

Primary Point



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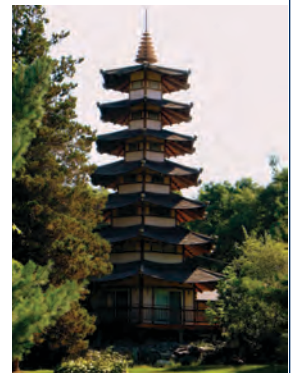
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The Kwan Um School of Zen supports the worldwide teaching schedule of the Zen Masters and Ji Do Poep Sas, assists the member Zen centers and groups in their growth, issues publications on contemporary Zen practice, and supports dialogue among religions. If you would like to become a member of the School and receive *Primary Point*, see page 31. The circulation is 2,100 copies.

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IN THIS ISSUE

The Moment I Became a Monk <i>Zen Master Dae Jin</i>	4
Biography of Zen Master Dae Jin	5
Funeral Ceremony and Cremation Rites for Zen Master Dae Jin	5
Bodhisattva Way <i>Zen Master Dae Jin</i>	6
The True Spirit of Zen <i>Zen Master Dae Jin</i>	8
Un Mun's Body Exposed in the Golden Wind <i>Zen Master Dae Jin</i>	8
Recollections of Zen Master Dae Jin	9
Inka Ceremony for Myong An Sunim	17
Inka Ceremony for Chuan Wen Sunim	20
Book Review: Kodo Sawaki <i>Arne Schaefer JDPSN</i>	23
Kwan Um School of Zen Centers	28, 29, 30
Membership in the Kwan Um School of Zen–America	31

[3



Cover: Zen Master Dae Jin. Photo by Francis Lau.

The Moment I Became a Monk

Zen Master Dae Jin

Translated by Kathy Park

Editor's Note: In the *Blue Cliff Record*, case 18, Emperor Su Tsung asked National Teacher Hae Chung, "After you die, what will you need?"

The National Teacher said, "Build a seamless monument for me."

Later in the case, Master Chim Won explains to the Emperor, "South of Hsiang, north of T'an. . . . In the middle there is enough gold for the country. . . . No shadow under the tree, the community ship. . . . In the crystal palace, nobody understands." Yet, when a great teacher dies, we have ceremonies, memorials and remembrances. This is no different from what we do for anyone else; why not for a Zen master? If we all can do seamless-monument practice, perhaps we do not need the rest of this. Yet how do we respond to the passing of one whose influence was so far-reaching? There is a benefit to hearing the voice of the sangha at these times; hence a memorial issue.

4]



Photo: Mu Sang Sa / KUSZ Photo Archives

Excerpt from an interview with Korean Buddhist Television (*Bulgyo TV*):

[I met Zen Master Seung Sahn] during my college years. I majored in chemistry and had an objective mindset. So I asked Zen Master Seung Sahn many questions and talked with him about many things. He always answered in a straightforward manner. I asked him why someone would become a monk and he shouted, "Why do you eat every day? Do you eat? Why do you eat?"

Zen Master Seung Sahn teaches us that we eat for all beings. In the same way, he said, becoming a monk is also for all beings.

When I asked, "How do I practice?" he would answer, "Throw away all thinking. Just do it." That's how he was teaching us: very straightforward and direct. "How can I practice to get enlightenment?" "Put down that kind of thinking. Only just do it. Only just do it."

When I became a monk, at that time in American society, I was living in a good situation, born into a good family, not poor. When I became a monk, it was with a big question—how can I help all beings who suffer in this world? That was the moment I became a monk.

Excerpt from a Dharma talk at Mu Sang Sa Temple:

Through practice, we can realize there is dharma energy inside us. Mind power. Dharma energy appears in us then we can do anything. In this life, if we help others, we get great merit and we can be reborn in the next life in any country, any place freely, in a good family. We can also be reborn into suffering. That is a teaching.

If we only want to be like a strong lion, that's not correct. Inside a lion, there are also shortcomings. Tiger also has shortcomings. So just wanting to become a strong lion is not correct. We need to be compassionate—that's the best human being—compassion is Kwansum Bosal's purpose and direction. Being a person with compassion who is giving to others, that's important. ♦

Biography of Zen Master Dae Jin

Zen Master Dae Jin was born in 1958 in Philadelphia, Pennsylvania, in the United States. In 1979, while studying at Boston University he met Zen Master Seung Sahn for the first time and began practicing Zen.

He ordained as a monk in 1984, receiving the name Mu Shim. Following Zen Master Seung Sahn, he traveled to South Korea and helped found the Seoul International Zen Center at Hwa Gye Sa Temple.

In 1986, he was ordained as a bhikku in the Chogye Order of Korean Buddhism. From 1985 through 1988, he participated in the 90-day International Winter Kyol Che retreats at Su Doek Sa Temple.

For more than 20 years he was Zen Master Seung Sahn's personal secretary, traveling with him widely and spreading the Dharma in Asia, Europe, Australia, North

America, South Africa and the Middle East. In addition, for many years he was the International Director of the Kwan Um School of Zen in Asia and of the Seoul International Zen Center.

In 1997 he received inka from Zen Master Seung Sahn. He served as guiding teacher (Soen Won Jang) of the Seoul International Zen Center at Hwa Gye Sa Temple from 1997 to 2000. After that, in 2000 he founded Nam San Soen Won (Nam San Zen Center) in Busan, Korea, and spent two years teaching there.

In 2001 he translated into Korean *The Whole World Is a Single Flower: 365 Kong-ans for Everyday Life*, a compilation of Zen Master Seung Sahn's kong-an teachings.

In 2008 he received dharma transmission with the name Dae Jin at the Whole World Is a Single Flower conference in Warsaw, Poland.

From 2002 to 2013 he was abbot of Seung Sahn International Zen Center at Mu Sang Sa Temple on Gyeryong San Mountain, and completed the construction of the main Buddha hall and the administrative building there. Zen Master Dae Jin served as the Hwa Ju Sunim (Community Leader) of Mu Sang Sa from 2013 until he entered nirvana on December 26, 2015 in Korea. ♦



Photo: Mu Sang Sa / KUSZ Photo Archives

[5

Funeral Ceremony and Cremation Rites for Zen Master Dae Jin Mu Shim (1958–2015)

Zen Master Dae Jin Mu Shim was diagnosed with leukemia in August 2013. He underwent various treatments for the next two years to reverse his condition but entered nirvana on December 26, 2015 from complications resulting in pneumonia.

On December 26, 2015 at 2 p.m., Zen Master Dae Jin's funeral ceremony and cremation rites were held at Mu Sang Sa Temple on Gyeryongsan Mountain in South Korea, his home temple for the last 13 years. More than 400 people attended the funeral from all over the country, including many venerable Korean monks and nuns. Many students, supporters and friends also attended. It was the first traditional Buddhist funeral ceremony and cremation held in Korea for a Western monk and Zen master. Zen Master Dae Jin was widely known in Korean Buddhist society from his many years as Zen Master Seung Sahn's close student and secretary, his fluency in the Korean language and his nonstop work to establish, maintain and spread Zen Master Seung Sahn's great teachings.

His efforts made it possible for thousands of Koreans and non-Koreans to practice in Korea.

The funeral ceremony was held in the main buddha hall and the formal dharma speech was given by Seol Jong Sunim from Sudeoksa Temple, who is the Bang Jang Sunim of the Dok Sung Mountain Dharma family. Zen Master Dae Jin's casket was covered with his monk's kasa and carried by eight brother sunims, followed by his dharma family and supporters in a formal funerary procession to the cremation site on Mu Sang Sa temple grounds. A traditional funeral pyre made of fresh pine-wood was lit while everyone surrounded the site chanting *Namu Amitabul*. The chanting continued while the fire burned for several hours into the night and early the next morning. The following day, Zen Master Dae Jin's ashes were collected and returned to his memorial altar in the main buddha hall where a *jesa* (offering ceremony) was held every seven days until the final 49th-day ceremony on February 13, 2016. ♦

Bodhisattva Way

Zen Master Dae Jin

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

Every morning before bowing, we recite four great vows, the first of which is: Sentient beings are numberless, I vow to save them all.

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

An eminent teacher once said, “Before the Buddha left the Tushita heaven he had already finished saving all beings from suffering.” Then why do you vow to save all beings from suffering?

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

So if the Buddha already finished saving all beings from suffering before he was born, then why do we recite these vows every morning?

If one being appears, all suffering appears; if one being disappears, all suffering disappears. If you appear in this world, then you create suffering. But if you disappear from this world, then you lose the Great Bodhisattva Way. Without appearing or disappearing, how can you save all beings from suffering?

KATZ!

Inside the dharma room, the Buddha is gold. Outside, Sam Gak San Mountain is white.

So, my dharma speech is finished, but I still have a few words to say. I’ve been here at Hwa Gye Sa Temple for, as many of you know, almost thirteen years. And I’ve seen many changes happen here. Also I have traveled with Zen Master Seung Sahn to many different countries and assisted him when he was teaching. So I have been able to experience many important kinds of teaching by watching how he conducts his life, from moment to moment. One story in particular comes to mind:

Zen Master Seung Sahn was invited to Taiwan about seven years ago, and I went with him as his attendant. Our Taiwanese



Photo: Mu Sang Sa / KUSZ Photo Archives

hosts were very kind and gracious. They put us up and fed us their delicious traditional vegetarian food. One day, Zen Master Seung Sahn was invited to officiate at a Buddha's Eyes Opening Ceremony at a prominent temple. We went to the temple, where three new Buddha statues were being installed in the dharma hall, and many people had gathered. There was a profusion of color, red and gold, and all the monks were very well taken care of. We were given gifts and many kinds of different food and drinks. Zen Master Seung Sahn was given the best room in the house to stay in.

