

MOON ON THE WATER

Volume 12, Issue 2 Newsletter of the Great Lake Zen Center, Milwaukee, WI October, 2010

STEMS AND ROOTS

By Zen Master Dae Kwang

During the later T'ang Dynasty there was a large Zen temple in Southern China named Ho Pak Sah. As with most Zen temples of this period, the monks of Ho Pak Sah earned their keep by working the soil. Because of the many monks and the large land holdings of the temple, a heavy burden fell on the monk who administered the farm lands. Early each morning he would inspect the gardens and paddies to make sure everything was running smoothly.

One morning as he was walking along the path to check the upper irrigation system, he heard a loud ruckus. His initial shock soon turned to puzzlement. Usually dawn was a time for quiet reflection, but on this morning he was confronted by angry voices. Where was all this shouting coming from? His eyes were drawn toward the pumpkin patch at the edge of the garden. In disbelief his eyes grew large--the pumpkins were fighting! This would never do, the harmony and success of the whole temple was at risk.

Suddenly he gave out a loud belly shout, "Ho!" In startled surprise the pumpkins grew silent. "This is a Zen temple! You must all now learn how to practice correctly." With great patience he taught each of them how to meditate. How to sit. How to breathe in carbon dioxide slowly through their leaves and breathe out oxygen...slowly asking, "What is a pumpkin?" Since they already knew these things, they learned quickly. Soon their minds became calm. He then asked them to put their leaves on top of their heads. Immediately there were several "ahhs" of recognition. Then the whole patch broke into a collective "YES!" The realization was clear: everyone had a stem coming out of the top of their head connecting each to the other. Why were they fighting? They all shared a common vine, rooting them to the source of life. By practicing, they had discovered their original connectedness and attained harmony. It's very important that you find your stem.

Coping with Uncertainty in a Changing World **Public Talk with Zen Master Dae Kwang**

Life is always changing, changing, changing. It seems more now than ever. How do we deal with it? Please join us for a Dharma Talk, titled *Coping with Uncertainty in a Changing World*, followed by Q&A with Zen Master Dae Kwang, Abbot of the Kwan Um School of Zen and the guiding teacher of the Great Lake Zen Center. This is a free talk, open to everyone. It will start at 7:30 pm at Otto Hall, First Unitarian Church, 1342 N. Astor St.

Fall YMJJ Retreat

The above talk is a kick-off for our fall **YMJJ Retreat** that will be held October 23 and 24th, 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 enclosed 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. For more information, email us at info@glzc.org.

400 Words

Andy Yench, DT

Tonight I am putting down four hundred words, without second guessing, without my inside voice saying, "No, not good enough, write it again tomorrow." Why four hundred words? It's just the length I decided this long overdue newsletter article should be. It's not very much to write but I have been avoiding the assignment like a trip to the dentist. Why? Giving a 400 word talk would be easy for me but writing is different for some reason. Too much time to self-critique, to check? I don't know. I could try to reflect more but I don't feel that introspective tonight. Lucky you. I just want to get these four hundred words out of the way so I can email it off to the newsletter editor and eat something sweet before bed. Are you still reading? Good news, we are already over one hundred words.

I am scheduled to give the Dharma Talk at the next YMJJ. This time the Dharma Teachers at GLZC decided that we should advertise a title for the talk to maybe intrigue some additional people into coming. The title I came up with was "*Coping with Uncertainty in a Changing World*." I think I already hate it. It's mostly the word "Cope" I don't like. It sounds hopeless and whiney like, "Well, here we are stuck on a bad planet with no way to get off so we might as well find a way to make the best of it.", and that's not the way I feel most of the time about our shared situation on planet earth. Quite the opposite actually, but maybe I am overthinking this. Anyway, this essay was supposed to help me prepare for the talk but it's not.

Despite my unhappiness with the title I am looking forward to the Dharma Talk. Our ancestors no doubt struggled with change just like we do now, but I think the scale and pace of the transitions we currently face are unprecedented. Rapid turnover in consumer software and electronics are frequently cited as examples of changes that afflict and delight us at this point in history. But as exhausting as keeping up with market driven technology may seem it is small potatoes compared with the real and potential impacts of megatrends like climate change, economic volatility, vanishing job security, the dwindling social safety net, or genetic engineering. In light of all these upheavals it should come as no surprise that many individuals are increasingly inclined to seek out an absolute. But in the long run I don't think that's a sustainable strategy since the current era-of-change shows no sign of ending anytime soon. Instead, I predict future generations are going to find better ways to adapt to uncertainty.

So maybe I was wrong a moment ago when I said this essay is not helping me with my talk? Maybe it's at least helped me figure out what not to say? Like a sitting meditation, these four hundred words focused me on what I need to do now . . . just write. So, like Bodhisattva Dharma Teacher Mike Zinke encouraged all of us in the last newsletter, I'm not going to judge this essay. If you are still reading, I hope it helped you in some way. But most of all, I hope you will join me at the public talk so we can keep working on it together.

Kido Retreat

November 13

9:30am – 3:30pm at First Unitarian Society, 1342 N, Astor St. Kido means "energy path." Participants in the Kido play percussion instruments while continuously chanting "Kwan Seum Bosal." Bring a percussion instrument (this can be as simple as blocks of wood). Some additional ones will be provided. **You should also bring a bag lunch.** Newcomers are welcome.

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 4th Wednesday of the month.

Calendar of Upcoming Events

October, 2010

- **Public Talk with Zen Master Dae Kwang**
Friday, October 22, 7:30 PM
- **YMJJ Retreat**
Saturday, October 23 - Sunday, October 24
- **Dharma Talk, October 27, 7:30 PM**

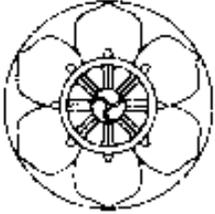
November, 2010

- **Introduction to Zen, Monday, November 1, 7:30 PM - 9:00 PM**
- **Kido One-Day Retreat, Saturday, November 13, 9:30 AM to 3:30 PM**
First Unitarian Society
1342 N. Astor St. (Corner of Astor and Ogden)
- **No Practice or Dharma Talk, Wednesday, November 24**

December, 2010

- **Extended Practice, Friday, December 3, 7 PM - 10 PM**
- **Buddha's Enlightenment Day, Monday, December 6, 7:30 PM**
- **Dharma Talk, December 22, 7:30 PM**

Great Lake Zen Center
828 East Locust Street
Milwaukee, WI 53212



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is published by the
Great Lake Zen Center
828 East Locust Street
Milwaukee, WI 53212
414-264-1676

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
Abbot: Peter Neuwald, SDT
DoGam: Susi Childress, BDT, Do Gam
Treasurer: Laura Otto-Salaj, SDT
Secretary/Publicity: Andy Yencha, DT
Editor: Gretchen Neuwald, DTT

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.

