

Kwan Um Sangha Newsletter

Completely Become One

by Zen Master Seung Sahn

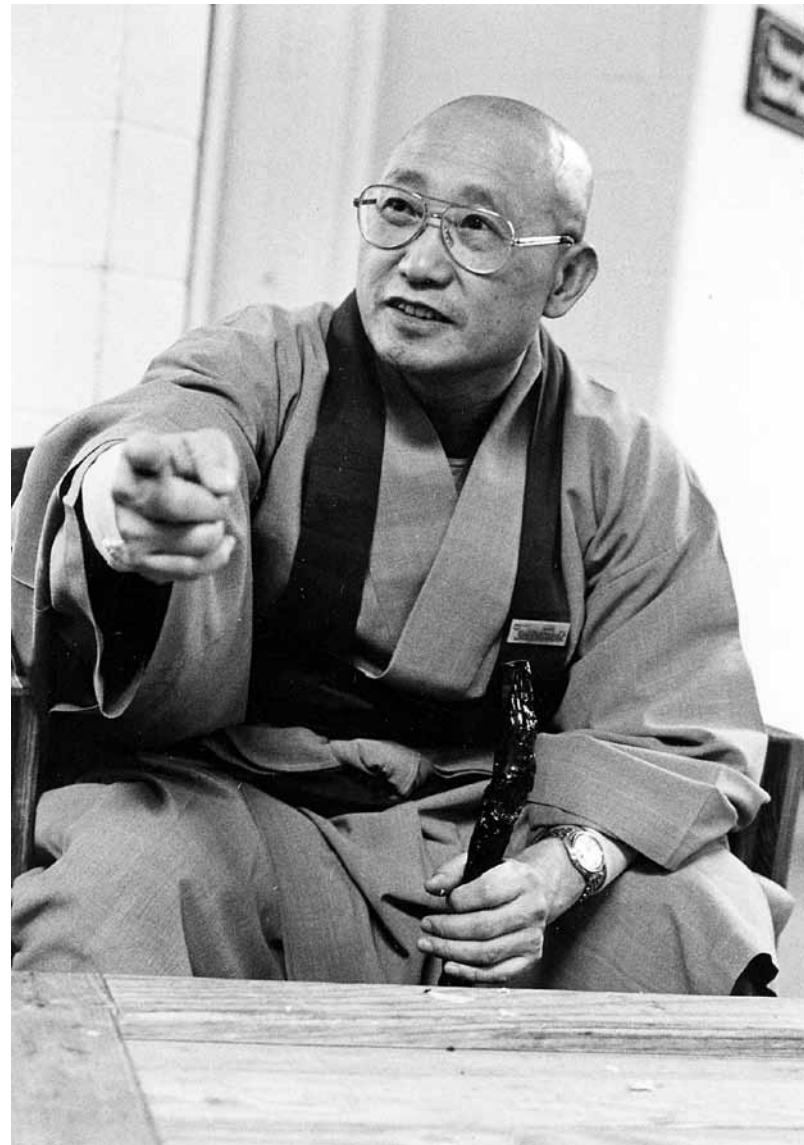
When I was in the hospital, the doctors checked my heart. The first time they checked, there were 23-25 mistakes (premature ventricular contractions) in one minute, out of about eighty beats.

Many people have read about research by a Harvard professor who checked people with bad hearts, diabetes, etc. He checked people who did meditation and people who didn't. People who didn't do meditation were O.K. with medicine, but not O.K. without their medicine. But, people who tried concentration meditation got better more quickly, and were O.K. without their medicine. The Transcendental Meditation people advertised this: "Meditation can fix many sicknesses." So now, many doctors like meditation. So, my doctors said, "Soen Sa Nim, you are a Zen Master, so you try!" So, I said, "O.K., I will try." So, I tried this fix-your-body meditation. In three days, my heart was making only five mistakes. Usually, it takes about one month to recover like this, so my doctors understood this meditation was helping my body, so they were very happy.

After one week, my heart was only making one or two mistakes, and my doctors said, "This is wonderful! Most people take two or three months to come down to only one or two mistakes each minute!" So I said, "Thank you very much; you have helped me, so I can get better quickly. But this is only fix-your-body meditation. This is not correct meditation."

"Why isn't this correct meditation?" they asked.

"You can fix your body, your heart, your diabetes. In Korea, China, and India, there are people who do yoga. They go to the mountains and do breath-in, breath-out meditation. They can live 500 years and not get sick. Keeping their bodies for a long time is possible; even flying in the sky is possible. Trying this style body meditation, anything is possible. A body is like a car. Use the car a lot, and in three years, it is broken. Only keep the car in the garage, then keep-



ing it for a long time is possible. But finally, after 500 years, then these yoga people die. Then what? Live a long time, then die; live a short time, then die—it is the same! Dying is the same."

The doctors understood. "What is correct meditation, then?"

I told them, "I always try meditation. Meditation means always keeping one mind, not-moving mind." They thought meditation meant only concentration and keeping your body still. So I said, "Meditation means keeping one mind. You must understand—What is life? What is death? If you keep one mind,

News from Zen Centers

Greetings from the Kwan Um School of Zen Australia in sunny Brisbane, Queensland, Australia. We have had devastating floods in Brisbane and many other places in the state, as well as a cyclone up north. Although none of our sangha members have been directly affected and it's back to business as usual, there are many people still waiting for their homes and businesses to be rebuilt. We have three groups holding practice in this area: Gold Coast, Brisbane and Deception Bay just to the north.

Greetings from Brno Zen Center. As time passes by, we are growing older. Yet we still try to keep our minds fresh and open to new possibilities. We held a retreat and precept ceremony with Oleg Suk JDPSN in Olomouc. In addition to many 5 preceptees, three people became dharma teachers in training, which doubled the number of 10 precepts people in our young sangha. At sangha weekend with Jo Potter JDPSN, we dedicated two hours to learning how to feed our bodies and how to make smoothies. Delicious! We also had a garden-party style dharma talk with Zen Master Bon Haeng. The visit was not only a wonderful opportunity to spend time with this great teacher, but also an important cross-pollination of ideas, challenging our minds to stay open and fresh. Such visitors are welcome!



