

The Whole World

THE SEED IS RIPE

Zen Master Dae Bong

Everyone remembers how Zen Master Seung Sahn traveled constantly, teaching us, teaching all over the world. One time, he arrived in Kentucky in the United States with one monk accompanying him as an attendant. Then, they were picked up by the head of the Kentucky group, got in a car, and left the airport, kind of American-style—Zen Master Seung Sahn sat in the front seat and his attendant sat in the back seat. Then, as they were driving along, the attendant in the back seat fell asleep. Then, the driver said, “Monk’s job: sleep in car.” Then, Zen Master Seung Sahn said, “Monk’s job: perceive this world and help all beings.”

We’re all Zen students, so that’s all our job: perceive this world and then help this world. Also, for many years, Zen Master Seung Sahn traveled around saying, “Many religions say end of this world, now is end of this world.” Zen Master Seung Sahn always said, in Buddhism we don’t say “end of this world,” we say, “the seed is ripe.” Sometime, if you’re very sick, and you practice, even in the hospital really look inside, maybe you’ll find what this means, the seed is ripe.

On September 11, seven years ago, when the twin towers went down in New York, I was with Zen Master Seung Sahn. We were either in Hong Kong that day, or a day or two afterwards. In any case, I remember being in Hong Kong with him, watching the television and seeing the repeated pictures of the two buildings falling down over and over again. At

that time, Zen Master Seung Sahn kept saying, “World War III already begun. World War III already begun.” I asked him, “What kind of war?” He said, “This war not usual style. This war, one hundred or two hundred years. Then, many, many people die, fighting, and disease, also natural disaster, also not enough food or water, or too much water.” He said, “People cannot work together now, because we are all holding our opinion very strongly, so we can see when we look at the world, many places make small groups, then fighting each other.” Zen Master Seung Sahn said at that time, also, “If we put down our opinion, then we can see, we’re one flower originally, already this universe is like that.” He talked more about the disasters of the world, so I asked him, “If there’s really a great disaster, then what can we do? Where can we go?” He said, “Hide under the path.” So, I thought, “Hide under the path. That’s follow the path, just follow the path.” In America, we used to say, “The worst thing Zen Master Seung Sahn ever did to us was together-action.” It’s true, it’s very frustrating. But, it’s a great treasure. Nowadays it’s very hard for humans in this world to do together-action. But this is the treasure that Man Gong Sunim gave us that passed to Ko Bong Sunim passed to Seung Sahn Sunim and to all of us. So I hope we continue to practice hard together, work hard together, and share this with as many beings as we can. Thank you very much. ☸

20]