On the day of the ceremony, many people assembled and Dae Soen Sa Nim did the Buddha's Eyes Opening Ceremony, and afterward more gifts were given and an elaborate lunch was served. After lunch we went back to Zen Master Seung Sahn's room. But when we entered his room a surprise awaited us. During the ceremony, someone had come into the room, gone through his bags, and taken all of his money, and some other things, too. Of course, I was very anxious, but Zen Master Seung Sahn only looked at me and said, "It's already gone, so don't worry!" But this was a lot of money that they had taken, perhaps a few thousand dollars, because he had planned to help some people along the way, giving money to monks and nuns living in this or that city on our itinerary. The interpreter was a Korean nun who spoke fluent Chinese. She was very sad, too. "This is no good," she said. "We have to tell the temple officials and our other hosts!" But Zen Master Seung Sahn asked her not to tell anyone of the incident, and only said to her, laughing heartily, "Don't worry! We just made a big donation to somebody!" But she told them anyhow.

The Taiwanese were upset because they were very conscious of being good hosts and taking such good care of their guests. They were very unhappy! And various things were being said, like, "Mu Shim Sunim, the door should have been locked" and "You are the Zen Master's attendant! This was your responsibility! You should have kept his monk's bag on you all the time!" And so I had a lot of thinking after that.

But then an interesting thing happened. This theft occurred in one of the southern cities, a provincial center called Taichung. But after our stay in the city of Taichung, our hosts had also arranged a big dharma talk in the capital city, Taipei. And so after a couple more nights' stay in Taichung, we went up to Taipei, and we had this big public talk, with many people, and there was a long dharma speech. Zen Master Seung Sahn taught in his usual style, as if nothing had happened, not referring at all to the grievous incident of a couple days before. After the talk, as is Chinese tradition, everybody came up and made offerings to the monks, putting money in these little red envelopes. The leader of their association had evidently told everybody, "Oh, this Zen master suffered a big loss in Taichung. Something was taken from him. We should really give a lot." Therefore many people came up. Old people,

young people—even little kids—and these old women came up and each pulled one coin from deep inside their dress pockets. I was suddenly given this big shopping bag by the president of the lay association, and I was told to hold it out. The people spontaneously formed a long line, and in my head I started to calculate how much money was in this bag, and how much will this make up for the money that was lost on this trip. There were young kids, there were very old people, people from all walks of life, rich, and poor—they all came up one by one, bowed to Zen Master Seung Sahn, and put into this big shopping bag many red envelopes. The bag was very, very full!

When it was all over, Zen Master Seung Sahn motioned to the interpreter, "I cannot take this money. This is not my money. This money belongs to all these people!" So he said to the association director, "You take all this money, and use it for monks' education, for hospitals and charitable things." Now I was off the hook! For myself this was very good teaching. In that situation I saw clearly how this Zen master's teaching was not for any kind of fame or profit, or for "getting back" the money that was "lost" on a trip, or to get back to a good situation. His teaching was purely about dharma, only for dharma. So loss or gain did not matter. Only how you can make some situation correct, and save all beings from suffering? So, if you are thinking, if you only try to take care of some being, if you have "I, my, me," then you have a problem. But if you don't make even one being, how do you appear and save all people? That's what I was talking about before.

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

In the Kwan Um School of Zen, there are many different ways of practicing. We have the calling on the Buddha or bodhisattva's name.

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

We have the reciting of some kind of mantra. *Om mani padme hum*, or *shin myo jang gu dae dharani* . . . We have this path.

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

We also have the path of formal Zen practice. Just sitting, just following your breath, just walking, only doing something very completely. So I ask you, which path is best? Which is the best way? Can you find that? *[Someone in the assembly suddenly hits the floor.]* You understand one, but do you understand two?

KATZ!

Thank you all for walking up these stairs today, coming into the dharma room, and listening to this dharma talk. ♦

Reproduced from the March–April 2013 edition of Zen Mirror, a bimonthly newsletter of the Kwan Yin Chan Lin (Singapore Zen Center).

The True Spirit of Zen

Zen Master Dae Jin

The celebration of the Kwan Yin Chan Lin Zen building inauguration and the 22nd anniversary is an auspicious event for the Singaporean sangha and all people. From the simple, humble beginnings of the KYCL community on the island of Pulau Ubin in 1990, KYCL has now grown into a vital force that hopes to open its doors wide to the public and revitalize the Zen practice in Singapore. There is no secret to revitalizing the Zen school other than to encourage the practice of meditation by all people.



Photo: Mu Sang Sa / KUSZ Photo Archives

In the year 2005, Kwan Yin Chan Lin hosted the event known as the Whole World Is a Single Flower (WWSF) Zen conference, which took place at Suntec Singapore. During this event many great teachers and sangha members from around the world participated. At the time, the president of Singapore, Mr. S. R. Nathan, requested to meet with the leaders of the WWSF event for some tea and discussion. The meeting took place at the presidential office within the Istana compound. I was fortunate to be there when President Nathan met with us. What I remember most from that meeting was that while drinking tea, he told us: "I am reading the Chinese newspaper every day. Although it is not my native tongue, I am trying to improve my understanding of Chinese and stay abreast of the events in the Chinese community." It was refresh-

ing to hear that he was still trying to learn and improve on his Chinese! Even though holding the most senior position of president, he was not required to do that. Of course, being the senior statesman that he was, there would have been plenty of people happy to translate the Chinese for him. However, the fact that he chose to continue to learn this himself and to challenge himself with this impressed me deeply.

The true spirit of Zen is to never stop learning, and never stop challenging ourselves to improve upon our past accomplishments. However much we have achieved before, there are always new areas for us to learn and attain. In order to revitalize Zen, we must first attain our true spirit. That is the way that the great Zen masters of the past have showed us through their lives. Korean people have a saying: "Aim high in your official position, but humble your mind." Great Zen Master Seung Sahn spoke like this when he told his close disciples, "Just before harvest, the ripe rice hangs its head low." That is the Zen spirit that the president has shown us, and is also the spirit of the Kwan Yin Chan Lin. Thank you for all your hard training, Ven. Chi Boon and the people of Singapore.

Reproduced from the September–October 2012 edition of the Zen Mirror, a bimonthly newsletter of the Kwan Yin Chan Lin (Singapore Zen Center). ♦

8]

Un Mun's Body Exposed in the Golden Wind

Zen Master Dae Jin

Mu Sang Sa Temple, Summer 2013

A monk once asked Zen Master Un Mun, "How is it when the tree withers and the leaves fall?"

Un Mun replied, "Body exposed in the Golden Wind."

Here we have the great Chinese Zen Master Un Mun being asked about the time when the leaves all fall off the trees and the branches wither, that is, they become small and short. Maybe in Singapore this does not happen because the trees are always green and the branches are always long! We know that this is not the case, and the tree will someday change its leaves and drop its old branches too. Usually this happens in the autumn season when the moon is shining brightly and the weather is cooling down.

Just like the trees changing their leaves and branches, we

human beings also have to change our clothes and adapt to the conditions. Only wearing the same clothes every day is not possible or helpful. When we change our clothes our true "body" is exposed! Exposed in the Golden wind? Golden wind means the precious wind of change. This means adapting to conditions, following the situation however odd it may seem. When we do this we grow and get wisdom.

Waiting for the Golden Wind is our usual condition. But, if you only wait for it to blow your way, you will just grow old and fat. Now! Look carefully! In front of you the fall moon is reflected brightly, and a clear wind blows lightly on the face.

Reproduced from the Zen Mirror, a bimonthly newsletter of the Kwan Yin Chan Lin (Singapore Zen Center). ♦



Recollections of Zen Master Dae Jin

Beyond Great Truth
For Zen Master Dae Jin

No mind
Has Great Truth

Great Truth
Has no life, no death

Beyond the Ten Directions
Blue sky above peaceful ocean

When I wrote this poem, shortly after hearing of Zen Master Dae Jin's death, I hadn't seen him for many years, and even though we were both teachers, we hadn't had much contact with each other, so I wasn't familiar with how he taught. The typical image of how Zen masters teach involves concise expressions of wisdom, delivered with subtle yet powerful skillful means. In reading the recollections offered by sangha members around the world, what stands out is his humility, kindness, openness, generosity and directness. We should all be so skillful.

Ken Kessel JDPSN
New York



While I don't have a specific recollection of Zen Master Dae Jin to mention, I was mainly just thankful for all that he did for Mu Sang Sa. I got to know him during the three years I lived in the nearby city of Daejeon. He gave countless dharma talks on Sundays and was instrumental in the operations of the temple and the direction that it took. He was fluent in Korean and readily sat down with any visitors who showed up at his doorstep. Korean visitors always asked him things like, "Why did an American like you decide to become a monk?" and he politely answered them with a smile on his face. Others would say, "Hey, you're that monk who's always on TV!" He became a famous figure in Korea. During interviews he showed a lot of care and concern for those who were facing difficulties in life and offered his sympathy to them. He followed the teaching of Zen Master Seung Sahn in a straight line, and that is how his life went. He will be remembered well by both Mu Sang Sa and Korea for all his hard work, contributions and teachings.

William Condron
Daegu, South Korea

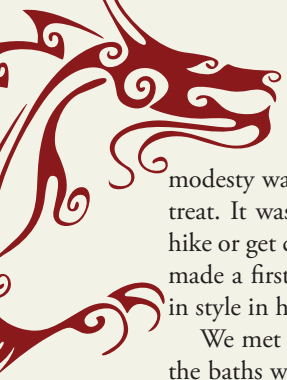


Photo: Mu Sang Sa / KUSZ Photo Archives



Thank you for your heart practice, Zen Master Dae Jin. When traveling to Korea for Kyol Che for the first time to sit at Su Dok Sa Temple, I was really happy to meet Mu Shim Sunim and Do Gong Sunim, who were assigned by Zen Master Seung Sahn to run the retreat. There were somewhere between 19 and 23 retreatants at these early retreats, usually arriving from as many as 11 countries. This retreat was unique in Asia, because it was likely the only place in the world at the time—or at least one of extremely few—where monks, nuns and female and male laypeople were practicing together in the same dharma room. This is because Dae Soen Sa Nim was and is an innovator, far ahead and beyond his time.

