

I Have a Diamond Sword

Zen Master Dae Bong

Dharma speech given at Mu Sang Sa Temple, Korea, February 11, 2017

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

Beginning is ending, ending is beginning.

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

No beginning, no ending.

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

Beginning is just beginning, ending is just ending.

If you throw away all that thinking, what do you have?

KATZ!

Today is Hae Jae day. Be careful!

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Today is Dae Bo Reum, big first full moon of the new year. Today the New Year really begins. Already washed away the old year. Today is the end of three months of winter Kyol Che, not only in our temple but in the temples all over Korea. Today is also the end of the winter 90-day Kwan Um Kido and the end of the 21-day special Hwa Om Song Jung. We did this 21-day kido to finish off the old year and begin the new year with strong, clear energy.

That's Buddha's army over there (pointing to the altar of the dharma protectors). We have Buddha's army that's supporting and helping the dharma. That means our own dharma power inside. Today also is the end of Ji Mun Sunim's chanting kido for almost 200 days straight. Every day for 200 days, three times a day. Sometimes many people in this Buddha hall chanted together with him, sometimes he chanted alone. His body stayed in this Buddha hall, but his mind? I don't know, maybe fly around many places, but always come back. Only following correct situation, relationship and function. Everybody did lots of practice this winter in the temple or at home. Everybody, did you accomplish what you wanted to during this practicing time? Accomplish or not accomplish, doesn't matter. It's not so important. What are you doing right now?

Last century, there was a very great Korean Zen master named Hae Wol. Everybody has heard of Hae Wol Sunim. He was not an educated person. I heard that he couldn't read or write but he was a great practicing person and a great student of Zen master Gyeong Heo. When he was teaching, he always said, "Everyone has a diamond sword." Sometime he said, "I have a diamond sword."

During the first half of the last century, we all know that the Japanese occupied Korea. At that time many generals in the Japanese army remembered the old times

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Photo: Grzegorz Piaskowski

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I HAVE A DIAMOND SWORD

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in Japan when the samurai were great. These days in America, the American president says, "America used to be great. We'll make it great again." So at that time also, many Japanese soldiers thought "We were samurai." Some officers even carried around swords. There was one general who was very proud of this tradition and carried a sword. He was stationed in Korea. He met many sunims, and he didn't like Buddhist sunims. He especially didn't like practicing sunims. Then one day he heard that there was a monk in Korea who said he has a diamond sword. Then the general thought, "That's crazy, impossible. A sword made from diamond? My sword is an excellent sword, a hundred years old, made from famous, old special steel. How could some monk say he has a sword made from diamond? That's crazy." He started searching around Korea for this monk, Hae Wol Sunim.

Finally, he found the temple where Hae Wol Sunim lived and went there. At that moment Hae Wol Sunim was in the Buddha Hall. The general came walking in without taking off his shoes. He just walked right in. "Are you Hae Wol Sunim?" "Yes." "I heard you say you have a diamond sword." "Yes." Then the general took out his sword and said, "Show me your diamond sword, or I'll kill you right here." Then without flinching at all, Hae Wol Sunim said, "Oh, my diamond sword is hanging behind you." This general turned quickly around to look for this diamond sword. At that moment, Hae Wol Sunim stepped forward and slammed his fist into the back of the general's neck and said, "This

is my diamond sword and you're dead." The general was so shocked. He fell down on the floor of the Buddha hall and he realized how incredibly brave Hae Wol Sunim was. The general turned around and bowed to him. After that, he never touched Korean sunims again and he always respected them.

Every one of us has a diamond sword in our mind. During this winter practicing time, whether you were in the temple or at home, did you find your diamond sword? Even if you found it, how will you use it? Zen Master Seung Sahn used to say, "Everyone has a diamond sword in their mind." Then he said, "If you take your sword out, don't just wave it around. You must use it and kill." This sword sometimes is cold and sharp and kills. Sometimes this sword is soft and gentle like a baby and gives life. So everyone, if you haven't found your mind sword, your diamond sword, you must find it. We must find our mind sword, and then use it to save all beings. This is our job as students of Buddha. This is our job as human beings. I want to finish with a poem from the Chinese Zen Master Mu Mun:

*Eye is a shooting star.
Spirit is like lightning.
Death sword,
life sword.*

Today is Hae Je day. What will you do this Hae Je? A light snow is covering the ground. A big storm may be coming. When you go outside, be careful! ♦

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