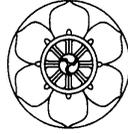


THE EASTERN GATE



Member Newsletter Winter/Spring 2016
The Cambridge Zen Center is part of the Kwan Um School of Zen

Talk given by Zen Master Soeng Hyang (Barbara Rhodes) during a seven-day Yong Maeng Jong Jin Providence Zen Center in December 2015

Question: Do you think that dying could be even harder when people are attached to their karma?

Zen Master Soeng Hyang: Much harder. When I worked as a hospice nurse I was amazed at all the various mental states that people would have as they died.

When I first began living at the Zen center I was working for an agency doing private duty care. One of my first cases was caring for a patient in the hospital on the night shift. The nurses informed me that this patient was a famous Mafia boss. He was in a coma and approaching the end of his life. The first night I stayed with him it was very hard for me to stay awake all night. My body was conditioned to be awake early in the morning and to go to sleep at night. When I got home after that first shift I asked Zen Master Seung Sahn how I could make myself stay awake the next night.

He suggested I sit up straight in the chair and recite the Great Dharani silently in my head. So I did just that. I used my beads, sat up straight and repeated the mantra over and over again. After about an hour this man, who had been mostly unconscious for several days, suddenly sat up in his bed and said, “I don’t know what you are doing, but *stop it!*”

So I stopped it and he went back into his coma. When I got home I told Zen Master Seung Sahn what had happened and he said, “Good! Demons hate the Dharani! His bad

all connected. Nurse / Zen student= Mafia Boss! So a coma is not a coma, any time and any place our practicing effort will affect and help others.



karma made you stop, but the mantra helped him.” For me as a very new student to experience his consciousness pick up on “my” mantra practice let me see that we really are

After going to countless ceremonies, much out of a sense of obligation, I have come to a point of realizing that the ceremonies are a bodhisattva arena. We invite everyone to come to these ceremonies, whether they are in the building or somewhere else in the universe. Our very intentional chanting pervades the universe! I mean, this is just an amazing universe. We’re not separate! It isn’t like bodies coming into the ceremony; it is love, it is effort, it is wisdom and grace. As our practice widens and our faith, courage and effort prevail, we will be more and more aware of the unbroken connection we have with our vows. So as difficult as this YMJJ may feel at times, there is an extremely intelligent reason for the forms and discipline.

Q: What did the patient do after he said that?

ZMSH: He only said, “I don’t know what you’re doing but stop it!” Who actually said that? Zen Master Seung Sahn told me it was his demons. All we need to know is that whoever was hearing the mantra was woken up, perhaps pulled out of a very bad dream.

Q: What was the mantra that you do?

ZMSH: The Great Dharani, but that is not important. You need to know how to keep

Introductory Dharma Talk

Given by Kathy Park at the Providence Zen Center, December 2015

It's nice to be back. I haven't been back in over five years, and it's wonderful to be practicing here with everyone.

Last year, I was one of the members helping to organize the Whole World Is a Single Flower conference in Korea. Planning took two years, and before the big event, it got really busy for about a month and everyone was working hard. We were working in Mu Sang Sa Temple, and a few days just before the conference I was exhausted. After morning practice, I just fell asleep. Usually at 7:30 in the morning after work period, we have a house meeting and then a tea break. I had an appointment with Dae Bong Sunim at 8 in the morning, but it happened that I slept through most of it.

I was sort of in and out, not in a deep sleep but in a dream. In this dream I was still in the room lying down, sleeping but kind of awake. There are four women sharing the room, since at Mu Sang Sa all the rooms are communal. In the dream one roommate was still in the room and everything was exactly the same, except that the window was bigger than usual. It was a big glass window. In the dream there was a storm outside—a strong, windy storm. I was lying down and thinking, “Oh God, there's a storm out there,” and my roommate got up in this dream and walked to the window because she wanted to climb out into the storm. I was still lying there asking, “What are you doing? Why are you going out into the storm?” She opened the window, went out and stood out there looking for somebody. I shouted, “Don't go out there! It's really windy!” Then the wind became very strong and everything turned white. The wind swept her off into space, like in *The Wizard of Oz*, and she was gone! I couldn't get up, and just lay there with the glass just flying out and this whirling white wind coming the room. It came and swept up

the entire room, swept me up, and I realized I had died. Everything turned into a white, blank space. Everything became completely white and suddenly it was very, silent for a while. Then my mantra came back and filled the space. Finally, I woke up and it was five minutes to eight, and I realized I had an appointment at 8:00! I bolted to the door, and



