

ZEN Is JUST LIKE THIS

Dharma Talks By
Zen Master Seung Sahn





Zen Master Seung Sahn (1927-2004) is from Korea and is the 78th Patriarch in his lineage. He has taught Zen Buddhism extensively in Asia, North & South America, Europe, and South Africa for more than 50 years and established over 100 Zen centres worldwide. His clear and direct teaching explains in a very lively and practical way how practicing Zen can help our daily life.

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Introduction To Zen

Zen means understanding your true self. "What am I?" That is a very important question: What is the one pure and clear thing? If you find the one pure and clear thing, you will have freedom from life and death. How is it possible to attain freedom from life and death? First, it is necessary that your direction becomes clear; if your direction is clear, then your life is clear. Why do you practice Zen? Why do you eat every day? You must find that!

Put it all down - your opinion, your condition, and your situation. Moment to moment just do it. Then there's no subject, no object, no inside, no outside. Inside and outside already become one. Then your direction and my direction, your action and my action are the same. This is called the Great Bodhisattva Way.

When you put it all down, you can believe in your true self one hundred percent. Then your mind is clear like space, which is clear like a mirror: red comes, red; white comes, white. Someone is hungry, give them food. Someone is thirsty, give them a drink. Everything is reflected in this clear mirror. Then you can see, hear, smell, taste, touch, and think clearly. The sky is blue, the tree is green; salt is salty, sugar is sweet. A dog is barking, "Woof! Woof!" Just like this, everything is truth. So you are also truth.

Then how does this truth function correctly? How do you make your life correct? Moment to moment, you must perceive your correct situation, correct relationship, and correct function. When you are hungry, what? If someone else is hungry, what? If you meet the Buddha, what do you do? Where do you throw away your cigarette ashes? Most people understand all of this, but they cannot actually do it. If you completely do it, then your everyday mind is correct life. Jesus said, "I am the Way, the Truth, and the Life." That is the same point.

Most people understand too much. This understanding cannot help your life. Descartes said, "I think, therefore I am." So 'I' makes 'I'. If you are not thinking, then what? Even if you have a big experience, if you cannot attain the one pure and clear thing, then all your understanding and experience cannot help your practice. Therefore Zen practice is not about understanding. Zen means only go straight, don't know.

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

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

"Then should I try to keep it or not?"

Nam Cheon said, "If you try to keep it, you are already mistaken."

"If I do not try to keep it, how can I understand the true way?"

Nam Cheon replied, "The true way is not dependent on understanding or not understanding. Understanding is illusion; not understanding is blankness. If you completely attain the true way of not thinking, it is like space, clear and void. So why do you make right and wrong?" Joju heard that, and got enlightenment.

What did Joju attain?

Often, Zen students want to 'keep it'. That is a big mistake. Zen means when you are doing something, just do it. You already know that understanding is illusion. Don't be attached to your understanding! Correct practice means, "How does your understanding get digested and become wisdom?" That is true everyday mind.

So why make 365 kong-ans? Since everybody understands too much, we must use understanding medicine. What did Joju attain? If you open your mouth, it's already a mistake! But if you are not thinking, the answer is pure and clear, always in front of you. Then how does your true 'I' function correctly and save all beings?

The Tao is called the Great Mother:
empty yet inexhaustible,
it gives birth to infinite worlds.
It is always present within you.
You can use it any way you want.

How does the Tao give birth to infinite worlds? This is the same question, the same point. In this collection there are Buddhist kong-ans, Christian kong-ans, Taoist kong-ans, and Zen kong-ans. There are old kong-ans and new kong-ans, but they are all the same: these beautiful words all teach correct direction. If you are attached to beautiful speech or holding your opinion, you cannot attain their true meaning. So put it all down - your opinion, your condition and your situation. Then your mind is clear like space. Then a correct answer to any kong-an will appear by itself. This is wisdom.

When you try a kong-an, if you don't attain it, don't worry! Don't be attached to the kong-an, and also, don't try to understand the kong-an. Only go straight, don't know: try, try, try for ten thousand years, non-stop. Then you attain the Way, the Truth, and the Life, which means from moment to moment keeping the correct situation, correct relationship, and correct function. That is already Great Love, Great Compassion, and the Great Bodhisattva Way.

Not dependent on words,
A special transmission outside the sutras,
Pointing directly to mind,
See your true nature, become Buddha.

If you wish to pass through this gate, do not give rise to thinking. The Buddha taught all the Dharmas in order to save all minds. When you do not keep any of these minds, then what use is there for Dharmas?

I hope every day you don't make any thing, just do it, from moment to moment, attain the 365 kong-ans, get enlightenment, and save all beings from suffering.

The high sky is always blue. Water always flows into the ocean.

What Is Zen?

Zen is very simple. What are you?

In this whole world, everyone searches for happiness outside, but nobody understands their true self inside.

Everybody says, "I". "I want this. I am like that..." but nobody understands this 'I'. Before you were born, where did your 'I' come from? When you die, where will your 'I' go? If you sincerely ask, "What am I?" sooner or later you will run into a wall where all thinking is cut off. We call this "Don't know."

Zen is keeping this don't-know mind always and everywhere.

*When walking, standing, sitting,
lying down, speaking, being
silent, moving, being still...
At all times, in all places, without
interruption—what is this?
One mind is infinite kalpas.*

Meditation in Zen means keeping don't-know mind when bowing, chanting and sitting Zen. This is formal Zen practice. And, when doing something, just *do* it. When driving, just drive; when eating, just eat; when working, just work.

Finally your don't know-mind will become clear. Then you can see the sky, only blue - you can see the tree, only green. Your mind is like a clear mirror - red comes, the mirror is red; white comes, the mirror is white. A hungry person comes, you can give him food; a thirsty person comes, you can give her something to drink. There is no desire for myself, only for all beings. That mind is already Enlightenment; we call that Great Love, Great Compassion, the Great Bodhisattva Way. It's very simple, not difficult!

So Buddha said that all beings have Buddha-nature (enlightenment nature). But Zen Master JoJu said that a dog

has no Buddha nature. Which one is right? Which one is wrong? If you find that, you find the true way.

"Only Go Straight"

The Purposes Of Buddhism

"The purposes of Buddhism" means understanding Buddhism's direction. What we call Buddhism is the teachings of Shakyamuni Buddha. Buddhism is not a revelatory religion; it is based entirely on what the Buddha taught as a result of his great enlightenment. So Buddhism is based not on some idea of divinity but on the enlightenment experience of Shakyamuni Buddha, the central event in Buddhist history. The Buddha himself is not special. He attained his true self, which means he completely understood himself and this world. So we say Buddha is mind, mind is Buddha.

