



A Whole World Flower Blooms



*Talk by Zen Master Seung Sahn
Nam Hwa Sah Temple, China*

The whole world is a single flower. What does that mean? Twenty five hundred years ago, Buddha stayed at Yeong Sahn Mountain. One day, in front of an assembly, he picked up a flower. Nobody understood; only Mahakasyapa smiled. Buddha said, "The all-pervading true dharma I transmit to Mahakasyapa."

Eight hundred years later, Bodhidharma came to China. The emperor of China, Emperor Yan, asked Bodhidharma, "I have made almost infinite temples, I have made almost infinite robes and kasas for monks. How much merit have I earned?" Bodhidharma said, "No merit." Buddha's flower had infinite merit, but what is the true teaching in this flower of Buddha? Bodhidharma said, "Only don't know."

Three hundred years later, the Sixth Patriarch said, "Originally there is nothing, where can you find dust?"

So Buddha's holding up one flower, Bodhidharma's don't know, and the Sixth Patriarch's originally nothing, where is dust... those three, are they the same or different?

If somebody says that they are the same... this stick will hit them thirty times.

If somebody says that they are different, this stick will also hit them thirty times.

Why is that?

The sky is blue and water is flowing. Today at Nam Hwa Sah, this whole world flower has blossomed.

This world is changing all the time. The last time we came here, three years ago, we noticed that the roads were not so good, and that Shaoguan, the city near here, was not very developed. This time, we cannot help but notice that the roads are very well constructed, and there are many new high buildings in the town. This gives us evidence that China is growing up, developing, and becoming a modern society. I have been traveling all over the world, and I have seen the development of many different countries. No other country has demonstrated the kind of rapid development, and change in people's minds, that I see today in China. This makes me very happy.

However, this outside environment does not necessarily mean that

our minds are becoming pure. Many temples have been reconstructed, many new temples have been built, many congregations are forming and people are attending temples again. I hope that people continue to come to these temples, learn sutras and do chanting, also do meditation, attain their true selves, and become teachers for all human beings. We have gathered here from all over the world to recognize that Nam Hwa Sah has a very important role to play in this matter. I sincerely hope that the people gathered here from many different countries attain the Sixth Patriarch's "originally nothing" and help this world.

Everyone can see that our world is not clear. There are many, many problems. Why? On this earth, the human population has suddenly exploded. Before the end of World War II, the whole population of this planet was less than two billion people. Today, the population of this earth has increased to five-and-a-half billion people. Over many thousands of years on this planet we only reached a population of two billion people, but in fifty years it has increased by three and a half billion people. In this short span of time, the minds of human beings as a whole have become less human and have become more animal-like. If we cannot fix the animal mind inside ourselves, then how can we expect to achieve world peace, how can we expect to make the whole world a single flower?

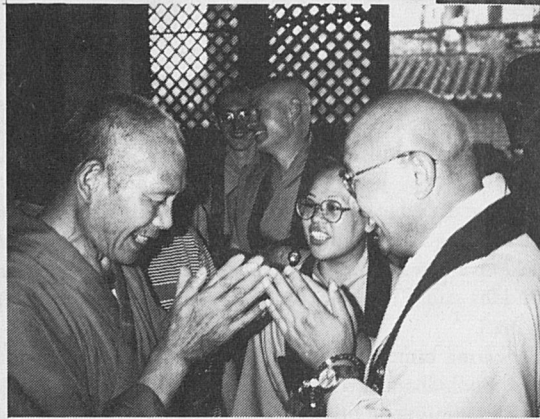
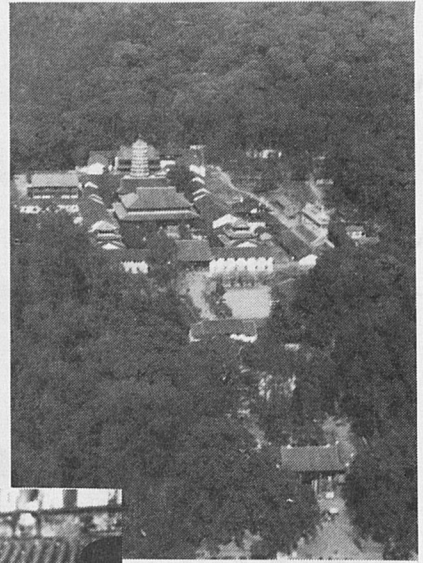
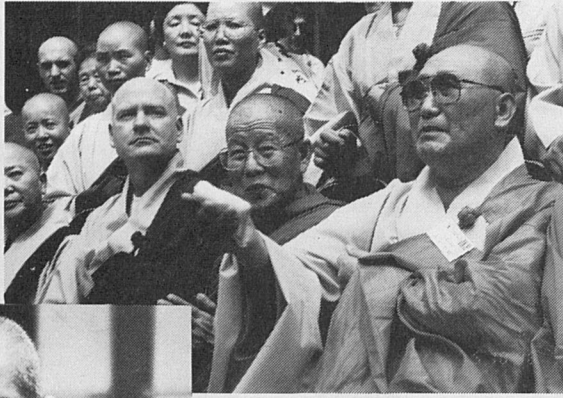
Starting from here, we need to fix this world, make this world a better place. The Buddha taught us a special mantra for cleansing our minds and purifying this world. This mantra is "Jong Bop Gye Jin On Om Nam." Let's all together try Om Nam. By doing this mantra we cleanse our minds. By cleansing our minds, we can cleanse the whole world. So hold your hands together in hapchang, and together we will do the Om Nam mantra.

