

Wake Up:What Am I?

The Teachings of Zen Master Su Bong

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Su Bong Zen Monastery
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Zen Master Su Bong
1943 - 1994

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Preface

“Nice to meet you! My name is Mu Deung*.”

“Nice to meet you! My name is Sudhamma**.”

I practice in Thailand, but originally I am from Hong Kong.”

This was the first time we met at Hwa Gye Sah temple in Seoul, Korea, in 1991. Later, I found out that Zen Master Su Bong was to be our guiding teacher for the 3-month winter retreat at the 1300-year old Shin Won Sa temple in Gye Ryong Mountain.

In a very small Zen hall deep in the mountain, there were 26 people from all over the world practicing together at that retreat. It was not easy at all. We were not allowed to go outside the temple grounds. After living in the forest in Thailand for 10 years, mostly alone, coming to the retreat and having to share a very small room with 6 other women, I could not even stretch my arms because you might hit the one sleeping next to you. Not only that,

* Zen Master Su Bong's name before Dharma Transmission

** Zen Master Dae Kwan's ordination name in Pali

we had to do everything together. After a few days, I was a bit agitated with the situation. During a kong-an interview with Zen Master Su Bong, I told him about my agitation. He said, with both palms facing up, “Give me your agitation.” He signaled me to put my agitation into his palms, and then continued, “I will light an incense to burn down the agitation.” When I heard that, I burst out into laughter. All the agitation disappeared. This was my first encounter with a great Zen Master. I met him even before I met Zen Master Seung Sahn. He helped me to understand that a Zen kong-an was not merely a legend or a story in a book. It can happen moment to moment in our daily life.

Zen Master Su Bong was a person of few words. He always used his actions to teach us. He was not so much attached to the things that he liked, such as his amber beads, his robes, the things that he used, or even money. Whatever he had, he would give away when it was needed. He taught us what it means to follow situation. When we went to China, he would follow 100% the Chinese way of practicing and not hold on to his own way. One time during a tea break at the retreat, the group started laughing. When he saw this, he did not say anything, but he hit the floor with his hand. The sound of his hit was very loud; all my thinking disappeared.

He would use all situations to bring you back to who you really are and not who you think you are. Our true nature has no ego so everything we do is not about “me” or “for me”. It is so important to attain this quality of mind in this fast-changing world.

This new book could not have appeared without a very raw first edition titled “Transcript of Su Bong Zen Master’s Dharma Talks from the Years 1992 - 1994”, which was made possible with a great vow from Lydia Kwan. Together with her team, she worked to publish it in 2002 and dedicated it to Su Bong Zen Monastery’s 10th year anniversary. Thirty nine tapes were transcribed by Wendy Chow alone, with editing by Margaret Li, and Catherine Lau working on the final stages.

This first draft showed us what Zen Master Su Bong taught in Hong Kong as our first guiding teacher, while helping us start the Zen Center. He did not like to be special, and instead, his character was such that he easily connected with people of all ages and backgrounds, be it a child or elderly, educated or illiterate, laity or monastic. His charisma and gift of skillfully presenting Zen Master Seung Sahn’s teaching in a humorous way, yet markedly retaining the originality of his teacher’s style, won the hearts of many

students. One time when Zen Master Su Bong was giving kong-an interviews, an elderly Chinese nun entered the room for an interview. The Zen Master bowed to her upon meeting her for the first time. This action moved her, and she immediately wanted to become his student. His action also taught us true equality, especially in an Asian Buddhist community where traditionally a monk will never bow to a nun.

With deep gratitude to Zen Master Su Bong, we present this book for Su Bong Zen Monastery's 20th anniversary. It includes our first edition of Zen Master Su Bong's teachings "Who Are You?" published in 2004. This new book comes in two language versions: Chinese and English. I would like to thank the translation and editorial team. The Chinese translation and editing was done by Bon Sun Sunim, Brian Tam, Montiza Siu, Lee Lai Han and Tammie Tam. The English version was edited by Kathy Park and copy-edited by Minh Tran. Special thanks to our designer Francis Lau for the design and layout of the book.

This world is full of greed, anger and disturbed ideas. If we start practicing in the direction of waking up to "What am I?", it is the best way to pay back the debt we owe to our country, our family and friends, and finally, to this

world. In fact Zen Master Su Bong used every opportunity to guide us back to "What am I? Only don't know." This Don't Know cuts off all ideas, desires, and thinking. When they all disappear, only one thing remains - What am I?

Where is Zen Master Su Bong now? Where did he go? If you find that, you are walking hand in hand with him.

With bows,

Dae Kwan

Su Bong Zen Monastery

Hong Kong

September 1, 2012

Biography Of Zen Master Su Bong

Zen Master Su Bong was born on January 7, 1943 in Hawaii. His mother was Korean and his father was of Chinese Hakka origin. He studied industrial design in the United States and was also an artist.

In 1974, he met the Great Zen Master Seung Sahn and soon became one of his most dedicated and keen students. Between 1975 and 1981, he assisted Zen Master Seung Sahn in establishing the Dharma Zen Center in Los Angeles and also helped to build many monasteries and pagodas in North America. In 1980, he received “inka” from Zen Master Seung Sahn to become an authorized Ji Do Poep Sa Nim. He started teaching kong-an practice and also served as abbot of Dharma Zen Center. In 1983, he was ordained as a monk and named Mu Deung Sunim. Between 1983 and 1994, he led thirteen 90-day Kyol Che retreats in the United States and at Shin Won Sa, Hwa Gye Sah and Su Dok Sa temples in Korea. He also traveled frequently to give teachings in Western and Eastern Europe, especially Poland and Russia.

In October, 1992 at the Providence Zen Center, he received Transmission of the Dharma from Zen

Master Seung Sahn and became Zen Master Su Bong. His enlightenment name means “Extraordinary Peak”. Zen Master Su Bong was the guiding teacher of Zen Centers in Hong Kong, South Africa, Australia and the Seoul International Zen Center at Hwa Gye Sah. Between 1990 and 1994, he also accompanied Zen Master Seung Sahn on teaching trips to China, Singapore and Malaysia.

On July 17 1994, Zen Master Su Bong was giving a kong-an interview to a 14-year-old girl at the Hong Kong Zen Center. He asked her, “How do you perceive the sound of the world?” After she answered, he indicated that she was correct and then entered nirvana while sitting up in his full Dharma robe and kasa. His body age was fifty-one and his monk age was eleven.

The death of Zen Master Su Bong in Zen teaching means “entering nirvana while sitting or standing”. It is said in the Pure Land Sutra, “Knowing the time has come, there is no illness, the mind is free of desire or delusion, no aversion, in samadhi state.” Zen Master Seung Sahn said, “Su Bong Soen Sa is giving us the teaching: coming and going, no hindrance.”

Katz! Thank you for your teaching, Zen Master Su Bong.



Meeting Zen Master Seung Sahn For The First Time

In 1974, a man called See Hoy Liao met Zen Master Seung Sahn in Los Angeles. See Hoy had been reading an enormous amount of Zen literature in an attempt to grasp the meaning of Buddhism and satisfy his yearning for a more purposeful life. His favorite book was the Platform Sutra by the Sixth Patriarch Hui Neng, which told the story of how he got enlightenment. In the story, when Zen Master Hui Neng heard, “You should not abide in any object and give rise to thoughts”, he got enlightenment.

See Hoy wondered, “What is enlightenment and how do I get it? If I understand the same statement, then I also should get enlightenment.” He read the Platform Sutra over and over again, but failed to apprehend the meaning of that passage. On one occasion, See Hoy asked Zen Master Seung Sahn, “In the Platform Sutra, it tells how Hui Neng, upon hearing a certain phrase, got enlightenment.”

“Which one?” Zen Master Seung Sahn asked. See Hoy opened the book to the page, put it on the table in front of Zen Master Seung Sahn and began to read out

loud, underlining the words with his finger, “You should...”

Suddenly Zen Master Seung Sahn slammed the book shut on See Hoy’s finger and said, “No more reading! Put it down!”

In a mild panic, See Hoy stuttered, “Then what can I do?”

Zen Master Seung Sahn replied, “Who are you?” See Hoy could not answer. There was a long silence.

Zen Master finally said, “No more reading books. Only go straight. What am I?”

See Hoy then decided to become Zen Master Seung Sahn’s student until he understood his new question. He did not read a single Zen book for eight years. In 1980, See Hoy received “inka” and became a teacher, later to become Mu Deung Sunim, then Zen Master Su Bong.

Try Mind

1. Why Do I Have To Finish This?

January, 1984

A talk given during a 90-day Winter Kyol Che meditation retreat at Providence Zen Center

When I was doing my first hundred-day solo retreat, at about the forty-seventh day, I called Zen Master Seung Sahn. I said, “Why do I have to finish this?” I said to him, “Soen Sa Nim*, now half of the retreat is over, it’s no problem. “When I went on this retreat, the mind I had was not retreat mind. Lots of people go on retreats and think, “I’m going to practice hard for 90 days and only follow my schedule, and I will do it!” That’s try mind. When I went on retreat, I made up my schedule and then said, “I’ll see what it’s like.” So I didn’t have try mind, I had “see what it’s like” mind, kind of like “checking it out” mind.

When the forty-seventh day came, I wanted to leave. I had to hitchhike a long way, six or seven miles to the outskirts of a little town, to get to a public phone. I called Zen Master Seung Sahn and said, “The next fifty days are no

problem. My body can do it. If you say, ‘stay,’ then I will stay. But why should I do that?” Asking him meant I thought I already had freedom mind and it wasn’t necessary to finish the retreat.

