



Primary Point



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Primary Point

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The Kwan Um School of Zen supports the worldwide teaching schedule of the Zen Masters and Ji Do Poep Sa Nims, assists the member Zen centers and groups in their growth, issues publications on contemporary Zen practice, and supports dialogue among religions. If you would like to become a member of the School and receive *Primary Point*, see page 29. The circulation is 5000 copies.

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ZEN MASTER SEUNG SAHN

Zen Master Seung Sahn, renowned master in the Korean Buddhist tradition, and founder of the international Kwan Um School of Zen, died on Tuesday, November 30, at Hwa Gye Sa temple in Seoul, Korea. He died peacefully, surrounded by his students. He was 77. There will be a one-year memorial ceremony in Korea on November 19, 2005 (see back cover).

Zen Master Seung Sahn was born in 1927 in Seun Choen, North Korea to Protestant Christian parents. He grew up during a time when Korea was under Japanese military rule, when political and cultural freedoms were heavily suppressed. After the Second World War, he studied Western philosophy at Dong Guk University in Seoul but became deeply dissatisfied with his ability to help his country through political activities or academic knowledge. He eventually ordained as a Buddhist monk in October, 1948 and soon after started an extremely rigorous one hundred day solo chanting retreat in the mountains. On the last day of his retreat, he got enlightenment and attained his true nature. In 1949, he received teaching transmission from Zen Master Ko Bong, becoming the 78th patriarch in his line of succession from the Buddha. In 1957, he became the abbot of Hwa Gye Sah temple in Seoul, and became involved in reforming the Chogye Order.

Zen Master Seung Sahn began his international teaching in 1966, founding a Korean Buddhist temple in Tokyo, and later a temple in Hong Kong. In 1972, Zen Master Seung Sahn came to the United States, becoming the first Korean Zen master to live and teach in the west. He accepted an invitation to move to Rhode Island and quickly attracted a group of Brown University students, who moved in with him to found the Providence Zen Center. Constantly on the move, accepting invitations to teach all over the United States, Zen Master Seung Sahn soon founded centers in Cambridge, New Haven, New York, Los Angeles, Berkeley, and other American cities.

In 1978, he made his first teaching trip to Europe, which is now home to dozens of his Zen centers and groups.

In 1983, he founded the Kwan Um School of Zen as the organizing body for his growing international network of Zen centers and groups. The School is headquartered at its international head temple, Providence Zen Center, which is now in Cumberland, Rhode Island. By the time of his death, Zen Master Seung Sahn and his students had established more than a hundred Zen centers and groups in more than thirty countries, including over thirty centers in the United States.

As a result of his efforts, he inspired more than a thousand disciples to practice Zen and of these, a number ordained as Zen monks and nuns. In a book entitled *Buddha and Vision*, published by Cambridge University's Religious Department professors, he was designated along with the Tibetan Buddhist leader Dalai Lama, the Vietnamese monk Ven. Thich Nhat Hanh, and the Cambodian Ven. Maha Ghosananda as one of the "Four Living Buddhas of the World."

In June 2004, he received the title "Great Master" from the Chogye Order of Korean Buddhism, in appreciation for his lifetime of teaching. This is the highest honor the order confers.

Zen Master Seung Sahn was the author of six books in English: *Dropping Ashes on the Buddha*, *Only Don't Know*, *Ten Gates*, *Bone of Space*, *The Whole World is a Single Flower*, and *Compass of Zen*.



CHEONG WA DAE

Office of the President
The Republic of Korea

Roh Moo-hyun

December 4, 2004

It is with profound grief that I send my condolences on the passing away of the Great Zen Master Sungsan.

The Venerable Sungsan taught himself through relentless self-discipline. In the process, he helped develop Zen Buddhism in an authentic way while contributing immensely to the harmony and reform of the Buddhist community.

He established 120 temples in 32 countries and spearheaded the effort to propagate Korean Buddhism around the world. Because of Sungsan's endeavors, many non-Koreans now follow the teachings of Korean Buddhism.

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Through his famous teachings entitled, *Only Don't Know* and *The Whole World Is a Single Flower*, he left invaluable lessons in the quest of humanity for harmony and world peace.

As I grieve for the Great Monk Sungsan, I reminisce on his remarkable achievements that spread wisdom of Buddhism and enlightened humanity.

念及此





SENATE
Washington, D. C.
December 1, 2004



Dear Friends,

My condolences and prayers are with all of you who are celebrating the life and work of Zen Master Seung Sahn Soen-sa. Whether working for political and cultural freedom as a young man or, later in life, establishing the Cambridge Zen Center and Zen centers in more than 100 countries, Zen Master Seung Sahn has touched the lives, hearts, and minds of those around him, and untold numbers of people who sought peace and tranquility.

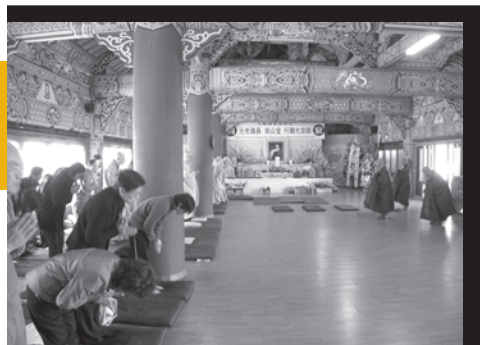
One of the people he influenced is particularly close to my heart – a cherished member of my family, our son John. Our family will always be grateful for the difference and the healing Zen Master Seung Sahn made and continues to make in John's life every day. Teresa and I can see the impact of Soen-sa nim and his teachings on John's work with young people, and in the love he gives so freely and selflessly to his daughter and his family.

Teresa and I wish you all peace in this time of mourning. We know you will continue to be inspired by Soen-sa nim's legacy, and comforted by his teacher, Ko Bong Soen-sa nim's words to him after giving Seung Sahn Kun Sunim the Transmission of Dharma – "We will meet again in five hundred years."

Sincerely,

Senator John Kerry

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Seung Sahn Sunim!

Which world have you gone to so that we are left without words and speech? If you are still your unchanged self, where is that spirit that gave us such a smile and great compassion now?

Is it our deluded view that doesn't allow us to see your original face?

Sunim!

Please show us once your true spirit that can move the universe with one finger and call all the millions of beings, that is full of great love and great compassion. You have shown us today that your life is the dharma body that is the great joy of life itself.