If you completely understand yourself, completely attain your true self, you too become a Buddha. The experience of the Buddha says that it is possible for each one of us to have the same enlightenment experience and to become Buddhas ourselves. This means it is possible for each one of us to completely understand ourselves, attain correct way and correct life.

What is attaining correct way and correct life? When the Buddha attained enlightenment, he was not sure if it was possible to transmit the truth he had received, in the hour of his enlightenment, to others. He thought that mankind, addicted to its delusions and attachment, would find it hard to understand his dharma. According to Buddhist legend, Brahma, the highest god in the pantheon, read the Buddha's mind. Brahma, fearful that the Buddha's teaching would be lost to this world, appeared before the Buddha and pleaded with him, "May the Blessed One teach the dharma; may the Well-gone One teach the dharma. There are living beings who have only a little dust in their eyes and who have fallen away through not hearing the dharma. It is they who will be recognizers of the dharma." Then, out of compassion for all beings, the Buddha looked at the world with his Buddha-eye and saw that indeed there were some beings who had keen faculties and only a little impurity. Realizing that there was a

suitable audience for his teaching, he decided to proclaim the dharma.

The decision by the Buddha to share his dharma with others was a critical choice in Buddhist history. If he had decided not to act in this world, his withdrawal would have been insignificant for human history. The stated motive for his choice is compassion for all mankind. At the same time, he must have realized that the truth received by him had a dynamic quality and needed to be converted into a message; otherwise, it would go to waste. So the direction or purpose of Buddhism is the same as the Buddha's example: if you completely understand yourself and attain your true self, you must teach others.

So every day we recite the four great vows. The first vow is, "Sentient beings are numberless; we vow to save them all." This vow is a manifestation of Shakyamuni Buddha's own compassion for all beings. This means that our practice and our enlightenment is not just for ourselves but for all beings. Once again, the purpose of Buddhism is to attain truth, attain prajna (wisdom); that means attain correct way, correct life. Then you can save all beings. This is human beings' correct job. Attain your true self means attain universal substance; attain universal substance means attain whole-world situation; attain whole-world situation means attain your correct job. How? It means, moment to moment, keep your correct situation, correct function, correct relationship. That means, moment to moment, how do you help others? Not only human beings, but this whole world. When enlightenment and correct life come together, that means your life becomes truth, the suffering world becomes paradise. Then you can change this suffering world into paradise for others. This is human beings' correct job; this is the purpose of Buddhism.

Samadhi And Zen

Zen Master Seung Sahn's teaching in western Europe
Mu Sang Sunim

Zen Master Seung Sahn is like a wandering mechanic - everywhere he goes he finds some engine, so to speak, which needs its valves adjusted, its screws tightened, old oil removed and fresh oil put in. On our recent teaching trip to western Europe he found that many people were confused about the relation between "samadhi" and Zen practice. So he taught over and over that while samadhi - "one-mind," "not-moving mind" - may appear "on the way," it is not the goal of Zen. The aim of our practice is truth or "clear mind," and the correct functioning of truth moment to moment.

"It is possible," Zen Master Seung Sahn taught, "for people with a lot of thinking to use samadhi to cut off their thinking, cut off their desire, and get a lot of energy. The universe and you become one point. But enlightenment does not depend on energy. In enlightenment there is no concern with energy."

"Enlightenment and non-enlightenment are the same point. A long time ago, a Zen Master said, 'Before I got enlightenment, when I saw the sky, blue; after I got enlightenment, when I see the sky, also blue.' That's enlightenment - the same point - the sky is blue. Getting enlightenment or not getting enlightenment doesn't matter."

"Samadhi has no cause, no effect, no karma, no enlightenment, no I, nothing at all - only energy. No sky, no color. But it's very easy to attach to samadhi energy and lose one's way. 'I am wonderful, I have lots of energy, I can do anything!' - this kind of mind can appear: much desire, much attachment to power. Then you return - BOOM! - to small I. I-me again appears. So this is very dangerous."

A second major theme addressed the students' concern

about the relationship between teacher and student. Zen Master Seung Sahn stressed that "Zen means not depending on God, or Buddha, or a teacher, or religion, but completely becoming independent. You must believe in your true self 100%. If you cannot believe in your true self, then you must believe in your teacher 100%. If you have no teacher, then you must believe in Buddha 100% - only keeping your own opinion is no good."

"Believing in your teacher and depending on your teacher are different. If you believe in your teacher, there is no subject, no object, no inside, no outside - inside and outside become one. Then you can believe in your true self, also you can believe in any teacher, also you can believe your eyes, ears, nose, tongue, body and mind. But if you only depend on your teacher, that is making two - I am here, something is there. That is not correct. When we are children, we depend on our parents. Then if our parents go away, we cry, cry, cry. But after we grow up we no longer depend on our parents; we can take care of ourselves. So don't be like a child - you must become independent. And don't depend on your teacher, only believe in your teacher 100%."

After one of the retreats in Europe, Zen Master Seung Sahn told two stories that further illuminate the dangers of attaching to samadhi: "A long time ago in China, during the time of Zen Master Lin Chi, there was a monk who was very famous for his samadhi practicing. This monk never wore any clothes and was known as the 'naked monk.' He had mastered many kinds of samadhi, had lots of energy, and didn't need to wear clothes even in winter."

"One day Lin Chi decided to test this monk. He called a student of his, gave him a set of beautiful clothes and asked him to present them to the monk. The student went to the monk and said, 'Ah, you are wonderful. Your practicing is very strong. So my teacher wants to give you these beautiful clothes as a present.' The monk kicked away the clothes and said, 'I don't need these clothes. I have original clothes, from

my parents! Your clothes can only be kept a short time, then they will wear out. But my original clothes are never broken. Also, if they be-come dirty, I just take a shower and they are clean again. I don't need your clothes!

"The student went to Lin Chi and told him what happened. Lin Chi said, 'You must go to this monk once more and ask him a certain question.' So the student went to the monk and said, 'Great monk! I have one question for you. You said you got your original clothes from your parents.' 'Of course!' said the monk. 'Then I ask you, before you got these original clothes from your parents, what kind of clothes did you have?' Upon hearing this, the naked monk went deep into samadhi, then into nirvana (he died)."