Mu Shim Sunim and Do Gong Sunim ran the retreat smoothly, bringing us to Su Dok Sa from Hwa Gye Sa. We arrived there later than the full-moon commencement day, starting the retreat in Hwa Gye Sa for a couple weeks to accommodate something, an event or preparations at Su Dok Sa. Imagine being the directors for a whole group, starting a retreat in two locations, traveling by bus and starting again. It all seemed to work. Mu Shim Sunim and Do Gong Sunim were quite chill in their roles and seemed to see themselves somewhat in the way of bus drivers. This



modesty was really attractive and I believe helped the retreat. It was a blessing, because we could really go for a hike or get chai in that very small town if we wanted to. It made a first Kyol Che really accessible and more Korean in style in how tight or loose the retreat was.

We met with Dae Soen Sa Nim regularly and went to the baths weekly. There were some hilarious scenes when Koreans came to do a practice fire drill at Su Dok Sa that are still in my memory, but I digress. I vividly remember parts of a walk down from Jung Hye Sa Temple during one late December day with Mu Shim Sunim and seeing the trees there. Also, Mu Shim Sunim was charged with taking me to Dae Soen Sa Nim's tailor for a full-length robe. I remember ducking into the tailor's angled-roof room covered in rice paper and Mu Shim Sunim telling me that Dae Soen Sa Nim had paid for this robe with his own money.

What stands out about Dae Jin Soen Sa Nim was his pure kindness in his actions, speech and words. I don't remember him ever being in a state of impatience. He was welcoming and I don't remember his speech ever being harmful toward me or any other guests.

These attributes of humility, kindness and support are some of the greatest attributes of any dharma person's life gifts. They are so meaningful to me as they are the heart qualities which I most deeply value and believe are important to share. May our practice bring us in alignment with this kind of respect and kindness for all life, so we experience the great love and great compassion of Zen Master Seung Sahn's teaching and Zen Master Man Gong's Whole World Is a Single Flower.

(Oh Shim)
California



A few years ago, Zen Master Dae Jin was visiting the Lithuanian sangha. After his dharma talk, there was a performance called "Golden Temple," where his student, Bo Haeng Sunim, a Lithuanian, was acting. I somehow ended up sitting near the Master. One of our sangha members was translating for him. I heard it and turned my head to that side. He noticed and said to the translator, "Thank you. It's enough. I don't want to disturb other people."

Migle Simanaviciute (Do Kwang)
Lithuania



I will always remember Dae Jin Sunim as someone who early in his life made a decision to devote himself to practice and help others, including being a bridge monk in conveying Dae Soen Sa Nim's teachings that were de-

veloped in the West to a Korean audience, and being the first Kwan Um monastic to live in Korea.

Kimball Amram
Cambridge, Massachusetts



I didn't know him as a teacher, but as a human. I met him at Providence Zen Center as he was following Zen Master Seung Sahn. I saw he was exceedingly alert, attentive and busy. It wasn't until I was a haeng ja at Hwa Gye Sa in 1998, when I was on the inside, that I began to know him. Behind all the turmoil and activity that surrounded Zen Master Seung Sahn and his first generation of monastics, there was an abundance of humanity.

There was a fever pitch at Hwa Gye Sa at that time, as all the young sunims rammed heads, new lines drawn, what would describe the future of our world sangha. Haeng jas, whirling within the same power architecture, fastened onto Dae Jin Sunim. He stood outside the fervor, calmly advising us, helping us to understand Korean culture, speaking on our behalf. Because of his close association with Zen Master Seung Sahn he was a mighty force, a kind and compassionate one. That he calmed the waters during the difficult trials of ordination, I will always be grateful.

I didn't see him for many years after that.

Once, as I brought him to the airport in Los Angeles, I told him I was thinking of returning to Korea to become a monk (again).

"You have to do it, now! Do you have your passport? You don't need any bags . . ."

He loved what he was doing, sincerely believing in it with his whole being. He gave his whole life to the dharma. He passed away not long after I'd finally returned to Korea to ordain.

His dedication and sincere effort directly influenced countless others. He was an important element, a catalyst, a force—the momentum carries through, is deeply embedded in the living tradition of the Kwan Um School of Zen and the greater sangha of the world.

Won Il Sunim



Where is Zen Master Dae Jin?

My first-time visit to Hwa Gye Sa and Mu Sang Sa was in December 2011. In Hwa Gye Sa, I met with Zen Master Dae Jin. When I returned, I sent an e-mail sharing with him poems of my experience in Hwa Gye Sa and Mu Sang Sa. Somehow there is something of my first-time visit to both temples that opened my eyes as to the profound effect and the legacy left behind by our great teacher, Zen

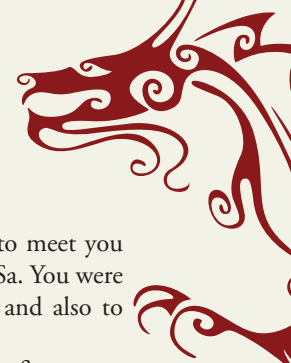


Photo: Mu Sang Sa / KUSZ Photo Archives

Master Seung Sahn. I bowed deeply at the stupa of Zen Master Seung Sahn. Zen Master Dae Jin used that opportunity to teach me on the kong-an, “Where is Zen Master Seung Sahn now?” The two poems I wrote to Zen Master Dae Jin and his reply are as follows:

Hwa Gye Sa

Abandoning likes and dislikes, practitioners focus their mind inward.

Traveling to Hwa Gye Sa to meet the Master again after many years,

Bowing deeply at the relics and stupa, recalling his kindness,

The Master is no longer there, but yet his presence is everywhere.

Mu Sang Sa

Dragons and phoenixes adorn the temple of Mu Sang Sa.

They live in harmony in Mount Gye Ryong,

Protected by a Grandfather who rides on a tiger,

The lonely summer flower blooms in the winter chill.



Reply by Zen Master Dae Jin

Dear TK,

Thank you for your e-mail. I was happy to meet you and share the dharma teachings at Hwa Gye Sa. You were very fortunate in your visit to Mu Sang Sa and also to Hwa Gye Sa Temple in Seoul.

Your poems are also very wonderful. In the first poem you wrote in the fourth line, “The Master is no longer there, but yet his presence is everywhere.” That is a good statement, but we occasionally ask our students to answer the question, “Where is Soen Master Seung Sahn now?” Then a simple, just-like-this answer is possible.

I trust that your return journey to Penang was uneventful and good. Looking forward to us meeting and sharing the Dharma again,

Dae Jin

In remembering Zen Master Dae Jin, I want to thank him for his wisdom and kindness in sharing the dharma teachings. Now that he is no longer with us, I pose the question, “Where is Zen Master Dae Jin now?”

Valen TK Ong



We both have the same Dharma name: Mu Shim—no mind.

Somehow I had the feeling that this connected me with you in a very special way.

Once you asked me this kong-an:

“Anika, when did the sun began to shine on the earth?”

“I don’t know.”

“Oh, that is very easy! The sun began to shine on the earth when you came into my life!”

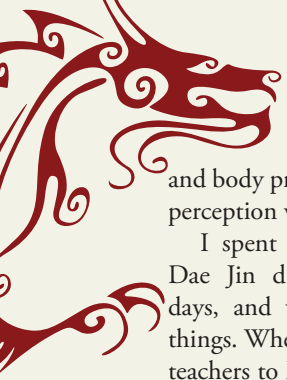
Wow, thank you for this kong-an! Just now I am sitting in the sun, which is shining in my room, and I notice you are still in my life, with your teaching and all the memories of two great Kyol Che retreats with you.

I will miss you very much,

Your little Mu Shim,
Vice-Abbess Anika Page
Dresden Zen Center



In 1997 Zen Master Seung Sahn, together with Zen Master Dae Jin, Zen Master Dae Kwan and Mu Sang Sunim visited Palma Zen Center in Spain. It was four years after the last visit of our Great Master in 1993 to Majorca Island. For me it was a very important event because, for some reason, all of us in Palma Zen Center were sad, because we felt Zen Master Seung Sahn would never come back to Palma Zen Center again due to his sickness



and body problems. And in fact this perception was right.

I spent time with Zen Master Dae Jin during the next several days, and we talked about many things. When the time came for the teachers to leave Spain, I went with them to the airport. I remember I was sitting in a chair next to Zen Master Dae Jin. I was deeply sad, because Zen Master Seung Sahn was leaving, but I didn't comment on this to anybody; I was just keeping my mantra silently. Then suddenly Zen Master Dae Jin looked at me with his eyes full of compassion and, without saying a word, he gave to me his own beautiful mala.

After a few moments of complete silence he added very softly and full of compassion toward me, "Just keep your mantra and don't check anything . . . Then no problem."

His presence, compassion and words deeply touched my heart and my mind, and I was relieved of a deep suffering.

Thank you Zen Master Dae Jin for your Clear Bodhisattva Mind.

With gratitude,

Eduardo del Valle

Palma Zen Center, Spain



Years ago, when Dae Soen Sa Nim visited Las Vegas on a regular basis to see Dr. Ju Cheon Lee for acupuncture, moxibustion and so forth, he stayed at the Hilton Hotel and Casino. I was very fortunate, being granted regular interviews with our great teacher early each morning in his hotel room.

Mu Shim Sunim JDPS (as he was previously known) was his secretary. Sunim and I, as per instruction, would frequently venture off in my car to fulfill errands for our teacher. Prior to our departure, Zen Master Seung Sahn would update Mu Shim Sunim regarding my current homework. He then instructed him to continue my kong-an work in the car on our way to various destinations.

I will always remember this. Dae Jin Sunim's wisdom, compassion, encouragement and great vow were always present. His love for all sentient beings fueled his clear direction for a lifetime.

With humility, gratitude, and profound respect for a great teacher,

Zen Master Ji Haeng

Las Vegas, Nevada



Photo: Mu Sang Sa / KUSZ Photo Archives



I was sitting Winter Kyol Che 2010–2011 in Mu Sang Sa for six weeks. I was writing a diary and wanted to share these entries about about Dae Jin Sunim. Sometimes, when I would happen to look up, like at mealtime, and find myself looking directly into Dae Jin Sunim's face and his awake eyes. We would have eye contact for just a second and this one clear moment together. This kind of experience hasn't happened for me with anyone else here.

