
MOON ON THE WATER

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November 2011

One Thing

Zen Master Dae Kwang

Buddhism teaches us that everything is just “One Thing”. In fact, Zen means become one. However, our dualistic thinking has us conceiving of the world as a vast array of opposites: good/bad, us/them, win/lose, subject/object, life/death etc. This forms the basis of our ignorance—we think of ourselves and everything else as separate. This leads to our experience of alienation and suffering, and all of our misguided attempts to solve our problems through satisfying our desires. Buddha taught that our desires were the source of our suffering. As Zen Master Seung Sahn said, “Thinking is desire; desire leads to suffering.” So, if we can let go of our opposites thinking, it’s possible to return to our True Self and then help the world.

Hui Neng, the Sixth Patriarch of Zen and the founder of modern Zen, spent many years in hiding after he received transmission from the Fifth Patriarch. One day it came to him that he shouldn’t live a secluded life all the time; it was time for him to propagate the Dharma. So, he left the forest and traveled to the famous Dharma Nature Temple in the city of

See *One Thing*

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Abbot’s Corner

In This Moment

Pete Neuwald, Abbot



Last week, Gretchen and I went for visit number two to see our new granddaughter in New York. For many people, they wonder what the fuss is all about. Others know. We didn’t go as tourists; we didn’t go for nights on the town. We went to help out our children, who are now brand new parents. We went to just spend time with them and our six week old granddaughter. Doing that was just like “retreat mind.” With retreat mind, you just do it. With retreat mind we leave all the “busy-ness” of “monkey-mind” behind. It’s a vacation from our busy mind lives. At 11pm, letting our daughter get some sleep and holding this little human being, there is no thinking – there is just holding her and being with her, one hundred percent. There is only this moment, which is really what we all actually have.

Holding someone so completely dependent upon older humans is sobering. You realize how much this little human depends on us. This is such a good reminder of how we are all interconnected and dependent upon one

See *In This Moment*

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Gwang Chou, in southern China. At that time a Bhikkhu named Yen Chung, a Master of the Dharma, happened to be giving a series of lectures on the Maha Parinirvana Sutra. Hui Neng happened to overhear two monks who were arguing about a temple flag, blowing in the wind. One said the wind was moving, the other said the flag was moving. They argued back and forth futilely. "It's not the wind or the flag that's moving," Hui Neng said, "it's your minds that are moving."

The whole assembly was awed by what Hui Neng said. The Bhikkhu Yen Chung then invited Hui Neng to take a seat of honor and questioned him about various difficult points in the Sutras. Seeing that his answers were precise and accurate and that they showed something more than book-knowledge, he said, "Lay Brother, you must be an extraordinary man. I was told long ago that the inheritor of the Fifth Patriarch's robe and bowl, and the Dharma had come to the South, very likely you are that man."

To this Hui Neng politely assented. The monk immediately bowed and asked Hui Neng to show the assembly the robe and bowl. He further asked what the Fifth Patriarch had taught him. "Apart from a discussion on the realization of True Nature," Hui Neng replied, "he gave me no other instruction, nor did he refer to meditation or liberation."

"Why not?" the monk asked.

"Because that would mean two ways," Hui Neng replied. "Buddha Dharma does not have two ways."

He asked, "What is the Buddhism without two ways?"

Hui Neng explained, "The Maha Parinirvana Sutra, which you expound, explains that Buddha-nature doesn't have two ways. In the Sutra, King Ko Kwai Tak, a Bodhisattva, asked Buddha if those who carry out gross acts of misconduct, commit the five deadly sins, or spread heretical teaching would destroy their 'element of goodness' and their Buddha-nature. Buddha replied, 'There are two kinds of 'element of goodness', the eternal and the non-eternal. Since Buddha-nature is neither eternal nor non-eternal, therefore their "element of goodness" is not eradicated.' Now, Buddhism is known as not having two ways. There are good ways and evil ways, but since Buddha-nature is neither, Buddhism is known for not having two ways. From the point of view of ordinary people, the component parts of a personality (the skandhas) and factors of consciousness (the dhatus) are two separate things, but enlightened people understand that they are not dual in nature. Buddha-nature is non-dual."

Around the time of Hui Neng, Chinese Buddhism began to develop a very interesting technique which allows us to directly experience this non-dual nature, the world of "One Thing". This technique is the Kong-an. Here is a kong-an for you:

A long time ago in China a monk asked Zen Master Kuei Shan, "What is the meaning of all the Sutras?"

Kuei Shan didn't say anything, he just raised his fist.

So, I ask you, if there is just One Thing, what was Kuei Shan's meaning?

Quick, tell me! Thinking isn't going to help you.

