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# MOON ON THE WATER

Volume 8, Issue 2

Newsletter of the Great Lake Zen Center, Milwaukee, WI

April, 2006

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## The Walls are White - The Rug is Blue

Zen Master Seung Sahn

One morning after chanting at the Providence Zen Center, Seung Sahn Soen Sa gave a Dharma talk, and afterwards one student asked, "What is Buddha?"

Seung Sahn Soen Sa said, "The walls are white. The rug is blue."

"I don't understand," said the student.

Seung Sahn Soen Sa hit him and said, "Just seeing is Buddha nature. If you want to understand the realm of Buddha, keep a mind which is clear as space. So let all thinking and all externalized desires fall far away. Let your mind go anyplace, with no hinderance."

The student asked, "What is keeping a mind which is clear as space?"

Seung Sahn Soen Sa answered, "It is enlightenment nature. Above, the abode of Buddhas. Below, the six realms of existence. One by one, each thing is complete in it. One by one, each thing has it. It and dust interpenetrate. It is already apparent in all things. So, without cultivation, you are already complete. Understand, understand. It is very clear."

Then Seung Sahn Soen Sa held up the Zen stick and said, "Do you see?"

And hitting the floor with the stick, he said, "Do you hear?"

The student nodded his head.

"Already you see clearly. Already you hear clearly. Then, what are this stick, this sound, and your mind? Are they the same or different?"

The student said, "They are the same."

"If you say 'the same,' I will hit you thirty times," said Seung Sahn Soen Sa, "and if you say 'different,' I will also hit you thirty times."

"Why?" asked the student.

"KATZ!" shouted Seung Sahn Soen Sa. "Three times three is nine."

The student bowed and said, "Thank you. I understand the meaning of your shout, but, I don't understand three times three is nine."

Seung Sahn Soen Sa said, "O.K., then here is a poem for you:

The four elements (earth, fire, water, and air) disperse as in a dream.

The six dusts (perceptions), roots (senses), and consciousnesses are originally emptiness.

To understand that the Buddha and the eminent teachers return to the place of light:

The sun sets over the western mountains.

The moon rises in the East."

*NOTES: The six dusts or perceptions are color, sound, smell, taste, touch, and ideas. The six roots or senses are the eyes, ears, nose, tongue, body, and mind, and the six consciousnesses arise from the six corresponding senses.*

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## *Bumper Stickers*

Michael Zinke, BT

I have always been intrigued by bumper stickers. My interest started during a clandestine political operation when I was in Jr. High. A friend and I were hired by the incumbent mayor of our little town to go out and secretly place his re-election bumper stickers on cars. It was secret because it was illegal. So there we were in the dark of night with a stack of bumper stickers desperately trying to stick these re-election messages on cars without getting caught. Hiding when car lights were approaching, running through alleys without being seen as we carried out our mission. I mean, if we got caught we would probably be ranked right up there with John Dean, Howard Hunt, and G. Gordon Liddy of Watergate fame. But I think the Statute of Limitations has run its course on that incident so I can confess.

I think bumper stickers can be tools for teaching. Some are pretty funny, some are informative, some are religious, and every few years most are political. A long time ago I was an Account Manager for a consulting firm and one of the things I was taught was to look around the client's office and see what type of mementos or keepsakes were on the desk or hanging on the wall. By looking around you could tell a lot about the person and gear your conversation toward areas of their interest. Bumper stickers, likewise, tell us a lot about the owner of the car. You can tell if they have a sense of humor, where they went on vacation, what college they attended, and what branch of military they or their child is a member of. A lot of people are eager to express their political views and insult people that disagree with their views. You can tell how smart their kids are, what bars they go to, what radio stations and what type of music they prefer, and a host of other interests.

I find this desire to tell other people their personal information somewhat interesting but totally presumptuous. Why do people feel they need to use their automobiles to tell other people what kind of dog they feel is the best breed or what rock band to listen to? Why are people trying to convince us that Harley Davidson is the best motorcycle there is? If we have a motorcycle and it isn't a Harley, are we wrong? Why are they bragging that they went to Wall Drug and we haven't been there yet? I always feel bad when I see a Wall Drug bumper sticker because I was there once and I didn't buy a bumper sticker. Was I wrong for not buying one? Am I missing out on some hidden benefit? Do people think less of me because they think I've never been to Wall Drug? See the suffering this can cause?

