

# MOON ON THE WATER

Volume 12, Issue 1

Newsletter of the Great Lake Zen Center, Milwaukee, WI

July, 2010

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## Check, Check, Check

*By Michael Zinke, BT*

There is something that all Dharma Teachers at GLZC (I'm making an assumption based on experience) dislike doing. They don't have to do it often but when the time comes -- it causes a struggle in the mind. They try to avoid it, they put it off until the very last minute and even beyond that. What is it? Well, it's the email that informs them that it is their turn to write an article for the newsletter. That email strikes fear into our hearts. The mind immediately goes into overdrive wondering what can I write about, what personal experience can I use to demonstrate how Zen can help in that certain situation. As a result the mind goes into checking mode, I could write about X but I did that the last time, I could write about Y but we've discussed that at the last Dharma talk.

Check, check, check and nothing gets written. The mind becomes totally blank. Then, slowly, an idea comes to mind but the checking mind rejects the idea for some unknown reason. Then another idea comes to mind but checking mind is right there waiting and throws that idea out as well. As long as the checking mind is there creating excuses why not to do the article, nothing ever gets done. And, while nothing is getting done our minds are still trying to come up with an idea that will satisfy the checking mind - which is very hard to do because checking mind is very strong.

So, what causes checking mind? Is it there because we don't have confidence in ourselves and are hesitant to say or do something because we aren't sure if it is the right thing to do or not? Is it because our desire mind wants everyone to like us so we don't say or do anything that might upset someone else or cause them to not like us? Is it because we are afraid of getting involved with something we don't want to get involved with? Yes.

Checking mind is always with us. It affects our work, recreation, relationships, etc. Checking mind prevents us from doing things that we should do by making us hesitate on an action until it is too late. If you see someone in a dangerous situation, you can't allow your checking mind to prevent you from acting. Many people have done 'heroic' acts that have saved other people from harm and even death. Afterward when asked what they were thinking they usually reply that they weren't thinking at all; they just reacted. No checking mind got in their way, they saw what needed to be done and they just did it. So, in Zen we say to drop your checking mind. Don't check your mind -- just do it. Don't question yourself but believe in yourself 100%. If you believe in yourself 100% then you have the confidence to act without wondering if you are doing the right thing. You won't need to worry about what others think of your action, because in your mind you know you are doing the right thing.

Now that's kind of like all of us Zenish people going around saying, if you want to have a happy life then just drop your attachments and let your suffering disappear, isn't it? Easy to say, easy to understand, but very difficult to do. Buddha said to gain enlightenment all you had to do was let go of desire, anger, and realize the law of cause and effect. Follow the eightfold path and you will gain enlightenment. It's all right there, written down for us -- a complete set of directions on how to live in happiness. So how many people do you know have followed those directions and are leading an enlightened life? That's what I thought. 2600 years after Buddha told us that, we're still here suffering.

We are surrounded by desires, surrounded by distractions, surrounded by problems. It isn't easy to live in happiness and enlightenment these days. We see people losing their jobs, their houses, all of their possessions during earthquakes, hurricanes, and floods and the bad economy. We think we have it bad because our satellite TV signal goes out when it rains too hard when what we really need to concentrate on is how to help others. How do we help others? The answer is right there in front of you. Sit on the mat and practice. Remember, we don't practice to help ourselves, we practice to help others. Sit on your mat and chant Kwan Seum Bosal for someone you know that is having trouble or is ill so Avalokitesvara can hear the suffering in the world today and help with her compassionate ways.

Now, if I could only decide on a subject for that newsletter article.

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## Public Talk and YMJJ Retreat July 23 - 25

A YMJJ retreat has been scheduled with Zen Master Dae Kwang for July 24 and 25, 2010. The retreat will be held at GLZC. Zen Master Dae Kwang will be leading this 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 for complete details. The price includes vegetarian meals. Sleeping space can be arranged if required at no extra charge. Those needing sleep space should notify us by email and bring a sleeping bag, pillow, washcloth, and towel. **You may register for this YMJJ by signing up at GLZC or by email at [info@glzc.org](mailto:info@glzc.org).**

The retreat will begin with a free public talk with Zen Master Dae Kwang at 7:30 PM on Friday, July 23rd. Please plan on joining us for some very strong practice.

