

SECOND ANNUAL SCHOOL CONGRESS

The School Congress July 27-29 this year focused not only on the state of the Kwan Um Zen School, but also on the wider issues confronting Zen students in America. There are many challenges facing this first generation of American Zen. Soen Sa Nim focused on the roots of American Zen in his closing talk (published on the front page of this issue) and many speakers throughout the weekend addressed the issues. Because of the opening of the new Diamond Hill Zen Monastery, we were also fortunate to have a number of Japanese and Korean visitors (see monastery story printed in this issue).

The Congress opened Friday, July 27, with welcoming remarks by School Director Mu Guk Sunim, followed by a circle talk in which everyone present introduced themselves. It was quite an international group! David Mott, Head Dharma Teacher from Ontario Zen Center and the Cold Mountain Karate School, closed with a short, bright jazz piece on his saxophone entitled "Ko Bong's Heedless Cow."

The Saturday program opened with a talk by School Abbot Linc Rhodes on how Buddhism takes different forms as it goes to different countries. A panel on "What is Zen?" featured Soen Sa Nim, Master Dharma Teacher George Bowman, and a visiting Zen Master from Japan, Yanasae

Roshi. Soen Sa Nim said that Zen mind is everyday mind, and that it is important to use our kong-an practice to help other people. George Bowman read the poem "Human Route" from Compass of Zen. Yanasae Roshi said that in the 21st century Christians and Buddhists will practice together, and emphasized the importance of keeping a "not moving" mind.

Next was a panel on Zen in America, moderated by Richard Shrobe. EGZC Director Loie Rosenkrantz, who has lived and practiced in the Bay Area of California for a number of years, talked about student-teacher relationships, and discussed the relationship of dependency on a teacher, sexual misconduct, and the patriarchal tradition of Buddhism. She pointed out that many people idealize Zen forms and Zen teachers and then are afraid to discuss problems openly for fear of censorship and from not believing in themselves strongly enough. She said people gain a sense of power and strength from association with a male teacher, but it is necessary for us to change these traditions from Asia and try out new things in America. She felt that as more women teachers appear, this will help address the imbalance in male-female relationships. She emphasized our accountability for problems that arise around us.

Bodhisattva monk Sonia Alexander said

that Zen is doing what you do every day, including any job that seems to go flat, until it becomes rich. She said she thought we were going to find "Buddhism in America" at this Congress, until she realized that Soen Sa Nim had already given it to us.

Soen Sa Nim talked about the hierarchy of teachers he has set up in the Kwan Um Zen School and how each one is supposed to function. He said, "Teachers must understand meticulously human relationships and how human beings function." He emphasized the importance of giving without expecting anything in return. People living in Zen Centers, he said, are already making a contribution. Those living outside need to support Zen centers and monasteries as part of Bodhisattva mind.

student-teacher relationships, led by David Klinger; and Zen Center inner structure, led by Linc Rhodes.

Following the small groups the assembly reconvened in the Dharma room to hear the annual reports from each Zen Center and group. Judy Roitman spoke about her trip to Poland in June (printed in this issue) and Jacob Perl related his trip to Brazil in July, which resulted in another Zen group being started in Recife, northern Brazil, in addition to the existing groups in Rio and Sao Paulo.

On Sunday Master Dharma Teacher Bobby Rhodes led a discussion of common mistakes in form. Correct form was demonstrated by Mu Ryang Sunim.

In the report from the School Council,

"American Buddhism means supporting each other. If other Zen schools need something, we must help them."

Zen Master Seung Sahn

Abbot Lincoln Rhodes addressed the issues of finding and supporting places to practice. He pointed out that Zen Center businesses, while providing jobs for people who practice, can be a mixed blessing. He also discussed how easy it was to become dependent on living at a Zen Center and feeling comfortable, not becoming independent.