Zen Master Seung Sahn said, “You must only try.” I said, “Yes, I can, but why?” Then he said, “For all people,” and slammed down the phone. It took me two hours to get back home, and the only thing in my mind was, “For all people - what on earth does that mean?” I asked him why sit, and he said “for all people”. What does this sitting do for all people?

For the next forty days I only had this question. I had no choice. It wasn’t that I asked myself the question; it was there all the time. “For all people - what on earth could that possibly mean?” It was there while I was eating, while sleeping, while practicing. I just wanted to vomit. I wanted it to be out and done with. I didn’t care whether I found an answer or not. I just didn’t want the question any more. Then one day I was sitting, and all of a sudden, it wasn’t there at all. I didn’t understand anything, but it wasn’t there. I was very happy. That happened on the eighty-seventh day. I only had thirteen days more to go. Those last thirteen days were just a bliss-out because I didn’t have this frustrating

* Soen Sa Nim means “Honoured Zen Teacher” in Korean, and that’s what Zen Master Seung Sahn’s students called him.

question. It was like going to the beach and lying around, but better than that. I could just do it: get out, chant, sit, wash my clothes.

We have to attain that “nothing to attain” mentioned in the Heart Sutra, so that we can return to our human nature. We all think there is something to attain in this life, a good car, good money or a good job. So we all fight each other, lie to each other, cannot get along together. If you attain “no attainment with nothing to attain”, which means “not only for me”, then this life is very simple. Then you and I have a chance of getting along. We don’t have to compete. You and I are already the same, which is “don’t know”, so we sit Kyol Che.

2. Try Mind

Answering a letter from a student

You spoke about losing energy too fast and want to shut it off....losing energy so you want to plug it up. After a period of long sitting, usually we have much energy, which wants to demonstrate itself. In itself that’s not good or bad. What matters is how we use this energy. If we have correct energy direction, then energy becomes more energy.

It’s like this: During sitting, our karma energy, which is our desire, anger and ignorance, begins to lose control, and our Dharma energy increases. When we return to our daily routine, this karma energy which is like a back seat driver says, “Aha! Here’s my chance” and wants to pull you this way and that, wants to use up and break down Dharma energy, wants to be in control again. This small “I” does not want to die, it does not want to lose control so it pulls you here and there....and old habits and patterns appear.

If you only try to push this back seat driver down, push it away, it will only use more energy; then finally kill you. So let it be, please don’t check your feelings, condition or situation, just let it be. I know it’s easy to say and another

thing to do it. That is, moment to moment, if you are doing something, JUST DO IT. We, each and everyone of us, must try that. So we say for 10,000 years non-stop try, try, try. That's so important, you know.

Once not long ago, I asked Soen Sa Nim about this, and he said, "Dharma energy strong, then demon energy strong, but Dharma energy plus try mind, then karma energy cannot control completely." So try mind is so important. Do you know that?

The Great Magic Of Clear Mind

3. A Small Fish In A Big Pond

March 1993

Moment world has no good, no bad, no coming, no going, no like, no dislike, no correct, no not correct, only this moment. If this moment is a mistake, then next moment make it correct. That name is moment world.

Moment world has no past, no present and no future. Has no attain or not attain. Has no true self, has no not true self. Has only that moment. If you want to attain this moment, don't check anything. Don't be a small fish in a big pond that muddies the water for all the other fish.

This small fish, you know, lives in a big pond among many fish, and water is very clear. Most fish are swimming and only taking care of their business, but one small fish doesn't understand anything. "Where is my food? Where is my sleeping place?" If this small fish only went straight, not so much muddied this water, then no problem. But this small fish, very frantically checking up and down, left and right, behind, everywhere, so whole pond becomes dirty. That's this world.

"Small I" means that small fish. This small fish has only I want, I want, I want...human beings are also the same.

This girlfriend, that girlfriend...this kind of food makes me healthy and strong. Then no, another food, another kind of medicine, another kind of practice.

Ah, this fish says one day, I like sutra. Next day, I like bowing. Ah, bowing is no good, I must meditate. Around, around, around, around...that's how this small fish dirties this big pond. The big fish in this pond means "Big I". In this world, only when necessary, move. When not necessary, don't move. If you keep that mind, this water is always clear.

Zen says keep a not moving mind. It means keep no attachment mind and everything is no hindrance; in my whole life, nothing is a hindrance. If something is necessary, do it. If something is not necessary, don't do it. It is clear that human beings must understand when to do and when not to do. Is it really necessary to do that? Or it is just our thinking, ideas, situations, and like or dislike? So human beings should attain our true self. Then all our actions, our thinking, everything is clear. That time, even if we make a mistake, the mistake is clear. Then it is very easy to make correction. But if we make mistake and the mistake is not clear, we cannot make it correct. If we do not attain our true self, our whole life is mistake after mistake, after mistake...

the name for that is suffering. Because of checking, whole life is going around, around, around, around, non-stop.

4. Perceive The World's Situation

February 1993

This world is changing very, very quickly, but human beings don't understand the situation they are in. Some people have very strong hopes, and others have very strong fears about the future, but nobody understands what's going on. So, suffering. Everywhere is changing: Russia, the European Economic Community, Hong Kong and also Africa, changing very quickly. But nobody knows what's going on and nobody understands their place and their relationships. They only understand their wish. So all human beings always say, "Leave me alone, just let me live my life and be happy." It is not possible. We are not separated. So if you attain your true self, it means that you can perceive other human beings; you can perceive your situation. Then you can understand this world's situation.

If you keep clear mind, you can perceive other human beings and your situation. If you cannot keep clear mind, you never understand your situation. We all understand how quickly this whole world is changing. We cannot keep up with all the things that happen in this

world, not possible – everyday, new things, new things, new things...changing, changing, changing... Sutra says, “All things are impermanent.” Now you are 20, 40 or 50 years old, but this time and space from the moment you were born till just now, where did it go?

There is no way in the world you can show me where this time and space, from the time you were born to just this moment, is. All that remains is some vague memory of yesterday. You cannot remember even from 30 seconds ago. So, if you understand that world, you attain moment world. That means moment to moment, clear, clear, clear. What are you doing just now? If you attain that, then you can perceive your situation.

5. The Greatest Magic

October 1992

Sutra, mantra or Zen practice is not for yourself. If your practice is for yourself, you will only get suffering. This is the way of this world. That's the truth of this world.

If you put down all your opinions, your conditions, your situation, then you will get freedom. Always at the end of his speech, Dae Soen Sa Nim said, “I hope you keep a mind which is clear like space, soon get enlightenment and save all beings from suffering.” That's the greatest magic.

He said, “I hope you keep a mind which is clear like space.” “Clear like space” means there is no opinion, no condition, no situation, no magic, no “I want”. It has nothing “for me”, completely nothing “for me”. Completely nothing “for me” - that is No. 1 interesting.

Everything just like this is truth. If you see clearly and hear clearly, then you understand your relationship to what you see and what you hear, then you understand your relationship to this world. When that happens, your action automatically appears. Correct action and correct function will appear automatically without doing anything. This is true live kong-an practice.

6. Freedom From Life And Death

February 1993

Everybody worries about death. When we were young, our first worry was - what shall we do when our parents die? We human beings worry about that. And children worry, "How will I feel? What shall I do? Who will take care of me?" Many kinds. Then old people worry about "When I die, where will I go? When I die, how would I feel? Would I be frightened? Would it be painful? How would it be?" Then, suffering.

But if you keep moment world, if your moment world is clear, then at the time when your body's changing (that means dying), if your consciousness is clear, then dying time, your body changing time, is also clear. Then you understand where you came from and where you are going. Everything's clear. Then, never afraid.

Any moment is clear, never afraid. Our whole life, moment to moment is clear, never afraid. You can do anything. So keeping clear mind is necessary.

If you don't understand, only go straight, don't know. Then this don't know cuts off all thinking. Cutting

off thinking is no thinking; no thinking is empty mind. But empty mind is not empty; empty mind is clear like space. Then you can see, you can hear, everything just like this is truth. If you see clear, hear clear, you know what to do, which means your action is also clear. So if you make mistake, this mistake is also clear. If mistake is clear to you, you know how to make it correct. That's all. That's keeping clear mind. Then your life is always correct. Even if you make mistake, your life is always correct. That name is freedom from life and death.

7. True Buddha Never Dies

October 1992

Buddha died when he was 80 years old. In those days, people were able to live up to 100, so a lot of disciples were checking. Why did Buddha die? Why didn't he live longer? This was not fair. Furthermore, they could not begin the funeral without the Buddha's great disciple, Mahakashyapa. They anxiously waited for seven days and finally Mahakashyapa arrived. The wood was stacked high on the funeral pyre, and on top was the gold coffin containing Buddha's body. Seeing that everyone were still sad and confused, Mahakashyapa bowed three times in front of the pyre, walked clock-wise three times and bowed in front of it three times. After the last bow, there was a big clap of thunder, the coffin broke open and Buddha's feet appeared. Everyone was very shocked and suddenly realized his teaching. Only Buddha's body had died, but the true Buddha never dies.

True Buddha never dies. Then what? Is Buddha a ghost?

You must attain the meaning of "true Buddha never dies". Buddha was already 80 years old and he died.

The story said at that time people could live up to 100 or even 120 years, but Buddha already understood his correct situation, relationship and function. Living longer could not help anybody, so to die was necessary. Yet, everybody was upset because they thought Buddha was a No. 1 special man and some magic was necessary. Buddha mind is Zen mind and everyday mind, so what is my correct function just at that moment? How does it teach people? How does it teach disciples? It was not special. So Buddha died.

