

MOON ON THE WATER

Volume 12, Issue 3 Newsletter of the Great Lake Zen Center, Milwaukee, WI December, 2010

Buddha's Enlightenment Day Speech Zen Master Seung Sahn

On Sunday, January 19, 1975 there were many flowers and fruits on the altar to commemorate the Buddha's enlightenment according to the lunar calendar. That evening during the ceremony Zen Master Seung Sahn delivered the following Dharma Speech:

Holding up the Zen stick, pointing to the sky, then hitting the table,

"Do you understand this? If you understand this, then you have already attained enlightenment."

"If you don't understand this, then you cannot get out from the world of fire."

"There are three worlds of fire: the world of desire, the world of form, and the world of no form. All these are made by thinking. Thinking is desire; desire is suffering; suffering is the mind's fire. So the whole world is on fire. If you don't understand, you cannot escape from suffering."

"Long ago, Buddha sat under the Bodhi tree for six years. One morning he saw the eastern star and attained enlightenment. How did he attain enlightenment? He only saw the eastern star."

"That star is still in the sky. If you find it, you will attain enlightenment. But in the sky there are many stars."

"Which one is it?"

"Where is it?"

"Have you found it?"

"If you haven't found it, I will show you."

Holding up the Zen stick, then hitting the table,

"Now can you find it? If you still can't find it, then you must enter through the sound. The name for this is first enlightenment. But enlightenment is no enlightenment. True enlightenment is before thinking. So there are no words, no speech, no star, no sound."

"What is true enlightenment?"

"Put it all down!"

Slowly lifting up the Zen stick,

"Can you see this?"

"What is it?" (pause)

"This is a Zen stick."

Hitting the table,

"Can you hear this?"

"What is it?" (pause)

"This is a sound."

“The stick is the stick; the sound is the sound.”

“When you see the stick, your mind is only the stick. When you hear the sound, your mind is only the sound. Only become one.”

“Buddha only saw the star. Only like this. The star is the star. Red comes: red. Yellow comes: yellow. Birds fly in the sky; fish swim in the water. Honey is sweet; salt is salty. One plus two equals three.”

“All is like this. That is the truth.”

“But you must not say, 'I have attained enlightenment.' If you open your mouth, I will hit you thirty times.”

“Why?”

“KATZ!!!”

“Today is Buddha's enlightenment day. The star is in the eastern sky.”

“Watch your step!”

“Can someone please show me how to hold a pencil?”

Laura Otto-Salaj, Senior Dharma Teacher

At a recent sangha meeting, the laptop computer of our secretary died as we were in the middle of planning our year-long schedule of events. We joked about how to proceed, given our increasing dependence on communications technology. Lately, I've been musing about this, and how it has impacted our lives and lifestyles in the past 10 – 15 years. Most of the people I know have come to rely on computers, cell phones, even smartphones, and look to these as well as mp3 players and other gadgets for information, communications, and entertainment. I have a desktop computer and a laptop, which I use every day. I also have a smartphone, which allows me to access email during the day. This semester, I'm teaching an online class, so my students have access to me pretty much all day, every day, during the semester. My students know this, and their expectations of being able to get hold of me quickly have also risen. It seems that as our access to technology has increased, especially in this time of economic stress, it is also used as justification that we need to accomplish much more in a given time frame than we used to. The good news: we can probably do just that. The bad news: we can do this, but at what cost?

I've noticed that, at times when I used to have “down-time” – perhaps in the car with my family, or at home, I gravitate toward the laptop or the phone, to “catch-up” on email or news, or to surf the Net. Back in the late 80's, when I was working on my doctoral dissertation in psychology at Temple University in Philadelphia, my mentor, David Kipnis, and I had a number of conversations about the potentially isolating nature of technology. He was worried that as people could (and eventually have) become more autonomous and have almost immediate access to information through use of technology, this might help us along the path to becoming more isolated, rather than more connected. He later discussed this in his book, Technology and Power. Now, twenty years later, in any given meeting I'm in, there are several smartphones going, with people multitasking. There are some in my workplace who, rather than walking down the hall fifty feet to see if I am in my office, will call or email me. And I confess, I've been one of those people who multitask, trying to cram the accomplishment of ten things in a space where, previously, only one or two would fit. What do I miss – and others miss from me - when I'm doing the other nine things, and not paying attention to the meeting, the 10th? Are we really doing what we can do to help, or are we in a dream, simply checking off tasks on a list? How often do we encounter people who surf the Net during meetings, conversations with friends, dinners with family... and how often are WE those people? In this day and age of increasing reliance on tools that can make our lives easier, do we really need to be up to the minute on everything? Especially at the expense of intimacy and helping this world?

