

▶ ▶ ▶ It's very difficult to speak of Dae Soen Sa Nim in the past tense.

His teaching was so down to earth and so solid and so fearless. In the recent issue of *Primary Point*, somebody asked him something like, "Are you the incarnation of Manjushri?" and he said, "That's crazy talk!" You know?

I remember a very long time ago seeing something written where somebody asked him a question that began, "Since everything is constantly changing..." and Dae Soen Sa Nim said, "Who told you that?? Everything is originally empty!"

The most amazing thing I ever saw him do, this fearless, fearless moment. You know how when you're around a crazy person you tend to be very careful? You don't want to name it. You don't want to say, "You know, you need help." Instead, you just try to go along because you don't want this person to take out a gun and shoot everybody.

A long, long time ago, Empty Gate Zen Center was just starting way up in the Berkeley hills. Diana and Ezra had this house and it was their house and they decided to let people come practice there and let people come live there. Dae Soen Sa Nim was there visiting, and we were sitting in their living room... There were twenty or thirty people packed into this little space. There was a guy sitting right there behind me, and you could tell this guy was nuts. He had this crazy energy and I would not have been surprised if he had taken out a gun and started shooting people. He just had this mad energy. He asked Dae Soen Sa Nim a question, a very edgy, angry question. Dae Soen Sa Nim just leaned forward and looked at him and said, "Right now, you a little bit crazy. You come back when you not so crazy."

It was so kind and so fearless and so completely right there. That was his teaching to all of us, every moment of our lives. This fearlessness, this 100% just do it. That's how he lived his life.

Somebody was asking me today, "How did he end up in Kansas?" He didn't live there, but he would visit us. The way he ended up there is I asked him to perform my husband's and my wedding a long time ago. Dae Soen Sa Nim asked, "How close Chicago?" I said, "An hour and a half." He thought car and I was thinking airplane. [laughter] But there were people who wanted the dharma, so he came. He gave the longest wedding speech—it had the whole Buddhist everything and the compass of Zen in the wedding speech. He'd come to a good ending point and you would see him think, "Oh, wait, they haven't heard this." And then he'd go on.

He went everywhere. He went anywhere anyone wanted to hear the dharma. Anywhere anyone wanted to practice. He didn't think about himself, he didn't think about his body. He didn't think about any of that. He was going to use that rental car until it really fell apart—and he did. He was completely selfless and completely fearless. He just gave of himself so freely. And now he's free. And here we are. And our job is also to become free.

There is a wonderful singer named Gillian Welch. I don't know if any of you know her. She has one song and one verse—it's just really how he lived his life. So I would like to sing that verse for you.

*Everything is free now
That's what they say
Everything I ever done
Gonna give it away*

Thank you, Dae Soen Sa Nim, for giving to us. And thank you, everyone, for continuing to give.

Judy Roitman, JDPSN





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