Kun Sunim!

The assembly here, including devoted students and those who remember you from all over the world, are deeply saddened at missing your true face. Coming and going is the truth of life and death, and it is the work of great love and great compassion, yet your silent being without words and speech deeply moves us to sorrow.

Kun Sunim!

You entered the mountain early, dedicating your life to strong practice by which you attained your true self and the truth beyond life itself. You lived a life according to such teachings, bringing enlightenment to the world through your brightness. This has made you a truly great master.

Your strong energy of determination and having no hindrance made the "whole world is a single flower" blossom in the ten thousand places of the world.

In the Chogye Order, there is no other great master who has taken the teachings out into the world so early with so much dedication. Starting from Hong Boep Won in Japan where you spread the dharma, and to America and beyond by which you gave the spark of enlightenment to the world.

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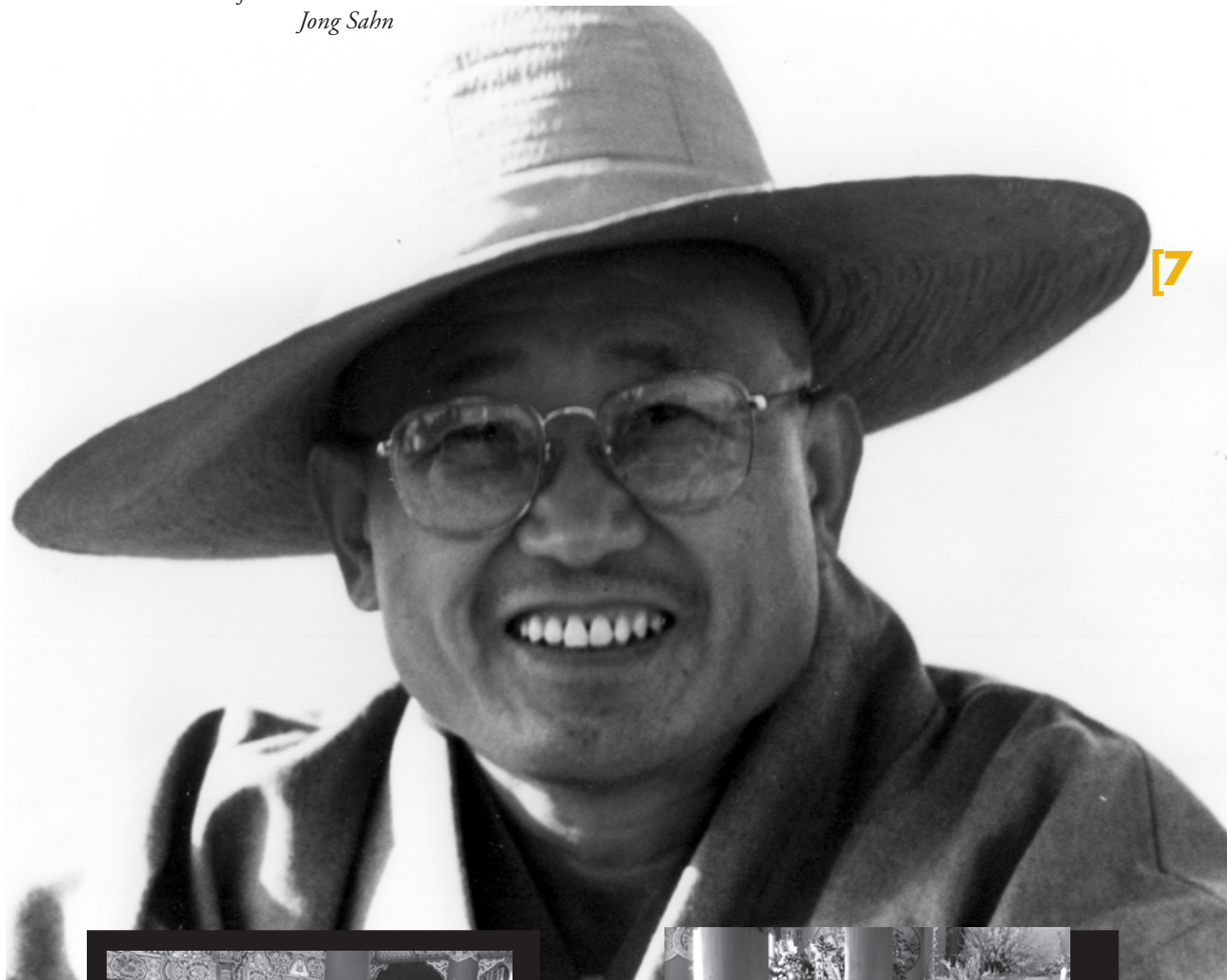
Kun Sunim!

Where can we hear and learn the true teaching now?
All of us here including those devoted students who
have many different faces, we all anxiously await for
one more appearance of your true face. Please return
to this earth to save all beings once more.

*Originally nothing
So no dust can appear.
If you can understand this
A wooden horse will laugh at the fire.*



*Korean Buddhist Chogye Order
Council of Elders Director
Jong Sahn*



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Providence Zen Center, Doyle Avenue, 1973



▶ ▶ ▶ **Great Seung Sahn Sunim** returns to his original form after leaving us one of the four great teachings.

Having attained complete enlightenment you have now entered true stillness. Your original form has become spirit, without coming or going. Your true form projects itself freely in the ten directions of the dharma world. Without name or form, you cannot be perceived, but your original face appears in a passing breeze.

Deep and still there is no form, but being one with the substance of the universe, without life or death, your mysterious being constantly leaves its mark everywhere.

If we search for it, it cannot be found. Knowing that you have departed, where is your original dharma face now? All substance is your dharma body; the great earth and the stillness of being are your original mind.

The passage of time and the way of the stars are all your original perception.

If you want to get it, you will fall into the lower realms. If you want to attain it, still, it has not left its original form.

Have you departed and entered into stillness or has your spirit body merely shed its cover?

If you say “entered into stillness,” you cannot escape the cauldron of fire. If you say your spirit body has merely shed its cover, the six gods of the great Tao will enter nirvana together.

This is one of the four great teachings of an ancient worthy.

Does the assembly understand?

Inside a deep well, a red spark appears.