18th Dec., 2010: During mealtime, I saw how Dae Jin Sunim took some vegetables from a shared bowl with his own chopsticks, instead of using the correct ones from the bowl. He noticed that I noticed, looked at me and smiled. It was a very vivid, awake and funny moment.

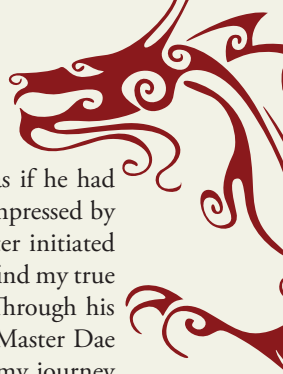
23rd Dec., 2010: I remember that Dae Jin Sunim was helping me a lot during interviews with my kong-an practice. He said that I should bring the kong-an to this moment. With this simple help, I was able to solve one kong-an, which was very important for me and which I was working on very hard for a couple of weeks.

Iris Grabner

Vienna, Austria



Dae Jin Sunim once told me that he lived in Berlin for a while as a child when his father was working in Berlin after World War II. That must have been in the 1960s and most probably after the wall had been built. He tried to recollect some of his German phrases of his childhood



when we met: “Guten Tag. Wie geht es Ihnen?” So Dae Jin Sunim was a “Berliner” for a while (I don’t know how long) and that is something we share.

I just remembered a funny poem in the Berlin dialect. I don’t know if it is funny in English too?

Ick sitze da un’ esse Klops
uff eemal klopp’s
Ick kieke, staune, wundre mir,
uff eemal jeht se uff die Tür.
Nanu, denk ick, ick denk nanu
jetz isse uff, erst war se zu!
Ick jehe raus und blicke
und wer steht drauß
en?
Icke!

I am sitting there and eating Klops*
suddenly it knocks
I sit, look, wonder,
suddenly the door opens.
Hey I think; I think hey!
Now it is open; first it was closed.
and I go out and look.
and who is out there?
me!

* *Klops is a kind of dumpling, traditionally made with meat.*

Zen Master Dae Jin suffered the last one and a half years very much from not being able to eat, although he was very hungry. May he enjoy wonderful, nourishing meals, good company and have a relaxed and happy mind.



Arne Schaefer JDPSN

Arne Schaefer JDPSN
Berlin, Germany



Zen Master Dae Jin, who knew that I am publishing my own cookbook and also that I am dedicated to healthy food, invited me to his room to show me a most wonderful and fascinating book, which contained a collection

of original recipes from monasteries. It was as if he had revealed a true treasure to me. I was deeply impressed by the unique recipe book and also the encounter initiated by Zen Master Dae Jin, which inspired me to find my true direction—and to realize my own creation. Through his endless kindness and great compassion, Zen Master Dae Jin helped to make my creative journey and my journey in South Korea such wonderful experiences.

Avital Sebbag
Israel



Dae Jin Sunim moved to Korea soon after he became a student of Zen Master Seung Sahn, so I never was able to spend much time with him. His original monk’s name was Mu Shim, No Mind! I heard that, because of his sometimes “stubborn behavior,” Zen Master Seung Sahn used to joke with him and call him Rock Head. He would then say, “He will always show up, get up and be very loyal to the dharma.” This proved to be true, and I bow to him.

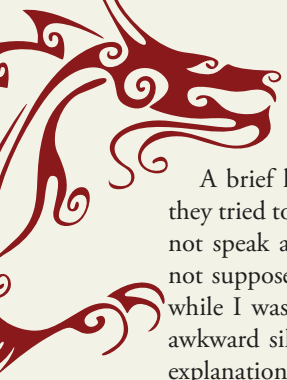
Zen Master Soeng Hyang
California



Deceived by Appearances?

In the weeks leading up to Buddha’s Birthday each year, Mu Sang Sa would receive a number of invitations to attend lantern lighting ceremonies from various Buddhist organizations in the surrounding area. As the abbot, Dae Jin Sunim was obligated to attend these events and I would often accompany him as the temple director. We were quite unknown to the Buddhist community, as Mu Sang Sa was just a few years old at that time. These events were held in the evening, so sometimes only the two of us would attend, as the other sunims were reluctant to go as it meant returning to the temple rather late in the evening and still having to rise at the same time in the morning.

We would be normally ushered into a room to have some tea before the start of the evening’s events. The hosts would engage in some small talk to set everyone at ease and invariably directed their questions at me. They assumed, I imagine, from my face that I was a Korean sunim who was there to help translate for the Western sunim. When the only response I could give was to smile wordlessly back at them as they posed their questions, they would, after a moment’s hesitation, politely repeat the question to me, thinking I had not heard them clearly, smiling expectantly in anticipation of my reply. It was usually at that moment that Dae Jin Sunim would jump in and reply for me in fluent and perfect Korean—he completely took everyone by surprise.



A brief look of panic would cross our hosts' faces as they tried to work out why the Korean-looking sunim did not speak any Korean, while the Western one who was not supposed to, did. Was Dae Jin Sunim the translator while I was the more senior monk? There was often an awkward silence and I could sense that they wanted an explanation but did not want to appear impolite in demanding for one. Dae Jin Sunim would go on to explain the situation to them—that I was a foreign sunim who had yet to learn Korean, and so did not understand their questions, eventually resolving their confusion, much to everyone's relief. This situation repeated itself a number of times until all the local Buddhists got to know Dae Jin Sunim and realized that he was the one who was fluent in Korean while most of the rest of us were still grappling with *annyeonghaseyo*.

Myong An Sunim JDPS
Malaysia

14]



It's his smile that will stay with me all of my life. Zen Master Dae Jin encountered each person and the world with that serene and radiant smile—with equanimity and calm—even as a novice monk years ago. As a beginning Zen student, I would do retreats with him at the Providence Zen Center or at Cambridge Zen Center—and would see him at ceremonies. He was a regular guy—but someone who was always positive and dedicated. It was a shock to me to hear that he was one of the very first of

Dae Soen Sa Nim's American students to choose to become a monk and to put on the robes. Initially many of us were appalled at Soen Sa Nim's decision to encourage his American students to become monks. It seemed so extreme and old-fashioned—and threatening! We were surprised that some of us fell for it!

It took me a while to realize how right it was for Zen Master Dae Jin. It really sunk in when I traveled with him to Korea with a group led by Dae Soen Sa Nim way back in 1984. Zen Master Dae Jin spoke the language better than anyone else, and seemed to revel in the role of monk in the monasteries we visited. At each of the gorgeous, ancient temples we visited and stayed in, he would be our liaison with the monastic culture. It was weird knowing him before and after his becoming a monk, and then seeing him naturally and seamlessly transformed.

At one point we visited a city and ended up staying in a hotel, rather than a temple. Dae Soen Sa Nim was elsewhere. Our whole group was invited to go out on the town with a local guide. Zen Master Dae Jin refused to go, because the guide said that they might go to a show that would be a bit spicy—and there might be a few drinks shared. As a Christian minister, I stayed back with Zen Master Dae Jin and some other monks. I later heard from a breathless participant that the group went to a show that included some topless dancers; and I found myself regretting my decision. But for Zen Master Dae Jin it was not a problem. He was a monk through and through.

Rusty Eidmann-Hicks
Holmdel, New Jersey



Our huge Barcelona Buddha protector was sent by Dae Jin Sunim from Hwa Gye Sa. He was always the right (and left) hand of Zen Master Seung Sahn, always helping all the sanghas. This will never die. His teaching is alive here, right now in Bori Centro Zen Barcelona. Zen Master Dae Jin stays with us in Mu Sang Sa, here in Borisa and all the sanghas he helped and the people he trained.

At the time when I was a haeng ja, deciding who will be my unsa sunim [preceptor], Zen Master Dae Jin had just become the abbot of Mu Sang Sa. That was an extremely hard job, since the temple was under construction, and there was little support for such a huge task. Many doubted anyone from our Western family of monks could handle that job.

One evening our Hwa Gye Sa *son won jang* [Zen center director], Dae Soeng Sunim, was packing a Mun Su Bosal [Manjushri Bodhisattva] statue at Dae Jin Sunim's request. He told me right there, "Dae Jin Sunim is the only one who can successfully continue the Mu Sang Sa project. He will not give up, no matter what!" Dae Jin Sunim wanted the Mun Su Bosal statue for Mu Sang Sa's



Photo: Mu Sang Sa / KUSZ Photo Archives

provisional *sanshingak* [temple shrine]. He always believed that with practice, kido, sincerity and clear direction that a bad situation turns into a good situation. And it happened . . . Mu Sang Sa, Seung Sahn Sunim's dream, was becoming true.

I became a disciple of Dae Jin Sunim, and as a young monk I was fortunate to be around and learn from him and the sangha. That was a very busy and very happy time in my life; the whole sangha was working hard and somehow enjoying it wholeheartedly. His style was not easy, but more and more I came to appreciate his "No Mind" (Mu Shim) teaching. The more I digest it, the more it becomes "Great Truth" (Dae Jin).

We owe him, and the way to repay is to never give up our practice, no matter how hard the situation is, like he did!

Namu Amita Bul

Tonda Horak (Dok An)

Bori Sa, Alta Garrotxa (Catalonia)



Namu Amitabul
Our Teacher passed away
Where is He now?
Sunlight through the clouds.

Наму Амита Буль
Ушел наш учитель
Где Он сейчас
Солнечный свет сквозь тучи.

Mark Polyansky



The route of the sun is short in winter.
One can hardly come up with it . . .
Путь у солнца короткий зимой.
Вряд ли догонишь его...

Elena Shubina

[The previous two pieces were translated from the Russian by Svetlana Bebyakina, Abbot, St. Petersburg Zen Center.]



Love Letter to Dae Jin Sunim

While I chant Namu Amita Bul for you,
I see your face and I hear your voice in my mind.
It makes me sometimes happy and sometimes
sad to tears.

You called me one day twenty years ago,
so unexpected.
Congratulations, you have become a mother!
I prayed for your safe delivery, you said.
Only then I understood how my little daughter
and I could stay alive
after many hours of difficult childbirth labor.

