keep away from good teaching and bad teaching.

[Strikes table with Zen stick.]

Good teaching is good teaching and bad teaching is bad teaching.

So Buddha held up a flower... is that good teaching or bad teaching? Huang Po beat Lin Chi with a stick three times. Is that good teaching or bad teaching? Zen Master Man Gong said that the whole world is a single flower, is that good teaching or bad teaching?

Ho!

Welcome to our Whole World is a Single Flower celebration. Please have a good time! 🌸

Scenes from the Whole World is a Single Flower conference and tour: Seoul airport, on the way to Bo Won Sa Ji, Zen Master Wu Bong and Zen Master Dae Kwang





A Korean cultural center; an outdoor market; Kyung Ho Sunim's room at Cheon Jang Sa



Contributors: Zen Master Dae Kwang, Judy Roitman JDPSN, Chong Hae Sunim JDPS, John Holland, Jody Blackwell, and Liatrix Studer

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In October of 2002, Kwan Um School of Zen members from around the world gathered in Korea for the triennial Whole World is a Single Flower Conference and tour. The trip to Korea from the west is a long one—16 hours from New York to Seoul. International flights of this length are more than tedious, they're downright soul-numbing. However, they are not without their lighter moments. Zen Master Wu Kwang said that as they were flying over the Kamchecka Peninsula they were experiencing some rough air when the pilot broke in with an announcement, "Even though we are experiencing some turbulence, it would be unwise for us to deviate from our course at this time since we are flying over Russia."

Travel

The Whole World is a Single Flower conference was billed as an opportunity to return to the roots of our practice. Of course the roots of our practice are in our own experience of suffering, but still it's a very interesting and sometimes emotional experience to visit the very places where many of the dharma stories we all know so well took place. Zen Master Seung Sahn has always encouraged Zen students to travel. The experience helps widen our minds and deepen our wisdom. This is even more true when you visit a foreign country with a radically different culture and history, like Korea. For many of us the experiences of the trip went far beyond the usual "tourist trip." The landscapes, the buildings, even the tastes and smells resonated deeply within us.

The Whole World conference was kicked off with a ceremony and Korean entertainment at Mu Sang Sa, our new temple in Korea. For many of us it was the first time to see Zen Master Seung Sahn in person. As he entered the meditation hall he was greeted by a spontaneous and emotional standing ovation. In addition to the group of 36 from the United States, Canada, France, and Germany,





overlook

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there were also representatives from the Hong Kong and Singapore sanghas. We were also honored by the presence of two old friends of Zen Master Seung Sahn's: Byoek Am Kunsunim, the precepts master for the Kwan Um School of Zen, and Noritake Kotoku Roshi, who has temples in Osaka and Kyoto.

The day after the ceremony we embark on a six-day tour visiting temples and hermitages associated with our lineage. Without a doubt the highest point of the trip is our climb up Won Gak Mountain to Bu Yong Am, the hermitage where Zen Master Seung Sahn got enlightenment while chanting the Great Dharani for one hundred days in 1948. Perched high on a cliff above Ma Gok Sa—the temple where Zen Master Ko Bong has his Zen center—Bu Yong Am presents us with a stunning mountain vista. Suddenly, a sense of place overtakes us... we chant the Great Dharani to honor the effort and practice of our teacher. We are no longer tourists but again rooted in the essence of our tradition. We linger there; nobody is in a hurry to leave. We present a gift of chocolates

and cheese to the resident monk. On the way down we come upon the stream where Zen Master Seung Sahn bathed and refreshed himself; we follow it as it threads its way down the mountain. The sound of the waterfall and the bird's song are the great sutras.

One of the most interesting places we visit is Cheon Jang Sa, the remote mountain temple where Kyong Ho Sunim sent the young thirteen-year-old monk Man Gong for Zen training. This is the same temple where five years later a village boy asked Man Gong the question that was to change his life, "The ten thousand dharmas return to the One... where does the One return?" It is also the region where one of the most compelling Kyong Ho Sunim stories takes place:

Early one fall as Kyong Ho Sunim was climbing into the high mountains for a retreat, he encountered some young men carrying firewood down the mountain. At over six feet tall with a wispy beard and dressed in ragged clothes, Kyong Ho Sunim was quite a striking figure. As the teenagers passed him they stared, poking fun at him: "Sunim, why are you wearing those tattered



Myo Haeng Sunim's restaurant at Daejeon



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clothes. Sunim, why don't you cut that beard, it is too long!"

Kyong Ho Sunim stopped and said, "OK, OK, but I'll make a bet with you guys—if you can hit me with one of those sticks you can have all my clothes, my food and my money. If you can't hit me then you will go on about your way and not say anything about me."

The boys jumped at the chance: "It's a deal! We can hit you easy." Then the boldest of the boys removed the load of firewood from his back, drew out a stick and hit Kyong Ho Sunim.

Immediately Kyong Ho Sunim said, "You didn't hit me." The young man hit him again. Again he said, "You didn't hit me."