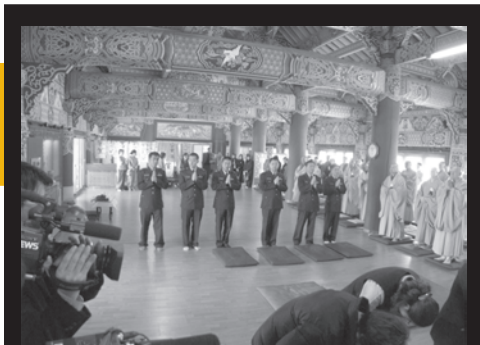
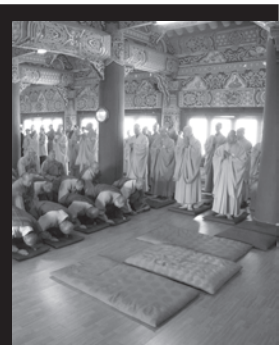
High on a mountaintop, waves are crashing.

A stone girl gives birth to a stone baby.

A turtle grows hair.



*Supreme Patriarch
of the Chogye Order of Korean Buddhism
Boep Joen*



▶ ▶ ▶ **After attaining** total freedom on Duk Sahn Mountain,
Drinking in one gulp all the five oceans.
Black and white are all extinguished in every corner of the world, bringing a fresh breeze to the world of blue eyes.

Korean Buddhist Chogye Order's Great Dharma Master Seung Sahn Haeng Won Dae Soen Sa Nim!

The sun that was bright until yesterday is now dark and cold.
All the surface of the great earth is dark and even celestial beings following the stars lost their light and are timid.

There is nothing higher than original action, and as according to universal law ten thousand things appear and disappear, and all appearances in name and form come and go according to the cycle of nature. Yet your departure leaves us at a tremendous loss.

Attaining so early your true self and the truth beyond life and death, you revealed this to us through your example, only following the teaching of Zen Master Man Gong's "the whole world is a single flower."

Yet, for those suffering beings who still do not understand that life and death itself are emptiness, our minds are full of the tears of sorrow that continue to flow.

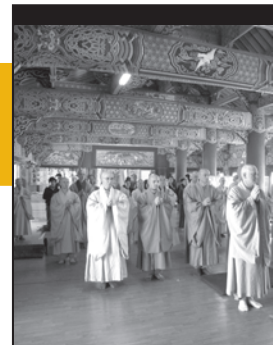
Great Dharma Master Seung Sahn Dae Soen Sa Nim!

You are the great pioneer who spread Korean Zen Buddhism in the world in one single lifetime. Starting from Hong Boep Won in Japan to the United States, Canada, Hong Kong, Singapore and to Poland, in 32 countries and over 120 centers, over 50,000 students have appeared. Declaring,

*Bringing the suffering world to substance world,
Substance world to truth world,
Truth world to correct function world,
There is not one minute nor second to waste
In order to save the whole universe through the great bodhisattva way.*

You manifested the power of your great vow, and as Buddha bodhisattva, spread the great power of your dharma. Finding places devoid of dharma, you watered them with the teaching, and opening up the gate of Zen in the materialistic western world, you rang the bell of awakening in order to put out the fire of samsara. Isn't it a wonder that so many people honor you now, yet you are so humble as to say, "I am merely a practitioner who happened to bring Korean Zen to the west."

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Great Dharma Master Seung Sahn Dae Soen Sa Nim!

Looking back, you were born in 1927 in Soon Chon, in Pyong An Do Province, and entered the monastery in Choong Chung Do's Ma Gok Sah temple. You were the disciple of Zen Master Ko Bong from whom you received transmission, and following Zen Masters Kyong Ho and Man Gong, you continued to establish the Lin Chi dharma lineage.

Later, in 1960 at the age of 33, you established the original Korean Buddhist Newspaper, and in 1961 you held the position of Deputy Administrative Director of the Chogye Order, some of the many roles in which you were instrumental for the Chogye Order of Korean Buddhism.

Also in 1962, during the instability of the Comprehensive Order of Bhikkus and Dae Chuhs, you were prominent in leading an interim order.

Your great energy to transmit the dharma and to be the pillar of our Order carrying the teachings, all come from the fact that you are a living Buddha and like no other Zen Master before or after you, your dharma energy commands such great respect.

We bow in deep respect at your never giving up practicing mind and your wisdom sword speech by which you convince all people of this world of the dharma.

Seung Sahn Haeng Won Dae Soen Sa Nim!

Now you are a great free man, having spread the wind of Zen in every part of the world. Your last word before departing is, again, deeply in our hearts; "Don't worry! When mountain is blue and water flows, that is truth." It is the bone of Zen teaching and the face of truth beyond life and death. Yet, your students from all over the world still very much need your compassionate teaching.

*Going into a forest,
Grass does not move.
Going into water
Waves do not appear.*

Seung Sahn Haeng Won Dae Soen Sa Nim!

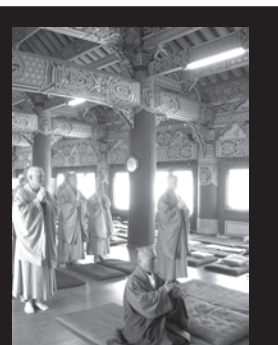
Though you have left for the world of complete stillness, have mercy on the sentient beings of this world, and please return again in your never changing form to save all beings from suffering.

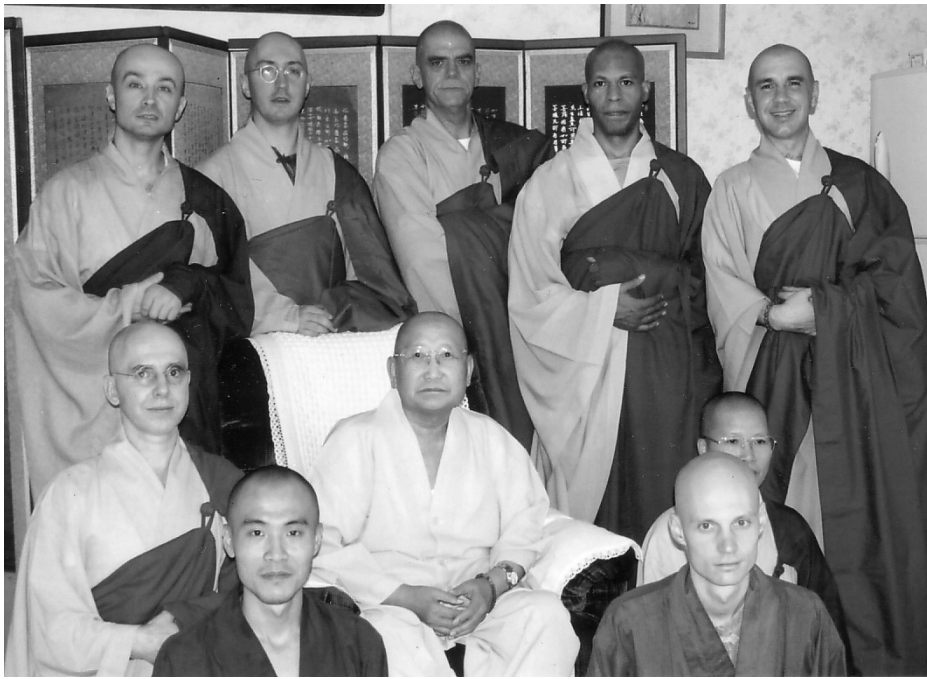
In hapjang, I humbly offer a stick of incense.

