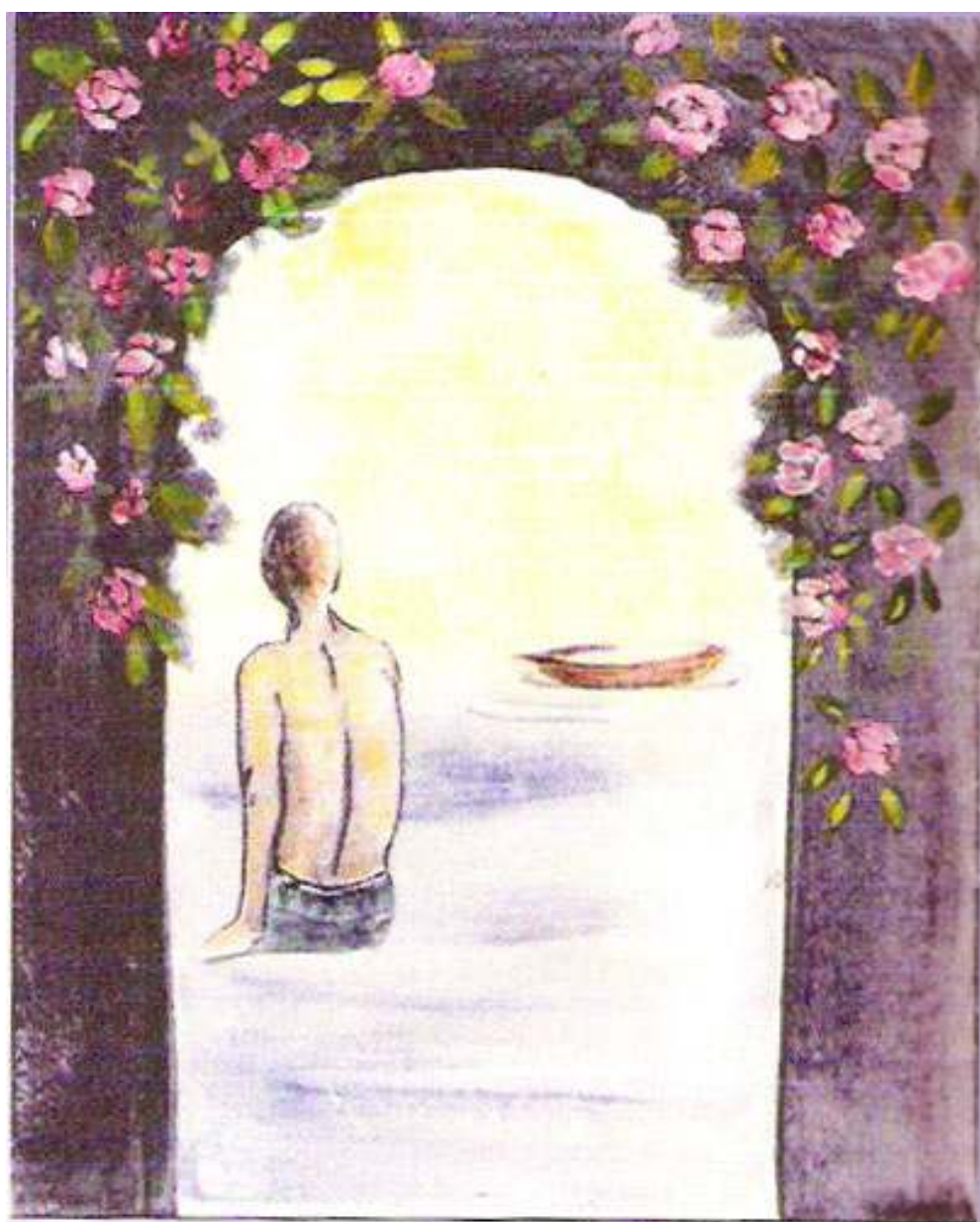


Energy in Zen

A Meditation Guide

Ven. Hwasun Yangil



Preface

I would like to devote this small book to novice meditators who are doing their spiritual training with these thoughts:

“While everything I do seems to be in vain, is there something that is not? What is it?”

“Since all the world seems pointless, then I should look inwards and find out about my mind.”

Since I came to Canada ten years ago, I have taught Zen Meditation at numerous workshops and meditation retreats in North America and many other countries, and I have always felt that beginners benefited from the guidance of a qualified teacher. I wrote this book based on my spiritual training with the Grand Master Wol Ha and my experiences at Zen school.

I sincerely hope that this meditation guide will be a milestone for the seekers, a lighthouse for the restless wanderers who have yet to find their spiritual home. I have tried to write a simple straightforward book that will help people see their true nature and understand the endless prajna wisdom that will enable them to live more happily and wisely. As a guiding light, I hope to provide support, hope and encouragement that will give seekers wisdom and intelligence.

Finally, this book will be helpful for those who read it daily little by little, absorb what they need, and apply what they learn to their meditation practice.

Yours in the Dharma,

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Words of Recommendation

It has already been more than ten years since Venerable Hwasun Yangil was appointed the head of the Dae Kak Temple, Toronto, Canada. The congregation has increased considerably since his appointment. Whenever he teaches Mujung Dharma Talk (a Dharma delivered by a non-sentient object) around the world, the power of his lecture moves heaven and earth and every day is like a new and glorious Tathagata trance itself.

Bright benevolent lights shine down on the world whenever he appears in a Golden Robe. I believe that this book will be a guide for seekers who wish to take the path to truth and a light for those who wish to understand the truth.

This book will help them understand their true nature which will show on their faces, hearts and in the behavior. Each day will be different, free from troubles and worldly desires, and each day will become more meaningful and happy. They will study Buddha's teaching harder and live what they learn, finally becoming a light for their families, neighbours and all sentient beings. Congratulations.

Wol Ha
Grand Master
Korean Buddhism
Chogye Order

Part I: What is Zen Meditation?

1. *Who is in charge of your life?*

“What is Zen Meditation?”. It is not necessary to say too much about this subject, because it is beyond words and imagination. Zen Meditation is something to do, not something to talk about. However, if you must define it, it is an action that shows us the absolute nature of mind with its fundamental truth. Under the ‘self’ that we have created lie the seeds of a much greater consciousness –in fact, the seeds that will flower into the whole universe.

Most people’s lives are unsatisfying to some extent. We hurry to accumulate riches, power and experiences; to define ourselves as the person we have decided to be. But perhaps, there is more to us –some other more natural self we have not yet met. Perhaps an ‘original face’ we have not seen.

What is it that I want to say? If you live only to satisfy your physical desires then it is the desire that is living. If you live just to adapt to the world as you perceive it then your life is entirely directed by the world you create.

Then what is the true nature of the mind? Even if we satisfy all our desires, we will eventually lose everything to old age, sickness and death. Life is uncertain, death is uncertain. Our restless minds keep us searching, keep us fragmented into so many warring aspects of ourselves –anger, guilt, fear, hope, hopelessness.

Zen Meditation helps you quiet your mind. It gives you access to the wisdom, compassion and happiness that flow naturally through a deep interconnectedness of things. It gives you the insight to free yourself from the dream-like illusion that is the world we live in. It helps you find out who you truly are.

