

---

---

# MOON ON THE WATER

---

---

Volume 17, Issue 2

Great Lake Zen Center, Milwaukee, WI

April/May 2015

---

---

## Every Day and Every Moment

Zen Master Wu Kwang on Sep 1, 1990

“Flowers in Springtime, Moon in Autumn, Cool Wind in Summer, Snow in Winter. If you don’t make anything in your mind, for you it is a good season.”

I often use this poem to teach both new and more experienced Zen students. Quite often, when I ask a student during a private Zen interview to read the poem, I see a spontaneous smile or “Aha” reaction emerge, and a kindling of the student’s “faith mind” or original confidence. It’s as if he or she were saying, “Yeah, the True Way is like that.”

The central point of this poem is essentially a restatement of the third and fourth of the Four Noble Truths, i.e., that there is an end to suffering and that there is a way or path of practice which actualizes the end of suffering. “If you don’t make anything in your mind, for you it is a good season.”

The poem comes from Case Nineteen of the Mu Mun Kwan and is titled “Everyday Mind is the Path.” The case is an interchange or dialogue between Zen Master Nam Cheon and

See *Every Day and Every Moment* continued page 2

## INSIDE THIS ISSUE

- 1** Every Day and Every Moment
- 1** Abbot’s Corner
- 2** Cruising Through Life
- 3** Calendar of Upcoming Events
- 4** Buddha’s Birthday Poem, April 2014

Abbot’s Corner

## Empty Our Cups

Pete Neuwald, Abbot



I have been a Pastoral Care Associate (PCA) at the First Unitarian Society for almost three years now, but I find I keep learning more and more. Pastoral care is different from being a “pastor.” In the PCA role, we do not replace the ministers of a congregation, but, rather, we supplement their work. We serve as non-judgmental, compassionate, active listeners who are simply present for others. This can be very difficult, especially for those of us who want to “fix problems” or “just make everything better.”

Recently, I ran into a situation that tested me. In this case, an old friend, not associated with the Zen Center or the First Unitarian Society, has been speaking with me about his prostate cancer diagnosis. He was diagnosed about a year ago and he took a “watchful waiting” approach to the cancer. Recently, his PSA has shot up and he is likely facing the choices of treatment options. This has been difficult for me due to my own struggle with prostate cancer. The treatment choices aren’t easy. While it might seem that the choices are obvious, they are not, and each treatment has its own set of trade-offs and side effects. I remember asking my doctor what would have happened if I hadn’t had a radical prostatectomy. He told me that I would likely have died (and likely would have been dead by the time of this writing). That pretty much convinced me that the course of treatment I chose was the best option. However, I have to admit that it did not make the side effects all that more palatable, nor did it quell some misgivings from side effects.

I thought I *should* be able to put that aside, that it was just an attachment to my younger body, functioning more healthfully, or at least more youthfully. Understanding is not the same as attainment, and I’m not sure I’ve attained that acceptance. Actually, by just saying that, I know I have not attained it. And “*shoulds*” are never really helpful. But, what does this have to do with being there for my friend? Well,

See *Empty Our Cups* continued page 4

his student JoJu, who later became a great Zen Master in his own right. At the time of this Dharma combat JoJu is still an inexperienced student. He asks Master Nam Cheon, "What is the true way?" Nam Cheon responds that "Everyday mind is the true way."

Then, there follows a series of questions by JoJu and answers by Nam Cheon which, one by one, undo JoJu's conceptual orientation. For example, JoJu asks, "Then should I try to keep it or not?" Nam Cheon responds, "If you try to keep it, already you are mistaken." Finally, Nam Cheon exclaims, "If you completely attain the true way of not thinking, it is like space, clear and void. So why do you make right and wrong?" At this, JoJu got enlightenment.

In the case, there is only talk of the Mind of no thinking, clear and void like space. The poem emphasizes how one with such a mind functions in contact with time, part of the phenomenal world, which is indicated by the four seasons. In a few words, it demonstrates a non-clinging way of being/becoming, a way of encountering the events of life. In this sense, it is in accord with Zen Master Seung Sahn's teaching of "Don't make anything, don't hold anything, don't attach to anything. Then you will realize that you have everything."

