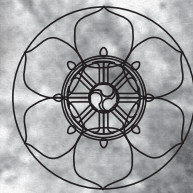


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Primary Point
 99 Pound Road,
 Cumberland RI 02864-2726 U.S.A.
 Telephone 401/658-1476
 www.kwanumzen.org
 ppp@kwanumzen.org
 online archives:
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The Kwan Um School of Zen supports the worldwide teaching schedule of the Zen Masters and Ji Do Poep Sas, assists the member Zen centers and groups in their growth, issues publications on contemporary Zen practice, and supports dialogue among religions. If you would like to become a member of the School and receive *Primary Point*, see page 31. The circulation is 2,800 copies.

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

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Founding Teacher
 Zen Master Seung Sahn

School Zen Master
 Zen Master Soeng Hyang

Editor-in-Chief
 Ken Kessel JDPSN

Editor for Europe
 Zen Master Ji Kwang

Editor for Asia
 Kathy Park

Managing Editor
 Tamarind Jordan

Managing Editor for Europe
 Eduardo del Valle Pérez

Book Review Editor
 Judy Roitman JDPSN

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Cover: Zen Master Man Gong (center) with a very young Won Dam Sunim (far right), who subsequently became the abbot and later resident master of Su Dok Sa Temple, and several nuns.

Sayings of Zen Master Kyong Ho

Zen Master Kyong Ho (1849–1912) was the great-grandteacher of Zen Master Seung Sahn.



Kwan Um School of Zen Archives

1. Don't wish for perfect health. In perfect health there is greed and wanting. So an ancient said, "Make good medicine from the suffering of sickness."
2. Don't hope for a life without problems. An easy life results in a judgmental and lazy mind. So an ancient once said, "Accept the anxieties and difficulties of this life."
3. Don't expect your practice to be always clear of obstacles. Without hindrances the mind that seeks enlightenment may be burnt out. So an ancient once said, "Attain deliverance in disturbances."
4. Don't expect to practice hard and not experience the weird. Hard practice that evades the unknown makes for a weak commitment. So an ancient once said, "Help hard practice by befriending every demon."

5. Don't expect to finish doing something easily. If you happen to acquire something easily the will is made weaker. So an ancient once said, "Try again and again to complete what you are doing."
6. Make friends but don't expect any benefit for yourself. Friendship only for oneself harms trust. So an ancient once said, "Have an enduring friendship with purity in heart."
7. Don't expect others to follow your direction. When it happens that others go along with you, it results in pride. So an ancient once said, "Use your will to bring peace between people."
8. Expect no reward for an act of charity. Expecting something in return leads to a scheming mind. So an ancient once said, "Throw false spirituality away like a pair of old shoes."
9. Don't seek profit over and above what your work is worth. Acquiring false profit makes a fool (of oneself). So an ancient once said, "Be rich in honesty."
10. Don't try to make clarity of mind with severe practice. Every mind comes to hate severity, and where is clarity in mortification? So an ancient once said, "Clear a passageway through severe practice."
11. Be equal to every hindrance. Buddha attained Supreme Enlightenment without hindrance. Seekers after truth are schooled in adversity. When they are confronted by a hindrance, they can't be overcome. Then, cutting free, their treasure is great.

Reprinted from *Thousand Peaks: Korean Zen—Tradition and Teachers* by Mu Soeng (revised edition; Cumberland, RI: Primary Point Press, 1991).

Editor's note: We would like to thank Oleg Šuk JDPSN, for agreeing to provide commentary on this article.

New Year's Eve is over. I suppose you also got many e-mails and messages with many greetings wishing you happiness, health, welfare and effort in your practice. And of course I sent many such greetings myself.

On this occasion of wishing each other the best, it is useful to remember the advice of our great-grandteacher, Zen Master Kyong Ho, about achievements and nonattachment to achievements.

Present trendy spiritual ways are competing with various techniques of visualization for health and welfare, enlightenment and well-being. The cult of health, we can see, grew into the cult of the body—a new kind of religion. There are books on how to make friends or how to become rich easily. By buying such a book and with a bit of imagination we get a feeling that enlightenment falls by itself into our lap. But all of these Christmas-present techniques we got under the Christmas tree have very strong wanting mind: Give me, give me, give me. I want more and more.

Our teacher's advice warns us that beyond such apparently positive wishes lies caginess, avarice and a lazy mind. Kyong Ho uncovers attachment, expectation and desire—everything that hinders our practice. This advice may seem restrictive, but actually it is compassionate advice that protects us and our co-practitioners from disappointment, pain and difficulties.

At the same time, he teaches us that we can practice with the inherent obstacles from which we try to run. We need to recycle them in order to get greater strength and inspiration, as they are essential parts of our reality and lives. Only then will we see that the understanding of Buddha nature is right here and now, not somewhere far away where we'll be rich, happy, beautiful and without problems.

That reminds me of an anecdote about an ugly man named Michal. He kind of looked like a crippled monster with black teeth, if

any, and no hair. Because of that, he was very sad and lonely. No friends or wife. He didn't go to work and was poor. He was simply a walking wreck without a future.

One day he won a lottery and became very rich. He underwent a couple of plastic surgeries, got his bones straightened, fixed his teeth. He became a completely new man. With his new self he went to the city. Each woman looked back as he went by. He was very irresistible and handsome, dressed in the best clothes. And so he smiled back and returned the looks, a fascinating man walking through the city. However because of this he wasn't careful enough and suddenly a bus ran him over and killed him.

He woke up in heaven. When he realized what had happened he ran to complain to God. "Oh God, why have you done this to me? I could now have such a beautiful life on Earth!" God looked at him for some time and couldn't understand what he was talking about. Then he asked him what his name was. The man replied: "Michal." And God said sadly: "Oh, I'm sorry. I didn't recognize you at all. You look completely different . . ."

So don't forget that getting something easily and quickly is only one side of the coin. The other side is difficult and long. Having a life without problems is only one half of a life with problems. That seeking gain from your friends means to forego loyalty. That beyond quick results hides a lazy mind, and beyond seeking reward for donations hides our poverty and fear. As Zen Master Seung Sahn used to say, do not create here and there, just do it. Just help this world. As an ancient text says: "Even if the sun rises in the west, the bodhisattva always knows his right job."

Whether or not it is the end of the world, keep your correct situation and your correct relationship with that situation. Then only ten thousand years, "Happy New Year." ♦

Revitalizing Zen: Kwan Yin Chan Lin Opening Ceremony

The following three talks were given at the Opening Ceremony for Kwan Lin Chan Lin Zen Meditation Centre in Singapore, on September 25, 2012.

This One-Doing

Tangen Roshi-sama

Please, please see it: everything is alive. Great, great alive. This is the happiness of all happiness. And this Now Here can never be destroyed. The light of your eternal life is shining brightly now. What joy there is in this radiance! Please take care of yourself, your shining Buddha-self. Become ever more able to appreciate your Buddha-self. That is not to say be arrogant. There is no one anywhere to feel small, and no one to be made small. There is no one anywhere who should feel superior, and no one toward whom you should feel superior. Who are you to feel

vain and proud when your very source is All Being? You are supported, you are nurtured, and you are guarded by All Being. The universe is One, Together, *thanks to All Being*. This one breath is breathed always One, always together, so very close, *thanks to All Being*. Please never forsake the limitless treasure which is You Yourself. Simply be in touch; simply do not look away. Grasp nothing. Hold nothing. There is just Now and Here— fresh and new and alive. Just Now. Just do your practice enveloped in all good grace.

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Photo: Courtesy of Bukkoku-ji temple

Daisetsu Tangen Roshi-sama (1924–) is the Dharma successor of Daiun Sogaku Roshi (1871–1961), the Zen monk known for combining Rinzaï koan teaching with Soto Zen. During World War II, before he met his master, Roshi-sama was trained as a kamikaze pilot, but the war ended just when he was about to fly. Grieving that he could not give his life to save his country, he met his teacher Daiun Roshi, who told him, “You yourself, you are still alive, so that you can forever and ever follow the path of giving. You can steadily, ever, ever more, give your life to save others, and that even with the death of this body, the genuine life continues.” He practiced with single-minded conviction and effort, until one day he went to dokusan (interview) with his master, Daiun Roshi, and passed all the koans with ease. In 1955 he became the abbot of Bukkoku-ji temple and has been teaching students for more than fifty years.



Photo: Ray Chua

Go Drink Tea

Zen Master Dae Kwan

In this world and in our life, many things are in duality: negative and positive, good and bad. When we hear something negative, we would probably feel bad. At that moment, our life is not on the middle path.

Learning Zen gives us a way out; to be free from good and bad, free from our emotions. It leads us back to the middle path. Zen Master Seung Sahn often said, “Our original state is like a mirror. When red appears, it reflects red, when white appears, it reflects white. Our practice is like a rehearsal, training ourselves to become like a mirror.”

When hearing others’ speech, only reflect. This means to accept reality. Salt is salty, sugar is sweet. This is truth. When someone says something irritating, perhaps you could invite him to have a cup of tea. In many kong-ans, when someone said something to Zen Master Joju, he only answered, “Go drink tea.”

When we first learn kong-ans, it feels like we are using a formula or giving random answers. Even when we do give the correct answer, we lack confidence in our answer. We tend to think that as long as we have passed, it’s all



Photo: Ray Chua

right; however, we do not appreciate this process. I encourage everyone to experience kong-an practice, as it is like a continuous rehearsal of life. During times of difficulty and karma, you will then know how to apply the different kong-ans to resolve your problems.

I encourage everybody to have confidence in kong-an practice. In every moment, whenever emotions arise, just bring up the question, “What is it?” At the moment when we have no answer, we call this cutting off thinking, or don’t know. Thus we return to the middle path and are no longer slaves to our emotions. In our life, we should rehearse continuously until nothing can bother us. Then you become free. At this point, you are the master.

I would like to congratulate and thank Gye Mun Sunim (Ven. Chi Boon) for his perseverance and clear direction in founding Kwan Yin Chan Lin, offering us a place to return to the middle path, to practice the dharma and attain our true nature so that we can repay our country, our parents, our teachers and all beings. Gye Mun Sunim, thank you for your effort. You are great! ♦

Desert Paramita

Zen Master Wu Kwang

This dharma talk was given at the opening ceremony for Zen Center of Las Vegas on May 5, 2012.

[Raises the Zen stick over his head.]

Do you see this?

[Raises the Zen stick over his head, then hits the table with the stick.]

Do you hear this?

If you see and hear this, then your mind and senses are clear and open. But if you attach to the idea of “open,” then closed has already appeared.

During the golden age of Zen in China, Zen Master Hyeon Sa had a teaching about three kinds of sick people. Addressing the assembly, he would say, “The adepts of old all speak of relating to things for all people.” (This means manifesting a selfless attitude in guiding and aiding people.) “Suppose they would unexpectedly encounter three kinds of sick people. With a blind person, if they raised the Zen stick, he or she wouldn’t be able to see it. A deaf person wouldn’t be able to hear the samadhi of words. And with a mute person, if you asked them to speak, they couldn’t speak. So how could they guide these people? If they couldn’t, then the buddhadharma has no miraculous effect.”

