

## SANGHA ALWAYS WAKES YOU UP

*Zen Master Soeng Hyang*

Three years ago, we had a wonderful Whole World is a Single Flower conference in Singapore. It was in a beautiful, large hotel, in a huge conference room. There were a lot of people there, I thought, a lot of Theravadan monks, and everybody looked so happy to be together. But then some kind of ideas appeared.

In the Kwan Um School of Zen, one of our favorite, favorite, favorite kong-ans is Nam Cheon's cat. When I was practicing this kong-an, and hearing this story, for me it was wonderful, wonderful Zen teaching. But many, many people at that conference got very upset, "Zen Master Nam Cheon would never kill a cat. That never happened. How can you give that kind of teaching?" As a matter of fact, they said, these Mahayana sutras, none of them are true. None of the Mahayana sutras ever really happened. It's not Buddha's speech.

That's why KATZ is very important. What is Buddha? When did Buddha live? How old is Buddha? So I thought, that after maybe ten minutes, the problem would stop, but it went on the next day. Same problem. So that meant that also, the Buddha never held up the flower. That's some kind of Mahayana idea, the Buddha never held up a flower, they said. Of course, we had this big banner, of the hand holding up the flower for our conference, a very big picture.

So that's why it's very important to believe in yourself. Don't be attached to words. If you're attached to words, if you're attached to time, Mahayana, Theravada, if you're attached to that, you go to hell. That's why I like Zen.

So, I have a joke for you. There was this very holy, holy Buddhist. In the news, everybody was saying there's going to be a flood. "Go to the high ground, there's going to be a flood." So this holy, holy Buddhist, he just sat in his temple. His temple was in the valley. So, somebody ran into the temple and said, "Please, please come with me. I can take you up to the hill." He said, "No, no, don't worry, Buddha will save me." So soon the water came up to his knees. The holy Buddhist stood up so he was not getting his bottom wet, and he just says, "I have my legs, that will save me. Buddha will save me." So he stood and he stood, the water got higher and higher, all the way up to his neck. So somebody came with a rowboat, they rowed up, they saw him standing in the temple, they said, "Quick, quick, get in my boat." "Don't worry, Buddha's going to save me, this is no problem." And then he drowned. He was a very holy man, so he went up to the holy heavens. Of course, in the holy heaven, Buddha was there, waiting for him. "Buddha, Buddha, why didn't you help me? I drowned! Why didn't you help me?" "I gave you the hill, I gave you the legs, I gave you the boat, what do you want?"

Everybody has already said, our sangha is not just this sangha; many people do not have enough money, so they could not come today, they live too far away. We have a very, very big sangha. Also, our sangha is the people we work with, our neighbors, our family. Also, our sangha is, for example, in the United States, these bankers that lied and cheated and were full of greed. That kind of sangha always wakes you up. A bad situation is a good situation. In my nursing job, I work with many people, they have almost no money. They have no idea the market went way down last week, they have no idea.



# is a Single Flower

That's why Jesus said, "The meek shall inherit the earth." We see this beautiful example of the aspiration of the Polish sangha, this beautiful idea, so then if we give our money to our sanghas, then we don't have to worry if the market goes up and down, we already gave our money to the practice.

Two weeks ago, I was leading a Yong Maeng Jong Jin up in the state of Maine, it's in northern America. So this man came in for an interview, and he wanted to ask me my opinion about something. He said he belonged to a left wing, liberal survivalist group. It's American thinking. We have this left wing and this right wing. But if you're trying to survive, where is left, where is right? This group is saving a lot of water, a lot of canned foods, everything so that if the flood starts to come up, or there's no more water, they can survive. Everybody else might die, but they will survive. In the Heart Sutra it says, "Far apart from every perverted view no fears exist." No fear, in the Heart Sutra, no fear. That's like hiding under the path. So I said to this man, "You want to know what I think about that?" He goes, "Yeah, yeah, I want to know what you think, you're my Zen master, tell me what you think." I said, "Give all your water away." Then he left the retreat. He didn't like my answer.

But this practice, when we do KATZ, when we do don't know, when we do "what am I doing just now?" there's no fear. So this real flower is generosity and perseverance. Samadhi, meditation. Right livelihood. And wisdom and effort. And precepts and no idea. So, already, everything is complete. When we were in Singapore, Zen Master Dae Bong Sunim was amazing. I don't remember what he said, but he straightened those Theravada monks out. So we have to remember to believe in ourself, not to trust words, not to trust ideas, but to 100% wake up, pay attention to what's going on right now. Because thirst doesn't come from lack of water. Thirst comes from holding on to I, my, me. So have great courage and always, always, only don't know. Kamsamnida, Dziękuję. 🌸