

Biography of Oleg Šuk JDPSN

Zuzka Šuková

Oleg was born in Kazakhstan in the town of Serebrjansk. His maternal grandparents lived with his mother during the Stalinist period, in exile in the far north of Russia. Perhaps because of this, and due to his upbringing, he was very modest and minimalistic through his life. As a child, he was pale as a dandelion. And very gentle: when in kindergarten, he never understood why the children around him would shout and bicker. He was constantly drawing and painting, even at night—so much so that his parents were seriously worried. Even in childhood, he was patient and meticulous. He made an army of three hundred small soldiers from clay, each one a different and original piece. In youth he practiced karate, judo, and other martial arts sometimes, trying to run up the walls. He loved the rough wilderness of Kazakhstan and spent a lot of time outdoors. He understood nature and animals, even sometimes trying to sneak animals into his parents' house.

12]

He was strong and clear as a diamond. He never diverted from his goals and direction, which he would not trade for anything or to anyone. He usually understood well how things work; he somehow always knew how to repair what he had, while enjoying a minimalistic lifestyle. Until the end of his life he was joyful, honest, and clear, almost as if from some other world. At the same time he was sharp, clear, and aimed straight to the point, just like he did with his humor.

Oleg studied architecture in Ust-Kamenogorsk, Kazakhstan. In 1983, he continued his studies of architecture at the University in Bratislava, in Slovakia. It was there that I met him. His eyes were clear and blue, the same as his soul. Through them, blue skies looked at you. Since then we were together to his last day. I discovered him as gentle, receptive, and compassionate, very modest and minimalistic. He used things and brought them back to life. From even something as simple as a piece of old wood, he managed to create something new and original—a small sculpture or a picture. He loved working with different materials.

He was a truly versatile artist, who exploited a multitude of graphic and design techniques. He created sculptures, drawings, and realized interiors; made handmade

paper, decorations, and jewelry; drew cartoon jokes; designed children's playgrounds; wrote books—including a fairytale about a little red riding hood that danced with wolves; and he left behind thousands of pieces of art, calligraphy, writing, and poetry. His Zen was an art, and his art Zen-ish, his paintings often minimalistic.

His entire life was like poetry. He wrote haiku as well. His creativity had a dreamlike beauty and emerged almost instantly. His caricatures and drawings won several international awards. Through his entire professional life, he taught children and adults to draw and paint. They always found with him peace and safety. They always sat after school listening to music, meditating on colors, tea, and solemnity.

Right after graduation, we started to practice Zen. Af-

ter years of practice he received inka and became a Ji Do Poep Sa. He was a wonderful Zen teacher. Many looked forward to attend his talks, meetings, and interviews. He taught through his art, his soul and humor, specific to him only. Clear, sharp, solid, kind, never losing his direction. Even after thirty-seven years of living together, his wisdom—whether in private life, at talks, or during



Photo: Bratislava & Kosice Zen Centers

kong-an interviews—always struck me clearly, precisely, and profoundly.

Calm, patient, and focused, he was an absolute artist. Even when he was hospitalized in the 100-percent sterile environment of intensive care, and later on during COVID self-isolation, just before his death, he created about fifty paintings. He was not particularly keen on mass media; however, through personal contacts, via his life, creativity, and art, he reached thousands and touched our hearts and souls.

One of his last thoughts was, "There is a need to bring more joy to our lives."

The great Russian poet-clown Vyacheslav Polunin said: "Find out who you are and fill up by it the entire space around you." Oleg succeeded in that. He filled up, infused our lives with gentleness, kind humor, beauty, and dreams.

Oleg's Haiku

*...tonight I will write nothing,
I will just watch...*