The arising of mental activity, the movement of thought, snapping the fingers or moving the eyes— all actions and activities are the functioning of the entire essence of the Buddha nature. Since no other kind of functioning exists, greed, anger, and folly, the performance of good and bad actions, and the experiencing of their pleasurable and painful consequences are all, in their entirety, Buddha nature...
Ma-tsu

How I Spent My Labor Day Weekend

Sonia Alexander, Senior Dharma Teacher

Let's see, it all began when Ken broke a tooth. He's getting a crown. My Lupus began to flare and I immediately saw the doctor. He said to try the infusion to see if it would control it. It didn't. Then the dog got sick. He started panting and when he whimpered I woke Ken up and told him that we needed to go to the Vet. NOW. After several hours and blood tests his kidney and liver values were slightly off. But since it was Labor Day Weekend and we couldn't leave him at the doctor's, we brought him home. His gums had pinked up and he wasn't panting anymore. He came into the bedroom and died there, unexpectedly, that night. We brought him in to be cremated. I was running a fever and called the doctor on duty. I was really sick by then.

My nephew found out that he had M.S. I called him and he was in denial. My sister was too. My niece discovered that the stalker she had was back.

Then the refrigerator lost all cooling capacity. I needed a new refrigerator, fast! It too had joined the legion of created things that were all doomed to fall apart.

Ken and I were sort of busy. And he was glad that Chris was

Calendar of Upcoming Events

November 2011

- **Introduction to Zen**
Monday, November 7
7:30 - 9:00 PM
GLZC
- **Annual Sangha Meeting**
Saturday, November 19
9:00 AM - 11:00 AM
GLZC
- **No Practice or Dharma Talk**
Wednesday, November 23
Enjoy the Holiday

December 2011

- **Buddha's Enlightenment Day**
Monday, December 5
7:30 - 9:00 PM
GLZC
- **Dharma Talk**
Wednesday, December 28
7:30 PM - 9:00 PM
GLZC
- **No Practice**
Saturday, December 24
Enjoy the Holiday



taking his job for the YMJJ as kitchen master. He sort of hadn't had time to learn to cook.

Change. Change. Change. Zen Buddhism doesn't protect you from the world and its happenings but it does give you a new way to view and appreciate them.

I got a new refrigerator as a memento of the weekend and the little dog, the one we still have, loves being the only dog. He doesn't miss his brother one bit! And now I can give him to Sharon for YMJJ's.

Change. Change. Change. That's all there is and somehow it's all good.

Inspiration to Practice

Zen Master Bon Soeng on Oct 5, 2011

Keep your direction clear. There is something that moves you to practice, that points you in the direction. Then find your "try mind". Inspiration is wonderful, but if we just rely on inspiration, it fizzles out. And then we're lost. So it's not about inspiration or not inspiration. We say in Zen something very direct: "Just do it."

Like or dislike is what creates a prison that we live in. So if you only practice when you want to practice and then don't practice when you don't want to practice, that's a fundamental problem. You are following the winds of your desire, and that's what leads to suffering. The Buddha's teaching is very simple. We suffer because of our desire, our anger, and our ignorance. So if our practice is based on desire, all it does is lead us to more suffering.

So what I will suggest for you is look at your life realistically and see what you can do. And then set your sights and your direction on doing that. Likes and dislikes – that's what you will meet when you sit down. Just do it! And then, don't be too concerned about success or failure. Your direction says do it, well... I don't feel like it, so I didn't do it tonight. Then tomorrow night is a new night, just do it. Just do it! Don't get stuck in thinking, "well if I didn't do it tonight, then I am done."

Moment to moment, be fresh and alive. Just do what you set out to do. Not just for one week, not for one month, not for one year, not even for one decade. Day after day after day... moment to moment to moment...

Us and Them

Francis Pauc

When I joined the Army, many years ago, I was issued an olive drab, scratchy, woolen blanket that had the letters "US" stenciled on to it. I asked another soldier why the Army insisted on writing "US" on all the blankets. He told me that it was so we knew that the blanket was ours. Then he smiled and told me that the word "THEM" was written on all of the Soviet blankets.

Us and them. The eternal desire of humans to choose sides. Where does it all start? Do you remember the first time that you picked players for your kickball team? The idea of people being "either/or" is deeply ingrained in our minds and hearts. We spend our lives separating the sheep from the goats and other people do the same for us. We want to know who is with us and who is against us. Why?

Choosing sides is a way of defining ourselves, albeit in a negative manner. Instead of looking at who we are, we look at who we are not. We can say things like, "I am not a fundamentalist" or "I am not a Democrat" and we effectively build a fence around our lives. We decide to whom we will listen and whom we will ignore. We attempt to establish an identity through aversion. It's a hollow sort of identity, because even if we cut off all the people we dislike, we still don't know who we are. We've only made our world a lot smaller.

