

## INKA CEREMONY FOR

# Kwan Haeng Sunim

*On December 13, 2020, Kwan Haeng Sunim received inka in a virtual online ceremony.*

### DHARMA COMBAT

**Carlos Montero JDPSN:** Hello Sunim, good afternoon. So good to see you. I also miss you a lot.

**Kwan Haeng Sunim:** Nice to see you. We enjoy your talks up here.

**Montero PSN:** You and I have sat a lot of retreats together, and in the last few years you've been head dharma teacher for Kyol Che when I would come as a guest teacher and teach for a week. I will never forget, one morning we were doing bows and I was keeping count, and at the number 107 you said last bow. And I was wondering, what happened to the 108th bow? What happened to it?

**KHSN:** You already understand.

**Montero PSN:** I'm asking you.

**KHSN:** Last bow!

**Montero PSN:** So what happened to it?

**KHSN:** Not enough?

**Montero PSN:** No, not today.

**KHSN:** Dog runs after the bone.

**Montero PSN:** All right, thank you my friend.



**Terry Cronin JDPSN:** Hello Sunim! It is so good to see you here. I have a question for you. You're a black man, I'm a Caucasian man. But we're both men. Where do we stand on the privilege pecking order in this country?

**KHSN:** You already understand.

**Cronin PSN:** Please teach me.

**KHSN:** We're sitting here talking together. Why are you making all these silly things?

**Cronin PSN:** [Laughing.] To test your mind, my friend. Thank you for teaching me.



**Question:** Thank you so much for becoming a teacher. I can't wait to have an interview with you.

**KHSN:** I'm looking forward to it!

**Q:** A while back you had a talk at the Cambridge Zen Center, and you shared with us how you found the path of Zen because you had a lot of anger and you were trying to do something with that anger. And your talk helped me a lot because I have a lot of anger. My question for you is, what is original anger?

**KHSN:** You already understand.

**Q:** Please teach me.

**KHSN:** Argh!

**Q:** [Laughing.] That's what I thought. Thank you.

### INKA SPEECH

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

Black is white. White is black.

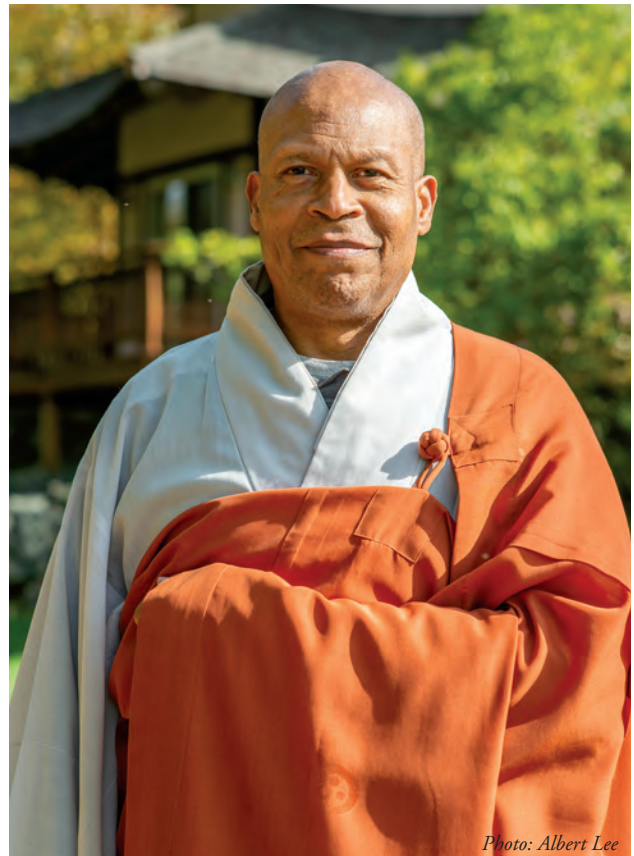
*[Raises the Zen stick over his head, then hits the table with the stick.]*

Not black, not white.

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

Black is black, white is white. What are you?

KATZ!



*Photo: Albert Lee*

We are all sitting here, and there are many colorful faces in the Zoom this evening.

