

INKA CEREMONY FOR

Jiri (George) Hazlbauer

March 20, 2016 at Wu Bong Sa Temple, Poland

DHARMA COMBAT

Question: Last year when I was on the way to Vrazne, I got lost and you gave me a lift. As you are becoming a teacher, I want to ask you, how can you give me a lift to enlightenment?

Hazlbauer PSN: You already understand.

Q: No, I don't.

Hazlbauer PSN: What color is this floor?

Q: It's brown.

Hazlbauer PSN: Keep that mind.

Question: I'm happy to see you here.

Hazlbauer PSN: I'm happy to see you, too.

Q: You're the guy who's traveled the world. You've lived in many places. What is your true home?

Hazlbauer PSN: You already understand.

Q: No, I don't.

Hazlbauer PSN: Sitting here talking to you.

Q: Oh, thank you.

Question: I would like to know what is wrong with I-my-me way of life?

Hazlbauer PSN: You already understand.

Q: Sometimes, sometimes not.

Hazlbauer PSN: My name is George. What is yours?

Q: Irit. Nice to meet you.

DHARMA SPEECH

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

A good situation is a bad situation; a bad situation is a good situation.

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

No good, no bad, then what?

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

A good situation is a good situation; a bad situation is a bad situation.

KATZ!

Many people in a warm room on a cold spring day.

I would first of all like to thank all of my teachers, especially Dae Kwang Sunim, for all of their patience with me through the years. And thanks to Jo, who really pushed me in the last few years with my homework. And to all of my dharma brothers and sisters, of whom the most important is my wife, Tam.

It's a strange feeling to be here, one which I did not expect. As I just said, with a good situation being bad and a bad situation being good, I was thinking of the life I lived that brought me to the misfortunes that shaped my life, which actually were more important than what you would call success, and I would like to share that with you. Because we often think things only need to go well in order for life to be good, but actually when we really look at it, we need both good and bad to have a really full and happy life.

So for one, I never wanted to be a carpenter. I wanted to be a mathematician, but my government told me that I have no future for the country, so they didn't allow me to go to school. So then I went into carpentry school, and thought I would do something else afterward. Then I started doing Zen a few years later, and I found out that all these Zen centers are built of wood! And that there are carpenters needed. So it opened the doors to Zen centers all around the globe. So bad? Good . . . ?

When I finished carpentry school I switched jobs really fast. Within two months I had a third job, lost that one too, and the father of my friend offered me a job in his construction company. It was more out of pity rather than that he needed anybody. He said, "Just come to the office, we'll have a talk and sort it out." I went to the office. He was not there; it was some other guy. I talked to him, got the job, started working. Then I met the owner of the company, and he's like, "Why didn't you ever come for the interview?" I said, "What do you mean, I went for the interview, I got the job." He said, "Well, not in my company!" I got a job in a fresh startup company, which had just become a really important company, and due to things various circumstances, in two months I was in the top management in that company and my life completely changed.

So, again, good, bad—things just happen.

I met incredible people in that company, which helped me really look into life, asking the questions, such as why we really live. They were like, "Yeah, we're doing this job but we really need to find out what life is about." I was like, "What do you mean, 'What is life about?' We work,



Photo: Grzegorz Piaskowski

we go home, we sleep, go back to work.” “No!” they said. “Something more!”

So those were the people who really helped me start questioning life, and that question became so big that I actually left the business, started traveling, and went to Israel in search of a spiritual teacher. I was on the way to Asia. I didn't speak any other languages really at that time, and the bus driver I guess didn't really understand me or what I was trying to do, so he let me out in the middle of the desert, saying, “This is the address you are looking for.” I was like, “No!” And he said, “Yeah!” I got out and there was really nobody. We found a few Bedouins, and they really liked us and let us stay with them. I spent three months living with the Bedouins and had an incredible amount of time to sort out my thoughts.

I was really desperate to figure out what this life is about. I literally left my company and just wanted to find

a guru and I was trying all possible techniques. I was going nuts. I remember I was trying to stop my thinking, because that's what I read. I tried so hard that I could not form a thought anymore. I ended up banging my head on a rock just to stop the pain. That was the first time in my life I actually saw the blue sky. I also had with me a few books I had found. One of them was *Dropping Ashes on the Buddha*. Since I had plenty of time, and the Bedouins were an incredible people, helping me to survive, I finally turned the last page. I read really, really slowly. So I got to the last page and there was an address of a place in Prague where people practiced Zen. So I turned around and went to Prague and started practicing with you guys.

Good, bad, who knows?

We never know what is the outcome of our actions. And we will never have control over our lives. That is the beauty of life: the unknown which is always in front of us. So I just wish for all of us that we can embrace that and live with that don't-know as the beauty that it is in our teachings and in our lives.

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

Open mouth already a mistake. Don't say a word, you're already dead.

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

No silence, no words. What can you do?

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

Silence is silence. Talk is just talk.

KATZ!

Many smiling faces in the room, cookies are coming soon. ♦

Jiri (George) Hazlbauer was born in Prague and started practicing with the Kwan Um School of Zen there in 1999. Since then, he has lived and worked in Zen centers around the world, participating in daily Zen training and many long retreats, as well as holding various staff positions. He is a carpenter by profession, which has enabled him to help with construction, maintenance and operations in various locations. Much of his Zen training took place at the North American head temple, Providence Zen Center, where he served as abbot before returning to his native country. He is currently the abbot of Vrazne Zen Center in the Czech Republic, where he lives with his wife.