



MOON ON THE WATER

Volume 1, Issue 2

Newsletter of the Great Lake Zen Center, Milwaukee, WI

June 1999

Yong Maeng Jong Jin Retreat Scheduled for July 9th-11th at Wellspring

Laura Otto-Salaj

In 1998, the sangha of the Great Lake Zen Center had the good fortune to host their first YMJJ, at a lovely place in the woods of southeastern Wisconsin called Wellspring. Nineteen people sat, walked, worked, and tried very, very hard. And it was great! Support came from Zen Centers in Racine, Madison, Chicago, and even New York! and everyone just showed great effort and one mind.

Well, the time has come where we can do it all over again! GLZC will be hosting a Yong Maeng Jong Jin retreat, July 10th and 11th, 1999. This weekend retreat will be led by Zen Master Dae Kwang, Abbot of the Kwan Um School of Zen and Guiding Teacher of the GLZC, the Original Root Zen Center in Racine, and Centers in Singapore and Toronto, and other locations throughout the world.

The retreat will start off with a **Public Talk at 7:30 p.m. on Friday, July 9th, 1999**, at the Conference Center. The talk will be followed immediately by a retreat orientation, so if you've never sat a retreat like this, have no fear!

The retreat will again be held at the Wellspring Retreat and Conference Center, located on 32 private wooded acres in Newburg, WI. This rustic retreat center is perfect for a summer retreat, and is located about 35 minutes north of Milwaukee. Ask anyone who went to last year's retreat at Wellspring – the location is wonderful, and where else can you do sitting practice in a well-equipped barn loft?!?! As the retreat site has a large garden (an organic garden cooperative), the site provides a wonderful opportunity for outdoor work practice.

The fee for attending the retreat is \$70, including dorm-type sleeping accommodations and all meals, which will be done formally.

Scholarships are available, as are detailed maps and directions. For more information or to sign up, please contact Laura Otto-Salaj at (414) 629-9868 or Peter Neuwald at (414) 771-2490. We'd love to see you there! ❖

Why We Chant

(From *Dropping Ashes on the Buddha: The Teaching of Zen Master Seung Sahn*)

One Sunday evening, after a Dharma talk at the International Zen Center of New York, a student asked Seung Sahn Soen-sa, "Why do you chant? Isn't sitting Zen enough?"

Soen-sa said, "This is a very important matter. We bow together, chant together, eat together, sit together, and do many other things together here at the Zen Center. Why do we practice together?"

"Everybody has different karma. So all people have different situations, different conditions, and different opinions. One person is a monk, another is a student, another works in a factory; one person always keeps a clear mind, another is often troubled or dissatisfied; one person likes the women's movement, another doesn't. But everybody thinks, 'My opinion is correct.' Even Zen Masters are like this. Ten Zen Masters will have ten different ways of teaching, and each Zen Master will think that his way is the best. Americans have an American opinion; Orientals have an Oriental opinion."

"Different opinions result in different actions, which make different karma. So when you hold on to your own opinions, it is very difficult to control your karma, and your life will remain difficult. Your wrong opinions continue, so your bad karma continues. But at our Zen Centers, we live together and practice together, and all of us abide by the Temple Rules. People

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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
Co-Director: Laura Otto-Salaj, DT
Co-Director: Peter Neuwald, DT
Treasurer: Jeff Ligman
Secretary: Lynn Ziegler
At-Large Member: Susi Childress
Publicity: Joanne Toman

Regular Practice Schedule of the Great Lake Zen Center

Monday 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.

For more information contact:

Laura Otto-Salaj 414.629.9868 (evenings)
414.456.7754 (days)
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Why We Chant

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come to us with many strong likes and dislikes, and gradually cut them all off. Everybody bows together 108 times at 5:30 in the morning, everybody sits together, everybody eats together, everybody works together. Sometimes you don't feel like bowing; but this is a temple rule, so you bow. Sometimes you don't want to chant, but you chant. Sometimes you are tired and want to sleep; but you know that if you don't come to sitting, people will wonder why; so you sit."

"When we eat, we eat in ritual style, with four bowls; and after we finish eating, we wash out the bowls with tea, using our index finger to clean them. The first few times we ate this way, nobody liked it. One person from the Cambridge Zen Center came to me very upset. 'I can't stand this way of eating! The tea gets full of garbage! I can't drink it!' I said to him, 'Do you know the Heart Sutra?' 'Yes.' 'Then why can't you drink the tea?'"

