
MOON ON THE WATER

Volume 15, Issue 3

Summer 2013

Don't Be Distracted By Inner Peace

Zen Master Bon Hae

Our minds are filled with confusion. We obsess endlessly. We anticipate, we regret, we brood and we scheme. We want what we don't have, and we don't want what we have. At times we feel under assault. At times we feel forgotten.

The Sanskrit word for this is dukha. It is often translated as "suffering," but what it really means is pervasive, at times unbearable, dissatisfaction.

When we are aware of this inner noise, this dukha, we naturally want it to stop. We think there is some other state we should be in – calm, peace or even nirvana. We go looking for it. We try this and we try that, and now and then we do feel peaceful; we do feel calm. And it feels really good.

So we try to hold onto this feeling. We become anxious that something will interfere with our morning cup of coffee, our

See Don't Be Distracted ...

continued page 2

INSIDE THIS ISSUE

- 1** Don't Be Distracted By Inner Peace
- 1** Abbot's Corner
- 2** Dae Soen Sa Nim's Original Teaching
- 3** Calendar of Upcoming Events
- 4** Introduction to Meditation
- 5** Friends

Abbot's Corner

Eyes Wide Open

Pete Neuwald, Abbot



We now have a new Buddha thanks to our Guiding Teacher, Zen Master Dae Kwang. When a new Buddha is installed in a dharma room at a center or temple a "Buddha's Eyes Opening Ceremony" is performed. We plan on having that ceremony in October when Zen Master Dae Kwang returns from Singapore to lead a retreat at our center. During the ceremony, the teacher symbolically paints the Sanskrit symbol for "Om" on the eyes of the Buddha. Voilà! The Buddha's eyes are opened! He is awake!

Zen teachers often talk about waking up – wake up to our true self, wake up to this moment, wake up to this universe. This got me to thinking about Google's Project Glass (<http://google.com/glass>). This project is a part of Google's effort to achieve their professed goal of "getting technology out of the way" and working toward a future in which technology would disappear.

What it really amounts to is an effort to make technology so all pervasive that we won't even realize that it is there; it will become fused with us. Always-connected devices already surround us. (I say this as I type on my MacBook Pro with my iPhone lying next to me.) This is taking it to the next level. The danger is that as we come to see the world through the eyes of our devices we won't really see

See Eyes Wide Open

continued page 2

five-mile run. Which just increases our feeling of dukha.

It's like the Gordian knot – you can't untie it. But you can cut through it.

Don't be distracted by inner peace. Don't be distracted by anxiety. Don't be distracted by anything. What are you doing right now? What is in front of you right now? Pay attention, see clearly and act correctly.

It's simple, but not easy. Our delusions mislead us. Our thoughts and feelings control us. We don't know who we are.

Some kind of practice, a daily practice over a lifetime, is necessary to cut through all this. And not in isolation, but within a community, to cut through self-absorption and delusion.

What kind of practice? It's up to you. My great-grandmother davened (Jewish prayer) every morning. My mother-in-law went to Mass every morning. I meditate every morning. Find what fits. Then do it, if you'll excuse the expression, religiously.

Dae Soen Sa Nim's Original Teaching

Ken Alexander, SDT

The other day I read a posting on Facebook from one of my Eastern European friends who shared the following teaching from Dae Soen Sa Nim:

"I don't teach Korean or Mahayana or Zen. I don't even teach Buddhism. I only teach "Don't Know."

How sweet is that? At a time where everyone, everywhere is screaming "I KNOW!", we have the most effective balm to ease the pain of this "know mind" which causes endless suffering, endless conflict.

It is very challenging. We want to have answers. We want to believe that there is some magic potion that will take away all of our suffering, our confusion, and even more importantly, our questions. Yet these questions are the most precious resources we have. Without these extremely irritating pebbles in our shoes, these nagging reminders that we just don't get it, we aren't able to even begin to resolve the issues that loom like dark clouds in our lives. Sometimes with "know mind," the clouds clear and we are happy with the warm and sunny days, but too often worry about when the rain will reappear.