Tufts students volunteering for Martin Luther King Jr. Day of Service.

it was interesting because I had just died! I knew I had died in this dream, it was a “death dream,” but when I woke up, I felt so happy!

I felt so happy I was dead! And my mantra kept going. Until that day, we were building up, working hard for the conference and I was getting upset that I couldn't go to evening practice sometimes because I was stuck in the office, and beating myself up about it. But when I woke up from this death dream, I thought, “Oh wow, that's what they mean when they say if you have a vow inside, this vow can take you wherever you go.” I thought

that was kind of a good rehearsal experience. Maybe it's OK to die. Actually, we're dying all the time, moment to moment. This “death is not something special” experience was really interesting. Of course if you get shot or something sudden happens to your physical body, it's a whole other story. I'm sure some of us have strong experiences and it's not easy at all. Like I said, it was a very interesting rehearsal. The really interesting thing about it was that I stopped checking myself about practice after that experience. It just got much easier to just work 100 percent, practice 100 percent, just do it 100 percent, do it, do it. Just not check so much anymore.

I'm now living in Asia, and that part of the world has been deeply Buddhist for over two thousand years, so when we give intro classes at the Zen center in Hong Kong or Korea, often we get people with a good understanding of Buddhism. I think it's happening more in the West too; more people studying and knowing about Buddhism than before. Sometimes it's challenging because they'll come and ask all kinds of questions about sutras or dharma. In our school, we don't study so much Buddhism, but we try to practice it.

One thing that inspired me recently was the teaching of the six paramitas. As you know, the six paramitas are: precepts, generosity, patience, effort or diligence, meditation (sometimes also called concentration) and wisdom. One beautiful interpretation of these paramitas is from a Tibetan teaching. They are: precepts without samsaric motives; generosity without expectations; patience without resentment; diligence or effort for the benefit of all beings; meditation, which cuts through all states of mind, and wisdom beyond concepts, with skillful means.

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Talk given by Zen Master Soeng Hyang

Continued from page 1

your moment-to-moment mind. For me, this long mantra is very helpful. I don't practice with it all of the time. I pick it up when it just comes into my consciousness and do my best to stay with it. During sitting I often need it or I find my mind drifting into uncreative, somewhat dead spaces.

My teacher told me to practice with this mantra and also stressed keeping a great question such as "What is this?" at all times. So, rather than attached, habit-enforced thinking, we displace this with the mantra and our great question. We just gently move the dualistic delusional thinking over and replace it with pure awareness. It's as simple as that! Only ask someone who has smoked for years how easy it is to stop smoking; many will say it is almost impossible. Well, our self-identified opposites thinking is more addictive than nicotine. At the beginning of this retreat one of you said, "I want to go home!" Now today that same person told me, "I don't want to leave!" This is the mind that we are all working with. It responds positively to practice if this practice is consistent and strong. After a while we stop saying, "I should come to a retreat, I should be more disciplined." We begin to just feel gratitude for the Buddha, the Dharma, and the Sangha, and know how to integrate them into each breath.

Question: I have a question; it's about what you said. Using a mantra, you mentioned in the other talk about seamlessness? So that

after a while, it's not like you have gaps. Can you talk a little bit about keeping practice or changing practice and what happens when you have gaps?

Zen Master Soeng Hyang: Well, as soon as we think, "Oh, now I'm practicing," or, for example with sitting meditation, "Now I'm sitting," then the bell rings, the chugpi hits



December One-Day Retreat led by Zen Master Bon Yeon.



