
MOON ON THE WATER

Volume 14, Issue 4

Great Lake Zen Center, Milwaukee, WI

October/November 2012

Cosmic Alarm Clock

Excerpted from the Inka Speech
Zen Master Hae Kwang, Oct. 1, 1993

One of the things about Buddhism that has always seemed completely right to me is that Buddha's enlightenment came when he saw a star. Everyone knows the story about how after years of asceticism struggling with the question of suffering, he decided simply to sit under a tree until he understood. One night toward dawn as he saw the morning star rising, his mind opened.

Long before I heard this story for the first time I became interested in astronomy. When I was about twelve years old I began to learn the constellations. It was springtime and every night at about eight o'clock I would go outside and identify some stars I hadn't known before. I found that if you go outside every night at the same time, new stars and constellations are rising in the east while others are setting in the west. So as the weeks went by I would look forward to new stars always coming up. But it was a slow process, and what I really wanted to see were the stars that wouldn't rise in early evening until wintertime, the exceptionally bright

See Cosmic Alarm Clock

continued page 2

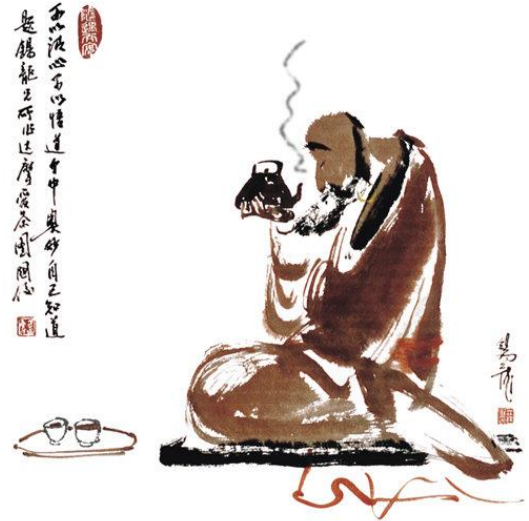
INSIDE THIS ISSUE

- 1** Cosmic Alarm Clock
- 1** Abbot's Corner
- 2** Kong-an for Autumn: Interception or Touchdown
- 3** Calendar of Upcoming Events
- 5** Seeing What's Really There

Abbot's Corner

Empty Your Cup

Pete Neuwald, Abbot



Nan-in, a Japanese master during the Meiji era (1868 – 1912), received a university professor who came to inquire about Zen.

Nan-in served tea. He poured his visitor's cup full, and then kept on pouring.

The professor watched the overflow until he no longer could restrain himself. "It is overfull. No more will go in!"

"Like this cup," Nan-in said, "you are full of your own opinions and speculations. How can I show you Zen unless you first empty your cup?"

This classic story is from the book *101 Zen Stories* and was reprinted in the book *Zen Flesh, Zen Bones* by Paul Reps. This story was acted out during training for the Pastoral Care Associate Program I am currently engaged in at the First Unitarian Society of Milwaukee. A Pastoral Care Associate provides a ministry of being present with and quietly listening to church members in times of need – a ministry of "being" vs. "doing."

When ministering in this way, it is of the utmost importance for the PCA to "empty her cup" before meeting with another person. If one is full of her own opinions,

See Empty Your Cup

continued page 4

constellations like Orion, and, the star I wanted to see more than any other, the brightest star in the sky, Sirius.

Then I learned that if I got up early in the morning to observe, instead of in the evening, I could see Sirius rising around the end of summer and wouldn't have to wait until winter. I had never been up that early, but one night in August I set my alarm for 4:30 am, got up, and went out into the back yard. It was still dark, and I saw all kinds of stars I had never seen before, and there, just over the roof tops and under the chinaberry tree in my backyard was a star that had to be Sirius, flashing green and blue and orange and white, impossibly brilliant. I watched it rise slowly through the branches of the chinaberry tree until it disappeared in the brightening dawn. That experience stayed with me, so when I heard the story about Buddha's mind opening when he saw the morning star, I thought, oh yes, of course.