"Everyone was very surprised and sad. But when the monk's body was cremated, many sarira appeared, so everyone thought, 'Ah, this was a great monk.' Sitting on the high rostrum, Lin Chi hit the stand with his Zen stick and said, 'Form is emptiness, emptiness is form.' He hit it again, 'No form, no emptiness.' He hit it a third time, 'Form is form, emptiness is emptiness. Which one is correct?' Nobody understood. Then the Zen Master shouted 'KATZ!' and said, 'The sky is blue, the tree is green.' If you cannot answer in one word the question about your original clothes, then, although you can get samadhi and nirvana, you cannot get freedom from life and death."

"Then the Zen Master stared at the sarira - poof! - they turned to water. This is magic! They all turned to water and disappeared. Everyone was surprised. The meaning of this is: if you do samadhi practice deeply, then when you die many sarira will appear. But, these sarira will not last long because they represent 'one mind,' not 'clear mind' which is our original nature. Our original nature has no life, no death, no coming or going. When the true dharma appears, which means form is form, emptiness is emptiness or sky is blue, tree is green - that energy - BOOM! - will appear, all the sarira will turn to water and disappear. Our teaching is

substance, truth, and correct life. Our Zen practicing means attain your true self; find the correct way, truth, and life. Any style of practice is OK - even using a mantra. But, don't be attached to samadhi - you must 'pass' samadhi. Zen means 'every-day mind' not special states of mind. Moment to moment keeping a clear mind is what's important.

"Here is another example. Once one of my students decided to practice with an Indian guru. This guru taught samadhi practice. So my student got a mantra, tried it all the time when he wasn't working, and went deeply into samadhi. All the time he was having a very good feeling. Then one day while doing this mantra, he was crossing the street. The next thing he knew, a car screeched to a halt, almost hitting him, and loudly sounded its horn. The driver shouted at him, 'Keep clear mind!' Then my student was very afraid. The next day he came to me and said, 'Dae Soen Sa Nim, I have a problem. Last night I almost died. I was practicing samadhi, didn't pay attention and was almost hit by a car. Please teach me my mistake.'

"So I explained to him, samadhi practicing takes away your consciousness. But Zen means moment to moment keeping clear mind. What are you doing now? When you are doing something, just do it. Then this kind of accident cannot happen. So don't make samadhi. Don't make anything! Just do it, O.K.?"

Earth, Air, Fire And Water

Repaying The Universe

In 1986, I visited Swami Satchidananda's yoga ashram in West Virginia for the opening ceremony of the Lotus Shrine, a beautiful ecumenical pavilion. They had a dedication ceremony and had invited many teachers. All the teachers were asked to give a short talk and do some chanting from their tradition. I talked to them about how every day we breathe in air, breathe out air. We breathe in and breathe out all the time but we never pay for this most vital of our needs. The sun shines every day and nourishes our bodies with sunlight and energy for all things to grow. We live on this earth and use its resources, but we don't pay any money to the air or the sun or the earth.

Our body is made up of four elements: earth, air, fire, and water. Everything we eat or use is also made of these four elements. So these four elements are us and we are these four elements. This means we are the universe and the universe is us. But how do you show your gratitude to the universe? If you understand that, you understand your correct job as a human being. A human being's correct job is to make harmony with everything in the universe - with the sky, with the tree, with the dog, with the cat, with everything. If you have this harmony mind, you cannot kill an animal or kill a tree. That's the correct idea. This correct idea appears when you put down your opinion, condition, situation and moment to moment keep correct function, correct situation, correct relationship. Then you and the four elements become one.

After the talk, we tried the Om Mani Padme Hum chanting. In the middle of the Thousand Eyes and Hands Sutra, we have this mantra: Om Mani Padme Hum. These four words mean the four elements of earth, air, fire, and water. If you try this chanting, then taking away your opinion, your condition, your situation is very easy. You become one mind; you and the

universe are never separate. You return to your original nature.

In Korea, there is a school of Buddhism called Jing Gak Jong. Their mantra is Om Mani Padme Hum and they chant it all day long. It's the same style as the Kwan Seum Bosal chanting that we do in our school. Om Mani Padme Hum means Kwan Seum Bosal. They both mean original mind. Also, Om Mani Padme Hum means eyes, ears, nose, tongue, body, mind.

In India, Om is a sacred sound, sacred mantra. The whole universe begins with Om. In our Thousand Eyes and Hands Sutra, we have another mantra: Om Nam. Om Nam means cleaning our minds, cleaning this world. If you use something, it becomes dirty and then you need to clean it, like your clothes or your body. When you use earth, air, fire, and water - the four elements and the universe - without giving anything back, your mind becomes dirty. So we use Om Nam to clean our minds.

If you try Om Nam or Om Mani Padme Hum forty-nine times in the morning and evening, then everything becomes clean: your stomach, your head, your job, your house, your universe. Why forty-nine times? In the Oriental belief system, seven is a holy number. Seven times seven is forty-nine, so we try a forty-nine day kido or forty-nine day ceremony after someone dies.

If you try mantra practice, your mind will become quiet. But if you become attached to this quiet, then you have a problem. Another time, many years ago, I went to Swami Satchidananda's ashram. They do a lot of very wonderful chanting. It's like samadhi; people close their eyes and feel very peaceful and almost sleepy. I gave a talk and shouted KATZ! Everybody was very surprised. Brother David (Steindl-Rast, eminent Benedictine monk) was sitting next to me and he said, "Soen Sa Nim, everybody was surprised. They woke up." I said, "Not wake up. Everybody got enlightenment!"

I explained that if you only stay in your mantra, you enter nirvana. But, if you only stay in nirvana, you cannot save all beings. Wake up means entering Anuttara Samyak Sambodhi. So "KATZ!" is not "KATZ!"; it is Anuttara Samyak Sambodhi. So this time when I went again to Swami Satchidananda's place, he saw me and said, "KATZ!" I also said, "KATZ!" Then everybody laughed.

So our direction means, how do you make your center strong? You must decide for yourself what kind of practice you want to do everyday. Once you decide something, you must do it, and do it at the same time every day. If you have a special situation such as a guest coming and you cannot do your practice at your decided time, then doing it some other time is okay. But if nothing is happening and your lazy mind appears and you don't do your practice, then your center will not become strong. When you stay at a Zen center or go to a Zen center, you do together action with other people: chanting time, chant; sitting time, sit; bowing time, bow. Doing together action will take away your karma. It will help you let go of your opinions, conditions, and situations. Doing together action will help your lazy mind disappear.