Lawrence High School Meditation group with Zen Master Bon Yeon's book, *One Hundred Days of Solitude*.

and its time to go out in the hallway, then we often drop our clear mind and start our habitual thought patterns. "I am wondering what we're having for lunch? Only two and a half days left until I get to go home and have whatever I want to eat." The same thing can happen with walking meditation. People will leave walking meditation all of a sudden when

they don't really have to: "Oh, good, I can get out of here!" But we need to learn there is no "getting out of here"! The discipline of a YMJJ can help us to drop that discriminating consciousness and become absolutely unconditional. We can learn to lean into our everyday life with a simple don't know mind. So we can really have a clear sitting practice that

will get up off the cushion with you and go to lunch with you. It's not checking, it's just being with, being with, being with. It's harder to do when we're on the move, but it's a beautiful thing to integrate it into everything you do—everything. Again, how many times have we heard that? "Everything is practice!" You have to see how that works and how you can sustain that.

The mantra practice helped me tremendously with hospice work. Like most professions that require working with people who are in some kind of distress, hospice caregivers are exposed to very complicated challenges. When I felt my mind getting frightened or feeling like it needed protection, I would start doing the mantra (in my head, not out loud). It would calm me down and, rather than reacting to perhaps one of the family member's verbal abuse, I would be able to respond helpfully to their obvi-

ous fear or anger. In primary point, there is no self and other; there is only correct situation, relationship and function. So rather than reacting like, "Hey, it's not my fault your wife is dying!" That's not helpful! The mantra would bring me back to primary point, to the point that just sees, just hears, and is able to

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Talk given by Zen Master Soeng Hyang

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intuit the situation. What is so amazing about practice is that my mouth would open and I would say something that would help. Something like, “It must be so hard to watch your wife in this condition. It must be so frightening to not know how to help her, how to get her out of this discomfort.” The husband would begin to relax and respond to this nurse, who is trained to find ways to help comfort not just his wife, but him as well. It might not sound like much, but for me, learning to trust primary point in myriad situations is a priceless gift.

So, the point is not to be defensive, but to feel and respond to what someone is going through. The thing is, we are that person, and that person is us. Sometimes we’re sitting and we’re that angry scared person that’s accusing. We call it checking, but it’s just—it’s tough to be born.

So can you just kick into the mantra and feel and respond! Our center is like an incubator; it can keep everything warm. It’s an uncondi-

tell your karma. Incubators don’t tell the eggs when it is time to hatch. Some of our kong-ans and lessons take a while to work out. Can

we be patient? Can we be generous? Can we be warm? Can we just go even beyond accepting? When you give birth and they wrap the baby in the blanket and say, “Here’s your baby,” you don’t say, “Oh, I accept that.” No! You go, “Woah!” And you take the baby in your arms. So that’s the thing: Can we do that with our pain and confusion? Can we not accept our pain but, keep it warm in our incu-



Seven-Day December YMJJ with Zen Master Soeng Hyang.

tional incubator. It’s not going to pick and choose: “Oh, I’ll take this but I won’t take that.” It takes all the eggs and keeps them just the right temperature. And it’s not going to

bator? Allow it, don’t check. It’s not easy; that’s why we have sangha, that’s why we have teachers and practice. Let’s bow to the process! Thank you very much.