In Zen we say Buddha's head is a dragon but his tail is a snake, meaning the head has correct direction but the tail doesn't follow. OK? Soon you will understand this speech. Buddha died, and the head is a dragon, but only dead and everybody was upset. Then Mahakashyapa came and bowed three times and walked around the coffin three times. Loud thunder appeared and Buddha's feet came through the coffin – that was a No.1 mistake. It means making special, making magic. After that, everybody wants magic. Buddha had special magic, so everybody wanted special magic. Then ghost appears in Buddhism, and many things appear. Just like this the truth appears.

However, this Buddha's feet coming through the coffin was Buddha's great love and great compassion, but

human beings changed his great love and compassion into magic, delusion and ghost because we want something special. It is because in a human being's life, it is easier to believe in something that is outside of us, and then it becomes a habit. It is much easier to believe in Buddha and believe in God or blame our parents or demons or devils for our wrong deeds. It is much easier to do that than to become responsible for our own life and our actions.

Maybe in Asian countries people blame ghosts or demons or some supernatural things. That's part of Asia's tradition. In America, they don't have so many traditions, so they blame everything on something: their parents, their ways of growing up, many kinds of things. The name for that is "modern ghost". Both have no substance. Can you touch the ghost? It is not possible. It has nothing. But we are dependent on that. I am not saying that it cannot help anybody, OK? But if you don't have a clear mind, then all will be very confusing, and it will only make your mind become crazier.

When I was a young student at university, I read one book by a famous psychologist called Man Against Himself. This book said, "If you cut off your fingernails or cut your hair, that means deep inside you want to kill yourself."

It talked about many other things, about man not liking himself, but I only understood about the hair and fingernails. Soon I became crazy. I even wanted to die. "Oh, if I cut my hair that means I don't like life." Then, "Oh, why I don't like life?" I never thought about that before, so I checked everything, my parents, everything. Then I could not do anything. Originally there was nothing, but somebody put something, then this something became bigger, bigger... then checking, checking, checking... so I thought I must do the same, so checking, checking, checking... so checking became correct. "Oh, human beings' checking is correct." But can human beings find the answer? They cannot. That's a No. 1 dangerous mind.

Everything in this world is already enough. You are already enough, but you must believe that. Already our eyes, ears, nose, tongue, body and mind, everything already is No. 1, the best magic. Why is more necessary? Why is getting enlightenment necessary? Getting enlightenment is not special. It only means "now I can believe my eyes". Getting enlightenment only means now "attaining enough mind". Getting enlightenment doesn't mean "I got something special". It only means "I believe what I already have". The name for that is "Wake Up". Another name for that is "True Buddha Never Dies".

8. Enlightenment Only Means Wake Up

August 1993

Everybody makes enlightenment very special. All sutras, all practicing people said enlightenment is No. 1 and very wonderful. That's not good and not bad because that word "enlightenment" sets up for human beings a goal, something to look forward to in life.

But every morning you wake up from your sleep and you see that it is 8 o'clock and you can see outside the sun is shining, and you can see the colour of your wall, whether it is white, blue or pink. You can hear your father or mother call, "Did you wake up?" That in itself is already enlightenment because enlightenment means only Wake Up. It's like waking up from a big dream.

If you stay awake in this world; if you are not wishing and dreaming of what things should be, or wishing that something that happened in the past, that morning or that day, didn't happen; if just this moment when you are doing something, you just do it, then you have complete freedom and you can do anything. Anything you like, you can do. Not only anything that you like, you can do also

anything that is necessary to do. That means you become independent. You can use your parents' teachings and your older brothers' and sisters' advice and you can go to school to learn everything about this world, and you are never dependent on those things, but you can use those things. Then you can control your feelings, your condition and your situation. Then everything is no problem. Everything is no problem so you can help your father, your mother, your brother and your sister. The name for that is love and compassion.

Just Do It

9. Obligation To This World

October 1992

If you use something, you must take care of what you use. You use your clothes, so you take care of your clothes. You use your car, so you take care of your car. You eat food, so you take care of the food to keep it fresh. You use this world. You use the things from this world, so you must take care of this world. That's correct life! Only I use, use, use things. That's not correct life! If I use these things, I must take care of these things. The name for that is obligation to this world. That name is harmony and balance. That name is world peace.

When human beings think about peace, they mean "I use this world for me". Everything in this world is for me. That's human being's idea of peace. But correct peace and world peace means "I use things and I take care of this world". Before I came to Hong Kong, I was with my friend, an old lady who was 96 years old. One day I went to visit her and took her out, driving around the beach, eating ice-cream. Then I took her back to the nursing home and said, "Bye, bye" and she said to me, "We are all guests in this world,

bye, bye!” We are all guests in this world. That’s important.
So, if you are a guest, respecting this world is necessary.

10. No Time To Practice

October 1992

Student: My friend wants to come to the Zen Center to practice, but he has no time because he has a family, he has a job, he does volunteer work and he has to attend functions at his company. What can he do?

Zen Master Su Bong: Zen style answer means put it all down, that’s all. I am this, this, this. I want this, this, this... but I cannot this, this, this...what shall I do? That’s not necessary. Put it all down and what? Just do it. Without checking, “Should I be doing this or this? Which one is more important?” Then when you are doing something and just do it, you will have time for everything. I do my job but should I be doing something else? So your job takes twice as long.

You all understand from your experience without me telling you how much time you waste wondering should I be doing this or that. But if you just do it, it would all be finished. There would be no extra baggage. That name is meticulous. Meticulous and complete. So I said put it all down, meaning your checking mind.

Many of our teachers don't have time. They are laymen just like you. They have very important positions, and they have families, and they must work very hard to make everything come together. But they only try and they got it. So this try mind is necessary. You cannot get anything with excuse mind.

11. No. 1 Dancing

October 1992

Student: We work in the Hong Kong ballet. We work hard everyday to improve, to become better dancers. You said before there is no good, no bad. So what is the point of working hard, improving our dancing, to become better dancers, if there is no good, no bad?

Zen Master Su Bong: There is no point. Why do you do that?

Student: Because it's my work and they pay me money to dance.

Zen Master Su Bong: They give you money to dance, not to think about good and bad. So just do it. You said they give you money to dance, then just dance. They didn't give you money to decide about good dance and bad dance. They give you money to just dance. If you just dance, that's No. 1. But if you have good and bad, you cannot do it. You cannot become completely 100% a dancer. When you are dancing and think "Oh! That's good!" it is already a mistake. Already you lost your dance. 100% dancing is No. 1 good dance. Just do it, OK?

Student: Sometimes you get me confused when you say no good, no bad.

Zen Master Su Bong: Has no good, has no bad. Give me good and bad. You made good and bad. Has good and bad, but that is our idea. Has good and bad, but if you attach to good and bad, good and bad will kill you. Understand? Has no good. Has no bad. How do you use good? How do you use bad? So just do it.

A Zen Master said to one of his students, “If you attain this and this sutra, you attain Buddha’s head and Bodhidharma’s heart.” Then the student said, “Teacher, no, thank you.” Then teacher said, “Why? You don’t want Buddha’s head and Bodhidharma’s heart?” The student replied, “No, thank you. I already have one head and one heart. Two is not necessary.” Then, this great teacher gave him transmission because he has enough mind, which means moment to moment, this world is already enough. If your mind is clear, then this world is enough.

12. Hermitage Of The Five-Year Old

August 1993

Student: I am doing this now and I do it, totally involved in what’s happening. How about the moment in between two happenings?

Zen Master Su Bong: That time, it is also “Just do it”.

Student: Then you have no preparation.

Zen Master Su Bong: Each moment is preparation for the next moment. Every moment in our life this universe is telling us what to do. This red man on the stop light said “Don’t walk”. Then the green man said “Go”. The green man said “Go” but the bus is coming and is not stopping. This bus said to you “Stop”.

There are two little dogs. One dog is a very nice dog and said, “Touch me on the head.” Another dog has rabies, a kind of dog sickness, with foam coming out of his mouth. This foam on the dog’s mouth is telling you to climb a tree. Every moment, this world is telling us what to do. If human beings can see that, then our life is very easy.

Long ago, on the highest mountain in Korea, there was one hermitage where only one monk and one small boy,

a 5 year old boy, lived together. Even today, to come down from this mountain to buy rice takes about six hours, and eight hours to go up. Only this monk and small boy lived there three hundred years ago.

One day, the monk said to the orphan boy, "Today, I must go down to the village to buy some rice and food. Very early in the morning, I will be going, and then late in the evening, I will come back. In the kitchen, I have made for you some lunch, so if you are hungry, go to the kitchen and eat. Also if you are afraid of anything, you chant Kwanseum Bosal, Kwanseum Bosal... then Kwanseum Bosal will come and help you." Then this boy said, "Yes, I will do that."

The monk went to the village to get supplies. In the afternoon, he wanted to return to the hermitage to the orphan boy, but a storm appeared and snow was coming down. Then he said, "Oh, very difficult, but I must go." He put all the supplies on his back and began walking up the mountain. The snow was very thick and he could not see where he was going, but he only tried. Very soon, the snow was taller than him so he could not continue. The next day he tried again, but it was also very heavy snow. Then he thought to himself, "What shall I do?" I cannot go, but what is my orphan boy doing?" In his mind, he was only thinking

about this small boy.

One week passed, two weeks passed, three weeks passed, one month passed. Then two months, three months passed. Finally came spring time, the snow was melting a little bit, and he could leave. All the way up to mountain, he was only thinking about this boy, and inside him, he was very sad. He also thought, "What will I find when I get there? I made a big mistake, and what can I do?"

As he got to the small hermitage, he heard noises inside, "...dung, dung, dung..." and one voice. This voice said, "Kwanseum Bosal, Kwanseum Bosal, Kwanseum Bosal..." When he heard that sound, he was very afraid, thinking that it was a demon that came to punish him because he did not take responsibility for the boy.

