

From the Dharma Practitioner

Michael Macklin (WonHyong)

All my life, I have been a spiritual person, but I have never found a spiritual tradition in which I could rest. So I have been a seeker, but not a joiner, and not a dabbler. I have been a committed agnostic, with a strong feeling of there being a real "truth". For many years, I have satisfied my spiritual inclination through my work as a psychotherapist. Believing in people and seeking the deepest possible understanding is a kind of spiritual quest, but it is limited in some way.



In Buddhism, I have found a complementary pathway in spiritual development. Studying Buddhist writings has been a type of spiritual practice for me, but it is not the practice of Buddhism. To practice Buddhism, I feel I need a teacher and a sangha.

In the fall of 2003, I wandered into a free meditation session taught by a Won-Buddhist priest (kyomunim). As many found, the atmosphere surrounding this Won-Buddhist meditation was a delightful, welcoming, and loving practice that made them feel at home from their first contact. Won-Buddhism is free from rigidity and dogma and is a practice that I can embrace. I have continued an active practice ever since and have had the opportunity to meet many priests, both here in the U.S., and also on a trip to Korea two years ago. The priests of Won-Buddhism are the embodiment of Buddhist practice: loving, joyful, and inspiring.

Since coming to the Won-Buddhism Temple in Chapel Hill, I have also had a chance to study the scriptures of Won-Buddhism and have found them to be a practical approach to living a good life and striving for enlightenment. In addition, Won-Buddhism is an active social action organization, working for peace and reconciliation throughout the world. They are active against world poverty, both through providing charity, as well as creating opportunities for education. I foresee our Temple becoming more socially active as we grow.

I have found in Won-Buddhism a spiritual tradition in which I can rest and continually renew myself in seeking awakening.