



# European Sangha Weekend

May 1 - 3, 2009

## Sangha Meeting Report / Announcements



KWAN UM SCHOOL OF ZEN



# *Sangha Meeting / May 2009*

## *Report • Announcements*

The recent European Sangha Weekend in Berlin was in a way quite different from previous Sangha Weekends. There was a lot of time and space to talk to each other, in formal and informal settings, students and teachers - all together. The formal parts were very well moderated and thus very effective. Everybody who took part on this event was very happy that our Sangha took a big step towards speaking openly with compassion to each other and about each and that we are learning to work together like this - in a very mature way...

We hope that next Sangha Weekend in Warsaw in autumn 2009 will be another opportunity to continue in what we have started in Berlin this May. We encourage everybody to find time and way to take part in this event and thus support your own practice and also the whole Sangha by sharing know-how, good advice and practice energy.

We also want to thank our teachers for their constant effort and commitment to our Sangha. We appreciate their willingness to help us and teach us, to be always there for us and to be open to our questions or suggestions. We vow to respect, help and support each other and we hope that we will always be able to learn from each other...

## **PARTICIPANTS**

### **Teachers:**

Zen Master Wu Bong  
Zen Master Bon Shim  
Zen Master Bon Yo  
Mukyong JDPSN  
Hyon Gak Sunim JDPS  
Andrzej Piotrowski JDPSN  
Muchak JDPSN  
Jo Potter JDPSN

### **Students and guests:**

55 students and guests from Belgium, Czech Republic, Great Britain, Latvia, Lithuania, Hungary, Poland, Slovakia, Spain





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### **REPORT FROM LOCAL SANGHAS**

- There is a Sangha starting in Ukraine under the guidance of Zen Master Wu Bong
- Hyon Gak Sunim became a permanent member of the European Teachers Group in KUSZE. He is currently the guiding teacher for Norway Sangha.
- The Munich Sangha found and moved to a new place with a large Dharma room. The date of the opening ceremony will be announced soon.
- A new group has been established in Bad Bramstedt (near Hamburg). The opening ceremony took place on May 17, 2009.
- There is no longer any Kwan Um Sangha in Denmark, since there are no events with teachers and no contact with the school in general

### **NEW ABBOT OF KUSZ EUROPE**

Mukyong JDPSN resigned from the European KUSZ Abbot Job.

Jo Potter JDPSN has been elected by teachers group as a new school Abbess.



We want to thank Mukyong JDPSN  
for all the work that he has done  
for the Sangha as the KUSZE Abbot.

We appreciate it very much.

Very best wishes from all of us!



We welcome Jo Potter, JDPSN as  
our new european Sangha Abbess!

Thank you for accepting this hard  
job. We wish you get lot of help and  
support from the Sangha!





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### TOPICS RAISED IN THE FIRST MEETING

#### MONEY

1. Fundraising, European Fund, Raising money for projects
2. Prices of retreats

#### PRACTICALS

1. How to get formal robes?

#### VISION / MISSION

1. VISION
  - in general
  - of the ZCs
2. REAL NEEDS
  - people, PR, finance, teaching
3. LONDON ZC
  - Moving to bigger place

#### COMMUNICATION

1. Resolving conflicts in an open manner (Kwan Um Conflict Management)
2. How to use Virtual Sangha?
3. Communication / Information processes (How do we want to share information that we really need?)
4. Sharing and using resources / know-how (professional resources of Sangha members)

#### EXTERNAL COMMUNICATION

1. Improving Public Relation
  - of the school
  - of ZCs
2. Organizing events with groups in conflict (New Kadampa Group in Dresden)

#### ORGANIZATION

1. Decision Making Process & Involving the Sangha / Sangha Representatives
2. What is the relation of KUSZ in Asia, Europe and US?

#### PRACTICE

1. Integrating the family into the Sangha
2. Are people under drugs or living on the street welcome in our ZCs?
3. Relationship Student - Teacher / Teacher - Student
4. How to deal with conflicts
5. Dharma Room in private flat or house
6. Education of Dharma Teachers / DT Retreat for Europe



# **Sangha Meeting / May 2009**

## **Report • Announcements**

### **DECISION MAKING PROCESS & SANGHA INVOLVEMENT**

#### **QUESTIONS RAISED IN THE DISCUSSION GROUP**

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- What is the selection process of officials and representatives?
- What is the selection process of the guiding teacher?
- What is the function and power of the guiding teacher?
- How is the Sangha involved in the decision making process?
- Who makes the decisions?
- What is the function of the head of the school?