Note: The word “Zen” comes from the Japanese “zenna”, which comes from the Chinese “ch’an”. “Ch’an” comes from the Sanskrit “dhyana” which means meditation.

2. Then what really is a human being?

Everyone has their own opinion on this matter. Is it merely physical shape or mental function or is it ideology, thought or spiritual perception?

Buddhists believe human being to be very different –we are composed of a set of five “skandas” (heaps or aggregates) that are seen, by enlightened beings, as “empty” – meaning without any kind of “self”. These skandas, - form, feeling, perception, mental formations and consciousness – contain all the information about us; our experience as persons and the objects that interact with us. Skandas also have been described as events that appear and disappear. This movement is in contrast to “Nirvana”, the state of enlightenment that was first attained by Buddha as he sat in meditation under the Bodhi tree. Nirvana is motionless, quiet and serene. There is no suffering, no illusion, no birth or death. Emptiness is the same as Nirvana, is the same as Buddha.

Thich Nhat Hanh, a Vietnamese Zen Master, describes the skandas as rivers flowing together. Buddhaghosa, the 5th century scholar and writer of Buddhist literature describes the skandas as “defining the limits of the basis of grasping after a self, and what belongs to a self”. This teaching is further expressed in the first paragraph of the “Heart Sutra”, one of the most important writings in Mahayana Buddhism. It is particularly beloved in Korean Zen temples where it is chanted every day along with the “Homage to the Buddhas”. It begins:

“Homage to the Perfection of Wisdom, the lovely the Holy! Avalokita Bodhisattva was moving in the deep course of the wisdom which has gone beyond. He looked down from on high and saw but five skandas which, in their own being, were empty”.

A simple way to look at the skandas would be:

1. *Form*: We are conscious of our own form, our body. Also, we perceive it to contain the other skandas, - our feelings, perceptions,

mental formations and consciousness. It can also be analyzed in terms of four elements –solids, fluids, heat and energy. “Form is a wave, Emptiness is the water.”

2. *Feelings*: These are classed as pleasant, unpleasant, or neutral. They come into being out of the contact between one of our senses (sight, hearing, smell, taste, touch) and a sense object. Also, the mind itself recognizes mind-objects (ideas, imaginary thoughts, etc.) although every object of the mind is also, by necessity, mind.
3. *Perception*: Perception is the action, or event, that associates an object with the senses.
4. *Mental Formations*: These formations are the choices or decisions produced by the mind. They are also called karma formations. “Karma” is the Sanskrit word for action. In Buddhist teaching, karma is the law of cause and effect. When we act in a positive or negative way, in body, speech, or mind it leaves an imprint in our consciousness which automatically produces more actions. Karma can overleap death and cause results in a future life.
5. *Consciousness*: Consciousness contains all the other categories and is the basis for their existence. It arises when a sense organ makes contact with an object. It does not exist independently, but arises when a suitable set of conditions have arisen.

All of this theory is very difficult to understand. Only a general impression is important. Many times the Buddha taught his disciples:

*Body is impermanent,
Feeling is impermanent,
Perception is impermanent,
Mental Formations are impermanent,
Consciousness is impermanent,
Body is not self,
Feeling is not self,*

*Perception is not self,
Mental Formations are not self,
Consciousness is not self.*

2-a. The twelve laws of karma are explained as a circular chain that completes one life cycle. Because of ignorance, reality has been split into:

subject – object
good – bad
self – others
birth – death

We suffer not only from desire and disappointment but also from old age, sickness and death. With Zen meditation we restore reality by breaking the chain of karma. We will then see life as a unified whole, we will end our suffering and find the Buddha nature that is in all of us. Then, with true compassion, we can then help others on their path.

Editor's note: This endless circle of suffering is referred to in Buddhism as “samsara”. It is very difficult, if not impossible, to understand. We should remember the Buddha's words to his disciple Ananda when Ananda declared he understood it:

“ Say not so, Ananda, say not so! Deep is the doctrine of events as arising from causes... It is through not understanding this doctrine, through not penetrating it, that this generation has become a tangled skein, a matted ball of thread, like to munja grass and rushes, unable to overpass the doom of the Waste, the Woeful Way, the Downfall, the Constant Round (of Transmigration)” .



2-b. *Then what is true human nature?*

Here is a parable from a Sutra. Long ago, there was a man and one day he saw an ants' nest that was burning the day and smoking at night. He went to ask a wise man about this as he thought it was very odd. After he heard about the nest, the wise man said: "Draw your sword and dig out the nest" The man did as he was told and found a door at the bottom of the nest. He

returned to the wise man who told him to break the door. The man did this and found it was covering many strange objects in water. He returned to the wise man who told him to remove all the things he found. When the man removed all the objects, he saw a dragon at the bottom. The man asked the wise man about the dragon. The wise man told him to leave the dragon in peace, to respect it and get rid of everything except the dragon.

The ants' nest which burns during the day and smokes at night represents human problems, fire represents human ambition and smoke represents human worries.

The sword represents wisdom. The wise man told the man to dig out and break the ants' nest with the sword which means we should dig out our worries, useless thoughts and three poisonous minds (anger, desire, foolishness) and cut them out with wisdom.

The door represents human ignorance, lack of self-esteem and an unclear state.

The objects in the water represent human desire, anger, stupidity, unforgiveness, stubbornness, selfishness as well as material things we consider important, such as fame, money and valuables.

The dragon represents Buddha nature. The wise man told the man to leave the dragon in peace and respect it. In all human beings, there exists Buddha nature. In fact, Buddha nature is the only true human nature. Enlightened eyes see only Buddha nature everywhere.

The first words from the Shakamuni after he became enlightened were "All living things are full of Buddha nature". This is not just a theory or words of blessing, but a very realistic sermon and a description of true human nature.



3. *What is Buddha nature?*

Buddha nature is truth itself. It is the root of all existence. It is called Dharma nature or true nature, central nature, whole self, etc. It is beyond imagination or perception, but occasionally, some enlightened people have tried to describe their overwhelming experience verbally.

The Enlightenment of Master Hui Neng

There was the sixth patriarch, Master Hui Neng, five generations after the Bodhi Dharma who taught Zen meditation theory in China. Master Hui Neng was an uneducated ordinary man who took care of his parents by selling firewood. He was able to receive spiritual training under Master Hung Yen and he was enlightened while reading the line “should develop a mind which alights upon nothing whatsoever” in the Diamond Sutra. He wrote of his

experience in the Hui Neng Sutra. He said these words in great joy to his teacher when he experienced his true Buddha nature:

Who would have thought that Buddha nature is so perfectly simple and so beautiful!

Who would have thought that Buddha nature is so perfectly eternal, so everlasting and so boundless!

Who would have thought that Buddha nature is so limitless and so perfectly free!

Who would have thought that Buddha nature is so timeless and unchanging!

Who would have thought that the whole universe belongs to Buddha nature!

In these words, Hui Neng tells us that Buddha nature is changeless and everlasting – we always carry his precious, sacred thing within us. Enlightenment is possible for everyone, rich or poor, educated or not, privileged or not. When in touch with their Buddha nature, humans have access to wisdom, compassion and creativity. Even those who seem so very evil have this pure, unalterable dimension that must be respected. Also, to the enlightened person, there are no boundaries, no “you or me” divisions – everything is One. This is called “The Oneness” in a Sutra.

