

Teacher Certification

On December 5, 1992, Zen Master Seung Sahn certified three senior students as *Ji Do Poep Sa Nims* (dharma masters). They are Do Mun Sunim, of Seoul International Zen Center; Stanley Lombardo of Kansas Zen Center; and Jeff Kitzes of Empty Gate Zen Center in Berkeley. Having received certification — “inka” — these teachers are authorized to lead retreats and teach kong-an practice. The following are their talks and excerpts from the dharma combat at the ceremony.

Hindrance or no hindrance

Do Mun Sunim, JDPS

Shows stick, hits table

This stick and this sound —
are they a hindrance to your mind?

Shows stick, hits table

This stick and this sound —
are they no hindrance?

Shows stick, hits table

If you say, “hindrance,” you are like someone who is bound without ropes or like someone who has buried himself alive in the ground. If you say, “no hindrance,” then a wild stone lion appears and drags you to hell. Why?

KATZ!

Shows stick, hits table

Very simple, yes? But, without any encouragement from outside, human beings make a treasure of form, feelings, perceptions, impulses and consciousness, and lose this point. Then hindrance and suffering appear. We call this opposite and suffering world.

But, originally, this world is complete stillness. So, all Buddhas and all Bodhisattvas taught this point. (*hits table*) This point takes away all opposites, all hindrances, all suffering, all happiness, everything. So, we call this absolute world.

If we attain this point, then opening our senses, everything we see, hear, smell, taste, touch, feel and think is the truth. Sky is blue, tree is green, dog barks “woof, woof,” car horn “honk, honk.”

Looking at the world, what do we see? Mouse is afraid of cat. Cat is afraid of tiger. Tiger is afraid of elephant. Elephant is afraid of mouse. Not only animals. Human beings are also like that — between nations, within families, within our own mind. Around, around, around, around. If we attain that, then this world is complete. Everything is complete. Everything has it. “Sugar is sweet” is complete. “Cloud is white” is complete.

If we attain that this world is already complete, then



everything is no hindrance. No hindrance means moment-to-moment we can keep the correct situation, correct function, correct relationship. That is moment world. Then, saving all beings is possible.

Our teacher, Zen Master Seung Sahn once said, “I” appears, then human being appears. “I” not appear, bodhisattva action appears by itself.” So, how to take away “I”?

Sitting here today, we are all human beings. But, attaching to that, how can we find the true way? How can we help this world?

There is a calligraphy hanging in the Providence Zen Center which says, “Without situation, true life.” Not holding our situation, our condition, our opinion, we find the true way and true life. This is our practice.

In the beginning, I only held up this stick and hit the table. (*hits table*) Then I talked about opposite’s world, absolute world, complete world, and moment world. So, which one is the true way?

KATZ!

After the ceremony, down the hall to the dining room for a party. ☉