At this the young men became quite angry at being cheated and started hitting him repeatedly saying, "Yes we can! Yes we can!" Finally they pummeled Kyong Ho Sunim to the ground. "We hit you, so give us your money and food. You can't cheat us."

As Kyong Ho Sunim struggled to his feet he said, "OK, you can have my things." After settling up, he turned and walked away. After a few steps he turned and said, "But you didn't hit me!"

Next we visit a famous hermitage associated with Zen Master Man Gong, Ganwoldo, on an island near Yeunpo. It was established by Zen Master Muhak in 1376 and is separated from the mainland at high tide. Looking out to sea from this tranquil spot, we enjoy a beautiful sunset. The Yellow Sea here reminds us of the famous "Moving Mountains, Moving Boat" kong-an, in which Man Gong took a boat ride with his students. At first there is water covering the sandbar that leads to the temple and we don't think that we can cross over, but an intrepid Korean woman from our party removes her shoes, hikes her skirt, and wades across to enthusiastic applause. As the tide ebbs, we follow her. Like so many pilgrims before, we





Chanting outside Zen Master Seung Sahn's hermitage

wait outside the temple's iron gate. The temple dogs do their job by barking at us while the resident monk slowly rings the temple bell thirty-three times to announce the beginning of evening chanting. What can we do? Before us is an impassable gate and behind us the sea is lapping at our heels. As the bell stops we tentatively call out, "Yo bo se yo! Hello!" Realizing that we are not the usual rowdy tourist, the monk lets us in. After he regales us with stories of recent tsunamis and ancient temple lore, we retreat back across the sandbar. On the mainland, we notice a cardboard box containing the remains of small candles—undoubtedly left behind by a shaman praying for the safe return of local fishermen.

After spending several days traveling around the Dok Sahn Mountain area, we head south about 100 miles to Un Mun Sa. This temple, located on Tiger Mountain, was established in the year 560. Recently Master Beak Pa (1767–1852), who created the distinction between Patriarchal, Tathagata, and Rational Zen, resided here. Since 1958, Un Mun Sa has served as the largest training center for nuns in Korea. About 250 bhikkunis follow a three- to five-year course at the sutra school.

After a temple tour, one of the older nuns invites us to tea. As we are chatting, she suddenly gets a girlish twinkle in her eye and shares with us a story from her early days as a novice. It is always difficult for recent initiates to get up at 3:00 am, especially in the winter. They usually straggle into the chanting hall at the last minute with puffy eyes and yawns. In order to "inspire" them, the proctor would sometimes sneak around early and fill their rubber shoes with waater. Of course, the water would rapidly form a thin layer of ice. Stepping into those shoes was quite a surprise! Everyone was wide-awake for chanting on those mornings.



Causeway to Ganwoldo island

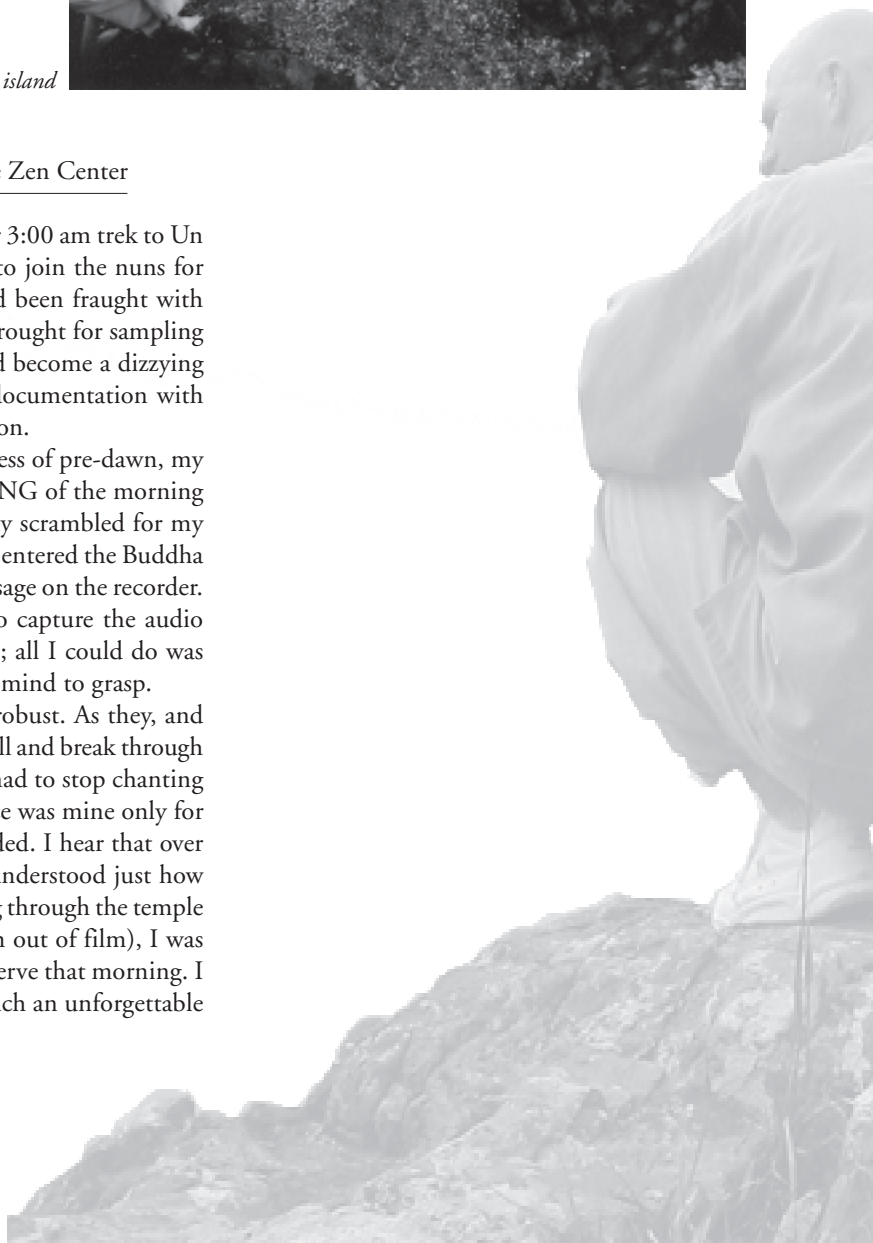
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Reflection on Un Mun Sa: Jody Blackwell, Cambridge Zen Center