[1 1]



*Korean Buddhist Chogye Order
Administrative Director
Boep Jang*





The following talks were given at the Memorial Ceremony at our International Head Temple, Providence Zen Center, on December 4, 2004

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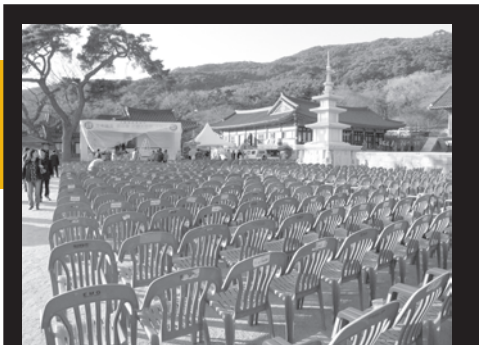
I still have most of my body. Our teacher has lost his body. We're all familiar with the poem in our school:

*Coming empty-handed, going empty-handed
That's human
When you're born, where do you come from?
When you die, where do you go?*

And then the last two lines of the poem are:

*There is one thing that is pure and clear, not dependent on life or death.
Then what is the one, pure and clear thing?*

I want to thank you all for coming today to recognize this occasion. Today there is not only a ceremony to recognize Zen Master Seung Sahn and his teaching in this country, but there are, in fact, ceremonies all over the world. He influenced so many of us in so many ways. Just like any time in our lives where there is a big event, whether it be a ceremony like this, whether it be a wedding, whether it be a birthday, whether it be a birth—those are big transition times. It's when the energy shifts. So what we do as human beings is, we pause at those times in our lives. We pause and we recognize. That's one part of our job today. The other part of our job today is to give Dae Soen Sa Nim's energy some direction as it continues out into the universe. And so we do some chanting.

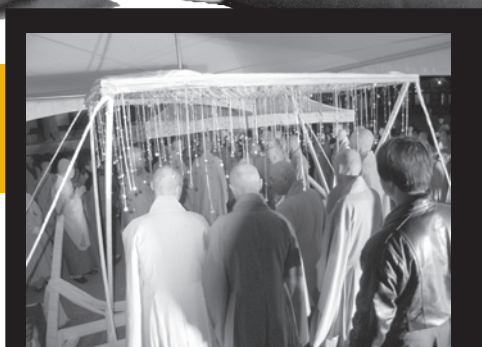
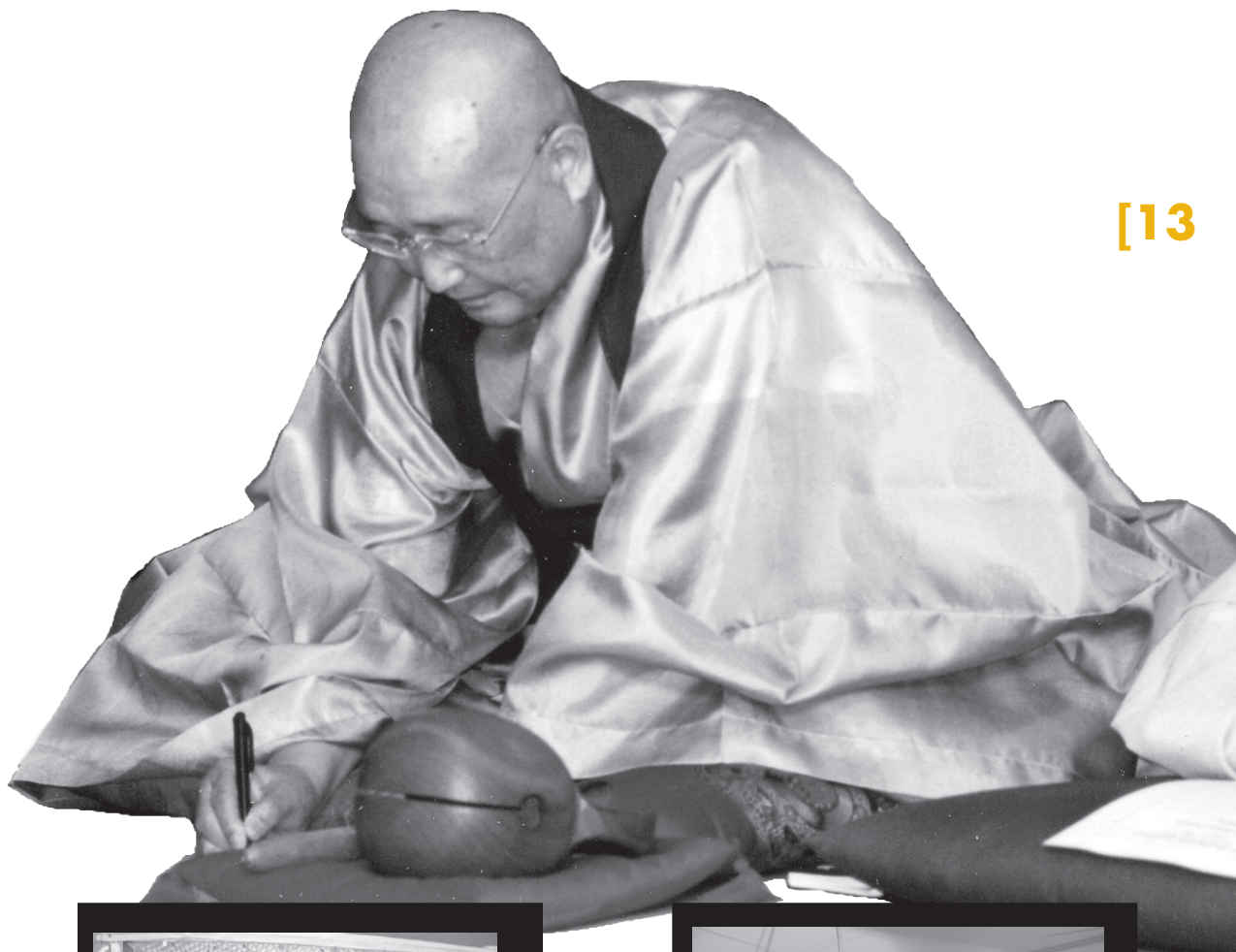


