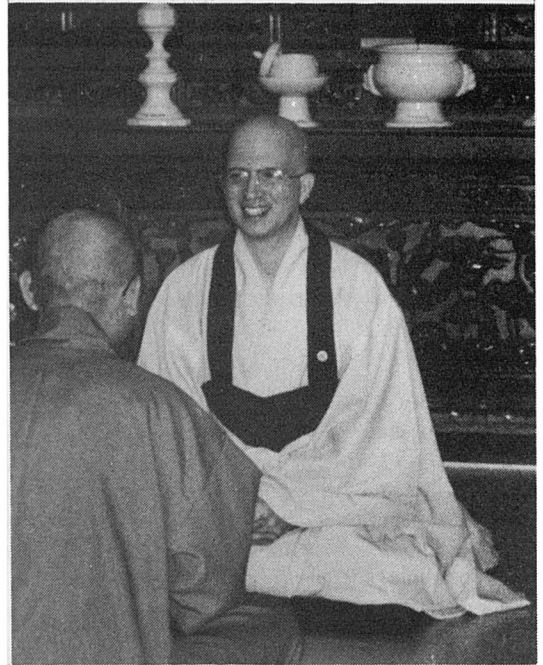


On February 23, 1997, Ven. Mu Shim Sunim received inka from Zen Master Seung Sahn at the Seoul International Zen Center, Hwa Gye Sah Temple, in Seoul. His dharma combat with members of the assembly, and a formal dharma speech, follow.

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# Mu Shim Sunim

## GETS A Zen Stick



### DHARMA COMBAT

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Student: Good morning.

MSSN: Good morning.

Student: Sometimes when two people look at the same color, they see a different color. One person maybe sees blue while the other person believes it's green. What can you do?

MSSN: You already understand...

Student: I don't understand. Please teach me.

MSSN: The cushion you're sitting on is red. My cushion is also red.

Student: [*Bowing*] Thank you.

Student: [*Holding a camera*] Good morning, Sunim.

MSSN: Good morning.

Student: I take your picture, and is it past, present, or future?

MSSN: You already understand.

Student: Please teach me.

MSSN: Give me your camera. [*Takes picture of student*]

Student: A teacher once said that by wearing a kasa, you are wearing the whole universe. Right now you are also wearing a kasa. But how can you carry the universe if you're not wearing a kasa?

MSSN: You already understand.

Student: Please teach me.

MSSN: [*Takes off kasa*] How may I help you?

Student: Thank you.

### FORMAL DHARMA SPEECH

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[*Raises stick and hits table*]

Every morning before bowing, we recite four great vows, the first of which is: Sentient beings are numberless, I vow to save them all.

[*Raises stick and hits table*]

An eminent teacher once said, "Before the Buddha left the Tushita heaven he had already finished saving all beings from suffering." Then why do you vow to save all beings from suffering?

[*Raises stick and hits table*]

So if the Buddha already finished saving all beings from suffering before he was born, then, every morning why do we recite these vows?

If one being appears, all suffering appears; if one being disappears, all suffering disappears. If you appear in this world, then you create suffering. But if you disappear from this world, then you lose the Great Bodhisattva Way. Without appearing or without disappearing, how can you save all beings from suffering?

KATZ!

Inside the Dharma room, the Buddha is gold. Outside, Sam Gak Sahn Mountain is white.

So, my Dharma speech is finished, but I still have a few words to say. I've been here at Hwa Gye Sah Temple for, as many of you know, almost thirteen years. And I've seen many changes happen here. Also I have travelled with Zen Master Seung Sahn to many different countries and assisted him when he was teaching. So I have been able to experience many important kinds of teaching by watching how he conducts his life, from moment to moment. One story in particular comes to mind: Zen Master Seung Sahn was invited to Taiwan about seven years ago, and I went with him as his attendant. Our Taiwanese hosts were very kind and gracious. They put us up and fed us their delicious traditional vegetarian food. One day, Zen Master Seung Sahn was invited to officiate at a Buddha's Eyes Opening Ceremony at a prominent temple. We went to the temple where three new Buddha statues were being installed in the Dharma hall, and many people had gathered. There was a profusion of color, red and gold, and all the monks were very well taken care of. We were given gifts and many kinds of different foods and drinks. Zen Master Seung Sahn was given the best room in the house to stay in.