And a similar point is made in Zen Master Yun Men's case in the Blue Cliff Record, "Every Day is a Good Day" (Case Number Six):

Yun Men, instructing, said, "Don't ask me before the fifteenth day of the month (Borom). After Borom, you must bring me one word." He answered himself, "Every day is a good day."

Our teaching in the Kwan Um School of Zen proceeds from "every day is a good day" to "every moment is a good moment." So a number of important questions for practice appear from the four seasons poem and Yun Men's case.

1. How can you demonstrate the meaning of, "if you don't make anything in your mind, for you it's a good season?"
2. What is the true meaning of "Every day is a good day?"
3. How can you demonstrate your understanding of "every moment is a good moment?"

And finally: A good season, a good day, and a good moment, how are all of these different? Which one is the best?

## **Cruising Through Life**

**Susi Childress, BDT**

For the last several years, when the gray skies and cold temperatures of winter were starting to wear on us, my husband and I left Wisconsin and headed for somewhere warmer for a little winter vacation. This year we took a ten-day cruise that departed from Ft. Lauderdale, Florida and visited ports in the eastern and southern Caribbean. Just having this trip planned made it easier to get through the seemingly endless days of winter. How can the prospect of sunshine, warm temperatures, bright blue water, and sea breezes not cheer you up in February? I'm sure those of you who live in cold climes can relate to what I am saying and are also smiling a little as you read this, imagining my cruise to some of the most beautiful tropical islands in the world. But, darn this Zen practice.... As is frequently the case, I am hearing that little voice in my head whispering that this is all just my like and dislike mind creating an illusion for me to escape into and avoid dealing with life just as it is, which at the moment is a gray, cold, rainy day. But even in places with beautiful scenery and comfortable temperatures, there is suffering. Wake up, Susi! Well, ok, it was fun while it lasted, but back to the task at hand: this article.

"Small I" was alive and well on this trip, in the form of "I like" and "I don't like." Here's how it went... Warm temps and beautiful scenery in Ft. Lauderdale: like. Long lines and a delay at check-in for the cruise due to rampant norovirus infections on the previous cruise that required disinfection before we boarded: dislike. Gorgeous shades of blue water at the Princess Cays in the Bahamas: like. Rough water and strong trade winds causing a bumpy ride through the Bermuda triangle: dislike. Beautiful fish and sea life discovered while snorkeling in St. Thomas: like. Wardrobe malfunction at the formal dinner onboard: dislike. Very interesting and beautiful tour through the rainforest on Dominica: like. Fire at the recycling plant with tires burning and spewing thick dark smoke and ash all over our ship in port at Dominica: dislike. River rafting trip in Grenada: like. Husband uninterested in doing a lot of the activities onboard that I would find fun: dislike. More great snorkeling and kayaking in Bonaire: like. No internet connection for five straight days: dislike. Very funny comedians at the show onboard: like. Bright sunshine and very hot temps in Aruba: dislike. (Wait... what???) Finding a café with free Wi-Fi and an open-air dining area with cool breezes: like. Heading home again: dislike, but also like.

OK, so that's how the cruise was for "little ole me." But this play between my "like mind" and "dislike mind" was not as bad as it might seem at first glance. You see, I have been practicing Zen for quite a while, and if there is one thing I have learned, it's how to observe these transient states of mind that happen to all of us through the course of our lives and not attach to them. In fact, I found that I was able to smile as each one, both positive and negative, appeared and welcome them into my experience.

*See Cruising Through Life*

*continued page 5*

## Calendar of Upcoming Events

### April 2015

- Introduction to Zen  
Tuesday, April 7  
7:00 PM - 7:30 PM
- Buddha's Birthday Celebration  
Tuesday, April 7  
7:30 - 9:00 PM
- Sutra/Dharma Talk  
Saturday, April 25  
9:00 AM - 10:00 AM

### May 2015

- Introduction to Zen  
Tuesday, May 5  
7:00 PM - 7:30 PM
- GLZC Rummage Sale  
Saturday, May 9  
9:00 AM - 3:00 PM
- Sutra/Dharma Talk  
Saturday, May 23  
9:00 AM - 10:00 AM



## Buddha's Birthday Celebration

Tuesday, April 7<sup>th</sup>

7:30 PM

Please join us for celebration of Buddha's Birthday with special chanting, meditation, the traditional reading of a poem, followed by a dharma talk and a flower offering. The poem will be given by Abbot and Senior Dharma Teacher Pete Neuwald.