#### **ANSWERS TO THESE QUESTIONS FROM THE TEACHERS**

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##### **GUIDING TEACHER**

- Is proposed by the Sangha and approved by european teachers group

##### **NATIONAL ABBOTS**

- Given by Head Teacher of KUSZE

##### **GROUP LEADERS & ZEN CENTER ABBOTS**

- Appointed by National Abbot

##### **ABBOT OF HEAD TEMPLE**

- Appointed by guiding teacher

##### **COMMUNICATION CHANNEL**

Teaching and practice in the local Sangha: Student > Guiding Teacher > European Head Teacher

Personal questions on practice: Student > any KUSZ teacher

Local Sangha administrative issues: Student > Abbot > National Abbot > Guiding Teacher

European Sangha administrative issues: Student > European Abbot Office > EU Head Teacher



# **Sangha Meeting / May 2009**

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### **INVOLVEMENT OF SANGHA REPRESENTATIVES IN DECISION MAKING**

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#### **ZEN CENTERS & ZEN GROUPS**

##### **- Board of Representatives**

(recommended board structure: Abbot, Vice-Abbot, HDT, Director, House Master, senior students...)

- voting system or semi-democratic system (space for all opinions, but decision made by abbot)
- live communication with other Sanghas, with the Guiding Teacher and with the KUSZE Abbot

#### **GUIDING TEACHERS**

- Bringing important information from teachers group to students, giving space for students to express their proposal, suggestions or questions - communicating those to teachers group if necessary

### **SCHOOL ZEN MASTER - FUNCTION & COMPETENCE**

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School Zen Master has a symbolic and moral function in our school. Does not have any decision power. Is a supervisor for JDPSN and Zen Masters in the international KUSZ.

### **GUIDING TEACHER - FUNCTION & COMPETENCE**

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- Is the “voice” of the Sangha
- Supervizing teaching administration of National Abbot and Local Sangha Abbot(s)
- Contributes 60 - 70 % of his/her time for teaching in the given Sangha
- Answers any questions concerning Zen Center business (practice, relationship to other schools etc.)  
(Personal questions can be asked or consulted with any teacher, indipendently on who is the guiding teacher for given Sangha.)
- Approves invitations of other teachers for the given Sangha
- Approves any other activities (such as yoga, calligraphy lessons, etc.) organized in the Zen Center or under a school name



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### SUGGESTIONS:

- To clarify the structure of the international KUSZ
- To create clear structures for the involvement of the Sangha in the decision making process (some kind of voting system?)
- To respect the voice of the Sangha as an equal partner
- To create more space for face to face meetings of teachers with Sangha representatives
- Teachers should be responsible for teaching, the Sangha should be responsible for organization
- To create local Sangha Board of Representatives based on a voting system
- More responsibility for the Sangha helps students to learn and grow up

### CONFLICT MANAGEMENT

The discussion on this topic brought up many suggestions and questions.

We would like to work together on creating guidelines for this area. The help of experienced students in this matter would be very much appreciated. There will be a discussion started on Virtual Sangha.

### SUGGESTIONS / PROPOSALS FOR FURTHER DISCUSSION

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- Clear rules and standards (who decides what and why?) / Creating a guideline
- More openness (no solitary decisions in Sangha matters)
- Grievance Committee for severe matters
- Open and correct communication about conflict situation to the Sangha:
  - be careful not to carry conflict matters into public outside the school (can hurt people)
  - learning how to communicate in a compassionate manner (put down your opinion, do not assume, listen to each other, do not talk based on your emotions, wait and then talk...)
  - clear and neutral report to the Sangha about the conflict and its solution



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- Workshops on Conflict Management, Mediation and Communication  
(creating a human resource database of KUSZE to organize events with lectures / workshops)

### **Tip:**

- There will be a Spring Sangha Gathering near Brno, Czech Republic on June 5-7, 2009.  
The program includes workshops on Conflict Management and Mediation led by Jo Potter, JDPSN.

