

# MOON ON THE WATER

Volume 5, Issue 2

Newsletter of the Great Lake Zen Center, Milwaukee, WI

April, 2003

## Lessons from a Tollbooth, Or Why I Like Illinois

*Laura Otto-Salaj, SDT  
Co-Director, GLZC*

Not long ago, I left work early on a Friday afternoon. My mission was to buy a loft bed for my daughter, who was about to have her 6<sup>th</sup> birthday. So, I hopped in my car and headed down to Schaumburg, Illinois, where there is an Ikea store. Sun shining, it was a great day for a drive.

Now, Wisconsin has no toll roads, so going to Illinois presents a little culture shock in that some of the major highways in Illinois have tollbooths. Having lived in Wisconsin for a good chunk of my life, and this not being my first trip to Illinois, I brought some change and several paper dollars. Knowing that there are lanes in which paper money is taken, I thought I was covered.

The drive takes about 1½ hours from Milwaukee. Getting on I-94 South, I passed through my first tollbooth, and used change. No problem. The next booth, I used paper money and got more change. Good. Now there was only one more booth to go before I hit Willow Road. So, knowing there was one to go right before I left the toll road, I used the rest of my change, figuring I could get more at the store. Life was very good.

I'm almost to the exit, and I see... a tollbooth at the exit! And one which is 'unmanned' – there are no people, so it takes...change only. Bummer. Big bummer.

I slow down the car, thinking, thinking – where in this car could there be some spare change? I need 40 cents – just a couple of dimes. Luckily, there are no cars behind me... I slow to a stop, and begin to rummage around in my front seat, then look to the back... a net gain of 12 cents.

I hear a short, courteous 'beep' behind me, and look to see a car with a woman patiently waiting for me to go. I shrug, then renew my search for coinage. Cars begin to line up behind us... not quite as patient as my friend directly in back of me.

Then I begin to think – maybe the woman in back of me will help? If she were really in tune with me – if she really wanted to help-- she would bring some money up to me so I could help the rest of us go! That would be what a Bodhisattva would do!

As I was thinking, she beeeeeeped again... a little more drawn out this time. Patience was ending. I implored – "I have no change!"

She then yelled back. "Then why don't you just go straight through!"

I looked. There was no crossing gate. Nothing was holding me (us) back but my thinking. I drove sheepishly ahead. The rest of the cars got on their way.

So, as students in a Zen Center, or as students who practice on their own, we've often heard the question asked: "What is your job?" And often, we respond that our job, moment to moment, is to use our Great Love, Great Compassion, Great Bodhisattva Way Nature to help. But, without great effort and clear direction, sometimes we can also get an idea of what helping is. And in that idea, there are two things that occur: we miss our opportunities to help, and we miss when others are helping us.

I had a great idea of how this other person could help me. But in that moment, she could see what I really needed, and I was blind! She became my seeing-eye person! "Just go straight through!" Only go straight, don't know, which is clear like space... Her action helped me help many other people be less late than they would have been, with much kindness as well. My thanks to her for also helping me look at my own ideas of what helping is, and how being 'just like this' is so important, so we can see what needs to be done.

(By the way, I made my situation correct with the State of Illinois by putting twice as much change in the first tollbooth on the way back to Wisconsin).

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## Buddha's Birthday Celebrated

*April 7, 2003*

On Monday, April 7 GLZC sangha members celebrated Buddha's birthday with special chanting, meditation, the traditional reading of a poem followed by a dharma talk, and a flower offering. The celebration marked the end of the Heart Kyol Che period of intensive practice that began on January 6. Following the celebration cake, cookies, and tea were served.

## Buddha's Birthday Poem

*April 7, 2003*

*By Do Shim*

*(Susi Childress, DT)*

Tonight we gather to celebrate Buddha's birthday.  
2500 years ago a special baby was born.

Yea!

Then the baby's mother died.

Waaa!

The moon and the water laugh at our joy and sorrow.

Where did the baby come from?

Where did his mother go?

KATZ!

The snow is falling in April as the cars slosh past  
the Great Lake Zen Center.

Happy Birthday!

## Midwest Sangha Weekend and Dharma Teachers/ Dharma Teachers in Training Workshop Scheduled

April 25-April 27, 2003

Argonne National Labs

Chicago, Illinois

The combined Midwestern Kwan Um School of Zen sanghas will be participating in a weekend of workshops, practice, activities, and fun at the Argonne National Labs in Chicago. Members from sanghas in Wisconsin, Illinois, Indiana, Kansas, and Colorado have registered for this rare event. There will be five KUSZ teachers giving dharma talks, presenting workshops, and giving interviews. The teachers will be GLZC guiding teacher Zen Master Dae Kwang; Zen Master Soeng Hyang (Barbara Rhodes) guiding teacher of Ten Directions Zen Community of Chicago; Judy Roitman, JDPSN, guiding teacher of Kansas Zen Center; Thom Pastor, JDPSN, guiding teacher of Great Brightness Zen Center of Las Vegas; and Bill Brown, JDPSN, guiding teacher of Isthmus Zen Community of Madison.