Many years ago, Zen Master Hui Neng went to see Zen Master Hung Jen. When he went to see him, Hung Jen said to him, “Why do you come here?” And Hui Neng said, “I come here only to become a Buddha.” Hung Jen said to him, “But you’re a southerner, an aborigine, how can you become a Buddha?” And Hui Neng said, “In Buddha nature, is there a south or not?”

We have the four great vows, and I want to talk about the second great vow. “Delusions are endless; we vow to cut through them all.” Originally, this universe was empty. Then something appeared. What appeared is delusion. If we cut our attachment to this delusion, then life can be bliss. And so, Jesus said, “The kingdom of heaven is inside.” The Buddha said, “The Tathagata lives in the land of bliss, even while he’s still in his body.”

For myself, what I do practicing here at the Zen center is I go into the dharma room and I sit down, and I practice. Like all of us. Just back to this moment. I don’t plan to walk around in a blissful state, and no Buddhist actually does. And so what happens when I sit down and bring myself back to this moment, whatever I’m holding on to in that moment lets go.

And then of course my mind wanders and picks up all that stuff. And once again I bring myself back again to this moment. And again, my mind goes, I bring it back. In this process of just bringing myself back to this moment, a very simple process, just always have this beginner’s mind, because there’s nothing really to learn here but only persistence, try mind, and direction.

Any time when I do that and sit in the evening or in the morning, when I leave the Zen room my consciousness is always lighter. I’m holding on to less. Actually, there’s not a whole lot to say about that, because that’s what the practice is. You do that. And of course, when you do that, you have direction, because you understand, there is no I, my, and me. So why see only what I can do for myself? Instead, how can I help others?

Years ago, when I was an adolescent, I was diagnosed with PTSD, this stressful state. I was taking medicine at the time. Post-traumatic stress syndrome, I guess is what it is. And I took medicine at the time. I was actually quite sensitive to noise, and noise would bother me and annoy me a lot. But later on I started practicing, and you can imagine in the Zen room, while sitting, sometimes I would be quite annoyed and stressed with the noise going on around me.

One time I went to see Zen Master Seung Sahn. This was back in the 1980s, and he had come here for sangha weekend, and I had come up here to this room to see him. [*Kwan Haeng Sunim is giving this talk from Zen Master Seung Sahn’s room at the Providence Zen Center.—Ed.*]

I said “Zen Master Seung Sahn, you know when I’m

practicing in the dharma room with this certain particular teacher, his YMJJ retreats are always noisy! You’ve got to say something to this guy. I don’t know what’s going on there.”

And Zen Master Seung Sahn looked at me and said, “That noise is like alarm clock.”

He didn’t usually speak a lot to me when giving me teaching; he was just very clear, and that has been one of the best teachings in my life.

So what is this “That noise is like alarm clock?” Like alarm clocks waking me up. And it’s been a teaching, to the extent that I could attain that teaching, that has helped make my life easier.

The meaning of that is, when I’m sitting there, and there’s noise, I just listen to the noise. And after a while my mind goes away, and then maybe comes back. And I will just hear. And that noise and this moment are not different. That’s the process I learned.

This post-traumatic stress syndrome for me is far much less than it was. I won’t say it’s 100 percent gone, but it’s a whole lot less. It just takes looking at oneself and seeing who or what we are. How do we connect with the universe?

Before that I had no idea who I was and where my body ended and where society’s body began.

Having said that. This dharma talk kinda comes to an end.

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

Red is yellow, and yellow is red.

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

Not red, not yellow.

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

Yellow is yellow. Red is red.

Who are you?

KATZ!

I thank you for your support this evening. ◆

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*Kwan Haeng Sunim met Zen Master Seung Sahn at the Cambridge Zen Center in 1986. He ordained as a novice monk in 1998 at Chik Chi Sa Temple in South Korea, and in 2003 he received full bhikkhu (monastic) precepts at Tong Do Sa Temple, also in South Korea. He has lived and practiced mainly at Hwa Gye Sa and Mu Sang Sa temples in Korea, where he performed the jobs of housemaster, media director, and head monk. Kwan Haeng Sunim received inka in December 2020, and he currently teaches and practices at the Providence Zen Center, Rhode Island.*