You were the gate that led to Zen Master Seung Sahn
at that time at Hwa Gye Sa.
I remember clearly, sitting in your room at the end of
a long corridor and listening to your
phone call to Dae Soen Sa Nim.
Sir, Namhee Bosal from Germany wants to talk to
you. Now ok?

Even after Dae Soen Sa Nim's departure,
wherever you were, Dae Soen Sa Nim was not far.
You kept open the gate to Don't Know,
where all the patriarchs and masters reside.

Some years ago you told us a story at
Zen Center Berlin:
As a young monk you went around in Korea
visiting many temples.

In one temple you were welcomed by an old
monk who treated you very well with a good
dinner. After the meal you both had a
conversation together.

Old monk: What do you practice?

You: I am practicing Zen!

Old monk: Why do you practice Zen?

You: I want to save all beings!

Old monk: How many beings have you saved
until now?

You said, you got completely stuck then. With a big
question you returned back to Hwa Gye
Sa. After bowing to Dae Seon Sa Nim you asked him
Sir, how many beings have you saved



already? Dae Soen Sa Nim answered immediately,
Saving all beings already finished!

This story strongly hit my mind. Thank you, Sunim!

I recall no occasion in which I ever hugged you.
For that you were too much a Korean monk to me.
So I bow to you today after 49 days of your departure
and say farewell.
Namu Amita Bul.

Muchak JDPSN (Nambee Chon)
Germany



“Hello this is Mu Shim from Korea, we received
your application to join our three month retreat in
Shin Won Sa, Korea, but we did not hear from you,
are you planning to come join the retreat?”

“Sorry, I wanted to come, but I cannot afford to
come!”

“Our teacher said no problem. We will help you.”

This was my first encounter with Zen Master Dae
Jin in October, 1991, over the phone.

16]

When I arrived at Hwa Gye Sa, a few monks came to
help me with my heavy bags. One of them was Mu Shim
Sunim (Zen Master Dae Jin’s ordination name). I was so
touched by this warm and ready-to-help reception.

Before we began my first winter retreat in Shin Won
Sa, he took us to a Korean temple. On the way, he told
us a story about Dae Soen Sa Nim teaching in Taiwan. At
that time I had no idea who was Zen Master Seung Sahn.
He told us that they were in a taxi when Dae Soen Sa Nim
saw that there was a mini-size Diamond Sutra hanging in
the car. So Zen Master Seung Sahn asked the taxi driver:
“When you are driving the car, how do you practice the
Diamond Sutra?” The driver was stuck. Then Dae Soen Sa
Nim asked the driver to ask him the same question. Zen
Master Seung Sahn replied, “Red light, stop. Green light,
go.” When we heard this story we burst into laughter. So
Zen Master Dae Jin was the first person who helped me
to understand Dae Soen Sa Nim’s teaching.

Who would have thought after that retreat Zen Master
Seung Sahn would want to start a Zen center in Hong
Kong? Now that Zen center (Su Bong Zen Monastery) is
already 24 years old.

During all these years I had many opportunities to
travel together with Zen Master Seung Sahn, with Mu
Shim Sunim being his secretary. When Zen Master
Seung Sahn was active, he came to Hong Kong up to
four times a year. Each time Dae Soen Sa Nim came to
Hong Kong, he would go to at least three to four other
countries. So we spent a lot of time together not only
spreading the dharma, but also handling many everyday
life issues.



Photo: Mu Sang Sa / KUSZ Photo Archives

Mu Shim Sunim was a very loyal person to Zen Master
Seung Sahn. No matter how much of a hard time Dae
Soen Sa Nim gave him, he never ran away or said bad
things about his teacher. On many occasions, Zen Master
Seung Sahn shouted at him in front of many Korean bo-
salmims, but he would just digest it and continue to help
his teacher.

In Asia, we usually treat our guests to a feast—10 to
12 courses for one meal! Very often, whatever food Dae
Soen Sa Nim couldn’t finish, Mu Shim Sunim would
have to help finish it. One time Zen Master Seung Sahn’s
good friend Venerable Sing Wai joined us for a meal. Af-
ter Dae Soen Sa Nim put his food in Mu Shim Sunim’s
bowl, Venerable Sing Wai followed too! This meant that
Mu Shim Sunim had to eat three people’s portions. At
that time I also couldn’t finish mine, but I didn’t dare to
ask him for help. When he saw my face, he said, “You
want me to help you as well?” “Could you?” I asked.
“Give it to me,” he said. This is Zen Master Dae Jin.

I would like to take this opportunity to show my ut-
most gratitude to Zen Master Dae Jin for everything that
you did to help Dae Soen Sa Nim. Helping our teacher
was helping the sangha. On behalf of all the students
from Su Bong Zen Monastery, I bow to you with deep
gratitude! I feel grateful that we became DSSN’s students,
that we learned and practiced together, and that we went
through many crises together. Finally the way we became
good friends was not to hold but to put it all down. This
is the experience I had together with you!

Thank You!

Zen Master Dae Kwan
Su Bong Zen Monastery, Hong Kong

INKA CEREMONY FOR

Myong An Sunim

November 1, 2015 at Hoeh Beng Buddhist Temple
in Kuala Lumpur

DHARMA COMBAT

Barry Briggs JDPSN: Good morning, Sunim.

Myong An Sunim: Morning, Barry

Briggs PSN: Zen Master Seung Sahn always said, “Don’t make anything.” But today we are making you a new teacher. And that is a big mistake. So how do you correct this mistake?

MASN: You already understand.

Briggs PSN: No I don’t—please teach me.

MASN: You’ve just made a big question—is that a mistake or not?

Briggs PSN: Now I understand.

Myong Hae Sunim: Hello, Sunim

MASN: Hello, Sunim

MHSN: I have one question that has been bothering me for a long time. Now your name is Myong An, which means you can see very clearly and so soon you are going to teach many different people. So I am asking you, when a blind person comes to you, how can you teach him what is the Buddha nature of the sky?

MASN: You already understand.

MHSN: No I don’t.

MASN: The sky is blue—I see for you.

Question: Firstly, Congratulations—I kind of expected it. So, I have a question for you—in the scriptures there is a description of the Buddhas and the Pure Land. But the Sixth Patriarch said that the Pure Land is clear mind. So is there a Pure Land or not—which is the true world?

MASN: You already understand.

Q: I don’t.

MASN: So what are you doing right now?

Q: Sitting.

MASN: And . . . ?

Q: Talking to you.

MASN: Pure Land already appeared.

Q: Sweet.

DHARMA SPEECH

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

Mind is Buddha, Buddha is Mind.



Photo: Chin Chun Yin

[17

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

No Mind, no Buddha.

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

Mind is Mind, Buddha is Buddha.

Is it Mind or is it Buddha—which of these three statements is correct?

KATZ!

Behind me the Buddha’s face is gold, in front of many shining faces.

Let’s go back about 20 years. It was the autumn of 1992. I had moved from London to Hong Kong and just found a dream job so I was happy and contented. One day, a friend I had recently met called up, and she said, “Hey! Doing anything Saturday night?”

“Dunno. Maybe . . .”

“Well, a Korean Zen Master is coming here and will give a talk on Saturday night. Wanna go?”

In my head, I thought “No.” Back then, I had three priorities in my life. What I lived for was my career. My religion was my career, and my beautiful wife was my career. And I wasn’t going to hang out with people who went to dharma talks. No way.

“Uh, I think I have something going on . . .”

“Well, OK. Anyway, me and some friends are going and we’ll have supper afterward so if you want you can join us for that.”

“Yeah, OK. I’ll try.”

“Bye.”

Well, the movie I wanted to see didn’t work out. So, standing outside the cinema, I started thinking—well, my new friend—she’s kind of nice and I could get to know her a little better. We could be friends, or good friends . . . or maybe more than just good friends. Who knows? You know, I was in my 30s, single, and guys of my age think about this kind of stuff. Quite often. Women too—right?

So I decided—go! I got to the hall and saw my friend.

“Oh, hi! I thought you said you weren’t coming.”

“I changed my mind,” I lied. “Thought it might be interesting.”

“Great! Let’s grab a seat—how about here?”

“OK.”

We sat down. Me—arms crossed, looking at my watch every minute, waiting for it to be over.

The emcee came in and introduced Zen Master Seung Sahn. After he finished, the Zen master came in. He wasn’t very tall. But he had a bright face, and he was stocky and really solid looking. I got the impression that he was not someone you’d want to mess with.

Following behind him were a bunch of tall Western monks and nuns with shaved heads and gray robes. That’s when I felt it starting to get a little weird and alarm bells started going off in my head. “Uh-oh. Korean religious cult? Is he the cult leader? Is he going to try to brainwash me into joining?”

I looked at the doors—blocked? No. Good. I looked around the room—everyone seemed normal, not the crazy cult type. OK. I felt a little better. But I was still very suspicious and wary.

Then Zen Master Seung Sahn started to speak. I really paid attention to his speech so that he wouldn’t be able to brainwash me. But after about 20 minutes, something

odd happened—I was agreeing with everything that he was saying. I just couldn’t help myself.

That’s when I started to feel a bit funny—you know the feeling you get when you hear something that sounds too good to be true? You think to yourself, “It is really true? What’s really going on here?” In my gut, I knew what he said was true but I couldn’t quite allow myself to believe it. Not just yet—I had to check.

An hour passed and he finished his talk and I hadn’t even looked at my watch once.

“Any questions?” he asked. “Any kind of question—your life, your practice, your problems, any kind of question, no problem . . .”

My hand shot up immediately and they passed me the mic. Now was my chance to check him out—was he the real thing? I was a little nervous because I knew I was going to challenge him in front of everyone. So I asked him, “They said you got enlightenment at 22—is that right? You got enlightenment?”

He sort of chuckled and replied, “That’s what they said. Not me.”

OK—he got past that one, I thought. Next question. “In the introduction, they said you were a general in the Korean army. In battle, you have to order your men to kill the enemy. How can you do that? How can you call yourself a Zen master and a Buddhist monk? Everyone knows that you have taken vows not to kill.” (Actually he wasn’t a general—he was a captain, and his job was as the abbot in the army’s Buddhist temple, taking care of religious services. But somehow that had gotten lost in translation.)

