

MOON ON THE WATER

Volume 3, Issue 4

Newsletter of the Great Lake Zen Center, Milwaukee, WI

August, 2001

Fixing a Pot *Zen Master Seung Sahn*

This story is from a Dharma Speech given at the end of a Yong Maeng Jong Jin at the International Zen Center of New York

In the countryside of Korea, people used to come together for big markets that lasted several days. Once a young man went to sell his vegetables and buy some rice. While he was there he saw an old monk just standing completely still in the sun for five minutes. The monk was wearing wintertime clothes, and they were old and torn. It was summer, and the sun was very hot -- Korean people don't like this sun -- but this old monk just stood still for five minutes.

The young man thought as he watched him, "This old monk, is he crazy? Does he have no consciousness, only standing still like this?" So afterwards, when the monk started walking around, the young man went up to him and said, "Excuse me, I would like to know why you stand still in the sun for five minutes."

The old man looked at him and said, "Lunch time."

"Lunch time? Who is having lunch?"

The old monk showed him the inside of his robe -- there were little animals, parasites, like lice. "If I move, they cannot eat, so I only stand still while they take lunch."

The young man thought this monk must have a wonderful mind, to be so kind to little animals, so he asked him if he could become his student.

The monk looked at his face and said, "Not possible."

"Why not possible?" asked the young man.

"Why do you want to become a monk?"

"Well, I don't like married life. I want to find the correct way. You say you give lunch to these small animals, so I have this very strong feeling that maybe this is the correct way. So I like you, so I want to be your student."

"Maybe," said the monk, "Maybe. Where do you live?"

"My parents are dead, so I stay at my brother's house. I have no place of my own; I want to come with you."

"O.K.," said the old monk, "come."

Then they went walking up deep into the mountains for a long time, until they reached a small grass house. In Korea, kitchens are outside of the house. In the kitchen there was a big pot, on a stand, with a fire under it. The pot was made of steel, very heavy. It had two parts: one side for water and one side for rice. So in this house the pot and the stand were broken. Fixing the pot means pouring a little water into the bottom of the pot and making sure it settles exactly in the middle of the bottom of the pot.

The monk said to the young man, "You must fix this pot and stand."

When he had finished, the young man said, "Master, I have fixed the pot."

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YMJJ Retreat and Precepts Ceremony Scheduled

October 5-7 with Zen Master Dae Kwang

GLZC will be sponsoring a YMJJ retreat October 5-7 at Wellspring Retreat Center in Newburg, WI. GLZC guiding teacher Zen Master Dae Kwang will be leading this retreat and conducting interviews. Wellspring is an organic teaching farm with excellent energy for our practice. The price of the retreat is \$80, which includes accommodations and vegetarian meals. The retreat will begin with a free public talk with Zen Master Dae Kwang at 7:30 PM. 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 or Laura.***

Following the YMJJ will be a precepts ceremony at GLZC in Milwaukee. Several of our Sangha members will be taking five or ten precepts, and some of our DTT's will receive long robes and become Dharma Teachers at this ceremony. The ceremony will begin at 4:00 PM. There is no charge, and everyone is welcome. Please plan on attending.

Free Public Talk at GLZC with Zen Master Dae Kwang

There will be a free public Dharma talk followed by a question/answer session with Zen Master Dae Kwang on Thursday, October 4 at GLZC. The talk will begin at 7:30 PM. Zen Master Dae Kwang is abbot of the Kwan Um School of Zen and GLZC's guiding teacher. Please join us for this rare opportunity to learn from a very clear, compassionate teacher.

Poetry Corner

neighbors

by Holly Eberhardy

the birds' chattering song and banter
the morning's cool delight
a fan whirs
while the sun bakes open a peony in
a bright triangle,
on the west end of the tiny backyard—
by the fence the calico cat crawls under to visit us.
the trellis awaits a clothesline, collective
between upstairs and us
and a commune herb garden signals a final
year's harmony—a joy of being neighbors

Fixing the Pot

(continued from page 1)

So the old monk went to check and said, "No good! Again!" and he dumped the water out.

The young man thought, "This Master has very keen eyes, so maybe he sees some mistake." So, he tried again, this time being very careful and checking the level of the water in the pot. When he had finished he said, "Master, I have correctly fixed the pot."

"O.K., I will check." So the Master went to check the pot and again he said, "No good! Again!" and dumped the water out.

The young man was very confused. "Where is my mistake? I don't understand. Maybe it is outside the pot, maybe the stand is not correct." So this time, he prepared the pot and checked all around the outside, the counter area, making sure everything was clean and neat. When he finished up, he said, "Master, I have fixed the pot -- it's very wonderful, very beautiful!"

"No good!" said the Master, and dumped the water out.

The young man did not understand. "Maybe the pot is good, but the kitchen is no good," he thought. So next time he fixed the whole kitchen -- the ceiling, the floor, everything. When he finished, he called to the Master, "Master! I have fixed the whole kitchen!"

"Oh, that's wonderful! I will check," said the Master. He went to the pot -- "No good!" and turned it over again.

This happened four times, five times, six times, seven times, eight times. Each time the young man thought, "What could it be this time?" and each time the Master answered, "No good!" and dumped the water. Now this man is getting angry. Finally the ninth time, the young man thought, "I do not like this Master, this is the last time!" So he just set the pot on the stand and said, "Master, I am finished."