Now it’s very important that the buddhadharma have miraculous effect. Otherwise how could this Zen center appear in Las Vegas? I can’t tell you how many times over the years people have said to me with incredulity, “You people have a Zen center in Las Vegas?” It’s as if a flower had bloomed in the desert. When Hyeon Sa calls blindness, deafness and muteness “three sicknesses,” that’s somewhat surprising because we wouldn’t ordinarily think of these as sicknesses. Disabilities, perhaps, but not sicknesses. So what is he getting at? And of course, you don’t have to be deaf to be unable to listen, and you don’t have to be mute to be unable to communicate.

A monk, having heard this teaching of the three sicknesses, went to Zen Master Un Mun and asked for clarification. Un Mun said, “Bow.” As the monk was coming up from the prostration, Un Mun poked at him with his Zen stick. The monk, seeing the stick approaching, drew back. Un Mun said, “You’re not blind.” Then Un Mun said, “Come closer.” Hearing this, the monk approached. Un Mun said, “You’re not deaf.” Then Un Mun asked, “Do you understand?” The monk said, “No, I don’t understand.” (We might say,



Photo: Chiemi McGhie

now he’s getting somewhere. He’s touched the mind of don’t know, don’t understand!) As the monk said, “No I don’t,” Un Mun retorted, “You’re not mute!” At this the monk attained. If you perceive this monk’s attainment, then you understand “Open.”

Two:

[Hits the table with the stick.]

No open, no closed! Like a black lacquer bowl—completely dark and empty. At this point, everything is equal—everything was “it.” But what is “it”?

Zen Master Seung Sahn would sometimes say, “Within emptiness, ‘mystic.’” Fleshing out his English we might say, “Here within emptiness resides the mystic potential for many good things,” but I like his “within emptiness, ‘mystic’” better.

Zen Master Seung Sahn’s great grand teacher Kyong Ho Sunim once attended a commencement ceremony at a sutra temple for young monks. This kind of temple emphasized study of Buddhist scriptures and philosophy rather than meditation. The abbot addressed the young monks: “You all must study hard, learn Buddhism and become like big trees from which temples are built and like big bowls able to hold many good things. A sutra says: water becomes round or square according to the container it is put in. Likewise people become good or bad according to the friends they keep. So always keep the Buddha in mind and keep good company. Then you will become like great trees and contain-

ers of dharma.”

Next Kyong Ho Sunim was invited to speak. Kyong Ho said, “You are all monks and monks should be free from petty desires. Wanting to become a great tree or big bowl will hinder you from becoming a true teacher. Big trees have big uses; small trees have small uses. Good and bad bowls can each be used in their own way. Keep both good and bad friends. Nothing is to be discarded. This is true Buddhism. My only wish is that you don’t cling to conceptual thinking.”

Three:

[Hits the table with the stick.]

Open is just open. Closed is just closed. Sun shines, the world is bright and open.

Cloudy time, not bright and open. If your preferences don’t cloud your mind, then just now, how is it? “KATZ!”

Today is the grand opening ceremony of the new Las Vegas Zen Center. Enjoy yourself a lot!

Thank you all for coming today and also thanks to the Zen center for asking me to give this talk. The first time I came to the Las Vegas Zen Center was probably more than ten years ago. At that time the Zen center was in a storefront in one of your many strip malls and was not very large. It reminded me of our Zen center in New York, which is also not very large. There were no bedrooms, so during the retreat everyone slept on the floor and I was housed in a “very modest” motel next door. The Zen center had a kitchen and toilet but no shower, so some people came next door to my room to use the shower during free time.

Zen Master Seung Sahn had a maxim that he would often teach with: “A bad situation is a good situation, and a good situation is a bad situation.”

Now this wonderful practice place has appeared through the hard work and generosity of many, and its appeal should be used to help many people come to the practice of the Zen way. But we always need to keep in mind what is the true practice place.

A monk asked Zen Master Joju, “What is the practice hall?” Joju said, “From the practice hall you have come. To the practice hall you will go. Everything everywhere is the practice hall. *There is no other place.*” When the monk asks, “What is the practice hall,” he is referencing something from one of the sutras, and Joju’s answer encapsulates the teaching from the sutra. The sutra is the Vimalakirti Sutra, which was prized by the Zen sect in China. The main character in the sutra is not the Buddha, but a layman named Vimalakirti, who was a wealthy merchant, and also a great practitioner and bodhisattva, considered to be almost on the level of the Buddha himself. The sutra contains dialogues between Vimalakirti and many of the Buddha’s disciples and many of the bodhisattvas. In these dialogues Vimalakirti usually



Photo: Chiemi McGhie

spots where someone is attached to some idea or concept or is clinging to orthodoxy, and he challenges their perspective. The particular dialogue being referenced by the monk and Joju is between Vimalakirti and a young bodhisattva named Shining Adornment. They meet at the gate of the city and Shining Adornment asks, “Layman, where are you coming from?”

“I’m coming from the place of practice [the practice place].”

“The place of practice—where is that? [What sort of place is the practice hall?]”

Vimalakirti said, “Mind itself is the practice hall.”

An upright mind is the place of practice. A deeply searching mind is the place of practice. The mind that aspires to clarity and wisdom is the place of practice.

Generosity of giving is the place of practice, because it hopes for no reward. Observance of the precepts is the place of practice. Patience or forbearance is the place of practice, for it enables the mind to be free of obstruction. Zeal and energy are the place of practice because they forestall laziness.

Meditation is the place of practice, because it makes the mind tame and gentle. Wisdom is the place of practice, because it sees all things as they are.

“Loving-kindness, compassion, joy and equanimity are the place of practice.” Usually in these dialogues Vimalakirti starts with a familiar perspective, but gradually becomes more radical. So he continues, “Earthly desires are the place of practice, for through *them* we know the nature of suchness. Living beings are the place of practice, for through them we know that there is no ego. All phenomena are the place of practice, for through them we know the emptiness of all phenomena. If bodhisattvas apply themselves, then everything they do, every lifting of a foot, every placing of a foot becomes coming from the place of practice.”

When Lin Chi lived in Zen Master Huang Po’s monastery, he frequently would plant pine trees around the temple. One day Huang Po asked him, “What is the reason for planting so many pine trees on this remote mountain?” Lin Chi said, “I do so first to improve the view from this mountain, and second, to provide beacons for future generations.” Now certainly this wonderful Zen center has improved the Las Vegas view—better than the grand hotels and casinos—and hopefully it will be a beacon for future generations of practitioners to come and continue the tradition.

I have one last practice place story. Someone once asked Trungpa Rinpoche, “What is the difference between Zen Buddhism and Tibetan Buddhism.” Trungpa said, “Zen is black and white; Tibetan Buddhism is like Technicolor.” I took this to mean that Zen emphasizes the “ordinary” while Tantra has many colorful practices such as visualization of unusual-looking deities, recitation of mystic formulas and specific practices for after death experiences. But there are always exceptions. So here is an unusual Zen story, a Technicolor story.

The monk Wu Cho was making a pilgrimage to the holy site of Manjushri, the bodhisattva of wisdom, on Mount Wutai. As he climbed the mountain, he came to a rough area and began to think that he might have lost the way. It was late afternoon. Suddenly he came upon a small temple, and the abbot invited him to spend the night. As they sat and talked, the abbot asked, “Where are you coming from?”

“From the south,” said Wu Cho.

“How is practice going on in the south?” the abbot asked.

Wu Cho said, “In this age of decline, not many monks keep the precepts.”

“How many in the assemblies?” asked the abbot.

“Some three hundred, some five hundred.”

Now from the Zen standpoint, Wu Cho has completely missed the point of the abbot’s questions. “How is the buddhadharma practiced in the south?” means how is your practice? Show me the veracity of your practice here and now. “How many in the assemblies” means your own unified being. The one is the many; the many the one. But Wu Cho only engages in shoptalk.

Then Wu Cho asked the abbot, “How is the practice of buddhadharma hereabouts?” The abbot said, “Ordinary people and sages stay together. Dragons and snakes intermingle.”

Wu Cho looked perplexed, but he persisted. “How many in the assemblies?” The abbot said, “In front three by three; behind three by three.”

Now Wu Cho was even more confused. Then they had tea. As they were drinking, the abbot suddenly held up a crystal bowl and asked, “Do they also have this in the south?”

Wu Cho didn’t know how to answer so he said, “No!”

“Then what do you drink tea with?” Now *crystal bowl* means pure and clear mind. If you are going to really taste the tea, your mind needs to be pure and clear.

Then they retired for the night. In the morning the abbot’s attendant escorted Wu Cho to the temple gate. Wu Cho asked, “Last night he said ‘in front three three, behind three three.’ How many is that?”

Suddenly the attendant yelled out “Oh Monk!”

“Yes.”

“How many is that?”

Now Wu Cho was really bewildered. He asked, “What is this temple?” The attendant pointed behind the statue of Vajrasattva. Wu Cho turned his head to look, but when he turned his head back, the attendant and the temple had both disappeared and there was only an open clearing. Then Wu Cho realized that the abbot had been Manjushri himself and that all this was illusory. Later Wu Cho served as rice cook at the temple on Mount Wutai. Sometimes Manjushri would appear above the rice pot. Wu Cho would immediately take the big wooden spoon and hit him and he would disappear.

So, if your mind begins to become too attached to the beautiful form of this practice place, you must hit it with a wooden spoon. Then we will be able to use the beauty and serenity of this place to help many people.

[Hits the table three times with the Zen stick.]

The dharma speech is now closed, but the Las Vegas Zen Center is completely open. Thank you for listening. ♦



Photo: Paul Dickman

See True Nature, Strong Center, Clear Direction

Zen Master Dae Bong

From a congratulatory talk at the inka ceremony for Hye Tong Sunim on September 2, 2012.

Thank you everyone, I hope that's interesting. This is the first time with our Korean family that we have this kind of inka ceremony, so I think people are a little shy. I hope that next time we won't be so shy.

But Hye Tong Sunim has energy. Some other people, not so much energy. But if you practice hard, you'll get energy. Then, a question will appear. Only strong practice is not enough. But, even if we have a good mind, a correct mind, if we're not strong then we can't do much in this world. So I hope everybody practices strongly so that a question appears, then someday, inka, or Zen master. Why not? Otherwise, as somebody said, if you don't control your own life, somebody will control it for you. So it depends on what you want.

In our school, Zen Master Seung Sahn made it clear that inka and transmission are different. Inka means you see your nature, and your kong-an practice isn't too bad. Maybe not complete, but very good. So we realize our true nature. Everybody has that experience a little bit, but with much practice, then your ability with kong-ans grows up. So that means your wisdom grows up. Then, specifically

in our school, you must pass twelve gates. But you must be able to handle many other kong-ans very well, from the 1,700 traditional kong-ans. That's the first point.