Zen Master Bon Haeng visits the Brno, Czech Republic sangha in June with Barbara Feldman and Mark O'Leary



Yong Maeng Jong Jin at Berlin Zen Center with Zen Master Wu Bong

Berlin Zen Center will celebrate its twentieth year in December. Zen Master Wu Bong, who used to be a part time resident with us, spends most of his time in Korea nowadays. He came to visit this spring with Dok Hyon Sunim, the former abbot of Gilsang Sa. Our second Yong Maeng Jong Jin this year in June gave us the opportunity to enjoy the teaching style of Zen Master Bon Haeng on his first European tour. Apart from Yong Maeng Jong Jin we hold monthly Zen days with our Berlin teachers.

It may sound strange, but we have taken a while to come to terms with the richness of having four Ji Do Poep Sa Nims in Berlin and with being the European head temple. All kinds of activities eventually became so important. When Muchak JDPSN was assigned as our guiding teacher she devoted a lot of energy into relentlessly reminding everyone to maintain an equally engaged practice mind. This is supported by a very lively and warm sangha life in our center.

Berlin Zen Center is located on the top floor of a former industrial building which is nowadays a listed historical monument. The wooden floor boards which we initially put in, constructing the center by ourselves, had been worn too much. They have now been replaced by new ones in the kitchen and social area as we have decided to stay on in this building complex, which recently experienced alternative development by artists, artisans etc. We are part of the change.



Cambridge Zen Center's hike up Mount Monadnock

At Cape Cod Zen Center, every day is a good day and milestones continue. In early April, Craig Richards took 16 Precepts and became a senior dharma teacher. John Parker took 10 Precepts and became a dharma teacher in training. We have just started a 2-year dharma teacher training curriculum. We're also looking forward to summer retreats at CCZC with Zen Masters Bon Haeng and Bon Yeon. We invite all to come to beautiful Cape Cod and practice with us!



The Cape Cod sangha after the April precepts ceremony

At Cambridge Zen Center, much physical plant work has been accomplished under the leadership of Dan Sinnott, our physical plant manager. Five skylights were replaced and new wall-to-wall, light brown carpeting was installed in the main house, along with cobalt blue carpet for the interview room and TV room. Four bathrooms have been completely redone. One apartment had major renovations, with a new kitchen, bathroom, floors, and track lighting. We also switched to a new air conditioning unit in the dharma room that is far quieter. On May 7 we celebrated Zen Master Bon Haeng's sixtieth birthday. About a hundred people attended. The sangha presented the Zen Master with a new Zen stick, beautifully polished by our members. Saba Usman choreographed and executed an exotic Arabian dance interpretation of a kong-an interview, in which Dan Sinnott surprised us all with his entrance as her Arabian lover in convincing costume.

At the Buddha's Birthday celebration at Providence Zen Center we welcomed several new preceptees: Christine Calfas (who came all the way from Portland) and Michael Selva each took five precepts; Mark O'Leary took ten precepts, becoming a dharma-teacher-in-training; and former residents Tiffany Reed and Melissa Hull became dharma teachers. Thank you for your commitment and great vow! We also congratulate Tiffany Reed on completing her three-month kyol che at the Providence Zen Center.

Thank you to our visiting retreat teachers: Zen Master Wu Kwang, Ken Kessel JDPSN, Thom Pastor JDPSN, and Paul Majchrzyk JDPSN. Andy Wood has continued teaching children from the various church groups that visit. Zen Master Bon Yeon taught a huge class of high school seniors in our dharma room. Our biannual college retreat was held on April 16, led by Zen Master Bon Haeng.

The European teaching tour of Zen Master Bon Haeng began on June 1 and included eight countries: Spain, Poland, Germany, Austria, Slovakia, the Czech Republic, Hungary, and Israel. Accompanying him were Jeff McDonough from the Open Meadow Zen Sangha; Mark O'Leary, for two weeks; and Barbara Feldman. There were dharma talks almost every evening, interviews and practice every morning, and seven retreat days. One poignant moment occurred at a public talk in Lodz, Poland, when an eight-year-old girl bravely asked, "Where will I go when I die?" Some sanghas told us they see a teacher as infrequently as twice a year, which made us appreciate all the more how bountiful the dharma is in Cambridge!



Anne Rudloe, abbot of the Cypress Tree Zen Group, received inka at Providence Zen Center in April



Cypress Tree Zen Group celebrating Buddha's Birthday with the Tallahassee Buddhist Community

Cypress Tree Zen Group is pleased to announce that our abbot, Anne Rudloe, received inka on April 3, 2011 at Providence Zen Center. She is Florida's first JDPSN and is looking forward to presiding at retreats once her training is complete. Meanwhile, we're all getting weekly kong-an practice—quite a change from retreat-only kong-an workouts! The Tallahassee Buddhist Community, where we hold our weekly sitting practice, celebrated Anne's accomplishment at their Buddha's Birthday observance on May 15th. She gave a brief talk before the bathing of the baby Buddha and we held a congratulatory potluck luncheon afterwards.

Dharma teacher Bill Bodiford is currently serving as President of the Board of Directors for the Tallahassee Buddhist Community, an organization that provides a facility where various Buddhist groups (Kwan Um, Chan, Tibetan, and unaffiliated meditation groups) can practice. Although it's not a residential center, it does provide a place for practice, meetings, special events and visiting speakers.

2011 marks Delaware Valley Zen Center's 12th anniversary. This year the Delaware sangha has witnessed some significant changes. In late March, our guiding teacher, José Ramírez JDPSN, moved to Providence, Rhode Island. On April 3, 2011, William McCracken took the 16 precepts and became a senior dharma teacher. The entire sangha has been extremely supportive of the transitions as they continue to unfold. Yolanda Chetwynd and Ken Kramer have been instrumental during this transitional period by participating in learning and performing weekly practice forms. On June 26, William McCracken and Ken Kramer gave a presentation on Buddhism and Zen to the Newark United Church of Christ.



Retreat and precepts ceremony at Deming Zen Center with Judy Roitman JDPSN

Deming Zen Center is located in southwestern New Mexico. We began meeting in 2009 as a sitting group in a garage. In 2010, we flew Judy Roitman JDPSN here to lead our first Yong Maeng Jong Jin. She was later ratified as our guiding teacher. In 2011, we incorporated as a Zen center, moved out of the garage into a commercial building with a parking lot, and hosted our first precepts ceremony with Judy as our precepts teacher. Deming Zen Center holds weekly practice, quarterly retreats, regular consulting interviews, and ceremonies for the community. We also host a variety of classes and workshops in Zen, yoga, tai chi, and the arts.



