

THE EASTERN GATE



Member Newsletter Fall 2015

The Cambridge Zen Center is part of the Kwan Um School of Zen

Dependent Origination

By Zen Master Seung Sahn, 1973

While visiting the Sambosa Temple in Carmel Valley, California, Zen Master Seung Sahn gave a dharma talk to a large gathering of visitors on a Sunday evening.

Zen Master Seung Sahn, walking up to a table in the front of the room, held up a stick and drew a circle in the air. He then asked, "Do you know what this is? If you say you understand, I will hit you thirty times; if you say you don't understand, I will hit you thirty times. Why?" He paused for a few moments and then hit the stick on the table. "Today is Sunday," he said.

He then delivered the following speech.

Buddha said, "Existence or nonexistence depends on a series of causes and effects." In Buddhism the process of conditioned life is viewed as one of continual phenomenal change. Aging and dying depend on birth, which in turn depends on becoming. Becoming depends on attachment, attachment depends on thinking, thinking depends on consciousness. This series of conditions perpetuates itself and causing suffering, the degree of which is measured by karma. The concept of karma can be defined as volition, or the act of making a choice.

You were not born into this world because you planned or wanted to. You were born

because your karma and your parents' karma caused you to be here. According to Buddhism, nothing occurs by accident; it does so by necessity through the functioning of karma. Our gathering here at Sambosa is not an accident.



Some are born with silver spoons in their mouths; some in famous families, some in poor status; some are born white, some black, some yellow. All people have different physical characteristics, personalities,

intelligences, attitudes, and so on. Who or what creates this kind of universe where so many varieties of things are happening constantly? God? Buddha? Neither of them! The answer lies in the strict rule of cause and effect. Buddhism explains cause and effect with regard to the life continuum through the doctrine of dependent origination. It clearly shows how the cause becomes the effect and the effect becomes the cause. By the same token, the continuous recurrence of birth and death has been aptly compared to a circle. Death is not a release, but merely the prelude to rebirth. As long as this process keeps on recurring, suffering is inevitable. Craving, or attachment, initiates thinking, which in turn causes human suffering. Your thinking influences not only yourself but also everyone else, which causes you to accumulate karma in your storehouse consciousness. This keeps you in a state of constant suffering.

Thus, in order to stop suffering, you must first stop thinking. If some thought or craving arises in your mind, then that will differentiate you from everybody else. But when you are not thinking, then you and all people are one, and there is no suffering.

The no-thinking, no-craving state of mind is the state of emptiness. The conception of

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Antie Tuyen

By JiHyang Padma

Just received news that my Auntie, Tuyen, passed away. Tuyen and I were close. She had begun practicing at the Cambridge Zen Center with Dae Won Sunim, a Vietnamese monk who had somehow come across Seung Sahn Sunim on his travels. Tuyen bridged cultures in this way—serving as treasurer of the Universal Buddhist Congregation Temple in East Boston, being central to that community while also living at a Zen center with young guys just out of college, and all the wonderful chaos that our residential Zen centers can bring.

When Tuyen moved into Cambridge Zen Center she brought the depth of her life experience with her. As a young girl in North Vietnam, she had been a tomboy: swimming, climbing trees, everything. She was quite the beauty, too—with silken hair that extended to her waist. She was the daughter of a teacher, and thus received good education. All of these factors came in handy as her country went into turmoil. During the Vietnam War, her brother was shot by the Communists, suspected of sympathizing with Diem's regime.

Years later, when we visited Sedona together, there was a wildfire. We watched helicopters pouring flame retardant on the forest. Only then did I realize what a powerful imprint the war had left on her consciousness. We had never talked about the Vietnam War during the fifteen years we had known each other. The helicopters reminded her of the American helicopters that had poured napalm on the Vietnamese forests, setting them on fire.

As a teenager, Tuyen began to make plans to leave her country by boat. In those days, everyone was hungry. It was not enough to hoard diesel fuel by burying it in the ground. Someone would undoubtedly find it and steal

it, or else expose their plan. The good swimmers dove to the bottom of the ocean and buried the diesel there.

The fishing boat was old—the engine showed its age. Sometimes the crew were able to coax



Tuyen Tran with Brendan Curran.

it when it stopped. Eventually there came a time on the open sea when the engine simply stopped, and it couldn't be coaxed. The boat drifted.