The weekend will begin with registration, room assignments, and a buffet dinner on Friday, from 4:00 PM - 6:15 PM. Following clean-up and a break, sangha members will have an opportunity to introduce themselves and get to know one another. Saturday morning practice will begin at 5:00 AM with bows, chanting, meditation, and interviews. The remainder of the morning and afternoon will be filled with workshops and dharma talks. Following dinner, there will be a short practice period and a dharma talk. The evening will end with a variety show to be put on by the members of each of the participating sanghas. Sunday's schedule will be similar to the Saturday schedule, terminating in a circle talk, lunch, and clean up at 3:00.

Because Argonne is a secure research facility, no late registrations will be accepted. Registration closed on April 15. Those who have registered should remember that anyone entering the facility will be subjected to a security search. Information letters and maps to Argonne will be mailed out in the next week.

Six of the GLZC Dharma Teachers and Dharma Teachers in Training will be attending the teachers' workshop on Friday, April 25 from 9:00 AM until 4:00 PM with Zen Master Soeng Hyang and Bill Brown, JDPSN. The teachers' workshop will be held at the Church of Religious Science in Glen Ellyn, Ill. DT/DTT's who have registered for this event should remember to bring \$35 for the workshop and lunch. Participants are also requested to bring their own cushions and mats.

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### Meditation for Peace

The Buddhist Peace Fellowship is holding meditation "Peace Practice" on Sunday evenings in May (May 4, 11, 18 & 25) from 7 - 8:30 PM at the Mindfulness Center. The Mindfulness Center is located on 2126 E. Locust St. For more information, call 414-962-8678.

## Annual Rummage Sale

Saturday, May 17, 9:00 AM - 4:00 PM

Work Practice/Set-up Friday, May 16,  
5:30 PM - 9:00 PM

Our fourth annual rummage sale will be held at GLZC on Saturday, May 17, from 9:00 AM until 4:00 PM. We will be holding a work practice the night before, on May 16, from 5:30 until 9:00 PM. Pizza will be delivered at 6:00 PM to sustain the workers. Donated items may be brought to GLZC and stored there, but we request that you price them as you bring them in to save time the night of the work practice. Pricing stickers are available on the table in the community room. If you have any large items that you would like to have picked up, please let Peter or Laura know. This fundraiser is a major source of income for GLZC, and revenues are used to help us fund YMJJ's and Zen Master visits. Please help us with this effort by donating items, working on either the 16<sup>th</sup> or the 17<sup>th</sup>, or by purchasing items at the sale. Be sure to ask your friends, families, and neighbors if they have any items they would like to donate. Come on out and support your Zen Center!

## Two YMJJ Retreats Scheduled

Two YMJJ retreats have been scheduled with GLZC guiding teacher, Zen Master Dae Kwang. They will be held July 11 - 13, 2003 and October 17 - 19, 2003. Mark your calendars and watch for upcoming details.

## 100-Day Baby Naming Ceremony Held

On Sunday, April 6, the GLZC Sangha held a 100-Day Baby Naming Ceremony for four children of GLZC members. Dylan and Aaron Dixon, Skylar Welchman, and Ian Yenchu participated in the ceremony to celebrate their birth. The children's original natures of Great Love and Great Compassion were recognized. Parents and Sangha members made a commitment to help the children follow the path of a Bodhisattva, helping others with love and compassion.



Front row, L to R: Heather Couch and Ian Yenchu, Danica Salaj, Gary and Aaron Dixon, Andy Yenchu. Back row: Gretchen Neuwald, Mike Yonkers, Dee Schwaiger, Julie Yonkers, Laura Otto-Salaj, Scott Salaj, Dylan and Jennifer Dixon, Dan and Skylar Welchman, Jenni Childress, Susi Childress. Not pictured: Peter Neuwald, Frank Childress.

## Zen Is Understanding Yourself

### Zen Master Seung Sahn

from *Dropping Ashes on the Buddha*

One day a student from Chicago came to the Providence Zen Center and asked Seung Sahn Soen-Sa, "What is Zen?" Soen-sa held his Zen stick above his head and said, "Do you understand?"

The student said, "I don't know."

Soen-sa said, "This don't know mind is you. Zen is understanding yourself."

"What do you understand about me? Teach me."