*Precepts ceremony at Empty Gate Zen Center
with Zen Master Bon Soeng*

Participation at Empty Gate Zen Center has been growing since late 2010. Our largest one-day retreat in many years occurred in April, and our annual eight-day retreat was the largest ever here, with over 25 participants including people from Oregon, Mexico and New York. Our next eight-day retreat will be February 24–March 3, 2012. Please join us!

This trend appears to be driven by the steady presence of Empty Gate on various social media, thanks mostly to our tech-savvy abbot, Jason Quinn. For example, people can now review us on Yelp, watch dharma talks on YouTube, and participate in live streaming video of Sunday morning practices.

Other social media sites we participate in, and recommend to other Zen Centers, include Facebook, Ustream, Bandcamp, Meetup, and Twitter.



*Good books, low prices:
Great Lake Zen Center abbot
Pete Neuwald helps out
at our annual rummage sale*

Greetings from Great Lake Zen Center. 2011 marks twelve years at our current location on Locust Street in Milwaukee, Wisconsin. We started the year with a Heart Kyol Che ceremony in January followed a few days later by a sangha movie and pizza night. The film, *Spring, Summer, Fall, Winter ... and Spring* was Ken Alexander's pick. Some of you may remember Ken and his wife Sonia from their early years with the Kwan Um School. Their strong practice has injected fresh energy into our sangha. Our guiding teacher, Zen Master Dae Kwang, visited in February to answer questions following a public dharma talk, and he stayed for the weekend to lead a two day Yong Maeng Jong Jin that was warm and dry inside the Zen center but cold and snowy outside. In April we hosted a half day practice session featuring a sutra discussion, sitting meditation, soen yu breathing and dharma play. Spring found us hosting two fundraising events: the annual GLZC Rummage, followed a few weeks later by our first ever Great Big Book Sale. Early sales between sangha members accounted for a fair percentage of the funds we raised at each event and had the added benefit of keeping the "stuff" in the sangha so items may, as often happens, reappear for a second (or third) go-around a few springs later. We added a third day to our summer Yong Maeng Jong Jin and held a precepts ceremony where we welcomed two new preceptees, two new dharma teachers (Chris Rundblad and Gretchen Neuwald), and two new senior dharma teachers (Ken and Sonia Alexander). Please visit us in person, on the Web www.glzc.org, or (new this year) friend us on Facebook.



The Isthmus Zen Community visits Bethel Horizons in Dodgeville, Wisconsin, for service and work practice

Isthmus Zen Community of Madison, Wisconsin, held its 8th annual week-long Yong Maeng Jong Jin at Bethel Horizons in Dodgeville with Thom Pastor JDPSN. As part of work practice we always offer some service to Bethel, which can take many forms -- clearing brush, pruning trees, sorting items for recycling, anything that needs doing. This past year we had the gift of cutting and preparing firewood for a traditional Japanese/Korean wood-fired pottery kiln. Near the end of the work period, Krista Loomans, artist in residence at Bethel, gave a detailed explanation of the process of wood-firing pottery. She was so passionate about her art and the process the energy was contagious. It was a great spontaneous dharma talk. She spoke of how the fire begins small and the temperature is slowly increased. Once the process has begun the kiln must be constantly and patiently tended—24 hours a day for as much as a week. During this time the various people will gather around the kiln and help feed the fire. Eventually the furnace gets so hot that any fuel placed in the kiln is almost instantly consumed. It is the ash and residue of this process which forms the glaze on the pots and creates the beauty. Not unlike Yong Maeng Jong Jin.

Kansas Zen Center congratulates Wenda Davis, Tracy Rassmussen, and Aly Young, who took 10 precepts in April and are now dharma teachers in training. We say goodbye to James Tyler, who has moved to Oregon, thanking him for his practice and support, and wishing him well in his new home. And we welcome baby Seyeon (Chloe), born Feb. 18 to Minjung Kim and Wonjin Jin.

Thanks to the folks who went off the Zen Center board: Jane Gnojek, treasurer extraordinaire; Tom Davis, our former secretary; and Wenda Davis and Larry Mignlionico, members-at-large. Welcome to new board members Jennifer Balke (our new treasurer) and Bill Bunn, and thanks to continuing board members Charlie Vitale (president), Edna Baginsky (secretary), Rita Sooby (do gam/facilities manager), Blake Wilson (our communications guru), Steve Olson, Stan Lombardo, and Judy Roitman.

It takes a lot of people to maintain the Zen Center's physical plant. Our snow shovelers this winter included Rita Sooby, Stan Lombardo, Brian Andrews, Judy Roitman, David Whitaker, Kitty Steffans, Jan Schaake, and Ben Graham.

Thanks go out to those who have helped us on all of our work days: Blake Wilson, Shari Wilson, Bill Bunn, Judy Roitman, Stan Lombardo, Rita Sooby, Patti Cawthor, Steve Olson, Darryl Clark, Edna Baginsky, Jennifer Balke. Ben Nelson, Charlie Vitale, John Van Sickel, Wenda Davis, David Whitaker, Bill Bunn, Geraldine Dotson, Jan Schaake, Judy Roitman JDPSN, began a 90-day retreat on June 13th and will return to us in September. We wish her well!



Precepts ceremony at Kansas Zen Center with Zen Master Hae Kwang and Judy Roitman JDPSN



Morning Star Zen Center celebrating Buddha's Enlightenment Day



Morning Star Zen Center Yong Maeng Jong Jin with Zen Master Hae Kwang

Zen Master Hae Kwang led a one-day retreat for members and friends of the Morning Star Zen Center on November 5, 2010, at the Mount Sequoyah Retreat and Conference Center in Fayetteville, Arkansas. At press time another one-day retreat with Zen Master Hae Kwang, followed by a precepts ceremony, was scheduled for July with more than 20 people expected to participate. Two members, Robin Roberts and Nathan Higgins, were set to take five precepts and Barbara Taylor to take 16 precepts in July. The Morning Star Zen Center observed Buddha's Enlightenment Day with a ceremony on December 12, 2010, and celebrated Buddha's Birthday on April 17, 2011. Members made birthday hats and shared birthday cake after the ceremony.