'Then why can't you drink the tea?' 'Because it's filthy!' (Laughter from the audience) "Why is it filthy? These crumbs are from the food that you already ate. If you think the tea is dirty, it is dirty. If you think it is clean, it is clean.' He said, 'You're right. I will drink the tea.'" (Laughter)

"So we live together and act together. Acting together means cutting off my opinions, cutting off my condition, cutting off my situation. Then we become empty mind. We return to white paper. Then our true opinion, our true condition, our true situation will appear. When we bow together and chant together and eat together, our minds become one mind. It is like on the sea. When the wind dies down, the waves become smaller. When the wind stops, the water becomes a mirror, in which everything is reflected—mountains, trees, clouds. Our mind is the same. When we have many desires and many opinions, there are many big waves. But after we sit Zen and act together for some time, our opinions and desires disappear. The waves become smaller and smaller. Then our mind is like a clear mirror, and everything we see or hear or smell or taste or touch or think is the truth. Then it is very easy to understand other people's minds. Their minds are reflected in my mind.

"So chanting is very important. At first you won't understand. But after you chant regularly, you will understand. 'Ah, chanting—very good feeling!' It is the same with bowing 108 times. At first people don't like this. Why do we bow? We are not bowing to Buddha, we are bowing to ourselves. Small I is bowing to Big I. Then Small I disappears and becomes Big I. This is true bowing. So come practice with us. You will soon understand."

The student bowed and said, "Thank you very much." ❖



Appearing ... Disappearing ... and Re-appearing

Peter Neuwald

This has been a time of many changes for the Great Lake Zen Center. We've had our name change; this newsletter appeared; and we moved to a new location. This changing is not ending. As I walk down North Avenue on the East Side of Wauwatosa, I notice the empty storefronts. Soon ours may be another one of them.

A city official has told us that the area is not zoned for religious organizations. When I first heard this, my mind started going into overdrive. I thought, "Maybe we could say we're not *really* a religion; that we're more of a meditation training center, whatever that is. Or maybe we could charge people \$0.25 a sitting so we could be a business." Thinking back to the empty storefronts, I couldn't help wondering why they were preferable to having a Zen center on the street.

Yes, the mind, when attached to something, begins to get very busy figuring out how to hold on to what it wants. It thinks, "There must be an angle; there must be some way to figure this out." As of the publication of this newsletter, it doesn't look too hopeful that we will be able to stay.

What a wonderful lesson! After working hard on cleaning, plastering, priming, painting, and decorating, and getting all settled in, we probably will need to leave our space. And it gets better – we will also probably need to do cleaning, plastering, priming, painting and decorating all over again in a new place!

What will happen? What can be done? We practice every Monday and Thursday at 7:30pm and every Saturday at 7:00am. ❖

Stay Tuned!

When and if we move to a new location, we will send out notifications via our mailing list.

Saturday Practice Added

We now offer a Saturday morning practice starting at 7:00am in addition to our Monday and Thursday evening practices at 7:30pm. ❖

Introductions to Zen

This is a reminder that Introductions to Zen are held every first Thursday of each month. ❖

Rummage/Bake Sale a Success!

On Saturday, June 5th, GLZC held it's first annual Rummage/Bake Sale. In spite of 90+ degree heat and high humidity, we made enough money to really help defray costs for our upcoming YMJJ, and were able to do 'rummage' practice together! A big "Thanks" to everyone who emptied their homes and garages of sale stuff, or priced, sold, baked, bought, and moved our sales items. An especially huge "Thank you" goes out to Lynn and Jerry Ziegler, who generously donated the use of their garage for storage and pricing several days before the sale, and their house and front yard the day of the sale. The great effort that everyone gave was terrific! Just wait until next year... ❖

Work Practice Thanks!

Many thanks to all those in the sangha who helped paint and set up the Dharma Room in our center. The all-day work practice was full of wonderful energy. The removal of the peg board and new coat of paint is greatly appreciated by all. Those little holes in the board did a real number on our eyes! And there is still a free Brewers ticket left over from the pizza promotion if anyone is interested.

SOME CENTERS IN THE KWAN UM SCHOOL OF ZEN

THE KWAN UM SCHOOL OF ZEN

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ADDRESS CORRECTION REQUESTED

For more information on any of our activities,
contact Laura at 414.456.7754 (days) or
414.629.9868 (evenings), or Peter at 414.771.2490.

Special Notice!

This is our second reminder for you to send the
information below. Thanks to those who have
already replied. **If you haven't replied yet and
you want to continue to receive the newsletter,
please send us the following information:**

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