Om Nam Om Nam Om Nam Om Nam Om Nam...

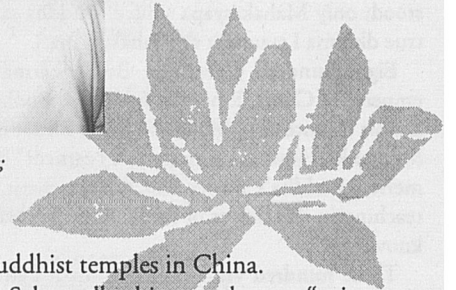
Thank you. This world is now becoming a better place. This world is becoming clearer. Attaining world peace has now begun at Nam Hwa Sah temple.

Always the sky is blue, and the water is always flowing down, down to the ocean.

Thank you very much.



Clockwise from top left: Dae Kwang Zen Master, Ven. Maha Ghosananda, Seung Sahn Zen Master; Nam Hwa Sah temple; Ven. Fo Yuen, Hyon Gak Sunim, Dae Kwang Zen Master, Hyang Um Sunim JDPS, and Seung Sahn Zen Master; Ven. Fo Yuen.



Last October's fourth triennial "The Whole World is a Single Flower Conference" brought together Zen Master Seung Sahn and over a hundred and fifty of his students from around the world. The gathering was held at Nam Hwa Sah, the Sixth Patriarch's temple, located in Guangdong Province in Southern China.

This was truly an international celebration. Dae Kwang Zen Master and Wu Kwang Zen Master came from the United States, Hyang Um Sunim JDPS from Hong Kong, and Heila Downey JDPSN from South Africa. There were students from Korea, China, Malaysia, Singapore, Cambodia, Russia, Europe, South Africa, and the United States. There were also many Chinese monks, nuns, and government officials at the ceremony, and the atmosphere was one of mutual support and harmony.

The western visitors convened in Hong Kong, where our host Zen Center, the Su Bong Zen Monastery, treated us to several days of sightseeing and delicious food. From Hong Kong we took a train 185 miles north into China, to the city of Shaoguan. From there we traveled to T'sao Chi Shan, the mountain where Nam Hwa Sah is located. Founded originally in 506 by an Indian monk, the temple was and still is one

of the most famous Buddhist temples in China.

Zen Master Seung Sahn calls this temple our "primary point," since it was the home of the Sixth Patriarch, the founder of modern Zen. Our host at Nam Hwa Sah was Ven. Fo Yuen, one of the most famous monks in China. During the cultural revolution he hid the remains of the Sixth Patriarch from the Red Guards and spent several years in prison suffering many hardships.

Since that time he has worked tirelessly to reconstruct Nam Hwa Sah and Un Mun Sah, the original temple of Un Mun Zen Master, of which he is also the abbot. Both of these temples are today quite impressive architecturally. They are also quite lively Buddhist centers, housing many new monks who have appeared during the recent resurgence of Buddhism. The second day of the conference was spent touring Un Mun Sah, which is on Un Mun Shan (Cloud Gate Mountain.)

Aside from being a worldwide gathering of our school, this conference provided an opportunity for Western Buddhism to meet and connect with its most important historical root—the monks and nuns of China. As Zen Master Seung Sahn says, "It's now our duty to help re-establish Zen in China, where it originated."