

## INKA CEREMONY FOR

# Bon Sun Sunim

*On March 6, 2021 Bon Sun Sunim received inka at Su Bong Zen Monastery, Hong Kong*

### DHARMA COMBAT

**Lizzie Coombs JDPSN:** Thank you very much for being here and answering questions. There is something I don't understand. Each one of us already has it. So why is teaching necessary? Can you help me?

**Bon Sun Sunim:** You already understand!

**Coombs PSN:** Please teach me.

**BSSN:** For all beings.

**Coombs PSN:** Oh, for all beings. Thank you for your teaching, Sunim!

**BSSN:** Thank you.



**Knud Rosenmayr JDPSN:** Thank you for doing this. I have a question. I have been reading about trees lately. I wonder if you could help me with one question. Why do trees grow from the ground to the sky?

**Bon Sun Sunim:** You already understand!

**Rosenmayr PSN:** Oh, I ask you.

**BSSN:** Why don't you go and ask the tree?

**Rosenmayr PSN:** Oh, very strong dharma tree. Thank you for your teaching!

6]



**Question:** Congratulations, Sunim! My mom (Ding Ding) is so happy today.

**Bon Sun Sunim:** Hello, how are you Ding Ding and Arnold?

**Q:** Ding Ding is so happy to see you here, but she has forgotten who you are. How can I help her to remember you?

**BSSN:** Don't you understand?

**Q:** She really forgot, please teach me.

**BSSN:** Kwan Seum Bosal, Kwan Seum Bosal, Kwan Seum Bosal. Let's chant Kwan Seum Bosal together.

**Q:** Ah, good! She still remembers how to chant Kwan Seum Bosal. Thank you!

### INKA SPEECH

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

The master is the guest, the guest is the master.

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

There is no master, and no guest.

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

The master is the master, the guest is the guest.

Three statements—which one is correct?

KATZ!

Welcome to the inka ceremony held on Zoom by Su Bong Zen Monastery. Thank you to all the respectable teachers and all the guests for joining today's ceremony.

A long time ago during the Tang Dynasty in China, when Zen Master Joju was an eighteen-year-old novice monk, he went to visit Zen Master Nam Cheon. On that day, Zen Master Nam Cheon received this guest while he was lying on his bed. When he saw this little novice monk, he asked Joju, "Where did you come from?"

Joju said, "From Auspicious Form Monastery."

Nam Cheon asked, "Did you see an auspicious form?"

Joju replied, "I didn't see an auspicious form. I only see a lying Buddha."

Nam Cheon right away sat up from his bed and asked, "Are you a novice with a master or a novice without a master?"



*Photo: Su Bong Zen Monastery*

Joju replied, “I am a novice with a master.”

Nam Cheon asked again, “Who is your master?”

Joju moved closer, leaned in close, and said, “The winter is cold, dear old master, please take good care, and I wish you good health.”

After that, Joju practiced with his teacher, Zen Master Nam Cheon, for many years.

I remember when I was a primary school student, I didn't know what to do whenever the teachers asked me to write an essay about my ambitions. I had nothing to write. I never thought of becoming a doctor, a nurse, a policewoman, a schoolteacher, or an accountant like my classmates. One time, I saw some sunflowers grown by my mom blooming behind our house. The flowers were bigger than my face, and the trees were taller than my height. Every morning, the flowers were facing east; every afternoon they faced the middle, and every evening facing west. They were so amazing, Sunflowers understand their direction, and they know what they want to do every day!

What about me? I don't know what to do with my life! Why do I sleep? Why do I eat every day? Later I read some book in the library, and it says that sunflowers understand their master, and their whole life they only follow the sun. That is the mission of their life.

In my early twenties, I started to practice at the Zen center in Singapore, Kwan Yin Chan Lin. Right away, I felt connected with Zen Master Seung Sahn's teaching. And later, in November 1999, I went to Hwa Gye Sa Temple in Korea for a three-month winter Kyol Che. During the free time while on retreat, I hung around with the haengja-nims and asked them many questions. When the Kyol Che finished, I suddenly had an ambition to become a haengja, and for my whole life to support everyone in their practice.

During those years, I also saw my mom suffer from heavy sickness. I saw how she struggled in the hospital bed before she passed away. It was such a painful experience that I couldn't help her in the face of death, even though at that moment, I was sitting right beside her.

In 2002, I went back to Korea again to join a three-month summer Kyol Che in Musangsa Temple. Inside my mind, I wondered how I can help my parents. The next person to face death will be my elderly father. During that retreat, I completely kept silence, spending all my free time with extra practice and my mantra until at some point, the mantra just kept rolling day and night, day and night, turning my body in bed: Ji Jang Bosal, Ji Jang Bosal . . . In the middle of all the dreams, Ji Jang Bosal just appeared and continued. In the morning before I opened my eyes, I heard from inside Ji Jang Bosal. And I don't know for how many days this situation continued.