Once, I remember I was talking to a fellow, one of our teachers out in Las Vegas, and he said, “One time I was with Dae Soen Sa Nim and this very studious, intelligent Buddhist scholar came to see him—an American. And he said to Soen Sa Nim, ‘You know, I’ve been studying the scriptures, the 84,000 sutras, and the more I study them the more confused I get. What is most important in Buddhism?’ Soen Sa Nim said: ‘Direction.’” Why is it that we do what we do?

The one thing that I learned from Soen Sa Nim which has been so helpful to me has been that when you do something, you make a 100% effort to be present and to do it. So as we proceed with this ceremony today, perhaps in our appreciation each one of us can make a 100% effort.

Zen Master Bon Haeng

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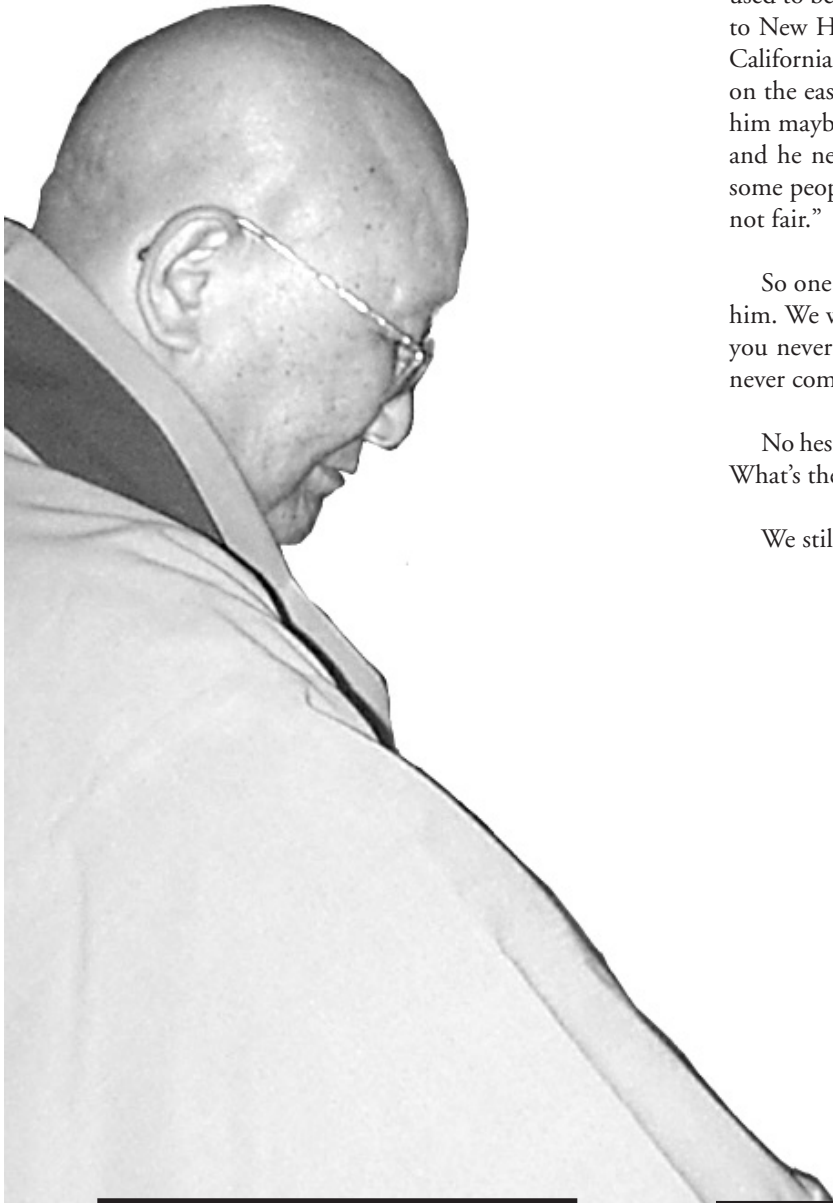
Years ago, there was in this country only the Cambridge Zen Center and the Providence Zen Center. Dae Soen Sa Nim used to split his time. He used to come up to Cambridge and study English, and he used to spend more of his time in Providence hanging out. He spent time every week at both centers. Then, all of a sudden, somebody invited him down to Yale and before we knew it, there was a center down in Yale. And then to New York. And we blinked, and there was a center in New York. And then in Cambridge, we started doing a little thinking. We said, geez, it used to be he came all the time, and now he goes to New York a lot and to New Haven a lot. And then, all of a sudden, a center sprung up in California. And then we were told that he was going to spend two months on the east coast, two months on the west coast, and we started seeing him maybe once a quarter. And we all got energy up. "He's our teacher and he never comes to see us!" And some people left the center, and some people just walked around. [laughter] And other people said, "It's not fair."

So one day, Soen Sa Nim came to Cambridge and we went in to see him. We were being very clever, of course, and we said, "Soen Sa Nim, you never come here as much anymore. So who is our teacher, if you never come here?"

No hesitation whatsoever. He said, "The practice and together action. What's the problem?"

We still have that.

Zen Master Bon Haeng





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Poland, 1978





Good morning, everybody. I have a few death stories to share with you from our beloved teacher.

The first occurred in Poland in 1986 at a dharma talk. Zen Master Seung Sahn was there in the dead of winter, and it was a room smaller than this, with standing room only. It was night time and outside the windows you could only see the noses pressed up against the glass. After the talk, and it was a wonderful talk, he patted me on the knee and he himself said, “Good speech, yah?” I said, “Very good speech.” And he said, “Now, not famous. After die, very famous!”