Before I left Kansas to come here, a friend of mine, Cathy Preston, gave me a poem she had written. The title is "A Gatha for Your Journey." It's in the style of the Hua Yen gathas, or poetic vows, that Robert Aitken, Roshi, has recently reintroduced. It goes:

*Whenever the work of saving all sentient beings
Becomes too much for this present moment, I vow with all
beings
To breathe in the grace of the morning star
And remember that they are really saving me.*

I think this poem expresses true morning star enlightenment, the enlightenment of reciprocal compassion. This world is full of suffering. Not only human suffering, but the suffering of animals and even of the planet itself. Buddha's practice, and ours, is to wake up to the cause of this suffering and help end it. When Buddha was born, just out of his mother's womb, he took seven steps and said, "In all the universe, only I am holy." That was his baby's mind. Then he grew up and led a very privileged life. When he encountered the mystery of suffering he began to practice, and when his mind opened up after his hard training, the first thing he said was, "How wonderful. All beings have this enlightened nature; only they have forgotten it." So then he began his life work of helping people wake up to their original nature. He saw that all suffering begins in our ignorance of our original, bright nature. Because we have forgotten that we already have everything, we form desires, and from the inevitable frustration of these desires comes anger and hatred. Waking up to our original nature means realizing we are already complete, not lacking anything. When we attain that, we can let go of all the psychological acquisitiveness to which we become addicted in our desperate attempts to fabricate and sustain a self at all costs. That letting go is the beginning of the end of suffering in this world.

As if it knows that, the world itself is always trying to wake us up, each one of us, every moment, with every

phenomenon it manifests, like a cosmic alarm clock for a race of troubled, restless sleepers. That's what Zen Master Seung Sahn is reminding us of when he says things like, "Go ask a tree" or "The sound of a waterfall is better than the sutras." So all of us have this original job, this great question, "What am I?" The consequences of answering it are enormous, and the answer is right before our eyes.



A Kong-an for Autumn: Interception or Touchdown?

Laura Otto-Salaj, SDT

Living in Wisconsin for most of my life, I'm a Packer fan. I have an Aaron Rodgers #12 jersey, a hat, earrings, and know the schedule well. My spouse and I try to go to a game at Lambeau Field each year.

Sitting at the computer writing this, the controversy continues. The Green Bay Packers and Seattle Seahawks played football several nights ago and a key play was made at the end of the game that resulted in a Seattle win. The play involved a pass by the Seattle quarterback and a catch by a safety on the Packers' team; the Seattle receiver also grabbed the ball, arguably at the same time as the safety. So, two players from opposite teams are holding the ball as they fall to the ground. The judges and head referee all see the play from different angles and have different versions of what happened (And, as you read this, you may also have a strong opinion. Don't check). The back judge raises his hands and signals a time out. The line judge signals a touchdown which overrules the other judge. The referee (who is often called on to mediate differences of opinion) then reviews the call by viewing a replay of the play and

See A Kong-an for Autumn continued page 4

Calendar of Upcoming Events

October 2012

- **Public Talk with Zen Master Hae Kwang**
Friday, October 19
7:30 – 9:00 PM

- **YMJJ Retreat**
Saturday, October 20 - Sunday, October 21

- **Sutra Talk – The Lankavatara Sutra**
Wednesday, October 23
7:30 – 9:00 PM

November 2012

- **Introduction to Zen**
Monday, November 5
7:30 PM - 9:00 PM

- **Annual Sangha Meeting**
Saturday, November 17
9:00 AM to 3:00 PM

- **No Practice**
Wednesday, November 21
Enjoy the Holiday

- **Dharma Talk**
Wednesday, November 28
7:30 PM to 9:00 PM

How to Leap Like a Tiger While Sitting

Sometimes it takes the concentration and daring of a leaping tiger to deepen our practice. The Korean words “yong maeng jong jin” mean “to leap like a tiger while sitting.” Aptly named **Yong Maeng Jong Jin** (YMJJ) retreats are designed to help us in the effort of breaking through our delusions and attaining our true self.

At GLZC, the typical YMJJ retreat is held over a weekend. It usually starts off with a public talk on Friday evening. The talk is given by one of our dharma teachers and is followed by a Q&A with a Zen teacher (usually a Zen Master) who will also be leading the retreat. The retreat itself typically runs from 6:00 am Saturday through 3:00 pm Sunday and consists of Zen practice (bowing, chanting, sitting and walking), silent work and rest periods, and vegetarian meals eaten in traditional temple style. The retreat includes kong-an teaching interviews with a Zen teacher. Prior meditation

Public Talk with Zen Master Hae Kwang

Friday, October 19
7:30 PM
First Unitarian Society
1342 N. Astor St.