Sometimes your "don't like" mind gets very strong. But like/dislike doesn't matter. If you continue to practice, like/dislike mind will become weaker and weaker. Making this mind completely disappear is very important. Why? Strong like/dislike mind means your direction is not clear. Then your practice is "only for me" - I like that, I don't like that. But if your direction is clear, you understand that your practice is only for other people. With that mind, any kind of situation is no problem. You only practice. That's a very important point.

There is a story that illustrates this. It is about my teacher, Zen Master Ko Bong. He didn't like chanting; he only liked to sit. One time he was staying in a small temple in the mountains. The abbot of the temple had to go away for a few

days. While he was gone, a woman came up to the temple with rice and other food. She asked my teacher to do a ceremony for her. Without hesitation, Ko Bong Sunim said, "Okay, okay," even though he didn't know the ceremony chanting.

The woman washed the fruit and cooked the rice and put everything on the altar. Then Ko Bong Sunim picked up the moktak and did some strong chanting. But this chanting was not Buddhist chanting; it was Taoist chanting. He had studied Taoism, so he knew one Taoist sutra. He chanted for one hour. The woman was very happy and said to him, "Thank you very much."

On her way down the mountain, the woman met the abbot of the temple. She explained to him how Ko Bong Sunim had done the ceremony for her. The abbot was very surprised. He said, "But he doesn't know any chanting!" The woman responded, "No, no, he did some fine chanting. I understand this kind of chanting." This woman had been a nun and she understood that what Ko Bong Sunim had chanted was not Buddhist chanting, but she was impressed by his try mind, his only do it mind.

When the abbot came up to the temple, he said to Ko Bong Sunim, "I met a woman who told me you did a ceremony for her." "Yeah, no problem." "But what kind of chanting did you do? You don't know any ceremony chanting!," the Abbot said. Ko Bong Sunim said, "Oh, I did some Taoist chanting." They both burst out laughing.

This is a story about only do it mind. When you just do it, there is only one mind. That mind is very important. It doesn't matter whether you do Buddhist chanting or Christian chanting or chant "Coca-Cola." In one mind there is no subject, no object, no inside, no outside. Inside and outside have become one. Then you connect with everything. You can connect with God, with Buddha, with a dog, with a cat,

with a tree, with the sky, with everything. One mind means becoming completely still.

So when you try Om Nam or Om Mani Padme Hum or Kwan Seum Bosal or any mantra, just do it. Then your opinion, your condition, and your situation will disappear. If you come to a Zen center, then waking up, together bowing, together chanting, together sitting, together eating becomes very easy. Then just doing it is very easy, because it's together action. In the beginning, you will have strong like/dislike mind: "I don't like Zen center food," "I don't like bowing," but if you do together action, then slowly, slowly this mind disappears. Then you can control your feelings, your condition, your situation. Then you can believe in yourself one hundred percent.

There is no life, no death; no coming, no going; no time, no space. You make time, so time controls you; you make space, so space controls you. But if your practice is strong, you can use time, you can use space. Then moment to moment you can do anything. Then you see clearly, hear clearly, act clearly. If somebody is hungry, give them food. It's not good or bad; it's only bodhisattva mine. But if you have this kind of mind, "Ah, I have done bodhisattva action for this person," then that's a big mistake.

One time, my great-grand teacher, Zen Master Kyong Ho, was walking with his student Yong Song Sunim, who was to become a famous Zen Master in Korea. Kyong Ho Sunim was a person of wide mind and wide actions. Yong Song Sunim was a person of kind mind and kind actions. As they were walking, they saw a group of children who had captured some frogs and were torturing them. So Yong Song Sunim offered some money to the children and bought the frogs from them. Then he put them back in the pond.

They started walking again. Then Yong Song Sunim said, "Today I brought free life to many frogs. That certainly is

good karma for me and for the frogs." Immediately Kyong Ho Sunim said, "That's wonderful action, but you will go to hell!"

Yong Song Sunim was very surprised, "You said it's wonderful action. But why do you say I will go to hell?" "The frog are free but you will go to hell," said Kyong Ho Sunim. Yong Song Sunim begged him to explain. Kyong Ho Sunim said, "You keep saying 'I' brought free life to the frogs; this 'I' will go to hell." Then Yong Song Sunim understood and bowed to him.

Therefore, anytime you have 'I', you have a problem. Our teaching is only do it. Don't make I. When you do a good action, it's not "I make good action"; it's your original job as a human being. It's your payment to the four elements, to the sun, the moon, the stars, the universe. Any helping action is not good, not bad. Nature does its job without making good or bad. Water is flowing; is that good or bad? Sky is blue, tree is green; is that good or bad?

Don't make anything. Just do it.

Zen Teaching, Kong-an Practice

Kong-an means public case, or public document. Many years ago in China, whenever government documents were copied, a chop or seal was imprinted on the copy so that half of the seal remained on the original document and half on the copy. In order to verify that the copy was authentic, the two halves of the seal were matched. In the Zen tradition, kong-ans are used the same way: the student's understanding of a question is one half and matches the teacher's understanding, which is the other half. When the student and the teacher share the same understanding, it is called 'transmission from mind-to-mind'.

Originally, there was no kong-an practice. The Buddha was born and attained enlightenment. He taught his students that everything is impermanent, that desire, anger, and ignorance create suffering; he also taught how to attain freedom from suffering, or Nirvana. There were no writings and not much discussion, only meditation practice. After the Buddha died, his disciples had several meetings to write down what he had taught. These writings, called sutras, were not written by the Buddha, just as the Gospel was not written by Jesus. They are the words of the disciples. In the years that followed, the disciples debated about what the Buddha actually taught: "The Buddha taught this, the Buddha taught that...." Studying Buddhism became more important than practicing. Also, sects within Buddhism argued with each other.

Then, about fifteen-hundred years ago, Bodhidharma began teaching. He traveled from India to China, where Buddhism had already arrived some three hundred years before. Bodhidharma saw that the people were only using Buddhism to pray for the things they wanted, so he began to teach them correctly. There is a famous story about his first visit to the Emperor Wu of Liang in Southern China, who told Bodhidharma that he had built countless temples, copied countless sutras, and given supplies to countless monks. Then he asked Bodhidharma:

"How much merit have I made?"

"No merit at all."