Fortunately, a Japanese trawler came by, which dwarfed their little boat. The refugees were taken onboard and later dropped off in Australia. After some time in internment, Tuyen was able to travel to the United States to be united with her relatives. Tuyen lived nearby the Zen Center, and at some point she was looking for a new home, and we persuaded her it was a good idea to move in.

In Korea, Seung Sahn Sunim (and my teacher, Dae Bong Sunim) have spoken about “love mind.” Love mind is different from romantic love. It is mother's mind, the mind of great compassion, which makes it possible for

Korean monastic communities to be supported by the *shindo* (lay community). Even though the monks and laypeople are not related, the quality of love runs very deep, and it includes the kind of sacrifices a mother would make for her children.

Tuyen was old-school in that way. As the only nun at the Cambridge Zen Center (and usually, the only monastic), I felt that deep quality of love from Tuyen. She treated me like her daughter. In the mid-2000s, Tuyen and I shared an apartment at the Zen Center. Seeing how much I traveled to teach, she gave me her car. Coming home late at night, I would need to watch my step, opening the door, as Tuyen often left oranges and other food at the doorsill, waiting for me. She made me juice out of the oddest assortments of fruits and vegetables: kale, chard, carrots, oranges—but also vines, jackfruit, possibly anything that had vegetation. She packed my lunches.

Tuyen's food generosity extended to the whole Zen Center family. The promise of Tuyen's spring rolls provided energy through many Zen Center work days, they adorned our parties and Sunday retreat lunches.

She was a bit psychic. She told stories of the dreams she had had—visitations from the dead, before anyone knew they had passed.

She had quite the sense of humor. Time after time, a new Zen Center resident would come to me with a furrowed brow, almost embarrassed to mention it. Did I know that

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Dependent Origination

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emptiness in Buddhism, however, is not the total rejection of the commonsense reality we experience through our senses, but rather it is the brushing off of our false views so we can see the world and things as they really are.

The Buddha said, “People come and go with empty hands. Then where do they come from and where are they going? Life is like a cloud floating across the sky, and death is like its disappearance over the mountain. As the cloud is without substance, so is life and death. It is all empty.”

The categories of existence and nonexistence are applicable only in the realm of the

conditioned and phenomenal world. Nevertheless, there is a seed innate in every person that never dies, that is crystal clear and intrinsically pure.



June YMJJ led by Zen Master Bon Shim.

Then what is it that stops craving and thinking, through which you transcend yourself to reach the state of nirvana? It is the very suchness. In this realm you are identical with everything and everybody.

Realize that myriad things, alive or dead, organic or inorganic, are all identical with suchness. This is the Buddha-state, the absolute and completely independent, unconditioned world where you can be with and of the whole universe. At the beginning of my talk I held up my stick and drew a circle in the air. If you were thinking for an answer to what it was, your answer would be no good. Only when you are able to cut your thinking will you understand. When I hit the stick on the table all our minds became one for that instant.

I hope you understand this truth. When you do understand, I hope you will teach others so they too can stop their thinking, craving and suffering.

Thank you.

ON THE WAY OUT THE DOOR

By John O'Regan

Of the numerous interviews I have had the good fortune of receiving over years of practicing Zen, two stand out for particular teachings I received *after* the interview was over.

The first one I remember was one of the very first interviews I had with Zen Master Seung Sahn during a weekend retreat in Kentucky in 1985. The whole thing was totally new to me and my level of anxiety was rather high. Throughout the interview I had no idea what he was talking about and he would periodically say “OK?” to which I would disingenuously mumble “OK.” Finally, Dae Soen Sa Nim bowed and I prepared to escape the room. As I was beginning to stand up from the cushion, he poked my belly with his stick as he said “And keep smiling!” Relieved, I left the room having finally heard something I could “get.”

The second great teaching I got post-interview came at the Cambridge Zen Center, when after bowing to the teacher before leaving the room, I haphazardly tossed the cushion back upon the mat. Immediately she pointed to the misaligned cushion and said sharply, “Put that back properly! That’s our life!”

These teachings have stayed with me and have informed a strong direction. Sometimes the teaching comes when least expected . . . on the way out the door.

SANGHADHARMA

Antie Tuyen

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Tuyen was cooking chicken soup in the (vegetarian) kitchen? I had to explain to them that Tuyen had called it “chicken soup” deliberately, to provoke exactly this effect.