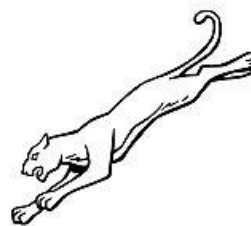
Please join us for a free public talk with renowned Zen Master Hae Kwang (Stanley Lombardo), the guiding teacher of the Morning Star Zen Center (Fayetteville AR) and Dharma Flower Zen Center (Chicago, IL). Zen Master Hae Kwang was one of the founders of the Kansas Zen Center in 1978, received inka (full authorization to teach) from Zen Master Seung Sahn in 1992, and transmission from Zen Master Seung Sahn in 1998. He is editor and co-editor of three of Zen Master Seung Sahn's books (*Bone of Space*, *Only Don't Know*, and *Ten Gates*). He is a Classics professor at the University of Kansas and has published translations of Greek poetry and philosophy, including translations of Homer's Iliad and Odyssey. He has also co-authored a translation of the Tao Te Ching.

YMJJ Retreat led by Zen Master Hae Kwang

Saturday, October 20 – Sunday, October 21

Zen Master Hae Kwang will lead a weekend YMJJ retreat. The retreat will be held at GLZC. In addition to leading the retreat, Zen Master Hae Kwang will be conducting interviews. Vegetarian meals are provided. Sleeping space is available at no extra charge at GLZC or members' homes. Those planning on staying at GLZC should bring a sleeping bag, pillow and washcloth/towel. You may register for this YMJJ by signing up at GLZC or [contact us](mailto:info@glzc.org) (info@glzc.org).

experience or attendance at a meditation instruction class is recommended. For more information on YMJJ retreats [contact us](mailto:info@glzc.org) (info@glzc.org).



upholds the ruling. Seattle victory! Seattle players dance in the end zone, while Packer fans and others light up the Twitterverse, Facebook, and other channels of communication in anger and protest.

Several days later, much is still ado about this. Celebrities and political figures have expressed opinions and much of the talk around the water cooler, as well as the lead story in the newspaper, and on TV, radio and the Internet is about this event. One blog I read talks about the “tragedy” that was this game. People are discussing boycotts of football and the potential violence from fans if the current group of referees continues to be used. Much anger and righteous indignation on both sides is being expressed.

However, Monday’s game brings to mind two stories. The first is about the blind men and the elephant:

A king has the blind men of the capital brought to the palace, where an elephant is brought in and they are asked to describe it. When the blind men had each felt a part of the elephant, the king went to each of them and said to each: “Well, blind man, have you seen the elephant? Tell me, what sort of thing is an elephant?”

The men assert the elephant is either like a pot (the blind man who felt the elephants' head), a winnowing basket (ear), a plowshare (tusk), a plow (trunk), a granary (body), a pillar (foot), a mortar (back), a pestle (tail) or a brush (tip of the tail).

As the story goes, the men begin to fight with one another because each man is attached to his opinion and discounts the others. The corollary to this can be summed up by a colloquial quote from an old movie: “Opinions are like (buttholes): everybody’s got one, and everyone thinks everyone else’s stinks.” Each of the referees on the field saw things from a different angle. So did the players; so did the crowd. Mistakes were made in this game with officiating, just as they will be made again in others. The thing is, this is the stuff that wars are made of – not football officiating, mind you, but differences of opinion that lead to anger and attachment to one’s opinion. One side thinks their way is correct. Another side thinks that their way is correct. Both sides think that the other needs to do things differently. Political parties form and battles commence. And rage on. And on. Sometimes for hundreds or even thousands of years.

Zen Master Seung Sahn talked about several types of anger, including attached anger, reflected anger, perceived anger, and love anger. Attached anger means “I want” – and with it comes great suffering. With practice, attached anger changes to reflected anger: someone is angry, and we reflect that. With still more

practice, reflected anger changes to perceived anger: we can feel anger, but are able to NOT act on it. Finally, we have love anger: anger only on the outside used to help others, but no anger on the inside – only great love.

With practice, we gain insight into the battles that we begin or sustain with our opinions, our attachments, and our attached anger. Sitting practice helps quite the body and mind. Mantra practice gives our mind something to chew on. Chanting gives the voice, body and mind different duties, all the while cleansing and exercising. Doing these practices, we can then begin to let go of our desire, anger and ignorance, and perhaps perceive that we’ve grabbed hold of a tail or a trunk, instead of using our eyes, ears, nose, tongue, body and mind to perceive the sounds of universal suffering. Attached anger moves to reflected anger, to perceived anger, finally to love anger. Then we can engage in the great Bodhisattva action we’re meant for.

The second story is a Zen story about two monks and Zen Master Huineng:

Two monks were watching a flag flapping in the wind. One said to the other, “The flag is moving.” The other replied, “The wind is moving.” Huineng overheard this. He said, “Not the flag, not the wind; mind is moving.”

So, if Zen Master Huineng were here and had been watching the game and subsequent events, what would he say? Interception or touchdown? It would have been very interesting, if he had been the referee of this game...