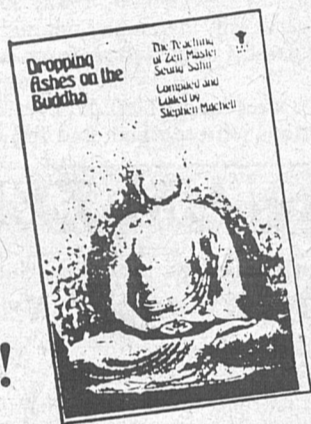
Monastery opening ceremonies took place in the afternoon, followed by an informal dinner to celebrate Soen Sa Nim's birthday. A huge cake was served and Soen Sa Nim received a cash gift from the School.

In the evening, people broke up into small discussion groups. The topics were: introduction of new Dharma Teachers, led by Bobby Rhodes and Dyan Houghton; speaking skills with use of video tape, led by Mike Olak; group process: new models for community decision making, led by Ken Kessel and Richard Shrobe; Christian social action and Buddhism, led by Rusty Hicks;

Abbot Linc Rhodes noted that the School had incorporated, received non-profit status from the IRS, began publishing the new quarterly PRIMARY POINT, arranged for the first time for Soen Sa Nim's health insurance and health care costs to be covered, increased our membership and successfully fundraised for all our operations. Council Representative Nina Crumm Davis spoke on priorities for the coming year: supporting Soen Sa Nim and allowing him some rest time, and supporting the Master Dharma Teachers so they can spend more time teaching.

Closing remarks were made by Director Mu Guk Sunim who commented on the international form the School is taking. Linc Rhodes observed that the School grows because people make contributions to it, and thanked everyone. The Congress ended with Soen Sa Nim's talk on the roots of American Zen. Everyone then bowed to him three times in gratitude for his teaching. □

YOU CAN HELP! YOU CAN HELP!



In its first year (1983-84) the Kwan Um Zen School:

- Held over 70 intensive meditation retreats, including a 21-day and a 90-day intensive sitting retreat.
- Hosted an ecumenical conference on "Prayer and Meditation in the Nuclear Age" with 22 guest spiritual leaders.
- Extended communication and technical support to 25 Zen Centers and groups in America and abroad.
- Established new centers in Brazil, Spain, Korea and Poland.
- Began publishing the new quarterly, PRIMARY POINT.
- Incorporated and received IRS approval as a tax exempt organization.

In its second year, the School hopes to continue supporting Zen Master Seung Sahn and his four American Master Dharma Teachers in their teaching here and abroad. We plan to host a second ecumenical conference, to publish Soen Sa Nim's fourth book in English, and to publish a pamphlet on "Buddhist Perspectives on World Peace," as well as support the growing number of groups seeking to practice Zen.

Our fund raising goal for 84-85 is \$80,000 out of a total budget of \$119,000. You can help by sending us a donation or pledge with the form below, to the Kwan Um Zen School, 528 Pound Road, Cumberland, RI 02864. Thank you!

Yes, I want to help the Kwan Um Zen School in 1984-85.
Here is my contribution/pledge of ___\$15 ___\$30 ___\$50 ___\$100 ___\$400

If \$30 or more, I do/do not want to receive a complimentary copy of Dropping Ashes on the Buddha by Zen Master Seung Sahn.

Name _____ Address _____
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ZEN MEDITATION

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led by

Master Dharma Teacher
Mu Deung Su Nim

January 6-April 7, 1985

90-day (\$1250) or
21-day periods (\$400)

Jan. 6-Jan. 27
Jan. 27-Feb. 17
Feb. 24-Mar. 17
Mar. 17-April 7

The middle 7 days, Feb. 17-24,
is an extra-intensive sitting retreat,
open to all but new students (\$175).



Providence Zen Center, a residential and retreat Zen center, located on 50 acres of woods and fields in rural Rhode Island, is offering a 90-day winter Kyol Che, an intensive Zen meditation retreat. The retreat will be led by Master Dharma Teacher Mu Deung Su Nim, who will give Dharma talks and personal interviews on a regular basis.

Zen retreats are rare opportunities to examine your life, to listen to what's really going on inside of you. The daily schedule includes twelve hours of sitting, bowing, chanting, and walking meditation under the supervision of a teacher. The intensive retreat becomes a vehicle of addressing the issues of what it means to be human, of how to live a life of clarity and generosity.

For information please contact:
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