Sometimes she invited me to come with her to the Vietnamese temple for Buddha’s Birthday. It was only after we arrived that she told me I would be doing the Heart Sutra in English and giving a dharma talk in front of the hundreds of people gathered . . .

She practiced yoga and Vietnamese qigong regularly, and for a long time it kept her as spry and vigorous as a woman half her age. When I was going on a vacation to Sedona and California during one winter break, she came with me. I

worried about her in the heat. She replied, “As long as I walk slowly, I can walk all day!” And so it was.

At the close of that trip, I dropped Tuyen off with an old friend from Vietnam who lived

in Orange County. Their car was struck by another car. No broken bones, but surprisingly soon after that Tuyen developed an autoimmune disorder, which then curtailed the traveling. Visits to the hospitals,

Tuyen’s communication style was terse, haiku-like in its simplicity. Sometimes there were voicemail messages: “Sunim! You . . . want soup, come here. Tonight.” Sometimes email messages:



Tuyen on YMJJ.

You have many mangoes here. temple send to you. I have Sticky cakes.. Can you come to pick up tomorrow. call me.

Sunim come by to get the soup somebody sent to you quick quick!!!

They were all signed “T2” (T squared, for Tuyen Tran). Very straightforward.

This wayward daughter was away in California so long. Luckily, in love there is ultimately no time, no space. And my love for her fills every corner of the three worlds.

Going out now, to chant for her.

Great love, great compassion, our original teacher . . .



JiHyang Padma

April 20, 2015



FALL 2015 SCHEDULE

Oct. 1	Dharma talk by Seon Joon Young, SDT	Nov. 19	CZC Thanksgiving dharma talks by Zen Master Bon Yeon & Barry Briggs, JDPSN
Oct. 9	Dharma talk by Igor Pininski, JDPSN	Nov. 26	Thanksgiving—No dharma talk
Oct. 10–11	2-Day YMJJ led by Igor Pininski, JDPSN	Dec. 3	Dharma talk by Barry Briggs, JDPSN
Oct. 15	Dharma talk by Tom Johnson, Abbot	Dec. 5	Buddha’s Enlightenment Day at PZC
Oct. 17–18	Dharma Teachers’ Retreat at PZC	Dec. 10	Dharma talk by Zen Master Bon Yeon
Oct. 22	Dharma talk by Zen Master Bon Yeon	Dec. 13	One-day retreat led by Zen Master Bon Yeon
Oct. 29	Dharma talk by Nancy Hathaway, SDT	Dec. 17	Dharma talk by Tom Johnson, Abbot
Nov. 1	College retreat led by Zen Master Bon Yeon	Dec. 24	Holiday—No talk
Nov. 6	Dharma talk by Barry Briggs, JDPSN	Dec. 31	New Year’s Eve—No talk
Nov. 7–8	2-Day YMJJ led by Barry Briggs, JDPSN		
Nov. 12	Dharma talk by Tom Johnson, Abbot		

SANGHANOTES

Our first autumn retreat brought relief from two weeks of extended summer heat. It also brought Cambridge Zen Center's new resident teacher, Barry Briggs, JDPSN. Barry managed to gracefully lead the retreat and inspire us even though his "ten thousand things" arrived from Seattle during the middle of the first retreat day! Barry PSN has been a regular visitor for several years, including four weeks during the snowstorms of February. We are so glad to have him here with us!

During these warm fall days, we might find it difficult to recall last winter, when we were bombarded by one blizzard after another and had many opportunities for together action shoveling. Boston broke all records at 110 inches of snow, and we took advantage of the snow by building two igloos in the Zen Center parking lot. Most autos remained buried on Auburn Street all winter without budging; even walking became challenging in the city. We appreciated our woodstove, the warm inviting kitchen and each other even more during this time.

Springtime brought a welcome ten-week teaching visit from Zen Master Bon Shim from Warsaw, and the benefit to us all cannot be measured. She worked hard on our behalf (although it appeared effortless), leading three retreats, giving five inspiring dharma talks, appearing every day at morning and evening practice and doing an extra kido practice daily. She also managed to oblige her many invitations to teach in Kansas, New York, California, as well as at Open Meadow Zen in Lexington. She even fit in a quick trip



Zen Master Bon Shim visiting New Haven Zen Center with Paul Bloom.