Summertime is in full force for the Little Rock Zen Group in Arkansas. "Fish are jumpin' and the cotton is high," as the song goes, and the cicada choruses are LOUD and intricate, helping us to perceive sound. Sangha activity is quiet this summer, yet we continue to treasure our together-action and our support for each other. Some of us were able to join our sister sangha, the Morning Star Zen Center, for their retreat and precepts ceremony in Fayetteville led by Zen Master Hae Kwang. Lovely to practice with all those who came from Kansas as well as Arkansas!



The Vienna Zen Group had a very nice Zen day in June with Zen Master Bon Haeng which found lots of interest. Great lively and spontaneous teaching. Today after evening practice Michael cooked mandu dumplings. Tasting hot! Everybody full stomach.



Walking a mountain during Summer Kyol Che at Mu Sang Sa

At press time, Mu Sang Sa is in the midst of summer Kyol Che. At least 60 people, including 16 monks and nuns, from more than fifteen countries are expected to participate. Zen Masters Dae Bong and Dae Jin are practicing together, giving weekly dharma talks and regular kong-an interviews. Bo Haeng Sunim from Lithuania is the head monk.

Also, we started a 49-day baekjung kido. The kido is a Buddhist ceremony performed at temples for the spirits of those deceased for their journey in the next world on the fifteenth day of the seventh moon by the lunar calendar.

People who come to Mu Sang Sa for learning about and practicing Zen Buddhism are increasing every year and we need more living space. So we are trying to purchase an additional 4500 pyong of land (15,000 square meters) directly in front of and behind the main Buddha hall. The land behind Mu Sang Sa costs about 200,000 won (US \$190) per pyong (3.3 Sq. m). We appeal for your generous support in the purchase of one pyong of land to help us ensure that the flower of Mu Sang Sa continues to blossom well into the future, spreading Zen Master Seung Sahn's great teaching to all beings around the world. Donations can be made in person in the office or wired to Kye Ryong Sahn International Zen Center. Please refer to our Web page, www.musang-sa.org, for detailed information on how to help. We sincerely hope that all our Zen centers and dharma family in the whole world are well.

Practice at the New Haven Zen Center (Mu Gak Sa), taking place on Wednesday evenings (7:00–9:00 with a newcomers' introduction at 6:30) and Sunday mornings (9:00–11:30), has been energetic, with many guests and new practitioners. Retreats and dharma talks are well-attended and vibrant under our guiding teacher, Ken Kessel JDPSN, and guest teachers. Ken usually does kong-an interviews on the first Wednesday evening and fourth Sunday morning of the month. Check our website for schedule changes.

A re-established Board of Trustees is working to make our aging building more energy efficient. Doors and windows have been sealed, storm doors repaired, and smart thermostats installed. Beyond "greening" the building, the board is working on revitalizing our residential program and preparing a capital campaign to cover upcoming major expenses, such as roofing, painting and replacing the two ancient furnaces with an energy efficient one.

Board member Keith Angilly took 10 precepts at the Providence Zen Center in 2010 and is now a dharma teacher in training. Congratulations, Keith!



New Haven dharma room, where we welcome friends old and new to practice with us!

The Northern Light Zen Center had a successful seaside retreat with Zen Master Soeng Hyang observing the fishing boats from the dharma room, and a follow-up retreat in an amazing barn in the middle of the woods. We had visitors Melissa Hull all the way from NYC. Summer is the time to come visit and drop in 'down east'. We continue with our training program, retreats and kido.



*Yong Maeng Jong Jin at Northern Light Zen Center
with Zen Master Soeng Hyang*

After ten years of practice, Orlando Zen Circle, a satellite group of the Gateless Gate Zen Center in Gainesville, has grown up to become the Orlando Zen Center. We have filed all the paperwork that comes with such grown-up existence and are currently looking to buy a property to establish a residential Zen center that will enable us to have daily morning and evening practice. Our guiding teacher is Zen Master Bon Haeng and our disposition is sunny. Over the years we have gathered several long robes and a bunch of short robes in our group's collective wardrobe, and the local sangha is growing. Some Sundays we run out of cushions (we own 21 currently). Until we have the residential Zen center we uphold the esteemed tradition of "cushion shleppers": we chant and sit and walk in a yoga studio on Sundays; we gather for one day retreats or for monthly study groups at a private residence; we meditate together with other groups under a direct descendant of the 'original' bodhi tree to celebrate Vesak by bathing the Buddha and cleaning and fertilizing the tree; we participate retreats in Gainesville, Tallahassee, or South Florida, and we look forward to becoming a buzzing center for Zen activities in Central Florida.

This has been a wonderful year for the Open Meadow Zen Group. Zen Master Dae Kwang, Andrzej Piotrowski JDPSN, Mu Sang Sunim, and Jo Potter JDPSN all came to share their wisdom and insight. Two members took ten precepts and five members took five precepts, so we now have one dharma teacher and eight dharma teachers in training "in house." Each commitment deepens the practice of the entire sangha. We acquired a brand-new bell for the dharma room which practically thunders when it is struck. Zen Master Bon Haeng became the North American abbot of the school and has recently returned from a three week teaching tour in Europe and Israel. What he brought back to us was a reminder that Zen Master Seung Sahn's legacy truly is worldwide and that, although other members may have lives very different from ours, our practice all goes in the same direction.

Whether in the morning, evening, or at retreats, practice at Open Meadow is marked by the seasons. In spring, the birds sing and the koi stir sleepily in the pond; in summer, crickets chirp and fireflies blink in the meadow; in fall, the wind rustles the willows and deer wade into the deep grass; in winter, the snow drifts up on the deck and a fire crackles in the wood stove. Our question is: how do we practice amidst such beauty and not attach to it? Come visit us and show us your answer!