As Zen students we try to teach others about the principles Zen is built upon. However, we try to teach these principles without forcing our own opinions on people in the process. Our opinions should remain our opinions. Our teaching should remain neutral, not degrading of other practices or other faiths. I'm sure everyone has heard, on many

occasions probably, that there are many paths to the top of the mountain. One specific path is not the correct path for everyone. We must each search for the path that we feel comfortable with and that we feel will lead us to the top of the mountain. While we are searching for "our" path up the mountain we don't try to force others to get on the same path. We don't go around saying the path we are on is the only correct path. In short, we don't wear bumper stickers proclaiming "I Found It" (you may have to be a little older to remember that one...). A lot of times the best method that we can use to teach doesn't involve words, it involves action. I'm sure you've heard the expression "actions speak louder than words", our Zen teaching should follow that advice.

So Zen teaching differs from bumper sticker teaching in that it doesn't force the opinions of the teacher upon the student. The teaching is presented to the student; the student evaluates the teaching and determines how comfortable they are with the teaching. We try to remain clear and on message. We can relate our personal experience if it helps with the teaching but we don't profess that our experience is the only correct experience. We understand that others have their own beliefs and we respect them. And we should be respectful of other's beliefs on everything, not just as to how their beliefs apply to Zen or religion. If someone has a different view of a subject than we do, then we need to recognize their view and respect it. We offer advice if requested but we don't preach to people on how they need to change their lives to suit our beliefs and if they don't accept our advice then we accept that decision and don't continue to force our advice on them. My beliefs work for me, your beliefs work for you. If I feel comfortable with my beliefs and you feel comfortable with your beliefs, then we are both on the right path.

So, taking my vast experience with bumper stickers into consideration, I was trying to come up with a Buddhist bumper sticker; one especially for the Great Lake Zen Center. A bumper sticker with a spectacular, yet short message, that would attract crowds of new people eager to practice with us. This bumper sticker would attract so many new students that we would have to buy new mats and cushions by the truck load. A message that says we have ended our suffering through our practice and attained enlightenment. A message that says we have put our thinking mind to rest and have a clear, uncluttered mind and we are happy about it. Here's what I came up with;

## *I Lost My Mind*

*at the*

*Great Lake Zen Center, Milwaukee, WI*

But then, that's just my opinion.....

## YMJJ Retreat

July 22 - 23

A YMJJ retreat has been scheduled with Zen Master Dae Kwang for July 22-23, 2006. The retreat will be held at GLZC. Zen Master Dae Kwang will be leading this retreat and conducting interviews. The price of the retreat is \$80 (fee subject to change, final fee will be published in the June newsletter) for both days, or \$40 for one day. The price includes vegetarian meals. Sleeping space can be arranged if required at no extra charge. Those needing sleep space should notify Peter and should bring a sleeping bag, pillow, and washcloth/towel.

The retreat will begin with a free public talk with Zen Master Dae Kwang at 7:30 PM on Friday. Please plan on joining us for some very strong practice. **You may register for this YMJJ by signing up at GLZC or by contacting Peter.**

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### ***THE GREAT GLZC RUMMAGE SALE***

***MAY 13, 2006***  
***9:00AM - 4:00PM***

The great, world famous GLZC annual rummage sale is planned for May 13, 2006. Start saving things for donation to the sale. We accept almost everything (except clothes, large seasonal items, and used computers). The annual rummage sale is the only planned event we currently have that provides extra money for our wish list and extra necessities. We can help with transporting large items to the Zen center and will be providing storage space for some items, if necessary. The great event starts on Friday night with the setup and pricing of all the treasures. Pizza will be provided for all those who attend and help and while you are there you can spot those extra special items and get there early Saturday to buy them. If you need help transporting items, please contact Peter (telephone number is on the last page of this newsletter) or email us at [info@glzc.org](mailto:info@glzc.org) and we'll arrange a pick up. Remember, donations are tax deductible and receipts for your donations will be available.

### **Calendar of Upcoming Events**

#### **April, 2006**

**Saturday, April 29 and Sunday, April 30 – Midwest KUSZ Sangha Week-end - Chicago.** Ask any Teacher for information.

#### **May, 2006**

**Saturday, May 13: Annual GLZC Rummage Sale.** GLZC, 9am – 4pm

**Monday, May 29: Memorial Day – No Practice.**

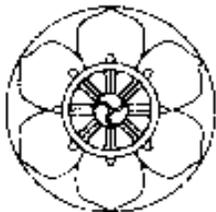
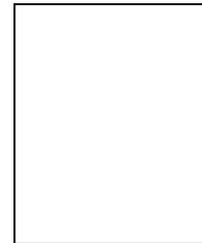
#### **July, 2006**

**Monday, July 3 – No Introduction to Zen or Practice.** Enjoy the holiday.

**Friday, July 21: Public Talk by Zen Master Dae Kwang.** GLZC, 7:30pm

**Saturday and Sunday, July 22 – 23. YMJJ Lead by Zen Master Dae Kwang.**

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*is published by the*

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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.