On the day of the ceremony, many people assembled and Dae Soen Sa Nim did the Buddha's Eyes Opening Ceremony, and afterwards more gifts were given and an elaborate lunch was served. After lunch we went back to Zen Master Seung Sahn's room. But when we entered his room a surprise awaited us. During the ceremony, someone had come into the room, gone through his bags, and taken all of his money, and some other things, too. Of course, I was very anxious, but Zen Master Seung Sahn only looked at me and said, "It's already gone, so don't worry!" But this was a lot of money that they had taken, perhaps a few thousand dollars, because he had planned to help some people along the way, giving money to monks and nuns living in this or that city on our itinerary. The interpreter was a Korean nun who spoke fluent Chinese. She was very sad, too. "This is no good," she said. "We have to tell the temple officials and our other hosts!" But Zen Master Seung Sahn asked her not to tell anyone of the incident, and only said to her, laughing heartily, "Don't worry! We just made a big donation to somebody!" But she told them anyhow.

The Taiwanese were upset because they were very conscious of being good hosts and taking such good care of their guests. They were very unhappy! And various things were being said, like, "Mu Shim Sunim, the door should have been locked," and, "You are the Zen master's attendant! This was your responsibility! You should have kept his monk's bag on you all the time!" And so I had a lot of thinking after that. But then an interesting thing happened. This theft occurred in one of the southern cities, a provincial center called Taijung. But after our stay in the city of Taijung, our hosts had also arranged a big Dharma talk in the capital city, Taipei. And so after a couple more nights' stay in Taijung, we went up to Taipei, and we had this big public talk, with many people, and there was a long Dharma speech. Zen Master Seung Sahn taught in his usual style, as if nothing had happened, not referring at all to the grievous incident of a couple days before. After the talk, as is

Chinese tradition, everybody came up and made offerings to the monks, putting money in these little red envelopes. The leader of their association had evidently told everybody, "Oh, this Zen Master suffered a big loss in Taijung, something was taken from him. We should really give a lot." So therefore many people came up. Old people, young people, even little kids, and these old women came up and pulled one coin from deep inside their dress pockets. I was suddenly given this big shopping bag by the president of the lay association, and I was told to hold it out. The people spontaneously formed a long line, and in my head I'm starting to calculate how much money is in this bag, how much will this make up for the money that was lost on this trip. There were young kids, there were very old people, people from all walks of life, rich, and poor, they all came up one by one, bowed to Zen Master Seung Sahn, and put into this big shopping bag many red envelopes; the bag was very, very full!

When it was all over, Zen Master Seung Sahn motioned to the interpreter. "I cannot take this money. This is not my money. This money belongs to all these people!" So he said to the association director, "You take all this money, and use it for monks' education, for hospitals and charitable things." Now I was off the hook! For myself this was very good teaching. In that situation I saw clearly how this Zen Master's teaching was not for any kind of fame or profit, for "getting back" the money that was "lost" on a trip, to get back to a good situation. His teaching was purely about Dharma, only *for* Dharma. So loss or gain did not matter. Only how can you make some situation correct, and save all beings from suffering? So, if you are thinking, if you only try to take care of some being, if you have "I, my, me", then you have a problem. But if you don't even make one being, how do you appear and save all people? That's what I was talking about before.

*[Raises stick and hits table]*

In the Kwan Um School of Zen, there are many different ways of practicing. We have calling on the Buddha or bodhisattvas' name.

*[Raises stick and hits table]*

We have reciting some kind of mantra. Om mani padme hum, or shin myo jang gu dae darani, we have this path.

*[Raises stick and hits table]*

We also have the path of formal Zen practice. Just sitting, just following your breath, just walking, only doing something very completely. So I ask you, which path is best? Which is the best way? Can you find that? *[Someone in the Assembly suddenly hits the floor]* You understand one, but do you understand two?

KATZ!

Thank you all for walking up these stairs today, coming into the Dharma room, and listening to this Dharma talk.