Second, you must have a strong center. Even if you understand something, even if you have some kind of wisdom, if your center is not strong, then you are easy to knock over. Then you cannot accomplish much in this life.

Third, you must have a clear life direction. If you are always jumping around and changing your mind, then your direction is not straight, not clear.

So, first we check those three things. Then some Zen master—your guiding teacher—sees your progress: “Ah, this person is getting very good.” Then we make a committee—it's not just one person's decision. In our school, this committee must include three Zen masters and two Ji Do Poep Sas, all who have been teaching more than five years. And each of them must accept this person's attainment. So this candidate must go to each of the people on this committee—Zen masters and Ji Do Poep Sas—and be tested. If his or her kong-an practice is good, then this ceremony is possible.

But this ceremony is also a final check for becoming a Ji Do Poep Sa. If everybody comes here and many of them hit this candidate, and the candidate makes more than three big mistakes, then receiving inka is not possible—we don't even get to this part of the ceremony. In that case, more practicing is necessary. So, we have this public test. In the old days, even if they had a private transmission, they always tested in public.

Then, if the candidate passes the test, they become a Ji Do Poep Sa. *Ji Do* means “show the way”—show the way of dharma. *Poep Sa* means “dharma teacher.” Then this person gets more training—always in



Photo: Kateřina Grofová

[1]

teaching situations—with one of the Zen masters in our school. They start giving interviews to students, always accompanied by a Zen master. In this way the new Ji Do Poep Sa gains more and more experience, until eventually they can teach on their own.

Then, practice, practice, teaching, teaching, for three years. Then it's necessary to go visit Zen masters from our side out school, and these other Zen masters check the person's understanding. Then, the candidate returns and reports—to three Zen masters in our school—on how the conversation went. “I said this, this Zen master said that. Then I said this, then that.” The three Zen masters check that. If the Ji Do Poep Sa visits three different Zen masters in other schools, and then three Zen masters in our school approve of the interaction was clear, then transmission is possible.

That's after three years. The fourth year you spend traveling, testing yourself. Then, two more years teaching. Then, after six years, everybody says, “Oh, this Ji Do Poep Sa is a very good teacher.” At that point, since three Zen masters have already given their approval, then the Ji Do Poep Sa gets transmission and becomes a Zen master. At that time, there is another ceremony like this, but with only five or maybe seven questions. This time, for the inka ceremony, there are 30 questions, and 30 people can check this new teacher. But on receiving transmission, there are only five or so, because they've already had much dharma combat over six years. After that ceremony, the person becomes a Zen master, a Soen Sa Nim, in our school.

Traditionally, when one person became a Zen master, they were then in complete charge of their own school. But in our school, all the teachers—Ji Do Poep Sas and Zen masters together in the Americas, Europe, and Asia—they all agree to follow the school's teaching and practice style. In this way we keep our practice direction clear, and we keep our form and teaching clear, and we help all students. This style is broad, and sometimes can change according to the situation. But the teachers' group makes those decisions, not one individual.

So it's an interesting style of organization. I asked Zen Master Seung Sahn once, “Why make a teachers' group?” Then he said, “One man on top cannot see his karma.” So only one person at the top—maybe Buddha, no problem—but sometimes, even some person who has got enlightenment, sometimes they make some mistake, and there's a big problem. But with the

teachers' group, it's easy. Other teachers can show you your mistake. Then simply, “Oh, OK.” So, our school has many checks and balances.

Hye Tong Sunim started at Hwa Gye Sa Temple. At that time, he was in the Korean sangha, but practicing with Western people sometimes, and he knew Seung Sahn Sunim. Sometimes he would have interviews with Seung Sahn Sunim. Then, finally, he went through Korean monastic training, and visited many Korean *soen bangs* (Zen halls). Then he returned to the Kwan Um School style and lived here at Mu Sang Sa Temple for four years. Then he also went to Providence Zen Center and lived in a Western situation, becoming head monk over there. That's difficult, because they are such different cultures. All foreign sunims here can tell you—if you live in a different culture, then many things hit you. Then, automatically, you get don't-know mind. If you hold your opinion, nobody cares—it's just not possible. So, your mind grows, grows, grows. So, Hye Tong Sunim practiced in America, had responsibility there, and also visited our centers in Europe. So his experience is very unusual. All very good. Even the dharma combat today, both English and Korean—both are OK. Not even any translation!

This is a good opportunity for us. In the future, I hope you go sometime, visit Hye Tong Sunim, and see his dharma also growing. Then, we can help Buddhism in Korea, international Buddhism, and the whole world. ♦



Photo: Kateřina Grofová

INKA CEREMONY FOR

Hye Tong Sunim

September 2, 2012, at Mu Sang Sa Temple,
South Korea

1.

[In Korean]

Question: Hello. Congratulations.

Hye Tong Sunim: Thank you.

Q: I have a good family and my job is also quite good. But to be honest, I'm not sure what to do for my life in the future. Can you give me any advice?

HTSN: What are you doing now?

Q: I'm a scientist in a research center and . . .

HTSN: No, what are you doing right now?

Q: [Surprised, then slowly] Sitting and talking with you . . .

HTSN: Live in that way!

Q: Ohhh . . . Thank you very much!

2.

Question: Good afternoon, Sunim.

Hye Tong Sunim: Good afternoon.

Q: Congratulations.

HTSN: Thank you.

Q: One man and one woman are walking in the field, they stop and they see a hole in the ground. And they see something that is coming up from the hole. Then, he says, "Oh, it's the head of a snake." And she says, "No, it's a seed." Who is right? He or she? They both are not right. What is coming out from the hole?

HTSN: You already understand.

Q: [Silence]

HTSN: [Stares at imaginary hole]

Q: [Closed eyes and silence]

HTSN: Not enough?

Q: [Keeps closed eyes and silence]

[Laughter]

HTSN: Go back to your hole!

[Laughter and applause]

3.

Zen Master Dae Jin: Good afternoon.

Hye Tong Sunim: Good afternoon.

ZMDJ: I have a question for you.



Photo: Germán Linares

HTSN: Sure.

ZMDJ: So, I have some bad news.

HTSN: What is that?

ZMDJ: Last night, around midnight, all the Buddhas, bodhisattvas, all the patriarchs, they all suddenly fell down, got sick and died. What can you do?

HTSN: You already understand.

ZMDJ: Please tell me.

HTSN: I am so happy to see one that still survived sitting in front of me.

[Laughter]

ZMDJ: Thank you for your teaching!

[Applause]

DHARMA SPEECH

[Raises the Zen stick over his head, then hits the table with the stick]

East is west, west is east.

[13



Photo: Germán Linares

14]

[Raises the Zen stick over his head, then hits the table with the stick]

Originally, no east, no west.

[Raises the Zen stick over his head, then hits the table with the stick]

East is just east. West is just west.

So three statements. Which of them matches your dharma?

KATZ!

In the morning, the sun rises in the east. In the evening, the sun sets in the west.

Good afternoon. It's nice to see all of you here in the beautiful Mu Sang Sa dharma room. It's a great honor for me to give an inka speech.

I just would like to share two short stories. Here is one.

During the Shilla kingdom in ancient Korea, there was a monk whose name was Hye Tong, which is the same name as mine. Actually I found this in some encyclopedia, because I was wondering if there was anybody in Buddhist history who had the same dharma name as mine. I was a little bored at that time. So I tried to find it and there was one in the Shilla kingdom, Hye Tong. So that's actually how I came to know this story, because it touched me a lot, even though we're not exactly the same: while our names are pronounced the same, they are written with different Chinese characters.

One day, when Hye Tong was a layman before becoming a monk, he went to the lake shore on the edge of his

village and there he saw an otter. This animal is small—less than a meter long—with a round, small face. It can also swim well in the stream. So he saw it on the shore, and as soon as he saw it, suddenly he felt hungry. So he did what you are thinking of now: he just caught it, killed it, and now he had a barbecue party for himself. Then he just left.

A few days later, for some reason, he came back to the shore, and he remembered what he had done, and he was curious if it was still there. So he went to that spot, and there were the ashes from the bonfire he had made. But he found one other interesting thing: the bones that he had thrown away after he ate all the flesh had just disappeared. So he was wondering where they could go. He looked around in the sand and eventually found the outlines of where the bones had been. In addition, there was a small trail of blood. So he just followed this blood trail and it led him into the forest nearby. It ended in front of what looked like some animal's hole. And he heard some little animal sounds coming from the hole. He leaned toward the hole and looked into it. There were six baby otters crying, and they were so young they had not even opened their eyes. And looking further, he was startled at the sight of something else. Guess what there was? There were the bones he was looking for, an otter skeleton, and it was hugging the baby otters. So even after she died, this mother otter couldn't forget her babies.

And then, a few days later, Hye Tong left home and became a monk. So what this story says to us is, even animals have it. Have what? The one thing beyond



Photo: Germán Linares

life and death. The one thing which is beyond life and death.

And here's the second story. And this is my experience.

So in the early days of Mu Sang Sa, as Zen Master Dae Bong mentioned, I had lived here for a while. At that time, we only had this one building. We had no kitchen. Sometimes, rarely, Zen Master Seung Sahn would visit here. Back then, when he would visit we'd all get together, having tea, and he told us to ask him any kind of question. And I had actually one question, which I had always wanted to ask him.

When I was a haeng-ja, I had read a book about Zen Master Ko Bong, who was Zen Master Seung Sahn's teacher. In that book, when Ko Bong was giving dharma transmission to Seung Sahn, he told him, "You and I, let's meet again, five hundred years later." So I was wondering what it could really mean. Actually, I didn't like that speech because even though I admired both of them, it sounded a little like some kind of prediction or even some fortune-telling. [Buddha said monks and nuns should not do fortune-telling. —Ed.] So I didn't really like that speech and I wanted to ask Zen Master Seung Sahn what it meant. So here was a good chance. In that tea room, I think there were about 11 or 12 students, including some Zen masters and teachers who were Zen Master Seung Sahn's students. I asked him, "Sunim, I read this in a book about Ko Bong Sunim, that when he was giving you dharma transmission, he told you, 'You and I, let's meet again five hundred years later.' So, what does it mean?" And Zen Master Seung Sahn just stared into my eyes for a second, and immediately answered, "That means, he and I will meet five hundred years later." And I was completely stuck. Actually, I had prepared one or two more questions, so that if he answered one way, I'd hit that way, and so on. But when I heard this, I couldn't do anything. And then he just kept staring into my eyes, and he pointed

his finger at me and almost shouted, "Never, ever, have doubt at all!"