Practice is an antidote to the cons of technology – frankly, it is an antidote to all our desires, to all the distractions life provides. At the Great Lake Zen Center, we have practice several nights a week and one weekend morning, plus retreats and special practices throughout the year. Meditation practice cuts off all thinking, so that we can be 100% in this moment and help this world. Sitting, chanting, bowing, and mantras all help us keep clear mind in the face of numerous distractions – sleep, sex, fame, money, food . . . At any given time, if we're not clear, using technology just facilitates any of those desires. In a letter to a student discussing clear mind, Zen Master Seung Sahn wrote that

clear mind "... means no subject, no object; inside and outside become one mind. If you keep this mind always, moment to moment, you can understand your correct opinion, your condition, and your situation. Most people separate their opinion, their condition, and their situation, but if you have a clear mind, your opinion, condition, and situation become one action; you cannot separate them. At teaching time, only teaching; when you return to your house, only mother's mind; when talking to your husband, only wife's mind; when you're driving, only drive; when you're walking, only walk; when you're eating, only eat. Correct moment to moment action is your correct opinion, correct condition, correct situation."

This doesn't mean that we need to become anti-technology; we should, however, be mindful of how we use it, just as we need to be mindful of everything we do. Practice helps us be clear in making decisions that help this world. So, perhaps I don't NEED to accomplish all the things on my list in any given day, especially looking at doing one or two things with complete and undivided attention. Wouldn't it be amazing if we could all be 100% intimate with this moment, and use it to help this world?

Practice is at 7:30 pm on Mondays and Wednesdays, and 8 am on Saturdays. Please come join us.

Where are the Young People?

Francis Pauc

This last week I paid a visit to my friend, Rabbi Shlomo. In the course of our conversation, we discussed the difficulty of getting young people (teens and tweens) to participate in religious or spiritual activities. Shlomo lamented the fact that in his congregation, they lose the kids right after their Bar Mitzvahs, and don't see them again until they want to get married. The story is similar at the church that I attend, where we lose them immediately after confirmation and they don't resurface until they want to get married. There seems to be a spiritual void that is not limited to any particular tradition.

Now, a cursory look at the population of the Zen Center would indicate a similar situation. Yes, there is an occasional young person in attendance, but we have an awful lot of grey hair visible during our practice sessions. A regular practice in any spiritual tradition seems to be the province of the older generation. Why is that? I mean the Buddha got on his path fairly early in his life, so why don't young people in our day and age do the same?

I believe that all people, regardless of age, are looking for a path to follow. It's just that in our younger years most of us are in love with the material world and all that it has to offer. I know that when I was in my twenties I was working very hard to get as many attachments as possible in as short a time as possible. I was successful in my efforts. I think that many young people aren't interested in non-attachment because they are doing their damndest to get attached to the world. Maybe it has to be that way. Maybe a person has to dive into the deep end of the pool of delusion before deciding to come up for air. I don't know . . . Looking at the Buddha while he was Prince Siddhartha, it appears that he had a head start on glutting himself on worldly pleasures. His party started and ended early.

Rabbi Shlomo asked why older people find ritual and spirituality attractive. He understands why younger folks find most forms of practice boring, but then why do some of us get interested in it later on in life? I would suggest that, as we age, we acquire a more intimate relationship with mortality. What shocked Siddhartha into action? It was when he saw sickness, old age, and death, up close and personal. A young person seldom gets exposed to these three things, certainly not if that young person spends most of his or her time with contemporaries. As years go by, things happen. Maybe a sibling dies, or we got very sick. It is guaranteed that we will grow old. The Buddha got his shock all at once; we get it little by little.

Is it really a problem that young people aren't very interested in following a spiritual practice? Maybe not. There is a time and place for everything. We should be welcoming to any young person that comes through the door, but perhaps we need not actively pursue them. They will come when they are ready.

Buddha's Enlightenment Day **Monday, December 6, 7:30 pm**

Buddhists traditionally celebrate only two "holidays" – Buddha's Enlightenment Day and Buddha's Birthday. So you don't want to miss our Buddha's Enlightenment Day celebration at GLZC on Monday, December 6, at 7:30 pm. Please join us for this short ceremony, followed by refreshments and friendly conversation. Family and friends are welcome to come and celebrate.