One of my vivid memories of the Korea trip was our 3:00 am trek to Un Mun Sa temple, near the southeastern Korean coast, to join the nuns for their morning chanting. My trip up to that point had been fraught with gadgets, among which was a minidisc recorder I had brought for sampling “Korean noises,” whatever that meant. Sightseeing had become a dizzying cycle of suspense, wonder, delight, and then frantic documentation with the camera and recorder, often ending in self-flagellation.

When we arrived at Un Mun Sa in the surreal stillness of pre-dawn, my breath was at once taken away by the melancholy GONG of the morning temple bell and its deep, rich overtones. Again I madly scrambled for my recorder as if I had just discovered Elvis alive. But as we entered the Buddha hall, the dim candlelight betrayed a “Low Battery” message on the recorder. My heart sank. Anytime but now! A painful desire to capture the audio landscape unfolding before me was now a lost chance; all I could do was bear witness to events passing too rapidly for even my mind to grasp.

The voices of the nuns were surprisingly low and robust. As they, and we, sang the Great Dharani, waves of harmony would roll and break through the room like an ocean tide. It was so beautiful that I had to stop chanting for the lump in my throat, knowing that the experience was mine only for a moment. Coming empty-handed, going empty handed. I hear that over and over, but listening to the nuns at Un Mun Sa, I understood just how deep my clinging, keeping, holding karma was. Walking through the temple grounds at sunrise, without my camera (I had also run out of film), I was incredibly sad to have lost the illusion that I could preserve that morning. I was also grateful that I'd been given that teaching in such an unforgettable place.





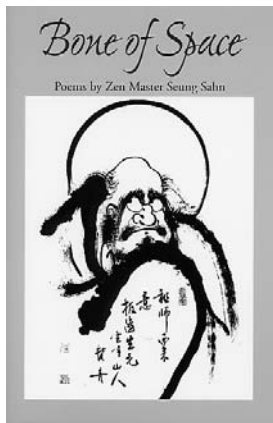
*[left] View from Zen Master Seung Sahn's hermitage;
[above] Zen Master Bon Soeng and a temple guardian*

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Afterward: Judy Roitman JDPSN

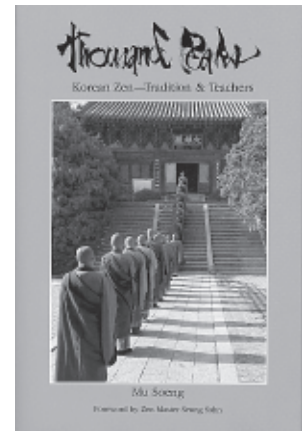
I was overwhelmed by the beauty and power of the Korean landscape — mountains everywhere, the sea, rice fields tucked into every conceivable corner, crystalline streams, rocks tumbling on rocks, stone steps built patiently over years. The strong emotional connection to those places where our teachers and ancestors have practiced. Chanting outside Zen Master Seung Sahn's hermitage— thank you, Tamar, for suggesting this! The incredible privilege of being in those places where Zen Master Kyong Ho, Zen Master Man Gong, Zen Master Ko Bong, and Zen Master Seung Sahn taught and practiced. ☸

A fresh approach to Zen



Bone of Space: Poems by Zen Master Seung Sahn. This collection captures a master's thoughts during everyday life—while traveling, talking on the phone, attending a friend's funeral. Primary Point Press edition, 1992. 128 pages.
Primary Point Press. ISBN 0-942795-06-7. \$15.00

