

TRANSMISSION CEREMONY FOR

Zen Master Gu Ja (Namhee Chon)

Transmission ceremony at Wu Bong Sa Temple, Poland, on April 8, 2017

DHARMA COMBAT

Question: I have a problem. I painted a calligraphy for you. *[Holds up a piece of calligraphy.]* The head of a dragon and the tail of a snake. But my purpose was to paint a different one: I wanted to paint the head of a snake and the tail of a dragon. However I had no special fantasy. I don't know what it looks like. Can you show it to me?

Zen Master Gu Ja: You already understand!

Q: No, I don't understand.

Zen Master Gu Ja: Go to the bathroom and look into the mirror! *[Loud laughter and applause from the audience.]*

Q: Thank you! *[Gives the calligraphy to Zen Master Gu Ja.]* You deserve it well.



Q: Very nice to see you. Some time ago you gave me very good training in Berlin. I am a well-known trouble-maker, but you managed to deal with it very well. At that

time we worked together to move you into a new house. You moved from your rented house to the big house where you are living now. We organized a truck and moved things to the new house. Now you are moving again, from Poep Sa Nim to Soen Sa Nim. But I don't see a truck. So what truck will you use to get from Poep Sa Nim to Soen Sa Nim?

Zen Master Gu Ja: You already understand!

Q: No, I don't.

Zen Master Gu Ja: Please kneel down.

[He kneels down and Zen Master Gu Ja sits on his back and rides on him. Very loud laughter and applause from the audience.]



Zen Master Gu Ja: Nice to see you again after so long a time!

Question: Nice to see you! *[Holds up a book of Zen Master Man Gong's teachings.]* Recently I came back to this little book and I found a question: "Zen Master" is not a conventional title like a doctor or a teacher. But it refers to a person who has mastered the principles of the universe. So how did you master the principles of the universe?

Zen Master Gu Ja: You already understand!

Q: Please tell me.

Zen Master Gu Ja: I like you very much. *[Loud laughter and applause.]*

Q: Thank you! *[Hugs Zen Master Gu Ja.]*

DHARMA SPEECH

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

Paint a tiger, get scared of the tiger and look for an escape.

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

Don't make anything! In infinite time and infinite space there is not even one single thing. Where is a tiger? Where is the one who paints a tiger?



Photo: Grzegorz Piaskowski



Photo: Grzegorz Piaskowski

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

Become clear. When a tiger appears, ride the tiger and get out of the illusion world! Then, crying and laughing with no hindrance, only for all beings.

Which one of these three do you choose?

KATZ!

Good to see you all here! Thank you, dear sangha, for coming to this ceremony. My invaluable gratitude is for my great teachers Zen Master Seung Sahn and Zen Master Wu Bong. The biggest privilege in my life is that I had the chance to meet these great teachers. When I was still a very young Zen student and practiced for some time in

Korea, Zen Master Seung Sahn told me several times, “Soon a teacher should appear in Germany.” He knew that I was living in Germany, so I felt like he was speaking to me. I asked him each time, “Whom do you have in your mind?” hoping he would have seen some quality in me which I didn’t even know existed. But he just ignored me completely and would not say a word. Sometime later I found out that this was his way to encourage me to keep practicing.

Soon after Zen Master Wu Bong passed away, I had a vivid dream of him one night here in the temple in Falenica. I told him in a dream, “Sunim, I miss you so much. Where are you now?” He spread out his arms and with his typical big smile he said, “The sky is blue and the trees are green.” Then I woke up and was so glad to know with no doubt the place where all the buddhas and great teachers are all together and that we are never separated from them. Today I meet them here in all of your presence.

Most of the retreats I attended in Europe were guided by Zen Master Bon Shim. She was always the source of inspiration and encouragement for me. Thank you Zen Master Bon Shim, for your teaching, trust and unconditional support. And I bow to my family in gratitude. Thank you that I am allowed to be your wife, your mother and most of all to be your friend.

Almost thirty years ago I came for the first time to Falenica and here I first met the teachings of Zen Master Seung Sahn. That one week I stayed here was extremely difficult for me. I suffered from pain in my knees and back. I had to stand up and sit down again and again every ten minutes during the sitting meditation, and I shivered and sweated cold and hot because of the pain. Despite the pain and the struggle there was something that did not allow me to give up. That was my strong wanting mind. I wanted to know what all the great teachers knew that I didn’t. What insight did they have? I thought my life would become different—more meaningful and valuable—as soon as I found this out.