Zen Master Bon Haeng with the Open Meadow Zen Group

Recent months have been very active times for Palma Zen Center. During April we held two Yong Maeng Jong Jin retreats. The first one, led by Zen Master Bon Shim, took place in the wonderful convent of Mar-raxinet. Zen Master Bon Shim loves this place. Actually everybody does, as it is very beautiful and the food is incredible. At the second Yong Maeng Jong Jin we were honored with a visit from Namhee Chon JDPSN, who stayed for a week at our Zen Center, giving a dharma talk, daily practice, and a lot of really clear teaching. In June we had another very special visit. Zen Master Bon Haeng, Jo Potter JDPSN, and some great students from the United States came to our Zen center and stayed for a weekend as part of Zen Master Bon Haeng's European teaching tour. Dharma talk, morning practice with kong-an interviews, excursions, and a lot of together action marked this very special visit. Thank all of you for your visit. Our Zen center will always be open for all of you.



Palma Zen Center enjoys a meal with Zen Master Bon Haeng during his European teaching trip



Dharma talk with Namhee Chon JDPSN at Palma Zen Center

There is a whirlwind of excitement and activity at Providence Zen Center with Jiri "George" Hazlbauer serving as our abbot! We launched a new version of the PZC website which includes a blog in which everyone is welcome to participate. There is now bamboo flooring throughout the first floor, and we created the "Room of Awesomeness." This brightly painted, sun-lit room has become the official meeting room for our residents! The abbot's house has been remodeled and refurbished, and we opened up Zen Master Seung Sahn's old room as a memorial.

During all these renovations, we found a hand painted Korean Buddhist mural that's currently hanging in the main stairwell. One of our co-guiding teachers, Nancy Hedgpeth JDPSN, told us it had been used years ago for a special outdoor ceremony in Korea. Somehow it was stored away for many years here at PZC and is quite an impressive sight. It probably measures 20 feet x 20 feet, practically reaching from floor to the ceiling.

Following a wonderful April sangha weekend, we held a Vesak celebration in May with several Buddhist groups in Rhode Island and we've had several workshops on growing mushrooms, doing calligraphy, and using yoga to help our practice. At press time, we are planning a two week collection of classes called Zen and the Art of Living.

Come and join us over the summer for lots of fun, yoga, bonfires and organic gardening. We have invited a special guest, Colin Beavan, to lead a weekend workshop he's calling "No Impact Weekend", on Saturday, July 23 and Sunday, July 24th. He is the author featured in the film No Impact Man, and more information can be found on the complete program at the website <http://www.providencezen.org/zen-and-the-art-of-living>.

In addition to all of this, we've added chickens and bees, with the hope of becoming more self-sufficient with our own eggs and honey. We hope you will visit us soon!



Kong-an interview al fresco with Lincoln Rhodes JDPSN at Tallgrass Zen Center

Greetings from Tallgrass Zen Center located in the beautiful Flint Hills of northeastern Kansas. We just finished our fifth annual “Summer Solstice Retreat on the Prairie” with our guiding teacher, Lincoln Rhodes JDPSN. Hapchang to Linc for his generous teaching. We are also grateful to the many birds for reciting the original sutra non-stop from dawn to dusk. We have two more retreats planned for this year: a one-day kido with Linc in September and a Buddha’s Enlightenment retreat, potluck and kido in December. And, of course, we continue to have twice weekly practice at the chapel at Mercy Hospital in Manhattan. If you are visiting the area, we’d love to see you!

Greetings to all from Prairyerth Zen Center in the heart of Kansas. We continue to meet at the Unitarian Universalist Fellowship of Topeka, which is generous enough to give us space to meet for practice four times a week. Retreat space has been difficult, but we will be holding two Yong Maeng Jong Jin this year as well as two one-day retreats. One year ago we began instituting beginner’s nights on the first Thursday evening of every month. This has generated a lot of interest within the Topeka community and because of this our sangha is growing. We have a number of members with children and so we have started a dharma school once a month for children ages four and up. The addition of children in our sangha has been a gift and adds a lightheartedness whenever they are present. Kemper Straley is the teacher for these classes and his ability to bring humor and whimsy into Buddhist teaching is unparalleled! He taught the children how to chant using a “frogtok!” Such fun! For the adults, *Compass of Zen* classes are held once a month and these have become a time of sharing and warmth.



Yong Maeng Jong Jin at Tallgrass Zen Center with Lincoln Rhodes JDPSN



Every third Monday of the month Zen Master Wu Kwang calls the Three Treasures Zen Center to declare, “I am ready!” With one click and four bows one of us has an interview with our Guiding Teacher, who is 200 miles away in New York City. At first our sangha was apprehensive about such interviews, but after the first session, almost a year ago, we have become more confident about “wandering free and easy in reality.” Now we ask, “Is Zen Master Wu Kwang and this Mac the same or different?”



May precepts ceremony in Las Vegas

Things have been busy at the Zen Center of Las Vegas since acquiring the new property last year. Landscaping has been completed, which means that there is plenty of work practice for the sangha—no problem, since our sangha is growing and jumping in to help at monthly work practices. With such a beautiful new center, it's now quite common to see new faces at practice (even mornings!) as the Las Vegas community discovers this oasis. Several have joined our Kwan Um family too: Caroline Houle, Andrew Barton, and Markos Stoumbis all took precepts at a Buddha's Birthday weekend retreat last May, which was attended by eleven people. In addition to our Buddha's Birthday retreat and ceremony, we celebrated a Korean Vesak ceremony in early May. Three more new attendees have signed up for a precepts retreat in December. In addition to our strong Zen practice, we have been making good use of the beautiful desert landscaping with the help of certified yoga teacher and regular morning attendee Stephanie Magee, who teaches a weekly outdoor yoga class, and Caroline Houle, who offers Sunday morning qi gong, also outdoors. Both of these activities were thoroughly enjoyed by the nine attendees at our retreat in early July. The desert, it seems, truly is thirsty for the dharma!

Su Bong Zen Monastery started off the year with a fund raising event in March, with invited guests Zen Master Wu Bong from Korea and several sunims including Myo Ji Sunim JDPS from New York and Hye Tong Sunim from Korea. Zen Master Wu Bong gave a public dharma talk at the all-day sitting fund raiser which was held at the historic Po Kwok Buddhist Primary School. The event was a great success with almost 200 participants and we raised funds to renovate and add facilities at Gaksu Temple for better accommodations for future retreats. In May, a one day retreat was held at Gaksu temple for newcomers and was attended by 50 people. Participants enjoyed a day of rest, qi gong exercise, practice and dharma sharing. Many students were happy to return to the bustling city after a day of quiet and clarity in the lush and natural environment of Gaksu Temple. In addition, a crew from the BBC filmed our 300 Bows event and the newcomers' retreat for a documentary series on Buddhism in different parts of the world, which will be aired later this year.