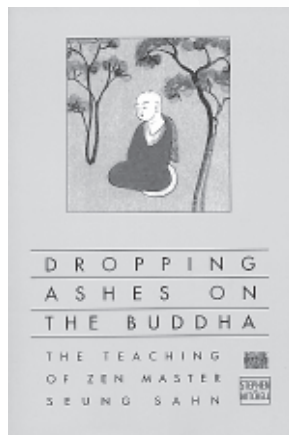
Thousand Peaks: Korean Zen—Traditions and Teachers. Mu Soeng. The spirit of Zen's golden age survives in Korean Zen. Primary Point Press edition, 1991. 256 pages.
Primary Point Press. ISBN 0-942795-02-4. SPECIAL SALE: \$8.00



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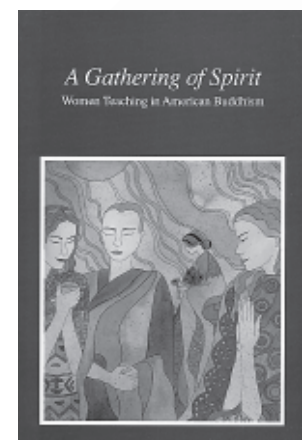
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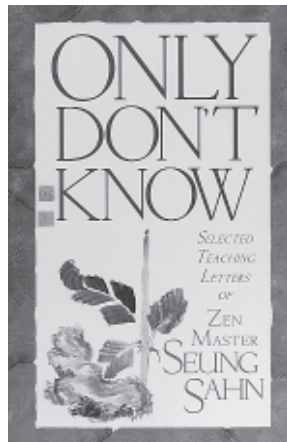
Dropping Ashes on the Buddha: The Teaching of Zen Master Seung Sahn. Compiled and edited by Stephen Mitchell. A delightful, irreverent, and often hilarious record of interactions with Western students. 244 pages.
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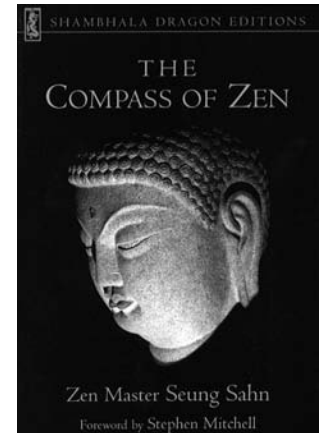
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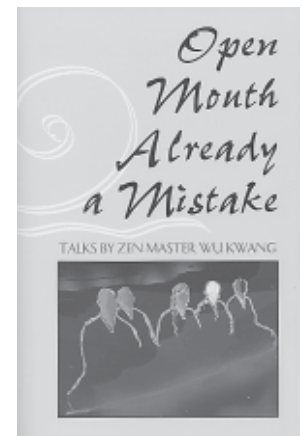


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Compass of Zen. Zen Master Seung Sahn. Compiled and edited by Hyon Gak Sunim JDPS. It is a simple, clear, and often hilarious presentation of the essential teachings of the main Buddhist traditions—culminating in Zen—by one of the most beloved Zen Masters of our time. 1997. 394 pages.
Shambhala. ISBN 1-57062-329-5. \$21.95

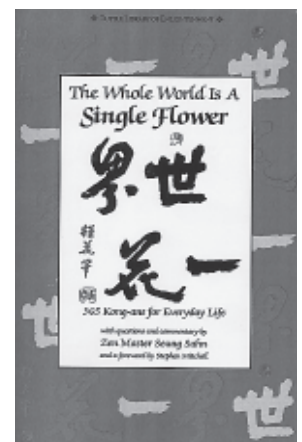


Open Mouth Already a Mistake: Talks by Zen Master Wu Kwang. Teaching of a Zen master who is also a husband, father, practicing Gestalt therapist and musician. 1997. 238 pages.
Primary Point Press. ISBN 0-942795-08-3. \$18.95



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. 1992. VHS. 54 minutes.
Primary Point Press. ISBN 0-942795-07-5. \$30.00

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. 1993. 267 pages.
Tuttle. ISBN 0-8048-1782-0. \$22.95



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tears

*Opening talk by Zen Master Wu Kwang
at the Buddha's Birthday Ceremony
at Providence Zen Center, April 5, 2003*

A number of years ago, there was a long-time student in New York who was having some difficulty with practice—a crisis of meaning that many of us go through at different times.

It was about this time of year when the student said to me, “I really don’t know if I can listen to the story of Buddha’s birth one more time.” [*laughter*] Actually, every year I really don’t know if I can *tell* the story of Buddha’s birth one more time. [*laughter*] But, embedded in this person’s remark—“I don’t know if I can listen to the story of Buddha’s birth one more time”—is the essence of practice. Because if you truly *don’t know*, through and through, then listening is possible, seeing is possible, feeling is possible, connecting is possible, and having engagement with others is possible. And that, in and of itself, is actually giving birth to the Buddha at that moment.

Now, according to the traditional story, the Buddha sprang from his mother’s side and walked seven steps in each direction and then issued his first teaching about “what is true self.” However, a number of years ago at a Buddha’s Enlightenment day ceremony, Zen Master Seung Sahn offered another story. Standing before the sangha, he said, “Two thousand, five hundred and some-odd years ago, Buddha got enlightenment by seeing a star. But if Buddha were to get enlightenment today, it would not be expressed by looking at the star and saying, ‘Ah, wonderful.’” Then Zen Master Seung Sahn stood silently, letting his face become sadder and sadder, while his finger slowly traced an imaginary tear running down his cheek. “That,” he said quietly, “would be Buddha’s enlightenment here and now today.”

