

“The Buddha, The Dharma, The Sangha”

Reflection by Joyce Haydock

May 8, 2022

Good morning. It is a beautiful morning, and so wonderful to be listening to and speaking about the healing messages and wisdom of Buddhism. First, I would like to thank Rev. Rebecca for inviting me to speak briefly about my Zen practice and our Monday night Zen Meditation group here in the church.

I have heard it said that no one can live a better life than someone who has true and unconditional love filling their heart and mind. My Zen Master Seung Sahn emphasized that the chaos in the world is nothing more than the chaos in human minds manifesting itself all over the world. He believed one way to decrease mental chaos is through the practice of Zen meditation. This is because it had helped him recover from so much trauma in his life. The most important thing in Zen is to realize the necessity of not believing the ongoing chatter in our mind. And we must make sure we don't attach to the chatter. One way to do this is by using the mantra "DON'T KNOW." Coming back to the moment over and over again through cutting off the chatter with "Don't Know" or other mantras, one is eventually able to build an off switch in your mind so that the chatter is no longer in control.

Our Kwan Um School of Zen is named for the Bodhisattva of Compassion whose name is Kwan Seum Bosal in Korean. A Bodhisattva is either a spirit or a person who hears the cries of the world and responds with compassionate aid. On this Mother's Day we say Happy Mother's Day to all the wonderful mothers. And a Happy Bodhisattva Mother's Day to anyone who has been an important influence in mothering children.

Luckily for me, I was able to find the Providence Zen Center (the headquarters of International Kwan Um School) near my home in Green Hill Beach, Rhode Island in 1989. After a lot of training, I became a Dharma Teacher in 2001 and a Senior Dharma Teacher in 2016. Our founding Zen Master, Seung Sahn had a very difficult young life - including almost being executed twice for opposing the Japanese colonization and later the communist insurgency. He was certified as a Zen Master in 1950 by his teacher and mentor Zen Master Ko Bong at the age of 22. He joined

the South Korean Army after the U.S. and its allies came to help them fight the Communists in 1950. After the Korean War ended, he put himself on a 3-year silent retreat. As his mind became clearer and clearer, he determined that he would spend the rest of his life bringing Zen meditation to the world. Because of this, our school has over 100 centers in 30 countries. These include several centers in Israel where the Jewish and Palestinians are meditating together. We also have six outreach prison centers, three in Massachusetts and three in Florida.

The three jewels - the Buddha, the Dharma, and the Sangha - are important to any Buddhist practice. The Morning Bell Chant which we heard while entering today gives one way to think about the Buddha. The English translation of one paragraph is, "The Buddha is known as Infinite Time and Infinite space. The blue mountain of many ridges is the Buddha's home. The vast ocean is the palace of Stillness. Whatever appears, meet it without hindrance. Few can see the red crane's head atop the pine tree. Become one with the Buddha of infinite time and space."

The Dharma is the path, or the many teachings of the Buddhism. The Sangha is considered most important; it is any group that gathers together to help support each other in their meditation practice. I gained a peace greater than anything I thought possible through the Kwan Um School of Zen, and I still practice at the Providence Zen Center and Open Meadow Center in Lexington as often as I can. But as we are obligated to help others it was very important to me to provide a Sangha for others in the Newburyport area. Gratefully the wonderful FRS has provided space for our Zen sangha to practice. I have been leading Zen meditation here for more than 12 years.

Lastly, every morning and evening we say the four great vows: "Sentient beings are numberless, we vow to save them all. Delusions are endless, we vow to cut through them all. The teachings are infinite, we vow to learn them all. The Buddha way is inconceivable, we vow to attain it."

If you take away anything from this talk, please

“The Buddha, The Dharma, The Sangha”

May 8, 2022 *page 2*

let it be that you should not believe or attach to the chatter that arises constantly in your mind. If you would like to start or increase a meditation practice, you are very welcome to join our wonderful group any Monday from 6:30-7:30pm. in the Lower Meetinghouse.

Thank you very much, and Happy Mother's Day.