WINTER / SPRING 2016 SCHEDULE

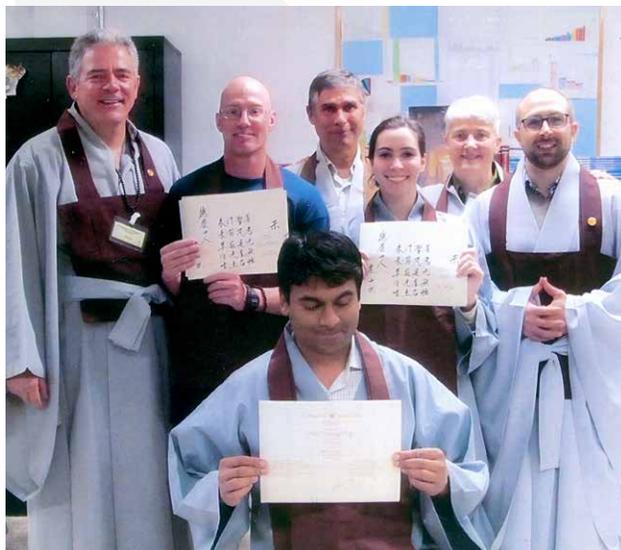
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|-------------------|--|-------------------|---|
| Feb. 4 | Book Signing by Colin Beavan DT | Apr. 22 | Dharma talk by Zen Master Bon Shim |
| Feb. 12 | Dharma talk by Carlos Montero JDPSN | Apr. 23–24 | Two-day YMJJ led by Zen Master Bon Shim |
| Feb. 13–14 | Two-day YMJJ led by Carlos Montero JDPSN | Apr. 28 | Dharma talk by Tom Johnson, Abbot |
| Feb. 18 | Dharma talk by Tom Johnson, Abbot | May 5 | Dharma talk by Ben Gleason SDT |
| Feb. 25 | Dharma talk by Zen Master Bon Yeon | May 13 | Dharma talk by Zen Master Wu Kwang |
| Mar. 3 | Dharma talk by Barry Briggs JDPSN | May 14–15 | Two-day YMJJ led by Zen Master Wu Kwang |
| Mar. 11 | Dharma talk by Nancy Hedgpeth JDPSN | May 19 | Dharma talk by Zen Master Bon Yeon |
| Mar. 12–13 | Two-day YMJJ led by Nancy Hedgpeth JDPSN | May 26 | Dharma talk by Zen Master Bon Shim |
| Mar. 17 | Dharma talk by Jennifer Magrone SDT | June 2 | Dharma talk by Zen Master Bon Yeon |
| Mar. 19 | One-day college retreat led by Zen Master Bon Yeon | June 9 | Dharma talk by Zen Master Bon Shim |
| Mar. 24 | Dharma talk by Zen Master Bon Yeon | June 11–12 | Two-day YMJJ led by Zen Master Bon Shim |
| Mar. 31 | Dharma talk by Barry Briggs JDPSN | June 16 | Dharma talk by Tom Johnson, Abbot |
| Apr. 2–3 | Buddha’s Birthday at PZC | June 23 | Dharma talk by Zen Master Bon Shim |
| Apr. 7 | Dharma talk by Tom Johnson, Abbot | June 30 | Dharma talk by Jean Murphy SDT |
| Apr. 14 | Dharma talk by Zen Master Bon Yeon | | |

After the warmest fall on record, winter finally arrived at Cambridge Zen Center. We have now had the first morning snow-shoveling exercise of the season. Perhaps last winter's record-breaking snows will only be a memory. The New Year was welcomed in by a delightful chanting kido until midnight, with assistance from two nuns visiting from Hong Kong: Myong Hae Sunim and Bon Sun Sunim. We enjoyed refreshments afterward. The nuns are now participating in the full winter Kyol Che at Providence Zen Center until early April.

We began 2016 with a two-day YMJJ led by resident teacher Barry Briggs JDPSN. Quite a few first-timers attended, including a 14-year-old boy with his grandfather, who is a dharma-teacher-in-training in the Kwan Um School of Zen.

Back in October, we were fortunate to have Igor Pininski JDPSN visit us from Lodz, Poland. He brought his lovely wife, Joanna, and stayed for 10 days. His enthusiasm, humor and gratitude were a much-needed shot of adrenaline, waking us up to the present moment. During my kong-an interview, he held up a marble coaster which had been in the teacher's room with fossil imprints of a microorganism. "How can you save these *Orthoceras*, who died 400 million years ago?" he asked, referring to the squidlike fossils.

I was surprised he recognized the species and knew its name! Igor Poep Sa Nim also participated in our annual dharma teacher retreat at Providence Zen Center and provided instruction about seated postures during long retreats.



Prison Precepts 9-30-15 with Zen Master Bon Haeng and Mark O'Leary.

