
MOON ON THE WATER

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August 2011

The Great Treasure

By Zen Master Seung Sahn, *Droppin'g Ashes on the Buddha*

When Dae Ju first came to Zen Master Ma-jo, the Master asked him, "What do you want from me?"

Dae Ju said, "I want you to teach me the dharma."

"What a fool you are!" said Ma-jo. "You have the greatest treasure of the world within you, and yet you go around asking other people for help. What good is this? I have nothing to give you."

Dae Ju bowed and said, "Please, Master, tell me what this treasure is."

Ma-jo said, "Where is your question coming from? *This* is your treasure. It is precisely what is making you ask the question at this very moment. Everything is stored in this precious treasure-trove of yours. It is there at your disposal, you can use it as you wish, nothing is lacking. You are the master of everything. What then are you running away from yourself and seeking things outside?"

Upon hearing these words, Dae Ju attained enlightenment.

INSIDE THIS ISSUE

- 1 The Great Treasure
- 1 Sit In, Sit Out
- 2 The Teacher and the Student
- 3 Calendar of Upcoming Events
- 4 No Good, No Bad
- 5 Fall YMJJ Retreat

Sit In, Sit Out

Pete Neuwald, Abbot, Senior Dharma Teacher

On the Monday after our last YMJJ, we had the good fortune to have our Guiding Teacher, Zen Master Dae Kwang, join us for our regular practice. After chanting, Zen Master Dae Kwang popped up to face out to the wall for the sitting period. Of course, there was nothing odd about that, except that we had been always sitting retreat style and facing in, away from the walls. After the sitting period and our reading, people were confused. "What is the correct way?" This reminded me of a story that Zen Master Seung Sahn told about in *The Compass of Zen*.

Zen Master Hak Un lived alone in a hermitage on a mountain in Korea. In the valley below his hermitage were two nuns' temples. One day a disagreement developed between the nuns of the Eastern temple and the nuns of the Western temple. The Eastern temple nuns said that when chanting to Kwan Seum Bosal, it should be pronounced "Kwan Se-*um* Bosal," while the Western temple nuns said it should be pronounced "Kwan Se-*oom* Bosal." They went back and forth arguing about which way was correct. Finally, the nuns agreed to ask Zen Master Hak Un the next morning. The abbot of the Eastern temple was getting worried that maybe their pronunciation wasn't correct after all, so they decided to make some rice cakes and feel out the Zen Master that evening. Zen Master Hak Un was *very* happy to get the rice cakes – mountain monks don't get many treats! Before the nuns left, they told Zen Master Hak Un about the disagreement and asked if they were correct. Zen Master Hak Un replied, "Of course! You are correct! Kwan Se-*um* Bosal is the correct way." This made the nuns of the Eastern temple very happy as they headed back down the mountain!

Meanwhile, the nuns of the Western temple were also worried. They too decided to pay a late night visit to the Zen Master. As a pretense, they cooked up some special noodles to take up the mountain. Although it was late, the Zen Master was also *very* happy to eat up the delicious noodles. After he finished the noodles, they asked if they were correct. Zen Master Hak Un replied, "Of course! Kwan Se-*oom* Bosal is correct!" This made the nuns of the Western temple very happy as they headed back down the mountain.

The next morning all the nuns were assembled in the Main Buddha Hall as Zen Master Hak Un climbed onto the high rostrum. After prostrations, the question was put to the great

See **Sit In, Sit Out**

continued page 4

The Teacher and the Student

Susi Childress, BT

A couple of years ago I sat a fall retreat with the Isthmus Zen Community in beautiful Dodgeville, Wisconsin. During a short break, I headed out to a cliff in the woods to sit and enjoy nature. As I walked out to the cliff, a deer raced away through the woods. I sat down and was very still in hopes of seeing more animals. As I looked out across the kettle moraine, I saw a squirrel sitting in a tree about fifteen feet away, right at eye level with me. He was grooming himself, and I sat very still, watching him and wondering about how squirrels groom themselves. He reminded me of my cat in the way he had his hind leg lifted in order to clean under his tail. All of a sudden he spotted me, and turned to face me. He sat motionless, watching me, and I sat motionless, watching him. I thought, "I can sit still longer than you can, squirrel. I've sat three retreats in the last four weekends, and I can sit really still!" The squirrel responded by sitting still and watching me.