So when your direction is clear, it is already beyond all the opposites. Life and death, possible or impossible, good or bad, right or wrong—it's already beyond all the opposites. And what kind of direction you have is also important. What do you think about the mother otter, the skeleton that walked to its babies, bleeding, even after it had been killed—can it be true? Is it possible? Or is it impossible? Zen Master Ko Bong and Zen Master Seung Sahn will meet again five hundred years later. And they seemed to know already, before they had died. Would it come true? Is it possible? Or

is it impossible?

Sentient beings are already numberless, they cannot be counted. Is it possible to save them all from the suffering? When your direction is clear, actually it doesn't matter that your wish or hope is going to come true or not. It's not about success or failure. It's not about truth or untruth. It's not about coming true or not coming true. It just keeps going on straight, for infinite time. Which means, actually, you're the direction, the direction itself is you. We just try, try for ten thousand years, for life after life, as Seung Sahn Sunim used to say. So I'm sure that many of us had it, when we just began our practice. Many of us had it when we were just a beginner. Do you still have it?

[Raises the Zen stick over his head, then hits the table with the stick]

When the direction is clear, you will see the sun rises in the east in the morning, and sets in the west in the evening.

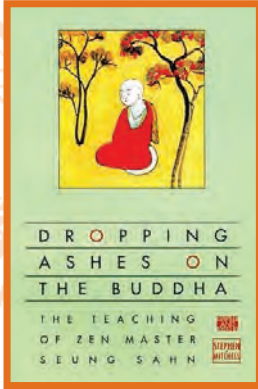
[Raises the Zen stick over his head, then hits the table with the stick]

When the direction is clear, in this dharma room, see in the east, the colorful, strong Hwa Um Seong Jung painting; in the west, the white wall. And, between them, compassionate eastern and western bodhisattvas' faces.

Thank you very much for listening. ◆

Hye Tong Sunim is from Korea. He started practicing Zen Buddhism at Hwa Gye Sa Temple in 1995, and was ordained as a monk in the Chogye Order of Korean Buddhism in 1996 right after graduating from Dong Guk University in Seoul. He has worked and practiced at Hwa Gye Sa, Mu Sang Sa, several Korean Zen monasteries, and Providence Zen Center. He now works and practices in Hwa Gye Sa International Zen Center. In addition, he collaborated on the translation of *The Teachings of Zen Master Man Gong*.

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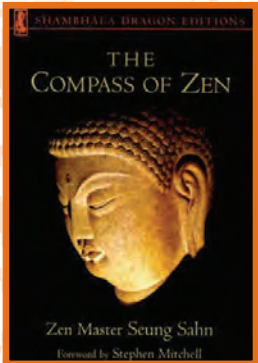
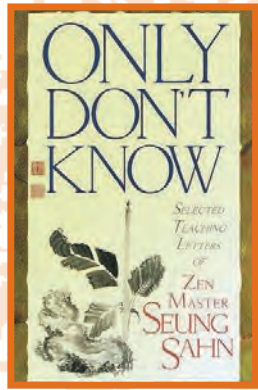
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ZEN IN A WILD COUNTRY SOLO WILDERNESS MEDITATION



Anne Rudloe

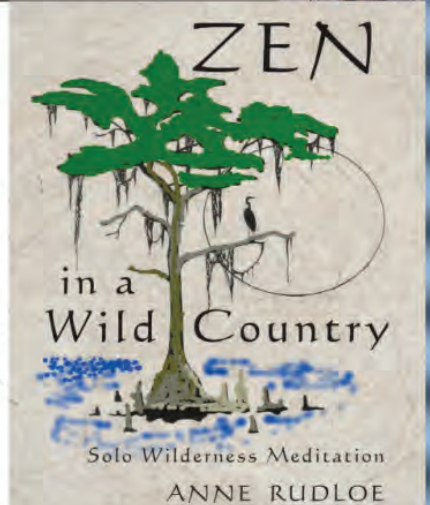
PRAISE FOR Anne's last Zen book, *Butterflies on a Sea Wind: Beginning Zen*

Writing with a haunting beautiful appreciation of the natural world...Rudloe reveals her maturing depth...has merit for anyone on any stage of the Zen path...can also articulate ineffable mysteries with easy grace. Publishers Weekly

ZEN IN A WILD COUNTRY takes the reader deeper into this spiritual path with descriptions of solo wilderness retreats, long monastic retreats and a marine ecologist's Zen of sharks, sea turtles, and starfish that share an ocean practice space.

Anne received Inka, permission to teach Zen, from the Kwan Um School of Zen, and holds a doctorate in Marine Ecology.

Her writing has also appeared in National Geographic Magazine, Smithsonian Magazine and many other national publications.



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Strong Faith and Building a Zen Center

Zen Master Wu Bong

During a working Yong Maeng Jong Jin at Zen Center Berlin

Very often in the Zen tradition, Zen Masters have not made it easy for students to practice with them. Initially the student is presented with some sort of test. One of the most famous Zen stories is that of Hui Ko. Hui Ko visited Bodhidharma and asked to be taught. Bodhidharma ignored Hui Ko for seven days. Hui Ko waited in the snow and it was icy cold. So finally Hui Ko cut his arm off to show his earnestness in wanting to be taught by Bodhidharma. And then Bodhidharma asked Hui Ko: "How may I help you?"

Once there was a young man who was a bit of a dilettante. He would visit different teachers and afterwards criticize them saying: "This teacher is too old and the other teacher is too young, I don't like that teacher's dharma talks and I don't like the last teacher at all." He would try various ways but he always found a fault with something about the different practices. Of course he didn't have any knowledge himself and ended up being a "jack of all trades but master of none."

One day this young man arrived in a temple where an old monk taught and he decided to stay. He was tired of trying so many things and he decided that for once in his life he would stick with something and really give it a chance. Perhaps his reputation had preceded him, because as soon as the old monk took one look at him he exclaimed: "You want to be a student here? Forget it! Go away."

The young man pleaded with the old monk: "Please, I really truly want to be a student here. Please admit me!" However the old monk ignored him. The temples in Japan have a waiting room and the form for asking to be admitted involves the aspiring student to sit in the waiting room until the Zen master lets him or her in. Sometimes according to the different forms, students wait one night or three days and three nights or sometimes seven days and seven nights. During this time the student is not forgotten and is offered a little food.

The aspiring students cannot leave. If they return they have to start all over again.

This temple was not so formalized and there was no waiting room. But the young man decided to wait nonetheless. And after some time the old monk came out and seeing the young man said, "You are still here? What do you want?" The young man replied: "I want to be a student here!" Then the old monk replied, "No! You are not sincere! I don't believe

you! It is just a waste of your time and a waste of my time and a waste of temple resources. Go away! Do something else!"

But the young man would not leave. And after more time had passed, the old monk appeared again: "Oh! You are still here!" The young man replied: "Yes! I really want to do this!" The old monk asked, "Have you seriously decided that this is what you want?" "Yes! I have decided!" replied the young man. "Even if it means you would lose your life to be a student here? Would you do this? Would you give up your life to be a student here?" asked the old monk. "Yes, I would do it!" said the young man.

"OK. Let me ask you something. Is there something in your life that you do well?" asked the old monk. The young man thought for a while. He thought of all the things he could do. But what could he do really well? Then, "Ah, yes. I can play chess rather well." The young man had played chess ever since he was a boy. He was a fairly decent player.

The old monk said: "Good. We will test you now. You will play against one of my monks. If you win you can stay as a student here. If you lose you will never be allowed to enter this temple again. If you do enter you will lose your life. If you still choose to stay in this temple after having lost, then you will give up your life." The young man replied: "I will not leave even if I lose. I will give up my life." The old monk said, "We have agreed, then." It was very serious situation. Also the Zen monk was very serious.

He called one of his attendants. He brought a big sword. He summoned one of his monks who was a chess-playing monk. And he told this monk: "You have been a monk in this temple for many years. You trust me, I trust you. I am going to ask something very difficult of you. You are going to play chess with this young man. If you lose this chess game I will cut your head off. I swear to you at the same time that if that happens, I will guide you well in your afterlife." The monk said: "No problem. I agree." Then the young man and the monk sat down at the table with the chess board between them. The Zen master stood at the side of the table holding his sword, watching. (In those days the laws were different. Everything was legal because the young man had agreed to the rules. These days the Zen master would go to jail.)

So the young man had agreed. It had been easy to agree with words. But inside he was wondering: "What if I really

lose? I am a pretty good chess player but . . ." The monk was very calm sitting across from him. He had started the first move. The young man was thinking, thinking, thinking and as a result of so much thinking after three moves a mistake had already appeared. "Oh no! What shall I do now?" So he thought some more. And again after a few more moves, another mistake appeared. His position was not good. But what could he say? It was too late. No way out now. If only he could take back his word, he would do it, but there was no way now. So finally he thought: "OK. I did something stupid. I made a foolish commitment and now I will die. Well that being as it is, I must die!"

Once he accepted the fact that he would die, his thinking disappeared and then the chess board became very clear and slowly he began to make very good moves, his position changed and became stronger. Suddenly he realized he was on the way towards winning the game. He relaxed and looked instead at the face of the monk sitting across from him. Then he thought, "What a beautiful face this monk has, so kind and gentle and so peaceful. This monk will die if I win. All my life I have been uselessly wandering around getting nowhere and achieving nothing. And this monk is such a treasure."

Then looking again at the chess board, he decided to purposely make a bad move. Then another and then a third bad move which reversed the positions and again he became the losing player. And at that very instant, the Zen master raised his sword and smashed it on top of the chess board. Then he said, "Chess game is finished!" He looked at the young man and said: "Keep this kind of mind for your practice and you will never have a problem. Keep this kind of attention and this kind of compassionate mind and you will become a good Zen student!"

This is a true story. This young man became a great Zen master. A chess Zen master!

We always say that Zen is not special. Paying attention to your life is not special. This story points to that. We do what we are supposed to do, moment by moment. We do this completely and wholeheartedly. Not only Zen students understand this. Everyone understands this.

The other point which is vital to our Zen practice is the direction it takes. In the story the direction that the young man took was compassion. He understood that being a Zen student was not only for him, it was also for the monk and for others. He attained the point: "Why should this wonderful monk die so that I can become a Zen student?"

This Zen retreat has been a working Zen retreat. We have been working to build this Zen center. Sometimes checking mind has appeared, "Not so many people have been helping with the work." Frustration appears. But we

think again about our direction. And then it is not important who is coming or not coming to work. Important is what each of us does. Do we do it completely and wholeheartedly?

We simply do what we can and our direction is that others will come and enjoy the fruit of this labor. This is correct direction.

Zen Master Seung Sahn says, "Zen means you must become crazy." For most people building a Zen center and putting so much work into it is crazy! In Paris we are also building a Zen center and friends cannot understand why we have left everything behind and moved to Paris where we still cannot speak the language. They ask: "Why leave America? Why leave a good situation? Why do all this? You are crazy!"

