

Why

Dusan Silvasi

Did Bodhidharma Come to Slovakia?

In our Slovakian Sangha, a great event happened on the 8th of May in Kosice. After publishing the first original Zen book in Slovakian history ever, *True Zen for True Life* or *Why Did Bodhidharma Come to Slovakia?* we held a big ceremony with an exhibition of pictures from the book to introduce it to the public.

In the spirit of together action about 130 people took part in the ceremony, led by Chong An Sunim JDPSN chanting the Homage to the Three Jewels and the Slovak Heart Sutra together with us. After the dharma talk, the ceremony continued with the Evening Bell Chant followed by a concert. Contemplative sounds opened the musical performance given by the Polish group "Ubu Experyment" by brilliant pianist and composer Ula Kiesel who had lived in Kosice Zen Center for two years.

During the following jam session performed by one of the most popular Slovak musicians Marian Cekovsky, together with Ula Kiesel, Chong An Sunim JDPSN joined by playing the drums. While fabulous music inspired by the present spirit of Zen was played, the artist Oleg Suk, the Slovakian national abbot, drew several large calligraphies of Bodhidharma. This spirit of creativity and spontaneity filled every heart in the room.

The program continued with a slide show from three months of Winter Kyol Che in Mu Sang Sah (Korea) in which Dusan Silvasi, abbot of Kosice Zen Center, and Oli Silvasi, participated two years ago. After that, there was a break when people could try vegetarian-style sushi and other vegetarian delicacies that our sangha members prepared by themselves for behalf of all guests.

Then the next round of music followed and lasted till night because nobody wanted to leave this warm and lovely happening. At the end, everybody left with a big smile on their faces.

It was an excellent inauguration ceremony for the book which will finally introduce Zen to Slovaks as being the real and true practice which can bring lots of positive and compassionate aspects to our everyday lives. Before in Slovakia, there were only translations of Zen books about ancient stories and Buddhist history. That was the reason why many people thought Zen is quite interesting but obsolete, and thus not the real path for us in this modern society. Our book will definitely dismiss this myth because you will not find there anything older than fifteen-year-old dharma talks, dharma combats, and live dialogs of our teachers during their visits in Slovakia. There are recorded encounters with ten teachers of our school answering a lot of questions from different visitors of Yong Maeng Jong Jins, and public talks about contemporary human problems.

Also, I would like to thank everybody who has helped with the book financially or by his or her own work on the book. Much work has been done so that we could publish this beautiful 320-page book with fifty artistic photographs from Oleg Suk. Thanks also to the Eastern European Dharma Fund of the Kwan Um School of Zen for their support.

Finishing with the words of Chong An Sunim JDPSN when ending the ceremony, "Great ceremony, great together-action, great music, great people, great food, and great book." I hope that all of this, especially the book, will help many Slovakian and Czech people to find their correct direction and true compassion in their everyday lives for all beings. ☸