But he must go in, so as he opened the door, the young boy came rushing outside, "Sifu, Sifu..." This monk was very surprised. First, he thought it was an illusion or maybe this boy's ghost, and was very afraid, but this boy jumped onto Sifu's neck and hugged him. Then this monk touched him. "You're real!" And the boy said, "Yah, this is me, this is me, this is me." The monk asked, "How did you survive this winter? You have no food. Also, you have no fire."

The young boy said, “Sifu, you said that if I’m afraid, only chant Kwanseum Bosal, Kwanseum Bosal, Kwanseum Bosal... I was never afraid. When I was hungry, I was chanting Kwanseum Bosal, Kwanseum Bosal, Kwanseum Bosal...and Kwanseum Bosal gave me food. When I was cold, I was chanting Kwanseum Bosal, Kwanseum Bosal, Kwanseum Bosal...and my body became warm.”

This boy’s speech hit, even shocked, his teacher’s mind. This monk said to himself, “I always give this advice to everybody, but I never really believed that myself 100%. Yet this young boy just did it 100%.” So they changed this temple’s name to “Hermitage of the Five Year-old” in honour of this five year-old boy. Even today once a year, many people make a long journey to this “Hermitage of the Five year-old”. If they want something, they only go to this hermitage and chant Kwanseum Bosal, Kwanseum Bosal, Kwanseum Bosal... That’s a true story.

Now you have a good life and you don’t have any problem and that’s a treasure for you. This Kwanseum Bosal is a treasure for you, which you keep in a treasure box. Someday when you need this Kwanseum Bosal treasure, you use it, OK? Only chanting Kwanseum Bosal, Kwanseum Bosal, Kwanseum Bosal...and because Kwanseum Bosal is

free, you can use it anytime.

I hope sometime if you need that, you don’t forget it. Then you can use it any place, any time. If you use it, don’t check. “Oh, now I did that for 10 minutes, what is the result? Is it working, not working?” Don’t check, just do it. Then it becomes very clear for you. That’s Kwanseum Bosal’s present for you.

Don't Make Anything

13. Why Do You Make Correct, Not Correct

August 1993

If you return to before thinking, you are the universe and universe is you. What does that mean? The sky never said, "I am sky." The sun never said, "I am bright." The air never said, "Human beings, I am air and you need me." The dog never said, "Human beings, call me dog and I say woof, woof." That's because the sun, the moon, the mountain, the river, and even the dog, only help all beings.

The sun never makes this teaching: "Today, I am only shining on this part of the world because these people like me." The air never said, "Ah, today, white people, you can breathe me, but black people, you cannot breathe me." The water never said, "Human beings, if you're using, you must pay." Only human beings said, "If you use water, you must pay." That's because this universe is all before thinking. The sun, the moon, the river, the mountain and the tree have no opinions, have no conditions and don't keep their situations. If you return to before thinking, then there is no name, no form, no condition and no word. You have no condition, no opinion, no situation, but anything that just

appears is the truth. If you return to before thinking, then you are universe, universe is you.

This is because the universe never holds anything, but only follows situation. We use so much of our condition, so this ozone has a hole. But this ozone doesn't think about that as being good or bad. It doesn't think about human beings, "Why you make a hole on me?" Only a hole appeared. Then human beings have suffering.

Now in Switzerland, Germany and Poland, you cannot go out into the sun between the hours of 3pm and 5pm. Can you imagine? Then what would you do? Soon this world and earth disappear, then where would you go? What would you do?

The sun, the moon and the sky don't care about anybody. But the sun, the sky, the moon, the mountain and the river do their jobs, and they do their jobs without hindrance because they have no likes and dislikes, have no correct or incorrect.

14. Pai Chang And The Fox

October 1992

Student: Many people are like a nail swinging between two magnets. They either swing between attachments or they swing to the other side, attaching to no attachment. How can one compromise? In Buddhism, how do you walk the middle way?

Zen Master Su Bong: Neutral! So don't make anything. You make one nail between two magnets, you make suffering and you make push and pull. You make something, so you have something. You have one nail, magnets, push and pull, so you have that kind of suffering. If you make something for yourself, you have suffering. There is a very good story.

One old monk always came to Zen Master Pai Chang's place to hear his Dharma talk. One day, he had enough courage to ask Zen Master Pai Chang a question, but first told him his story. "Long ago, I made a mistake and was given a fox's body for five hundred generations." Then Pai Chang asked him, "What kind of mistake did you make?" The old monk replied, "Oh, once I was the chief of this mountain and someone asked me, 'Is an enlightened

man subject to cause and effect?’ And I said no, so I was given a fox’s body for five hundred generations.”

Do you understand fox? Fox means clever. After getting enlightenment, sky is blue. Then is an enlightenment man subject to cause and effect? The old monk answered no, so that’s a big mistake. Then the old monk asked Pai Chang, “Is an enlightened man subject to cause and effect?” Pai Chang replied, “Cause and effect are clear.” Upon hearing that, the old monk got rid of his fox’s body.

Before he got enlightenment, the sky is blue. After he got enlightenment, the sky is blue. The speech “cause and effect are clear” saved this old monk. “Cause and effect are clear.” What does this mean? When you see the blue sky, then what?

Student: Blue.

Zen Master Su Bong: Correct. Cause and effect are clear. Is an enlightened man subject to cause and effect? If you say yes, this stick will hit you. If you say no, this stick also hits you. Why?

Later that evening, Huang Po, who is Pai Chang’s student, asked Pai Chang, “If this old monk had not made the mistake, what would have happened then?” Pai Chang replied, “Come here and I will tell you.” Before Pai Chang

could answer, Huang Po hit him. That means if you say yes, I hit you. If you say no, I also hit you, so don’t make anything.

At that time, the student hit the teacher, which in normal circumstances, the teacher would not like, but that was a very wonderful action because it was clear. Instead, Pai Chang was very happy and said, “Before, I thought the barbarian’s beard was red, now I see the barbarian has a red beard.” Understand that speech?

“Before, I thought the barbarian’s beard was red, now I see the barbarian has a red beard.” This means thinking and attaining: “I thought my robe was grey, but now I see I have a grey robe”.

Huang Po hitting the Zen Master means cut off all thinking. Cannot answer him, so Pai Chang says, “I thought the barbarian’s beard was red, now I see the barbarian has a red beard.” Cutting off all thinking, just like this is truth.

A little complicated speech, but one line shows everything. If you attach to words and speech, you won’t understand this statement. If you don’t attach to words and speech, you can see the wall is white. That’s all. That’s Pai Chang’s teaching.

Without thinking, just like this is truth. That is

Pai Chang's teaching. It is also Zen Master Seung Sahn's speech. That's our school's teaching, and it never changes. This family line lasts for ten thousand years although name, form and style may change.

If you don't understand, only go straight, don't know. Then attain this point [*Hits the floor*], become clear like space and save all beings from suffering.

15. Don't Paint Legs On A Snake

August 1993

When you see the sky, only blue. When you see the tree, just green. When you see the wall, only white. When you see the floor during meditation time, eyes half open and only in meditation, only brown. That name is "seeing something, mind is clear".

Zen means "don't make anything". Don't make "behind" meaning. If you make "behind" meaning, then you are checking, checking, checking...whole life. So even if you attain something, you cannot believe it.

We have a saying in Zen: "Don't paint legs on a snake". That's No. 1 important speech. Trust that the snake is enough. Why do we need to put our idea on the snake? "Snake, you don't have legs, so I put legs on you because you should walk. Now you have legs so of course you need socks and shoes." So you make a snake with legs and socks and shoes.

If you cannot believe that the snake is enough, it means we cannot believe in ourselves. We cannot believe our eyes, ears, nose, tongue, body and mind, so we cannot

believe anything. Still, we always think about great love, great compassion and great bodhisattva way to only help somebody.

Our intention is good, so we want to help this snake. We want to make it have feet and socks and shoes and give it some style. But our good intention only hinders everything around us because the basis of all human relationship is trust. If you trust something and trust someone and they make a mistake, that is no problem. Because you trust them, soon they will begin to trust themselves. Then slowly, slowly, slowly...everything becomes independent.

We have also one saying: "Great love and great compassion are wonderful, but sometimes too much compassion turns to shit." Our practice means put it all down - my idea, my condition, my situation. Somebody said, "You never listen to me, you never listen, you never listen to me." Meaning is "follow my idea". Put it all down, that's our teaching.

16. You Must See Through All Zen Masters' Teaching

October 1992

Zen Master Joju asked Zen Master Nam Cheon, "What is the true way?"

Zen Master Nam Cheon replied, "Everyday mind is the true way."

What kind of everyday mind is the true way? The wall is white, the floor is brown. If I am driving, red light, I stop. Green light, I go. Green light, I go, but somebody comes in front of me, and I stop. That is everyday mind. That's all. It is very natural, not special.

If you cut off your thinking, then you can see everything clearly, you can hear everything clearly, and if your high class computer is working correctly and nobody can pull the plug, then correct function is possible. That's all. It is very simple.

Keep clear mind, cut off all thinking, perceive truth, then just like this is truth as well as what are my situation, my condition, my relationship and my function.

A poem says:

*Your true self is always shining and free
Human beings made something and entered the ocean of suffering
Only without thinking, can you return to your true self
Blue mountain is always high, white clouds coming and going*

That means cut off all thinking. That's Buddha's teaching of equality. Return to your true self, which is clear like space, and everything just like this is truth. "Blue mountain is high, white clouds coming and going." That place has no likes and dislikes, has no ghost, has no psychology, has nothing at all, and just like this is truth.