Family, friends and newcomers are encouraged to attend. Following the celebration, cake, cookies, and tea will be served.



## Rummage Sale Returns to GLZC

Spring has sprung! We here at GLZC know what that means: our annual **GLZC Rummage Sale** is not far away. Spring is the perfect time to de-clutter. By organizing and tidying up your physical space you can accomplish two good things at once— simplifying your lifestyle **and** aiding our Zen Center. Just discard your clutter by donating it to our annual sale! The sale will take place at our center on **Saturday, May 9 from 9:00 am to 3:00 pm**. We accept almost everything (except clothes, large seasonal items, aquariums, humidifiers, vaporizers and computer components.)

The sale kicks off on Friday night with the setup and pricing of all donations. Pizza will be provided for all those who help. 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 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.

This rummage sale is our only fundraising event. It provides critical funds for the rental/maintenance of the center and support for retreats and other events. Putting your house in order helps us maintain ours. Please be generous!



## Buddha's Birthday Poem 2014

At his birth  
Buddha said  
"Heaven above, Earth below, only I am holy."

Yahweh said  
"I am the first and last, beside me is no god."

Muhammad said  
"There is no god but Allah, the all, the ah, the one."

Jesus said  
"I am the way, the truth, and the life;  
No one comes to the Father but through me."

Zen Master Seung Sahn said  
"There is one thing that always remains clear  
It is pure and clear, not depending on life and death."

Who alone is holy?  
"What is the one pure and clear thing?"

KATZ!

Black pen scratching on white paper

*Won Shim*

*Empty Our Cups*

*continued from page 1*

nothing, and everything.

Being with him brought up many feelings within myself. I tried to put them aside since I realized that it was most important to be there for him, just as it was for me when I was diagnosed. While a case could be made that I understood his situation, his feelings, and his fears, putting my PCA hat on, I knew that I could not tell him what I thought he should do, and what I thought would be best for him. He didn't need that. He has doctors and specialists to give plenty of opinions and multiple options to consider. I believe what he needed was someone to voice his concerns to, listen to his fears, to be present with him, and to simply listen to him – really listen to him. I believed this, because that is what I needed when I went through my own journey with that disease.

This is where my practice has helped. In our PCA training we talk about emptying our cup before we meet with someone who is going through some difficult life event. In the context of a PCA meeting, this means we put aside our own situation and condition and only concentrate on our relationship with that person and being present for that person.

There is the saying from a Zen story that goes: "Like this cup, you are full of your own opinions and speculations. How can I show you Zen unless you first empty your cup." This is not that different. In both situations, we really can't learn and we really can't be present if our cups are not empty.

This is not always easy to do, but I have found that practice helps. It's not that we ignore or deny our own situation and condition, but we don't let that define our relationship or influence being 100% present for the person in front of us. If we are able to let go of our "I, my, me" for the time that we are with another person, maybe we can offer something to them that will truly help. This is truly a time to "put it all down" and "just do it" by providing a compassionate, listening presence to another human being.