Our prison program reached a milestone in the fall. Zen Master Bon Haeng conducted a precepts ceremony at MCI Shirley. Two CZC residents took five precepts at the same time. Mark O'Leary and other regular sangha volunteers visit the prison for weekly meditation and dharma conversation. Shuk-Kuen Tse has been volunteering each week to co-lead meditation training at the Pine Street Inn, a local homeless shelter. A street retreat is planned for May. Lawrence Public School teacher Thomas Dejardins is teaching a program on mindfulness and meditation to his ninth-graders using Zen Master Bon Yeon's book, *One Hundred Days of Solitude* (Wisdom Publications, 2008) as their textbook.

There was enthusiastic attendance at the ever-popular college retreat and at the one-day retreat in December, both led by Zen Master Bon Yeon. The shining faces in the photos say it all.

Some of us were fortunate enough to participate in Zen Master Soeng Hyang's seven-day YMJJ in December after the Buddha's Enlightenment Day ceremony at Providence Zen Center.



Zen Master Soeng Hyang and Jennifer Mancini.

We were saddened to hear of Zen Master Dae Jin's passing in January. Zen Master Dae Jin was abbot of Mu Sang Sa Monastery in Korea. Although he rarely left Korea, many long-term practitioners knew him well and we had good karma with him. He began his Zen training at Cambridge Zen Center and met Zen Master Seung Sahn here. It is a great loss to our school and to the many people that Dae Jin Sunim helped.



John O'Regan repairing the Dharma room rice paper door.

As for our residential community, our heroic housemaster, Dharma Teacher

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Woody Wood, has stepped down after leading us in together action for three years. Among other activities, Woody served as work master, repaired approximately ten thousand broken items, provided 24/7 diplomatic consultations, soothed ruffled feathers and generally helped to foster a happy atmosphere. He will now focus on his psychotherapy career. Paul Laurey will be taking over shortly as housemaster, and we thank him in advance! Our head dharma teacher, Senior Dharma Teacher Jim Kopcienski, is also stepping down after three years of dedicated service to our sangha. Jim brought eight years of prior experience as head dharma teacher at PZC to our dharma hall—not to mention long monastic training. We were lucky to have him steering our dharma vessel. Jim encouraged and trained many dharma teachers and dharma-teachers-in-training to lead daily practice, as well as weekend retreats. Mark Uehling will be stepping up to be our new head dharma teacher. Both Woody and Jim will be guiding their replacements to ensure a seamless transition.

Dharma Teacher Beth Walsh is recovering from a recent medical procedure. She stayed in the main house briefly to receive help with meals and other necessities. It seemed every day brought healing. She is now doing fine on her own.

We wish every happiness to departing residents Christopher Raiche, Won San Sunim and Eric Busse, who left to dedicate themselves to graduate studies at Harvard Divinity School. Our doors are open and we hope to see the three scholars often. Environmental activist Shea Reister left after a short residency



Colin Beavan speaking on his book, "How to Be Alive."



Cambridge Zen Center.



"How to be Alive" books for sale.

and we wish him well. Mark Horan moved out in late October after a six-year residency. During his time here, he served as head dharma teacher and rebuilt our website, using the graphic elements of a previous incarnation. He also created an online web application for the CZC fundraising events in 2012 and 2014. When not concerned with programming, Mark was a dishwasher extraor-dinaire who cleaned the kitchen thoroughly and seemingly at supersonic speed. We hope his next chapter will go well for him.

Speaking of past fundraisers, our accessibility project is slowly getting underway. It will provide vastly improved building access for those in wheelchairs. The renovations will include widened doorways, a ramp and a new bathroom on the first floor near the inter-view room.

A group of 10 Tufts University students joined us for work period with their chaplain in honor of Martin Luther King Jr. Day in late January. Much mindful cleaning, dusting, painting, and door repairs in good company took place. Thank you for your service!

Looking ahead, Dharma Teacher Colin Beavan will visit from New York in February to give a talk based on his new book, *How to Be Alive*. We are also eagerly awaiting YMJJs just over the horizon, including retreats with Carlos Montero JDPSN, Nancy Hedgepeth SDT, and Zen Master Wu Kwang. And we are so glad that this year Zen Master Bon Shim will again be joining us from Poland. She plans to stay for ten weeks.