Anthony Jenkins-Tracy Dolge-Andy Wood at Founder's Day 2015.



Terri Scott, Babak Fard, Jennie Ullrich, Mike Bruffee.

to Cape Cod with Zen Master Bon Yeon and another with Zen Master Bon Haeng. We miss her and hope for another extended visit next spring. She is very much beloved by the sangha.

As always, the Zen Center family has experienced many comings and goings. Our computer master, Curran Kelleher, finished his PhD and moved to San Francisco for work. Thank you for your service, Curran! Thanks also to Jim Kopcienski for stepping up as our new computer master. Janice Stenger, birthday master, took care of providing flowers on the altar while Kyungha Strange-Lee taught in Syracuse for the summer. Thank you, Janice! Kyungha has returned and resumed her elegant arrangements. Jennie Ullrich continues to oversee the smooth operation of the Community Cooks program; we have cooked and delivered delicious vegetarian meals to a nearby woman's shelter once a month. Last month, eight folks helped with meal preparation. Jennie also serves as the center's guest master. Eric Espinosa recently stepped down as work master to spend more time with his son and partner. Woody Wood, our superman housemaster, has taken on the work master position. Big thanks to Eric for a most important but sometimes thankless job at a large Zen center. Under his direction, the weekly work period completed much important work and many projects.

We were glad to have former resident Thomas Ponniah live with us for the summer months until he returned to Toronto; we said farewell to Seon Joon Young and Jae Berry, who moved closer to Harvard while Seon Joon

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works on her master's degree at Harvard Divinity School; congratulations to Katherine Foo, who relocated to Penn State for a postdoctoral position; and thank you to Anthony Rhyss Jenkins, who will sit winter Kyol Che at Mu Sang Sa in Korea; after the retreat, Anthony plans to further his theater training in London. Jake Ferrini returned to his program at Berklee College. Hari Pillai visits us frequently but now lives locally with his partner—Hari we miss your big smile, good humor and fabulous cooking! We miss you all and wish you good fortune in your direction.

One departing resident, Andy Wood, bears special mention. After ten years of residency, he has begun a three-month retreat in Western Massachusetts and plans to follow it by sitting Kyol Che at Mu Sang Sa and then entering a solo retreat. What a great use of a sabbatical year from teaching seventh-graders! Andy's contributions, too numerous to list in full, include serving as garden master (we were included in the "Secret Gardens of Cambridge" walking tour one year); Saturday morning breakfast chef extraordinaire, including waffles, parfaits and scrambled tofu dishes; party host including Halloween in costume; and teaching around fifty children's groups who came from churches and charter schools to Cambridge Zen Center to learn about Buddhism. Andy worked his special creative magic on them. We enjoyed the many laughs—and some confusion—that came from having two residents with the same name. Thank you Andy for countless gifts to the



Woody Wood receiving Dharma teacher's bowls.



Tyler Morrill receiving Dharma teacher bowls.



September YMJJ led by Resident teacher Barry Briggs, JDPSN.

center and for your dedicated practice. We welcome new residents Shea Reister, Eric Busse, Kelly Kumm and Terri Scott. We also welcome Won San Sunim from Korea, who will be with us for three years as she attends Harvard Divinity School. Congratulations to Clayton Strange-Lee who graduated with honors from the Harvard School of Design. He is the 2015 recipient of the Druker Traveling Fellowship from the Harvard Graduate School of Design, which will fund two years of travel-based research on the subject of mono-industrial towns in Russia, China, India and Brazil. The research will focus on documenting their vulnerability and transformation over time as well as speculating about their future as settlements.

Last December, the Buddha's Enlightenment Day weekend at Providence Zen Center brought us a new dharma teacher: Bo-Mi Choi. Thank you for your dedication, Bo-Mi! Frequent visitor Denise Johnstone became a dharma-teacher-in-training, after coming from Australia to participate in Kyol Che. In April, the Buddha's Birthday weekend brought us two more strong dharma teachers: residents Andrew (Woody) Wood and Tyler Morrill; another resident, Christopher Raiche, became a dharma-teacher-in-training, and Christopher Wales took five precepts. Congratulations to all and thank you for your great vow. Also during Buddha's Birthday we celebrated the 90th birthday of our very active member, Bob Jay! Bob was an early student of Zen Master Seung Sahn and helped out by cosigning a lease on his first apartment in Providence. He

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taught anthropology at Brown University and the University of Hawaii for 25 years and, as he puts it, “life happened.” After 30 years of marriage and raising three children, he returned to regular dharma practice while in his 80s. Bob joins us once or twice a week for practice and this very weekend he is sitting a two-day YMJJ at the Zen Center! Bob, you are quite an inspiration to us!