Recently we received a phone call in the center and we were asked how many people were coming to practice. We said: "Well . . . ah . . . a few Polish people and, ah . . . two French students." It is crazy! So in a way if you continue practicing it will lead you into a kind of insanity.

I have already mentioned that this retreat was a work retreat. Actually there are two kinds of work. Inside work and outside work. Inside work means keeping a non-moving mind and outside work means helping all beings. Building a Zen center is extremely important. If you look at this world and all the varieties of problems in our lives, then it is of utmost importance to examine the underlying causes of these problems or even diseases. Doing this we see that there are three causes: I, me and my. Eliminating I, me and my means eliminating the causes of suffering.

Building a Zen center means offering a place where everyone can come and deeply examine the mind and the causes of suffering. A Zen center is not actually a place but rather the people who come. Many people will come to this place and practice.

So building a Zen center is very important outside work.

Being concerned only about inside work is not correct Zen practice. Only inside work means nirvana and peace of mind only for me. Including outside work into our individual practice means living with a direction for others and not only for me. How can we share with others? This is a wonderful way and makes a lot of sense.

So I hope that everyone will continue this everyday working practice, everyone will soon get great enlightenment and save all beings. ♦

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Karma Is Relentless. Everyone Here Is Buddha.

Ken Kessel JDPSN

From a question-and-answer session at the New Haven Zen Center on December 16, 2012.

Question: This is kind of a big one. I was having a conversation with my friend. He's a very rational, pragmatic person. Very smart. And I said, "So, do you believe that anything has a purpose? Is there a reason?" And he said, "What about what happened in Connecticut, in Newtown? How could that have a purpose? What about those kids? How could they deserve that?"

At some point in my life I knew a pretty decent answer to that—maybe. I'm not sure what it was. I just wanted to bring it up and see how you would respond to that.

Kessel PSN: Why is he your friend?

Q: Because he's a good listener.

Kessel PSN: There's lots of good listeners. Why is *he* your friend?

Q: I have respect for him.

Kessel PSN: There are lots of people you respect. Why *this* person and *you*? If you see *that*, the root of what brought that together is the root of what made Newtown appear. That may not be very satisfying. On the one hand we have mind, or Buddha-nature, or God, something that's vast and indescribable and exists before words appear. And then we have the unfolding of cause and effect, which we call karma. You could say he's a good listener; you could say he's very intelligent; you could say you respect him—that's all true. But over the course of many tens of thousands of years of human

history, what brought you and him together in New Haven? We don't know. Exactly!

Some of it is immediately clear. He's a good listener. You like somebody who listens well. You like to listen well, too. He's intelligent. You're attracted to that kind of mind. You respect him, and it's important to you to be in the presence of those you respect. So in an immediate sense, the two of you have some affinity. But what shaped you to have that particular affinity, and what shaped him to have that particular affinity? How could it be that two people with a similar affinity came together in New Haven to talk about something important?

In the Lankavatara Sutra, Mahamati asks Buddha, "Where do words come from?"

Buddha answers, "Words come from the conjunction of the nose, and the lips, and the teeth, and the jaw, and the throat, and the chest." Mahamati isn't satisfied and asks for a more philosophical explanation, which Buddha provides. But at the start, he says what's simply true. Human beings make human sounds. Dogs make dog sounds; cats make cat sounds; birds make bird sounds. There's some function to those sounds that is there before the words are uttered and that goes beyond them.

In talking with your friend about something important, something appeared that wasn't about the words. It was just about the nose, and the lips, and the teeth, and the tongue, and the jaw, and the throat, and the chest. You feel some connection with each other. The presence of that sustains love and attention, awareness and peace, caring, compassion and wisdom. Getting too caught up in the words you say to each other can interfere with that. But the intention to come together and explore something vital is a valuable thing.

If you value those things you'll find other people who value those things. You'll attract each other. We call that the karma of having similar affinities, which is kind of like saying your right ear is on your right side.

Just sit and investigate: what is a human being? We have that question, somewhere, and we may do many things to

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Photo: Adam Dubroka

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Current residential training centers include: Gateless Gate, Dharma Zen, Cambridge, Providence, New Haven, Las Vegas, New York, Indianapolis and Northern Light. Please contact the Zen centers directly for availability and qualifications. A complete listing of Zen centers can be found beginning on page 28.



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Photo: Adam Dubroka

distract ourselves from it, but when we stop distracting ourselves that question resonates all by itself. When you were born, who taught you to breathe? When you were born, who taught you to see? When you were born, who taught you to hear? Who taught you to smell? Who taught you taste? Who taught you to touch? That's what this lump of flesh does.

Somebody may have taught you something about seeing that helped you see better. Somebody may have taught you something about hearing that taught you to hear better, but the innate ability to see is with you from the beginning.

We learn something about being human from the humans around us. Some of us have more fortunate experiences and some of us have less fortunate experiences about that. If you just sit, then you see, we have this innate clarity, and simultaneously, we have things that attract us and things that distract us. We reach out for things that we want but we don't have; we want to get them, even if we can't, and that makes our energy go off in one direction. We try to hold on to things that we have and we don't want to lose, even if their nature is to go out, and that also makes our energy go off in a certain direction.

That's a little bit like, I want air so I won't stop breathing in. Then it feels like I can never get enough. Still, at some point you have to stop breathing in. Or, I don't want this air anymore because it doesn't feel good, so I'll breathe it out. In fact, I don't want any air; it keeps changing into carbon dioxide. I don't like that, so I'll never stop breathing out. While this is an exaggeration, we all do something like that.

Receiving and giving become clinging and rejecting. To the degree that clinging and rejecting become the centerpiece of our life, we start to construct things mentally and emotionally that support clinging and rejecting, because we think they're important. When we do something a lot we get good at it. If you cultivate careful listening with your friend you become better at careful listening; it becomes satisfying. You get good at it, so you like it so you do it more. If I cultivate clinging and rejecting I get good at it, so I like it so I do it

more. Even if I don't like the result, I no longer connect cause and effect, and I've cultivated a habit.

Add that up: we have seven billion people, now. Beyond just now, there have been a lot of human beings on earth. Not all of what we do nurtures life. Even if it feels like it nurtures *my* life, it may not nurture life broadly. It reflects "I want, I want, I want, I want. I don't want, I don't want. I want to make my situation good and comfortable." So add *that* up, generation after generation, billions of people before us, and billions of people now.

Our founding teacher, Zen Master Seung Sahn, was fond of saying, "Human beings number one bad animal!" Everybody gets *that*. If he'd said it more eloquently it wouldn't have been as striking. Buddhist traditional teaching is that in the past, people killed many animals both for food and for recreation in a way that was thoughtless, so those animal consciousnesses then get reborn as human beings, and carry that thoughtlessness with them.

So now we have many human beings who are not human beings. They have human bodies, but they have dog mind, or cat mind, or falcon mind, or duck mind, or bird mind or tiger mind. Sometimes people even have two minds, half dog, half cat, so they're fighting inside. Zen Master Seung Sahn used to talk about broken consciousness. And if you have tiger mind and I have lion mind, I want to hurt you. If you have a dog mind and your friend has a dog mind, you have some affinity. You can play that out, and you're free to take it literally. And in fact I can't disprove it, nor can I prove it, for that matter.

But it also paints a picture of the kind of things that persist, and how they persist. As Buddha says, karma is relentless. We collectively cultivate the habit of not being mindful of how we live on the earth. This creates generations that don't pay attention to that well. That has consequences.

Of course, there are pockets of people who are more committed to being more broadly mindful. Some of those pockets of people are sure that their way is the only way. Some of those pockets of people have a sense that this is a good way, and I'm glad that other people are also paying attention in a way that seems to work for them—we have something in common.

If you add that up over time, there's something natural about this awfulness. Ignorance plus ignorance plus ignorance plus ignorance equals a lot of ignorance. That creates a certain field, a context. We have collective vulnerability and individual vulnerability. Sadly, finally, naturally, at some point, this kind of thing tends to happen. And naturally, if it happens close to home, we notice it more, we feel it more, we ask questions about it more.

But as Paul noted in his talk, there are other pockets of

people on the earth where these large tragedies happen a lot. And in fact some of it we're participating in by proxy, just because we pay taxes. And we don't pay attention to that the same way. It's hard to feel a similar horror, partly because it's far away, partly because we're not participating directly, and partly because we learn of it through sources where we've taught ourselves that what comes through those sources is pretend or we can just turn it off.

We feel what happened close by in Newtown very deeply, and we should. If we didn't, something inside us would be dead. But we don't necessarily feel everything else that deeply.

So, you have your friend, and in a deep sense, you don't know why, but you know you have him. You feel it's good.

Recently, I had pneumonia and I don't know why, but I had it. I can also pick it apart: I had certain constitutional weaknesses and certain bad habits and certain vulnerabilities, and all that adds up to pneumonia. And I feel that's bad. We don't necessarily wonder why, if something is good. But if it feels bad, then we do wonder. Why me? Why children? Why this child? Why in Newtown? Why any one at all? How can it be satisfying to say that there are aspects about the unfolding of karma, where we just can't see the particulars?

What can we do?

What do you want to do? That's the first question.

Everybody's here, so you want to do something, otherwise you'd be someplace else. But you're here, so you want to do something, because you're suffering, because you're human, because you have desire, because you have a body. Those of us with bodies who are human who have suffering don't like that. That's good.

If I step on a thorn, I feel pain. If I'm letting my body function, I'll pull my foot away, and then if I continue to let my body function, I'll look down at the part where I stepped on the thorn. I'll try to take it out, because the pain directs my attention to something important that's toxic. If I direct my attention in the right way, maybe I can bring some nurturance to the thing that was toxic or injurious and allow healing to happen.

What do we do with pain? What do we do with suffering? Partly, we want to say, "Shhh! Quiet, I don't want to see it." Or we want to push it away, outside, to make a space that's safe, inside. That feels better. But



Photo: Francis Lau

it's not safe. It's also not unsafe. We have ideas about safe and unsafe. Something's holding the skin and bones together, but that's very tenuous and dependent on a lot of things. We happen to be on a planet that supports our life. There are lots of ways of not supporting that. It's safe and it's not safe to be in this body, but here we are.

I want something, but I can't get what I want, so I'm suffering. In some ways, everything boils down to that. Just look at the raw form of it: I want something; but I can't get it, so I'm suffering. If we're clear about what we want, then the inevitability of suffering guides our attention in a way that lets compassion emerge. That's like looking at the thorn you stepped on. As a race, we're throwing out thorns and then stepping on them and then saying, "Who put the thorns there?" We did that. We did it collectively; we also do it individually. It's hard to do something about how we've done it collectively, unless we want to do something about how we're doing it individually. That allows us to participate in a different way.

That's where we have some authority, in how we participate. I don't have so much authority about how someone else participates. I have some. I may have some influence; I may have some power. But really, the most we can do something about is how I participate in this area that we occupy, what this skin and bones occupy. And if we do something about this area that our skin and bones occupy, we might start to have a more clear and tempered influence over other spaces. We move through space and time with other beings who occupy similar spaces that we recognize, the same way that dogs recognize dogs, and birds recognize birds.