This hasn't always been the case. There were times earlier in my life where I would have been on an emotional rollercoaster, riding high while experiencing the things I like, then sinking into sadness, irritation, or anger when I experienced the things I don't like. I imagine those days as being much like my experience in the two-seat kayak in Bonaire. We were kayaking from a small dock near where our ship was docked to a location two miles away where the coral reefs were located and where we were going snorkeling. The water was pretty rough near shore, and we had to paddle through waves to get to our destination. It took a lot of concentration to keep our kayak facing the correct direction so as not to get tipped over by the big waves. We had to paddle in unison, really strongly, through the waves, and then find some spots where we could relax a little and not paddle so hard. I used to see my life this way. I would "paddle" so hard through the rough times, hoping to soon get to the smooth water where I could relax for a while. I was so focused on "paddling" that I didn't notice anything else around me. This wasn't a very satisfactory way to live my life. I was expending a lot of emotional energy when life wasn't going the way I wanted it to go, and then when things were OK, I was not truly enjoying it, but instead re-gathering my strength for the next big "wave." I finally realized that there had to be a better way to live my life, and this realization led me to find Zen, the teachings of the Buddha, the teachings of Zen Master Seung Sahn, my teacher (Zen Master Dae Kwang), the Great Lake Zen Center, and our wonderful sangha. Just as I wasn't alone in that kayak, none of us are actually alone in this world.

As we are all human beings, we will have emotions, opinions, preferences, and desires. Some people think that if we do strong practice, we can be free of these things and be able to move on and live a peaceful life. This isn't exactly correct. As a human being, you will not ever be devoid of emotions, opinions, and desires. But with strong practice you can learn to not be ruled by these things. You can see beyond them to your own pure original nature.

Shodo Harada Roshi, in his excellent book *Morning Dewdrops of the Mind*, puts it this way: "Our true nature is just like this. We can't get rid of that ego completely and live. But we can recognize that it is something transient and changing from moment to moment and become one with its scenery, moving along with it, knowing that our ego consciousness is something which varies from moment to moment. Our mind is originally totally clear and uncluttered. This clear, transparent mind receives and accepts the scenery of each different moment and expresses it in the mind of

each of those moments." Roshi goes on to warn that if you attach to your ego, you will be unable to move in its heaviness. "If we are always seeing and hearing from under the piled-up layers of ego, we only see a world made crooked by the weight of the ego. If we can encounter that true deep mind beyond the ego and then give free and full energy to its expression, we can give great free life to our days, free from any attachment to our ego, using our imagination fully to push that ego wide open and discover that which connects all of humankind. To give birth to that kind of world where all humans are truly joining hands and energy is true peace. If our minds are noisy and irritated, this won't be able to happen. Especially at this time, it is important to quiet our minds, and with that quiet mind to see clearly through all things, for each person to take responsibility in the understanding and walking of that path which humans should truly walk. This must be seen clearly and acted on energetically." So, the path is clear. Practice regularly and with great intention and energy. Discover the mind that sees clearly through all things, then take this clarity out into the world and use it to help yourself and others. When ego appears, just smile, say hello, and move on. Don't attach. It's your old friend, but it isn't your master. Your true master is there, waiting for recognition and expression.

So, when it's cold, bundle up. If it's raining, grab an umbrella, and if it's sunny, put on a hat and sunscreen. If black, sooty smoke blankets your cruise ship, move inside. Wash your hands frequently to avoid spreading norovirus on a ship. Be mindful of delicate ecosystems and cause no harm when interacting with them. Life is just like this.



# MOON ON THE WATER

is published by the  
**Great Lake Zen Center**  
828 East Locust Street  
Milwaukee, WI 53212

**e-mail:** [info@glzc.org](mailto:info@glzc.org)  
**Web-Site:** <http://www.glzc.org>  
**Kwan Um Web-Site:** <http://www.kwanumzen.org>

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

Founder: Zen Master Seung Sahn  
Guiding Teacher: Zen Master Dae Kwang  
Abbot: Peter Neuwald, SDT  
Do Gam: Susi Childress, BDT, Do Gam  
Treasurer: Laura Otto-Salaj, SDT  
Secretary/Publicity: Andy Yench, DT  
Editor: Gretchen Neuwald, DT  
House Master: Chris Rundblad, DT

Great Lake Zen Center  
828 East Locust Street  
Milwaukee, WI 53212

ADDRESS CORRECTION REQUESTED

## Regular Practice Schedule of the Great Lake Zen Center

Tuesday 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 Tuesday of each month at 7:00 PM. *Dharma Talks* are offered on the fourth Saturday of each month at 9:00 AM.



BUILD RATE
US POSTAGE
PAID
PERMIT NO.
00000