There are a number of workshops planned for the immediate future under the guidance of Barry Briggs JDPSN. A series of three Monday-night conversa-

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Introductory Dharma Talk

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The Sanskrit word *paramita* actually means perfection. It makes us think that they are perfections that we must aspire to, but as Zen Master Seung Sahn would say, we already have it; our Buddha nature is already within us. What hinders us from using these paramitas that are already inherent in all of us?

For me, I saw in these paramitas our simple Zen teaching. Keeping precepts without sam-saric motives means keeping the precepts without any intention for I-my-me. That is actually our vow, our direction, not for me but for all beings.

Generosity without expectations is not-checking. I think all of us have some experience of a moment of being generous. "Oh, I want to help that person," and then very quickly, "Oh, wait a minute, I don't like the way she looks." That kind of checking appears. I don't mean generosity in that we do things impulsively, but I think we know inside when we genuinely want to help, a natural response that has urgency appears and then, there's checking that quickly follows.

The third is patience without resentment. Everybody knows that one! For me, that's what we call "not holding," not holding on to our idea. Sometimes we think we're patient but actually we're holding. In true patience there's nothing to hold on to; we're completely free to just accept whatever is in front of us, even if it's painful or difficult, and that takes courage.

The next is being diligent or making effort for the benefit of all beings. That's "just do it 100 percent." Zen Master Seung Sahn was always this amazing example of "just do it" mind all the time, always with a bodhisattva direction, without hindrance.

The fifth paramita is meditation that cuts through all states of mind. For both effort and meditation, what we were doing the last seven days sitting retreat reminds me of the *Lord of the Rings*. There's one scene in a big battlefield where the good wizard Gandalf and a few men face off with hundreds of thousands of demons, dragons and beings with weird heads, and they have to fight through these guys! So Gandalf just raises his staff and charges forward, "Aaaarrhhhhh!" and everybody charges behind him on horseback. There are maybe only a hundred of them and several hundred thousand of the



College Retreat led by Zen Master Bon Yeon 11-1-15.

enemy, and they just charge forth. A big, white, charging trail blazing through this big mass of black, dark evil beings, cutting through the big battlefield. It's like that sometimes when we try to plow through our karma, just sitting on the cushion! Sticky, muddy stuff! As Zen Master Seung Sahn said, that's "just do it" mind. Complete effort. Meditation that cuts through all states of mind is "only go straight" like Gandalf cutting through—only going straight like a knife.

The last paramita is wisdom beyond concepts. Wisdom beyond concepts is "don't know." If we stay in don't know then wisdom appears naturally. This past spring, I did a solo retreat in Hong Kong. It was short,

about three weeks. After the Whole World Is a Single Flower event I got totally exhausted. Then we had winter Kyol Che and I got exhausted on that too because one of our teachers, Zen Master Dae Jin, had been sick with leukemia for a couple of years so we all took turns trying to help him. I had to take him to the hospital many times during Kyol Che. At the end of the retreat, I just got wiped out. But I had a strong desire mind, so I wanted to do another retreat. I did all this work during Kyol Che and now I wanted to have my own retreat by myself! Bobby always encourages us to do a solo retreat. So I did three weeks.

The first week was great but in the middle I kind of ended up in a crisis because it was too hot, too wet, too much everything on this island in Hong Kong and I hated it and I was exhausted physically, so I got knocked down. Of course I was determined to keep the schedule and not compromise. That's the beauty of retreat; you set yourself up with expectations and then you hit bottom yourself. That's when you really pick up the pieces. If we are not skillful, we can hurt ourselves. I was kind of hurting a lot. It came to a point

when I was so tired that I couldn't sit hardly at all, I couldn't bow well. I had to bow really slowly or I would get dizzy. All I could do was chant, so I was walking around the island chanting really slowly, hitting the moktak: "Kwan Seum Bosal, Kwan Seum Bosal" like that and feeling terrible.