First, then, is to recognize what is a person, and the first person to recognize is the one sitting on the cushion. Oh, that's a person. There's one! There's one, there's one, lots of people. Oh, also, I'm a sentient being. Oh, sentient beings are numberless. That's a lot.

You too, you too.

Zen practice is taking a complicated mind and allowing it to become simple. That doesn't mean disowning your intelligence. It doesn't mean deadening your capacity to feel. It doesn't mean inhibiting your capacity to respond. Because that's also denying something. That's also a form of ignorance. But if we become intimate, in the sense of very familiar, with

what *this [points to body]* is, then that's portable; we carry it with us everywhere. And it's difficult in the sense that distraction is easy. Cultivating distraction is tempting, and then it becomes habitual, and then it feels like we have no choice. It's easy in this sense: [*hits the floor with Zen stick*] that's clear. Nobody mistook it for a duck. When you walked through the door, you didn't come through the wall, but instead you sat on the cushion, and you didn't try and sit on the ceiling. How can that be? It's actually kind of simple.

So with this sense of simple-difficult, if we start to direct our energy toward appreciating what it is to occupy this space, that changes the perspective on everything else. Because we like to distract ourselves, we have to make some effort to create circumstances that support the intention of attentiveness and clarity. It's a powerful yet fragile intention, like most of our intentions. So we help each other. We made a room, we bought a house. And then we put out cushions, and some of us wear lay robes. Some of us take precepts to live life in a particular monastic way. Together, we have practice. Oh, you're a nun, that's wonderful, how can I support that? That's me practicing generosity, because it's good for me. She gives me an opportunity to practice being decent with another human being. Oh, she wears those robes, so I'm supposed to be decent with her. Maybe I think, him, I don't care, but I'll get bad karma if I'm not decent with her.

If I recognize that her presence is my opportunity for practice, so I'm grateful to her for doing it, then I get better at practicing that, so maybe I can be nicer to Paul. Sunim, on the other hand, practices the same thing from the other side of the coin, for which I'm grateful. So we support each other by taking different jobs. And we recognize that this is a good thing. Chanting is a good thing. Bowing is a good thing. Having interviews is a good thing. Sharing meals together is a good thing. Working together is a good thing. All of these opportunities in this space are opportunities to practice what we know is most important, but we try to avoid. We do it here so we get good at the simple form of it, so we can do it someplace else.

If we make that kind of energy and intention to practice, we find a way for it to persist beyond the cushion. A couple of years ago I just decided to carry beads around all the time, because I'm a little stupid, so I need a reminder to practice. I found a way that works for me. This is good; we have to remember. So I want to thank everybody for remembering to come here. I want to remind us that this is a place to come where the more of us who come, as you walk through the door, there's a feeling that it's really good to sit in a room with all these Buddhas. Not just that one, on the altar, but that one and that one and that one. Everybody here is Buddha. Everyone outside of here is Buddha. Remember to look. ♦

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Iceworld

White full moon in the sky
White snow on trees,
meadows and pagoda

Did the world become ice?
Did the mind become ice?

Stone pagoda licks
Ice full moon

Crack, crack, crack

Steps on frozen snow at night

—Arne Schaefer JDPSN

Book Review

Dreaming Me: Black, Baptist and Buddhist—One Woman's Spiritual Journey

By Jan Willis

Wisdom Publications, 2008

Review by Kwan Haeng Sunim

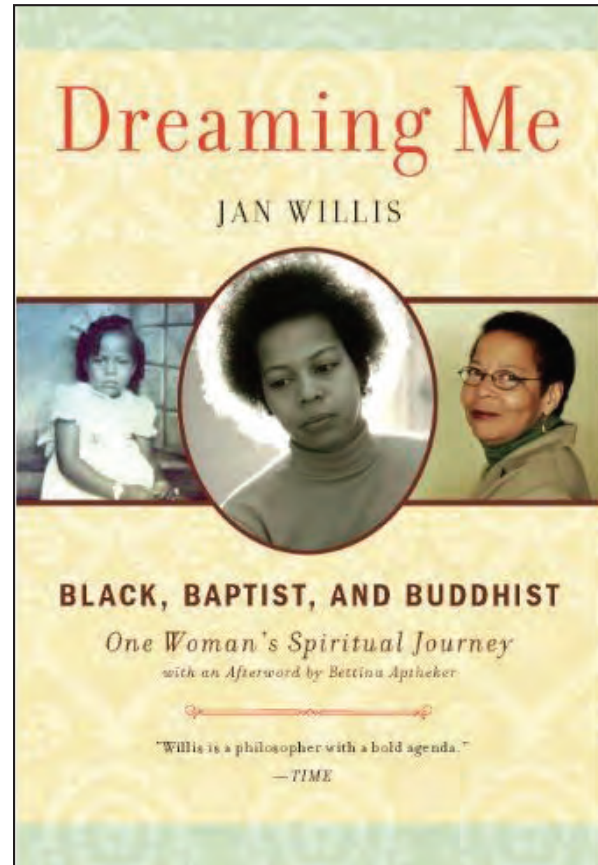
Dreaming Me: Black, Baptist and Buddhist—One Woman's Spiritual Journey is an autobiography written by Jan Willis, a professor of religion at Wesleyan University and the first African-American scholar-practitioner of Tibetan Buddhism in America.

Born in Docena, Alabama (near Birmingham) in 1948, the daughter of a Baptist deacon and steel worker, Jan Willis grew up amid the turmoil of the civil rights movement in 1950s and 60s. The Ku Klux Klan made regular visits to her neighborhood. Along with her father, mother and sister, she marched with Martin Luther King Jr. in Birmingham. Later she went on to attend Cornell University just as the war in Vietnam began to draw protests from the student body. Confronted with her rage and anger, she wondered at the Buddhist monks who set themselves on fire in protest of the war.

Willis's spiritual journey was precipitated by life experiences touching her essence, not the least of which were dreams that chronicled her spiritual insights. As the book begins Willis tells us of a dream she has about lions. These lions are powerful and are coming after her. They threaten not only her but her family as well. As she progresses through her life story we see that these dreams are a reflection of her life. From these dreams we sense there is a self beyond our thinking minds, a self that is in fact hindered by our thinking. What is this self? What am I? Willis struggles with that question, both in her dreams and in her day-to-day life.

Her book's title suggests how names and forms can help or hinder the quest for spiritual awakening. Jan Willis takes us through her own soul-searching transformations. She writes candidly and with grace about the formation of her faith in the context of racism, oppression and relationship. As a child of nine, she regularly endured the racial taunts of a young, white, five-year-old girl on her way to the post office. As a young teen, at home with her mother and sister while her father worked the night shift, the Ku Klux Klan burned a cross in front of her house. Her suffering was the catalyst for her self-examination and her search for the truth. Her experiences as a Baptist and Buddhist bring the two paths together. We find the shared self behind name and form, whose goal is to find truth and share it with others.

Willis shows how relationships impact our choices and how they come to be part and parcel of spiritual development. Relationships—on the one hand with family, friends, mentors and a teacher with genuine interest in our spiritual development, and on the other with those whom we see as mean, hateful and harmful—all these relationships come together in our prayers and meditation. And as our prayer or meditation life deepens, this apparent tension can bring us to truth as it is. Willis shares



personal and painful memories to chronicle the path of her own spiritual growth, such as the pain and confusion of a five-year-old whose mother shouts out of the blue, "What's the matter with you, you little devil? You think you know so much! You just shut your mouth, you hear! You, you . . . My Lord where did you come from?" Years later, this experience transforms into compassion rooted in insight, about her own family's suffering in particular, and human suffering more broadly.

Willis met her Buddhist teacher, the great Tibetan monk Lama Yeshe, while in India for a year as part of her philosophical studies at Cornell. She "had come to Lama Yeshe loaded with feelings of guilt, shame, anger, and a feeling of utter helplessness." Unable at that time to see past her rage from untold indignities she had endured, she notes, "Yet wounds like mine had a flip side too, a false and prideful view of entitlement: Look at all that I've endured. I'm great. In time, Lama Yeshe would find a way to pull the rug out from under this pride." One morning, Lama Yeshe walked by Jan Willis, paused, looked at her piercingly for a brief moment and, before continuing his journey, said, "Living with pride and humility in equal proportion is very difficult, isn't it? Very difficult!"

About this exchange Willis writes, "It is the trauma of slavery that haunts African Americans in the deepest recesses of our

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souls. This is the chief issue for us, the issue that must be dealt with head-on—not denied, not forgotten, not suppressed. Indeed its suppression and denial only hurt us even more by causing us to accept a limiting, disparaging, and at times even repugnant view of ourselves. We as a people cannot move forward until we have grappled in a serious way with all the negative effects of this trauma . . . With just a glance that morning, Lama Yeshe had captured my heart's dilemma: How to stand dignified, yet humbly, in the world?"

Willis's relationship with Lama Yeshe lasted for fifteen years before Lama Yeshe died in 1985.

Often implicit in her stories is that part and parcel of the process of finding this truth is that a healing takes place.

Lama Yeshe later advised Willis to take the three refuges from his teacher, Geshe Rabten. Some time later, Willis met with the Dalai Lama and spoke to him of her dilemma about violence versus nonviolence. His Holiness said to Willis and her two friends, "We must practice patience and meditate to gain clarity in order to act appropriately." But pressed further on the subject, His Holiness said, "When I came out of Tibet, many Khampas with guns accompanied me. They were concerned about me. They wanted my safety. I could not say to them, 'You are wrong to have guns.' Many monks too in Tibet took up guns to fight the Chinese. But when they came here, I made them monks again. Still patience and clarity are most important, most important."

This is a much needed book, not only for African-Americans interested in Buddhism, but anyone interested in a healing spiritual change from a Buddhist perspective. Anger and

the urge to use violence does not go away simply because we want them to. It is the same with guilt, shame and the feeling of helplessness. Buddhism is a way that shows us, using various meditation practices, that we can remove the effects by becoming nonattached, that is, by digesting our experience. By becoming nonattached we become clear and see things as they are. And for the sake of others we are able to make clear choices. ♦



Photo: Francesco Morello

Kwan Haeng Sunim is a native of Boston, Massachusetts. He encountered Zen Master Seung Sahn in 1986, and shortly thereafter sat his first 90-day Kyol Che in Providence, subsequently becoming housemaster. He developed an interest in ordination after traveling to Hwa Gye Sa Temple in Korea. He became a haeng-ja at Hwa Gye Sa and was ordained as a novice monk in 1999 at Jik Ji Sa Temple. Returning to Hwa Gye Sa, he became housemaster, and later, head monk. Continuing his training at Hyon Jong Sa Temple, he then received full bhikku precepts in the Chogye Order at Tong Do Sa Temple. He returned to Hwa Gye Sa, remaining there until 2005, and then moved to Mu Sang Sa Temple, where he did a 100-day kido and then remained, holding positions as housemaster, head monk and media director. He returned to Hwa Gya Sa as head monk in 2010. Kwan Haeng Sunim returned to the United States in September 2012 and now practices at Providence Zen Center.



