



MOON ON THE WATER

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Newsletter of the Great Lake Zen Center, Milwaukee, WI

February, 2003

The Garden

Michael Zinke, DT

Originally there was nothing. Then the grass was removed, the soil turned, tilled, and raked. The rocks were removed and peat moss was added to help the soil retain moisture. Seeds and starter plants were introduced to the warmth and protection of the soil. Some took hold and sprouted, some weren't strong enough or fertile enough to survive in this new, strange environment and died before maturing.

The survivors grew and formed plants. The plants produced blossoms that later became peas, beans, tomatoes, sunflowers, corn, and a host of other delicious foods. During their growing period, plenty of hard work was required to remove the weeds that threatened to strangle the weaker plants, and it seemed that every part of the country except the garden received ample rain during the summer. Watering the garden became a nightly ritual. But before long you could bend over and pluck a pea pod from the vine, and without uttering a single sound, the pea pod would offer its life to the harvester. Then came the beans and tomatoes -- the garden kept giving of itself throughout the summer. At times its generosity exceeded our requirements, and new homes had to be found for the surplus.

Then, slowly at first, the leaves of the plants started turning brown at the edges. The edges became wrinkled, dry, and crumbly. No amount of watering or care helped as the brown color and dryness spread throughout the leaves, then the stalks, and finally down to the roots of the plants. The plants slowly decayed. The colder nights, and occasional frost, sped the plant's demise. New growth stopped, the bountiful supply of offerings decreased to only a few of the hardiest plants, and soon even they gave up the struggle. The sunflowers that once stood straight and tall and reached for the sun now bent over as if looking for a place to lie down in surrender to the approaching winter.

Now, on a cold November night, the skeletons of the garden are placed into the fire pit. A match is struck, and the flames start to consume what little remains of the garden. The flames start slowly, then seem to jump from one plant carcass to another, then to another and another. The flames rise high and the darkness of the night gives way to the light offered by the fire. Hiss! What little moisture that remains in the stalks now turns to steam from the fire's heat. Pop! What was once a thriving, living plant now succumbs to the hungry fire. The yellow, orange, and blue tongue of the fire engorges the decaying flesh of the garden, leaving only ashes in its path. Crackle! The flames leap higher and higher as if dancing in a celebration of destruction. Hiss! More moisture turns to steam - or is that a plant crying out in pain? The night's darkness is illuminated by hundreds of tiny, glowing

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Notes from a Zen Outpost

Peter Neuwald, DT, Co-director GLZC

We have a somewhat unusual situation in the Midwest. While Zen Buddhism is relatively new to the United States, it's even newer to the Midwest. Unlike the East and West Coasts, we don't have many senior teachers. Sometimes, this causes some problems. Maybe our not-so-senior teachers are not as well versed in all the ins and outs of practice form and teachings. I remember how we used to emphasize the word "hindrance" in the Heart Sutra. This was how other not-so-senior teachers taught us. Later, during the first retreat our center did with Zen Master Dae Kwang, he asked us why we did that. The answer was simple! That's how we were taught. So now we were corrected and we no longer emphasize "hindrance." That was no problem.

Sometimes when we have a retreat with other schools from the Midwest, we find competing opinions on what the correct form is. Maybe none of us really know. What's important is why do we do something. Are we really trying to help with non-attached love, what we call "Great Love?" Or are we only trying to be the one who is "correct?" This can be difficult sometimes.

When we practice together many likes and dislikes appear. This can be amplified at a retreat. Actually, we usually go through each day with many likes and dislikes. As our practice deepens, we just begin to notice them much more! At a retreat we may find that things we don't like annoy us much more, be they forms, other practitioners, or the phase of the moon.

Seng Tsang, the third patriarch, wrote:

"The Great Way is not difficult
for those who make no distinctions.
Have no likes and dislikes,
and everything becomes clear."

No likes and dislikes - very important. Hui Neng, the Sixth Patriarch, got enlightenment upon hearing a monk recite the following line from the Diamond Sutra: "Do not become attached to any thoughts that arise in the mind." This is a wonderful teaching for all of us.

Since we probably won't have resident senior teachers for some time here, it is very important that we all help one another with compassion. For those of us who are not-so-senior teachers, this has a number of implications. We need to be very sensitive to helping other teachers, those who are training to be teachers, and all members of our Sangha. We need to hone our skills in form and the teachings as best we are able. We need to provide real support and training to those who will become teachers

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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 are planning a weekend of workshops, practice, activities, and fun at the Argonne National Labs in Chicago. This event is open to any KUSZ member who wishes to attend. Members are expected to attend from sanghas in Wisconsin, Illinois, Indiana, Michigan, Kansas, Arkansas, Iowa, and possibly Colorado. There will be six KUSZ teachers giving dharma talks, presenting workshops, and giving interviews. This is an unparalleled opportunity to meet some wonderful teachers and receive their teaching. The teachers will be GLZC guiding teacher Zen Master Dae Kwang, Zen Master Soeng Hyang (Barbara Rhodes), Zen Master Hae Kwang (Stan Lombardo), Judy Roitman, JDPSN, Dennis Duermeier, JDPSN, and Bill Brown, JDPSN.