A lot of things happened. It's humbling because what struck me was that for the first time in about 17 years, nothing I tried worked. I couldn't keep my mantra practice, couldn't keep a question, couldn't control my feelings or emotions. Everything was upside down. And I thought, something's happening to me, maybe I'm going crazy. Yet, all I knew

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SANGHANOTES

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tions on the *Temple Rules* has begun. These are a great opportunity for those new to meditation, and also for those who have been practicing longer but want to deepen their appreciation of the dharma. Later in February, Barry Poep Sa Nim, Dharma Teacher Bo-Mi Choi and Seon Joon Young SDT will lead a workshop on basic forms in the *Dharma Mirror*. Cambridge Zen Center

will inaugurate regular training for DTITs and DTs, but all are welcome. We have also begun a sensitivity workshop for residents to be led by Senior Dharma Teacher Jen-nifer Magrone. She works in human resources and hopes to teach us potatoes how to live together as harmoniously as possible. On April 10, Barry will offer a workshop on the poetry of Zen. A selection of poems will be read and discussed

from the perspective of Zen training. Whether you celebrate the New Year on January 1st or February 8th, the Korean New Year, it is a traditional time of resolutions, a time to rededicate ourselves to what is most important, to our practice and to keeping our great question alive: “What is this?”



Martin Luther King Jr. Day of Service with students from Tufts University.



January 2016 YMJJ led by Barry Briggs, JDPSN.

Word for the Year

By Jody Blackwell

Recently, to attempt to be more cheerful and less gloomy, I changed my computer home page from headline news to an “inspirational” website that offers a Tip of the Day. Thus, a few days ago my new page suggested for the New Year that I pick a word for the year to set a motivational tone for 2016. “Great,” I thought. I looked backward to the last nine months of 2015, during which my life has been hamstrung by the discomfort and inactivity of an unexpected health problem, and I cynically asked myself which word means “Do Utterly Nothing At All But Wait.” Not the glowy, serene, sitting-in-the-dharma-room kind of “nothing,” but the permanent-but-imprint-on-the-sofa kind, endless and claustrophobic. If there were such a word, *that* would be me. Then I thought, “wait, I think I once read about a word like that, maybe in Taoism?” So I Googled “do nothing” and “Taoism,” and up comes *Wu wei*. Of course. Not just an overpriced tea at Starbucks, it means non-action or non-doing. More accurately, it means “effortless” doing, or doing before we make the idea “I am doing” and attach to it some outcome. In Zen, we’d call this our “before-thinking” mind. *Wu wei* is traditionally likened to flowing water, which encounters a rock and moves fluidly to find the open path again. This is like our own true nature, responding to what the present moment requires, instead of to our extra ideas about it. Water doesn’t curse its rotten luck for hitting a rock, like I’ve been doing for the past nine months. It allows obstacles to alter its path, speed and destination, not even making the idea “obstacle.” *Sitting quietly, doing nothing. Spring comes, and the grass grows by itself.*

Other recent teachings: It’s very humbling to be sick for a long time and feel helpless. It’s confusing to have to let go of comforting routines, including daily sitting. And it’s scary to not know who I am, if I am not constantly doing and planning. So, what to do?

KATZ!

The sofa is soft and welcoming. Time for a hot cup of tea. *Wu wei.*

Introductory Dharma Talk

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was that I have to finish the retreat one way or another. I had to die trying, and I had to find a way to finish somehow. I knew I wasn't going to leave the retreat until it was over, and every day seemed to be really long. It was just getting longer and longer. It's only three weeks but it just felt like forever, like it's not going to end. It was too painful.

I was doing the retreat in a little house on Lantau Island. Behind the house is a flat area with a platform and there sits a pagoda. It's a pagoda dedicated to Zen Master Seung Sahn. This pagoda is a replica of the one in Korea, a famous one in a temple called Bul Guk Sa. The design is quite intricate, in Shilla Dynasty style, from about the seventh century. It's done well, a good replica. I was chanting in front of it because it's too hot and you have to be outside. Outside is also too hot but inside is worse and wet and I could breathe better outside, so I would stand in front of the pagoda and sometimes bow and

walk around the pagoda and around the island, chanting Kwan Seum Bosal.