Empty Your Cup

continued from page 1

condition and situation, it will be impossible to truly be present and engaged with the other person. She will be full of her own feelings, thoughts, stresses and affairs. When we let go of our own opinions, condition and situation, we can give our full attention to the other person by just listening.

It strikes me how difficult the practice of fully listening to another can be. I see how sometimes when I am “engaged” in conversations with another, I am not *really* engaged. In some cases, I may be thinking about what I am going to say, or somewhere I need to go, or judging what the person is saying. If the person is talking about a problem or issue they are having I may find myself trying to “fix it,” or I may find myself trying to empathize by talking about how I had a similar situation, so I know what they are feeling. All of that serves only to minimize the person’s own experience. After all, it’s not about “me.” This is not to say that listening is a passive act – quite the contrary, it is an extremely active and deeply energetic act. To be fully present and engaged with the person, we must try to listen to their every spoken word, as well as “listen” to their unspoken words. We can only do this after we “empty our cup.” When we are able to do that, then compassionate, “not for me” action is possible.



Events Help Raise Needed Funds

This past spring GLZC held two important fund-raising events -- our Annual Rummage Sale, held May 12, and our Great Big Book Sale, held in conjunction with Locust Street Days on June 10. Both of these events helped us raise part of the revenue needed for the rental and maintenance of our center and support for retreats and other events. GLZC expenses come to about \$10,000 a year. With all of our expenses met solely through donations and fund-raising, you can understand how critical these two events are. We are pleased to announce that we raised over \$700, enough funds to cover one month's rent and utilities.

These events mean so much to our center, not just for financial reasons, but because they are a great way of building community-- both with members and friends of our Sangha and with our Riverwest neighbors. Making posters, pricing items, sharing pizza, welcoming guests into our center, packing up and hauling away the leftovers to Goodwill— all were great examples of “not-for-me,” together action. What a great way to enjoy the sights and sounds of our vibrant Riverwest neighborhood. This year we were really fortunate to offer live music as part of our Great Big Sale. GLZC practioner Franc Pauc arranged for three friends, all talented blues musicians, to play during the sale. A huge thanks goes out to Frank, Randy and the rest of the band for making that day so much fun. And thanks to everyone—those who donated items to sell, those who helped sell, and those who shopped or just stopped by to check us out. We couldn't keep GLZC going without you!



Seeing What's Really There

Frank Pauc

Our son is home from the war. Hans fought in Iraq, and now he is visiting us on leave from his unit. I have been trying to get to know him again. Hans doesn't talk much, so I try to listen carefully to him when he does open up and tell us things. I don't have a complete understanding of his experiences, and I probably never will. However, he has given me some insights. Hans and I had a conversation after the shooting at the Sikh temple in Oak Creek. In the course of our talk Hans mentioned to me that it is difficult for him to interact with people that look Muslim or Indian. He told me that he feels nervous and paranoid when he goes to a filling station or convenience store that is run by somebody who resembles the people he had seen in Iraq. I pointed out to Hans that the guy in the gas station isn't his enemy, but Hans made it clear that once somebody has tried to kill you, you tend to view others from his ethnic group with suspicion.

In Zen we place a great emphasis on having a clear mind, clear like space. In this particular situation our son does not have a clear mind. In his head he can understand that a Muslim in a gas station is just another guy; in his gut the person is a potential threat. To put it another way, part of Hans is still in Iraq. While Hans deployed in a combat zone, his wariness was necessary for self-preservation; here, it prevents him from seeing what's really there.

A few days after I spoke with Hans, I had a conversation with a Muslim woman. I told her about our son and his war experiences. I told her that he had killed a man in Iraq. She listened thoughtfully, but she made it clear that it was very hard for her to empathize with our son. She has never met Hans, but she already has a feeling about him. In her head she knows that he did what he had to do as a soldier, but in her gut she probably feels fear or anger toward him. She also lacks a clear mind, at least in this matter.

Do I have a clear mind? No, generally not. I don't see things any better than Hans does, and my feelings are just as subjective as those of the woman. These two conversations brought home to me how really difficult it is to have a clear mind. It takes great effort to just see the person who stands in front of me and to hear what he or she is actually saying. It is so much easier to look at the world through the lens of my experiences and accept a somewhat distorted image.

How can I tell if I am seeing what's really there? I think that love is the litmus test. If I have compassion and empathy for the person in front of me, then I am probably seeing them clearly. If I view them with animosity, then there is distortion and confusion within me. It is possible for me to adjust the way I see a person. That person probably won't change, but my perception of them might.

We sit in order to have a clear mind. We sit in order bring compassion into a broken world. We sit in order to see what's really there.

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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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