

was inspired, and so I decided to make this kind of Zen village, and we have a good place now.

But it happens slowly. And I need support. But people in Lithuania won't support you if you're not Catholic, because all the rich people are also Catholic. Now before coming here, we just had a big conference, with a prominent Christian monk, Krishna monk and myself. Almost 700 people came. We had strong interaction with the audience. Most of them, of course, use the internet and Facebook. So all of a sudden, we are getting support from social media. And to my surprise, one guy calls and says, "I can help."

So slowly, OK. This took from 2004 until now—13 years until people believed in me. I understood about this from watching Zen Master Seung Sahn. While I was in in Hwa Gye Sa Temple, when I stayed at Mu Sang Sa Temple, I made problems for my teachers—many, many problems. And now I see I kind of had it easy. Because of how monasteries are, I became the head monk. That's just the way it works, getting these positions. I wasn't very important, but had responsibility. When I went back to my country and people started believing in me, many people wrote me. I wrote a book, and people knew about me more and more. And I had this realization, "Wow, these people really believe."

I immediately changed my behavior. Changed my karma. This is the meaning of what Zen Master Seung Sahn told me: "You must help people." Because when people trust you, your behavior has to change. It's not easy. It doesn't happen quickly. But I changed. Now I see how I used to lie—to myself, to others. Now I cannot lie too much. I cannot behave like I did before. After telling everybody, "Lying is not good," I realize, "Oh my god! This means I cannot lie!"

If you talk to people like this, and they really trust you, then now they also check you everywhere you go. They look at what I do. They look at what I say. If I say, "Coffee is not good for you," and then I start drinking coffee, of course they will wonder. They'll say, "Hey! Yesterday you said coffee is not good. So why are you drinking coffee?"

Now that people believe me a little more, trust me a little more, they start teaching me. Now we are coming together. I already have many connections, maybe a thousand people who already know what I'm doing and help out. Arunas is also here today. He helped me a lot. These people have really already decided, "OK, I will help you." This really gives me faith. Now I understood how important a monk's life is—not alone, but together. Any time I have a question, I call Dae Bong Sunim and ask what can I do. Already I've performed maybe ten marriage ceremonies, a hundred baby ceremonies. Monks need support, more and more. It's not about money, just belief and trust and together action, in this country, which is not Buddhist.

Thank you very much.

Bo Haeng Sunim began Zen practice in 1989 and became a monk in 2001. Each year he participates in the summer and winter Kyol Che retreats at South Korean temples and at the head European Kwan Um Zen School temple in Warsaw. In addition, he leads Zen retreats in Lithuania. Bo Haeng Sunim has founded Zen groups in many cities. He also regularly meets with laypeople, visits prisoners, gives lectures at business conferences, and participates in TV and radio programs—all the while making Zen teaching more accessible.

The Monastery That You Have to Have Is Inside

Myong Hae Sunim JDPS

[Zen Master Jok Um asked, "I'm wondering if you've experienced the same kind of 'you don't belong here,' since you're both from Lithuania. I'm wondering how you experienced that and how you've coped with it."]

Well, actually, wearing the uniform, you kind of stand out anyway. I forget that I look different. It happens a lot when I go to Lithuania. I go to the bus station and suddenly everyone turns to look at me, and I just look back behind me wondering, "Is something happening?" So I do stand out in the gray monastic uniform. When I'm in Asia, because there are not so many white people wearing these clothes, again everybody will look at me and wonder why a white person would become a monastic. There are many times when people will treat you differently. So it's not necessarily that you don't belong here, but people kind of question what this is.

Zen Master Seung Sahn said, "Monastics are like a don't-know army", so that's what I am doing, and I'm very happy. I'm just giving 'don't know' to everybody! It's just like a big question: "Who are you?" It is very interesting. You see

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Photo: Allan Matthews

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they are not the people who will inspire us to act.

However, quite a lot of us here were willing to travel thousands of miles to listen to Zen Master Seung Sahn and to study with him. It's the same with the Dalai Lama or the Pope. When I was young, I thought nothing of getting my friends together and finding somebody who had a car so that we could drive a few hours to go to a concert and hear our favorite band—U2 or Springsteen.

