



who's the bee?

Zen Master Dae Kwang, Providence Zen Center

I'd like to welcome all of our sangha members from throughout the world to our Whole World is a Single Flower conference and to the Providence Zen Center. It's an honor for us to host our international Kwan Um School of Zen sangha. First, I'd like to thank Zen Master Seung Sahn, who makes all this possible through his tireless efforts in spreading the dharma throughout the world. I also thank all of you for your commitment to your local Zen Centers and your hard practice.

Already this weekend I've heard many interesting tales of Zen center life around the world. In Korea, I learned they have a saying: If you scratch an Asian Christian, underneath you will find a Buddhist; if you scratch a western Buddhist you will find a Christian. That's funny—it's a reflection of our world situation—but it's very important to find what lies deeper, what we are before Christian, Buddhist, Asian, Western even appears.

My mother was born an identical twin. That means that she and my aunt were genetically identical. However, even though they were the same they were also very different. My mother had one husband and two children, while my aunt had several husbands and no children. My mother spent most of her life taking care of our home while my aunt was a professional woman and was an early espouser of feminist sentiment. When my mother died, I asked Zen Master Seung Sahn why it was that even though they both started out the same, they were so different. His answer was very simple—"thinking!"

Nations are also like that: they start out the same but then they become quite different. Sometimes they become very attached to these differences and start fighting. But our school's "don't know" teaching has none of that. The clarity and genius of Zen Master Seung Sahn is that he never teaches opinions, religion or culture, so our "don't know" can travel anywhere in the world and help all people realize their original compassionate nature. If we keep don't know mind, we are all identical twins even though we are different!

Fifty years ago Zen Master Ko Bong gave transmission to Zen Master Seung Sahn, saying "You are the flower and I am the bee." But, if the whole world is a single flower, then who is the bee?