So the contest was on. Five minutes passed; no movement, just sitting and paying attention. Ten minutes passed... I didn't move, and he didn't move. We both continued to sit and watch. "Darn," I thought, "I am moktak master at this retreat, and it must be nearly time for me to do the five-minute moktak warning. As much as I am enjoying this, I'm going to have to look at my watch to check the time." I looked, and sure enough, I had to leave. I stood up to walk away, and the squirrel, winner of our contest, scampered up the tree. As I walked away I thought, "You taught me what it means to be a squirrel. And I taught you what it means to be a moktak master."

One of the things I really love about going to practice is that it provides an opportunity to quiet my mind and body and just relax into the present moment. When we are able to do this, it is easy to see the teachers who appear before us from moment to moment. When we are thinking, it is not so easy to see them or to attain the meaning of their teaching.

When I was a relatively new Zen student, I thought that practicing hard would give me something. I'm not sure what I thought I would get, but I knew it would be something worth all the hard practice! As a high school special education teacher, I began to see that much of what I was learning through Zen practice was applicable in my classroom situation. My teenaged students provided numerous opportunities for me to practice mindfulness, paying attention, coming back to this moment, letting go, using skillful means, etc. I remember one day when a sullen teenaged girl plopped herself into a chair in my room and exclaimed, "School is a prison! I hate this place!"

Without thinking I responded, "Well, I have good news and

bad news for you. The good news: There are no bars on the windows, and the doors are not locked on the inside. You can leave if you want to."

"Not really," she replied. "I would be in big trouble if I left."

"Yes, your parents will have a fit if you do, and you may be grounded for life, but the reality is that you can choose to leave. Additionally, maybe you sit in a class and say, 'I hate school! School is a prison!' The student sitting next to you might say, 'I love school! I enjoy coming here most days!' So, if two people in the same room have two different views of the situation, one seeing a prison and one seeing a pleasurable place, which is the truth?"

"I suppose you want me to say the prison is all in my mind..."

"The good news is that if the prison is in your mind, you can knock down the bars and destroy the prison," I replied.

"What is the bad news?" she grumbled.

"The bad news is that if the prison is in your mind, you can knock down the bars and destroy the prison.

One of the things I really love about going to practice is that it provides an opportunity to quiet my mind and body and just relax into the present moment. When we are able to do this, it is easy to see the teachers who appear before us from moment to moment. When we are thinking, it is not so easy to see them or to attain the meaning of their teaching.

Later that night, when I was sitting in meditation at home, I reflected on this interchange and realized that the idea for this teaching came from a Dharma talk I had heard one night at practice. When I listened to the talk, I did not think, "Oh, I am going to find a way to use this to teach others." I simply listened and connected to the meaning behind the words of the speech. I did not check the speech of the Dharma teacher nor attach to his words; I just attained the meaning of his speech: *mind makes everything*. So, if you don't like what you have, change your mind.

In the temple rules that we read at the beginning of a retreat, Zen Master Seung Sahn instructs us to listen to Dharma talks in this way: *"When you listen to the words of the Zen teacher, keep your mind clear. Do not be attached to the words. Cut off all thought and pierce the true meaning. Do not think, 'I already have great understanding; I have no use for this*

See **The Teacher and the Student**

continued page 3

Calendar of Upcoming Events

August 2011

- **Introduction to Zen**
Monday, August 1, 7:30 – 9:00 PM
GLZC
- **Sangha Meeting**
Sunday, August 21, 9:30-10:30 AM
GLZC
- **Sutra Talk on Platform Sutra**
Wednesday, August 24
7:30 - 9:00 PM
GLZC

September 2011

- **No Introduction to Zen or Practice**
Monday, September 5
Enjoy the Holiday
- **Public Dharma Talk**
Friday, September 23
7:30 -9:00 PM
First Unitarian Society
1342 N. Astor St.
- **YMJJ Retreat**
Saturday, September 24, 6:00 AM –
Sunday, September 25, 3:00 PM,
GLZC



speech. This is delusion.” I have found that I must be very mindful when I listen to a Dharma talk to keep from slipping into my old mind habits of checking and discriminating (like and dislike mind). If I start sorting the ideas in the speech by what I like or dislike, checking and excusing the ones I dislike while attaching to the ones I like, then I am unable to digest the teaching and make it my own. *“If a snake drinks water, the water becomes venom. If a cow drinks water, the water becomes milk. If you cling to ignorance, you create life and death. If you keep clear, you become Buddha.”* Even though two people can sit a Dharma talk and hear the same words, their understanding and how the teaching is manifested may be very different depending upon the clarity of their minds when they received the teaching.