He was very straight up. And I think that’s true—I think his teaching has only just begun. So much of what he has imparted to us is just beginning and it’s like what the Buddha gave us: it’s 2,500 years later and we are still doing it. That’s just part of his teaching.

I had practiced in the Tibetan tradition for a few years before this one. There is this whole emphasis on reincarnation and choosing where you are going to be reborn. Somehow these Tibetan lamas will tell you before they die, “Look for me on the mountaintop in such-and-such a province in two years and five days.” So I said to Dae Soen Sa Nim, “Do they have a corner on that market? Are you going to do something like that? Can you determine, do you know where you are going to be reborn?”

He looked at me and said, “Of course!”

I said, “Really, where?”

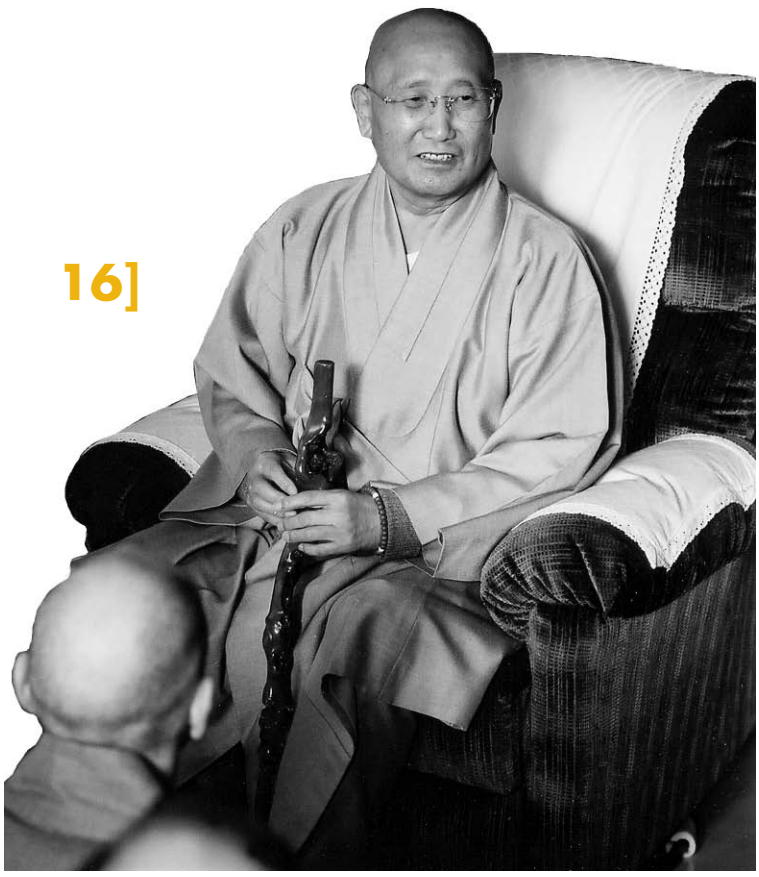
He said, “KOREA!”

I think there’s a good chance that we’ll be eating kim chee for generations to come.

That was something so great about him. He really wouldn’t let you get attached to anything, and yet he would go along with all of this and use it as a teaching tool.

Another really beautiful story was recently, when he was—he was suffering a lot. I am grateful to him for his benevolence, that he faded away at his own great physical

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pain over the last few years. It gave us all a chance to get used to this idea, that he would be going soon. I think it made it a little easier, at least for me, so that it could be a relief that he could get out of that body. His rental car needed a new transmission.

In this state, a student said to him sometime recently—it's a great Buddhist question we all have: "How do we get beyond life and death?" That's why a lot of us come through the door. So this monk said to him, "Well, Dae Soen Sa Nim, how do you go beyond life and death?"

He looked at the monk and he said, "We are life and death." That's true. He was always very deep in bringing it down to earth for us.

Lastly, his famous question about the rental car was great. For the first ten years, he would say, "This is just your car. But who is driving this car?" I know it gave me a heart attack the first time I heard that, and it gives everyone a heart attack because that's the question we have. Who is driving the car?

As he did with all his teaching, he refined it. He was always making it better and streamlining it and making it more efficient. Soon the car became the rental car. Or, as he would say, "the lentil car." He was always telling us that one day we must return this car. But I have no doubt that the driver's direction is still the same. Thank you.

Zen Master Bon Yeon





The first time I saw Dae Soen Sa Nim was at a dharma talk at Cambridge Zen Center. I understood very little of what he said. Maybe a third—maybe. But I remember very clearly his delight. He laughed freely.

The next time I saw him, I had been practicing and waiting. I was nearly sick with anxiety when he arrived again. And he looked at me and said, “Are you sick?”

I wanted to tell a story that Stan told once because it hit me very hard when he told it here at Providence Zen Center. Dae Soen Sa Nim was in Kansas doing a public talk at the university. There was a young man sitting right in the front row, staring intently at Dae Soen Sa Nim with great desire. He finally got a chance to ask a question and asked, “What can you teach me?” And Dae Soen Sa Nim looked at him and said, “I’m not special.” He shared that with us his whole life. We put robes on and made this altar and built Zen Centers, and we have all kinds of hooplah. Behind it and in amongst all of it, nothing is special. Just how is it now?

I drove Dae Soen Sa Nim to a Korean couple’s home for dinner once, near Cambridge. They spoke Korean all evening and I understood pretty much nothing. I got to sit back and watch the dynamics as they chatted. I picked up some words. It was a lot of Korea talk and the politics of religion and stuff. After dinner, he turned to the wife and the energy completely changed. It was dharma. It was so clear that there was a love for sharing the dharma with whomever—a delight and a love and an obvious passion, his passion. That was what we all got to share. And it will continue.

The last story I remember was when he gave a talk about life and death here at Providence Zen Center once. He had just been in the hospital and he had been quite ill, but also he had a roommate who was older and quite ill. He talked about what is our job just now. As we get older, we lose our working jobs, our family jobs, our physical ability to move as the different functions of the body are beginning to fall apart. Still, what’s my job just now? Then, there is just breathing: breath in, breath out; breath in, breath out.

So our job is always right in front of us and no teacher is great teacher because then our job is very clear. Standing here, sitting here, talking, listening. On this occasion, so sad, so glad.

