

Please Become Buddha: The Whole World Is a Single Flower Conference 2011 Formal Ceremony

The following talks were given at Dae Sung Sokka Sa, in Lumbini, Nepal, on October 25, 2011, at the Whole World Is a Single Flower conference formal ceremony. The introductory talk was given by the abbot of Dae Sung Sokka Sa, Poep Shin Sunim, followed by a keynote speech by Zen Master Dae Kwang, and finally a formal dharma talk by Seol Jeong Sunim. The first and third talks were given in Korean and translated by Hye Tong Sunim JDPS.



Photo: Renee Dumont

Poep Shin Sunim

Hello everyone. It is such an honor to have all of you here today from all over the world for this Whole World Is a Single Flower conference, especially Su Dok Sa Temple's *bang jang* [spiritual head], Seol Jeong *Kun* [Great] Sunim, as well as all the great Zen masters here. Special thanks to Mu Sang Sa Temple's *ju ji* [abbot], Dae Jin Sunim, for his help organizing this event. I am honored to be able to host everyone for this great conference that takes place only every three years.

As you may know, this temple was established by Zen Master Do Mun, who was a disciple of Zen Master Yong Seong. You can see his portrait on your right over there. In 1995 he got permission from the Nepalese government to establish this temple in Lumbini, so it is thanks to him that we can actually have this conference here now. Further, having met the government's rigorous requirements, our temple has permission to operate for the next 99 years.

For the last ten years my teacher has charged me with running this temple. The distinctive architecture of our temple was based on that of Hwang Ryong Sa Temple in the city of Kyong Ju, Korea. That temple was built during the Silla Dynasty (57 BCE–935 CE),

a time when Buddhism flourished in Korea.

I understand that many things here must be uncomfortable or frustrating for you, such as the bathrooms. But since you came here with a great vow to follow Buddha's teaching, I hope you have a great time and a good conference. I also appreciate everyone making an effort to attend this ceremony. Thank you. ❖

Zen Master Dae Kwang



Photo: Adam Dubroka

Our school's "Whole World Is a Single Flower" conference occurs every three years. Starting in 1987 at Su Dok Sa Temple in Korea, it has convened in many different locations around the world. This year, we are meeting in India, the home of the Buddha. Zen Master Seung Sahn had many reasons for creating this kind of international conference for our school, reasons which relate directly to our practice.

First, it brings together members of our school from all over the world so we can connect with each other as a worldwide school. Zen Master Seung Sahn was a ge-

nus at teaching people of many different countries and cultures. If he had started only one thing here, another there, and over there, it wouldn't have much effect. But by bringing them all together, it can really have some force. Every culture has its own ideas and style, but if we can let go of those ideas and come together, then it's possible to have some effect on the world.

Also, as you've experienced during the conference over the last couple of weeks, we come together in the context of practice. So, it isn't just a talk-talk-talk conference, it's a practice-together conference.

Another interesting aspect of these conferences is they always involve a trip. Maybe the trip is to Korea. Maybe the trip is to China. Maybe the trip is to Malaysia, or now India. One time the trip was even to the United States. But there is a teaching reason behind the trip:

As you probably know, right after the Second World War, Man Gong Sunim wrote a famous calligraphy: "The whole world is a single flower." The concept of "the whole world is a single flower" is actually a description of our original mind. Our true self *is* "the whole world is a single flower." But as you have all experienced, human beings have a tendency to attach to their opinions. Any time you attach to your opinion, your mind becomes narrow. Because of this, Zen Master Seung Sahn always taught us to put down our opinion, our condition and our situation; let it rest! When you put down your opinion, your condition and your situation, then the whole world becomes a single flower, because you have let go of your narrow, small mind. At that moment we can connect to the world around us and help it.

So, why are we going on this trip? Zen Master Seung Sahn once said to me, "It's so people can see what the world is really like." As you know, people mostly live in a small little bubble. Maybe they live in a monk or nun bubble. Or maybe they live in an American bubble, or a German bubble, or maybe even an Indian bubble. So, by traveling around the world for these conferences, we widen our minds by experiencing the world outside of our bubble. Everyone on this trip has said to me, "India is like this, like this, like this—it's *so* different than conditions in my country!" When you have that experience, your mind is already a little wider. Also, you experience the suffering of the world.