Su Bong Zen Monastery has been blessed this year with visits from many teachers from the Kwan Um School of Zen. Zen Master Dae Kwang led a four-day retreat at Gaksu Temple. He also gave a public dharma talk at the Leighton Community Center in Hong Kong on "The Path to Great Investment". We were fortunate to have him stay at Su Bong Zen Monastery for over three weeks for this special trip where he gave many kong-an interviews and had time to spend with students. Zen Master Dae Bong also visited in July for the seven-day annual retreat in memorial of Zen Master Su Bong, our first guiding teacher. The event began on July 11 with a fish releasing in Sai Kung harbour, followed by a week-long Yong Maeng Jong Jin at our city center, and ended with 300 bows and the memorial ceremony for Zen Master Su Bong on July 17. Zen Master Dae Bong, Zen Master Dae Kwan, Andrzej Stec JDPSN and Myong An Sunim gave talks in his memory.



Zen Master Dae Kwang visits Hong Kong

“No Problem”

Travelogue by Mark O’Leary

In June 2011, Zen Master Bon Haeng and a few sangha members from Cambridge and Open Meadow Zen Centers visited Europe for a Zen teaching tour.

Tuesday, May 31

I stay over the night before departure at the Cambridge Zen Center. I go to bed early after re-checking my gear for the hundredth time. Passport. Still camera. Video camera. Laptop. Battery chargers. Double-A batteries for wireless microphone. Somehow, I lose the double-A batteries. If I forget any of this stuff, my main job—blogging the trip—will not be possible.

I forget to pack a towel. No problem.

Wednesday, June 1

Two hours until departure. The airline calls. The flight from Boston to LaGuardia has been cancelled. Would we like them to put us on another flight to New York at 8PM? No, we would not. Would we like to arrange alternate ground transportation? Again, no. In the end, they put us on a flight with another airline. No problem.

We change planes in New York, and soon the four of us—Mark, Barbara, Jeff (from Open Meadow Zen Group) and myself—are on the overnight flight to Barcelona.

Thursday, June 2

We land in Barcelona hid-

eously early in the morning. I had told people I was interested in accompanying Zen Master Bon Haeng on this trip because I wanted to see how he reacts in everyday situations. Dharma talks and kong-an interviews are all very well, but how will he be in strange places, on short rest? How will he be when things go wrong?

Like say, when the airline loses his luggage?

In the act, the airline lost ALL our luggage. Somehow though, the Zen Master remained calm and present, which helped the

rest of us to do likewise. We gave our information to the baggage people as best we could, then went to find our contacts with the Barcelona sangha.

No problem.

Amazingly (not to say miraculously), our bags find us by noon. After a rest, we hit the streets in a Renault mini-van to do some sightseeing. Our guide, Mauro, is a very patient and friendly guy who only learned to drive a month before, which leads to some interesting situations. We tour the medieval portions of the city and end up at the 18th century Castell de Montjuic, overlooking the city on one side and the busy port on the other. Barcelona prides itself on its Catalan—not Spanish—heritage, and many Catalonians have hard feelings about this place, which has functioned as a Spanish base of operations against the natives as often as in their defense.

Evening practice with kong-an interviews in the upper room of the Libreria Santo Domingo, an eclectic spiritual book store. We enter the practice space and, as we will do in every dharma room we visit on this trip, we bow to the Buddha



Barcelona



Majorca sangha

three times in unison. It is a curiously comforting action.

That night the sangha takes us out for pizza, a fun restaurant with a jazz combo. People eat late in Spain, and because things are pretty relaxed in general, service can be slow. But 2½ hours after we arrive, our food is still MIA. Our hosts inform us that this is unusual even by Spanish standards. Soon, we are the only ones in the restaurant. Even the jazz band goes home. Eventually though, the food arrives. It is wonderful. No problem.

Friday, June 3

Morning practice, then breakfast. Bad news: I try to find a fast internet connection. No luck. Good news: Jo Potter JDPSN arrives from Berlin. I have never met a force of nature before.

Barcelona is an incredibly beautiful city. We try to get in to see the Sagrada Familia, the surreal church designed by Antoni Gaudi, but the line to buy tickets is endless. We decide on a hike through Parc Guell instead, since Gaudi's house is there, and he designed many of the features of the park. It's good exercise, which I will need if I continue to eat like this.

That night Jo gives the intro talk in Spanish. For the first time since I arrived, I can understand every word, a pleasant surprise. Zen Master Bon Haeng does not



Lodz sangha in the dharma room



Krakow

understand the talk, but he has to answer the questions!

Later, a huge group of us have dinner at an Indian restaurant. Afterwards, we wander through the streets, just people watching. It rains. I use my umbrella for the first time.

Saturday, June 4

108 Bows, sitting, breakfast. They sure know how to eat in this country.

Fast internet continues to elude me.

We fly to Palma, principal city of Mallorca. Or Majorca. (All that high school Spanish, and I only visit cities where the main language is Catalán.)

We are met by Tolo, Eduardo

and Enrique, Mallorcan natives who seem to know everything and everyone on the island. Mallorca has been continuously inhabited since 6000 BCE, and people here have a deep sense of history.

The Mallorca Zen center is quite attractive and comfortable, a good thing since it is also where Jeff & I will sleep tonight. It also has a luxury no other Zen center would have on this entire trip: air conditioning!

Our hosts are eager to show us their beautiful island. I especially enjoyed Sóller, with its orange tram that runs right through the middle of town, and Deiá, where Zen Master Bon Haeng said he would like to build a Zen center. (He just needs \$20 million or so.)

The dharma room in Palma fills to bursting for the dharma talk. This sangha feels like it has been here a long time. These people know each other and are comfortable together, a real extended family.

Monday, June 6

From Mallorca we fly to Zurich, with a connection to Warsaw. Then a wild, exciting drive to Łódź, our first stop in Poland.

We have a great time in Łódź. The Zen Master's talk, held in a large auditorium at Łódzki Dom Kultury, draws the biggest crowd of the trip. The sangha welcomes

us warmly and the dinner they host afterwards at a Hungarian restaurant is truly memorable.