Spring brought word of endings as well as new beginnings. Bob Powers died at the end of March. He was a caregiver for human services homes as well as a programmer. He lived at CZC with his wife Debra for many years and was highly regarded practitioner, as well as Head Dharma Teacher and Senior Dharma Teacher. It is a great loss. We were saddened by Tuyen Tran’s death on April 18. Tuyen lived at the Zen Center for 13 years, leaving only a few years ago due to an illness that required special assistance. Many of us attended the service for her on April 20 with her Vietnamese community; about 50 members and family joined together to chant in Vietnamese. One woman told of their 45-year friendship, which began when they were teachers together; she spoke movingly about how Tuyen had brought her to the dharma. Once Tuyen gave us a talk about how she had organized a boat escape from Vietnam with 40 people whose lives she was responsible for saving. She was a generous donor and many of our sangha cared deeply for her.

The same week the word came that our beloved sangha member of 30 years, Rick Davenport, had unexpectedly died on April 24. It was all the more shocking because we had all just seen him the week before when he led practice for the Thursday night dharma talk; we were not aware that he was ill. We did special chanting for him with his family members and, after 49 days, Zen

Master Bon Yeon conducted a beautiful and moving memorial service arranged by his two devoted sisters. Rick was such a sweet and humble guy and everyone came away from the day having learned new things about Rick that he had never mentioned. People from different areas of his life spoke movingly about him, including his sisters, niece and nephew; dharma community members; and a director of Tunefoolery Music, a group of musicians in mental health recovery that considered Rick to be a mainstay. About a hundred people attended and there were many musical tributes as



Rick Davenport, 1949–2015.

well as spoken ones. We miss him greatly.

The prison dharma program flourishes under the guidance of dharma teacher Mark O’Leary; a few residents have visited prisons with Mark, and Barry Briggs JDPSN led a one-day retreat last winter. Practice occurs once each week with introductions, chanting, sitting meditation and a dharma talk. One Zen Center resident commented, “It is a great group and the prisoners are incredibly kind and respectful. They always seem to teach us far more than we teach them.” Zen Master Bon Haeng will lead a precepts ceremony in the prison at the end of September, and two CZC residents will also take precepts with them.

A group has formed to revamp the Zen

Center’s website, and much hard work has already been accomplished thanks to Mark Uehling, Bo-Mi Choi, Woody Wood, Tyler Morrill, Barbara Feldman and Jim Kopcienski. Mark Horan, who single-handedly built the current site, is helping with the transition. Barry will also contribute to this effort.

We have had visits from many youth groups and college groups, including the CMM Interfaith Youth Group, the First Parish Unitarian Universalist Church in Needham, a “Religions of the East” class from Cambridge College in Sherborn; an eighth-grade charter school group in Cambridge, a Boston University Community Service Center first-year student outreach program and a Bay State College group. Following a visit of seventh-grade girls from the Sophia Boyer Davis Leadership Academy, our group coordinator wrote: “Their visit today comprised some 35 people, including 3 teachers. I gave them a short tour. It was delightful. We had three separate 5-minute sittings. During that time there was a lot of youthful energy, giggling, squirming, horsing around and many wonderful questions about meditation. After hearing that one possible mantra was ‘Coca-Cola’ a student naturally used ‘Pepsi’ instead. I had control of the room, but just barely. The sound of the chukpi was clearly quite surprising and dramatic to their young ears.”

We’ve had a wonderful winter, spring and summer, but the biggest miracle of all at Cambridge Zen Center is our 40 years of “together action”—daily morning and evening practice, weekly talks, biweekly interviews, breakfast 6 mornings a week, dinner 5 evenings a week, our 35 residents, 5 staff members, all the dharma-teachers-in-training, dharma teachers, senior dharma teachers, many frequent visitors, members, donors and last, but not least, our guiding



WEEKLYSCHEDULE

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



Resting canoers.

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



Eric and Miguel Espinosa .

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