If you see a ghost, that's no problem, but don't make ghost. If you like some food, that's wonderful. If you don't like some food, that's also wonderful, but don't make likes or dislikes. If you make something, you'll get something. If you get this something, this something will hinder you. If you are hindered by something, then you already understand that you'll get suffering.

Yet, we make something to take away suffering. We make Zen, enlightenment, we make true self. We make many things, but you must see through all these things.

You must see through all of Buddha's teachings, all the Zen Masters' teachings, and do not attach to speech and words, do not attach to name and form.

Our grand teacher Zen Master Ko Bong was a No. 1 good monk, but he didn't like monks. He never taught monks. He did not have a problem teaching nuns and he liked laymen. In Korea, even nowadays all laymen like Zen Master Ko Bong's style. At Hwa Gye Sah temple, monks cannot be lazy. If they are lazy, they will soon go away. It is because monks at Hwa Gye Sah temple work all day, sometimes from 5 o'clock in the morning until 8 o'clock in the evening. Birth ceremony, death ceremony, many kinds of ceremonies, whole day long they never go outside the temple. I always wondered about that, why these monks never go outside the temple? It is because they are so busy, and when they have time, they only want to sleep.

Long time ago in many temples, monks did not have to work so much. They had time for practice. Only wake up in the morning, bow three times to Buddha, "Good morning, Buddha." At night time before they go to sleep, bow three times, "Good night, Buddha." Nobody touch Zen monks because Zen monks don't know chanting and they cannot do ceremony.

Also Zen Master Ko Bong didn't know how to do ceremony, but he had "try mind". One day some believers came to the temple and wanted some ceremonies, so they asked Zen Master Ko Bong, "Where is the ceremony monk?" Zen Master Ko Bong replied, "Oh, today our abbot went downtown. Only I am here." It was a long way to this temple, so the woman said to Zen Master Ko Bong, "Can you do a ceremony for me?" Zen Master Ko Bong said, "Yes, ma'am, I can do a ceremony for you." So they put fruits on the altar, lit incense, put fresh candles and prepared for the ceremony.

Zen Master Ko Bong picked up the moktak and began hitting it and chanting. When he finished the ceremony, the woman said, "Oh, Sunim, thank you very much for this ceremony. It was wonderful." Zen Master Ko Bong replied, "You are welcome." Then this woman went down the mountain. On the way, she met the abbot. The abbot knew the woman because she often came to the temple. "You went to the temple?" "Yes," she replied. He asked, "What did you do?" She said, "Oh Sunim, today I had the best ceremony in my whole life." Then the abbot said, "How's that possible? There was no ceremony monk." Then she said, "Oh, but one Zen monk did a very good

ceremony." Then this abbot said, "Zen Master Ko Bong doesn't understand chanting." This woman was a nun before and now was a layperson, so she said, "No problem, your Ko Bong monk only chanted Taoist chanting. Also, he chanted Taoist chanting to Buddhist rhythm. He just hit the moktak, then only chanting." Then she added, "That's a No. 1 ceremony because this monk has No. 1 try mind and he chanted from his heart." That's our grand teacher's style.

There are many sayings in our school. One saying is "When we do something, just do it." That's our grand teacher's teaching. If you don't understand, don't check. When you are doing something, just do it, try, try, try, try, try for ten thousand years non-stop, what am I? That's Buddha's teaching.

If you don't understand, only go straight, don't know. Don't make anything – this is important. Then soon you will return to your true self, wake up and save all beings from suffering.

17. What Is Cheap But Also Expensive?

November 1992

If you want to understand your past life, everybody goes to a fortune teller. That's not necessary. You can understand your past life, so don't waste money. Only look at what you are doing right now. It's very easy. If you want to understand your future life, only look at what you are thinking now. It is very cheap, but also very expensive. How expensive?

Expensive means you must keep a mind which is clear like space. Then you can clearly see your situation now, and you can understand your past. Expensive means you can clearly see your mind now so you can see your future. If you want to attain this mind, which is clear like space, it is more expensive than all the money and gold in this world. Since you must pay, you must pay by taking away your opinion, your condition and your situation.

It's very easy. With a little work, everybody gives away money, no problem. Taking away your opinion or your idea is not so easy. If you want to understand correct fortune telling, that's No.1 expensive. You must pay with your life.

18. What Is Demon?

June 1994

Student: Many people said when we begin to practice many hindrances appear. Why is that?

Zen Master Su Bong: When we begin practicing, our Dharma becomes strong. We say Dharma becomes strong, demon becomes strong. This is a question that so many people have asked, and I also asked, "Teacher, why? I already did this, this, this...why still problem?" Then he said, "Dharma becomes strong, practice becomes strong, then demon becomes strong." That's all. But now you must understand that this demon is your assistant. This demon comes from where?

Student: From yourself.

Zen Master Su Bong: Correct. "Your demon becomes strong" means this demon also wants to become free. This demon is helping you, "Go ahead, go ahead, take me too, take me too!" Doesn't want to be left out, afraid, you know. "I want to go with you. Let me free, take me, take me, here I am." "Dharma becomes strong, demon becomes strong" means this demon is saying to you, "Not enough,

not enough.” Demon is saying, “Put it all down, even me. I also want to be free. Save me, save me.” OK? This demon comes from yourself, so if you want to be free, this demon also wants to be free.

Dae Soen Sa Nim had one friend in Korea when he was drafted into the army. His friend had no money so when they went out Dae Soen Sa Nim paid for everything. Then one day his friends said, “I’ll take you to No. 1 place for lunch.” In Korea, they have a big, big restaurant on one mountain in Seoul. In this restaurant, only diplomats and very rich people go, and ordinary people cannot go.

Dae Soen Sa Nim’s style is to only follow situation, so he went even though going to this kind of place as a monk doesn’t look so good, but he went. At the end of the meal he asked his friend, “How can you afford this kind of thing? Did you get some inheritance or some good job?” “No, no.” Then his friend explained, “Before I went into the army, I was the chief pickpocket. So I called my old friends and returned your favour.” He liked Dae Soen Sa Nim very much so he listened to Dae Soen Sa Nim. Dae Soen Sa Nim would talk to him and give him this kind of teaching: “That’s not correct job, that’s not correct life...”

Then one day he and Dae Soen Sa Nim went sightseeing in Sorak Mountain, and many people were there. This man bumped into another man and took his wallet. Dae Soen Sa Nim took his hand and hit him, “Why do you do that?” His friend replied, “I don’t know. Only appeared by itself.” Then Dae Soen Sa Nim said, “OK, you go and give this wallet back to this man.” His friend went to this man, “Sir, I saw you dropped the wallet.” Then this man said, “Oh, thank you, thank you. In this wallet is money that I saved for one year to buy a water buffalo for the rice field. If I lose this money, I cannot grow my rice. I give you a little reward money.” Then this chief pickpocket said, “No, no. No, no.” Then Dae Soen Sa Nim poked him and said, “Take some.” He took a little reward money. At that moment, the demon transformed into correct action. From then on, this pickpocket demon disappeared, never to return again.

Don't Know Teaching

19. Don't Know = Equality

October 1992

One morning, Buddha sat in front of the Pagoda of Many Children and many disciples gathered from near and afar to hear his Dharma speech. Everyone waited for him to begin, but Buddha did not open his mouth. In the front row were the older students, including many Arahats, and the new monks sat farthest away. Mahakashyapa arrived and walked to the front, in front of Buddha. Though he was an old man, he had only recently become a monk so everyone thought it was incorrect of him to walk in front of Buddha. But when Buddha saw him, he moved over and allowed Mahakashyapa to sit next to him on his cushion. Everyone was surprised and amazed. Through this action, Buddha was demonstrating the equality of Dharma nature.

That's the first point – equality of Dharma nature. Buddha already said all things have Buddha nature. Then, which one is better, sky is blue or tree is green? The dog's barking "woof, woof" or the cat's "meow"? Is it better to be old or young, man or woman? Originally there is nothing, but human beings make something. We make young and

old. We make high class and low class. We make good and bad, we make likes and dislikes, but originally everything is equal. Why does this world have so much suffering? It is because human beings cannot understand equality mind. Do they have respect for some things, but no respect for other things? All human beings are like that. Even great Zen Masters are like that. Great Zen Masters understand their likes and dislikes, but do not attach to them and only use them to save all beings from suffering.

Mahakashyapa was a very new monk, but a very old man of almost 80 years. A monk's life has some kind of tradition. Even though you are 80 years old, if you are a new monk, you must sit at the last row. That was monks' society, and at that time, even all laymen understood monks' rules. So they were a little attached to name and form. Buddha did not open his mouth, but only moved his cushion, and Mahakashyapa sat next to him. Not opening his mouth already hit all his students' minds, *Boom!* His action already hit likes and dislikes, hit name and form.

All the disciples got confused. Why Buddha did that? Don't know! This "don't know" already cut off all thinking. The technique is a little different. We say, "Go straight, don't know". Buddha already did that long time

ago. One action and all disciples - only "don't know". Cut off all thinking, then everybody returns to equality. That's Buddha's first transmission to Mahakashyapa.

All Dharmas are equal. If you keep don't know 100%, only go straight – What am I? Don't know - then everything becomes equal. Everything becoming equal means clear like space, clear like a mirror. Then during sitting meditation time, breathe in slowly, slowly, slowly... What am I? Don't know. The floor in front of you is very clear. That is the nature of equality mind.

20. Dropping Ashes On The Buddha

November 1992

The cigarette man came to the Zen Center just now. He smokes a cigarette and drops ashes on the Buddha. What can you do? If you don't do anything, only sit and meditate, and if somebody doesn't do something, then nobody can believe in this practice.