From my own experience I can attest to the fact that this

"know mind" approach has not worked well for me. Over and over waiting for, hoping for, or expecting my preferred outcome to appear does not produce the effect I had wished for. Getting what I wanted did not lead to happiness. Maybe lottery winners would understand this.

So truly, the only medicine that has ever been effective for me was and is "Don't Know." It takes away all that is not necessary--checking myself and my self-perceived failures and those of others. "Don't Know" take away all of the needless and pointless everyday annoyances from driving in traffic, to checking out at the food store, to trying to get your health provider to wake up.

It is a joy to try to explain to newcomers that our School is "don't-want-anything Buddhism." Mostly they are confused because they think that the point of a spiritual practice is to get something. I want to say to them, "Don't thank me now, thank me later" because when they realize that they are not burdened with having to manufacture a perfect person in order to get something, they will realize that a great burden has been lifted from them and that they are free to just be themselves in whatever way they have manifested., with no judgment.

Eyes Wide Open

continued from page 1

the world as it is. We will record life, google life, photo-shoot life, but not really engage with life.



When the mind is distracted, we don't see clearly; we are not awake. This is occurring even without Google Glass. How many times have you seen two people at a restaurant tapping on their smart phones rather than being with the person across from them? So really this is a problem that we already have. We use our devices for distraction and separation. The devices themselves are not good, not bad. We just need to make a conscious effort to set them aside when they get in the way of waking up and being present in this moment.

Calendar of Upcoming Events

June 2013

- Introduction to Zen
Monday, June 3, 7:30 - 9:00 PM
- GLZC's Great Big Book Sale
Sunday, June 9, Noon - 8:00 PM
- Dharma Talk
Wednesday, June 26, 7:30 - 9:00 PM
- YMJJ Retreat
Friday, June 28, 12:00 PM-
3:00 PM, Sunday, June 30

July 2013

- Introduction to Zen
Monday, July 1, 7:30 PM - 9:00 PM
- Dharma Talk
Wednesday, July 24, 7:30 PM - 9:00 PM

August 2013

- Introduction to Zen
Monday, August 5, 7:30 PM - 9:00 PM
- Extended Practice
Saturday, August 24, 9:00 AM - 11:00 AM
- Dharma Talk
Wednesday, August 28, 7:30 PM - 9:00 PM



YMJJ Retreat Led by Zen Master Bon Hae

Friday, Saturday, June 28 – Sunday, June 30

GLZC is excited to announce that Zen Master Bon Hae will lead a three-day YMJJ retreat, beginning at noon on Friday, June 28th and ending at 3:00 pm on Sunday, June 30th.

Zen Master Bon Hae (Judy Roitman), began practicing Zen with Zen Master Seung Sahn in 1976 at the Cambridge Zen Center. She was one of the founders of the Kansas Zen Center in 1978 and received inka (authorization to teach) from Zen Master Seung Sahn in 1998. She received transmission to become a Zen Master in 2013. She is the guiding teacher of the Kansas Zen Center, the Red Earth Zen Center in Oklahoma and the Deming Zen Center in New Mexico.

The retreat will be held at GLZC. In addition to leading the retreat, Zen Master Bon Hae 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).

Great Lake Zen Center's Great Big Book Sale

Sunday, June 9
11:00 AM – 8:00 PM

During the Locust Street Festival

DON'T MISS OUR BIG FUND-RAISER OF THE YEAR!

**Books, Vinyl, DVDs, Plants
Also Hand-crafted Cutting Boards**

Low Prices
@ GLZC
828 E. Locust St.

Support Our Sangha and Have Fun!