The Emperor then asked, "What is the highest meaning of the holy truths?"

"No holiness is clear like space."

The Emperor was completely baffled. "Who is facing me?" he asked.

Bodhidharma answered, "Don't know."

Then Bodhidharma went to northern China, where there were many famous temples, but he avoided them all, and sat in a cave near Sorim (Ch: Shaolin), facing the wall. After nine years, a man named Hui Ko came to him in his cave and said:

"Please teach me what Dharma is."

"Bodhidharma replied, "Even I told you, you would not believe me."

Then Hui Ko cut off his own arm to demonstrate his sincerity. "Oh Master, the pain is terrible! My mind is in awful pain! Please put my mind at rest."

"Give me your mind and I will put it at rest."

"I cannot find it."

Bodhidharma replied, "I have already put your mind at rest."

Upon hearing this, Hui Ko attained enlightenment, and became the Second Patriarch. This was the first Zen teaching: transmission from mind-to-mind.

The next major change in Zen teaching came with the Sixth Patriarch, who taught, "If you don't make the cause, you have no effect, so don't make anything." He became well-known for this very simple kind of teaching. Once, two monks were watching a flag flapping in the wind. They argued over which was moving, the flag or the wind. Overhearing them, the Sixth Patriarch said, "Neither the flag nor the wind is moving. It is your mind that is moving."

So this new question - "What is mind?" became an inspiration for Zen monks. Many questions came out of stories such as these: What is life? What is death? What is mind? All of these questions became kong-ans and people started to use them in their own practice. When a student came to him, the Sixth Patriarch asked him,

"Where are you coming from? What kind of thing comes here?"

"Don't know," the student replied.

This is where the "What am I?" kong-an originated. It was the same question that the Buddha practiced with for six years. The Buddha, Bodhidharma, and the Sixth Patriarch all had the same question, "What am I?" and all answered "Don't know." This was the original kong-an practice. Later, many schools evolved and naturally a variety of techniques grew up within each school. A country boy once asked the Eighth Patriarch, Ma Jo, "What is Buddha?" Ma Jo answered, "Mind is Buddha, Buddha is mind." Later he answered the same boy's question with "No mind, no Buddha." Whereas before the teaching had been simple, now there were many intellectual styles of teaching, and so a kind of word-fighting, or "dharma combat," also appeared. Thus we have *The Blue Cliff Record* and the *Mumon Kwan*, two famous collections of Zen kong-ans.

Zen began to look more cryptic to ordinary people. The practice of Zen and people's everyday lives grew further apart. People couldn't understand esoteric sayings like, "The wooden chicken cries, the stone tiger flies in the sky," or "Do you see the rabbit's horn?" Zen became a practice only for the elite. One always had to look for the hidden meaning, because the words themselves didn't make any sense. This style went on for a while, until more direct teaching returned. "What is Buddhism?" was answered with "Spring comes, the grass grows by itself." So although Zen had developed many

kinds of answers to these fundamental questions, all along they were pointing to the truth.

In the past, monks and nuns spent their entire lives in the mountains only practicing Zen. Attaining truth was enough. The correct function of truth was not necessary because they had no connection to society. But most people today have busy lives with families and jobs - so connecting Zen and everyday life becomes very important. In order to attain your true self, a correct life is necessary. Put it all down, don't make anything and moment to moment keep correct situation, correct relationship, and correct function. Just do it. If you practice this, you already attain your true self. But you don't believe that, so you must keep trying. Then correct attainment and correct function happen at the same time. This is a kind of Zen revolution.

In the past, kong-an practicing meant checking someone's enlightenment. Now, we use kong-ans to make our lives correct. This is different from the traditional way of using kong-ans that we talked about earlier. Whether the answers are correct or not doesn't matter - only how can you *use* kong-ans in your everyday life.

Kwan um means "perceive sound." This means perceive your true self. At the same time, perceiving world sound means perceiving that many, many beings are suffering. If you can hear this sound of suffering, then helping is both possible and necessary. That is the Bodhisattva Way. Helping other beings is our practice and our job. Correct practicing is not only attaining enlightenment - it's finding enlightenment's job. So kong-ans are only a technique to teach you how to do that. Don't be attached to correct answers or incorrect answers. You must use kong-ans to take away your opinions. When you take away your opinions, your mind is clear like space, which means from moment to moment you can reflect any situation and respond correctly and meticulously.

Some people ask, "What is the best way to work on kong-ans?" An eminent teacher once said, "The ten thousand questions are all one question." Practicing with one question means only go straight, don't know. Just *do* it. If you are attached to a kong-an, you will have a big problem; it's a kind of Zen 'sickness'. A kong-an is only a finger pointing at the moon. If you are attached to the finger, you cannot perceive the moon. The most important thing is your direction. This direction is Don't Know.

The old style of practice was to go into the mountains, cut off the outside world and just work on one kong-an, sometimes for many years. Our style of practice is learning how to function correctly in everyday life through kong-an practice. So, when you are doing something, just do it. When you just do it, there is no thinking no subject and no object. Inside and outside become one. This is correct kong-an practice - only doing it. Moment to moment everyday life is our kong-an. Our Zen revolution.

Strong Taste Of Nothing

This world is always changing, but the process is sometimes slow, sometimes fast. Old people experience this sense of slow or fast time, but young people never do. They don't understand what time and space are, and that's their right. Old people have a right to the past.

When you climb a mountain, you walk up the side for a long time, then you arrive at the top. Going up, we don't understand what is happening. What are human beings? What is the world? But when you get to the top, you can see everywhere. You can understand what human beings are, as well as time, space, and this world. But understanding and attaining are different.

Several years ago, I became very sick. Zen Master Soeng Hyang (Barbara Rhodes) checked my heart and said, "Soen Sa Nim, you have an irregular heartbeat. If you don't go to the hospital, you might die soon." So I went to the hospital. The doctor told me I must meditate. "Yes, sir! What kind of meditation?" He didn't know I was a Zen Master, so he said, "You are moving around too much, so you have this heart problem. Don't move at all. Correct meditation is necessary." "Yes sir!" So I did correct meditation, only one mind, lying in my bed, not moving.

(Zen Master Soeng Hyang: Except that he did 108 bows every morning!)

That's right (laughter). They checked me. They put a monitor on my chest so that my heartbeat appeared on their office monitor. So I stayed in bed, but I did bows. I could see my heart action on the monitor, and when I would turn this way and that way, my heartbeat wasn't so good. But when I did bows, my heartbeat was very good. I checked this by watching the monitor signal. The doctor didn't like this, but I did "correct meditation" for ten days.

