

Second Woman Certified as Ji Do Poep Sa Nim

On December 7, 1991, Jane McLaughlin became the eleventh Ji Do Poep Sa Nim (senior teacher) in the American sangha. She was the second woman to be so certified. McLaughlin PSN has lived in Zen centers in Los Angeles, Providence, and Cambridge, and participated in several long retreats here and in Korea. She currently directs the AIDS Care Project Acupuncture Clinic in Boston. This fall she will move to Europe, where she will be teaching at Kwan Um School of Zen centers. The talk and dharma combat that follow are excerpted from her certification ceremony at Providence Zen Center.

Address to the Assembly

Jane McLaughlin, JDPSN

(HITs the podium with the Zen stick.)

Mountain is blue, moonlight is shining.

(HIT)

Mountain never said, "I am blue." Moonlight never said, "I am shining."

(HIT)

Which one is true?

If you say "true," you can never find the truth.

Why?

KATZ!

The blue mountain is complete stillness.

Moonlight shining everywhere.

Thank you all for coming this evening. Even though it's a very happy occasion, I was a little nervous before the ceremony. Then I remembered a story about how Mu Sang Sunim once kept a clear mind in a potentially nerve-racking situation. This story reminded me to return to "don't know mind," so if you're ever in an emergency, you can use it too. Don't know mind gives us a clear mind in any kind of situation, even the most difficult.

Maybe some of you remember the summer of 1982, when Zen Master Seung Sahn was doing a lot of special energy practice. In addition to doing a thousand bows every day, he was trying all sorts of techniques which we had never seen before. Sometimes we even heard shouts coming from his room between midnight and two a.m.!

Once during this period of special energy practicing, Zen Master Seung Sahn was traveling on an airplane with Diana Lynch and Mu Sang Sunim. En route, Zen Master Seung Sahn perceived that the pilot was thinking about his girlfriend instead of paying attention to flying the

plane. So, he said to Diana and Mu Sang Sunim, "This pilot's mind is not clear. I must wake him up!" The next thing they knew, he flipped down the tray on the chair in front of him, and began banging on it while chanting at the top of his lungs, "Kwan Seum Bosal, Kwan Seum Bosal ... !" (the mantra for the bodhisattva of compassion) The other passengers became visibly confused and upset. Within seconds, two or three flight attendants came over to say "Sir, calm down, please, you are disturbing the passengers. Can I get you a drink?" But Zen Master Seung Sahn only chanted louder, "Kwan Seum Bosal, Kwan Seum Bosal ..."

Mu Sang Sunim thought to himself, "What shall I do?"

The Zen Master is causing a scene!"

He looked at Diana, who had already decided her best response would be to keep reading her magazine. As he was contemplating what to do, he remembered Zen Master Seung Sahn telling him once, "Your computer is number one high class. Sometimes a high class computer is not so good. Too much thinking. Anytime you have a question, ask the question up here (points to head), but don't listen to any answers that come from up there. Only use the answers from your don't know center, down here (points to belly)." In the midst of all the commotion—his teacher shouting and banging on the tray, the flight attendants rushing around, the passengers craning their necks to see what was going on—Mu Sang Sunim decided to try this advice. He asked his computer: "What should I do?" Instantly, an answer appeared from his don't know center.

"Eat a banana!" He thought, "That's odd. Maybe I'd better try again." So again he asked, "What shall I do?" Again the answer came: "Eat a banana!" So, he reached into his bag, pulled out a banana, and ate it. He felt much better.

In this situation, everyone was just doing their job: Zen



Jane McLaughlin, Ji Do Poep Sa Nim

Master Seung Sahn chanted to wake up the pilot, Diana continued reading not to add to the commotion, and Mu Sang Sunim only followed his teacher's advice. As he was disembarking, Zen Master Seung Sahn apologized profusely for the disturbance. "I am sorry for the trouble I caused you" he said, bowing to the flight attendant.

That's Zen. Each moment is complete. But everything is also always changing—one moment banging and shouting, the next moment apologizing—not attached to either one. Use your karma, whatever it is, to help others. Zen Master Seung Sahn's teaching is always the same. He always talks about direction, never technique. Never once, in all of these years, has he shown me a meditation technique. Only "don't know!" And only direction: why do we do what we do?

My first formal interview with Zen Master Seung Sahn was in 1983 on the first day of Winter Kyol Che, a ninety day retreat. He began by saying, "Good morning! Do you have a question?"

"No, I have no question."

"Then I have a question for you! Why do you come and sit ninety days of Kyol Che?"

"Because I want to!"

He burst out laughing. "That's number one bad reason, okay? Now you ask me!"

"Okay. Why do you sit ninety days of Kyol Che?"

"For you."

That was a very striking answer. The next morning he asked again, "Why do you come and sit ninety days of Kyol Che?"

"For you," I replied, in a somewhat tenuous manner.

"Correct!! That's wonderful!"

After I left the room, though, I realized that I wasn't so noble as that. The truth of the matter was, I hadn't come with the desire to practice for others. I only wanted to understand my true self.

Over the course of the next ninety days everyone practiced very sincerely. Because our thinking wasn't so constant and ever-present, often we all had the exact same mind: when breakfast was served, we were all happy. When it rained, we all got wet. That was it. Nothing more than that. On the last morning of the retreat, Zen Master Seung Sahn came back to give interviews. I thought to myself, "He knows we've been sitting here for ninety days—I bet he's going to ask a very difficult question." I bowed and sat down.

"Good morning! Do you have any questions?"

"No."

"Then I have a question for you. Why did you sit ninety days of Kyol Che?"

"For you."

He smiled and said, "Thank you very much."

As we practice, this "for you" mind slowly becomes ours. It is the beginning and the end of the teaching. We

can spend our whole life growing into it, finding the million ways there are of practicing it. Sometimes we fail. Failing gives us inspiration to keep trying. First it's Buddha's idea, or a Zen Master's idea, but when you practice don't know mind, there is no thinking. When there is no thinking, there is no separation between "me" and "you." The real wonder of Zen practice is that we can experience this ourselves. That's the meaning of "inside and outside become one."

This "for you" teaching is not dependent on Zen or any other form. There is no prescribed "package" in which to find it. If we can take away "I" even for a moment, then we are already in harmony with the universe.

What a wonderful evening! Thank you all for your support, and for practicing together. And thank you, Zen Master Seung Sahn, for your teaching.

(HIT)

Jesus said, "The way is wide, the gate is narrow."

(HIT)

Buddhism says, "The Great Way has no gate."

(HIT)

Taoism says, "The Great Way cannot be perceived."

Which one is correct?

KATZ!

Out the door, through the gate, into the evening wind.

Thank you.

Dharma Combat

Q: As I was driving here today, I was listening to a song on the radio. It said "I've been gone around and around but where do I find my soul?" So I ask you, where do I find my soul?

JM: What are you doing now?

Q: Sitting here talking to you.

JM: Then you've already found your soul.

Q: Thank you for your teaching.

Q: Is Kwan Seum Bosal (*the bodhisattva of compassion*) male or female?

JM: You already understand.

Q: No, I don't.

JM: How may I help you?

Q: Thank you for your teaching.

Q: When I told Zen Master Seung Sahn that I practiced Sufism, he said "Better than doing nothing." When I told my Sufi master I practiced Zen he said "It's not complete, only Sufism is complete." I'm confused, help me!

JM: What are you doing right now?

Q: Talking to you.

JM: Is that Sufism or Zen?

Q: (*pause*) Thank you for your teaching. □