Introduction to Meditation

From *Dharma Mirror*, Third Edition

Traditionally, in China and Korea, only monks did Zen practice. But Zen has come to the West and here lay people practice Zen. This has changed the character of Zen. Now our teaching is about Zen in everyday life. Sitting Zen all the time is not possible for lay people. Everyday-life Zen means learning mind-sitting. Mind-sitting means not-moving mind. How do you keep not-moving mind? Put down your opinion, condition and situation moment-to-moment. When you are doing something, just do it.

This is everyday Zen. For lay people the teaching of great love, great compassion and the Great Bodhisattva Way is very important. To attain that, it is necessary to keep a not-moving mind, then correct situation, correct function, and correct relationship appear by themselves in everyday life.

There are various forms of meditation. Each technique has a special effect on the mind. The various techniques are discussed below.

Mind practices

These practices are the heart of meditation. They have different effects on the mind when they are practiced. Also the speed of the effect can be different depending on the technique used. In all meditation techniques, the breath is important. To calm your body down, it is helpful to take several long, deep breaths at the beginning of meditation. Breathe using the diaphragm and center the breath in the lower belly. It should be relaxed, natural and quiet—the breath should breathe you.

Technique 1: counting the breaths

This practice, often recommended for beginners, brings attention to each breath and helps to still and focus the mind. The count may be done on either the inhalation or exhalation. The count is done either up to three or up to ten and then repeated for the duration of the sitting period. If the count is lost, then the practitioner returns to one.

Technique 2: keeping a question

Having a great question is fundamental to Zen practice. The questions most often used are “What am I?” or “What is this?” (in Korean “Shi Shim Ma?”). Let go of all thinking, opinions and desires and continually return to the questioning. This practice is usually co-ordinated with the breath.

The question may be asked during the inhalation, followed by a prolonged “Don’t Know” on the

exhalation; or the question may be asked on the exhalation. Both techniques promote a return to the before-thinking mind.

Technique 3: mantra practice

Using a mantra to calm the mind and strengthen the center is another technique used by Zen practitioners. The main difference between the mantras is the length of the mantra used and the mantra’s direction. Generally the more incessant the thinking, the shorter the mantra should be. The usual technique is to recite the mantra constantly, paying attention to it and allowing all other thinking to drop away. This takes some practice since it is very easy to let one part of the brain “chant” the mantra while the other part is thinking about dinner or going to the movies. When this happens, gently bring the mind back to the mantra without any judgment. The most common mantras recommended for beginners are the two listed below.

1) Clear mind, clear mind, clear mind, don’t know

This mantra is usually suggested to beginners in conjunction with a breathing exercise. Breathe in to a count of 3, saying “clear mind” at each count and breathe out to a count of 7 saying ‘doooooonnnn’t knnnnoooooow’ just once for the whole 7 count. The count may vary with the individual, but the exhalation must be more than twice as long as the inhalation.

2) Kwan Seum Bosal

This is the Korean name of the Bodhisattva of Compassion, Avalokitesvara. This mantra is commonly suggested for people whose minds cannot be quiet one minute or who cannot concentrate for very long. Because it is short it can be repeated over and over (usually with a set of beads for counting). The usual recommendation is for 3000 to 10000 a day for someone who really wants to clear their mind of a particular problem. It is also used on a daily basis by many people as part of their sitting meditation technique. More advanced students often use the entire Great Dharani as a mantra, reciting it sub-vocally as fast as possible over and over again.

Technique 4: chanting

Although the individual chants—especially the Great Dharani—may be done alone as mantras, chanting done in a group is also meditation practice. The key to chanting correctly is to chant with 100 percent focus and energy: just loud enough to hear your own voice, and softly enough to hear everyone else in the room. This allows everyone to follow the moktak master for the chant as there is no one voice over-powering all the rest. Also people who have a hard time singing in key can then blend in with everyone and the sound from the chant in group will truly be together action— all minds becoming one. Kido chanting is an especially strong form of chanting meditation.