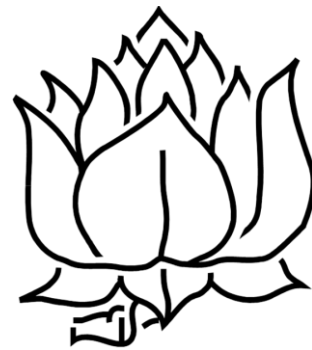
Defining ourselves is a waste of time anyway. Zen makes it clear that we don't really know who we are. Other traditions say the same thing. Christians from St. Paul through Thomas Merton have said that we see through a glass darkly, that we do not and cannot really understand ourselves. I often have to use the loudspeaker at work to call somebody to the office. There is a time delay on the intercom and I hear my words a few seconds after I say them. I always think about how strange my voice sounds and I wonder if that is really how I sound to the rest of the world. If I have trouble recognizing my own voice, how can I recognize the person inside my head?

As Pink Floyd sang in *Us and Them*:
"And who knows which is which and who is who,
Up and Down,
And in the end it's only round and round and round..."

Who we are is a mystery that we cannot solve; we can only exhaust ourselves in the attempt. Perhaps each person has a unique, immortal soul that is their true self.

Even if this is true, a person can never fully experience that self. I know that I can't. What I experience is the shifting, changing personality that responds when somebody yells the name "Frank". It is hard for me to see that I am constantly changing--- and, hopefully, growing. Other people point it out to me; sometimes they don't do that in pleasant ways. Most of my classmates from West Point do not acknowledge me anymore because the man they knew, or thought they knew thirty years ago, is gone. I still have the same DNA and social security number, but I am no longer the person I was at age twenty-three.

"Don't know" mind helps. Once I accept the fact that I do not know who I am or what I am, then I can become whatever I need to be. It's an oddly liberating notion. If I can't figure out who I am, then it is useless to try to define others. "Don't know" leads to the idea that all things are in a state of flux and all things are connected. If all things are connected, then there is no "us and them." There is only us.



In this Moment

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another. We like to think that we are independent and self-sufficient. This is delusion. Babies can help us remember and realize this. They don't pretend they are separate from all of us and the whole world. They intuit otherwise; they can't really do anything different – good for them. We somehow forget this, or pretend that it is not the case. Our minds are very clever. If you can't go visit a baby, I suggest doing a retreat. Just let it go, relax, be in this moment. A retreat can happen right now.

A Dream of Stars

Zen Master Seung Sahn

(1977 Enlightenment Day poem from *Bone of Space*)

An ancient saw a star, got enlightenment,
What can moderns see, get enlightenment?
Can I also see a star, get enlightenment?
There are many stars. Which one should I see?

Shining stars, singing stars, dancing stars,
Army general's stars, flag's stars, cookie stars,
Shooting stars, *Star Wars* stars, tree stars, river stars.
I want to see the true star.
Which one is true?

Where do all the stars come from?
Where do all the stars go?
Time flows by. How can you find them?
If you grab them, they take flight.
If you find them, there is nothing.
In a star is a star.
In *this* star is a star.
The star sees the star.
Stars singing star songs.
Stars dancing star dance.

An eminent teacher asked, "What is your star?"
Student facing ground, imitating a star search.
Then, clapping hands, laughing, transmission.
How wonderful it is!
Find a star in the ground, become a great man!

Do you want to pick a shining star?
Do you want to find a ground star?
Stone lion appears from the clouds.
All stars are afraid;
They hide in the tiger's shadow.

Where is north, south, east, west?
Don't know heaven, don't know earth,
Don't know road, don't know house,
Don't know. Don't know. Dark. Dark.
Only don't know.

Cliff...OUCH! Dead Wake up.
Heavenly star shining in the sky.
Two ground stars. Bright dharma room!

Buddha's Enlightenment Day Celebration

Monday, December 5th
7:30pm – 9:00pm
Great Lake Zen Center

Long ago, Buddha sat under the Bodhi tree for six years. At dawn he looked up and saw the morning star in the eastern sky. At that moment, seeing the world for the first time with complete clarity, he attained enlightenment. Once a year we come together to celebrate Buddha's great victory in penetrating the nature of ultimate truth. Please join us for a short ceremony, which traditionally includes the sharing of an enlightenment poem written by a fellow Sangha member. Refreshments, corn tea and friendly conversation follow.



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The Great Lake Zen Center is affiliated with the Kwan Um School of Zen.

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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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