

KEN KESSEL

What Do You Want?

(raises stick and hits table)

Do you want to see this? If you want to see it, your eyes fall out.

(raises stick and hits table)

Do you want to hear this? If you want to hear this, your ears fall off.

(raises stick and silently touches the stick to the table)

Do you know what you want?

KATZ!

Seeing shining faces, hearing beautiful chanting, I want to thank you for your efforts practicing.

After Hui Neng was given transmission by the Fifth Patriarch, he ran away. What did he want? For two months he was chased by several hundred people. What did they want? The fastest was Hui Ming. When Hui Ming caught up, Hui Neng hid behind a rock. He put his dharma robes and bowl on the rock, and Hui Ming could not budge it when he went to get it. Then Hui Neng came out from behind the rock. Hui Ming said, "I don't want your robes, I want your dharma." But he wanted something.

When I found out that I was a candidate for inka, I talked to other teachers. I wanted something: to see their minds on this matter. While they all had helpful things to say, I remember what two of them said particularly well.

Dae Kwang Zen Master said, "Just do it!" And at a different time, Dae Gak Zen Master said, "Don't do it!"

"Just do it" and "Don't do it": Where do they point? If you're not clinging, then "Just do it." If you're clinging, then "Don't do it." Maybe that. But how do we clarify this matter?

I once asked Wu Kwang Zen Master, "Our precept says not to take things not given. What does that mean?" He said, "What do you want?"

On another occasion, I had an interview with Su Bong Zen Master. After I bowed to him, I asked, "What is your job?" He too said, "What do you want?"

So, if this "What do you want?" becomes clear, then everything becomes clear. But if this "What do you want?" is not clear, then what?

(raises stick and hits table)

"What do you want?"

(raises stick and hits table)

"What do you want?"

(raises stick and hits table.)