I manage to get online in Łódź., but I am concerned that I won't be able to keep up with the blog unless I can find more reliable connections. I am falling behind.

Problem?

Tuesday, June 7

The train from Łódź to Warsaw—like all the trains we took in Europe—is a pleasure. I edit several videos on this leg of the trip.

Because it was mostly leveled during WWII, Warsaw is all new since the 1940s. Looking around at the old Soviet-style buildings, I think of the Warsaw Pact, the treaty that was set up by Communist Europe in opposition to NATO. I grew up on that confrontation, every night on the news with Huntley & Brinkley, and now it's all changed. Warsaw is brighter and...I don't know...happier than I expected it to be.

Lunch in a restaurant specializing in pierogi, which reminds me of my childhood in Pittsburgh. A beautiful day, hot sun, lots of tour buses and school groups everywhere. We drive to the Zen center, which is in Falenica, outside the city.

The Warsaw Zen Center, Do Am



Sunim, Do Am Sa, Warsaw Zen Center



Lunch after Yong Maeng Jong Jin in Belin Sah, reminds me of Providence Zen Center: large, rural, and— at least during the public talk— busy. Through an interpreter, Barbara gives the intro talk. Barbara has found an old friend here, a nun with whom she sat kyol che in Korea several years ago. They renew acquaintances despite not speaking each other's languages or even knowing each other's names. We just call the nun "Sunim."

Sunim, the kitchen master, works and smiles constantly. She also corrects just about everything I do: how I sit, where I sit, how I wear my robe, how I eat—but she does it with such kindness and good humor it's hard for me to mind. No problem.

The next day, after leading morning practice and cooking breakfast, Sunim drives us to the train station, finds our platform, even carries our bags onto the Krakow train before saying goodbye. She is a real Bodhisattva.

Wednesday, June 8

The Krakow Zen center, a fourth-floor walk-up flat, with full kitchen and several large practice rooms, is perhaps the most unusual practice place we saw. A variety of Buddhist traditions share the space, the two main ones being Kwan Um and Shambhala. Portraits of Dae Soen Sa Nim and Trungpa Rinpoche hang side by side on the wall in both the Kwan Um and Shambhala rooms.

Another unusual feature of the Krakow Zen center is Dae Soen Sa Nim's reliquary, a lacquer box containing some of Dae Soen Sa Nim's ashes. Having grown up in the Catholic church, I have seen saints' reliquaries before, but this is the first time I have seen this sort of thing in our school.

During the public talk that night, a construction crew next door runs machinery that sounds as if they're trying to bore a hole right through the stone wall. For Zen Master Bon Haeng, it is no problem. An eleven year old girl wants to know: "What happens to us after we die?" Out of the mouths of babes....

Thursday, June 9

Unlike Warsaw, Krakow was mostly untouched by bombing in World War II, so its classic architecture is well preserved. You could wear out a camera on this place, and we try to do just that. Too soon we have to head for the airport to make our flight to Berlin.



Omnipresent Jo Potter meets us in Berlin, and because we have been camping in Zen centers and apartment floors for the past week, she decides we should spend our first night in comfort at her house. A relaxing, home-cooked meal and a real bed—just the thing.

Friday, June 10

After a delicious and unpronounceable breakfast, Jo drives us to the Berlin Zen center. It is bright and clean, and surprisingly large. Because I am behind on the blog I decide to skip Yong Maeng Jong Jin and spend the weekend getting caught up. A sangha member offers me the use of his apartment while he sits the retreat. I find a café with wifi (Europeans pronounce it “wee-fee”) and hunker down to work.

No problem.

Sunday, June 12

On Sunday morning, I emerge with the blog updated, lots of video processed, and many new



Brno sangha waving goodbye at the train station



*Zen Master Bon Haeng stands to make a point.
The translator is to the left.*

photos. I return to the Berlin center as the retreat ends. They—and I—consider the weekend a rousing success.

Afternoon flight to Vienna, where our hosts take us to a Tibetan restaurant. We are met there by...Jo Potter!

Monday, June 13

In Austria, as in many European countries, the Monday after Pentecost is a public holiday. That’s why we’re able to have a 1-day Yong Maeng Jong Jin—in a rented space in a yoga studio—on a Monday. I consider it a makeup for what I missed in Berlin. No problem.

Tuesday, June 14

Sightseeing at the Schönbrunn Palace, home of the Habsburg emperors, Vienna’s most popular tourist destination. Formal gardens, fountains, a hedge maze, sculpture gardens.

The afternoon train from Vienna to Brno, Czech Republic. The public talk is held in a beautifully manicured garden behind a house in a quiet neighborhood. Mats and cushions on the lawn, children playing barefoot, wonderful homemade food, a real “garden party.” Brno wins the award for the nicest setting for a public talk.

Wednesday, June 15

We tour the city in the morning. In the afternoon we board a train for Bratislava, capital of Slovakia. This was the tightest part of our whole trip, a real flying visit, and we had little time to sightsee. The public talk was held in a community building a fair distance from

the Zen center. Dinner in a restaurant, then bed at the Zen center, on the other side of the city.

Thursday, June 16

My last day with the tour. Zen Master Bon Haeng and Barbara will continue on to Hungary (another Yong Maeng Jong Jin) and Israel, while I return to Boston. I would like to have visited Israel especially, since it's the only country on this trip that I have visited before.

Bratislava—Prague—Heathrow—Logan. Fourteen hours travel time. No missed connections. No lost baggage. I even manage to sleep on the longest flight. By dinnertime, I am home and well rested.

No problem.

Mark O'Leary is a Dharma Teacher in Training who practices at the Cambridge Zen Center. He is a videographer, part-time actor and amateur photographer. He is married, father of three, and lives in Newton, Mass. No problem.