Nancy Hedgpeth, JDPSN





[hits moktak, rings bell, silence]

What is missing?

Dae Soen Sa Nim pointed to great question, practice, and direction.

Great question is Buddha, great question is what we already have. If you think that's missing, you aren't listening.

Practice is dharma. If you open your eyes and open your ears, it is right in front of you. If you think it's missing, you're not looking.

Direction is sangha. Please look around the room. If you think that's missing, you're not participating.

There is a wonderful Buddhist story that seven woman sages were walking through the forest of corpses. One of them pointed to a corpse and said, "Here is the body. Where is the person?" Then the eldest one said, "What?? What??" And simultaneously, all seven experienced the tolerance of birthlessness. I love that phrase, "the tolerance of birthlessness," because I have no idea what it means. *[laughter]* If she had pointed to a live body, would it have been any different?

My experience when I first heard of Dae Soen Sa Nim's passing was confusion because I was in a place where first thing in the morning I'm normally confused. After some time passed, I thought I should write a poem.

*Apparently you died in an ordinary way
Only go straight—where?
Zen mind, everyday mind.
Namu Amita Bul
Namu Amita Bul*

My experience at that point was one of obligation. Not the kind of obligation like "you should clean behind your ears and keep your room neat," although that's an obligation, too. But everybody here has the fortune or misfortune of having either met Zen Master Seung Sahn face to face, or having met those of us who have met him face to face and you can't let that go.

So that has some particular meaning for all of us. For me, it was, "Where are you still rough around the edges? Keep trying."

If you don't feel him in your bones, then he never lived. If you do feel him in your bones, then he never died.

So I want to thank all of us for carrying forth the teaching that he had the good fortune to be a bridge and pass along to us, and I hope we feel it deeply in our bones. I think that's the best gift we could give to him and give to each other. Thank you.

Ken Kessel, JDPSN



▶ ▶ ▶ **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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▶ ▶ ▶ **Just do it.** Only go straight, don't know. Keep a clear mind. Don't hold anything. Don't attach to anything. Don't want anything.

Dae Soen Sa Nim gave us all these teaching words and one of the most important of them was: practice great love, great compassion, and the great bodhisattva way.

All of these have become internalized in part of our consciousness because he embodied them. This great love, great compassion, great bodhisattva way. I want to tell you one story about each point.

First, great love. I live in New York now but I began practicing in New Haven. The first time I met Dae Soen Sa Nim, the story is in *Dropping Ashes On The Buddha*, "When the lights go off, what?" That was the talk he gave. That was a long time ago, in the seventies. He was present through my many years while practicing in New Haven. He always asked me about what was happening in my life, about my wife and my children. One time, when my second child was born, he asked me, "How is it going?"

I said, "It's going okay, but I have a little problem. Now that my new daughter is born, my son is not so happy. He's a little jealous."

Zen Master Seung Sahn said, "Oh! No problem. I'll tell you what to do. You take some candy. When your daughter is in the room, you go up to your son and give him this candy and say, 'You are wonderful. I don't like her so much either!'" [laughter]

That made my son very happy! My son and daughter are now very good friends, in their twenties.

He showed me father mind. I was the father, and he showed me father mind. He also understood sibling-father love and sibling love. He understood teacher love.

Another time, we were practicing in New Haven and we were blessed by his visiting very frequently in the beginning before he became so peripatetic and began traveling so much. He was always coming to New Haven.

One morning we were practicing in the dharma room and during practice when we were doing sitting meditation, someone rang the doorbell and somebody let this person into the Zen Center. When he came in, even though he was instructed to sit on the cushion, he just wandered around the dharma room. He was mumbling and kind of creating a significant disturbance. I'm sitting there—I'm a doctor—and I just didn't know what to do. I was sitting there thinking, "Maybe we should take this person away." All of a sudden, Dae Soen Sa Nim jumped up, walked over, put his arm around this man, and called the monk who was there—Mu Gak Sunim—and said, "Oh! This very good man, but he doesn't feel so good now. You take him to the hospital." So Mu Gak Sunim took him to the hospital. He was totally psychotic and they admitted him to the hospital. This man is still around—he became a lifelong student of Dae Soen Sa Nim. He's still a student. But meanwhile, I'm thinking, "Wait! I'm the doctor here! I'm supposed to know about this!" But I wasn't listening so clearly. Dae Soen Sa Nim taught me something about this great compassion. Being a doctor is helping people, but if you're not listening, you don't see what's going on. He made this diagnosis: The patient is psychotic, take him to the hospital!

Finally, this great bodhisattva way. The last time I was with Dae Soen Sa Nim he had come to New York City and was staying in Long Island. He was coming to have his heart checked. This is before he had all of his operations and he was going to this famous heart hospital, St. Francis. It was difficult to get to see the doctor so he took a hotel room and there were at least four or five, maybe six monks, sometimes even more would come and they would stay. I went out to see him frequently. When I went there one Saturday afternoon after practice, he was surrounded by the monks, many of whom you know. He said he wanted to do something, because he was getting bored. They said, "No, you're not feeling so good. You're sick, so we got you some videos. We can watch these videos." They asked him which video he'd like, and he picked *The Seven Samurai*.



We all started watching this video. He had a big, king-size bed. There were two monks and me sitting on the bed, some were sitting around the room. This is a Japanese movie, it's a very long, very interesting movie about a samurai who comes to the rescue of these people who are being attacked by these bandits, and then he gets six of his compatriots together and these seven samurai save the community. After maybe fifteen or twenty minutes goes by, somebody is snoring. After an hour, everybody was sleeping except Dae Soen Sa Nim and me. He was sitting there watching and laughing. After maybe two more hours, this long movie comes to an end and he turns to me and says, "Ah, now understand bodhisattva action!" [laughter]