There are many articles and teachings written by other enlightened people who broke through the illusions of ordinary life to live their lives within timeless, pure and serene Buddha nature.

4. The problem of identity

Who am I? Why is my mind always wandering, reliving the past, planning the future, unable to experience the moment that is “Now”? Nothing can be relied upon to last. As soon as I grasp for something, it is gone. Nothing

of the riches of this world will survive death. Life sometimes seems to be a confusing dream, lost in a sea of mist.

If we believe the world around us is the only one, life becomes an exercise in managing our needs. Suffering comes with clinging to the ideas of “me” and “mind”. Buddha challenged people to understand the nature of suffering, to confront what it means to be fully human. What he had understood, this first Buddha Siddhartha, when he was enlightened under the Bodhi tree, could be described as a transformation of perception. At that moment he saw through his idea of himself as a separate entity; he realized that this idea was an illusion, a creation of his own thoughts. Without this sense of “I” he saw the world as a perfect unity – a “oneness” of pure and absolute beauty.

During meditation the restless mind is quieted, we begin to live in the “Now”. The real world, both familiar and mysterious, is revealed to us, and the grip of suffering is loosened; our feet are now firmly on the path to enlightenment.

Come! Let's go see

The real flowers...

Of this painful world.

5. The problem of the “18 boundaries of awareness”

In Buddhist theory, this world of illusion is composed of 18 boundaries. These boundaries contain six sense organs, six sense objects and six corresponding kinds of consciousness. They are outlined in the “Heart Sutra” in the negative sense, as seen by the enlightened Avalokiteshvara Bodhisattva:

“no eyes, no ears, no nose, no tongue, no body, no mind; no colour, no sound, no smell, no taste, no touch, no object of mind; no realm of eyes and so forth until no realm of mind consciousness”

Ordinary people live all of their lives within these boundaries of awareness, which confine us to our present existence. The story of enlightenment of Bumjee at Vultrure Peak in the book of the transmission of Buddha mind beyond Sutras explains this well. It happened at Yong San Hoe Sang (the meeting place) when Buddha was alive.

The Enlightenment of Bumjee the Hermit

Bumjee was a hermit who had obtained five supernatural powers through spiritual training. One day he went to see the Buddha with a whole blooming Paulownia tree in each hand. Buddha said, "Put it down". Bumjee put down a tree he was holding in his right hand. Buddha continued, "Put it down". Bumjee put down the tree in his left hand. Buddha again said, "Put it down". Bewildered, Bumjee asked the Buddha, "What else do I put down, Master?". Buddha answered himself, "Oh hermit! It is not these trees that I asked you to put down, it is the six roots from your inner world, the six perceptions from your outer world and the six senses in between that you should get rid of in order to go beyond life and death". Bumjee understood his true nature at once. He let go of his thoughts and there he saw the essence of life which is everlasting, glowing Buddha nature.

As we see from this story, enlightenment does not come from self discipline, it comes from emptying your mind. One cannot approach Buddha nature through one's own thoughts or theories but only when all those thoughts and theories cease to exist.

6. Dharma and Zen Meditation

Master Suhsan said, "Zen is Buddha's mind, Dharma is Buddha's words." There is theory, logic and understanding in Dharma. In words of love, wisdom and truth, the enlightened Buddha opened the door to Dharma.

Here is the problem. The enlightenment itself, the true Buddha nature, is beyond words and imagination and is impossible to write about. Understanding, which Buddha spoke of in Dharma teaching, comes from a place where there are no words, thoughts or theories. All Buddha's teachings

come from his desire to lead the common people to a place of wordless understanding. This is the fundamental nature of the Eighty Thousand Sutra and the essence of Dharma.

Then, does this mean that Buddha's words have nothing to do with enlightenment? This is not the case as you know! Buddha spoke to us about everything he experienced. But alas! The only thing the common people see and hear are the words and theory itself, which is nothing but the tip of the iceberg. Because Buddha's message was not wholly expressed in words, his teaching was often compared to a red autumn leaf to amuse a little child or a finger pointing at the moon.

Zen Buddhists do not cling to Buddha's words to attain spiritual enlightenment. (In fact, the wordless simplicity of Zen often seems the opposite of Buddhism, with its many Sutras, teachings and stories). Dharma practice is something to do, not something to talk about. We know in meditation we must let go of our thoughts and feelings and live calmly and clearly in the present. Dharma practice extends this "letting go" to all aspects of our lives. In this way we let go of our craving for life to be different than it is. Dharma practice gives us the freedom to see the path to enlightenment. Perhaps you could say Dharma explains the unexplainable in words while Zen shows it in practice.

Those who know ...cannot explain.

Those who explain ...do not know.

- Lao Tse, Tao Te Qing

6-b. Zen Master Daewon's Enlightenment

There is a story of Zen Master Daewon's enlightenment which illustrates well the difference between Zen and Dharma. Originally, Master Daewon was a lecturer of the Nirvana Sutra. One day while he was lecturing about the very delicate nature of the Dharma body, he saw a monk grinning at him.

“I was explaining everything according to the Sutra and you are laughing! Do you have a better way then?” asked Master Daewon.

“Funny thing that you don’t know what the Dhamra body is!” said the monk.

“What is it that is wrong then?” questioned Master Daewon.

“if you don’t know what is wrong, why don’t you explain the Dharma body one more time!” replied the monk.

“The Dharma body is just like an infinite space. Vertically it covers the past, present and future. Horizontally it forms a ball, it echoes every Karma. In other words it is beyond space and time.” said Daewon.

“Don’t tell me that! What you have told me is not right. What you are saying is just guessing. You simply do not know what the Dharma body is.” said the monk.

“Then please teach me!” requested Master Daewon.

“Stop lecturing for a while, sit quietly and let go of all the Dharmas whether they are right or wrong. Then you will know.” replied the monk.

Master Daewon sat there quietly till dawn and as he heard the gong he attained enlightenment. As you can see, Dharma is words and theories, Zen is a practice of the truth.

6-c. First Zen Lessons

Originally in Zen Gate (school), it was said that Buddha taught Zen Meditation to his disciple Mahakashyapa at three different places which were later called the “Three Place Transmission”.

Yang San Hoe Sang

While Buddha was giving a Dharma talk at Yang San Hoe Sang, the king of Brahmadeva made it rain flowers, which was his offering. Buddha picked one up and showed it to the bewildered audience who did not know the meaning of it. Mahakashyapa, who was sitting to the side, smiled, and Buddha said, "Transmit to Mahakashyapa my Jung Bub Ahn Jang (the store house of the correct doctrine of Buddha) and Yal Ban Myo Shim (eternal bliss, wonderful mind and profound, beyond-human thought)."

Parinibbana Pagoda

Mahakashyapa was late for Buddha's lecture which was held in front of the Parinibbana Pagoda. Buddha shared his seat with Mahakashyapa and he covered Mahakashyapa with a Kasa (monk's robe).

Death of Buddha

When Buddha died, Mahakashyapa arrived three days late and cried over his coffin. Buddha pushed his two feet out of the coffin.

Editor's note: The silence and the smile are true Zen themes. In the ancient writings known as "The Seven Sages of the Bamboo Grove", the monks were said to "walk in the heat of the afternoon, making up poetry, drinking a little wine, playing the lute. Here they would indulge in pure conversation which would end when they reached the "thought that cannot be spoken". Then they stopped talking and silently understood each other with a smile."