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

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Americas

Buenos Aires Kwan Um Group
Zen Master Bon Yo
 c/o Dorota Maldrzykowska
 & Tomas Rautenstrauch
 Av. Caseros 490 4H
 C115 2AAN Capital Federal
 Buenos Aires, Argentina
 +54 11 43 07 26 80
kwanumzenbsas@gmail.com

Cambridge Zen Center
Dae Gak Sa
 Zen Master Bon Haeng
 Zen Master Bon Yeon
 199 Auburn Street
 Cambridge, MA 02139
 Office 617/576-3229
 Fax 617/576-3224
director@cambridgezen.com

Cape Cod Zen Center
Zen Master Bon Yeon
 169 North Main Street
 South Yarmouth, MA 02664
 508/362-2410
capecodzencenter@yahoo.com

Chogy International
 Zen Center of New York
Zen Master Wu Kwang
 400 East 14th Street, Apt. 2E
 New York, NY 10009
 212/353-0461
info@chogyzencenter.org

Cold Mountain Zen Center
Zen Master Bon Soeng
 c/o Cary de Wit
 P.O. Box 82109
 Fairbanks, AK 99708
 907/479-8109
cdewit@alaska.net

Cypress Tree Zen Center
Zen Master Bon Haeng
 647 McDonnell Dr.
 Tallahassee, FL 32310
ctzg@webdharma.com

Delaware Valley Zen Center
José Ramirez JDPSN
 P.O. Box 7837
 Newark, DE 19714-7837
 302/533-8819
dvzinfo@gmail.com

Deming Zen Center
Judy Roitman JDPSN
 501-A E. Spruce Street
 Deming, NM 88030
 575/545-4665
info@demingzen.org

Dharma Flower Zen Center
Zen Master Hae Kwang
 861 Clay Street
 Woodstock, IL 60098
 815/236-2511
dharmaflowerzen@gmail.com

Dharma Zen Center
Paul Park JDPSN
 1025 South
 Cloverdale Avenue
 Los Angeles, CA 90019
 323/934-0330
info@dharmazen.com

Empty Gate Zen Center
 Gong Mun Sa
Zen Master Bon Soeng
 2200 Parker Street
 Berkeley, CA 94704
 510/845-8565
info@emptygatezen.com

Gateless Gate Zen Center
Zen Master Bon Haeng
 1208 NW 4th Street
 Gainesville, FL 32601
 352/336-1517
info@gatelessgate.org

Great Lake Zen Center
 Dae Ho Soen Won
Zen Master Dae Kwang
 828 East Locust Street
 Milwaukee, WI 53212
 414/771-2490
info@glzc.org

Indianapolis Zen Center
Lincoln Rhodes JDPSN
 3703 North
 Washington Blvd.
 Indianapolis, IN 46205
 317/921-9902
director@indyzen.org

Isthmus Zen Community
Thom Pastor JDPSN
 c/o David Peters
 402 West Lakeview Avenue
 Madison, WI 53716-2114
 608/221-3379
info@isthmuszencommunity.org

Kansas Zen Center
 Nam Pung Sa
Judy Roitman JDPSN
 1423 New York Street
 Lawrence, KS 66044
info@kansaszencenter.org

Korea Buddhism Jogeji
 Temple of America
Do Am Sunim JDPSN
 42 West 96th Street
 New York, NY 10025
 212/665-3641
nychogyesa@gmail.com

Little Rock Zen Group
Zen Master Hae Kwang
 4201 Kenyon
 Little Rock, AR 72205-2010
 501/661-1669
lusauer@aristotle.net

Mexico City Zen Centre
Jo Potter JDPSN
 Tajín #617-1
 Colonia Narvarte
 Mexico Distrito Federal
 C.P. 03300, Mexico
 (52)-555-6051489
kwanumzendf@gmail.com

Morning Star Zen Center
Zen Master Hae Kwang
 1599 Halsell Road
 Fayetteville, AR 72701-3902
 479/521-6925
btaylor@uark.edu

Myung Wol Zen Center
Merrie Fraser JDPSN
 P.O. Box 11084
 Scottsdale, AZ 85271-1084
 480/947-6101

New Haven Zen Center
Mu Gak Sa
 Ken Kessel JDPSN
 193 Mansfield Street
 New Haven, CT 06511
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Buk Kwang Soen Won
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 202 Meadow Road
 Topsham, ME 04086
 207/729-6013
nlzc@gwi.net

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Tim Lerch JDPSN
 c/o Michael Schutzler
 5627 167th Place SE
 Bellevue, WA 98006
info@oceanlightzen.org

Open Meadow Zen Group
Zen Master Bon Haeng
 212 Marrett Road
 Lexington, MA 02421
 781/652-8303
openmeadowzen@yahoo.com

Orlando Zen Center
Zen Master Bon Haeng
 c/o Claudia Schippert
 515 S. Crystal Lake Drive
 Orlando, FL 32803
 407/897-3685
orlandozencircle@gmail.com

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 c/o Rebecca Otte
 8000 SW 23rd Street
 Topeka, KS 66614
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Hong Poep Won
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 Nancy Hedgpath JDPSN
 99 Pound Road
 Cumberland, RI 02864
 401/658-1464
director@providencezen.org

Red Earth Zen Center
Judy Roitman JDPSN
 Windsong Innerspace
 2201 NW I-44 Service Road
 Oklahoma City, OK 73112
 405/628-8891
contact@redearthsangha.com

South Florida Zen Center
Zen Master Wu Kwang
 7110 SW 182nd Way
 Southwest Ranches,
 FL 33331
 954-263-4653
southfloridazengroup@gmail.com

Tallgrass Zen Center
Lincoln Rhodes JDPSN
 P.O. Box 304
 Alma, KS 66401
tallgrasszen@yahoo.com

Ten Directions Zen Community
Zen Master Soeng Hyang
 c/o Margaret McKenzie
 P.O. Box 2261
 Glen Ellyn, IL 60138
margaretmckenzie@sbcglobal.net

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 of Oneonta
Zen Master Wu Kwang
 14 Wayman Drive
 Otego, NY 13825
 607/988-7966
abbot@thethreetreasures.org

Zen Center of Las Vegas
Dae Myong Sa
 Thom Pastor JDPSN
 2461 E. Harmon Avenue
 Las Vegas, NV 89121
 702/293-4222
lasvegascz@gmail.com

Zen Group of Pittsburgh
Tim Lerch JDPSN
 125 1/2 Harvard Avenue
 Pittsburgh, PA 15213
 412/491-9185

Asia

**Gye Ryong San International
 Zen Center**
Mu Sang Sa
Head Temple, Asia
Zen Master Dae Bong
Zen Master Dae Jin
 Chungnam, Gyeryong-city,
 Eomsa-myon,
 Hyangjeoksangil 129
 South Korea (321-935)
 Office +82 042 841 6084
 Fax +82 042 841 1202
info@musangsa.org

Hoeh Beng Zen Center
Zen Master Dae Bong
 18-A Jalan Raja Bot
 50300 Kuala Lumpur,
 Malaysia
 +60 3292 9839
 Fax +60 3292 9925
hoehbeng@hotmail.com

Pengerang International
 Zen Center
 Kwan Yin Chan Lin
Gye Mun Sunim JDPSN
 Lot 109 Telok Ramunia
 81620 Pengerang Johor,
 Malaysia
 +60 7 826 4848
kyclzen@singnet.com.sg

Singapore Zen Center
Kwan Yin Chan Lin
Zen Meditation Center
Gye Mun Sunim JDPSN

No. 21, Lorong 25 Geylang
Singapore 388299
+65 6392 0265
Fax +65 6392 4256
kyclzen@singnet.com.sg

Su Bong Zen Monastery
Gak Su Temple International
Zen Center

Zen Master Dae Kwan
32 Leighton Road
5/F Starlight Hse
Causeway Bay,
Hong Kong, China
+852 2891 9315
Fax +852 2575 0093
info@subong.org.hk

Australia

Brisbane 1
Zen Master Dae Jin
27 Bredden Street
Chapel Hill
Brisbane QLD 4069,
Australia
+61 407 821 081
(Hae Kwang–Frank Storey)
kwanumzen.oz@hotmail.com

Gold Coast 1
Zen Master Dae Jin
23 Sundance Way
Runaway Bay QLD 4210,
Australia
+61 402 289 923
(Julie-Bup Wol)
goldcoastzengroup@
hotmail.com

Gold Coast 2
Zen Master Dae Jin
(Retreat Centre)
102 Bonogin Road
Mudgeeraba QLD 4213,
Gold Coast, Australia
+61 402 289 923
(Julie-Bup Wol)
+61 437 070 897 (Kathy
Brackenridge-Bup Hwa)
kwanumzen.oz@hotmail.com

South Africa

Jung Shim Zen Group
Zen Master Dae Bong
P.O. Box 690
Wilderness 6560
Republic of South Africa
+27 823 773 280 (Gerry)
alreadyone@webmail.co.za

Europe & Israel

Austria
Vienna Zen Group
Head Temple, Austria
Zen Master Ji Kwang
c/o Meditationszentrum „
der mittlere weg“
Biberstraße 9/2
1010 Wien, Austria
+43 680 55 396 11
(Knud Rosenmayr)
kwanumzen@gmx.net

Belgium
Brussels Zen Center
Head Temple, Belgium
Zen Master Ji Kwang
Rue de l'Oiselet. 16A
1080 Molenbeek
Brussels, Belgium
+32 497 596 659
(Koen Vermeulen)
info@kwanumzen.be

Czech Republic
Brno Zen Center
Dae Gak Sa
Oleg Šuk JDPSN
Zenové centrum školy
Kwan Um v Brně
Výletní 7
62300 Brno, Czech Republic
+420 775 988 882
(Ondráš Přibyla)
brno@kwanumzen.cz

České Budějovice Zen Group
Zen Master Bon Shim
c/o Vít Erban
Krajinská 384/40a
370 01 České Budějovice
Czech Republic
+420 774 123 974
(Vít Erban)
ceskebudejovice@
kwanumzen.cz

Litoměřice Zen Group
Zen Master Bon Shim
U Kapličky 442/5
412 01 Litoměřice,
Czech Republic
+420 721 674 455
(Viktor Matys)
litomerice@kwanumzen.cz

Olomouc Zen Group
Oleg Šuk JDPSN
Zen group školy
Kwan Um v Olomouci
c/o Petr Klásek
P. Bezručů 4
783 35 Horka nad Moravou
Czech Republic
+420 603 449 959
(Petr Klásek)
olomouc@kwanumzen.cz

