

# Everything Becomes Buddha

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As you just heard, my name is Muchak. When I got five precepts, I received this name, Muchak. *Mu* means “no” and *chak* means “attachment.” I was very proud of my name. At that time I checked very much: I checked me and I checked others. One teacher called me “Checking Woman.” At that time I checked myself.

I’m not so much attached to money, and not so much attached to sleep, or sex, or fame. I checked myself, and thought, “I’ve not so much attachment.” I thought I could give up everything, like this [*snaps fingers*]. And so I thought, this name is really good for me.

And then once I went to Korea and met a strong Buddhist woman. She asked me, “What is your Buddhist name?” I said “Muchak” and she immediately knew the meaning. Then she told me, “Your master must have reasons to give you this name.” I never thought of it from this viewpoint. So my ego got hurt.

After a while I noticed my mistake. There was so much “I.” “I can do this, I know this, I can . . .” Everything I, I, I, so big. Even if we give away our life and the whole world, but we keep hold of our “I”—nothing happens.

Buddha once said, when we look closely, all the origins or roots of our suffering come from this “I.” We have something to protect, to be nourished and to be praised. From that come the so-called five poisons: pride, jealousy, desire, hatred, ignorance.

But what is this “I”? Who am I? To find out what this is we come here together. Once in a summer retreat in America, in Providence, I sat and I got really lost in huge mountains of memories. You know already what it is like: you have lots of memories, and I saw lots of people whom I saw before, whom I loved, whom I hated, with whom I fought. Places I had been to, and wonderful experiences and bad experiences, all this stuff.

But somehow I could manage to come back this moment where I was sitting. So I looked at the floor and suddenly a question appeared to me: “This person, this person in my memories, is it still me? Is it still me who loved this person and hated that person, who did this and that?” And I must say “No.” I was no more this person. I could not say, “This is I, this is me.”

In this way I could see that this very person who asked this question, whether this person is me or not, soon this person will not be me. So I somehow got into a panic. Then “What am I? Where is this I?” I was kind of desper-

ate to look and find, to search . . . There was no answer.

Now on this day there was an interview. The teacher rang the bell and I went into the interview room. As soon as I bowed and took a seat, Do An JDPSN (who would later become Zen Master Dae Kwang) asked me “WHO ARE YOU!”

And all of a sudden I had to cry, I had to cry hard tears. There was no way to find out. After some time Sunim told me “shhh” and then said, “Listen!” And outside at that very moment a bird was singing. I was so happy! So first I was so sad, and at that moment he told me “Listen!” and then he said, “that’s all.”

The rest of that retreat I spent with hearing. Every sound, each sound I was hearing, was wonderful. The wind, birds, doors banging constantly. There was only this sound, this wonderful sound. It’s not only hearing. When we are really stuck, when we don’t know, when we have this don’t-know completely, then everything—whatever you hear, whatever you see, whatever you touch—everything becomes Buddha. Everything is like what it is. There is nothing to add, nothing to take away. Everything is OK.

So we sit. Many of you sat the whole retreat already, and some of us just for several weeks. We sit, looking, perceiving how the thoughts are coming, going, coming, going. This is actually all that we are doing. Our work during sitting time is to sit and watch as thoughts are coming and going. And don’t touch this; then the thought itself is Buddha.

There is no good thinking and bad thinking. There are thoughts. We don’t welcome them, but we don’t reject them. And so we sit, straight but relaxed. We just naturally watch, without manipulation, just relaxed. But the thinking, the sounds that we perceive are not that important, too. Our minds just reflect these things, but it comes and goes.

But one thing: we stay awake, aware of what is coming, what arises. And we let go, by itself. This awakening from moment to moment is very important. In this way we can be master of our house. We don’t get controlled by others, or by our mind.

So we don’t need to keep saying, “How may I help you?” All this is bullshit. This is only speech. If we, from moment to moment, awaken and be aware of what is coming, that is already a big help. So I hope we keep clear mind from moment to moment, save first ourselves from suffering, and at the same time others. Thank you. ♦