He turned to a monk sitting next to him. “What did he say?” The monk explained in his ear. Then he looked squarely into my eyes and said, “When you meet your parents, you must kill your parents. When you meet your teacher, you must kill your teacher. When you meet the Buddha, you must kill the Buddha. OK?”

When I heard “you must kill your parents” I felt like he had punched me in the gut. The rest of it was the knockout blow. He had completely *hit my mind—bam!* I couldn’t move, I couldn’t think.

For those few moments, I experienced complete “don’t know.” One hundred percent. My mouth fell open, then closed, then opened again. Like a goldfish: *bop . . . bop . . . bop*. But nothing came out. I just stood there—totally dumbstruck.

Then I snapped out of it, realized what was going on

and felt very embarrassed. I could feel my face going red. Dae Soen Sa Nim saw this and chuckled, “Hahaha! Sit down please.”

I thought “Thank God!” and sat down, feeling really embarrassed.

That night, Zen Master Seung Sahn gave me a taste of “don’t know,” and it launched me onto the path of finding out who I really was and what I was doing in this world. What was it that made me want to follow, learn from him—and become a monk with him as my teacher? Was it his great dharma talks? No. Was it that he ticked the right boxes? Got enlightenment—check. Got transmission from a Great Zen Master—check. Many people call him a Great Zen Master—check.

No. It was simply . . . I believed what he believed. Just that. I believed what he believed. In my gut, I knew his teaching came from a place of total authenticity. He didn’t just talk the talk. He walked his walk. He just *did it*. For all beings—moment to moment.

In my experience with him, I never felt that he did anything selfishly for himself. It was always directed at helping others. So—I believed what he believed—that it was possible for everyone, even for me. If we really try, we can wake up, attain our true nature and help others.

Theodore Roosevelt, one of the greatest American presidents, said over a hundred years ago, “It is not the critic who counts; not the man who points out how the strong man stumbles, or where the doer of deeds could have done them better. The credit belongs to the man who is actually in the arena, whose face is marred by dust and sweat and blood . . . who at the worst, if he fails, at least he fails while daring greatly, so that his place shall never be with those cold and timid souls who know neither victory nor defeat.”

At that time in my life, I could choose comfort and security, or decide to trust in “don’t know,” to just try—to try to dare greatly.

What options did I really have, when you really look at it? To work hard, make money, have security, comfort, wife and two kids? That’s what most people choose. But when I’ve have done all of that, then what? Is that just all that life is about?

Helen Keller, the first deaf-blind person in this world to earn a bachelor of arts degree, said, “Life is either a daring adventure or nothing. Security is mostly a superstition. It does not exist in nature.”

Zen Master Seung Sahn said many times, “In this mo-

ment, we can only decide two things: “I can” or “I cannot.” You decide “I can,” then you can. Decide “I cannot,” then you cannot. That’s all. For me—it all came down to two simple choices: either to wake up from this dream of a life, find out who I really was and use my time in this world to help others or, to continue to take care of I, my, me, chase after my wants and desires—and discover along the way that I, and many others like me, as Thoreau said, “lead lives of quiet desperation and go to the grave with our song unsung.”

The Buddha and all the Patriarchs have shown us the way to wake up and help others. It is now up to you and me. How will you choose?

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

Awake is Asleep, Asleep is Awake.

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

No Awake, no Asleep.

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

Awake is Awake, Asleep is Asleep.

Are we awake or asleep?

KATZ!

Inside this buddha hall, many people are listening to this talk. Outside in the market, many people are buying and selling.

Thank you for listening. And thank you, Yijuan, for a great translation.

Myong An Sunim was born to a Chinese family in Malaysia in 1959. He was mainly educated in the United Kingdom, earned an MBA and worked for ten years in London, Hong Kong and Singapore in finance. In 1992, he was inspired to practice Zen after hearing a dharma talk by Zen Master Seung Sahn in Hong Kong. He served as one of the Hong Kong Zen Center’s first directors and later become a dharma teacher. After completing four full winter Kyol Ches in Korea, he ordained in February of 1997, becoming the last monk to be ordained by Zen Master Seung Sahn. He continued to sit two full retreats annually, and in 2000 moved from Hwa Gye Sa Temple to Mu Sang Sa Temple. He served in various positions there, helped organize the Whole World Is a Single Flower conference in 2002 and continues as a member of its board. Returning to Malaysia in 2013, he started the Haeng Won Zen Centre in Penang in a rented house. He is currently developing plans to turn a donated piece of land into a Zen meditation retreat center. ♦

INKA CEREMONY FOR

Chuan Wen Sunim

November 1, 2015 at Hoeh Beng Buddhist Temple in Kuala Lumpur

DHARMA COMBAT

Question: I forgot where my home is. Can you please tell me?

Chuan Wen Sunim: You already understand.

Q: I don't understand.

CWSN: [*Pointing at his cushion.*] You are sitting here. Here is your home.

Q: Thank you, Sunim!

Question: You have a very interesting place here. You have a very beautiful Chinese temple but outside it's just all Malay markets. So if some Malay people come into your temple and never want to know your teaching about Buddhism and never want to sit for meditation or teaching of Zen, how can you help them?

CWSN: You already understand.

Q: No, I don't.

CWSN: "Selamat Datang!" [*"Welcome" in the Malay language.*]

Q: Thank you!

Question: The cat is eating grass.

CWSN: What do you want to ask?

Q: What does Buddha eat?

CWSN: You already understand. What do you offer to Buddha every day?

Q: Put it all down

CWSN: Put it all down . . . then put down the microphone.

DHARMA SPEECH

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

Zen is Sutra. Sutra is Zen.

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

No Zen. No Sutra.

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



Photo: Chin Chun Yin

Zen is Zen. Sutra is Sutra.

KATZ!

Many beautiful smiling faces.

After graduating from Fo Guang Shan in 1989, I was sent by my teacher to take care of Hoeh Beng Zen Temple. It had never occurred to me that I would one day reside in a Zen temple. While doing Buddhist studies, I read in books regarding Zen that there are endless opportunities to gain enlightenment—some got enlightened upon seeing bamboo being hit by pebbles, others from falling pillows, from listening to songs from a brothel, from a leg broken by being slammed in a door, or from hitting and shouting. This got me curious and interested in wanting to gain enlightenment, and to realize what enlightenment is. Thus, after moving into the Zen temple, I become more keen to learn about Zen so as to live up to the standard of the temple's founding abbot.

In 1997, after the completion of the reconstruction of the Hoeh Beng Zen Temple, one day a Caucasian monk visited the temple to give a talk on Zen. This monk was none other than Zen Master Dae Bong. (At the time he was a guiding teacher called Do Mun Sunim.) Accompanying him was Myong An Sunim, who at the time was still a lay practitioner.

I was so pleased to meet Zen Master Dae Bong and I immediately went up to him and asked him a question that had been with me for a long time. I asked, "What is enlightenment?"

Zen Master Dae Bong pointed to his gray robe and asked me back, "What color is this?"

"Gray," I answered.

He replied, "That's right. This is enlightenment!"

I could not accept that answer at that time, for if enlightenment is so simple, then everyone in this world would already be enlightened. Where then is the need for dharma practice? I was too attached to my previous dharma studies. I held firmly that the Buddha gained enlightenment due to his realization regarding causality and emptiness. Furthermore, I was not familiar at all with Zen practice, which points straight to the mind.

I was not satisfied with the answer given by Zen Master Dae Bong, and I was totally at a loss regarding the concept of "don't know mind." More amusingly, I did not realize that this Caucasian monk, Zen Master Dae Bong, would be my guiding teacher at the Winter Kyol Che that I had registered for two months previously.

What would happen when a nun who had only studied sutras met with a monk who practiced Zen? Are you all curious to know?

During each interview, the Zen master would always remind me, "Put it all down . . . That is just explanation . . . Now you are a Zen student . . ." But my heart would say, "I hope you become a Chinese monk in your next life, then you would be able to better study and learn from sutras. Only then would you be able to teach sutra-studying nuns like me." There was truly no communication between two alien species, so much so that I began to dread attending interviews and listening to his reminders.

Then in one interview, the Zen master asked me about the kong-an with the wind and flag. In the interview I managed to provide only half of the correct answer. As a result I had to leave the interview room. Suddenly, as I was closing the door on my way out, the answer appeared. Immediately I returned to the interview room and gave the Zen master the answer, and he told me it was correct.

This process enabled me to experience the real meaning of "cut off thinking," "return to don't know mind," "outside and inside become one," "just reflect" and "just do it." Ever since then, I began to accept and appreciate my teacher's constant reminders.

Actually, it does not matter whether one follows sutra teaching or Zen, for they are both conduits to enable us to proceed toward enlightenment and then help all living beings.

The greatest enemy of a human being is attachment to one's self, while the attachment to success and the fear of failure is in turn the greatest enemy of self. People often judge winners or losers based solely on which outcomes were successful or otherwise.

Young children already know how to please their parents, and sometimes compete with each other to get their parents' attention and affection. Later, in school, they compete for status, and they compare their grades, mobile phones, clothes, wristwatches and other accessories with those of others, either to save face or due to pressure from their parents. As their ambitious minds grow stronger, they often won't admit their faults. When faced with any dispute, they blame others. All the while their obsession with winning and losing, success and failure, will only increase as they enter society, even when they settle down and have families, and as they progress to middle and old age. As their ambitious mind grows stronger, even when they are at fault, they often can't admit it. When faced with any dispute, they insist that the fault is always with others and steadfastly maintain their own innocence.

Thus, if children begin to foster this kind of mindset when very young, then inevitably their suffering shall multiply throughout their life.

After the seven-day Zen retreat in 2010, as we were driving Zen Master Dae Bong to the airport, we stopped in a café to have some refreshments. During the conversation, I informed a nun that Zen Master Dae Bong had agreed to return to Kuala Lumpur to lead another Zen retreat the following year. She was surprised, as about half an hour ago she heard from me that the Zen master would not be able to lead the retreat the following year. She informed me that she was curious and would like to know the reasons behind this change of mind.