Asking questions after the talk can help ensure that your understanding is correct and complete. I discovered early in my practice that being shy and too embarrassed to ask questions doesn't help me or others. One of the reasons I go to practice is so that I can “have the dirt washed off my potato.” It's important to expose my understanding (or lack thereof) so that it can be corrected or affirmed. This practice is not for me; it's for others. If my mind is clouded with delusion, how can I effectively help others? Despite my best intentions, if I am not clear, I may cause more harm than good. Using every opportunity to cut through delusion and expose attachment to the discriminating mind is an important part of our practice. It is how we work to help others.

All of this is also true of kong-an interviews with the Zen Master at retreat. I used to get very nervous about being put on the spot to answer silly questions that seemed to have no meaning. Eventually I realized that the interchange between the teacher and me was what was important, not so much the words of the kong-an. I needed to make a connection to the teacher while we were engaged in the kong-an exchange if I was ever going to attain the true meaning of the kong-an. The experience can be quite intimate, and it has been a struggle for me to let down my defenses and allow this to happen. Sometimes the kong-ans that stump me for long periods of time seem to have a “behind-meaning” that also stumps me in my everyday life. My incorrect answers allow the teacher to see where my attachments lie, and he can then respond in a way that may help me to identify and let go of these attachments. There is a certain amount of trust that is necessary in this interchange. I must have faith that the teacher is able to detect and guide me to see my mistakes, and I have to believe that he is doing his job as a teacher by helping me to let go of my attachments and see clearly what's directly in front of me. But if I begin to follow too blindly and start to lose my strong center, he will hit me thirty times (figuratively speaking) to show me the error of my ways.

All in all, it is really very simple. When you listen to a talk, just listen with a clear mind, no checking or discriminating. When you go to interview, be open and respond without thinking. Ask questions when you don't understand. Recognize and honor the teacher before you from moment to moment. When it is time to strike the moktak, just do it. And... what did I get? Only how can I help you?

OK, I've been a school teacher for many years, and old habits are hard to break... so now I must give you a test to see if you understand. In the story about my student thinking that school is a prison, which is the teacher? In the story about the squirrel and me, which is the teacher? At a Dharma talk or in interview, which is the teacher? If you figure it out, be sure to let me know. I really could use the help!

No Good, No Bad

By Frank Pauc

Our oldest son, Hans, will be in Iraq by the time you read this. He is being deployed there with his unit for a year, at least. Needless to say, this situation is disturbing to Karin and myself. We are worried about our son's safety, and we find his deployment to be senseless. This is hard for us.

At the Zen Center we often talk about how there is "no good and no bad"; the idea being that these things are only in our minds. We make good and bad. Reality is inherently perfect, and everything is interconnected. I try to apply this viewpoint to Hans' situation and I find it to be very difficult. My mind rebels when I think about Hans' participation in the war, and I say to myself, "This is nonsense." Actually, I use a much stronger word than "nonsense", but you get the idea. Hans' involvement in the Iraq war is so wrong at so many levels that it makes my head spin. I'm sorry, but for me this situation qualifies as "bad".

So, does this mean that I have rejected Zen in this case? Maybe not. I think the practice has made it easier for me to see the reasons for Hans' choices. I can see that he joined the Army for the same reasons I had over thirty years ago. I understand why he is doing what he is doing, and I can still respect him. There is no anger or resentment between us. If anything, I just feel sad.

I believe that Hans and I have an unspoken understanding about his deployment. He knows that Karin and I did not want him to join the Army, and he knows that we still love him and support him even though he did join. He also knows that we know all this. On the other hand, Hans is probably not happy that I am an antiwar activist. He doesn't talk to me about it. I know that he puts up with my radical ways, even though they rub against his views and his chosen profession. He is following his path, I am following mine. God bless us both.

