



MOON ON THE WATER

Volume 2, Issue 3

Newsletter of the Great Lake Zen Center, Milwaukee, WI

October, 2000

Why Do We Need to Practice Zen with Other People?

Excerpted from *Only Don't Know*
by Zen Master Seung Sang

Many students like practicing alone. This is not good, not bad—better than nothing. But if you practice alone, your practice does not grow. When you practice alone, you can lose perspective on your opinions, your condition, and your situation; your ideas only get stronger. You may not understand this growth yourself. If you practice with other people, you will see your karma. Only if you see your karma can you make it disappear.

Together-action is like washing potatoes. When people wash potatoes in Korea, instead of washing them one at a time, they put them all in a tub full of water. Then someone puts a stick in the tub and pushes it up and down, up and down. This makes the potatoes rub against each other; as they bump into each other, the hard, crusty dirt falls off. If you wash potatoes one at a time, it takes a long time to clean each one, and only one potato gets clean at a time. If they are all together, the potatoes clean each other.

Our practice of bowing, chanting, and sitting together is like having many potatoes bumping into each other, cleaning each other. Sometimes in the morning you are tired, so you do not want to get out of bed, or after work you only want to watch television. But (at a Zen Center) you must practice with everyone; you must put down your own feelings and do together-action. This action means not being controlled by your bad karma of desire, anger, or ignorance.

Sometimes you bump into other people: "I don't want to bow!" or "I'm too tired to do the dishes!" But soon you see you are only bumping into your bad karma. If you are alone, it's easy to hold your own ideas. When you are separate from other people, your thinking and opinions grow stronger and stronger. Then your mind becomes narrow and tight; it has many walls.

Zen means inside and outside become one. This means at any time, you and your correct situation become one. When you practice with other people, everyone helps you see your correct situation. Then your life becomes simple and clear. Your thinking-walls become weaker and weaker, and soon they disappear. Then you can see and hear; everything is the truth, just as it is.

If you are alone, you only make your own walls. When will you get out of your small walls? This universe is very wide, infinite in time and space. So don't make "my space"; don't make "my time." Put down I-my-me. Only try, try, try. This is very important. Don't check your mind, your feelings, your understanding, then no problem. Thinking comes and goes—let it be. Only go straight, don't know, and persevere.

One-Day Retreat at GLZC

Saturday, November 11, 2000
9:00 AM – 4:00 PM

A one-day retreat will be held at GLZC on Saturday, November 11, 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, and a vegetarian lunch. This retreat is offered free of charge and provides an excellent opportunity for new and experienced students to learn some additional practice forms used in the Kwan Um School of Zen. The 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 Susi at (262) 796-1659, or E-mail us at glzc@execpc.com.

Buddha's Enlightenment Day Celebration

Wednesday, December 6, 2000
7:30 PM

More than 2000 years ago, an Indian prince sat under the Bodhi tree, determined to discover an end to suffering in this world. After six years he looked up and saw the morning star, attained the great enlightenment, and became known as the Buddha. Please join us in celebrating this great event, which gives all of us hope and direction in our lives, that we may also find an end to suffering. The celebration will be held from 7:30 p.m.-8:30 p.m. Corn tea and treats will be served following the ceremony. All are welcome, so please attend and bring your family and friends.

Practice Notes:

- ~ The extended Friday night practice, scheduled for November 10, has been cancelled. We hope you will be able to attend the one-day retreat on November 11 instead.
- ~ Introductions to Zen are held on the first Thursday of each month. The introductions are free and open to all, offering an opportunity to ask any questions you may have. All introductions start at 7:30PM.
- ~ Dharma Talks with a question/answer session are offered in lieu of formal practice on the last Wednesday of each month.
- ~ There will be no practice on Thursday, Nov. 23, Monday, Dec. 25, and Monday, Jan. 1. Happy holidays!
- ~ Sangha meetings are held the third Monday of each month. Please try to attend! Next meeting: Nov. 20.

Heart Kyol Che

January 8 – April 5, 2001

Intensive Week: February 12

Weekend Retreat: February 17–18

Beginning January 8, we will be celebrating Heart Kyol Che simultaneously with Winter Kyol Che practice at the Providence Zen Center. Kyol Che, literally translated, means “tight dharma”, and it is an extended period of intense practice. Midway through the Heart Kyol Che period, we are planning a week of intensive practice. During the week of February 12, we will have practice each night from 7:00 PM until 9:00 PM, culminating with a weekend retreat Feb. 17-18. Mark your calendars and stayed tuned for more information after the first of the year.

Two GLZC Members Take Precepts

At the precepts ceremony following the YMJJ held September 30-October 1 at the Original Root Zen Center, two GLZC members took precepts. Mike Yonkers took five precepts, and Holly Embers took ten precepts. Holly has also entered the Dharma Teacher in Training program. Congratulations Mike and Holly! We thank you for your commitment to practice and your vows to attain enlightenment and save all beings from suffering.

Newsletter Notes

The *Moon on the Water* newsletter will now be published on a bimonthly basis. Articles and announcements may be submitted for inclusion in this publication by placing them in the newsletter box at the GLZC or by mailing them to the Zen Center, c/o Susi Childress.

E-Mail Request

If you would like to receive E-mails of happenings at GLZC, please send an E-mail to glzc@execpc.com, asking to be included on our E-mail list.

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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.

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