But I did not answer her question. Feeling rather victorious, I told her to ask the Zen master directly, which she did. The Zen master pointed to me and said, "She knows how to control the mind of the Zen master, but she does not know how to control her own mind." This reply was like a Zen sword that sharply pierced through me. It instantly made me feel deeply ashamed, and I was too shy to face anyone at that time. What a failure! Despite all my efforts, I was still enjoying this victorious feeling, and it had never occurred to me that I would actually fail so miserably at letting go of

attachments. I wished there were a burrow where I could hide myself.

The end result of all of this, no matter who won, is that Zen Master Dae Bong would continue to return to Kuala Lumpur to teach Zen and to maintain the teaching of Zen Master Seung Sahn in Malaysia till today.

I'd like to tell you another story about winning and losing.

A warrior caught a fish and brought it, still alive, to Zen Master Yi Shiu.

The warrior said, "We have a bet, Zen Master. Do you think that the fish is alive or dead?"

Zen Master Yi Shiu knew that if he were to say that the fish is dead, the warrior would release the fish; otherwise he would have the fish killed.

Therefore, Zen Master Yi Shiu replied, "The fish is dead."

22] The warrior immediately released the fish and laughing-ly said, "Zen Master, you lose. See, the fish is clearly alive."

Zen Master Yi Shiu grinned and said, "Yes indeed I lost."

While it is true that the Zen master had lost the bet, he won back the fish's life.

This story shows the compassion of Zen Master Yi Shiu.

Attachment to winning and losing poses serious hindrances to dharma practitioners. Indeed, we must be able to frankly face up to the mindset that attaches to winning or losing. In so doing, only then are we not fooling ourselves. Put down winning or losing, return to don't know mind, then see clearly, hear clearly, smell clearly, taste clearly, touch clearly and act clearly.

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

Lose is win. Win is lose.

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

No lose, no win

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

Lose is lose. Win is win.



Photo: Chin Chun Yin

Now, did Chuan Wen, who is standing here and holding a stick, win or lose?

KATZ!

Just do it!

My utmost gratitude to all Zen masters, guiding teachers, sunims, representatives of Buddhist organisations and all of you here for having us and for so graciously taking time off to attend this inka ceremony. Later when you hear the hitting of the moktak, please proceed to the dining hall for *nasi lemak* (coconut milk rice).

Chuan Wen Sunim was born to a Chinese family in Malaysia in 1964. After training and working as a teacher, she was ordained as a Buddhist nun in 1988 by Reverend Kong Euee of Beow Hiang Lin temple. She trained at temples in Malaysia and Taiwan, returning to Malaysia when her teacher gave her the job at the young age of 24 of rebuilding an old Buddhist temple in the heart of the capital, Kuala Lumpur. She is currently the abbot of Hoeh Beng Buddhist Temple. Venerable Chuan Wen first heard of Zen Master Seung Sahn and his teaching in 1995 and invited Dae Soen Sa Nim and his disciples to teach at Hoeh Beng Temple. Since that time Dae Bong Sunim has regularly visited to lead seven-day retreats. She did her first Zen retreat during the winter of 1997 at Hwa Gye Sa Temple and has participated in most summer Kyol Ches at Mu Sang Sa Temple since 2010. Chuan Wen Sunim was the vice president of the Young Buddhist Association of Malaysia, and the chairperson of the Dharma Propagation Committee and is currently the religious advisor of the Young Buddhist Association of Malaysia, an organization of all Buddhists in Malaysia under 40 years old. In 2003, Chuan Wen Sunim inaugurated the Dharma Practitioner Camp, a yearly program to introduce people to Buddhist practice through games and group activities giving the experience of don't know mind. ♦

Book Review

The Zen Teaching of Homeless Kodo

By Kosho Uchiyama Roshi (author), Shohaku Okumura (author, translator)
Wisdom Publications, Somerville, Massachusetts, 2014

Commentary on the Song of Awakening

By Kodo Sawaki
Merwin Asia, Portland, Maine, 2014

Review by Arne Schaefer JDPSN

Two books by Kodo Sawaki Roshi, one of the most important and influential Soto Zen masters in twentieth-century Japan, have appeared in the last two years. The well-known *Zen Teaching of Homeless Kodo* has been out of print since 2010, but a new extended edition was published in 2014 by Wisdom Publications.

Commentary on the Song of Awakening was only available in a French translation by Janine Coursin, but now that has been translated into English by Tonen O'Connor and published in 2015 by Merwin Asia. France was the base of Taisen Deshimaru Roshi, one of Kodo Sawaki Roshi's dharma heirs. He founded the Association Zen Internationale (AZI), a network of European Soto Zen temples well known in Europe. With the English translation, this text is now available to a larger audience.

The reason these two books were published is the 50th anniversary of Kodo Sawaki Roshi passing away in 1965.

Kodo Sawaki Roshi did not write either book, but rather his talks and sayings were collected, compiled and transcribed by his students and dharma successors. The books differ very much in their structure, but both books present Kodo Sawaki Roshi's unique style of presenting and explaining the Soto Zen teaching. Kodo Sawaki Roshi taught for 50 years in Japan. Uchiyama Roshi and Shohaku Okumara are both his dharma heirs and taught in the West. Uchiyama Roshi had a degree in Western philosophy, and his comments in the first book give the Western reader helpful and necessary insight into the background of Kodo Sawaki's statements.

The main part of the *Zen Teaching of Homeless Kodo*, 56 sayings from Kodo Sawaki Roshi with commentary by Kosho Uchiyama Roshi, appeared already in 1967 in a Japanese newspaper. Fifteen additional articles have been integrated for the seventh anniversary of Sawaki Roshi's death. The first English translation was available in the late 1970s. In 1990 a revised English version was published by Shohaku Okumara under the by now very well-known title *Zen Teaching of Homeless Kodo*.

Biographical Notes on Kodo Sawaki

The biographical notes in both books show that Kodo Sawaki did not have an easy start in his life. He was born in 1880 as one of seven children. He lost both parents very early, and was eight years old when he was adopted by Sawaki Bunkichi, a friend of his uncle, who also had died. Sawaki Roshi remembers him as "a weak and lazy man" and a professional gambler who had eleven wives (the one of the moment was a prostitute). In several parts in the *Commentary on the Song of Awakening* Kodo Sawaki refers to his difficult childhood, but always takes it as a positive: "Thanks to this I've forged a body that never fails and I never catch a cold" (p. 127). At the age of 13 he regarded his manner of living with horror and became interested in Buddhism and attempted to become a monk to escape his family: "I was orphaned at the age of eight and from the age of ten or eleven I had only one thought: to escape the sufferings of my miserable life. And I must say that the sole place on this earth where I could have found refuge was with the monks" (*Commentary on the Song of Awakening*, p. 78). At the age of 15 he ran away to Osaka and tried to get ordained near Eihei-ji Temple, but had to wait until 1897 to be ordained and become a monk under the name Kodo (Cultivating the Way) in Soshin-ji Temple in Kumamoto Prefecture, Kyushu.

At the age of 19 he learned zazen practice from Rev. Fueoka, who also gave him private lectures on Dogen Zenji's writings and advised him first to study Buddhism in general. A year later he had to serve in the army for six years and was seriously wounded in the Russo-Japanese War in 1904. In 1906 he was discharged from the military service, received dharma transmission at Soshin-ji and returned to his hometown and started to study Buddhism in Takada for two years and Yogacara (a school of Buddhism) at Horyu-ji Temple for four years, where he attained the highest status that priests from other Buddhist schools could reach. Besides studying Yogacara, he continued to study Dogen, whose teaching he considered essential, and practiced shikantaza (just sitting without any expectation of getting anything, even "enlightenment") and harmony without competing with others. After six years of studying Buddhism he dedicated himself to study Dogen's Shobogenzo thoroughly and started to teach for several years in different places. In 1923 he began traveling around Japan to give lectures and conduct sesshin retreats. In 1935 he was invited to become a professor of Komazawa University in Tokyo and was appointed instructor at Soi-ji Temple, the other main Soto monastery besides Eihei-ji. After World War II he became more fa-

mous in Japan, and in 1949 he became abbot of Antai-ji, a small Soto temple in Kyoto, where he retired at the age of 83 and died in 1965 after a life of extensive teaching and traveling throughout Japan.

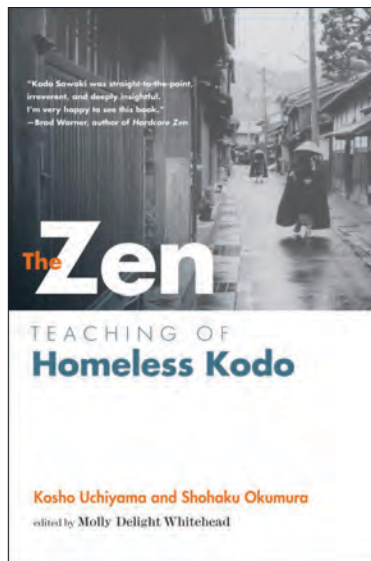
Sawaki Roshi taught in his unique way, with humor and using colloquial language, trying to make Zen Master Dogen's teachings accessible to many people outside the traditional monastic system by teaching laypeople as well as monks, and by giving lectures in prisons and universities. Shohaku Okumura stated that "he brought a breath of fresh air to moribund Zen by reintroducing the universal practice of *zazen*" (Commentary of the Song of Awakening, p. xxi). He also popularized the ancient tradition of sewing the *kasa* (*kesa* in Japanese). Since he never had his own temple and was always traveling, he himself called his activity a "moving monastery" and got his nickname of "Homeless" Kodo.

In his foreword to *Commentary on the Song of Awakening*, Shohaku Okumura also noted the difference as one who was born three years after the end of World War II in 1948. The educational system of Japan after losing the war had been changed and Americanized, which made it difficult for Shohaku Okumura to accept the idealized way of a warrior (*samurai*) in parts of Sawaki Roshi's teaching. Sawaki Roshi himself says, "I myself was a soldier during the Russo-Japanese War and fought hard on the battlefield. But since we lost World War II, and what we thought we had gained was taken away, I can clearly see that what we did was meaningless. There is absolutely no need to wage war" (*The Zen Teaching of Homeless Kodo*, p. 47). I miss any admission that war is not only meaningless but also causes a tremendous amount of suffering.