But now, we have another *today*. I think that if Buddha’s birth were to occur here and now it would not be by springing from the right side of his mother, but maybe by emerging from some of her teardrops. Because it is quite sad that people once again are killing other people in this world. It is quite sad that young men and women are going off to war and really don’t know all the essential reasons connected with why they are being sent. And sad because they will probably do serious damage to other people and will have to cope with the psychological repercussions of that for the rest of their lives. It is quite sad that leaders of countries and other world leaders do not know how to talk to and get along with each other. And it is incredibly sad that young children are hearing bombs dropping near them day after day.

I think it is very important that *we* enter into that sadness—and that we let the emergence of that sadness give birth to Buddha’s mind of compassion, joined with clear seeing, wisdom and some kind of straightforward action.



*Zen Master Wu Kwang at the Whole World is a Single Flower
Conference and Tour*

like
the
blink
of
an
eye

Kyol Che at Mu Sang Sa 2002/2003

Grazyna Perl, JDPSN

[The floor is yellow, the wall is white]

One quiet spot in the dharma room and four bowls filled with good food—that is Kyol Che at Mu Sang Sa.

When we arrived at Mu Sang Sa, near the Korean city of Daejeon, we were welcomed by a group of monks and nuns. After a matter-of-fact introduction, we were driven to a public bathhouse. After soaking luxuriously in an herb-filled hot bath, we were all ready to start practicing.

During our stay at Mu Sang Sa, the directors took care of us with a simple “just do it” and “how can I help?” mind, a very comforting atmosphere. Once, a friend of my mother said, “A good government is one that you don’t notice.” It was like that here; we were not bothered with anything, we could practice peacefully. All the temple directors and staff, starting with the abbot Mu Shim Sunim JDPS and ending with the Haeng Ja Nims, worked very hard. One of the participants said, “There is nothing to do and nothing to worry about here, just practice.”

[Meditation]

Sitting silent and still
One sees the flow of mind’s creations.
You understand that you were following phantoms.
From now on, what will you follow?

KATZ!

The branches are dancing
as the wind blows through the trees.

[White cloud over a blue mountain]

Mu Sang Sa is situated at the foot of Kuk Sa Song peak. Looking out from the temple, one sees a valley vista: small lakes, rice fields, and scattered farmhouses; a vast panorama of mountains on the horizon. One feels embraced by the surrounding landscape.

Zen Master Seung Sahn said that there is very strong Manjushri and Kwan Seum Bosal energy here, the energy of wisdom and compassion.



How can one not be motivated to practice in such an inspiring environment? It’s quiet, but not too quiet. There is construction going on here as the new Buddha Hall is being built, so your mantra sometimes takes on the rhythm of a hammer and a saw. After the workday is finished, only the sounds of the small temple bells interrupt the evening silence. Zen Master Seung Sahn said “It’s easy to find quiet in a quiet place, true silence is not dependent on anything.”

[Watch your step]

During the breaks, after having tea, you can hike in the surrounding mountains. The mountains welcome each of us with different paths: steep ones and easy ones, or you can just sit by a mountain spring and let your mind follow the shimmering water.

As the fall progresses and the snow comes, everything becomes white and silent. The cold freezes the mountain stream into wondrous sculptures. Every day nature brings new experiences, every day the mind brings new challenges, and every day the small bells outside the temple ring: ding-dong, ding-dong... wake up, wake up!

[Everything is coming and going]

The three months passed in the blink of an eye. The Kyol Che is finished and suddenly time, problems, and opinions seem so unimportant. Where did it come from and where did it go? Everybody wants something... what do you want? If you do Kyol Che with a “put it all down” mind and let go of your situation and opinions, you will get everything.

[In the mountains]

Standing on the top of a mountain,
Between the high sky and the low ground.
There is no this or that.
Then, why is the temple bell
being rung every morning?

KATZ!

When the baby cries, mother comes.



My first teaching trip to Israel

Given the situation in Israel these days, I was expecting very strict security checks on my flight from Paris to Tel Aviv. However, there was only a bit more security in Paris and Vienna for the flight—much less than I had prepared for. After a three hour flight I arrived at the Tel Aviv airport. It felt just like at any airport in the world. I took my luggage and went to meet sangha members Yuval and Gal, who were there smiling, and off we went. In the car I was all eyes and ears, expecting I don't know what... almost anything.

The weather was great: blue sky, streets filled with handsome people on errands. I thought, "This is nothing like what I saw on television." In the evening Yuval took me for a long walk along the sea. The beach was beautiful. We sat in chairs in the middle of the beach, having wine and watching the sun set over the sea. What could be more relaxing and peaceful?

The retreat started the next day in Tevon. We drove to the retreat through the Carmel Mountains, from which I could admire some more of this beautiful country. Now, being closer to the people, I had started to feel more of what's behind their handsome faces and beautiful scen-

ery, a shadowy sorrow and sadness that does not surface easily. People live, work, have families—try to continue "normal" life, no matter how heavy the emotional "back-pack" they drag around.

