

Inka Ceremony for Myo Ji Sunim

On April 7, 2001 Myo Ji Sunim received inka in a ceremony at Providence Zen Center with Zen Master Soeng Hyang presiding.

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

Q: We just finished a 90-day Kyol Che up at the monastery. The other day I was looking up at the altar and I saw something very strange. I noticed that the statue on the altar is Kwan Seum Bosal. But then I looked up and I saw that the painting behind Kwan Seum Bosal also has Kwan Seum Bosal in it. And the Kwan Seum Bosal in the painting is bowing. So, what I don't understand is, how can Kwan Seum Bosal be bowing to Kwan Seum Bosal?

Myo Ji Sunim: You already understand.

Q: So, I ask you.

MJSN: [*Bows... pause*] Is that not enough?

Q: Thank you. Kwan Seum Bosal.

Q: I grew up in Queens. So, I ask you, Queens and Manhattan, are they the same or different?

MJSN: You already understand.

Q: But I ask you.

MJSN: In Queens the sky is blue, in Manhattan the sky is also blue.

Q: If there wasn't Buddhism, what religion would you practice?

MJSN: You already understand.

Q: No, I'm asking you.

MJSN: The floor is yellow.

Q: Thank you for your teaching. Good religion.

Q: We have known each other a long time. But still I don't know one thing. In Korea there is a huge painting, bigger than here, and there's many bodhisattvas and Buddhas. I want to know which one is you?

MJSN: You ask me a question and I answer you.

Q: Thank you for your teaching.

Q: Last time you came to Germany, Arne and I were there and we translated for you from German to English, and your English to German. But next time, maybe Arne and I will not be there, and no one will be there to translate for you. How will you teach the truth then?

MJSN: You already understand.

Q: A little bit more.

MJSN: Danke.

Q: Danke.

DHARMA TALK

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

Empty is full.
Full is empty.

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

No empty, no full.

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

Is that empty or full?

KATZ!

Korean sky is blue, American sky is also blue.

Even as a young child, I always felt an emptiness in whatever I did. When other kids joined a dancing class, I thought, "Maybe that is what I want." So, I took the dancing class. But it was not what I wanted. Some others tried piano, so I thought, "Maybe that is the way I have to go." But that was not for me either. Whatever others were interested in, those activities were not my way.

Both my father and grandfather were Christian ministers. The house I grew up in was like a church. But I was never 100 percent into that because everything felt empty. I was always searching for something—nothing seemed to complete me. My question was this: If what people say is true, why do I feel so much doubt? Why do I always feel this emptiness?" When I moved to North America, however, I did have a belief system. I joined the Catholic Church. I fell in love. But I still asked myself, "If these things are true for me, why is there still this emptiness?"

Later I met a Buddhist nun and asked her, "What is Buddhism?" She said, "Mind creates everything." When I heard that, I hit myself and cried, "That's it!" That nun was the one who taught me how to practice, to bow. Then one day she called my house and said, "There is a great Zen Master visiting our temple. You must come and meet him." I dropped everything I was doing and rushed right over; that was when I first met Zen Master Seung Sahn.

At that time I was very busy, working long hours every day, so he told me to do midnight kidos. If I just sat, I would fall asleep, so I bowed from 12:00 to 2:00 every night. I was getting by on very little sleep but still I had a lot of energy—I don't know where it all came from. Today I am not empty any more because of this practice. The emptiness was filled in and things have become clear. This practice is our teacher.

These days I don't have money, a car, a house or even hair! But I am no longer empty... it's fulfilled.

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