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.

The cost to attend the weekend is \$110, which includes a bed in a double room, six meals, and all workshops/activities. The cost for one day and night is \$75. Because space is limited, and this event is expected to fill up quickly, we ask that you register as soon as possible. Full payment will be expected in advance. As with all KUSZ events, scholarships are available for anyone who would like to attend but who is unable to pay the full amount. Please contact Peter or Laura if you are in this situation. You may pick up a registration form at GLZC or download it at www.glzc.org.

Because Argonne is a secure research facility, registrations must be received by April 15. No late registrations will be accepted. Anyone entering the facility may be subjected to a security search.

Dharma Teachers and Dharma Teachers in Training are invited to attend a teachers' workshop on Friday, April 25 from 9:00 AM until 4:00 PM with Zen Master Dae Kwang and Zen Master Soeng Hyang. The teachers' workshop will be held at the Church of Religious Science in Glen Ellyn, Ill. Cost for this workshop is \$35, which includes lunch. Sign up with Peter if you plan to attend.

Kido Retreat Scheduled

Saturday, February 22, 2003

9:00 AM - 4:00 PM

As part of our intensive week of practice, a Kido chanting retreat will be held on Saturday, February 22, 2003, from 9:00 AM until 4:00 PM. Kido, literally translated, means "energy path." Participants in this Kido will play percussion instruments while continuously chanting "Kwan Seum Bosal." Zen Master Seung Sahn has said that completing a one-day Kido may provide as much benefit as a one-week YMJJ retreat. The Kido will be held at the First Unitarian Church, 1342 N. Astor, Milwaukee. Participants should bring a percussion "instrument" (anything you can bang or hit, such as blocks of wood, may serve this purpose) and a bag lunch. The charge for this retreat is \$15. A lack of funds should never be a reason to not practice, so if you are in need of a scholarship for the Kido, please contact Peter or Laura. Register by signing up at GLZC or by contacting Peter.

One Day Retreat at GLZC

Sunday, February 23, 2003

9:00 AM - 4:00 PM

To mark the midway point in our Heart Kyol Che practice and the end to our intensive week of practice, a one-day retreat will be held at GLZC on Sunday, February 23, from 9:00 a.m. until 4:00 p.m. The retreat will feature a Dharma Talk, special and regular chanting, extended sitting and walking meditation periods, work practice, consulting interviews with senior dharma teacher and GLZC co-director Laura Otto-Salaj, and a vegetarian lunch. The fee for this retreat is \$15, but scholarships are available for those in need. This is an excellent opportunity for new and experienced students to learn some additional practice forms used in the Kwan Um School of Zen. A vegetarian lunch will be presented in the formal style, and instruction will be provided as needed. In order that we may plan food for this event, anyone interested in attending should sign up at GLZC, call Peter or Laura, or E-mail us at info@glzc.org.

Heart Kyol Che Intensive Week of Practice

Monday through Friday, February 17-21, 2003

7:00-9:00 PM

On Jan. 7, we held a small celebration at GLZC marking the beginning of Heart Kyol Che. Kyol Che, literally translated, means "tight dharma", and it is an extended period of intense practice. Participants in Heart Kyol Che have made commitments to increase their practice during this period. Midway through the Heart Kyol Che period, during the week of Feb. 17, we will extend practice times by one hour and practice each night of the week. Practice will be held from 7:00 p.m. until 9:00 p.m. Please join us on any or all of these nights, and stay as long as you able.

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embers flying high into the air before slowly descending back to the ground where the glow gradually disappears and the remaining ash grows cold once again.

The flames grow smaller as the fuel supply is consumed, then without notice they suddenly grow larger as new food is found to temporarily satisfy the fire's hunger. Soon there is no more food for the insatiable flames, and they also start to disappear. Beneath the ashes of what was once the garden grows a bed of hot embers. The embers appear to pulsate as if they were a living, breathing entity. A slight breeze feeds the embers, and they grow brighter, burst into flames, then the flames die out once more. The embers continue to breathe for hours after the flames have disappeared, consuming every last ounce of plant flesh.

