

Teacher Certification

anything. When we attain that, we can let go of all the psychological acquisitiveness to which we become addicted in our desperate attempts to fabricate and sustain a self at all costs. That letting go is the beginning of the end of suffering in this world.

As if it knows that, the world itself is always trying to wake us up, each one of us, every moment, with every phenomenon it manifests, like a cosmic alarm clock for a race of troubled, restless sleepers. That's what Zen Master Seung Sahn is reminding us of when he says things like, "Go ask a tree" or "The sound of a waterfall is better than the sutras." So all of us have this original job, this great question, "What am I?" The consequences of answering it are enormous, and the answer is right before our eyes.

Hits table.

Yahweh said from the burning bush, "I am who I am."

Hits table.

Jesus said, "I am the way and the truth and the life."

Hits table.

Buddha said, "In all the universe only I am holy."

What can you say?

KATZ!

A roomful of shining faces on a December evening. ☉

Reveal your true nature

Jeff Kitzes, JDPSN

Shows stick, hits table

Life is like a cloud that appears.

Shows stick, hits table

Death is like a cloud that disappears.

No life, no death.

No appearing, no disappearing.

Shows stick, hits table

Katz! Just now, breathing in and breathing out.

Twenty years ago I first heard the teaching which says that if you use death as your advisor, you will wake up to this moment and truly be alive.

For a twenty-year-old college student this was a revolutionary concept. If I remember my own death, the power and intensity of this very moment becomes evident.

Ten years later my father was sick with cancer and facing his own death. He said to me: "All my life I thought



I had to hide who I was... Schmuck!" He realized the futility and waste of spending a lifetime not revealing his true nature to the world. It was only by facing his own death that he could perceive this fundamental truth.

So, we must all wake up; RIGHT NOW! At any moment this ceiling could fall down. Our death awaits, at any moment

it may appear. The illusion of immortality is very strong. Be careful. What can you do?

As Zen students, we've learned the necessity of keeping a don't-know mind. When we keep the Great Question, *what am I*, the reality of this present moment appears. If just now we open our eyes, breathe in and breathe out, what do we see, what do we hear, what do we smell, taste, and touch? If we are awake then only this moment is the truth.

Next, we say, how does this truth function. Moment to moment this is the challenge of our lives. How do I use this moment, express my true self and help others? When we put down our opinions, condition, and situation, this very moment becomes alive. Our don't know mind cuts off self-centered thinking, and acting for all beings is possible. Then the incredible suffering which we see every day can be felt in our hearts. Only then can we truly get on with the great work of life and death and help others.

So I hope that when we see this stick (*holding up Zen stick*) and hear this sound (*hitting table with Zen stick*), we all can wake up, attain our true selves, and help save this world from suffering.

Thank you very much. ☉