Soen-sa said, "In a cookie factory, different cookies are baked in the shape of animals, cars, people, and airplanes. They all have different names and forms, but they are all made from the same dough, and they all taste the same. In the same way, all things in the universe - the sun, the moon, the stars, mountains, rivers, people, and so forth - have different names and forms, but they are all made from the same substance. The universe is organized into pairs of opposites: light and darkness, man and woman, sound and silence, good and bad. But all these opposites are mutual, because they are made from the same substance. Their names and their forms are different, but their substance is the same. Names and forms are made by your thinking. If you are not thinking and have no attachment to name and form, then all substance is one. Your don't know mind cuts off all thinking. This is your substance. The substance of this Zen stick and your own substance are the same. You are this stick; this stick is you."

The student said, "Some philosophers say this substance is energy, or mind, or God, or matter. Which is the truth?"

Soen-sa said, "Four blind men went to the zoo and visited the elephant. One blind man touched its side and said, 'The elephant is like a wall.' The next blind man touched its trunk and said, 'The elephant is like a snake.' The next blind man touched its leg and said, 'The elephant is like a column.' The last blind man touched its tail and said, 'The elephant is like a broom.' Then the four blind men started to fight, each one believing that his opinion was the right one. Each one understood the part he had touched; none of them understood the whole."

"Substance has no name and no form. Energy, mind, God, and matter are all name and form. Substance is the Absolute. Having name and form is having opposites. So the whole world is like the blind men fighting among themselves. Not understanding yourself is not understanding the truth. That is why there is fighting among ourselves. If all the people in the world understood themselves, they would attain the Absolute. Then the world would be at peace. World peace is Zen."

The student said, "How can practicing Zen make world peace?"

Soen-sa said, "People desire money, fame, sex, food, and rest. All this desire is thinking. Thinking is suffering. Suffering means no world peace. Not thinking is not suffering. Not suffering means world peace. World peace is the Absolute. The Absolute is I."

The student said, "How can I understand the Absolute?" Soen-sa said, "You must first understand yourself." "How can I understand myself?" Soen-sa held up the Zen stick and said, "Do you see this?" He then quickly hit the table with the stick and said, "Do you hear this? This stick, this sound, your mind - are they the same or different?"

The student said, "The same."

Soen-sa said, "If you say they are the same, I will hit you thirty times. If you say they are different, I will still hit you thirty times. Why?"

The student was silent.

Soen-sa shouted, "KATZ!!!" Then he said, "Spring comes, the grass grows by itself."

## Calendar of Upcoming Events

**Friday, Apr. 25:** Midwest Sangha DT/DTT workshop with Bill Brown, JDPSN, and Zen Master Soeng Hyang, Church of Religious Science in Glen Ellyn, Ill., 9:00 AM-4:00 PM, \$35. Bring your own cushion.

**Friday, Apr. 25- Sunday, Apr. 27:** Midwest Sangha Weekend, Argonne National Labs, Chicago.

**Saturday, May 10:** Ecumenical Buddha's Birthday celebration, Gordon Park, noon until 4:00.

**Friday, May 16:** Work practice at GLZC to set up for the rummage sale. 5:30-9:00 PM. Pizza at 6:00 PM.

**Saturday, May 17:** Rummage sale at GLZC. 9:00 AM-4:00 PM.

### Annual Greater Milwaukee Buddha's Birthday Celebration

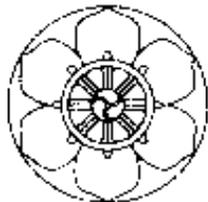
*Saturday, May 10, 2003  
Noon - 4PM*

Gordon Park Pavilion  
(southeast corner of Locust Street and  
Humboldt Avenue)

Dharma Talk by Jack Lawlor  
Sponsored by the Buddhist Peace Fellowship

The fifth annual Ecumenical Buddha's Birthday Celebration, sponsored by the Buddhist Peace Fellowship, will be held from noon until 4:00 PM at Gordon Park. Most of the Buddhist groups in the Greater Milwaukee area will be participating in the celebration, each contributing a part of their tradition to this collaborative effort. GLZC will be chanting the Heart Sutra in Korean. There will also be the traditional bathing of the baby Buddha. Don't miss this rare opportunity to celebrate with Buddhists of other traditions.

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ADDRESS CORRECTION REQUESTED

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The Great Lake Zen Center is affiliated with the Kwan Um School of Zen.

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### **Regular Practice Schedule of the Great Lake Zen Center**

Monday and Wednesday at 7:30PM;  
Saturday at 8:00AM

Other special events as described elsewhere in the newsletter. Unless otherwise noted, all events are held at the Great Lake Zen Center.

*Beginners Always Welcome!*

Unless noted otherwise, *Introductions to Zen* are offered on the first Monday of each month. Dharma Talks are offered on the fourth Wednesday of each month. Both are at 7:30PM.