We have four kinds of "like this". First "like this" is called "without like this". "Without like this" means [*Silence*]. Next is "become one like this". [*Hit*] Lin Chi shouted "Katz!" or Dok Sahn Zen Master will hit you, "Peew!" The name for that is "become one like this". It has no inside, no outside, no separation. That's "become one like this". I am Buddha, Buddha is me. But "become one like this" never said "I became Buddha, Buddha is me." That's sutra style speech. Zen style "become one like this" means only "Boom!" [*Hit*], or hit you "Peew!", or "Katz!" Never explain anything. Only demonstrate. That's "become one like this".

Then next is "truth like this". "Truth like this" means the wall is white, the floor is brown. Mountain is mountain,

river is river.

Then next is "just like this". "Just like this" means correct situation, relationship and function. Zen world says, "Mountain is blue, water is flowing." That's correct function.

This cigarette man only attained "form is emptiness, emptiness is form". He read this speech "form is emptiness, emptiness is form", then thought, "Ah, I understand. I am Buddha, Buddha is me. Then wall is the floor, the floor is the wall. Buddha is ashes, ashes is Buddha. Everything becomes one, wonderful! So I smoke cigarette and drop ashes on the Buddha."

He came here and wanted to teach you that everything becomes one. "I am Buddha, smoking Buddha, dropping ashes on Buddha. Also Buddha said that all things have Buddha nature, so why not? No problem."

Then you said to him, "Cigarette man, you are not correct." But he just [*Hit*], which means cutting off all thinking, right? So no Buddha, no God, no you, no I and no thinking. "Without like this" and "become one like this" look very similar.

He thinks about cutting off all thinking. If you cut off all thinking, you have no distinction. You have no good

and no bad, and that's no problem, but you also have no Buddha and no ashes, so then you have a problem. So what can you do?

He thinks, "I cut off all thinking [*Hit*], I got enlightenment." Now he has a proud mind. He got enlightenment, but he cannot make the distinction that the wall is white and the floor is brown. Buddha's style enlightenment means "The sky is blue, the tree is green." But the cigarette man got enlightenment and cut off all thinking, but cannot distinguish one thing from another thing.

I give you a big hint. I'm very desperate, you know. It's like this. Two mothers take their children to the supermarket. The children cannot distinguish "my things" from "store's things", so both children start fighting and they cannot distinguish what's "my toy" or "your toy". "I" want that, then that is "mine". Then one child takes a candy, a comic book and toys and put them into his pocket. First mother says, "You are no good. [*Slaps*] Put it back!" The child is only crying, crying... "My mother doesn't love me." The next mother is a Zen student. She already passed the cigarette man kong-an, so she says to her son, "You are my good son, my good son. I love you, but if you take those

things and not pay for them, you will become a thief. Do you want to become a thief?" Then boy says, "No, mummy." Then mother says, "Wonderful, wonderful, then you must pay for these things so you don't become a thief, OK?"

Step by step, give correct teaching. The name for that is great love and great compassion.

So you fix this cigarette man. If you attain that style of mind, then everything is no problem. Then saving all beings from suffering is possible. If you don't understand, only go straight, don't know. Finishing this kong-an is necessary, but don't attach to this kong-an.

A kong-an is only direction. The meaning of kong-an is to only give you don't know. Another name for all kong-ans is "don't know food". When this "don't know food" digests, digests, digests, then you become completely "don't know". Then everything is clear like space.

That's Bodhidharma's way. Long ago Buddha sat for six years under the bodhi tree, "What am I? Don't know."

Emperor Wu asked Bodhidharma, "Who are you?" He said, "Don't know."

In 1992, we are practicing only go straight, don't know. Then, Buddha's don't know, Bodhidharma's don't know and your don't know, are they the same or different?

If you attain this point then you, Bodhidharma and Buddha become the same thread. That's this "don't know" lifeline. That is our tradition.

If you like that, only go straight, don't know, then soon you will get enlightenment. Saving all beings is not possible, but try, try, try for ten thousand years is necessary. So this Zen Center has a try mind. That's wonderful.

Thank you for your hard training, and thank all of you for your warmth, kindness and your try mind.

Wake Up: What Am I?

21. Story Of Zen Master Hyun Do

October 1992

There was once a very famous Zen Master in Korea named Hyun Do. He was a monk for a long time, for almost 40 or 45 years, but could not attain anything. He thought, “I have monk’s clothes and live in a temple, but I am like a layman because I still got nothing.” He also thought, “I became a monk because I had many desires. I still have those desires and I haven’t gotten anything. I have not enjoyed being a layman, but I have not gotten any rewards as a monk either.” So he was very upset and decided, “I understand. I do mantra and then can get something.”

Hyun Do went to some small island in Korea and found a small cave. For twenty hours a day, just like Zen Master Seung Sahn, he chanted Great Dharani, thinking, “I want something. I want something, but I have no special power and no special technique, so I try mantra.” So whole day long, only chanted. He chanted for almost 100 days and then Buddha appeared in front of him. He bowed to Buddha, “Oh Buddha! Thank you for coming.” Buddha said, “Oh monk! You have strong practice.” Then Hyun Do said,

“Yes, Buddha. I am doing strong practice because before, I had no special powers, no special technique so could not get money, could not get fame and could not get sex. But now you appear. I am chanting now and you appear before me. Please give me magic.” Then Buddha changed into a demon and hit Hyun Do. “You are a no good monk. You only want something special, so I put you into this big bag.” Then he tied Hyun Do with a rope and put him inside a bag.

The demon called two other demon monks, “Come here. Take this bag of shit and throw it into the ocean.” The two demon monks replied, “Yes, sir!” Both demon monks grabbed the bag and went towards the ocean. Then Hyun Do said, “This island is very small. Oh, soon I will die. What can I do? I can already hear the water breaking on the shoreline. Ah! I understand. I try special mantra, ‘Om nam, om nam, om nam ...’” He tried many kinds of mantra to try to kill this demon, but this demon only laughed at him, “Ha ha ha! I was the same kind of monk as you before so I understand all your special mantras. Your special mantras cannot touch me. Now we throw you into the ocean. You will become a demon like us.”

Hyun Do was very afraid. Soon I will die. Then he remembered his first teacher. My teacher said only sitting

Zen facing the wall, sometimes would fall asleep, and he got enlightenment. But I could not connect to that. I remember my teacher asking me, “Who are you?” Soon I will die What am I? Then only don’t know. Everything completely stopped. Soon I will die, what am I? Then all ideas of sutra, all ideas of mantra, all desires disappeared and only one thing remained: What am I? Soon I will die, what am I? Only don’t know.

After a long period, there was no demon sound and he could hear the ocean. He should be in the water already for a long time, but he was not wet. Then he understood – this “don’t know” was very heavy. This “don’t know” means cut off all thinking. Cutting off all thinking, I become like rocks, trees and mountains and return to form body. This “don’t know” has no karma body, but only form body, so these demons cannot see my karma body and cannot find me. Also when I have no thinking, my body becomes like rocks and trees, and it is very heavy. So these demons cannot carry it.

Hyun Do then came out of the bag and returned to his temple, only practicing “What am I?” Five years passed and then he got enlightenment. This is the story of Zen Master Hyun Do.

22. Karma Passing From Parents To Children

October 1992

Student: Since I was very young, my parents were fighting, and they have much anger towards my brother and me every day. Even when we made small mistakes, they screamed and yelled at us. This anger was inside me every day. I am holding this anger and can easily pass it to others, so not only do I suffer, but I make other people suffer too. Zen Master Seung Sahn said put it all down, so how to do it?

Zen Master Su Bong: Your question is about karma passing from parents to children, and going around and around because nobody in this world believes in themselves 100%. Then who can we believe in? Our parents? Even though the feeling is not comfortable, it’s because they are the closest, so we believe in them even though the feeling is not quite right. Then this relationship becomes the habitual way that we relate to the world. It’s the only thing that we know so we just follow it.

But Zen practice means “Wake up”. We talk about getting enlightenment. To get enlightenment is very simple. It means only to wake up. Morning time, you wake up and

everything is clear. At night time, you go to sleep and many dreams, many demons appear. One moment maybe you were very rich, the next moment you were very sad, that is our dream. In this dream many things can happen. Dogs smoke cigarettes, Superman appears, you have special powers, etc. You can do anything. But when you wake up, all those things disappear and then what? Turn on the light, now is 6 o'clock. That is the concrete world.

Our practice is to get enlightenment to wake up. Then how do you use your wake up state in your daily life? Very easy. When you are hungry, you eat. In the dream world, when you are hungry, you want energy and breathe in, then very good feeling. You can do that kind of practice for a short time, but it cannot help your stomach. So waking up means you can perceive everything. This anger comes from where? This sadness comes from where? This happiness comes from where? If you see that, then you will never attach to these things.

Buddha said that all things have Buddha nature. Zen Master Seung Sahn said:

Sky is my father, ground is my mother

White clouds coming and going are my friends

My parents, my family and friends all have the same root

Our practice is only sitting meditation and keeping “What am I?” That’s all. Not special. Only “What am I?” It is not about asking what is the past, present, anger, like or dislike, or anything. Only “What am I?” Asking this question sincerely is the way to attain our true selves, attain our karma and help our family and this world.

Independence And Freedom

23. Absolute Freedom

June 1994

Student: What is the meaning of “Absolute Freedom”?

Zen Master Su Bong: “Absolute Freedom” has no absolute freedom. Sometimes we have long meditation. The first seven days usually are the most difficult because you are adjusting. It is a kind of jet lag, but once you adjust to it, then the rest of the ninety days will be very smooth. We always teach that our practice means “attain enlightenment and save all beings”.