I believe it's the spiritual leaders, the musicians, the artists, the poets, the filmmakers who can and will inspire us. Why is that? They speak to our hearts, not to our minds. I've seen Al Gore's first documentary. It was OK and informative. But I don't think it inspired or moved me as much as listening to Zen Master Seung Sahn, or other spiritual teachers or some music that I really connected with.

I think that all of you here are spiritual leaders. Some of you are also musicians, artists, poets, writers and filmmakers. If you step up to inspire others, I think we could do a lot to help our world situation. I don't have a nice neat answer to what it is to be true human beings, but I think it's up to us to reclaim our true human heritage by practicing the spiritual path.

You're probably not going to like what I am going to say next. One way we can start doing something simple now is to make changes with the meat that we eat. In 2006, the UN's Food and Agriculture Organization published a report called "Livestock's Long Shadow." Following this,

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families with kids, and all of a sudden, a kid looks at you funny, tugging at her parent's sleeve and pointing a finger at me with a questioning face: "Who is that? What is this?" The kids already have don't know. And at the same time, other people will also have this question, "What is it?" Even if it's just for a short moment, they return to don't know. Or sometimes they might ask, "These clothes—are you a monk or what?" I get all these questions. So even today, coming from the hotel on the shuttle bus, the driver was just looking at me and at the Providence Zen Center address, and he said, "I've seen this place before. What are you doing here? What is meditation?" And you can see that he's thinking, "I have difficulties. Can it help me?" Maybe you will have a new person coming on Sunday. So because of the monastic uniform, these people would come to ask about their lives and in a way have a chance to meet the dharma.

I didn't go to churches and didn't face the challenges that Bo Haeng Sunim went through, but having this kind of experience of how people relate to me differently is not necessarily a feeling of not belonging. I hadn't been in Lithuania for a long time, so the situation there has changed a lot. I may not understand many things or know how to fit in. Even though I've been in Asia for a long time, I'm not really Asian, and I still do not completely understand Asian culture either. It's like I don't belong anywhere. I'm not Asian, but I'm in Asia. When I

Goodland and Anhang of the World Bank published a similar report in 2009. Both found that livestock farming is a huge contributor to global warming and greenhouse gases because ruminant animals like cattle fart and belch a lot.

What comes out of them is methane. It is about 80 times worse than CO2 for warming the climate. But methane doesn't last as long as CO2. It has a much shorter life span. So, if we could cut our meat and dairy consumption, it would make a pretty immediate impact. But it's something that we have to be willing to do.

A University of Cambridge study in 2014 found that the average efficiency of converting plant feed to meat is only 3 percent. If any of you ran a business at 3 percent efficiency, you wouldn't be in business very long. But we still insist on doing this.

If China and the rest of Asia and India start to eat like the West, I don't know what's going to happen. Many of us like our bacon, our cheese and our yogurt. However, if we can't adopt a plant-based diet 100 percent, why not try 80 percent? Try eating meat and dairy one day a week. And the rest of the time eat plant-based foods. We could try it this coming week—we've got great chefs serving up a great menu of vegetarian and vegan food. I don't think anybody's going to die from not having animal protein for a week.

So, finally, for our children and our children's children—all of those who will come after us—please let's just try to just do it. Thank you. ♦

go back to Lithuania, they'll call me a foreigner, because I have an accent now when I speak Lithuanian. I have an accent in every language I speak! I But what is my true self? What am I really? I am not Chinese; I am not Lithuanian; I am not any of these things. And at the same time I feel that actually I belong to everyone, to this whole world. It's starting to break boundaries. So in some ways you break the boundaries of "that's my country" or "that's my path" or "that's the group of people I belong to."

I am used to this monastic life, and practice is a little bit like a challenge. It challenges my own boundaries as well. As Bo Haeng Sunim said, he was told, "You have to stay in the monastery; don't go out." Well, after you practice, the monastery that you have to have is inside. But breaking the boundaries of what we are making, of what you are, boundaries of I-my-me. Having a strong inner monastery of don't know helps. Also everything is constantly changing. So you have to be with this don't know all the time. That's my challenge. ♦

Myong Hae Sunim JDPS is the first Buddhist nun from Lithuania, where she heard of Zen Master Seung Sahn's teaching for the first time in 1991. She moved to Hong Kong after becoming a nun in 1997 to train under Zen Master Dae Kwan. Myong Hae Sunim has served as head nun and vice abbot of Su Bong Zen Monastery in Hong Kong, where she now serves as the monastery's second guiding teacher.