For many of us, the bubble we live in is like the Buddha's palace. When the Buddha was born his father created a small bubble, a palace, for him to live in so he wouldn't experience the suffering of the world. But the Buddha was very smart; he knew there was some-

thing outside the bubble. It's just that at first he didn't know what *it* was, what was outside the bubble. Later he had his servant take him outside the bubble so he could see the world. He then saw a sick person, an old person, and a dead body. This direct experience hit him hard—*boom!* He then knew directly that his “bubble life” was not the answer to the great question of life and death. Inside of him at that time there was only a big question: What am I? What is a human being? Where does all this suffering come from?

Buddha only taught one thing: he taught about suffering and the relief of suffering. All the rest is just frosting on the cake. So, when we travel around we also see suffering; our trip is a kind of “coming out of the palace.” Zen Master Seung Sahn wanted us to directly have that experience.

Suffering, as the Buddha taught, is created by our like and dislike mind, by our opposites thinking. This is our desire for a good situation, for a “bubble.” When Buddha left home he was actually leaving behind his opposites thinking and his bubble. Also, our practice, moment to moment, is a leaving home, because our home—our palace, our bubble—is made by our opposites thinking.

You don't have to be a monk or a nun to leave home. What we wear is just a costume, a leaving-home costume. But any human being at this moment can let go of their opposites thinking. When you leave your opposites thinking behind, that's true “leaving home.”

One time the monks of Hyang Bong Zen Center sent a letter to Man Gong Sunim. In the letter they said, “On December 8, Buddha saw a star and got enlightenment. What does this mean?” Man Gong Sunim wrote back and said, “Buddha saw a star and said he got enlightenment. That is sand falling into the eyes.” This statement leads to three very interesting questions:

First, Buddha saw a star and got enlightenment. What does this mean?

Second, what kind of enlightenment did Shakyamuni Buddha get?

And third, Man Gong Sunim said, “Buddha saw a star and said he got enlightenment. That's sand falling in the eyes.” What does sand falling in the eyes mean?

If you can answer these three questions then you, too, become Buddha. And even better than that, you get to be the teacher of Buddha. That's a big job, so be careful.

Finally, I want to thank you all who have attended this conference. It isn't easy, so thank you for your efforts. Let's all practice together so our minds can become clear. Then we can get enlightenment and save our world from suffering. Thank you. ❖

Seol Jeong Sunim

Seong Won Seol Jeong Sunim first came to Su Dok Sa Temple at the tender age of 13, when he left home to become a monk. He went to Hae In Sa Temple's monks' college to study the sutras, and he also attended Seoul National University, where he majored in agriculture. For ten years after that he served as the abbot of Su Dok Sa Temple and later became speaker of the house for the monks' parliament of the Chogye Order. Meanwhile, his Zen practice continued to develop under the guidance of his teacher, the late Won Dam Kun Sunim, and he practiced meditation for several years in various Zen centers throughout Korea. In 2010, he became the guiding teacher for the entire sangha of Hwa Gye Sa Temple—where Zen Master Seung Sahn lived and taught until 2004—and for the Su Dok Sa Temple family of monks and nuns.

His dharma names mean “Relaxed Snow” and “Gentle Pine.” Usually he is always sitting the winter and summer retreats on top of the mountain where Jeong Hye Sa Temple is located. Jeong Hye Sa Temple was the Zen center that Zen Master Man Gong developed and where he lived and passed away. Seol Jeong Sunim follows the tradition of the lineage of Man Gong, Byok Cho, and Won Dam, who all strongly believed that Zen monks should practice farming and working Zen in addition to sitting Zen. Seol Jeong Sunim often will quote the Chinese Zen Master Pai Chang who said: “A day without work is a day without eating.” —Zen Master Dae Jin

I really appreciate that everyone from all over the world made a hard effort to attend this conference. It's especially important that we hold this conference in India where the Buddha was born and taught for all his life.

It makes me very happy that we could have this conference in a Korean temple in India, in Lumbini actually, even though the buildings are not completed yet. I further hope this temple is finished and this great project comes to fruition.

As you already understand, the true meaning of Buddha's teaching is trying to find your true self, and then make world peace, and then help all beings. And now I'd actually like to finish my dharma speech.

Now everyone here in this dharma room is listening to my dharma speech and looking at me. So I ask you, what is it that I'm truly talking to, in this moment? Please don't say “it's my master.” If you say that which is now listening to my dharma speech and looking at me, if you say that is the master, I have a question for you. If you call it “the master,” then is it long or short? Is that big or small? Is it coming or going? What is that?