One day during a sitting session, while continuing Ji Jang Bosal, I felt a little tired and not clear, so inside I reminded myself, “Keep clear! Who is chanting!?” And suddenly I was so shocked, I couldn't breathe! At the same

time that I was asking this question, inside there was another person chanting who was so clear and calm! Who was that? Which was my true master? The one who was chanting? Or the one who was asking? Inside was there one or two? What was this? Who am I? All these questions just gushed out from deep inside. I was completely shocked and stuck!

As the retreat continued, after some time, thinking appeared, and I couldn't keep my Ji Jang Bosal mantra consistently anymore. I was so disappointed. Then I tried to chant the mantra again and concentrate, intending to catch the moment when thinking arose or when the mantra stopped. After making a strong effort and failing many times, I became impatient. Finally I was so mad, and a really strong question from inside appeared. “Is it that the mantra stops first or that thinking arises first?” And suddenly everything disappeared for some moment; the master and the guest all disappeared. Only, the floor is yellow. It can't even be described, because even language disappeared, and thinking couldn't function without language.

This very first experience of Kyol Che completely changed my life. All the time I was looking outside for the answer of my life—from school, from the library, from wiser people—but eventually the true question and answer were already inside. When we come back to the land of before thinking, the truth is just in front of us. The truth becomes clear; our life becomes clear; our karma also becomes clear. The only thing is how do we use the truth, our life, and karma to help others.

Later I became a haengja and then a monastic. I was

[7



Photo: Su Bong Zen Monastery



Photo: Su Bong Zen Monastery

8]

so lucky to become Zen Master Dae Kwan's student. By living together with her all these years, my practicing life has been nourished by her teaching every day, from her speech, her actions, the way she lives her life, and the way she helps others.

I remember the time we were facing the big crisis of almost losing our temple on Lantau Island. When the situation came and we needed to talk with the government, and possibly even get involved with a court case, some people tried to discourage her from continuing to make an effort; some people blamed her, and some people even threatened her. One day when we were talking together, I said to her, "Sifu, your situation at this moment is the same as the man up on the tree hanging from a branch by his teeth! Open your mouth, you are dead. Close your mouth, you didn't do your job as a monastic to protect the temple." When the crisis temporarily came to an end, I could see that her answer to this kong-an was, "Correct!"

Whenever any job or crisis appears, she seldom considers herself; she never treats that as a problem or burden. She only keeps a positive mind full of passion to solve the problem. In fact, in the most heated moment, she could just say sorry to those who misunderstood her and those who scolded her in public. She could kneel down and bow to the student who blamed her. That was a really big teaching in my life!

In the Tang Dynasty, when Zen Master Joju was old, a visiting monk came to ask, "For a long time I have heard of the stone bridge of Joju, but now that I've come here, I just see a log bridge."

Joju said, "You just see the log bridge, but you don't see the stone bridge."

The monk asked, "What is the stone bridge?"

Joju replied, "Asses cross, horses cross."

Joju's bridge, generation after generation, only helps people to cross from this shore to the other shore of wisdom.

Thank you, Sifu, for your teaching. You are like Joju's bridge for all the students on this practicing path! I learned so much from your life!

Also I would like to thank Zen Master So-eng Hyang and Zen Master Dae Kwang for your teaching and for always giving me lots of encouragement. Thank you Zen Master Dae Bong and the late Zen Master Dae Jin for your great teachings and for building Musangsa for us to do Kyol Che all these years. Thank you Zen Master Hyon Ja, thank you Barry JDPSN, thank you Knud JDPSN, for your teachings of the kong-an practice. Thank you to all the dharma sisters in Su Bong Zen Monastery for practicing and working together for many years, thank you for your encouragement and tolerance.

And lastly I would like to thank Gye Mun Sunim JDPS from Singapore. Without his effort to make a Zen center in Singapore, I might not have had the chance to practice Zen and become a monastic in this lifetime. Thank you very much for your teaching!

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

When we come back to before thinking, the sky is blue, the floor is brown.

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

When you are able to see clearly, what do you bring for going out on a rainy day? What would you do when leaves fall on the floor in front of Gak Su Temple?

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

Spring sun shining on Gak Su Temple,  
Green sprouts and flowers blooming everywhere  
Butterflies and bees are busy working  
Sprouts, flowers, butterflies, and bees never look for  
spring  
They understand that they are spring  
What is our obligation in this season?  
Just do it! Just do it!

春日照耀覺修寺,  
綠芽花兒在盛放,  
蜜蜂蝴蝶採蜜忙,  
花兒和蜂蝶不會去尋找春天,  
他們明白自己就是春天  
什麼是我們在這個季節的職責?  
只是去做!只是去做!

Thank you to all the teachers, Zoom working team, and all the participants today. After the ceremony, please stay for dinner.

Thank you to all the guests on Zoom for joining this ceremony. Let's have tea when we meet. ◆