

D H A R M A C O M B A T

Question: Your name is Chong An. That means, "Clear Eye." Can you see your clear eye?

Chong An Sunim JDPS: You already understand.

Q: I'm asking you.

CASN: The floor is yellow. The mat is green.

Q: This morning, it was my job to take pictures. I would like to take a picture of a real Buddha. Where can I find one?

CASN: You already understand.

Q: Please tell me.

CASN: What are you doing right now?

Q: Holding a camera.

CASN: The true Buddha has already appeared.

Q: Every morning and evening, we recite the Four Great Vows. One of these vows we make is to cut through all delusions. How many delusions have you cut?

CASN: You already understand.

Q: No, I don't.

CASN: What color is the Buddha up there?

Q: Yellow.

CASN: Delusion has already disappeared.

Q: August 15th is Korean Liberation Day. On this day, Korea celebrates its liberation from Japan. July 4th is American Independence Day, marking America's liberation from Great Britain. Today is your Inka Day. What did you get liberation from?

CASN: You already understand.

Q: I'm asking you.

CASN: How may I help you?

Q: You've been caught by the bodhisattva mind!

CASN: Not enough?

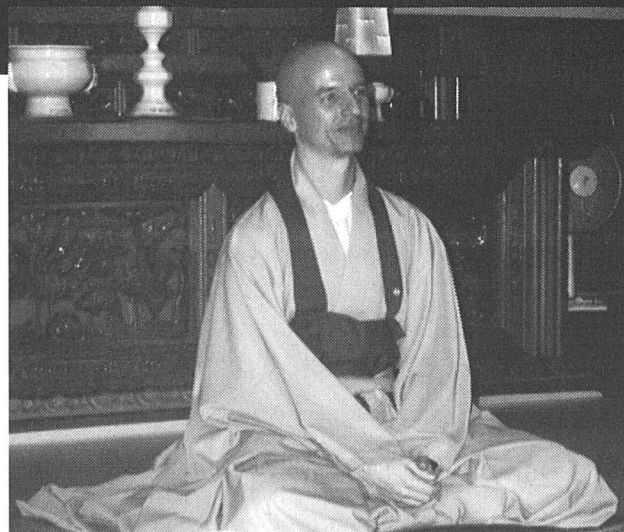
Q: Not enough!

Q: Everybody has come up here and asked you questions, and you always answer, "You already understand." But I don't understand "already understand."

CASN: You already understand.

Q: Understanding cannot help you.

CASN: Then why do you ask questions?



D H A R M A S P E E C H

[Raises Zen stick over head, then hits table with stick.]

Sound is silence. Silence is sound.

[Raises Zen stick over head, then hits table with stick.]

No sound, no silence.

[Raises Zen stick over head, then hits table with stick.]

Sound is sound. Silence is silence.

What is original sound?

KATZ!

Hear the mokat hitting and the women chanting in the ceremony hall.

This story is about sounds, music and voices I have heard in my life. My good old friend Zoli and I loved drumming. We got congas when we were eighteen and drove the neighbors through the roof with our rhythm. We were completely crazy about it, and had great parties where instead of some commercial tape a group of youth drummed, danced and loved each other very much.

One day Zoli brought great news: He was hired by an avant-garde theater to give percussion to their music. The play was an old Greek drama, full of passion, suffering and tragedy. He invited me to the performance, promising that we would have the greatest drumming experience. We did. I got enthralled by the energy of the place, the radiation of the group, the intensity of their acting.

A few weeks later I saw a poster announcing the start of a new studio class in the theater. Without thinking, I made up my mind and gave it a try. I was accepted, and twice a week ten of us trained together to become actors. It was action theater with simple instructions and no theories—you had to bring everything out of yourself.

At the end of the season, we took an exam. Eight people finished the course and were invited to a remote house in the countryside for a weekend workshop. This turned out to be a shamanistic trip led by the director, super-drumming for a long time, dancing around the fire, raising tremendous amounts of energy and sending our minds to places we had never gone before.

Afterwards, I felt extremely strong, with sharp, clear perception and the strength to carry out anything I wanted. It was Spring 1990. I was 24. I had been looking for a spiritual way for a long time, but in the summer I began to feel doubt that what I had found was going in the correct direction. I met the director in his apartment and asked him several questions: "What is the purpose of this practice? What kind of karma do we make by doing it?" He said, "You will not find the answer in religion, psychology or philosophy." His energy changed from supportive to repressive. I felt a tremendous push as if somebody wanted to crush me; then tension, anxiety, and helplessness. These feelings did not leave me for many weeks.

Summer wore on. I talked to several friends about my doubts and depression. One of them suggested that I should go and see a Zen group, that there I might find the answer to my questions. It was the Hungarian sangha of the Kwan Um School of Zen. I went there, and what I got was not answers. It was our practice form, the very tool that enables us to find any answers we want, independent of anything or anybody.

Later, in September, the theater season began again and I was still worried and anxious about what I was doing, where my life was going. As the first rehearsal began, I saw a moktak among the drums. I never told anyone in the theater about Zen. How could it get there? Did somebody perceive my mind so deeply? I felt I was in trouble, without any defense. I decided to leave.

The director took my notice with a plain face and told me, "People can do this only three times in their lives." Next day I was back, moving and acting at the sound of the drum. That day, while going home, I heard one voice in my consciousness: "Do you want to be free? Or a slave?" I gathered my strength again and never went back to the theater any more.

That fall, I was exhausted all the time. My nights were horrible. Voices were screaming in my head. My body, speech and mind were separating. While I was thinking about something, my mouth said another, and my body did something else. I felt my life was disintegrating, my self going down into the deepest hell.

I had a choice: either I went to a mental hospital or tried to get out of this myself. From before, I knew the teaching that our mind creates the whole world, but I had no experience how it works. One thing I knew: I must do it myself. I had seen enough psychiatric wards not to want to go in there. So, I kept going to the weekly meetings of my sangha, bowing every morning at home and sitting with splitting headaches. I did a lot of sports. In spite of my efforts, I felt I was going into a dark, murky winter with no spring coming.

In December 1990, Do Am Sunim JDPS came to Budapest and held a Yong Maeng Jong Jin. He was strong and clear. That weekend swept away the thick clouds for a short while and the light at the end of the tunnel appeared for a moment. Then I knew: I was on the right track, I just had to keep going, digest my karma and become completely clear.

Early the next year Zen Master Seung Sahn visited Budapest. I had the fortune to meet him, ask him questions, and get beaten in dharma combat. This strengthened my resolve to keep on the path and practice more.

Three years passed. I graduated, got a job, had a girlfriend, and was attending my first 90-day retreat at Diamond Hill Zen Monastery in 1994. That Kyol Che brought up what I had gone through, the deepest shock in my life. I vowed to use that experience to help those who are controlled by some spiritual strongman, hear voices in their heads, or have mind and body going to different places. Having gone through ten more 90-day retreats in the last five years makes me say: There is no one to do your job, only yourself. You can do it, you can do anything—but only you, nobody else.

So, welcome to this world—our world. Hear it. Perceive it. I ask you: Is this world sound or silence?

KATZ!

When you hear the big drum tonight, get ready for chanting.

Thank you for your attention.