The retreat started; twenty people crowded into a small dharma room. There was a warm, nice fragrance coming from the surrounding trees. A constant bird's song accompanied our practice. It was the very first retreat in Israel with formal meals. Step by step, the students learned the forms, with laughter and "yuk" faces when the "tea time" came. At the same time, "try mind" and "just do it" appeared strongly..

In the middle of the day interviews began. One student came with "I killed a man"; another with "I poured gasoline on myself and burned my body"; yet another, "I was in the army... now how can I make a change in this world?" The teaching words are the same everywhere in the world: great love and compassion, forgiveness and tolerance, keep a wide mind clear like space. The same words everywhere, but here, because of the suffering, they sounded heavier and seemed to have a more poignant meaning. During the dharma talk one woman with tears

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rolling on her cheeks asked, “Is it possible that IT will end some day?” In that question great doubt and great hope became entangled; everything comes and goes, ends... one has to be patient and strong to let go and return to a loving and compassionate mind, to forgive and be tolerant.

The day the Yong Maeng Jong Jin ended, there was a peace demonstration in Tel Aviv in memory of the assassinated prime minister, Itzhak Rabin. From Yuval’s home we could hear the music and speeches. Heavily armed security and army people walked by us as we sat on a bench having a glass of wine. The security people gave us short but warm smiles, cautious eyes looking for any danger.

The next day I left for home. At the airport, a security guard questioned me for more than an hour. The guard’s eyes were accusing, the words raw and sharp... unforgiving. I did a strong “they are only doing their job” mantra to stay calm and not let any personal anger appear. The questions: “Where do you come from?” “Why are you here?” “What is Zen?” “What is meditation?” “What do you care?” Again a new dimension to the old dharma words appeared. In just three hours I was in the Vienna airport, and a universe away from that world.

Sitting in the Paris Zen Center’s garden a few days later, my heart felt shrunken. I thought, “Oh, how lucky we are,” but at the same time I would like to stay with the Israeli sangha. A few days later I received a letter from one of the participants saying, “Thank you for your teaching and for coming to Israel, when most people just want to run away from it.”

Israel

Blue sky and

Blue mountain

Warm sun and

Warm faces

Red flowers and

Red blood

People bow in repentance and

People bow in anger

Where is the mistake?

Katz!

Outside, in the green trees

Birds are singing


Peace song



Our bowing practice is deeply rooted in the Buddhist tradition. By bowing three times, we embrace the Three Treasures (Buddha, Dharma and Sangha), and endeavor to do three kinds of practice (Sila—Precepts, Samadhi—Meditation, and Prajna—Wisdom). This practice extinguishes the three poisons of desire, anger and ignorance. If we bow fifty-three times, one is bowing respectfully to the fifty-three Buddhas. Bowing one thousand times is to bow with reverence to each of the one thousand Buddhas of the present kalpa. By bowing three thousand times, we show our admiration for each of the one thousand Buddhas in the three great kalpas of the past, the present and the future.

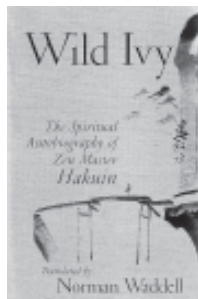
Ordinary people traditionally suffer from 108 different delusions of mind. These defilements of desire torment us when the six roots and the six desires meet each other. When the six roots (senses) and the six dusts (perceptions) unite with each other. When the six roots—eyes, ears, nose, tongue, body, and consciousness—are integrated with the six desires—color, sound, smell, taste and touch realm—then the three kinds of like and dislike mind appear. In other words, when the six roots and the six desires connect, the divided mind of like/dislike, same/different, suffering/happy, and life/death appears. So the number of delusions is thirty-six ($6 \times 6 = 36$). Since these delusions occur in the past, the present, and the future, the total number of delusions is 108 ($36 \times 3 = 108$).

The 108 delusions of humanity expand to eighty-four thousand—a number signifying vastness. Our innumerable delusions, appearing and disappearing moment to moment, control the mind to such an extent that most people cannot avoid suffering. However, while bowing 108 times, our basic attachment to delusion is cut, our minds become one thing, which leads naturally to the infinite capability and vitality of mind. Bowing 108 times is very effective in allowing one to return to Buddha-nature, the primary point before all suffering. ☸



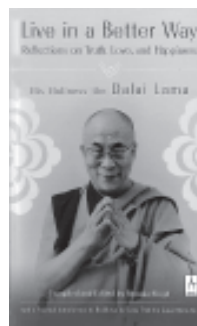
Brief Reviews

Judy Roitman JDPSN



Wild Ivy: The Spiritual Autobiography of Zen Master Hakuin, by Hakuin Ekaku Roshi, translated by Norman Waddell, Shambhala, 2001