Then I was almost well. The doctor was very surprised. "You are a good meditator! Most of the people with this ailment stay in a hospital for three or four months. You are almost well after only ten days." It was only after this that he discovered I was a Zen Master. Then he asked, "What is Zen meditation?" So I lectured in the hospital.

When I was in the hospital I experienced strong questions: What is death? What is life? What is this body? I understood these things before, but I had not experienced them. I never used to think about my body. I just pushed it very hard, not checking it. As long as my body was OK, there wasn't a problem. Dying was OK, too. But then my heart developed a problem. I wasn't caring for my body correctly, pushing it too fast, not getting proper food or enough sleep. You must make everything correct, moment to moment. If you don't consider your body, then your body will tell you, "You're not taking care of me. Sometime soon, you and I will be separated (laughter)!" So I said, "Yes, I'm a little late. We have a job to do together and it's not finished, OK?"

In the hospital, there was a very old man in the bed next to me. He was wealthy, successful, and an intellectual. He had studied philosophy, so he had some understanding. Sometimes his wife, who was also very old, came to visit him. He didn't know when he would die, perhaps soon, but he had a very clear mind. I asked him, "When you were young, you were very strong. You made a lot of money and studied a great deal. You have a clever mind. Now your body is very sick. Maybe you will die tomorrow or the day after."

"Yes, I don't know when."

"So, in your whole life, what did you get?"

"Nothing!"

"That's primary point," I told him. "You found it. You studied philosophy but you couldn't attain this nothing. Just now, you

attained nothing. But if you hold nothing, then you will have a problem."

"What do you mean by 'holding nothing'?..."

"It's very sad if you are holding nothing. All your lingering attachments will press on you. If you are not attached to nothing, you will attain nothing, and there is no life or death. If you are nothing, then life and death are nothing. You are already beyond them."

"Oh, that's wonderful!" he said. "I didn't understand that until now."

It was an interesting conversation. He was old, rich, and very well-known, but he said he had gotten nothing. As you get old, this nothing gets bigger. Before you come into this world, there is nothing. When you are young, you don't understand 'nothing', just the words. But by the time you are forty or fifty and a good friend has died or your mother and father have died, then you have experienced nothing. You have tasted nothing. If you practice hard, the taste is very strong, and you are free to help other people. But if you are holding something in your mind, you can't taste 'nothing'. If you want freedom, you must taste nothing very intensely. What is the taste of nothing?

A long time ago in China, many great scholars used a special meditation which a great Zen Master developed called "corpse practice." Turn yourself into a corpse: "I am a corpse." Try doing that. "What do you want, corpse?" "Cemetery!" "When?" "Right now!" If you are not a corpse, you have problems, but if you turn yourself into a corpse, all problems disappear. You can help other people without difficulty. Complete bodhisattva action is possible.

If you can become like a corpse, you can take away all your desires, even your deep lingering attachments. Sometimes a condition will appear, out of the blue, and bang! You can't

understand what's happening. You can't control yourself. Where did this come from? This is a lingering attachment. Some of them come from a previous life. You can continue for many years, even many lives, holding something. We also call it "deep karma." Most people don't understand it. A good Zen student may do hard practice and everyone thinks, "Wonderful!" Then one day a condition appears, and bang! The good student falls apart.

You must find your lingering attachments and remove them. But if your attitude is that "everything's no problem," then your lingering attachments are hidden. You won't see them, even if you do hard training. It's fine to do daily Zen practice and work, but you also need special practice: perhaps bowing 500, 700 or 1,000 times every day, or sitting two extra hours each day, or doing a special mantra practice, maybe 3000 or 10,000 Kwan Seum Bosals. Every day, do regular practice with everyone together, and special practice. It's very important. If you try this, you will see your lingering attachments. If you do special practice every day, your center will get stronger, and when lingering attachments appear, you can control them.

Everyone has their own karma. Some people's karma is anger, or checking, or holding. Holding karma causes body problems. You might have trouble with your back or your legs, but it's your holding mind that is the problem. Desire is OK; anger is OK. Let them be. But also make an effort to do this special practice. It will not help you to only perceive desire, anger, and ignorance. Make your practice stronger every day, and then these things will become weaker and you can control them. When desire appears, you can say, "Maybe tomorrow," and tomorrow doesn't have to appear. That's what we call "dharma energy."

Why We Chant

One Sunday evening, after a Dharma talk at the International Zen Center of New York, a student asked Zen Master Seung Sahn, "Why do you chant? Isn't sitting Zen enough?"

Soen Sa Nim said, "This is a very important matter. We bow together, chant together, eat together, sit together, and do many other things together here at the Zen Center. Why do we practice together?"

"Everybody has different karma. So all people have different situations, different conditions, and different opinions. One person is a monk, another is a student, another works in a factory; one person always keeps a clear mind, another is often troubled or dissatisfied; one person likes the women's movement, another doesn't. But everybody thinks, 'My opinion is correct!' Even Zen Masters are like this. Ten Zen Masters will have ten different ways of teaching, and each Zen Master will think that his way is the best. Americans have an American opinion; Orientals have an Oriental opinion. Different opinions result in different actions, which make different karma. So when you hold on to your own opinions, it is very difficult to control your karma, and your life will remain difficult. Your wrong opinions continue, so your bad karma continues. But at our Zen Centers, we live together and practice together, and all of us abide by the Temple Rules. People come to us with many strong likes and dislikes, and gradually cut them off. Everybody bows together 108 times at five in the morning, everybody sits together, everybody eats together, everybody works together. Sometimes you don't feel like bowing; but this is a temple rule, so you bow. Sometimes you don't want to chant, but you chant. Sometimes you are tired and want to sleep; but you know that if you don't come to sitting, people will wonder why; so you sit.

"When we eat, we eat in ritual style, with four bowls; and after we finish eating, we wash out the bowls with tea, using

our index finger to clean them. The first few times we ate this way, nobody liked it. One person from the Cambridge Zen Center came to me very upset. "I can't stand this way of eating! The tea gets full of garbage! I can't drink it!" I said to him, "Do you know the Heart Sutra?" "Yes." "Doesn't it say that things are neither tainted nor pure?" "Yes." "Then why can't you drink the tea?" "Because it's filthy." (Laughter from the audience) "Why is it filthy? These crumbs are from the food that you already ate. If you think the tea is dirty, it is dirty. If you think it is clean, it is clean." He said, "You're right. I will drink the tea."

