

# Broken Consciousness

BY ZEN MASTER SEUNG SAHN

*From a talk given by Zen Master Seung Sahn at Hwa Gye Sah Temple, Seoul, Korea on June 9, 1997.*

**Question:** Twenty years ago I was a soldier in Vietnam. At that time I had some bad experiences. These experiences still effect my consciousness today — my consciousness is a little bit "broken." How can I fix my consciousness?

**ZMSS:** During the Vietnam war many young people went over there to fight. War is a very bad situation, but this war was even worse. The soldiers could not even tell who the enemy was. Even the soldiers on the same side were sometimes fighting each other. Also, the people at home didn't completely support the soldiers. So there were many bad experiences and many came back with their consciousness damaged. How do you fix this consciousness? Broken consciousness comes from karma. Not just war: bad family situation, natural disasters — many kinds of bad experiences can have a lasting effect on our consciousness. Most important is, how do you take away your karma?

The only way to fix your consciousness is through strong practicing. Two kinds of practicing are important: bowing and mantra. First, every day and do bowing practice. Slow, slow bowing. Next is mantra. Choose one mantra — Kwan Seum Bosal or any mantra — then do it. Only try, try, try mantra. This problem means you have a lot of thinking many opinions. These appear from "me." Doing bowing and mantra practice doesn't have "I, my or me." Inside and outside become one — boom! If you try that, then your karma will slowly disappear. Only do it, then finally your consciousness will be clean, then your problem will disappear. Only practicing will help you. Reading books and understanding will not help you. OK? Only do it!

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