7. Theory of Zen

We are reborn again and again with the idea that this world is the true reality, although we, as it was mentioned earlier, are born with the glowing Buddha nature within. To free ourselves from our illusions is almost impossible by ourselves. Why? Trying to forget your problems is a problem. Saying there are no problems is a problem. How do we make any progress?

7-a. Silent Zen

This is the first way of Zen Meditation. As we first from Master Daewon's enlightenment, this way is to be free from all thoughts (empty your mind). You must even free your mind of the thought of freeing your mind. By this very way, Master Daewon saw his true nature. That is why the Sutra says, "Whoever wants to know Buddha's boundaries of awareness should know his intention as clearly as the sky". This "person" is no one and everyone, pure awareness unlimited by any definition of self.

Master Chun-dong Jungkak says in the Book of Silent Meditation, "Everything reveals itself clearly in silence, more certain that in the lights and clearer. So clear that it starts to shine by itself, which is even more mysterious." The empty mind shines like a bright blue sky.

The Enlightenment of Master DoMyung

Master DoMyung was a 4th rank army general. He came first to grab Master Hui Neng's robe and bowl from him after Hui Neng became the sixth Zen Master. He knelt before Master Hui Neng's Dharma power, reporting his misdeeds and asked to be taught the Dharma. Master Hui Neng told him, "Since the object of your coming is the Dharma, refrain from thinking of anything else and keep your mind blank." When DoMyung had done this for a considerable time, Master Hui Neng asked, "When you are thinking of neither good nor evil, which is your real nature at that moment?" DoMyung became enlightened as soon as he heard this. Later he became the Seventh Patriarch.

Let us look at Layman Pang's story. Layman Pang asked the great Master Ma Tsu, "What man does not keep company with a myriad of things?"

"Wait till you can swallow all the water in the West River in one gulp, then I will tell you" replied Master Ma Tsu.

The Enlightenment of Master Ananda

Master Ananda asked Master Mahakashyapa, who continued Buddha's teaching after Buddha had died, "What else did Buddha leave you other than

his robe and bowl?'. Mahakashyapa had received Buddha's robe and bowl as a sign of taking over Buddha's teaching. However, here Ananda is questioning Mahakashyapa's understanding of Buddha's teaching, not just his receipt of the robe and bowl. Mahakashyapa replied, "Knock over the flagpole in front of the gate." Ananda could not understand Master Mahakashyapa's meaning, but after seven days of meditation of these words, Ananda became enlightened.

As we can see, in this type of Zen, the Master helps the student become enlightened by throwing him a message. This message can be in the form of a question that seems completely illogical, but is designed to force the thinking of the student beyond normal processes of logic. It is actually a "spear of Dharma". Some will awaken right away, others will take longer. The student must have reached the state where his or her mind is completely clear and quiet, in a moment of pure receptive emptiness.

Now we will look at Koan Zen, which is the method that I will try to teach in this book.



7-b. Koan Zen

Next, let us look at a Koan taken from the Dharma talk – “There is no need to talk much if you try to meditate. Just focus on Master Chao Chou’s ‘Nothingness’”.

(One monk had asked Ancient Master Chao Chou, “Do dogs have Buddha nature too?” Master Chao Chou replied, “none at all!” This was very confusing because Buddha had taught that all living things have Buddha nature. This Koan is called “None” or “Nothingness”.)

Repeat the Koan over and over, whether you are going or staying, sitting or lying down. Make your will as hard and bright as a diamond and keep it up for the longest time. Focus the light of your concentration onto your inner self. If your body is tired and your mind is wandering, discipline yourself

as best you can until you can hear the universe within the Koan as easily as a running stream. Then you will be content and comfortable with an empty and quiet mind. Neither be afraid nor delighted when there is a war between good and bad within you, for if you love or hate too much of one thing you will eventually lose your natural way and follow the wrong path. When you keep your will as high as a mountain, your mind as wide as an ocean, there will be wisdom as bright as the sun that will shine through the whole universe. And, as the evening approaches and the misty clouds disappear, the big, bright full moon will come out in the endless darkening sky that will shine right down to the place where you are sitting and fill your heart with happiness.

Buddha is Mind, Mind is Buddha

When there is a fire in the sky and a smoke from the bottom of the ocean and one piece of bamboo fits into another, you will become enlightened. Then you will be able to put all 1,700 Koans together and will understand all of Buddha's mystical teachings.

When you reach this point, go to a Zen Master immediately to balance your understanding. If a wise Zen Master recognizes your enlightenment, go back to where you were and face the earthly pleasures and pains according to your own karma. However, do it in such a way that there are no misdeeds or regrets and keep yourself as pure as a lotus flower. When the time is right to leave the mountain, get on a bottomless boat and follow a stream wherever it leads you.

Teach everybody what you know so that we'll all go to Nirvana together.

Editor's Note: The word "Nirvana" has the connotation of "blowing out" or "extinguishing" as a flame might be blown out when the fuel is all used up. It is cool and peaceful. No suffering or passion resides there. In Indian style – "Nirvana is release from life, from life and death, calling and answering."

8. The Meaning of Koan

In the stillness and silence of Zen meditation, the mind of the meditator is trained to see straight forward. We know that with time, patience, discipline and the guidance of the Zen Master, the mind will come home; the meditator will see the truth of his or her being –the enlightenment of Buddha.

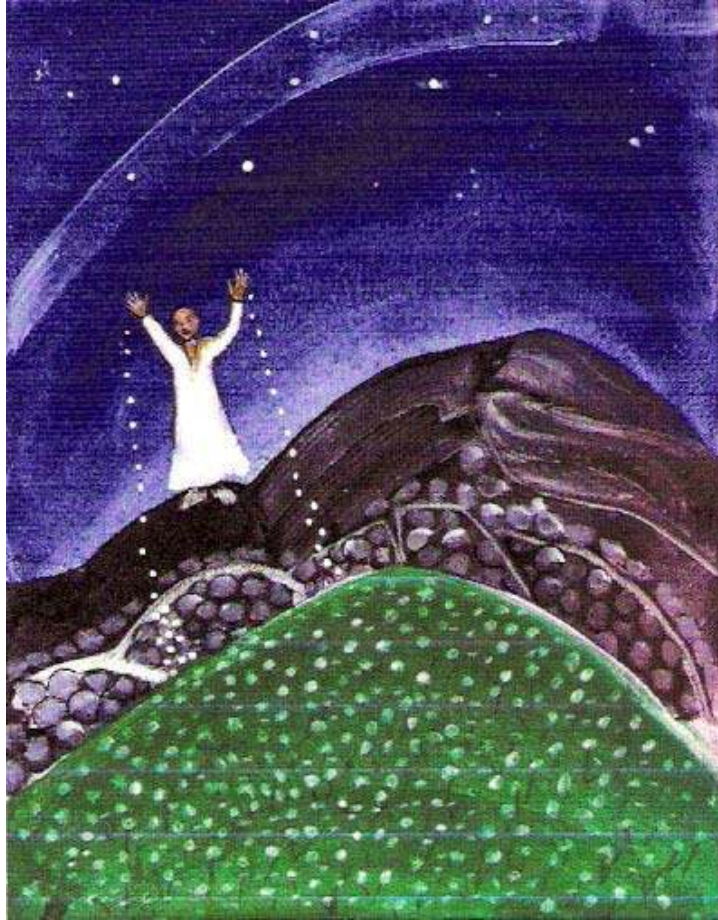
We call all Buddha's and the Ancient Masters' teachings Koan. Koan originally means a government document and also an unbreakable law, rule or principle. The living truth comes from understanding the unbreakable law. It is important to remember that the mind of the meditator must be in a state of receptive openness –“empty mind” to work well with the Koan.