"Wonderful! Wonderful!" said the Master.

This Master was testing his mind. Zen is not dependent on anything. You must be dependent on yourself, whatever your own style is. But what is your own style? If you keep your opinions, your condition, your situation, your correct style cannot appear. So this Master tested his mind. Before, each time when the student fixed the pot, "maybe this will pass, maybe this will pass;" much thinking. The last time, no thinking.

Also this Master tested his perseverance mind. "This young man likes me, but how much does he want to understand his true self?" Usually people try maybe four, maybe five times, then they say, "I don't like you!" Then they go away. Try, try, try is very necessary, then some time the Zen Master will say, "Oh, wonderful!"

Only this mind, try, try, try, is very important. Try, try, try means persevere. So you must only go straight, try, try, try -- then you will get your true way.

Extended Practice Scheduled

Friday, September 14

7:00-10:30 PM

There will be an extended practice at GLZC on Friday, September 14, from 7:00-10:30 PM. This practice will include special chanting, regular chanting, four sitting meditation periods and three walking meditation periods. Please join us for all or part of this practice. It is a wonderful way to unwind after a busy week and clear your mind for the weekend.

Sangha Meeting Time Change

Sangha meetings will continue to be held on the third Monday of every month, but they will now begin at 7:00 PM. The earlier time will allow us more opportunity for practice following the meetings. All GLZC members are encouraged to attend these meetings.

GLZC T-shirts

A new logo has been designed for the GLZC T-shirts, and the first ones have been ordered. The design is centered on an athletic gray short sleeve shirt. The cost of ordering the shirt is \$15. If you would like to order a T-shirt and have not already done so, please contact us, and we will put you on a list for the second ordering.

The design is as follows, but the Zen circle is white, and the waves are blue (so they will be visible on the gray shirt).



YMJJ Held at Wellspring, July 20-22

On the weekend of July 20, 2001, more than 20 people from Milwaukee, Madison, and Chicago sanghas came together at the Wellspring Retreat Center in Newburg, Wisconsin to practice. The retreat was led by the Isthmus Zen Community's guiding teacher, Bill Brown, JDPSN. With temperatures soaring into the upper 90's during the retreat, the heat became a good teacher for the retreatants. Not only did it become clear that we had to be mindful of our own conditions in order to avoid heat stroke, we also had an opportunity to be mindful of others' conditions and to assist whenever possible. As we all suffered together with the heat, many of us experienced a sense of connectedness and compassion as we continued to "just do it". This was the GLZC's first YMJJ to be co-sponsored with the Isthmus Zen Community of Madison. We would like to thank JDPSN Bill Brown for his excellent, clear teaching, and we plan to have more co-sponsored events with IZC in the future.

Fox Lake Correctional Group to Add Another Day of Practice

The Buddhist group at Fox Lake Correctional Institute will be adding another day of practice. The group, led by GLZC's co-director, Peter Neuwald, will now be meeting one Friday evening per month in addition to the one Monday afternoon per month already scheduled. The group of approximately 15 prisoners is reading and discussing Thich Nhat Hanh's book The Heart of the Buddha's Teaching. In addition to Buddhist instruction, Peter is leading the group in chanting, sitting, and walking practice during his bimonthly visits to the prison. The group is in need of cushions and mats as well as altar items. GLZC is investigating ways in which we might help them attain these items, including the possibility of making the mats.

Peter reports that the men have already made good progress in their practice forms, and their sitting and chanting are becoming stronger each time he meets with them. Susi Childress, DTT, visited the group with Peter in July and delivered a Dharma talk. She has applied with prison authorities to attend Friday practices with Peter on a regular basis, and she awaits final clearance by prison authorities.

Pick 'n Save We Care Program

GLZC is registered with Pick 'n Save grocery stores as a tax-exempt charitable organization in the We Care Program. Pick 'n Save will donate to our Zen Center a portion of all sales that are scanned on a Pick 'n Save Saver's Club card keyed to the GLZC number. So the next time you go into a Pick 'n Save, apply for a new Saver's Club card at the service counter and identify GLZC as the beneficiary by giving them this number: **#279415**. This money should be very helpful in offsetting some of our operating expenses.

Editor's Note: This is the final opportunity to sign up to receive this newsletter. The next newsletter will only be mailed to those who have notified us that they would like to continue to receive it. Thanks to all those who have already responded.

Moon On the Water Mailing List Update

From your Board of Directors: With the increasing cost of printing and mailing the *Moon on the Water* newsletter, we are asking that anyone interested in continuing to receive the newsletter to complete and return this form. If you do not return the form, we will drop you from the mailing list. Our newsletter will continue to be available on our web page or at GLZC free of charge. If you would like to continue to have the newsletter mailed to you, please consider making a donation to help us with the costs. Thank you.

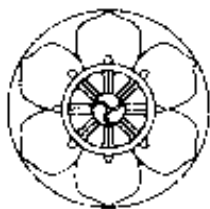
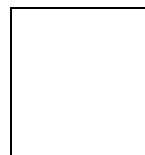
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The Great Lake Zen Center is affiliated with the Kwan Um School of Zen.

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Regular Practice Schedule of the Great Lake Zen Center

Monday, Wednesday and Thursday at 7:30pm;
Saturday at 7:00am

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 Thursday of each month. Dharma Talks are offered on the last Wednesday of each month. Both are at 7:30PM.