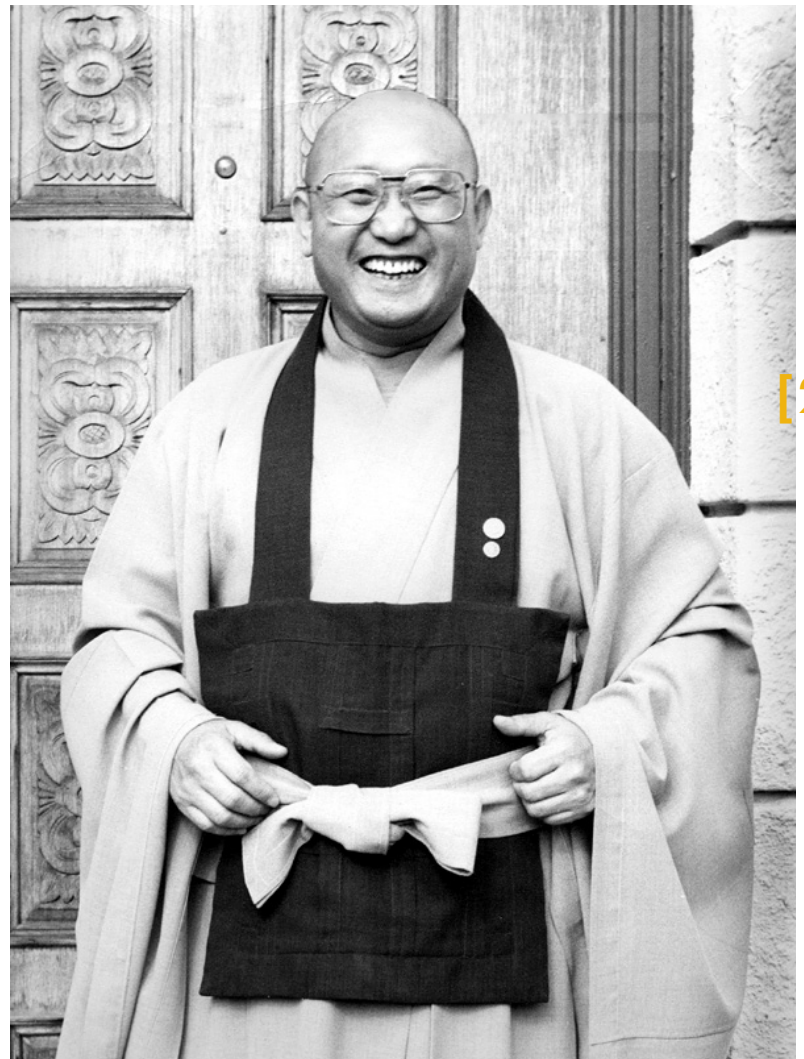
Everybody else was sleeping! They missed that message!

What I got from that is that this heroism embraced by bodhisattva action was completely part of his life. He gave always great love, great compassion, and he lived this great bodhisattva way. I also wrote a poem, which I won't repeat, but the last line of my poem was:

The great temple bell resonates long after the hammer strikes.

Thank you for your teaching, Dae Soen Sa Nim.

Steve Cohen, JDPSN





Providence Zen Center, 1998

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▶ ▶ ▶ **Thank you all** for coming to this ceremony today.

Recently somebody told me a story of a time when a student asked Dae Soen Sa Nim when he was having one of his earlier serious illnesses, “Soen Sa Nim, when you die, what are we supposed to do? We’re going to miss you!”

This was a sincere question. He started having difficulty with his health fairly early on, and many of his students were worried. Dae Soen Sa Nim supposedly responded by saying, “Don’t miss me. If you only keep your mind clear for one moment, then we’re never separate.”

So even though we’re having this ceremony, which I’m sure Dae Soen Sa Nim would also approve of—it’s appropriate—the big message of his whole life is: Don’t miss me, keep your mind clear. Then, not only are we never separate from our founding teacher; we are also not separate from our lives, moment to moment. One moment of clear mind and this whole universe become one. That’s a wonderful gift, just in that simple teaching. Keep your mind clear for one moment, then already you are never separate.

We can do that, right? We can practice that way. We can practice with that intention. We can find that as the essence of what we’re doing sitting here in this building at this place or in our everyday lives or in our involvement with Zen Centers. We can remember that. That’s not too complicated.

Along those lines is a more personal story. I had just become a monk here at the Zen Center. After the ceremony all of the monks who were here at that time and Dae Soen Sa Nim went out to lunch at a nearby diner. I remember Jimi Hendrix was on the jukebox and I thought that was kind of interesting, sitting in this funky little diner that he liked. I was sitting at the table with him feeling kind of nervous, just starting this life as a monk and having no clue what it meant. He looked over at me and said something like, “Oh, you become monk. Wonda-pul.” Then he said, “Where you going?” And I said, “I’m going to Seattle, sir.” He said, “Oh. Is there an older monk there?”

I said, “No sir. I will be the only monk.”

“Oh. No problem. Just do it! Okay?”

There was my orientation. You might think, as I did at the time, “Wow. That was a little brief.” [laughter] At that time, how to be a monk was kind of a mystery to me. I didn’t have many role models and there wasn’t a manual or book on how to be a monk. I was going back to live in the Zen Center in a new role and I literally did not have a clue. But I’ll tell you what: I’m still learning it, but that “Just do it, okay?” was the best instruction I could have been given by anybody. Every day, something would come up. I couldn’t run to the manual that listed all the things that might come up, with the solution. I couldn’t appeal to the senior monk there and dodge the problem. I had to face it: boom-boom-boom. I was so glad that all he told me was to “just do it.” Because then, do it and it works, no problem; do it and you screw it up, also no problem. And we got plenty of both of those in various degrees. [laughter]

“Just Do It.” That was, for me, the most impactful teaching I ever got from him. And as has been said many times, Dae Soen Sa Nim’s teaching will continue to unfold for each of us as we live our lives and continue our practice. In a similar way, here we are, at a Zen Center, in a Zen School, and our founding teacher has passed away. There is no manual for us either. There’s a *Dharma Mirror* and all forms and robes and titles, but really what we have to do is—we have to—just do it. That’s where this moment appears.

Thank you, Dae Soen Sa Nim, for all of your gifts. I’m sure that we’ll be opening them for generations to come.

Chong Hae Sunim, JDPS



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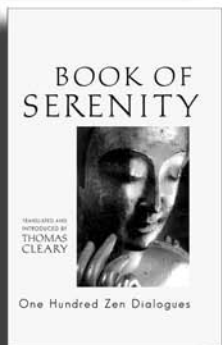
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**ZEN MASTER SEUNG SAHN
ONE YEAR MEMORIAL CEREMONY
SATURDAY, NOVEMBER 19, 2005
HWA GYE SAH TEMPLE, SEOUL, KOREA**

**ALL OF ZEN MASTER SEUNG SAHN'S INTERNATIONAL STUDENTS ARE INVITED
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