8-a. The story of the cup of tea

A story that illustrates this needs concerns a student who went to see a Zen Master and began demanding the answers to a great many questions. The Zen Master was pouring a cup of tea for the student. He kept on pouring the tea until the tea was overflowing and the tea was spilling everywhere. The surprised student asked the teacher, “What are you doing?” The Zen Master replied, “If your mind is already filled like this teacup, how can there be any room for you to learn?” Koan gives an immediate and intuitive insight into true reality that is not based on any study of lessons.

In Koan there is a doorway, a “Zen Gate”, to pass through to find the true self. Koan is the most important task for the meditator. It is called the entrance to become a Master as one will know Buddha, the Ancient Masters and Dharma after completing the task of breaking through the entrance. In other words, it is a passage to become like the Ancient Masters.

Let us take a look at a few Koans to make our understanding easier.



8-b. Some Favourite Koans

When the great Master Bodhidharma came to China for the first time and met Emperor Wu of Liang, the Emperor asked the Master, "What is the highest meaning of the holy truths?" Bodhidharma said, "Emptiness, without holiness." The Emperor said, "Who is talking to me?" Bodhidharma replied, "I don't know." This Koan is called "I don't know".

One day Master Hui Neng asked an audience, "I have such a thing which has no head, no tail, no name, no front or back. It is bright as the sun and also as dark as the night. Can you tell me what I have?" This Koan is called "What is this?".

Buddha showed the public a Mani Pearl (wishes come true pearl) and

asked, "What colour of Mani Pearl do you see?" Some said black, others said yellow or blue as they saw it. This time Buddha hid the pearl under his garment and raised his empty hands in the air and asked, "Then how about this one? What colour do you see?" Amazed, the 5th Heaven God said, "Your hands are empty now, then what pearl are you talking about now, Master?" Buddha answered in sorrow, "How ignorant you are! You had so much to say about this earthly pear, but you have nothing to say about the real one." This is called "Mani Pearl" Koan.

It was said that originally there were 1,700 Koans. Even though it seems this figure came from the Transmission Records, how can Koans be numbered when all Buddha's words and actions are actually Koans?

8-c. The "Bright and Shining Mirror" poems

It has been mentioned that a Koan is a whole demonstration of Buddha's enlightenment itself, and who can understand Buddha? Only someone who opens up his eyes to the wisdom of Buddha. Here is a story about working on your Koan:

The Zen Master Hungjen felt his death was coming so he told his students to write a poem expressing their understanding of meditation. From these poems he planned to decide which student he would give the Transmission to.

Shenhsiu wrote:

*The Body is like a Bodhi tree
The Mind is like a bright mirror standing
At all times we must wipe it clean
And allow no dust to ever cling.*

Huineng wrote:

*There never was a Bodhi tree
There never was a mirror shining bright*

*Since there was nothing from the first
Where then is the dust to cling?*

Training yourself in Koan was said, in the days of Ancient Masters, to be like building up your work as desperately as facing a silver mountain and an iron wall, as hot as a great fire and painful as suffocating on a chestnut in your throat. It is difficult for ordinary people to try so hard, especially when enlightenment cannot be explained to them. No one can describe it. That is why it is said that, “Enlightenment is the place where a thousand holy men become silent”. In our method, we help you train your mind with patience and gentleness to let go of thinking, since thinking makes good and bad, and makes all fears and sadness. Then happiness will be yours.

8-d. The Enlightenment of Layman Pang

This is Layman Pang’s story. Layman Pang asked the great Master Ma Tsu, “What kind of man does not keep company with a myriad of things?” “Wait until you can swallow all the water in the West River in one gulp, then I will tell you.” replied Ma Tsu.

When Layman Pang questioned “What kind of man doesn’t keep company with a myriad of things?”, what did he mean? In our experience, the world is full of a myriad of things – separate, distinct people, objects, etc. This is the point when our thinking mind can take us no further. But gradually, through meditation, we come to the intuitive realization that there exists a deeper inter-connectedness of things, more dimensions to time and space than we, trapped in our “18 boundaries of awareness”, can realize. These “Zen” experiences gradually erode our sense of having our own separate existence. All things return to the “One”.

Ma Tsu’s answer, “Swallow all the water in the West River in one gulp” seems completely illogical, but it is designed to push Layman Pang’s thinking outside of its dependence on words – to give him the freedom to open the door to Prajna (wisdom). Layman Pang attained enlightenment at once after the great Master Ma Tsu’s answer.

9. Fundamental Principles for the Pursuit of Koan

Firstly, you must have strong faith – faith that all sentient beings have Buddha nature. You must have confidence that you can reach your true nature and have access to the wisdom, courage and virtue of an enlightened being. In your everyday life be generous, bright, courageous and positive – have the hope that there will someday be a Buddha world. Become resourceful in urging yourself to repeat your Koan. Beautiful music, poetry, a flower – anything that brings you joy can call upon you to do your meditation with all the happiness of greeting an old friend. You should never give up at any difficulty; hope and courage will lead you to enlightenment. The great poet Lu Yu of the Song Dynasty in China wrote these encouraging words:

*The mind is like the water of a pool
Tranquil without wind;
Sitting silently for thousands of breaths
Midnight, but don't be surprised to see
Whales making huge waves
to welcome the sun at dawn.*

Secondly, you must have great dissatisfaction. Why do you have to be so frustrated? A meditator often has thoughts like these:

“Why is my life so lost in illusion? Why am I so attached to this world? I know that one day I will lose everything, and my consciousness, which is only a guest of my body, will depart. And yet, meditation is difficult, being unafraid is difficult, believing in myself is difficult ...”

The novice must not worry about having doubts. They will give him the energy to make the effort to achieve his goal. Meditators are invited in Zen tradition to treat life as a question – “What is This?” is an attitude as well as a Koan. It takes energy to focus the mind, to train it to stay still, to concentrate. We need the driving force of an intense dissatisfaction.