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Eminent teachers speak this way. This is not Buddha, it's not mind, it's not even a thing. So then what is this truly? If you didn't find the answer, please look at this floor. Do you see? Do you hear? If you have no doubt at all about what is said, you are actually already beyond life and death and will get happiness for your whole life. Please let everything just go and just see what it is in front of you. Then you actually attain the great truth. At that moment, your eye is just like the bright moon. At that moment, wherever you go, whoever you meet, you will meet the truth.

The whole single flower is actually the flower of the mind. That means actually the truth-world of this universe. Where is mind? Even though you see, it can't be seen. Even though you hear, it cannot be heard. If you put your mind down, only then can you find it. However, if you try to find it, the more you try the further it goes away. It used to be said that trying to find mind is compared to cultivating a farm. We always have to make an effort for our mind to be clear and beautiful and kind. Our mind is easily controlled by desire, anger and ignorance, and also it is always infested with the insects of evil. If you don't try to clear your mind like cultivating a farm, it always happens that the three evils of desire, anger and ignorance will control your mind instead.

On this trip your clothes and your body have probably gotten dirty very often. It is important to clean your clothes and your body, but the more important thing is to clean your mind. What is the mind, really? It's just like a clear mirror. It's just like the lake that reflects everything in the world—stars, moon, trees. It just reflects everything as it is. That's all. No hindrance, no thinking there. That could be actually your original mind, but now I ask you, are you hindered even by this speech? If you are hindered then you have to practice harder. Without practicing Zen, you never reach the point. Anybody can practice Zen, and actually practice sincerely, and anyone can attain the result.

As you know, Buddha taught for about 45 years after he got enlightenment. Likewise, Zen Master Seung Sahn devoted his whole life to teach just what the mind is, the same as what Buddha taught. Where is the life? Where is the true, peaceful life? You wish only to have freedom forever and just be happy for your whole life. We call that, in Buddhism, true peace and getting enlightenment. We call this nirvana, that you have no hindrance and just have peace and just get true pleasure for your life. And that is what Buddha tried to find out.

So I ask you, what is the purpose of your life? If you want true freedom, true peace, true happiness,

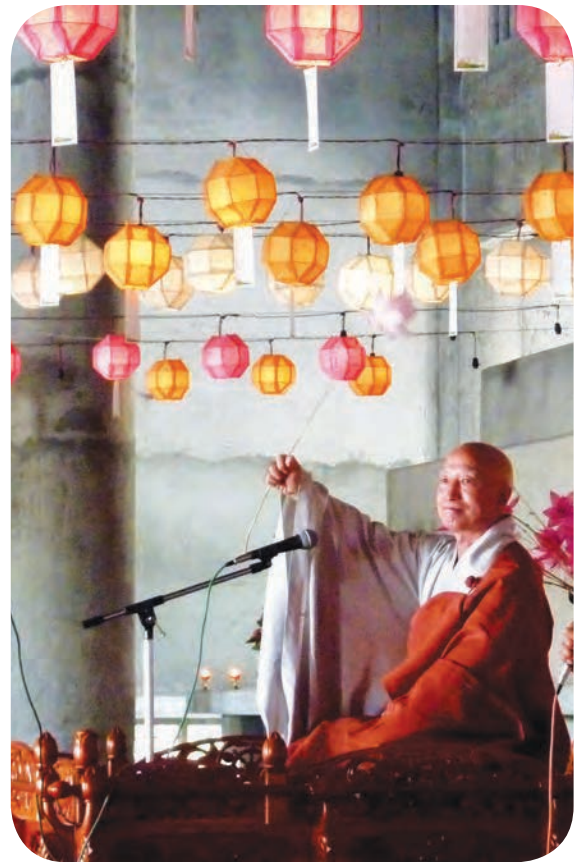


Photo: Francis Lau

then you already know the answer: practice. Once you attain the true nirvana, then you can be truly compassionate. The most important thing in life is how you can help others. You can give things like money, housing or material things to other people and make them happy. That's actually what some great people can do in this world. It's because actually giving and offering—helping—is the most precious thing in a human's life. An even more precious offering is the truth that Buddha taught all beings. Not everyone can offer this teaching—only those who practice hard and discover their true self are able to offer their teaching to all beings. That offering is actually the true path of your life. That's actually what all human beings are supposed to attain and carry on in their life. And practice is the way to attain that.

I really hope that you practice Zen hard, just like you have been doing in your life, find your true self, and help all beings. Please become Buddha.

Let's have a round of applause for the abbot of this Dae Sung Sokka Sa Temple. I hope that this temple is completed as soon as possible, so that if there is another event like this we can have better facilities. Let's all clap our hands again for this great abbot. ♦