Events & Contacts

For the school-wide calendar of programs, please visit www.kwanumzen.org/retreats-and-programs/calendar-of-events/

For addresses, phone numbers, and e-mail addresses of the Zen Centers and groups, please see the latest issue of Primary Point or visit www.kwanumzen.org/zen-centers-and-groups/

Trustees' Report

The trustees for North America met at Providence Zen Center in December 2010, April 2011, and July 2011. Here are the highlights of their discussions:

1. The Zen Masters and JDPSNs in North America have begun paying membership and dharma teacher dues, to help support the School financially.
2. Zen Master Bon Haeng was elected as North American abbot.
3. An executive board of trustees for North America was created, to meet monthly and make administrative/policy decisions. The members of that board are: Zen Master Soeng Hyang, Zen Master Bon Haeng, Zen Master Bon Soeng, Paul Majchrzyk JDPSN, Nancy Hedgpeth JDPSN
4. Dharma teacher in training dues were increased to \$15 per month, and now are the same as dharma teacher dues. There is now a student/senior membership category. Associate memberships will no longer be offered.
5. There are three new Zen centers that have completed the administrative and legal process to become "official" Kwan Um groups:
 - Deming Zen Center in New Mexico. Guiding teacher Judy Roitman JDPSN
 - Orlando Zen Center in Florida. Guiding teacher Zen Master Bon Haeng.
 - Tallgrass Zen Center, Kansas. Lincoln Rhodes JDPSN.
6. Zen Master Bon Haeng and Nancy Hedgpeth JDPSN were ratified as co-guiding teachers for Providence Zen Center.
7. The North American KUSZ has recently created a scholarship fund to help sangha members attend Kyol Che at our head temple, Providence Zen Center. So whether you can come for three days, a week, a month, or three months, please know that the School will do its best to help you with the expenses. The value of a long retreat can not be over-emphasized. You can apply for this scholarship through your guiding teacher. Let him/her know that you want to come and they will recommend you to the PZC vice-abbot. You can find more information about these retreats on the Providence Zen Center website: <http://www.providencezen.org/>
8. The teachers have decided to change the standing bow form to the traditional Korean form, which means that our hands, in hapchang, will remain touching our chest as we bend forward. (Until now, our standing bow form has been bowing so that our hands would drop to knee level as our torso bent over.) The reason for this change is to help unify practice forms throughout the worldwide Kwan Um School of Zen. You can view photos of this bowing form on our website: www.kwanumzen.org/teachers-and-teaching/resources/bowing-2/
9. Policy for listing Zen centers on website:

The KUSZ website will list official Kwan Um centers that have completed all financial and legal steps on the "Zen Center Formation Guidelines."

If an officially legal group loses members so they have less than 5, they will continue to be listed on the website, but they will financially affiliate with a larger Zen center, and be considered a satellite group of that larger Zen center. Members for the satellite group will be recorded as members of the parent Zen center in the School office. All dues for the satellite group will be included in the dues check to the larger (parent) Zen center. The satellite group and its parent Zen center are responsible for keeping track of which members "belong" to the satellite group, and distributing the dues money appropriately.

We will not list satellite groups on the website that have not met the legal requirements for Zen centers (incorporation, bylaws, etc.) These groups can be listed on their parent Zen center's website.

there is no life, no death. Then, if you die tomorrow, no problem; if you die in five minutes, no problem.”

“What do you mean, no problem?” they asked.

“Maybe you do fix-your-heart meditation. Then, ‘My heart is good; my body is good.’ It is very easy to become attached to this meditation. But, when you get old, and your heart is not so good, then you try this meditation. Maybe it is still not so good. Then, ‘Why doesn’t my meditation work?’ Then your body, your meditation become hindrances. If your meditation cannot help your body, then you don’t believe in your meditation. Then what? So, this style meditation is no good.

“Correct meditation means correctly understanding your situation moment to moment—what are you doing now? Only do it! Then, each action is complete; each action is enough. Then no thinking, so each moment, I can perceive everything just like this. Just like this is truth. Sick-time, only be sick. Driving-time, only drive. Only go straight—then, any situation is no problem.”

The doctors liked this; they wanted to hear more about Zen. So six doctors came to my room, and I talked to them for two hours. One doctor asked me, “I am very busy at the hospital, then going home to my family. How can I keep a clear mind?”

“Clear mind,” I told them, “means moment to moment, what are you doing now? When you are with your patients, only 100% keep doctor’s mind. When you leave the hospital and you are driving home, 100% keep driver’s mind. When you meet your wife, 100% keep husband’s mind. This means, each moment, only go straight—don’t make ‘I’, ‘My’, ‘Me’. If you make ‘I’, ‘My’, ‘Me’, then your opinion, your condition, your situation appear. Then, you have a problem.

“If, when you are with your patients, you think, ‘Where is my wife? Is she spending a lot of money?’ Then, this patient is talking to you, and you only say, ‘Oh, yeah, mmm-mmm.’ So the patient is thinking, ‘What does the doctor think?’ They don’t believe you. If you are talking to your wife, and she is telling you something important, and you are thinking about the hospital, this is just your opinion; this is just thinking; it is not your just-now situation. So, put it all down; only go straight.

“We say ‘jeon il’, completely become one. When you are doing an operation, you and this knife com-

pletely become one. When you are driving in your car, you and the car only become one. If you drive on a road with pebbles and you are not thinking, only driving, then you can feel these pebbles under your tires. Only become one means, you and your action completely become one; then you and the universe only become one — completely no-thinking mind. Inside and outside become one. The name for this is, ‘only go straight,’ or ‘put it all down,’ or ‘don’t make anything,’ or ‘keep clear mind.’”

“If you are only in the present, how can you plan for the future or choose a direction? I have to plan for my patients, and for myself, my family,” one doctor said.

So I said, “What is the purpose of life? I asked many old people in the hospital this question, or ‘What did you get out of life?’ and many said, “Nothing”. Maybe they have a good job, good family, good wife or husband, but these things cannot help them now. They want something they cannot have, and they understand this, so they say, help them, so they are suffering. Zen means attaining this nothing mind. The Buddha said, “If you keep clear mind moment to moment, then you will get happiness everywhere.”

Zen is attaining this nothing mind, and then using this nothing mind. How can you use it? Zen means making this nothing mind into big-love mind. Nothing mind means no ‘I’, ‘My’, ‘Me’, no hindrance. So, this mind can change to Great-Compassion mind, action-for-all-people mind. This is possible. Nothing mind does not appear, does not disappear. So, moment by moment, it is possible to keep your correct situation. Then your mind is like a mirror — when you are with your patients, only become one. Then helping them is possible. When you are with your family, only become one; then understanding what is best for them is clear. Just like this. The blue mountain does not move. The white clouds float back and forth.

Newsletter of the Kwan Um School of Zen

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