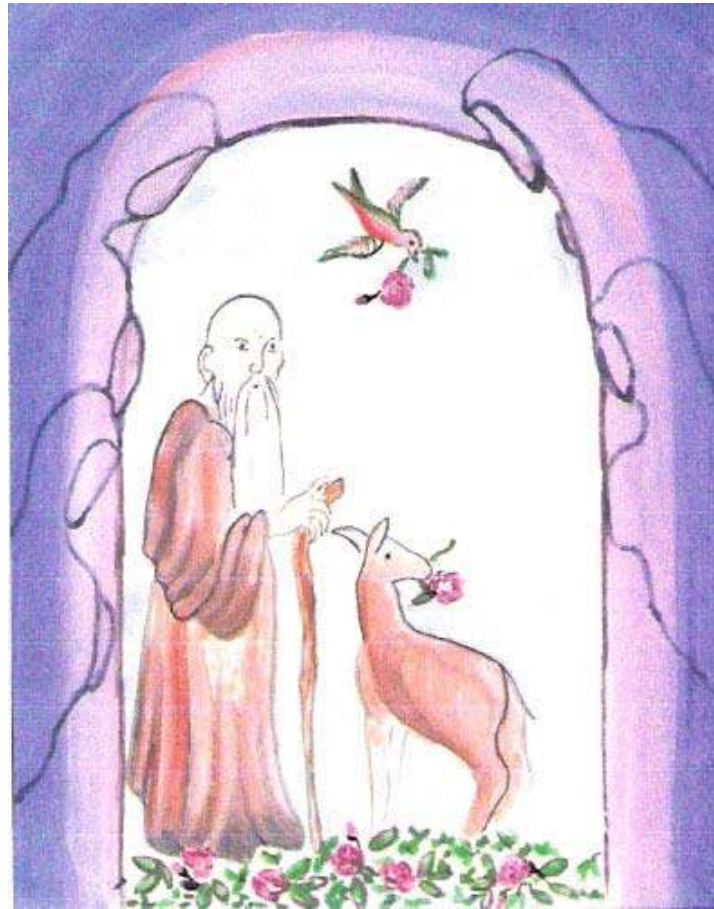
Here is a story about the famous Zen Master Ananda:

Master Ananda was very clever, bright and intelligent and could memorize everything he heard. He wrote a book about Buddha's 49 years of teaching and he made Buddha's followers his own. But, Mahakashyapa, who had taken over the "Grand Master" position from Buddha, thought Ananda was not doing enough to help his followers, and was spending too much time in meditation. He thought Ananda should be actively teaching. He thought to himself, "Buddha chose me from among these people, Upari the principle follower, Sari, the wisest, and Rahula, the secret server, to teach the "Living Meditation Technique". But I can find no one to continue Buddha's teaching. He decided to provoke Ananda to action. Zen Masters have been known to act strangely towards young monks, often seeming cruel and arbitrary to force enlightenment. Mahakashyapa howled at Ananda, "You bastard! Show me your principle of enlightenment since you babble that you served Buddha all your life *and* listened his teaching *and* wrote a Sutra. Buddha taught only the very essence of his enlightenment. All theories are nothing but a finger pointing to the moon. You teach people about the moon without seeing one. Then what you are teaching is wrong! Get out of here since you lead men and women to makeshift, opposite and evil opinions and destroy them!" Expelled Ananda was very angry and this incident provoked him to resolve to become awakened.

Without this intense resolution we waste time in a world that is not real. We listen only to words, and words are dangerous, because they foster the illusion of permanence. When we find ourselves forced to face our own mortality, we have little time left, for death pulls us from the front and pushes us from the back. Ananda, after he was expelled, studied wholeheartedly for 7 days and attained enlightenment, which was approved officially by Mahakashyapa. Mahakashyapa then said, "Oh, Ananda! Without this kind of resolution even if you tried the rest of your life you would never have attained enlightenment."

"... if you free yourself from birth and death, you should know where you are."

- Chapter 47, "The Gateless Gate"



9-b. The Enlightenment of Daedoug

There was a Master named Nan Jun. It was said that everyone adored him for his spiritual enlightenment. Even ghosts bowed to him, deer and birds brought him flowers. But as the master got old, all these phenomena stopped. Moreover, when the Master could not control his bowels due to old age, all the people despised him. At this time a layman named Daedoug came to seek the master's teaching while serving the old Master. For three years, Daedoug looked after him faithfully. However, the Master did not teach Daedoug at all, no Koan, no Zen Meditation, or Dharma, just giving him a lot of work. Daedoug started to wonder, "What is going on here? What happened to the Master that whom everybody said was like no other?" Even worse, when Daedoug would make a mistake, Master Nan Jun would scold him badly. The whole thing started to fill Daedoug with anger and resentment. He said to the Master, "Hey old man! You make me work like a slave for three years without a word

of Dharma! What is this? You deceived me! I'm not going to take it anymore!" And he ran away. As the Master could not stop Daedoug, with great difficulty he got up and followed him, for he was sorry to see Daedoug go.

Daedoug was unaware that the Master had been waiting for the right time and circumstances to begin his teaching. The Master had to make Daedoug angry and somehow force him to leave so that he could follow the young man with his sickly body and create the conditions in which Daedoug would understand the Master's intentions. When the Master called, "Daedoug" –at that moment when Daedoug turned around –he became enlightened.

Part II: Zen Meditation Instruction

1. Decision

People who want to practice Zen Meditation must have a definite desire to do so. Much determination is needed because the mind is accustomed to being entertained –concentration, mental and physical discipline are not easy. It is helpful to remember that we are not just doing meditation for our own good but for the benefit of all sentient beings –we are following the example of the Bodhisattvas, or "Enlightenment Beings". These enlightened ones were on their way to becoming Buddhas but postponed their entrance into Nirvana for the purpose of helping all suffering creatures. The great vow of the Bodhisattva is stated as:

"I shall not enter final Nirvana before all beings have been liberated."

2. Cut off all worldly thoughts and feelings.

When your thoughts stray from repeating your Koan, you must bring your mind back, gently and firmly. All thoughts and emotions are calmly let go as we return to the quietness of Koan again and again. This is very difficult at first because the mind is so easily distracted with memories from the past and plans for the future –one moment's forgetfulness and we are swept away

on a sea of chatter. The illusion of “self” arises when we believe these thoughts and emotions to be truly who we are. If we do not react, they will pass away. When your mind becomes calm and clear your meditation will begin to flourish.

3. Control your diet.

The ideal time for Zen Meditation is when you are not too full or too hungry. Overeating will not give you more energy, nor will undereating clear your mind. It is not recommended to have a raw or salty diet or to fast. Controlling your diet will help you establish a good attitude toward meditation practice in general. It will help you develop the controlled and tranquil mind you need to maintain consistent practice.

4. Have a regular sleeping pattern.

You must sleep regularly. Sleepiness will ruin your concentration and make your meditation heavy and dull. Morning meditation practice can gradually be extended as you make progress and your sleeping pattern will adjust easily. However, it is not advisable to skip your evening meditation completely as it will eventually produce a better night's sleep and make your body feel lighter and healthier the next day.

Usually, Zen Meditation schools hold overnight retreats occasionally throughout the year. During the retreat you meditate all night without sleeping. Anyone who practices strictly and carefully should be able to last without any difficulty.

5. Select a place for Zen Meditation.

The place selected for Zen Meditation should not be too dark or too bright. For a beginner, it is advisable to choose a quiet place. However, the place should not matter to the experienced meditator. The important thing is that the person has a strong desire to practice meditation and a good basis in Zen Meditation method. The best place is a Zen Centre. Any established Zen Centre should have the type of atmosphere which is conducive to proper meditation. For the novice meditator, it is better to practice at a Zen Centre

under the guidance of a Zen Master.

6. The right posture for sitting Zen Meditation.

Have two thick cushions and loosen your belt to free your waist and ease your breathing. Fold one cushion in half and place it on the other one and sit on it facing a wall. Take off any accessories that restrain your body such as glasses, watch, etc. Sit in a lotus position by putting your right foot on your left thigh and your left foot on your right thigh.