The guiding teacher during that Kyol Che told me during an interview that if I keep strong don’t-know mind, I would see clear, hear clear and everything will become clear. Actually I did not know the true meaning of “don’t know” or “seeing clear.” So every day during a break I went out to the garden and checked whether I could see more clearly. According to my idea at that time I expected to see something beyond what I could perceive

usually, or perhaps things would appear with more sharp outlines. To my disappointment I didn't notice any progress in this concern.

But during the sitting meditation I saw a lot more. My seat was placed right in front of the wooden wall. The small piece of the wall in front of me soon turned out to be filled with constantly changing pictures. I saw pictures of beautiful landscapes, fields, trees, animals, faces of men and women, people dancing, laughing, making love and so on. I was totally fascinated and absorbed while looking at the pictures and forgot everything around me for many days. But one day it happened that suddenly all the pictures disappeared. The wall stayed just as it was with lines, dots, colors and wood grains. Simple and not changing. The view of this simple piece of wood could not be compared with anything else I had seen before. It was so clear and beautiful! This beauty touched me so deeply that I started to cry silently. But it wasn't until some years later that I could realize that what I saw on the wall and how I saw it had to do with my mind only. This small piece of wooden wall revealed obviously how my mind was moving and creating things. When our mind moves and thinking appears, out of the lines, dots and colors a tiger jumps out, demons are threatening, sex and rock 'n' roll emerge. It is the same in our everyday life. Our mind fabricates something, we think it's real and we laugh, cry and crave like mad because of that. We are like a fish fidgeting in the net of our own mind. Only when we realize that the substance of thinking and also the substance of our mind are all empty, we can let go of our attachment to our thinking and get out of the net. Everything then becomes simple and clear as it is. The wall is white and the sky is blue. Whatever we perceive, we are one with it. Only white and only blue.

Enlightenment is simple. Just without attaching to our thinking see clear, hear clear, perceive everything clear. Then what is the job of enlightenment?

Before my mother died, she was seriously sick for many years, so she had to take many strong medicines. As a side effect she had hallucinations from time to time. She saw snakes crawling in her room, pumpkins growing on a tree in wintertime or monkeys jumping around. At the beginning I felt strongly embarrassed. Every time when she clapped her hands and exclaimed, "Look at these big pumpkins! Let's make a pumpkin soup!" or "How cute these monkeys are!" I tried to persuade her that what she thought she was seeing was not there and it wasn't real. But I had no success. I also could not convince her that

there were no snakes in her room. She was terribly scared. There was no doubt about her emotional reaction to what she perceived.

At some point I started to ask myself whether it was possible that we all live in a world of hallucinations. Indeed, many people live in this world under the strong influence of a drug called ego. They see everywhere I, my, me where there are none. What do we see now? If we perceive whatever it is in front of us through the perspective of our opinion, our condition and our situation, we create our own hallucinatory bubble. Buddha bubble, Zen bubble, enlightenment bubble, Zen master bubble. When we are attached to our bubbles, we make good and bad, right and wrong and we are fighting for my religion first, my country first, my family first and I first. We become blind and deaf to suffering and to the cries of this world, and so we create even more suffering.

In this life it is not about our I and it is not about our gain or loss. What is this I? We cannot find it. Only don't know. This very don't know is our original nature! We are this don't know, no matter in what situation and condition we are. So whatever it is, it is OK. Whatever we do, this don't know is doing it. This don't know is manifesting in ten thousand things, and the ten thousand things are manifesting this don't know. So living in this world means living this don't know in each moment. Happiness comes: only happy. Sadness comes: only sad. Paradise is welcome. Hell is welcome too. Then we can use our happiness, our sadness and also the paradise and hell in order to help all beings. That is our job in this life and our direction. Enlightenment means just do it. So let us from moment to moment just do it!

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

Sitting, sleeping always with your eyes open. If you perceive you dreaming, are you in sleep or are you awake?

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

Who perceives whose dream?

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

Wake up! What are you doing now? Just do it!

But how can you do this "just do it"?

KATZ!

My talk is now finished. Thank you for listening. ♦