We are grateful to Zen Master Dae Kwang for taking time out of his busy schedule to visit us and lead the YMJJ's. We are only provided the opportunity to sit with and interview with a Zen Master three or four times a year. Please plan on attending and taking advantage of this opportunity.

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### The GLZC "*Moon on the Water*" *Michael Zinke, BT*

After a long delay the GLZC newsletter is once again finding its way to your mailbox. As the editor of the newsletter it is my responsibility to create the newsletter and send it out to our subscribers to keep you all informed of the events at GLZC. I haven't been doing a very good job of that lately and I apologize. My company, like many others, is shedding the American worker and shipping jobs to foreign countries. That creates hardships for thousands of laid-off workers in the US and puts an extra burden on those remaining US workers that find themselves loaded down with additional work. Long work hours and a lot of traveling have put a damper on my extra-curricular activities and the newsletter has suffered. However, I will make a concerted effort to publish the newsletter on a timely basis for the rest of the year and into the future. Thank you for your understanding and your patience.

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### GLZC Rummage Sale

The annual GLZC rummage sale turned out to be a great success. Thanks to everyone that donated items for sale and to everyone that purchased items. It looked a little bleak going into the final week but people came through with donated items just in time. The final total taken in allows us to pay rent and utilities for a month and that is a big deal for us. Thanks from everyone at GLZC.

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**Reminder: Introductions to Zen are offered the first Monday of every month. Even if you have been to an intro session in the past, feel free to join us again as the subject often changes.**

**Don't forget the Dharma talks offered by the Dharma Teachers of GLZC, every 4<sup>th</sup> Wednesday of the month.**

**Stop Making Sense**  
by Frank Pauc

Back in the days of vinyl, there was a record album from the Talking Heads called " Stop Making Sense ". I always liked the title because it seemed paradoxical, and it has a Zen feel to it. The human mind apparently has an insatiable desire to make order out of chaos; to find patterns, even where none exist. As for myself, I feel safer somehow if I can make sense out of a situation. I find it very comforting if I can answer the question " Why? "

However, things often don't make sense. The questions don't get answered. Events occur that defy explanation. A son joins the Army and is scheduled to go to war in Iraq. A daughter attempts suicide. Every minute of every day things happen that cry out for answers, and there is only an echo and then silence. Last fall, at my brother Chuck's funeral, I mentioned to another of my brothers that I had written about Chuck's life in order to make sense of it. My other brother replied to me, " Does it even have to make sense? "

Maybe it doesn't. My understanding is that we sit in order to have a clear mind. We meditate so that we can see the world as it is; nothing more and nothing less. If I can see clearly the suffering around me, then I can help. If I see clearly, I can love others. Perhaps, if I sit, I will understand better why things happen. Or, perhaps, I will understand that I don't need to understand. I just need to be here.

It's a bright, clear May morning. Outside of my window is a world of exquisite beauty that is simultaneously a world of confusion and pain. That world is on this side of the glass too. I think I will enjoy it while it lasts.

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## Calendar of Upcoming Events

### July, 2010

**Friday, July 23. Public talk with Zen Master Dae Kwang.** GLZC, 7:30pm.

**Saturday – Sunday, July 24-25. YMJJ with Zen Master Dae Kwang.** GLZC, Saturday 5:55am – 9:40pm, Sunday, 6:00am – 3:30pm

### September, 2010

**Friday, September 17. Extended Practice Evening.** GLZC. Practice from 7:00pm – 10:00pm

### October, 2010

**Friday, October 22. Public talk with Zen Master Dae Kwang.** GLZC, 7:30pm.

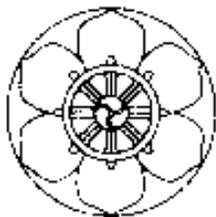
**Saturday – Sunday, October 23-24. YMJJ with Zen Master Dae Kwang.** GLZC, Saturday 5:55am – 9:40pm, Sunday, 6:00am – 3:30pm

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**Great Lake Zen Center**

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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.