See *Introduction to Meditation*

continued page 5

Technique 5: prostrations

Prostrations are a very powerful technique for seeing and working through the karma of a difficult situation because both the mind and the body are involved. Something that might take days of sitting to digest may be digested in a much shorter time with prostrations. A common practice, especially popular in Korea, is to do 1000 bows a day (actually 1080). This can be done all at once or as is usually the case, spread out through the day. For instance,

- 1 set for morning bows,
- 2 sets before breakfast,
- 2 sets at lunch time,
- 2 sets mid-afternoon,
- 1 set before evening practice,
- 2 sets after evening practice.

This is a demanding schedule. Practitioners often commit to 300 or 500 bows a day.

Technique 6: clear mind meditation

This form of meditation involves just sitting and being aware of what is going on at just this moment. This is moment-to-moment mind. It hears the birds in the trees, the cars going by, the planes overhead, and the children playing outside. To the clear mind there is no such thing as 'noisy', it all just 'is.' This is not a technique for beginners, but is an out-growth of experience with the previous meditation techniques.

Friends

Frank Pauc

I have a friend, or rather I had one. His name is Joe. I met him over ten years ago. He's a very articulate and well-read individual. He has an agile mind and a quick wit. He tells funny stories and he has a generous heart. Over the years, I have always been able to confide in him. He was one of those rare people who is actually able to listen.

A couple months ago, he fell off the face of the earth. I lost contact with Joe, as did most everyone else. I know that he is still around, but he isn't interested in getting together. He isn't interested in interacting at all. I don't know what has happened in his life, and it's not really my business to know. I do know that, at least temporarily, I have lost a good friend. I grieve for that.

What does this experience have to do with Zen? When I lie awake at night, or as I sit on the cushion during practice, I try to understand what has happened and why I feel what I feel. The standard Zen answer would be that I am attached to this person, and therefore I suffer in his absence. That is

an answer that answers very little. It just prompts additional questions like, "Why am I attached?" or "Does all this bother me because I want to help Joe and am unable to do so?" Do I suffer for selfish reasons, or because I am worried about my friend? Or are there a variety of reasons that are all mixed up?

In Zen we put a lot of emphasis on the transient nature of things. Nothing lasts, including relationships. People come into our lives, and they often leave again abruptly. Sometimes they move away, sometimes they die, sometimes they cut the connection without giving any reason at all. We all change all of the time, and the person we liked a year ago may not really exist anymore. I might not be the person any more that my friend liked. Intellectually, I understand that I have lost friends and will continue to lose them. However, my heart rebels at this fact. I let go of people grudgingly, and generally in sadness.

In Zen we also put huge emphasis on the interconnectedness of all beings. For me this makes it harder to let people go. If I truly believe that I have a deep connection with another person, how can I with equanimity just cut somebody off? Zen makes it harder for me to burn my bridges, and it hurts as much when I see the other person light the fire.

In Zen practice we strive for a clear mind. We attempt to see things as they are. Sometimes that clear mind allows us to sort out the tangled strands of our feelings and desires. Sometimes the clear mind just tells us to accept the obvious and move on. Sometimes the clear mind tells us to just let it go.

I read once that our hearts work like hands. When our hearts are closed tight like fists, we can't let things go. We are also unable to accept new things into our lives. When our hearts are open like open hands, we can let go freely and freely receive. Maybe that is how it works with friends. As a finite human, I can only hold so many people in my heart. Perhaps I have to release people from my life in order to accept new ones. That doesn't mean that I cease to love old friends; I just have to let them move on so that they can bless others.



MOON ON THE WATER

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

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
Do Gam: Susi Childress, BDT, Do Gam
Treasurer: Laura Otto-Salaj, SDT
Secretary/Publicity: Andy Yench, DT
Editor: Gretchen Neuwald, DT
House Master: Chris Rundblad, DT

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

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.



BUILD RATE
US POSTAGE
PAID
PERMIT NO.
00000