The semi-lotus position is also fine. In this position, place your left foot between your calf and thigh behind your right knee and place your right foot underneath your left knee. Place your right hand palm up between your feet, just under your navel, resting on your feet. Put your left hand on your right hand also facing palm up and touch your thumb tips together making an oval. Move back and forth and side to side to relax your body into a comfortable position. Straighten your back, push your chest out ensuring that your lower back is completely straight. Relax your shoulders and hands. Align your ears with your shoulders, your nose with your navel, so that your head is straight and level. Half close your eyes and look down at your nose. Touch the roof of your mouth with your tongue and keep your mouth closed without clenching your jaws. This is the proper position for Zen Meditation in the sitting position. To relieve them, change position of your legs and/ or rock your body from side to side.

Novice meditators tend to keep their eyes closed, but they should keep open. The Ancient Masters said that meditating with the eyes closed is like falling into an evil cave in the mountains. Closing the eyes quiets the mind and allows you to concentrate better, but it is easy to fall into a drowsy state. While meditating, if you feel sleepy, clench your jaws, open your eyes wide and take 10 deep, slow breaths. Keep the inhaled air in your abdomen for a while and then exhale slowly. This will relieve your sleepiness. If sleepiness persists, stand up, tense your whole body and do the breathing mentioned above.

It is better to combine sitting Zen Meditation with walking Zen

Meditation. 50 minutes of sitting meditation and 10 minutes of walking meditation is customarily practiced in Korea, but the length of walking meditation is flexible. The hand position for walking meditation is the same for sitting meditation. Keep your body still, your feet moving in the same rhythm as your breathing, while you concentrate on your Koan. Walking Zen Meditation will relieve fatigue while clearing your mind and energizing your body.

7. Breathe evenly.

It is not necessary to have a particular method of breathing to meditate, but if you are doing sitting Zen Meditation, it is advisable to follow the basic method to aid in relaxation. Sit in the correct position comfortably, moving your body back and forth and from side to side three or four times and then exhale thorough your mouth. Next, inhale slowly through your nose. Make sure the air goes down from your nose to the chest and abdomen with the sense of bringing energy to the abdomen. Focus your mind: breathe in all the energy of the universe and exhale as if you are cleansing yourself of all your worries, nervousness, sadness, etc. Hold the air in your chest for a while and exhale. Breathing should be even and relaxed. Empty your mind, let go of all the stiffness in your body, remembering to keep your spine straight and breathing regular. Repeat this about twenty times and then focus your mind on the Koan as given to you by the Zen Master. Good breathing practice will help with your physical health as well as strengthen your concentration. Here again, I encourage you to practice under the guidance of a Zen Master who will help you develop the foundations for Sammadhi (wisdom).

Benefits of Zen Meditation

Zen Meditation produces many benefits in everyday life. The body is healthier and more cheerful; beginners find themselves having more energy, more confidence and inner peace. However, these are only side benefits – we must not lose sight of our goal. All suffering, all illusion comes from the desire for happiness for oneself. We are on the path of the Bodhisattva – our meditations are dedicated to the happiness of others.

Silas for Zen Meditation

1. The establishment of a vow.

Silas are precepts or rules. If anyone wishes to become a Buddhist, he often decides his own course of spiritual training, taking advice from the monk or nun he chooses as his teacher. Usually, he receives the five training precepts: not to kill, not to steal, not to indulge in sexual misconduct, not to lie and not to take intoxicants. These vows are conscious decisions to train in certain areas. Failure is met with sorrow and determination to try harder. Then, he may take the Bodhisattva precepts. At the end of the ceremony some of these rules are repeated:

*"I vow to save all beings.
I vow to end all sufferings.
I vow to learn all Dharma teachings.
I vow to attain enlightenment."*

-excerpt from 48 Bodhisattva precepts

2. You have to follow the Zen Master's guidance.

The meditator's path is revealed to him with help from the insight and wisdom of the Zen Master. Therefore, try to understand the Zen Master's teaching and practice it sincerely and respectfully. Changing your method without consulting him could undermine the success of your meditation.

3. Always keep the meditative attitude.

Keep the Zen mind wherever you are and in whatever you do.

4. Concentrate when you study.

Make yourself one with your meditation, without thinking or worrying about it.

5. Lead a bright daily life.

Strive to be happy. You are on the right path.

6. Speak positively.

Don't see other people's faults. Often the fault is only in your mind. Long ago, a seeker came to an Ancient Master and asked, "What do you see, Master?" "What I see is my fault, and what I do not see are other's faults", said the Master. Masters have never talked about others failures or misfortunes. They well know that what you have in your mind is reflected in your face. People who talk with the essence of Buddha nature say only positive words.

7. Live with compassion and unselfishness.

Masters and students must live with each other in harmony and without conflicts. This, of course, is very difficult. But, it cannot be stressed enough that peace of mind and body come from living with kindness and generosity.

8. Learn at least the basic teaching of Buddha.

Words are not Zen and Zen cannot be reached through them. However, this does not mean that you cannot benefit greatly by understanding some of the ancient teachings. Use as much guidance as you find helpful. Some old poetry from the I Ching shows the way:

By yielding, ...overcome.

By bending, ...become straight.

By emptying, ...be filled.

By breaking, ...become whole.

By losing, ...gain.

By following the Way, the seeker becomes one with the world.

Choose emptiness to find fullness;

*Embrace formlessness to find form;
Practice humility to attain greatness;
Claim nothing to receive the riches of the world.*

Part III: Advice for the Novice Meditator

1. Have a sincere resolution that can deal with matters of life and death.

When you meditate, you must have a very strong determination to solve problems as serious as life and death. Great faith in our own potential to become a Buddha will sustain us when our meditation is going well, and when it is not. Meditation, at the beginning, seems to be difficult; it seems a great deal like suffering. Our minds are constantly trying to do something else. However, when the mind gradually becomes still for longer periods of time, it will learn to rest. Shantideva, an eighth century Buddhist poet wrote:

“If this elephant of mind is bound on all sides by meditation, all fear disappears and complete happiness comes.

All enemies- all the tigers, lions, elephants, bears and serpents of our emotions, all the keepers of hell; the demons and the horrors,

All of these are bound by the mastery of your mind, and by the taming of that one mind all are subdued;

Because from the mind are derived all fears and immeasurable sorrows.”

2. Have a doubt (questioning).

One Ancient Master said, “If you question a lot, you understand a lot; if you question a little you get a little, and if you do not question at all, you get nothing at all.” We need the sincere resolution discussed above to strengthen us, but we need sincere questioning to open up our minds. This is why the “What is This?” Koan is so often given to beginners, and why they are encouraged to develop a “don’t know” mind. Don’t be surprised if the answers you get are not what you expected. Remember this story:

The Sixth Patriarch of Zen Buddhism, Hui Neng, came across two monks who were arguing about a flag flapping in the wind. One said, "The flag is moving." The other said, "The wind is moving." They argued back and forth without agreement.

The Master Hui Neng said: "It's not that the wind is moving; it's not that the flag moves; it is your mind that is moving." The two monks were stunned.