Andy, being the good friend and sage dharma teacher that he is, suggested that perhaps one reason for Hans' deployment is to get me fired up about working for peace. I think that Andy is correct. I am more motivated. I can't change Hans' path, but I might keep some other young person from going into combat. There is a meaning and purpose for Hans to go to war. I don't understand it. Maybe I never will. I have to accept what is really happening, and work with it. I think that Zen will help me to do that.



Sit In, Sit Out

continued from page 1

Zen Master. He closed his eyes and after a long time said, "This is a *very* difficult question!" The nuns were confused, "But yesterday you said . . ." With eyes closed again, he then said, "But it is very easy . . ." Each group felt relieved thinking each was correct.

He said, "A long time ago, when I was a young monk, I studied the most profound sutras of our tradition. The Rice Cake Sutra says Kwan Se-*um* Bosal is correct. But the Great Noodle Sutra says Kwan Se-*oom* Bosal is correct."

This really got the nuns going! "You made rice cakes for the Zen Master! You're no good!"

"You gave him noodles! That's low class!"

Back and forth, back and forth, back and forth. Thinking, thinking, thinking. Checking, checking, checking.

Suddenly the Zen Master shouted, "KAAAAAATZ!! Put it all *down!* Kwan Se-*um* Bosal is Kwan Se-*um* Bosal. Kwan Se-*oom* Bosal is Kwan Se-*oom* Bosal. When you're chanting, only *do* it!"

So, which do we like better, sitting in or sitting out? Our style is sitting out, unless we are doing a retreat. No problem. It's very simple. It's much simpler than remembering our School's new standing bow form. I'm still working on that!

The Platform Sutra of the Sixth Patriarch

Shen Xiu secretly wrote his poem at midnight on the wall:

Body is the Bodhi-tree,
Mind is a clear mirror stand.
Carefully we wipe them constantly,
And let no dust alight.

Hui Neng, the "barbarian" and soon to be Sixth Patriarch, replied:

Bodhi has no tree,
Clear mirror has no stand.
Originally nothing,
Where is dust?

So, then what? Come to the Platform Sutra talk and let's look at the only Sutra in our tradition not attributed to the Buddha. The "barbarian" from the South has very clear teaching.

Sutra Talk on Platform Sutra
Pete Neuwald, Abbot, Senior Dharma Teacher
Wednesday, August 24th
7:30 PM



Group photo of participants from GLZC's YMJJ Retreat,
July 22-24, 2011

Don't Make Anything Public Talk with Zen Master Dae Kwang

Friday, September 23, 2011

Please join us for a Dharma Talk by Senior Dharma Teacher and Abbot, Pete Neuwald, titled, *Don't Make Anything*, followed by Q&A with Zen Master Dae Kwang, guiding teacher of the Great Lake Zen Center. This is a free talk, open to everyone. It will start at **7:30 pm** at **First Unitarian Society**, 1342 North Astor (corner of Ogden and Astor). This talk is the kick-off to our Fall YMJJ Retreat.

Fall Yong Maeng Jong Jin Retreat September 24-25, 2011

Looking forward to cooler fall weather? Are you ready to re-energize after a languid summer? Come and sit with us on our Fall Yong Maeng Jong Jin Retreat. Enjoy this opportunity for sustained periods of mindfulness and together-action practice. The retreat will include sitting, walking, chanting, bowing meditation, along with kong-an interviews, formal meals and short work periods.

Our fall **YMJJ Retreat** will be held at GLZC, 828 Locust St., and will run from **6:00 am Saturday, September 24 through 3:00 pm Sunday, September 25**. **Zen Master Dae Kwang**, the guiding teacher of our center, will be leading the retreat and conducting interviews. The price of the retreat cost varies for DT/DTT, members of Kwan Um School, and non-members. See the registration form on our website for complete details. The price includes vegetarian meals. Sleeping space can be arranged if required at no extra charge. Those needing sleeping space should notify us by email and bring a sleeping bag, pillow, washcloth, and towel. For more information, email us at info@glzc.org

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828 East Locust Street
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e-mail: info@glzc.org
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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, DTT
House Master: Chris Rundblad, DTT

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

ADDRESS CORRECTION REQUESTED

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.



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