Kodo Sawaki Roshi gave dharma transmission (*shihō*) to five monks and three nuns: two of Sawaki's most influential students did not receive transmission from him, but received transmission from others after his death: Gudo Wafu Nishijima (1919–2014), the teacher of Brad Warner and Jundo Cohen, received transmission from Rempo Nira; and Taisen Deshimaru (1914–1982), who established the Association Zen Internationale (AZI) in France in 1967, got transmission from Yamada Reirin.

About The Zen Teachings of Homeless Kodo

It so happened that I had to read this book twice. I almost had finished it, with many of my marks in it, when I lost it on the train. So I had to get it again and read it again. Reading it the second time, I read it somehow differently. I enjoyed it more! Before, I compared it too much to the more familiar (for me) teachings of the Korean Zen tradition, and especially of Zen Master Seung



Sahn's teachings. So the first time I was a little disappointed. The second time I just read the book and got inspired by it. I enjoyed and appreciated his direct way of addressing things and making his points. One example is that he did not have any special issue about eating. When I received a wrong delivery at a Chinese restaurant while I was reading his book, it made me eat rice with chicken even though I have been a vegetarian for over 20 years.

The new edition still has 72 chapters, each two to three pages long, with one short saying by Kodo Sawaki Roshi at the beginning and sometimes additional sayings in the following text. Kodo Sawaki Roshi and Uchiyamai Roshi both did use their own unique and contemporary colloquial expressions with examples reflecting their time and the difficulties of modern people's lives, so their teaching became popular in Japan. After the 72 chapters there is a more systematic overview of Kodo Sawaki Roshi's teaching by Koshō Uchiyama in two chapters, followed by another 12 pages of Shohaku Okumura's review of the *Life of Homeless Kodo*.

Responsible for the new edition and translation of *Zen Teachings* is Kodo Sawaki Roshi's dharma grandson, Dhohaku Okumura. For him the teachings of Kodo Sawaki and Uchiyamai Roshi were the bridge to make the teachings of Dogen Zenji and Shakyamuni Buddha accessible. Okumura supports most readers in Japan and the West by giving further explanations and comments in the book as a help for all that are not familiar with the Japanese background, or with Zen in general and Zen Master Dogen's teachings in particular, so they can get the essential points of Kodo Sawaki's teaching. For some of Kodo Sawaki's sayings this is of value, especially if they are connected with Japanese history, culture and society.

This new edition reflects three generations of Soto Zen teachers and their personal experiences. But it also fills the book with more comments and reduces the amount of Kodo Sawaki's original words in the book.

Kodo Sawaki had a very critical perspective on modern Japanese society. He criticizes its educational system, their group identity and the belief in technological advancement, but also the rites and customs of ordinary Buddhism. "Most people don't live by their own strength. They merely feed off the power of organizations. Those who make a living by their titles or status are wimps" (p. 115). He states the educational system was causing trouble because it grades students and classifies them. For him "there is nothing more ridiculous" (p. 33). Later he says in his typical way that "eating rice isn't preparation for shitting; shitting isn't preparation

for making manure. And yet these days people think that high school is preparation for college and college is preparation for a good job” (p. 144). With the expression “group stupidity” he points at the Japanese tendency to form and follow groups, leading to rather a kind of paralysis, which in his view “is also true for religious groups and institutions. To practice zazen is to become free of this group stupidity” (p. 35).

Shohaku Okumura comments that Sawaki Roshi and Uchiyama Roshi were criticizing “not only the traditional Buddhist institutions that had lost their vitality like withered old trees but also the new movements that enticed people with promises of wealth, success, and good health” (p. 44). Consequently Sawaki Roshi questions the value of technological advancement, since the people have not become better and “achieved greatness of character.” He considers civilization and culture not more than the collective elaboration of illusory desire. So consequently he reasons that “human beings are idiots” (p. 50).

Yet the main issue of this book is to outline what correct Zen practice is (zazen) and what it is not, by using many examples from our everyday lives. Here are some typical and unique quotes of Kodo Sawaki Roshi and their comments, to give an original impression of the book itself:

We cannot exchange even a fart with another, can we? Each and every one of us has to live out our self. Who’s better looking, who’s smarter: you or I? We don’t need to compare ourselves with others.

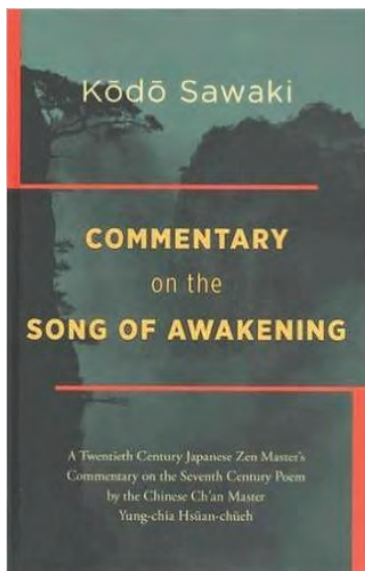
Comment by Shohaku Okumura:

Japan has become one of the richest countries in the world, but more than thirty thousand Japanese commit suicide each year. I’m convinced the system that demands young people work hard, compete, get rich hasn’t made the Japanese happy in the long run (pp. 25–26).

To study Buddhism is to study loss It’s a big mistake if we become Buddhist monks hoping to be successful in the world. No matter what, we monks are beggars from head to toe.

Comment by Shohaku Okumura:

These teachers chose a life based not on conventional ideas of gain and loss, success and failure, happiness and sadness, but on simply working so much as possible for the sake of the Dharma and receiving whatever was offered by life (pp. 101–3).



One of the most famous quotes of Kodo Sawaki Roshi is from chapter 45, “Zen Is Good for Nothing”:

What is zazen good for? Nothing! We should be made to hear this good-for-nothingness so often that we get calluses on our ears and practice good-for-nothing-zazen without expectation. Otherwise, our practice really is good for nothing (p. 138).

About *Commentary on the Song of Awakening*

The “Song of Awakening” (Jap. *Shodoka*) is one of the most popular classics of Chinese Zen literature, a long poem composed by Yung-chia Hsuan-chueh (Jap. Yoka Daishi), an eminent disciple of the Sixth Patriarch, Huineng. Kodo Sawaki Roshi explains that “the work is actually a series of individual poems or statements about the nature of reality . . . , they are Yung-chia’s hymn to his profound awakening.” (S.1).

The comments are talks that Kodo Sawaki Roshi gave on this text. For him the “Song of Awakening” reflects the spirit of Zen teaching outside the sutras. He explains that the transmission from mind to mind between two beings could only be possible by the resonance of poetic language. In this sense he considers the Shodoka as extraordinary. Read in Chinese it would sound clear and strong, be rhythmic and melodious. Since it was also much simpler and more stripped down than the kong-an collections *Pi-yen Lu* (Jap. *Hegikan Roku*; Eng. *Blue Cliff Record*), *Tsung-jung Lu* (Jap. *Shoyo Roku*; Eng. *Book of Serenity*) or the *Wu-men-kuan* (Jap. *Mumonkan*; Eng. *Gateless Barrier*) he names it one of the jewels of Zen literature.

The book has two parts: The first 40 pages are the needed preparation and background for the lecture. There are acknowledgments; foreword; preface; information about the transcription; a biographical note on Kodo Sawaki; and Kodo Sawaki’s introduction to the text and its author, Yoka Daishi.

At the beginning of the second part is the text of the “Song of Awakening” in its English translation on only 17 pages, followed by almost 300 pages of Kodo Sawaki Roshi’s commentaries. To get a flavor of the book here are two examples:

#32

Entering the deep mountains, I live in a hermitage.
Under a great pine on a steep peak overhanging
the abyss. I sit tranquilly and without care in my
humble abode. Silent retreat, serene simplicity.

[25

Kodo Sawaki's commentary:

It's a mistake to think that the mountain is an ideal place to find calm. I knew an abbot who'd made this choice. He yawned constantly: "Oh! How long the days are! If only a visitor would think to bring me some sushi!" It might be a good idea to live deep in the mountain if they weren't infested with demons ceaselessly prowling in the vicinity. They quickly visit, and the solitude doesn't last long. . . . When they speak of an isolated place, I always think of a toilet. There also it's the deep mountain. No one. No link to anything. Alone with yourself. Such is the Way of authentic religion. When we're face to face with someone, we go on stage and play a role (#32, pp. 132-33).

#41

Do not search for truth, do not cut off illusion. Understand that both are empty and devoid in character.

Kodo Sawaki's commentary:

We wish to escape from a world we judge detestable, but after having left it, we miss it like the lost paradise. Men always want to leave for somewhere else and upon arriving at the destination they feel like the rat in a sewer. The country from which they've come appears

once again wonderful. . . . When one seeks nothing, even satori, one has no tensions and is at ease. It's very important to experience this well-being. If one has need neither of money, nor renown, nor social status, nor satori, nor even of life, one experiences a sense of well-being without equal (pp. 176-77).

Kodo Sawaki is clearly a Soto Zen master and his mission in promoting Soto Zen as the only correct way of practice is present throughout both books like a mantra: *zazen, zazen, zazen* . . . He often called Zen "wonderfully useless," discouraging any idea of gaining or seeking after special experiences or states of consciousness, emphasizing a rigorous *zazen*, in particular the practice of *shikantaza*, or "just sitting." He does not spare strong words opposing other Buddhist paths or teachings. Here is one example: "Do you know how to resolve Joshu's koan 'Mu'? One response that was permitted was to get down on all fours and bark 'Bow, wow!' Can there be anything more stupid? It means that they do not understand the origin and history of 'Mu'" (p. 27).

Readers from backgrounds other than Soto Zen may not always want to follow Kodo Sawaki Roshi's arguments, but they will still enjoy his wit and strong determination to awaken his audience to perceive the true way. Kodo Sawaki's standpoint is clear and is never obscured, which makes it easy to follow him and his explanations, even if you have a different point of view. ♦



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