We come to practice, you are sitting and your legs are sore, your brain hurts and your whole world is in one form or another of pain, and the only thing you can think of is struggling. But who are you struggling for? You are struggling for “me”. “I want no pain, I want no thinking, I want good feeling.” We always say take away this “I”. If you take away this “I”, this meditation is what we say in Hawaii “like a breeze”, meaning very good and life is very easy. If you take away this “I” and if you don’t make this practice for you, you have nothing to lose. You have no investment for yourself. It’s like somebody gives you money, and this is not

your money, so you use it for others and not for yourself.

If your practice is not for you, then very strangely, you don't care if you are practicing hard or not. Also you don't care whether it is correct or not correct. It is because your practice is not for you. You have nothing to gain and you have nothing to lose. Then you only relax. Very interesting, you know. The name for that is freedom.

In 1961 in America, one very famous singer died early. The last song she made was very interesting. "Freedom is just another word for nothing left to lose." If you lose your "I, my, me" you have nothing left to lose, and the name for that is freedom.

The other day at the Buddhist Youth Center I said, "Buddha, Bodhisattva and Zen Masters do not want your money, do not want your husband, do not want your wife, do not want your car, but they want your life." What is the meaning of it? That means to take away your "Small I" and catch your "Big I". This is the meaning of wanting your life. Bodhisattva's freedom means absolute freedom. Bodhisattva has no choice, so no choice is great freedom. The water spilled on the floor, he wiped it up, no choice. We call that freedom. Old layman hit the chukpi, he had no choice, that's freedom. He cannot decide whether he hits it four times or

only one time. He must only hit it three times because the head of the Dharma room said, "Only three times." That name is freedom, but nobody understands that kind of freedom.

Everybody says "monk" means "leaver of home and one who goes away from this world". Many people talk about monks as those who got freedom from this world. If you asked Zen Master Seung Sahn, "What is a monk?" He would say, "Only follow situation." Only following situation for others is true freedom.

24. Becoming Independent

November 1992

We always talk about Zen as “becoming independent”. That means you believe in yourself 100%. However, many people misunderstand that speech. For some people, that speech only makes stronger “I am”. Or the speech “just do it” makes people think “OK, I don’t care about anything, I just do it.” That still has “I”, so that action is not correct.

“Becoming independent” doesn’t mean “I become independent”. Truly “becoming independent” means this world can depend on me. Understand? My parents, my family, my friends and my country can depend on me – that means “becoming independent”. “I am independent so I can do anything I like” is not correct independence. “Becoming independent” means “this world can depend on me”. Then what? Everything can depend on you so you and everything become harmonious. Also, “everything can depend on me” means “I am dependent on everything”.

Here is a simple example, OK? I am driving and red light appears, so I am dependent on red light. This red light directs my life. Then I stop, so this world is dependent on

me, and the other drivers can trust me. This driver coming this way, I am going that way. Red light, I stop, so this driver can believe me. He can depend on me, but my action is dependent on this red light.

Zen means correctly perceiving the situation clearly. Then what is my relationship? Then what is my correct function? That is correct life.

25. Life Is Not For Yourself

October 1992

Did you get anything? If you got something, what is it that you got? If you didn't get anything, you must wake up. How do you wake up? If this was a formal Dharma speech, the Zen Master would first ask, "How do you wake up?" At that time if nobody can answer, he would shout, "Katz! The wall is white, the floor is brown." What more is there?

"Wake up" means human beings live in a dream. We are in a like and dislike dream, wanting dream, enlightenment dream, Buddha dream, Zen student's dream, kong-an dream. Everything is a dream. When the Zen Master shouts "Katz!" it means "Wake up". Zen Master Seung Sahn would then say, "The sky is blue, white clouds coming and going."

If you don't make anything in your mind, everything just like this is truth. If you attain that point, your life has 100% no hindrance. If you cannot attain that point, and if you don't wake up, everything is a hindrance. Zen practice means cut off all thinking and become independent.

If you want to become independent, you must take a chance. You must take a chance even if you have to die.

Even if dying is necessary, you must do it. Zen practice never kills anybody, but you must have this mind: Even if I die, I have to attain my true self. That mind is the No. 1 point. The name for that kind of mind is "just do it". That is necessary.

Long time ago, there was a very diligent Zen monk. He did not like anything in this world. Nothing interested him, and he only wanted to attain his true self. He didn't care about any kind of worldly things.

There is a difference between not caring about something and pushing something away. Many people think, "I must push away all my emotions, desires and feelings." That's No. 1 bad idea because Zen practice means to become a correct human being. If you have no feelings or emotions, you are like a rock and cannot keep correct life. That is a big mistake for many monks.

First, we talk about returning to our original self. If you want to return to your original true self, you must take a chance even at the risk of death. Zen never kills anyone, but if you are holding on to your life, you cannot do anything. If you are not holding on to your life, you can do anything.

When you look around, all your friends, everybody you know, why do they do what they do every day? They

do it for “my life”. What they can do, what they are able to accomplish is very limited. Yah! Maybe they can make lots of money and own nice cars. Maybe they become presidents of some big corporations, but inside, they are not independent or happy.

However, if you have no attachment to your life, then you are free to do anything. If you are not holding on to your life, mistake or no mistake doesn't matter. You become free, you can try anything, and you will never be afraid because your life is not for yourself.

This old Zen monk sat in meditation for many years. He already attained “I don't want anything”. He has no big desire, doesn't care about money, doesn't care about sex and doesn't care about good food, but what is the thing that has no desire? He already attained no likes and dislikes, but what is this thing that has no likes or dislikes? He didn't understand. So he only sat in meditation.

His meditation was a No. 1 good style meditation, never moving, only sitting, breathing in and breathing out, what am I? Don't know. Then many years passed. Finally he was very upset. He had no likes and dislikes, but what am I? Don't know. So he was very upset. Then he decided, “I meditated for many years and still don't understand my

true self. What was my mistake? Maybe I have not tried hard enough.” So he decided to do seven days without sleeping and only meditate.

This monk also decided, “I have already practiced for very long time. If I don't get enlightenment after seven days, I will jump off this cliff.” So he only sat on the edge. Seven days passed and he still couldn't get enlightenment. Since he already promised himself, on the seventh day he said, “I can't get anything.” He then stood up, looked down and just when he was ready to jump, *Boom!*, he got enlightenment.

This story has a big meaning. The meaning is that, before, he thinks about “I have no desire. I have no likes and dislikes.” Also maybe he understood “I have no likes, I have no dislikes”, but until that moment, he never attained “no life”.

In Zen we always say understanding cannot help you. That is an important point. You must take this chance. This monk already wants to give up his life. At that time he believed in himself 100% because he said, “On the seventh day, if I cannot attain my true self, then to die is necessary.” There is no hesitation or fear. That means believing in yourself 100%.

Question & Answer

26. Dharma Combat

October 1992

Dharma Transmission Ceremony at Providence Zen Center

Do Mun Sunim, JDPS : Richard Shrobe JDPS gave the opening Dharma talk about three kinds of transmission, and today we have three transmissions. So I would like to ask you, are you the tail, the family shame or the blind donkey?

Zen Master Su Bong : You have head, body, and feet. What is it doing now?

DMSN : Standing in front of you.

ZMSB : Isn't that enough?

DMSN : No!

ZMSB : Arrow has already passed downtown.

DMSN: Thank you for your teaching.

Mu Ryang Sunim : Zen Master Seung Sahn is a very great Zen Master. Do you feel any awe in stepping into his shoes?

ZMSB : Zen Master Seung Sahn is a very great Zen Master. Many people in Korea wear white rubber shoes, so no problem. What kind of shoes do you wear? [*Laughter*]

27. Not Blind, Not Deaf

November 1992

Student: If you see something, your mind becomes very clear. If you hear something, you might get the true way. But what about for someone whose eyes are blind and ears are deaf, what happens?

Zen Master Su Bong: What color is the wall?

Student: White.

Zen Master Su Bong: You are not blind. What am I saying now?

Student: ...

Zen Master Su Bong: You are deaf. Don't understand?

Student: No!

Zen Master Su Bong: That means put it all down. OK? Somebody asked me the other night, "Human beings eat an apple. Dogs eat an apple. Is that same or different?"

Human beings eat apple, dogs eat apple, is that same or different? How do you answer? Human beings eat apple, also dogs eat apple, is that same or different? If you ask some very wise man, maybe you get a very long explanation. If you ask a Zen student, he'd say, "Keep clear

mind, a dog never eats apple." That's Zen mind. It means don't make anything. Only without thinking, just like this is truth. You are not blind, you are not deaf, so why make blind and deaf?

Other Teachings

28. A Child Who Doesn't Speak

October 1993

One of my friend's children, maybe six years old, doesn't speak so well, doesn't speak so much. So his mother took him to many places to see many kinds of doctors. Then he visited me and his mother said, "Tell Su Bong Soen Sa what you did today." Or she would say, "Bill, why don't you ask Tim what he did yesterday?" This style of speech, all just to encourage her son to speak. But this son already understands his mother's wish, which means, "I don't believe that you can do it by yourself so I encourage you." Then more and more this child doesn't talk.

Then one day, I said to this mother, "Shut up!" A very short time afterwards, twenty minutes, this son exploded, and from his mouth, bah, bah, bah...not to his mother, not to me, but to my son*, many talking, nonstop talking. Then she understood that her son's problem was not that he was not able to speak, the problem was he chose

** Before becoming a monk, Zen Master Su Bong was married and had two children.*

when to and when not to. Then she understood her own pushing mind and was relieved. “Ah, my son can talk, that’s not a problem. I trust my son when he wants to talk, when he does not want to talk.”