At one point, I was chanting and just looking at the pagoda and noticed the design. It was quite new to me, just seeing this pagoda as if for the first time: the energy that went down the middle of the structure, and the design of the pieces lifting up the sides, the way the stones were placed. It had a spirit that would just sort of bring it up, like a head, then shoulders, then strong legs and a base. When I just perceived this pagoda while chanting "Kwan Seum Bosal, Kwan Seum Bosal," suddenly all this energy came back to my feet and my center. It was like a reflection of the pagoda: Boom! Grounding me to that place where I was standing and chanting. I could feel my center again. I looked again, and it was wow, a good teacher! A few pieces of stone, and wow! I finally understand why they make pagodas! Before I thought they were just decorative. I finally understood why for thousands of years they

would build pagodas and stupas. There's something in this thing that centers you if you really look and practice. I think Buddha didn't make pagodas himself, but all the expression of dharma teaching comes to us over generations of practitioners and transmissions, not only in human form but also in name and form. That's pretty amazing and exciting. We can recognize that and use it. We can recognize that in a tree or the blue sky, actually in everything. Everything is a great teacher. I think that's what they mean by "don't know." When we don't keep some idea about ourselves or anything, then as Zen Master Seung Sahn said, "everything becomes your teacher." Everything we encounter teaches us nonstop. That's our wisdom paramita functioning naturally.

Thank you everybody for practicing together. It's wonderful to be able to practice anywhere in the world, to come "home" to sit, chant and bow together and become one mind.

Dae Jin Sunim

By Kimball Amram

The recent death of Dae Jin Sunim was the loss of a monk who had dedicated his life to practice and to passing on Zen Master Seung Sahn's teaching in Korea.

Dae Jin Sunim had the good fortune to meet Zen Master Seung Sahn when he was a student at Boston University in 1979. He then moved into the Cambridge Zen Center, which was then located in Allston. He lived at CZC for the next four years as he completed his undergraduate studies. In 1983 he moved to the Providence Zen Center to do more training and to help with the construction of the Diamond Hill Zen Monastery.

In the spring of 1984, at the conclusion of winter Kyol Che in Providence, he was

ordained as Mu Shim Sunim, becoming the last member of the Mu monastic family, which had begun in 1974. Upon ordination he was sent by Dae Soen Sa Nim to live at Hwa Gye Sa Temple in Korea, becoming the first Kwan Um School monastic to do so, and thereby starting the community of foreign monastics that exists at Mu Sang Sa today. He also started learning Korean and would eventually become fluent in it.

Dae Jin Sunim was ordained into the Chogye Order in 1986, becoming the first Kwan Um School monastic to do so and he also sat kyol ches at Su Dok Sa and Bo Mo Sa as well. He was Zen Master Seung Sahn's personal secretary for fifteen years, and traveled the world

helping spread the teaching that Dae Soen Sa Nim had developed in the West. He also translated *Dropping Ashes on the Buddha*—which was the first of Zen Master Seung Sahn's books written for Westerners—into Korean.

In March 1997, he received inka from Dae Soen Sa Nim, and in 2008 he received dharma transmission from Zen Master Dae Kwang.

Dae Jin Sunim shall always be remembered as somebody who decided early in life to devote himself to practice and to transmitting Dae Soen Sa Nim's teaching in Korea after it had been developed in the West.



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WEEKLY SCHEDULE

Introduction to Formal Practice
Thursday Evenings 7:00pm

Long Sitting & Kong-an Practice
Tuesday Evenings 6:30–9:30pm
Sunday Mornings 9:00–11:30pm

Midday Sitting
Tuesdays & Thursdays 12:30–1:00pm

Public Dharma Talk with Q & A
Thursday Evenings 7:30–8:30pm



DAILY SCHEDULE

Mornings:
(*Except Tuesdays*)
108 Bows 5:45am
Chanting 6:10am
Sitting 6:30am

Evenings:
(*Except Thursdays*)
Special Chanting 6:30pm
Chanting 7:00pm
Sitting 7:25pm



From left: Natalie Watson, Igor Pininski JDPSN, Zen Master Bon Haeng, Joanna Pininska.

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