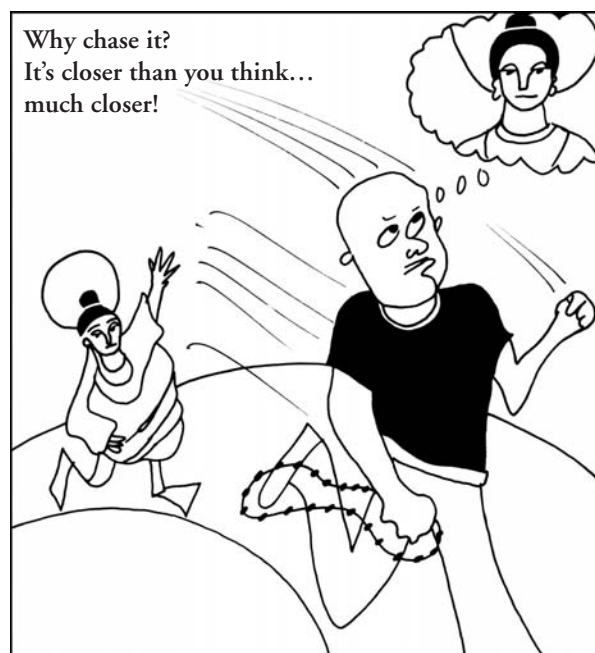
Hakuin was one of the great figures not only of Japanese Zen but Japanese culture, who in his long life revitalized Rinzai Zen in the 18th century, wrote extensively in many genres, and was also a great painter and calligrapher. This book is a memoir of his early years, until the age of thirty or so, interspersed with a number of stories about earlier Zen Masters and contemporary ghosts and demons. The extensive translator's introduction (Waddell is an important translator of Japanese Zen texts) gives us a complete biography of Hakuin in the context of his times. As a young boy, Hakuin became terrified hearing a Pure Land teacher preach about Buddhist hells, and became a monk in a desperate attempt to avoid them. *Wild Ivy* describes a life of hard practice, travel from teacher to teacher, incredible energy and persistence in practice, and attempts to reconcile often contradictory responsibilities to one or another mentor. Interspersed with the autobiography, in fact opening it, are attacks on Bankei's notion of the Unborn, a popular Zen teaching of the time which Hakuin reviled. (It's interesting to note that Waddell has also translated a book of Bankei's writings.) Sometime shortly after his first kensho, or awakening, experience, Hakuin came down with a serious illness—the Rinzai tradition has institutionalized this by calling it “Zen sickness” and expects many of its practitioners to come down with it—which has been diagnosed by modern commentators in various ways, most commonly as severe depression coupled with an anxiety disorder (but diseases such as tuberculosis are also sometimes mentioned). Hakuin was still able to function with this sickness, but he was desperate for a cure, and finally found one in a meditative practice which can be summarized as imagining butter melting down from the top of the head. Don't laugh—after three years of intensively following this practice, Hakuin was cured and his Zen practice deepened, and there is much to be learned from hearing a great teacher talk about his breakdown and subsequent return to health. The last chapter of his book is a description of his illness and cure, and in an appendix Waddell includes Hakuin's extensive description of this meditation practice, written at the request of his students.



Live in a Better Way: Reflections on Truth, Love, and Happiness, by His Holiness the Dalai Lama, Penguin Compass, 1999

A compilation of lectures given in New Delhi, this is a fairly standard book of the Dalai Lama's teachings, given a slightly exotic cast because it is directed at audiences in the homeland of the Buddha (so, for example, there is a question about a Ganesh statue that supposedly drank milk). Everyone wants to be happy, nobody wants to be unhappy, here's how to be happy and how to avoid unhappiness. Cultivate good thoughts, emotions and actions, avoid bad thoughts, emotions and actions. Bad stuff comes from ignorance, good stuff comes from... at this point the talks diverge markedly from each other. Some of them stay on the level of clear and at some points perhaps oversimplified (but the Dalai Lama knows his audience) exposition of basic Buddhist teaching, but others go into fairly technical discussions of subtle points of doctrine found in the sutras and in debates between various schools of Buddhism (e.g., “The prominent followers of the Madhyamika refute the presentation of the mind-only school saying that if you do not accept the existence of the external phenomena, you cannot accept the existence of the mind as well.” p. 166-167). The question and answer sessions after the talks exhibit a wide range of styles of responses, from discursive lecturing to honest references to his own life to flashes of humor, e.g. (p. 86) “Q: If we are all human beings, what is the difference between you and me? A: I think there is a great difference. You are you and I am me!” A good example of expedient means in action. ☸

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by Tan Gong Sunim and Chris Morgan

Book Review

Algernon D'Amassa



First You Shave Your Head, by Geri Larkin, Celestial Arts, 2002

Regarding the teacher-student relationship, Zen Master Seung Sahn has told us more than once, “First you must kill your parents; then, you must kill Buddha; and then, you must kill me.”

Author Geri Larkin is a dharma teacher under a different Korean teacher, Samu Sunim. Her first two collections of dharma talks (*Stumbling Towards Enlightenment* and *Tap Dancing in Zen*) are inspirational. These two books are completely heartfelt, utterly accessible, and entertaining for a general reader. She is a single mom in Michigan who is also a serious student of Zen, such that when her teacher tells her she must shave her head for a pilgrimage in Korea, she does it—but she prepares herself by consulting fashion magazines. No pretentious, other-worldly Zen here.

