



## BONES

*Excerpted from a talk by Zen Master Seung Sahn  
at Seoul International Zen Center*

**Student:** During Hae Jae, I did a short Ji Jang Bosal kido. I did extra chanting of Namu Amita Bul and bowing for my mother, but I still have this question: Where is my mother's consciousness now?

**Zen Master Seung Sahn:** Don't check anything, only do it. If you are checking, you will have a problem. So, your consciousness and your mother's consciousness, are they the same or different? *[student hits the floor]* Keep this mind, OK? Then there will be no problem!

**Student:** Sir, a while ago you did Namu Amita Bul chanting here at Hwa Gye Sah over some Japanese bones which had been discovered. When Korean people found these bones, they wanted to destroy them, but you said no, bring them here to Hwa Gye Sah. Then for many days you chanted Namu Amita Bul. Were you chanting for these dead Japanese people?

**ZMSS:** Of course, why not? At one time the Buddha and Ananda were traveling together when they encountered some animal bones laying on the ground, partially buried. The Buddha started chanting. Ananda said, "Buddha, these are animal bones, why chant over them?" Buddha said, "Before, these creatures were my mother, also my father." Everything is always changing and in the end moving up. So, any set of bones will become your mother and your father. Understand? That mind is the Buddha's mind. No matter what the animal, no matter what the being, they are always moving up, up, up. We are always practicing together, your parents, my parents, all beings, up, up, up. One day soon you will die, then you too up, up, up. Many generations, many thousands of generations, up, up, up together. There's only one mother and one father; understand? Keep this mind. That's Buddha's teaching. Any more questions?

**Student:** Buddhism teaches that if human beings do bad things, then they will become animals. But how do animals make good karma to become human beings?

**ZMSS:** Is your consciousness an animal's or a human being's? *[student hits the floor]* Good! Wonderful! Keep this mind. Don't check. If you're checking, you will have a problem. Checking, checking, checking, then you always have a problem. Up, up, up... only one thing. Christianity calls it God, Buddhism calls it Buddha nature. Don't check! That's all. OK?