As the flames dissipate, darkness recaptures the night. At first a slight dimming is felt, then swiftly the heavy darkness falls upon the area, extinguishing what little light remains. The evening cold, which was replaced by the warmth offered by the fire, returns with a vengeance, as if angry for being pushed away. The night is very still, very dark, very quiet. The garden is now only smoke.

Sometimes we humans feel as if we will last forever, or that the new car we so badly desire will last forever, or that our happiness or good position will last forever. But we forget the characteristics of external phenomena – things are created (arising), they start to form (stability), then they start to decay (decline), and then they disappear (dissolution). When we get attached to things, we ignore these characteristics. We think that things will last forever, or that we will last forever, or that our relationships will last forever. We think these things because this is what we want, what we desire. Our suffering is caused by not recognizing that eventually all things decay and disappear -- just as the once flourishing garden is no more.

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.

Babies Galore!

The GLZC Sangha has been blessed with the addition of three new babies! Gary and Jennifer Dixon became the proud parents of a son, Dylan Ryan Dixon, on December 23, 2002. Gary and Jennifer also have another son, Aaron, 2. On December 28, 2002, Susi Childress became a grandmother with the birth of Skylar Beth, daughter of Jenni Childress and Dan Welchman. And finally, on February 6, 2003, Andy Yenchu and Heather Couch gave birth to their first child, Ian McKenzie, who weighed in at a hefty 10 lbs., 13 oz. All babies and parents are doing well.

A 100-day baby-naming ceremony is being planned for Dylan, Aaron, Skylar, and Ian at GLZC on April 6.

Zen Outpost... (continued from page 1)

and not just throw them in the fire with no direction. When we don't know something, say it. And we must always, everywhere work on not attaching to our own likes and dislikes.

For those of us who are not teachers, it's also important to provide support to the same people. The Buddha told us to look at our own lives deeply. Good advice. Don't attach to the words of teachers or other practitioners. If you see something that does not ring true, speak with a teacher about it.

We all need to support the Sangha, our community, as we are able. The Sangha is all of us. This is important in every community, but perhaps even more so here in the Midwest. This April we will be having our first Midwest Sangha Weekend. This is a wonderful opportunity to spend a weekend with a number of senior teachers from our school, including our own Guiding Teacher, Zen Master Dae Kwang. Attend it and come with all of your questions, especially the ones we not-so-senior teachers got wrong!

Extended Practice Scheduled:

An extended night of practice has been scheduled for Friday, March 21, 2003 at GLZC. The practice will be held from 7:00 PM until midnight. Come for all five hours, or come for as much as you can. Hope to see you there!

Calendar of Upcoming Events

Monday, Feb. 17-Friday, Feb. 21: Intensive week of practice, daily at GLZC, 7:00-9:00 PM.

Saturday, Feb. 22: Kido chanting retreat at First Unitarian Church, Ogden & Astor, Milwaukee, 9:00 AM-4:00 PM. Bring a bag lunch and a percussion instrument. Fee \$15.

Sunday, Feb. 23: One-day retreat at GLZC, 9:00 AM-4:00 PM. Fee \$15

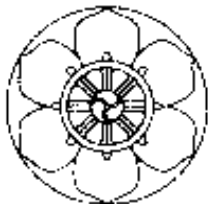
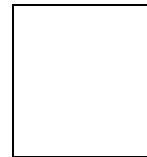
Friday, Mar. 21: Extended practice, 7:00 PM - midnight, GLZC

Monday, Apr. 7: Buddha's Birthday and ceremonial end of Heart Kyol Che, 7:30 PM, GLZC

Friday, Apr. 25: Midwest Sangha DT/DTT workshop with Zen Master Dae Kwang and Zen Master Soeng Hyang, Church of Religious Science in Glen Ellyn, Ill., 9:00 AM-4:00 PM, \$35. Contact Peter to register.

Friday, Apr. 25- Sunday, Apr. 27: Midwest Sangha Weekend, Argonne National Labs, Chicago, \$110 for the weekend, or \$75 for one day and night. Register at GLZC or print out the registration on line at www.glzc.org

Great Lake Zen Center
828 E. Locust St.
Milwaukee, WI 53212



ADDRESS CORRECTION REQUESTED

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Great Lake Zen Center
828 East Locust Street
Milwaukee, WI 53212
414-771-2490 (Peter) or
414-380-9215 (Laura)

e-mail: info@glzc.org

Web-Site: www.glzc.org

Kwan Um Web-Site: 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
Co-Director: Laura Otto-Salaj, DT
Co-Director: Peter Neuwald, DT
Treasurer: Jeff Ligman, DT
Secretary/Publicity: Andy Yench, DTT
Editor/ Member At-Large: Susi Childress, DT

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.