This travelogue, in which Larkin and an American dharma sister visit Korean temples under the severe gaze of their teacher, is filled with humor, but it is not *Ally McBeal-goes-to-Asia*: it is a plunge into the unknown. Korea is still very much another world from our own, and all of the confidence Larkin had accumulated on her home turf

is quickly stripped away by the weather, the rough terrain, the austerities of the trip, and the harsh, often incomprehensible behavior of her teacher.

She likens the process of beating a shirt clean. She is left not even with humility—*everything* is taken away and reduced to “don’t-know” mind:

The longer and more arduous the trip, the more your heart has a chance to open up until finally, in a moment of utter exhaustion, you realize that’s all of you that is left—the heart part. Your mind has disappeared—the one that judges and gets mad and worries and thinks and fantasizes. Instead you are in love with your life, whatever it is. And the whole world is your family with the earth playing the lead role as universal nest, one you are thrilled to share with all takers. I almost forgot. You’ll also lose ten pounds without even trying.

But holding on to that isn’t it, either. The most wonderful thing this book offers (aside from some choice anecdotes, such as when an elderly monk demonstrates the full versatility of a soccer ball as a home exercise machine) is an open-hearted account of a sincere student finding real faith in her own practice, getting it by losing it completely, and then giving every ounce of the merit away. ☸

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In 1998, the Kwan Um School of Zen established a special fund to help support practice at our Zen Centers in Eastern Europe. The advisory committee for this fund is Zen Master Dae Kwang, Chong An Sunim JDPS, Andrzej Stec JDPSN, and Tadeusz Szykowski. The goals of the fund include capital improvements for needy Zen Centers; paying for teacher travel to Zen Centers which otherwise could not afford to have teachers visit; and helping students participate in retreats. Over the last five years almost \$10,000 has been disbursed, including assistance for the current construction of new retreat centers in Prague and Gdansk. Contributions are tax-deductible for Americans when sent to the Kwan Um School of Zen, 99 Pound Road, Cumberland RI 02864. Thank you for your generous support!



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YONG MAENG JONG JIN with Darek Gorzewski, JDPSN

Wednesday, May 19—Friday, May 21, 2004

A traditional YMJJ retreat will set the stage for the 2004 West Coast Sangha Weekend. Join in practice with Zen students from throughout North America for three days of focused effort.

Details on the weekend and retreat will become available in 2004.



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鷲
山
國
際
禪
院
無
上
寺

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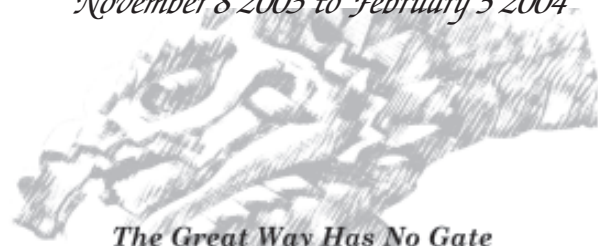


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Winter Kyol Che Mu Sang Sa

November 8 2003 to February 5 2004



*The Great Way Has No Gate
The Tongue Has No Bone
Spring Comes Everywhere
Willow Is Green, Flower Is Red*

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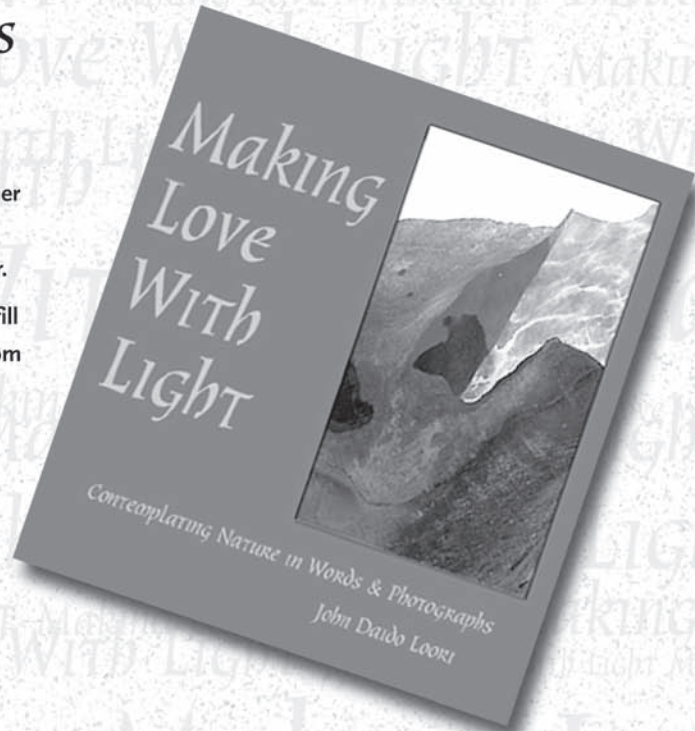
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