"So we live together and act together. Acting together means cutting off my opinions, cutting off my condition, cutting off my situation. Then we become empty mind. We return to white paper. Then our true opinion, our true condition, our true situation will appear. When we bow together and chant together and eat together, our minds become one mind. It is like on the sea. When the wind comes, there are many waves. When the wind dies down, the waves become smaller. When the wind stops, the water becomes a mirror, in which everything is reflected - mountains, trees, clouds. Our mind is the same. When we have many desires and many opinions, there are many big waves. But after we sit Zen and act together for some time, our opinions and desires disappear. The waves become smaller and smaller. Then our mind is like a clear mirror, and everything we see or hear or smell or taste or touch or think is the truth. Then it is very easy to understand other people's minds. Their minds are reflected in my mind."

"So chanting is very important. At first you won't understand. But after you chant regularly, you will understand. 'Ah, chanting-very good feeling!' It is the same with bowing 108 times. At first people don't like this. Why do we bow? We are not bowing to Buddha, we are bowing to ourselves. Small I is bowing to Big I. Then Small I disappears and becomes Big I. This is true bowing. So come practice with us. You will soon understand."

The Whole Universe Is Plastic

One Sunday, while Seung Sahn Soen Sa Nim was staying at the International Zen Center of New York, there was a big ceremony marking the end of one hundred days of chanting Kwan Seum Bosal. Many Korean women came, with shopping bags full of food and presents. One woman brought a large bouquet of plastic flowers, which she presented smilingly to an American student of Soen Sa Nim 's. As soon as he could, the student hid the flowers under a pile of coats. But soon, another woman found them and, with the greatest delight, walked into the Dharma Room and put them in a vase on the altar.

The student was very upset. He went to Soen Sa Nim and said, "Those plastic flowers are awful. Can't I take them off the altar and dump them somewhere?" Soen Sa Nim said, "It is your mind that is plastic. The whole universe is plastic."

The student said, "What do you mean?"

Soen Sa Nim said, "Buddha said, 'When one mind is pure, the whole universe is pure; when one mind is tainted, the whole universe is tainted.' Every day we meet people who are unhappy. When their minds are sad, everything that they see, hear, smell, taste, and touch is sad. The whole universe is sad. When the mind is happy, the whole universe is happy. If you desire something, then you are attached to it. If you reject it, you are just as attached to it. Being attached to a thing means that it becomes a hindrance in your mind. So 'I don't like plastic' is the same as 'I like plastic' — both are attachments. You don't like plastic flowers, so your mind has become plastic, and the whole universe is plastic. Put it all down. Then you won't be hindered by anything. You won't care whether the flowers are plastic or real, whether they are on the altar or in the garbage pail. This is true freedom. A plastic flower is just a plastic flower. A real flower is just a real flower. You mustn't be attached to name and form."

The student said, "But we are trying to make a beautiful Zen center here, for all people. How can I not care? Those flowers spoil the whole room."

Soen Sa Nim said, "If somebody gives real flowers to Buddha, Buddha is happy. If somebody else likes plastic flowers and gives them to Buddha, Buddha is also happy. Buddha is not attached to name and form, he doesn't care whether the flowers are real or plastic, he only cares about the person's mind. These women who are offering plastic flowers have very pure minds, and their action is Bodhisattva action. Your mind rejects plastic flowers, so you have separated the universe into good and bad, beautiful and ugly. So your action is not Bodhisattva action. Only keep Buddha's mind. Then you will have no hindrance. Real flowers are good; plastic flowers are good."

This mind is like the great sea, into which all waters flow - the Hudson River, the Charles River, the Yellow River, Chinese water, American water, clean water, dirty water, salt water, clear water. The sea doesn't say, 'Your water is dirty, you can't flow into me.' It accepts all waters and mixes them and all become sea. So if you keep the Buddha mind, your mind will be like the great sea. This is the great sea of enlightenment."

The student bowed and said, "I am very grateful for your teaching."

Not Just A Human World

This world is changing very fast. Recently, I went to Moscow to take part in a large conference called the Global Forum. The idea of this conference was very interesting - "how can we save this world?" Soviet President Gorbachev had invited over six hundred people - prominent religious, political, scientific and business figures - from many countries. Gorbachev perceives that this world is in danger. His mind is very wide. He isn't attached to the Communist idea.

Human beings have proven themselves to be very stupid animals. We have broken nature - broken the air, mountains, rivers; killed animals; fought each other. We don't understand our own correct situation or the correct way. In human life, keeping the correct way is very difficult. People get money, become famous, have this possession or that, but when old age and death approach, there is much suffering. In a way, if you have much money, there is more suffering; if you have no money, there is no suffering. Also, if you have too much thinking, too much understanding, there is more suffering; if your mind is simple, there is no suffering; it is possible to accept old age and death as a natural process. This simple mind is don't know mind. The don't know mind does not check, does not hold, does not want, is not attached to anything. It only keeps a one-pointed, simple direction.

But if you are holding your opinion, your condition, your situation, then this world attacks you. First, your mind attacks you; then your family, your friends, all the people you meet attack you; your society, your culture, time and space, everything attacks you. If you put it all down, this world and time and space cannot touch you. Then you can control this world, you can control time and space.

Human beings always want something; this wanting mind never ends, so our life is always complicated, always suffering. Putting it all down means making life very simple, like a clear mirror. The name for this mirror-mind is Great Love,

Great Compassion and the Great Bodhisattva Way. Originally everything is very simple, very harmonious. Only when 'I' appears do things get complicated and suffering begins. When 'I' disappears, this whole world is yours. When 'I' appears, you lose this world.

For instance, in West Germany some people are wary of unification. Why? Because East Germany is very poor. So 'I don't like' appears. That's animal mind, not human being's mind. East Germany has had much suffering; West Germany is prosperous. We must put down our prejudices and live in the world with the sky, the trees, the air, and other people.

At this conference in Moscow, the religious and political leaders of the world got together and talked about how to save this world. Now they are all concerned about ecology, about the environment, about pollution in the air and in the water. They talked about how to fix the problems of the world, how to raise enough money, things like that. In my talk to them, I explained that this is not just human beings' world; our universe includes animals, birds, plants, air, sky, everything. When there is harmony in all these things, the world is harmonious. When there is no harmony, there is a problem. So the problems of this world are only a result; this result is from primary cause. If you don't understand primary cause, you cannot fix the results. What kind of primary cause?