Very often we make that kind of mistake even with a very good intention because we cannot see the situation clearly. We only worry about “my feeling, situation, my condition” so we cannot see. Meditation means keeping a before-thinking mind and returning to your true self. Our practice is not for “me”. It means how do we use our true self from moment to moment, perceive our situation, our condition and our opinion. Then not attaching to “my” condition, “my” situation, “my” opinion, not attached to anything, make it correct.

29. Empty is Clear

February 1993

Many people try to control their thinking. First, they try to solve their thinking. They try to make bad thinking correct. They try to make themselves right. That’s usual first course. That means if I can justify my thinking, I can justify my life.

But after many attempts, they find it doesn’t work. So the second course is to blame your friends. But soon you understand that it also doesn’t work. You are very unhappy. If you keep that condition, then very soon you have no friends. Why? Because only you are the best. That means strong only “I am”. Then if you keep this “I am”, you and this world become separate. It means that you become crazy. Crazy people have one idea, only “my action”.

Somebody understands “I cannot fix my thinking by my rationalization”. Then they also understand “I cannot fix my life only by blaming other beings”. There are many ways of separating ourselves from this world, not only by becoming crazy. Good movies, good friends, good books and many kinds of things already separate us from this

world. Those things are not good or bad in themselves. If we use those things only for ourselves, then we separate ourselves from this world. But if we don't use those things only for "me", then we are in harmony with this world. That means attaining correct relationship to things.

"Separate from this world" means become empty. Human beings' idea of "empty" is you and this world are separate. Buddha's "empty" means empty is not empty; empty is clear. "Clear" has everything. It has you, me, God, Buddha, dog, cat, tree, man, woman, good, bad, like and dislike because everything is clear. Then how do you use these things? That's important.

30. Your Family Doesn't Like You Practicing Buddhism

April 1994

Your family doesn't like you practicing Buddhism and many people have that situation. Why is that? Because they love you. All human beings want to protect the people they love. That's because all human beings have an idea of what is a correct life and what is good for their family and their children. Everybody has that.

Eugene is director of a Zen Center in Czechoslovakia. His parents are No. 1 good Catholics and have never heard of Buddhism. Buddhism in an Eastern European country is really new and people consider it a cult. After finishing a seven-day retreat, Eugene said, "Su Bong Soen Sa, let's go to my parents' place and take a little rest."

Right away, I was a little uneasy. "That's OK with your parents?" He said, "Don't worry." Then we went there. When we arrived at his house, his mother put out food, all vegetarian. They are not vegetarian, but she put out vegetarian food. After the meal, I lay down and slept on a couch next to the dining room, because I could perceive his

mother's mind is very open. Her feeling for us was like "You are my son. To me, you are family." So I could do that. But still I didn't understand.

At around 9 o'clock, Eugene's father came home. He rose from his seat and went to the cabinet, took out his father's eyeglasses, holding it and said, "Dad, sit down, please." He gave his father the eyeglasses and then introduced us to him. Then I understood that this Eugene is No. 1 correct son. Not dependent on his practice or what he believes or not believes, he always has correct relationship, function and situation with his family.

So his family doesn't care meditation practice or demon practice. Most important is what is our son's relationship to us? That's the proof. One action is better than ten thousand words. One action - what you are doing? That's beyond dependency on name and form.

31. In The War Zone With Killers

August 1993

Student: The world is full of suffering, so how should we help people who are suffering and who are in danger?

Zen Master Su Bong: That's your job. You must find that. Sutra cannot tell you, Buddha cannot tell you, Zen Master cannot tell you.

We all have some idea about how to help the suffering in this world, but it is all only an idea. Maybe somebody asked, "How will you help this world?" And if you are a Zen student, you said, "May I help you?" That's a very wonderful heart and mind, because "May I help you?" direction is great love and great compassion, saving this world from suffering.

Recently I was in Bosnia in Yugoslavia. One man who lived there liked Buddhism, but he was a special killer soldier. He heard that I was coming and said to his friend, "You ask Su Bong Soen Sa if he wants to come to this town, I'll show him around." For three days, I spent time with him and his killers. When he introduced me to his soldiers, he said, "These are my killers, they are my family." They don't

belong to the Croatian regular army, and they have some independent action.

Then one day, we have nothing to do so he said to me, “What do you like to do?” I said, “I want to go to Mostar.” The town of Mostar is where the Croats were fighting with the Muslims. In this town, every day for 24 hours, there was fighting. Not in the valley, not in the mountain, but fighting in the town.

One ironic thing is that five kilometers away, on top of the mountain, there is a town called Medjugorje, and if you are Catholic, you’ll understand this town. This town is where twelve years ago, the vision of the Virgin Mary of the Catholic religion appeared to five young children and instructed them, “You must pray for peace.” Up until the time the war broke out in Yugoslavia, 15,000 or 16,000 Catholics visited this town, and they climbed this mountain to pay respects to the vision of the Virgin Mary, but now this town is completely empty. No tourist comes, no restaurants are open. All young men from this town are fighting.

I told my friend that I wanted to go to this town of Mostar, so he said, “OK, I can take you anywhere.” Then he said, “Just a moment please” and entered his room to put on a special uniform. Outside the house, there were other

soldiers, but their uniforms were a little different. The colour is the same, the camouflage is the same, but the fashion, the cut is different. So I asked him, “Why is it that your uniform is different from theirs?” And he answered, “My uniform is brown and green.”

That’s like a Zen answer, since the other soldiers’ uniforms were also brown and green. But at that moment, I understood he couldn’t tell me why. Later I understood that it was because he was a special kind of killer. We went to the top of a hill overlooking Mostar. There were many bombs and bullets flying around. One soldier said to me as I was standing on top of the hill and watching, “Get down! Get down! Even if you have funny clothes and no hair, they will shoot you because from the other side, they shoot anything that moves.” Then my friend said, “OK, you want to go to the front line?”

Somehow the front line was safer than on top of the hill. In the middle of the town, there was one road of completely destroyed buildings. From one end of the city to the other there was one straight line all destroyed, which was the Croatian and Muslim boundary. They were always going back and forth on this line, fighting. Just on the opposite side of this line, the buildings had holes, but were

not broken.

On the street behind these broken buildings were a few small shops where they sold coffee and Coca Cola, ice cream and potato chips and of course cigarettes. The soldiers walked across this boundary line, fought each other, came back and drank coffee and smoked cigarettes. Very funny, because it's like they were sitting in an outdoor café in France, and of course it's not like France, but my friend said, "Let's eat ice cream and have some soft drink."

Next to us were soldiers with all their weapons on the ground next to them. One of the soldiers asked me through a translator, "Where are you from?" I said, "I am an American, I live in Korea." Then he looked at me and asked, "How can you help us?"

If you had been there, how can you answer this soldier? What would you say? Would you say "may I help you?" Or would you say "Amitabul, Amitabul..." If you are a Zen student, then what? Would you say "sky is blue, tree is green"? Not possible.

Already I am a Zen student, many kong-ans already answered, but this question from a soldier in a real life and death situation. "How can you help us?" hit my mind and hit my soul. Of course being a good monk, I gave him a correct

answer. I gave him some answer, but that answer, you alone, must find.

If you find that answer, then you will have correct function and correct human being life. If you cannot find that, then our whole life is a dream. A Zen dream, a don't know dream, a Buddha dream, a Pure Land dream, a nirvana dream, a samadhi dream. Ten million Buddha lands, ten million dreams.

If you want to help this soldier who asked, "How can you help us?" We human beings must wake up. If you don't understand, I hope you only go straight, don't know, or recite Amitabul, Amitabul, Amitabul... what am I? Attain your true self, get enlightenment and become one of the ten thousand Buddhas, which means become this universe and save all beings from suffering.

Thank you very much for coming here this evening. You are very kind. If five and a half billion people have your mind and your heart, even if we didn't attain anything, this world will be at peace. Thank you very much.

32. Together Action

November 1992

The Wei-Ahn school says, “Teacher and student in harmony. Father and son share the same house.” That means together action. Always together action, together action, together action.

What does it mean? “Teacher and student in harmony, father and son share the same house.”

Every morning, student bows to the teacher. When baby cries, mother gives him milk.

Easy life, very wonderful. That name is together action.

33. Zen Master Su Bong’s Last Word

June 1994

Why do you eat every day? In this world, what is most important? You have already tasted that. Otherwise, you would not come here. Some of you already understand what is most important. Even if your speech and words cannot explain it, your true self already understands what is most important. That means inside each and every one of you, there is already a Bodhisattva seed. Our practice means making this seed grow. Like a farmer who plants a seed and wants this rice to grow, there is no guarantee. But farmers have No. 1 strong try mind. You are a Dharma farmer. Only try, try, try for ten thousand years nonstop. Thank you very much.

About Su Bong Zen Monastery

Su Bong Zen Monastery is a place for practicing Zen meditation and resting the mind. At our city center located in the heart of Hong Kong and a retreat village in remote Lantau Island, we invite you to join us in the practice of Zen to attain clear mind and see our true nature all are welcome. Beyond age, religion and walks of life, to practice together. Through Zen meditation and kong-an interviews, we open our minds to attain truth, access wisdom and compassion and find the correct human way to help all beings from suffering.

Su Bong Zen Monastery is a registered non-profit charitable organization established in 1992 in Hong Kong. It is a branch of the international Kwan Um School of Zen.

The Kwan Um School of Zen is an international organization of more than a hundred Zen Centers and groups founded by Zen Master Seung Sahn, the first Korean Zen Master to live and teach in the West. The school's purpose is to make this practice of Zen Buddhism available to an ever-growing number of students throughout the world.

Wake Up: What Am I?

The Teachings of Zen Master Su Bong

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