Prague Zen Center
Soeng Kwang Sa
Head Temple, Czech Republic
Zen Master Bon Shim
Zen centrum školy
Kwan Um Praha
Kwan Um (Dobeš)
Podolská 112
147 00 Praha 4,
Czech Republic
+420 604 390 505
(Jirka Motl)
praha@kwanumzen.cz

Vrážné Zen Center
Zen Master Bon Shim
c/o Vrážné Zen Center
Vrážné 3
Jevíčko 569 43,
Czech Republic
+420 608 169 042
(Jiří Hazlbauer)
abbot@vraznezen.org

Zlín Zen Group
Oleg Šuk JDPSN
Zen group Kwan Um ve Zlíně
Lhotka 44
763 02 Zlín
Czech Republic
+ 420 608 441 791 (Martin)
+420 739 672 032 (Kamila)
chachopek@seznam.cz

France
Paris Zen Center
Saja Hoo Soen Won
Head Temple, France
Zen Master Bon Yo
Centre Parisien de Zen
Kwan Um
35 Rue de Lyon
75012 Paris, France
+ 33 613 798 328
(Eanjo Kim)
bureau@kwanumzen.fr

Won Mun Sangha Zen Group
Zen Master Bon Yo
19 Grande Rue
45360 Pierrefitte-ès-bois, France
+ 33 601-762-384
(Philippe Potyralla)
won-mun-sangha.blog4ever.com

Germany
Bad Bramstedt Zen Group
Jo Potter JDPSN
Warnemünde-Ring 19
245767 Bad Bramstedt,
Germany
+49 419 2306 8360
(Uwe Schmidt)
bad-bramstedt@kwanumzen.de

Berlin Zen Center
Chong Hye Sa
European Head Temple
Muchak JDPSN
Gottschedstraße 4
13357 Berlin, Germany
+49 304 660 5090
berlin@kwanumzen.de

Cologne (Köln) Zen Group
Zen Master Ji Kwang
c/o Gisla Blankenburg
Am Alten Bahnhof 5
50354 Hürth, Germany
+49 02233-7130080
koeln@kwanumzen.de

Dresden Zen Center
Oh Sahn Sa
Arne Schaefer JDPSN
Louisenstraße 15
010 99 Dresden, Germany
+49 176 7008 2636
(Ronny Herzog)
dresden@kwanumzen.de
www.kwanumzen.de/dresden

Hamburg Zen Group
Jo Potter JDPSN
Practice address:
c/o Unternehmensberatung
KIRSCH
Bahnenfelderstrasse 169, 6th Fl.
22765 Hamburg, Germany
Postal address:
c/o Sung-Yon Lee, Eulen-
strasse 91
22763 Hamburg, Germany
+49 (0) 179 466 2706 (Sung
-Yon Lee)
hamburg@kwanumzen.de

Great Britain
London Zen Center
Ja An Sa
Head Temple, Great Britain
Ja An JDPSN
(Bogumila Malinowska)
Ilex House, Crouch Hill
Holly Park
London N4 4BY,
Great Britain
+44 207 502 6786
+44 774 297 9050
zen.london@hotmail.co.uk

The Peak Zen Group “Kubong-Sa”
Zen Master Ji Kwang
c/o Kubong-Sa
Matlock Bath, The Peak District
Great Britain
+44 1629 580392
(Peter Voke)
kubongsa@kwanumzen.org.uk

Hungary
Baja KUSZ Group
Jo Potter JDPSN
+36 30 4670677
(Major Tamás)
kvangdo100@gmail.com

Budapest KUSZ Zen Group
Jo Potter JDPSN
+36 70 457 0486
(Tamás Mészáros)
mesztamas@gmail.com

Szeged KUSZ Zen Group
Jo Potter JDPSN
+36 30 5864090
(Kasza Péter)
szongdzsin@vipmail.hu

Israel
Haifa Zen Group
c/o Ofer Cohn
Sderot Moriah st. 47, ap. 4
Haifa, Israel
+972 527 460 544
(Ofer Cohn)
ofercohn@gmail.com

Hod Hasharon Zen Center
Zen Master Wu Bong
c/o Rowena Gill
16a Ha Tchelet Street
45264 Hod Hasharon, Israel
+972 54 4831122
(Rowena Gill)
rowenangill@gmail.com

Pardes-Hanna-Karkur Zen Group
c/o Boaz Franklin
15 Beit El St.
Pardes Hanna 33087, Israel
+972 54 6522812
(Boaz Franklin)
zen.pardeshanna@gmail.com

Ramat Gan Zen Group
c/o Alex Lurye
Tzanhanim st. 6/6
Givataim, Israel
+972524464949 (Alex Lurye)
zencenter108@gmail.com

Latvia

Jurmala Zen Group
Kwan Ji Sa
Oleg Šuk JDPSN
c/o Tatjana Tračevska
Raina street, 83
LV-2016, Jurmala, Latvia
+371 29191137
(Tatjana Tračevska)
kwanumzen@inbox.lv

Riga Zen Group
Oleg Šuk JDPSN
c/o Inga Konosonoka
Nīcgales iela 19-15
LV-1035, Rīga, Latvia
+37192733256
(Inga Konosonoka)
inga_kono@inbox.lv

Lithuania

Kaunas Zen Center
Kam No Sa
Andrzej Piotrowski JDPSN
c/o Tomas Stonis
Verkiu 25c
LT-44466 Kaunas, Lithuania
+370 601 56350
+370 698 29299
108tomas@gmail.com

Klaipėda Zen Group
Andrzej Piotrowski JDPSN
c/o Linas Svirinas
Klaipėda, Lithuania
+370 600 00370
(Linas Svirinas)
jaunatis@gmail.com

Šakiai Zen Center
Son Kwang Sa
Andrzej Piotrowski JDPSN
Šakių KC,
Nepriklausomybės 7/7
LT-71122 Šakiai, Lithuania
+370 686 56392
(Vytautas Smirnovas)
smirnovas.vytautas@gmail.com

Vilnius Zen Center

Ko Bong Sa
Head Temple, Lithuania
Andrzej Piotrowski JDPSN
Mokyklos 21A
LT-08413 Vilnius, Lithuania
+370 675 16008
(Modestas Kazlauskas)
songji108@gmail.com

Poland

Gdańsk Zen Center
Zen Master Bon Shim
Lipowa 9
81-702 Sopot, Poland
+48 698458603
(Jacek Wachulewicz)
gdansk@zen.pl

Katowice Zen Center
Zen Master Bon Shim
c/o Waldemar Pawlik
ul. 3 maja 38/22
40-097 Katowice, Poland
+48 501 430 062
(Waldemar Pawlik)
katowice@zen.pl

Kraków Zen Center
Do Miong Sa
Zen Master Bon Shim
ul. Mostowa 14 m. 17
31-061 Kraków, Poland
+48 601-636-989
(Krzysztof Łabędzki)
krakow@zen.pl

Łódź Zen Center
Andrzej Piotrowski JDPSN
ul. Zielona 30/6
90-604 Łódź, Poland
+48 509 241 097
(Igor Piniński)
lodz@zen.pl

Opole Zen Center
Dae Won Sah
Zen Master Bon Shim
c/o Henryk Kulik
ul. Złota 46/7
45-656 Opole, Poland
+48 502 327 686
(Henryk Kulik)
opole@zen.pl

Płock Zen Group
Zen Master Bon Shim
ul. Antoninów 1
09-520 Łąck, Poland
+48 607 317 084
(Alicja Pełkowska)
alap7@gazeta.pl

Rzeszów Zen Group
Zen Master Bon Shim
c/o Artur Sikora
ul. Plac Wolności 2/205
Rzeszów, Poland
+48 797 019 351
(Artur Sikora)
rzeszow@zen.pl

Szczecin Zen Group
Zen Master Bon Shim
c/o Dariusz Pozusiński
ul. Bazarowa 5/12
71-614 Szczecin, Poland
+48 508 431 216
(Dariusz Pozusiński)
kwanum.szczecin@gmail.com

Toruń Zen Group
Andrzej Piotrowski JDPSN
c/o Piotr Iwanicki
ul. Rybaki 40/6
87-100 Toruń, Poland
+48 609 696 060
torunskagrupazen@gmail.com

Wałbrzych Zen Group
Zen Master Bon Shim
c/o Marek Elźbieciak
ul. T. Chałubińskiego 17/2
58-301 Wałbrzych, Poland
lisi_kamien@wp.pl
(Marek Elźbieciak)

Warsaw Zen Center

Do Am Sa
Head Temple, Poland
Zen Master Bon Shim
ul. Małowiejska 22/24
04-962 Warszawa-Falenica,
Poland
+48 609 566 986
(Malgosia Gabryel)
kwanum@zen.pl

Warsaw Zen Group
Zen Master Bon Shim
ul. Dąbrowskiego 1/2
Warszawa Mokotow, Poland
+48 691 256 668
(Piots Giers)
zen_na_brackiej@poczta.onet.pl

Wrocław Zen Group
Zen Master Bon Shim
Poland
+48 726 624 411
(Karol Bazgier)
elff@op.pl

Russia

Rostov Zen Group
Oleg Šuk JDPSN
c/o Leonid Kosmynin
Bashkirskaia Ulitsa,
d.4A, kv.20
344068 Rostov-on-Don,
Russia
+7 904 504 2111 (Leonid
Kosmynin)
poephaeng@gmail.com

Saint Petersburg Zen Center

Dae Hwa Soen Won
Head Temple, Russia
Oleg Šuk JDPSN
The Buddhistic Temple
in Saint Petersburg
Kwan Um School of Zen
Datsan Gunzechoinei
Primorsky pr. 91
197374 Saint Petersburg,
Russia
contact@kwanumzen.ru

Slovakia

Bratislava Zen Center
Myo San Sa
Head Temple, Slovakia
Oleg Šuk JDPSN
c/o Peter Košút,
Hanulova 5
841 01 Bratislava, Slovakia
+421 905 368 368
(Lubor Košút)
bratislava@kwanumzen.sk

Košice Zen Center
Sin Dzong Sa
Oleg Šuk JDPSN
c/o Dušan Silváši
Letná 43
040 01 Košice, Slovakia
+421 903 134 137
(Dušan Silváši)
kosice@kwanumzen.sk

Spain

Barcelona Zen Center
Zen Master Bon Shim
Bori Centro Zen
c/o Bárbara Pardo
c/Beates 8, 3º, 2ª
08003 Barcelona, Spain
+34 655033018
(Bárbara Pardo)
boricentrozen@hotmail.com

Palma Zen Center

Head Temple, Spain
Jo Potter JDPSN
Centro Zen Palma
Plaza Bisbe Berenguer
de Palou nº 1, 1º, 2ª
07003 Palma de Mallorca
Illes Balears, Spain
+34 686 382 210
(Tolo Cantarellas)
zen@mallorcaweb.net

Prison Groups

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Rhode Island
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Florida
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