

## TRANSMISSION CEREMONY FOR

# Zen Master Ji Haeng

April 5, 2014, at Providence Zen Center

### DHARMA COMBAT

**Zen Master Ji Haeng:** Mu Sang Sunim.

**Mu Sang Sunim:** Thom.

**ZMJH:** Good afternoon.

**MSSN:** So. Not so long ago, you were in a terrible auto accident. Now, at that time, as I'm told, after the accident you didn't remember what happened. You were completely unconscious. So at that time, when you were unconscious, your true self, where did it go?

**ZMJH:** You already understand.

**MSSN:** I don't, please teach me.

**12] ZMJH:** Your head is shaved and your eyes are blue.

**MSSN:** I don't accept that.

*[Laughter.]*

**ZMJH:** You want more?

**MSSN:** I want more.

**ZMJH:** Go drink tea. Already here.

**MSSN:** Thank you for your teaching.

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**ZMJH:** Great abbot Carlos.

**Question:** Hi Thom.

**ZMJH:** Hi.

**Q:** Congratulations.

**ZMJH:** Thank you.

**Q:** So, before Zen Master Seung Sahn got transmission he sat a 100-day retreat. Last night you told me you sat a 50-day retreat. What happened to the other 50 days?

*[Laughter.]*

**ZMJH:** You already understand.

**Q:** I'm asking you.

**ZMJH:** Ten more days after today will make 100.

**Q:** OK, thank you.

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**Question:** Rrrrrrrrr! *[On all fours, acts like a dog.]*

*[Laughter.]*

**Q:** Raarrrr! *[Sniffs around, lifts leg, as if peeing on a tree.]*

**ZMJH:** Dharma already complete.

**Q:** *[Returns to seat.]*



Photo: Karen Resnick

### DHARMA SPEECH

*[Raises the Zen stick over his head, then hits the table with the stick.]*

The stick is the table, the table is the stick.

This is opposites world. Everything is changing moment by moment. Who can know it or define it?

*[Raises the Zen stick over his head, then hits the table with the stick.]*

No stick, no table.

This is absolute world. It requires no explanation, no faith and no understanding.

*[Raises the Zen stick over his head, then hits the table with the stick.]*

The stick is brown, the tablecloth is red.

This is complete world. Not reliant on knowledge, not giving rise to grasping or rejecting.

Each of these statements represents three worlds: Opposites—Absolute—Complete

Which one do you like?

KATZ!

Right now, we are all present in this dharma room for a ceremony.

The precision and intelligence of each moment flows freely only when we are not judging and evaluating our experience.

In 2008, as some of you may recall, I was involved in a near-death automobile accident on my way home from Zen practice one evening. An intoxicated driver hit my vehicle from behind. Five eyewitnesses testified his speed to be near 100 miles per hour. My vehicle rolled over three times. In addition to multiple other injuries, my neck was broken, which is often fatal or results in paralysis. The driver who hit me subsequently was found guilty of felony drunk driving and sent to prison. As for me, I spent the better part of a month in the hospital: initially the trauma ward, followed by intensive care and then rehab.

When I was sufficiently capable to take calls, Zen Master Wu Kwang telephoned me with well wishes. It took a moment for the nurse to fit the telephone handset through the metal bars of the halo device that was attached to my skull, keeping my neck in place.

He asked me “How are you doing?” Not wanting to miss an opportunity to engage him, even under those circumstances, my response was, “Right now I’m lying here in bed looking up at the ceiling and talking to you!” Sort of a “dharma convalescence combat.” Without hesitation Zen Master Wu Kwang replied, “What choice do you have?” His mind sword pierced me that day, his Zen stick hitting me from clear across the country. In this life, we are guaranteed nothing.

Upon his enlightenment, Zen Master Man Gong composed this poem:

*Empty Mountain, true energy without time and space.  
White cloud and clear wind come and go by themselves.  
Why did Bodhidharma come to China?  
Rooster crowing in the morning, sun rising in the east.*

Zen Master Jun Kang’s commentary said, “If you attain this poem, you attain the meaning of all the sutras. The last two lines are the most important: Rooster crowing in the morning, sun rising in the east. If you find that point, then you find Bodhidharma’s heart and Buddha’s head.” He finished by saying “Thorny jungle everywhere.”

Oftentimes we set up some idea in the road of prac-



Photo: Karen Resnick

tice of gaining something. We entertain a linear vision of practicing to purify something, eliminate something or transform something into something else.

The truth, however, can only be found in the present moment. This moment has no birth and no death. Birth and death, coming and going, are all based on some type of conceptual framework. We make attempts to anchor ourselves in a system of rationale and theoretical space at first, but only by stripping away all the props and constructs can we arrive at a place of not knowing that is truly profound. Zen Master Seung Sahn used to say, “no meaning is great meaning.”

A novice monk once asked Zen Master Joju, “Master, each day you and I wake up at the same time, bow together, chant together, eat together, and meditate together. What differentiates us that elevates you to the high seat?” Master Joju replied, “There is only one difference.” The young monk, eager to learn what this one difference could be, implored the Master to reveal this single element. Joju replied, “It is really quite simple. I use the twenty four hours and you are used by the twenty four hours.”

Everything is no problem as long as we are not attached to our thinking and the resultant thought streams that control our actions, speech and emotions.

Observing the comings and goings of our mind without rejecting or grasping anything allows us to see all situations with a clear mind. We can give up being competitive, and settle into an intelligence that responds rather than reacts to life situations. When this happens, our founding teacher’s legacy stands there like a mirror to remind us that our true inside job is to help this world and save all beings from suffering.

*[Raises the Zen stick over his head, then hits the table with the stick.]*

If you say that sound is liberating, you have already lost it.

*[Raises the Zen stick over his head, then hits the table with the stick.]*

If you say that sound is binding, you are trapped in a world of opposites.

*[Raises the Zen stick over his head, then hits the table with the stick.]*

Liberate or bind, how do you resolve this dilemma?  
KATZ!

In a little while, we will all pose for a group photo. ♦