Heart Kyol Che 2010 **Monday, January 3, 7:30 pm**

The start of Heart Kyol Che at GLZC will be held on January 3, 2010. Kyol Che is a traditional Korean Zen retreat. The name means "tight dharma" or "coming together." In Korea, it is the three-month winter and summer periods when monks and nuns do intensive sitting practice in the mountain temples. Providence Zen Center holds two Kyol Che retreats annually, with students sitting up to three months in the winter and four weeks in the summer.

The Heart Kyol Che is an opportunity for students who cannot sit the traditional Kyol Che, or who can sit only part of it, to participate by doing extra practice at home and participating in together practice as they are able. This will run concurrently with the traditional Kyol Che. By doing this Heart Kyol Che together, we strengthen our own practice, and provide support to our fellow students who are able to sit the traditional Kyol Che. We in turn can draw inspiration and energy from their commitment. You can participate in the Heart Kyol Che through your commitment to practice at home and by attending talks, sittings, and retreats at the Zen Center. During the Heart Kyol Che period the Great Lake Zen Center will offer extended sitting hours and an intensive practice week. During the Heart Kyol Che period you can participate by committing to extra practice to show your support in a variety of ways. Some ideas are as follows:

1. An effort to do daily practice (suggested minimum is recitation of the Four Great Vows; bowing; chanting of the Heart Sutra; and sitting - fifteen minutes)
2. Doing daily mantra practice (suggested minimum is one thousand Kwan Seum Bosals)
3. A personal day of silence and mindfulness (optional)
4. Long sittings (suggested minimum is one)
5. Dharma talk s (suggested minimum is one)
6. Yong Maeng Jong Jins and one day retreats (suggested minimum is one day)
7. One or more weeks of Winter Kyol Che at Providence (optional)
8. Winter Kyol Che ceremonies at Providence (optional)
9. Work practice at GLZC

GLZC Movie & Pizza Night **January 7, 6:30 – 9:00 pm**

Join us Friday, January 7th for the GLZC movie, popcorn, and pizza night. We will start set up, ordering the pizza, etc. at 6:30 and the movie will start at 7:00. The only cost for the evening will be to chip in for the pizza and soda. Join Sangha members for an enjoyable evening – and a good movie to boot! The name of the movie is **Spring, Summer, Fall, Winter, and Spring**. The setting is a tiny Buddhist monastery that floats on a raft on a lake that is surrounded by

mountains somewhere in Korea. A solitary monk is the caretaker who suddenly has to care for a small child who becomes his protege. It is the story of this boy's journey through life where he experiences and manifests "desire, anger, and ignorance," but returns to a life of practice and wakes up to a life of wisdom and compassion. Quite a touching movie. It is in Korean with English subtitles and is 102 minutes long.

There will be a sign-up board at the Zen Center or email us at info@glzc.org if you are planning to attend so we can judge how many pizzas to order.

Beginner's Mind Retreat January 22, 9am – 12pm

"In beginner's mind we have many possibilities, but in expert mind there is not much possibility." – Shunryu Suzuki

Have you thought about sitting a Zen retreat but you aren't sure what to expect? This retreat is purposely intended for newcomers to Zen meditation. No experience is necessary. If you have never sat a retreat and would like to find out more about the sitting, meditation, and formal meals that take place during a formal retreat; this short introduction to a Zen retreat will provide all of that information and answer any questions you may have. This is a short, instructional, less formal version of the longer retreats. It is held at GLZC and run by GLZC Dharma Teachers.

Reminder: Introductions to Zen are offered the first Monday of every month.

Don't forget the Dharma talks offered by the Dharma Teachers of GLZC, every 4th Wednesday of the month.

Calendar of Upcoming Events

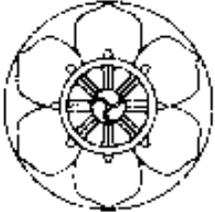
December, 2010

- **Extended Practice, Friday, December 3, 7:00 PM – 10:00 PM**
- **Buddha's Enlightenment Day, Monday, December 6, 7:30 PM**
- **Dharma Talk, December 22, 7:30 PM**
- **No Practice, Saturday Dec 25**

January, 2010

- **No Practice, Saturday, January 1**
- **Buddhist Peace Fellowship New Year's Peace Gathering, 10 AM – Noon**
Tender Shoot of Joy, 1945 N 2nd St, Milwaukee
Potluck to follow
- **Heart Kyol Che Ceremony, Monday, January 3, 7:30 PM – 9:00 PM**
- **Zen Movie Night, Friday, January 7, 6:30 AM – 9:00 PM**
- **Beginner's Mind Retreat, Saturday January 22, 9:00 AM – 12:00 PM**
- **Dharma Talk, Wednesday, January 26, 7:30 PM**

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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 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.