## **INTEGRATING THE FAMILY INTO THE SANGHA**

### **RETREATS**

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- Organizing retreats in nature with less practice and more together action (sports, etc.)
- Sharing costs and time - both parents with child(ren) take part, pay one fee and exchange in practicing and baby-sitting / several families can share child care
- Family week in the Kyol Che schedule
- Open Day for family members (giving a chance to our partners to meet the Sangha and to get to know what practice means to us)

### **PRACTICE IN A RELATIONSHIP**

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- Compassionate communication
- Making clear the importance of practice to the partner
- Support the partner, pay attention to his/her needs
- Plan your practice time with respect to your together time / family needs



# Sangha Meeting / May 2009

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### FUNDRAISING

#### INTERNAL FUNDRAISING

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- Identifying the needs of the Sangha
- Starting small fund to build the trust of the Sangha (projects for school / projects for ZCs)
- Progress bar on website, showing how much has been raised and how much is still needed
- Internal promotion and public relation (providing the Sangha with sufficient information)
  - reports, “success” stories, transparent financial management
- Finding Sangha members with sale, businnes and fundraising experience - sharing know-how

#### EXTERNAL FUNDRAISING

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- Specifying the goals before approaching the donors
- Meeting of our school needs with donors demands (<http://foundationcenter.org/findfunders/>)
- External PR and promotion

### VISION - MISSION

- **IDENTIFYING THE NEEDS OF THE SANGHA**
  - Not to deal only with the symptoms, but with the roots of needs / complaints / demands
  - Asking questions about feelings, motivation - getting feedback and reflecting it clearly
  - Creating an open space to present needs and questions, talk about conflicts and find solutions
- **COMMUNICATION**
  - More alive and active co-operation / active sharing / workshops
  - Clear and compassionate communication (more openness, sharing clear information)



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- **SANGHA LIFE**
  - Informal events inside / outside the Dharma room (events in nature, no silence, together action)
  - Connect the practice with outside world (social work, ecology day, teaching at schools...)
- **BUILDING TRUST**
  - Financial Management - how and for what we spend “our” money, clear vision and action
  - More space for face-to-face meetings for students and teachers (regular meetings)





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### SANGHA WEEKEND SCHEDULE - Main Events

#### Friday - May 1

After evening practice

##### **1st Sangha Meeting**

Sangha meeting with teachers

Sangha representatives report news from groups

Gathering topics (what do we want to achieve here?)

#### Saturday - May 2

After breakfast

##### **2nd Sangha Meeting**

Sangha meeting without teachers

Working in groups on topics

11- 12.30

##### **Precepts Ceremony**

15 - 18

##### **3rd Sangha Meeting**

Sangha meeting with teachers

Presenting results from morning workshops on topics

Discussion with teachers and the sangha

Report from the teachers' meeting to the Sangha

20.30

##### **Party with buffet**

Improvisation theater - poems from ZM Seung Sahn

#### Sunday - May 3

Breakfast

##### **Breakfast with teachers**

Sangha representatives meet with teachers

Discussion on most important topics, questions, suggestions



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## SANGHA WEEKEND SCHEDULE - Main Events

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|---------|---|
| 11 - 13 | <b>Buddha's Birthday Ceremony</b><br><b>Installation of new KUSZE Abbot</b> (Jo Potter, JDPSN)                      |
| 14      | <b>Closing Circle</b><br>All Sangha and teachers meet<br>Feedback on Sangha weekend, farewell words, well wishes... |

The teachers meeting took place from April 30 to May 1 outside Berlin.

## NEXT SANGHA WEEKEND

Next Sangha Weekend will take place at the end of summer kyolche in Warsaw (Poland).

**SEPTEMBER 18 - 20, 2009.**

Everybody is very welcome! Please come and use the opportunity to meet with our teachers and many Sangha friends, to share experience, know-how and also have lots of fun together :o)

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We want to help our school to be a truly living organism. That is why your feedback is very important for us. If you have any questions, comment or suggestions, please write us. For any matters connected to KUSZE organization, finance, public relation, events, etc. use our new e-mail address: [kwanumeurope@gmail.com](mailto:kwanumeurope@gmail.com). Thank you very much!

*\*This report has been prepared for you by Katka and Matthias, and has been approved by Jo Potter, JDPSN.*