3. When you meditate, do not even be aware that you are sitting.

A novice meditator should not see the sky as it is even he looks at it. He should not see the earth as it is even when he looks down at it. He should not see the mountain as it is even when he looks at it. He should not see the water as it is even when he looks at it. He should not be aware he is walking when he walks. He should not be aware that he is sitting, when he sits. He should see nobody among the crowd. Do not have excessive worldly attachment, stubbornness or desire for mere knowledge. Study hard as if you were looking for a lost treasure. Study when you are fully awake; be alert and precise as a cat hunting a mouse. When the cat hunts the mouse, she keeps her eyes on the prey and stands firm. She does not concern herself with anything else. Meditators must also concern themselves only with the pursuit of enlightenment. If you are distracted with worldly matters, never mind the poor mouse, you will lose the cat itself.

Master Huang Po wrote this verse:

*" It is not the usual thing to go beyond this filthy world.
Make it happen while holding the rein tightly.
Without the bitter cold which reaches to the bone,
How can the fragrance from the Maehwa blossom pierce our nose?"*

4. Do not exhibit your knowledge.

Meditators should not analyze or memorize the Master's words. There is no benefit from doing this, if you are trying to reach the state where there

is no active mind. Do not try to reason in order to understand. If you have not been enlightened, do not teach others, just do your own meditation.



5. Seek only the Koan.

While you are meditating, if other thoughts creep in which are absolutely irrelevant, chant “Amitaba”. Chanting is good for Zen Meditation. It gets rid of unnecessary thoughts and does not interfere with the Koan. Do not bring any worries or problems to meditation. Remember the story of the young woman at the river:

An old monk and a young monk were walking together when they came upon a pretty young woman standing before a rushing river. She was wearing a beautiful dress and was obviously afraid to get it wet. She smiled sweetly at

the two monks and said:

“Please help me! The current is swift and the water is cold, if my dress gets wet, it will be ruined! Will one of you carry me across?”

The young monk became very angry. He thought she must know that monks are not supposed to touch women. He waded into the river and crossed to the other side. The old monk picked up the young woman and carried her to the other side. The two monks continued on their way, but the young monk was still angry.

Years later, the young monk met the old monk again. He still remembered the young woman and became angry all over again. HE began shouting at the old monk about his terrible behaviour. The old monk said:

“Oh, my goodness! Are you still carrying that woman? I put her down many years ago!”

A Brief History of Korean Buddhism

“Mahayana” or “Great Vehicle” Buddhism emerged from “Hinayana” or “Lesser Vehicle” Buddhism around 150 AD in India. It represented a great creative flowering of the basic potential of the Buddha’s teachings. The main ideas include:

- 1. The “Bodhisattva” ideal.** The Bodhisattva is an individual who has won “nirvana”, - release from the painful rounds of rebirth –but voluntarily turned back to the world of suffering to help others. The Bodhisattvas seek to generate “Bodhicitta” or “Wisdom-heart” which is direct insight into the nature of reality. They practice the six “perfections” (paramitas) of giving, morality, patience, vigour, meditation and wisdom.
- 2. Compassion.** Compassion is seen as equal to the virtue of wisdom. Buddhist compassion is based on the idea of being able to feel the sufferings of others as if they were one’s own, resulting from a feeling of “non-self”. Compassion is felt for all living things equally.

3. **“Emptiness” (Shunyata).** Hundreds of years of meditation have gone into the concepts behind this word, making it almost impossible to explain adequately. It is often used as “empty of self” or “empty mind” but also includes the transcendental idea of having surpassed the universe; having “gone beyond” into a realm not based on the physical but only grasped intuitively.

When Buddhism came to China, it underwent another important change. The first teacher, the “Bodhidharma” was an Indian monk who traveled to China in the 6th century to teach meditation. Meditation is “Dhyana” in Sanskrit, “Ch’an” in Chinese, and “Zen” in Japanese (“Zen” is traditionally used in the West). He was said to have spent nine years in the Shaolin monastery, in ceaseless meditation, staring at a wall. He is usually drawn as a fierce old man with huge round eyes. Legend says he cut off his own eyelids in order to keep awake for meditation. Lu Yu, a poet of the Song Dynasty, wrote this poem to describe Bodhidharma’s philosophy:

Others have revolted, I am unmoved.

Gripped by desires, I am unmoved.

Hearing the wisdom of sages, I am unmoved.

I move only in my own way.



Ch'an (Zen) represents the finest achievement of Chinese Buddhism. It resulted from a blending of the local religion, Taoism, with the new Indian Buddhism. Both religions shared several important common beliefs:

1. Desire is a source of trouble.
2. The concept of "self" hinders spiritual development.
3. Helping others and society is an obligation shared by all people.
4. The "Middle Way" of Buddhism is much like the balance and harmony teaching of Taoism.
5. Buddhist compassion is much like the humility of Taoism.
6. Meditation, the quiet mind of Buddhism, allows the

Buddhist to achieve enlightenment; selflessness enables the Taoist to become one with the Tao.

Ch'an is said to be more "down to earth"; a "return to the essentials" of the basic teachings of the Buddha, putting much less emphasis on all the texts, codes and rules that had been written over the years. It is original and highly creative; it cuts through to the heart of the matter by giving the student direct insight into the method that transforms a meditator into a Buddha.

Hui Neng (638-713) was the sixth Patriarch of Chinese Ch'an (the Bodhidharma was the first). He is described as a poor, illiterate woodcutter who experienced his first enlightenment on hearing a verse of the Diamond Sutra. He became the sixth Patriarch after writing the poem, "There never was a Bodhi tree ... a mirror shining bright ..." that was discussed earlier. He was known to tear up sutras to denounce the excessive scholarliness of the other monks. The name of Korea's main Buddhist order, "Chogye", comes from the mountain in China where Hui Neng lived.

Korean Buddhism, although closely related to Chinese Buddhism, is as distinct and individual as the Korean culture. Korea is a curving peninsula reaching down from China towards the southern tip of Japan. Buddhism was introduced from China around the fourth century. Korean Buddhism had its golden age during the Silla (668-935) and Koryo (935-1392) periods, when beautiful monasteries and temples were built. Between 1910 and 1945, the Japanese occupied Korea and attempted to impose their own type of Buddhism. The Korean War (1945-1953) resulted in North Korea separating as a Communist state. However, Korean Buddhism is as vitally important to Korean culture, history and spirituality today as it has been down through the ages.

The Chogye Order

The Chogye Order emphasized meditation to gain enlightenment; its sacred texts are: The Heart Sutra, The Diamond Sutra, The Platform Sutra of the 6th Patriarch, The Avatamsaka Sutra and the stories of the ancient Zen Masters. There are more than 1,632 temples (1997 census) belonging to the

Chogye Order, organized into 25 geographical regions. Each region has a main temple. There are four major temples: T'ongdo-sa, Haein-sa, Songgwang-sa, and Sudok-sa. These four major temples have a meditation hall and a monk's training centre. Teaching monks have been sent to many countries to establish Korean Zen Buddhist centres – the United States, Japan, Hong Kong and Canada are some examples. The Order has a newspaper and a radio and television station. It contains about 12,000 ordained monks and nuns as well as 8.1 million active lay members.

Other Buddhist sects in Korea, for example, the T'aego, the Hwaom, the Whonhyo, etc. share identical philosophies. The Pomun is the only all women sect in the world. There are Buddhist schools and universities both for monks and nuns and for lay people. Everyone is welcome to visit a Korean Buddhist temple at any time.