

# God and Buddha

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*From a Dharma Talk by Seung Sahn Soen Sa Nim, New Haven Zen Center,  
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Recently I held a two-day Yong Maeng Jong Jin at the National Cathedral in Washington D.C. for a group of lay Christians, ministers, and monks. During interviews I asked each one, "Where are you coming from?" "Washington." "Whose hand is this?" "Mine." "Whose leg is this?" "Mine." "Your body comes from Washington, but I'm asking you, not your body. Where does your true self come from?" "God," everyone answered, "God," so I said, "Yah, you are correct, but I ask you, where is God?" "Everywhere," some answered, "Everywhere," some could not answer. All the ministers answered, "Everywhere."

So I said, "Then is God in your mind or outside your mind?" Very difficult! "If you say God is inside your mind, then I say, Oh, this God is very small! If you say God is outside your mind, then I ask you, Are God and your mind the same or different? If you say they are the same, I will hit you. If you say they are different, I will also hit you." Everyone stops, no one can answer. Don't know. This is correct.

Buddhism first taught that there was only one Buddha, Shakyamuni Buddha. This is Hinayana style. Later, in Mahayana Buddhism, there were 84,000 Buddhas, 84,000 Bodhisattvas, 84,000 demons, 84,000 Dharmas, many sutras. In response to this, Zen Masters say, many Buddhas are not necessary. If you meet Buddha, you must kill Buddha. If you meet a Bodhisattva, you must kill the Bodhisattva. Too many, you know, so all kill. Mahayana Buddhism has too many Buddhas, so it's no good. Also if demons come, you must kill the demons. Buddha, demon, Bodhisattva—you must kill everything. This is Zen.

**Student:** "Then what?"

**DSSN:** "Then hit!"

So, killing everything means that if, in your mind one mind appears, you must kill it—good mind, bad mind, kill everything. Then what? You always have opposites thinking in your mind—good and bad; Buddha and not-Buddha; Heaven and Hell; the American sky is dark, the Oriental sky is blue—always opposites thinking. You must take away these opposites. Then your mind is absolute. So Zen is a revolution. Mahayana Buddhism has many styles, but Zen is a revolution in Buddhism. Or rather, a revolution in your mind.

Then you will get complete peace. Complete peace means complete equality, complete freedom.

America is wonderful. You have freedom for any speech. But what is complete freedom? If you *want* freedom, you already lose freedom. If you *want* peace, you already lose peace. If you want equality, you already lose equality. You must make

want mind disappear. This means, you must kill your true self. First kill Buddha, then kill everything, then finally kill your true self. Then what? Then world peace, O.K. ? So I asked the minister, “Why these days don’t American young people like Christianity? Why don’t they go to church?” You must understand American people have already almost become Buddha. Already 90% Buddha. It’s like Christian style—long hair, beards, ragged clothing—almost like Christ. The only difference is that Christ had no desire for himself, only for all people. Some hippies, though, think “Only me. I like this, I don’t like that. I like natural style. I like natural food. I like natural medicine, only natural-natural. I don’t like plastic, I don’t like machines, I don’t like this government, I don’t like this person”—this mind. “I like something, I don’t like something.” Christ liked everything, liked everybody. No desire for myself.

So complete hippie mind equals complete Christ mind. But some hippies are only outside hippies; inside they don’t have hippie mind. So it’s necessary to be a complete hippie, inside and outside. This means you must make likes and dislikes disappear. Then your mind is the complete absolute. No opposites. Then you already have equality and freedom.

**Student:** If the truth is already in me, why am I looking for it?

**DSSN:** What do you want?

**Student:** Truth.

**DSSN:** Already mistake. If you open your mouth, it is not the truth. What is truth? You say, “I want truth,” so you don’t believe in yourself. You already *have* the truth, but you say, “I want truth.” So you make a mistake. What color is this floor?

**Student:** Brown

**DSSN:** Correct. This is truth. If someone said, “White,” this would be crazy. “The floor is brown” is the truth. You already understand. So if you make the mind that wants to understand truth disappear, then you are already complete.