Today there are almost six billion people in the world. In 1945, at the end of the war, there were only two and a half billion people. So since the second world war, human population has grown very fast. Also there has been an economic revolution. Now many people in the West are comfortable: good house, good car, good situation. But how many people have happiness? Every day twenty-five thousand people die of hunger in poor countries of the world. But in rich countries of the world, there is much leftover food thrown into the garbage. So there is imbalance in this world. Who made this imbalance? Human beings holding on to their

opinion, condition, and situation have made this imbalance, this suffering in the world.

Only a short time ago, everyone was afraid of nuclear war. Now everyone is afraid of AIDS. Always everyone is afraid of dying. But if you keep your correct function, correct situation, correct relationship moment to moment, you can never die. Then you make harmony and balance in this world; that's how you help this world - not only human beings but the entire universe. That's a very wide mind.

Western history always talks about change from the outside, so Western societies have many revolutions. Eastern mind means inside revolution, not outside. It means sharing our world with the sun, animals, trees, all of life. Many Western people have been attracted to meditation because of these ideas. When your life becomes correct, you become harmonious with the rest of the universe.

The Buddha always talked about this idea: love and compassion, harmony with everything in the Universe. He talked about equality and love. Everything in the universe has its job: tree has tree's job, bird has bird's job, human being has human being's job. Only human beings don't understand their correct job.

So any kind of Zen practice means making your mind very simple, means don't know mind. Don't know mind means understanding human beings' original job. The Buddha practiced non-stop for six years. Bodhidharma sat for nine years. Why? He already had enlightenment, so why did he sit for nine years in the cave at Sorim? (Ch: Shaolin) He realized that the time was not ripe for his teaching, so these nine years were a time of waiting for him. This waiting was not for himself but for all beings. So his waiting was his practice.

Bodhidharma's waiting mind is also your mind. Putting down your opinion, your condition, your situation, and keeping

correct function, correct situation, correct relationship is also Bodhidharma's waiting mind. This is the Bodhisattva mind; this mind's job is never finished, because this mind is only for all beings.

I hope you continue to keep this Bodhisattva Way. Don't make anything. Moment to moment, just do it.

Biography of Zen Master Seung Sahn

Zen Master Seung Sahn (Dae Soen Sa Nim) was born in 1927 near Pyongyang, now the capital of North Korea, to a Protestant family. He attended school during the time of the Japanese occupation of Korea. In 1944, he joined the underground Korean independence movement, was caught, jailed, and only escaped serious consequences through the goodwill of his high school principal. After a futile attempt to join the underground forces across the border in Manchuria, Dae Soen Sa Nim returned to Korea.

After the Japanese surrender in 1945, Dae Soen Sa Nim found himself cut off from his parents by the division of the country by the United States and the Soviet Union at the 38th Parallel. He never saw them again. Searching for a way to help Korea free itself from foreign domination, he enrolled in Dong Guk University in Seoul and studied Western philosophy, political science and Confucian texts. After a few years he realized the futility of this academic approach.

When a friend introduced him to the Diamond Sutra, Dae Soen Sa Nim decided to become a Buddhist monk. He was ordained as a novice in 1948 and later that year undertook a strenuous 100-day solo chanting retreat on Won Gak Mountain. (A full account of this remarkable retreat is given in the final chapter in *Dropping Ashes on the Buddha*, a book of Dae Soen Sa Nim's teaching letters and stories). At the end of the retreat he realized his true nature and returned to visit various teachers, testing and deepening his realization. In 1950, he received Transmission of the Dharma in a formal ceremony from Zen Master Ko Bong, the 77th Patriarch of the Chogye Buddhist lineage in Korea. It was the only transmission that Ko Bong Sunim ever gave. Seung Sahn Soen Sa Nim (Tall Mountain Zen Master) was at 22 years old the youngest Zen Master in Korea.

Chronology Of Events

- 1951: Following the outbreak of the Korean war, he was drafted into the army and served as a chaplain, rising to captain in five years.
- 1957: He was discharged from the army and helped to re-organize the Chogye Order, the main sect of Korean Buddhism, founded the United Buddhism Association, and became Abbot of two temples in Seoul.
- 1962: Dae Soen Sa Nim was invited by some Japanese to establish a temple in Japan. He established two there and one in Hong Kong which became havens for Korean Buddhist monks and lay people studying abroad.
- 1972: He went to the United States, becoming the first Korean Zen Master to live and teach in the West. Not knowing any English, he supported himself by working in a laundromat in Providence, Rhode Island, repairing washing machines. Within a few months several students from Brown University decided to move in with him to learn about Zen first-hand. Thus, the nucleus of the Providence Zen Center was formed in his small apartment.
- 1983: The Kwan Um Zen School of North America was established as an umbrella organization to facilitate teaching schedules, support and communications among the many centers and groups.
- 1984: Kwan Um Zen School of Poland was formed. (Head Temple at the Warsaw Zen Center)
- 1985: Kwan Um Zen School of Europe was formed. (Head Temple at the Centre de Zen in Paris)

1986: Dae Soen Sa Nim became the first Korean Buddhist monk allowed into China since the Communist revolution. He led a two week pilgrimage to historical Buddhist sites and searched for signs of active Chinese Buddhism. (His encounters and Dharma combats with a variety of Chinese Zen Masters and monks and nuns are recounted in a small booklet entitled 'Zen Dialogues in China.')

1987: Dae Soen Sa Nim traveled to Russia for the first time to teach.

1988: Kwan Um School Zen Centre was founded in Spain.

1989: Kwan Um School Zen Centre was founded in Germany.

1990: Kwan Um School Zen Centres were founded in South Africa and the former Soviet Union.

1992: Su Bong Zen Monastery was founded in Hong Kong.

2004: Dae Soen Sa Nim passed away on 30 November 2004 in Seoul, Korea.

Publications By Zen Master Seung Sahn

- The Compass Of Zen - 1997, *Shambala Publications*
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- Only Don't Know: Teaching Letters Of Zen Master Seung Sahn - 1991, *Primary Point Press*
- Ten Gates: The Kong-an Teaching Of Zen Master Seung Sahn - 1988, *Primary Point Press*
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- Zen Dialogue In China - *booklet*
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- Mountain Is Blue, Water Is Flowing - *Korean language*
- Moon In A Thousand Rivers - *Korean language*

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