

Hae Jae Dharma Speech 1981

BY ZEN MASTER SEUNG SAHN

This is the Dharma Speech given by Zen Master Seung Sahn at the Hae Jae Ceremony marking the end of Kyol Che at the Providence Zen Center on April 10, 1981.

When spring comes, flowers bloom everywhere. Maybe spring makes flowers. Don't make anything, O.K.?

Today is the Hae Jae Ceremony. Hae Jae means loose, not tight, so this is our "Loose" Ceremony. Ninety days ago we held the Kyol Che Ceremony. Kyol Che means "Tight Dharma." Tight Dharma, Loose Dharma — what is Dharma? Dharma means complete stillness, so how can it be tight or loose? That is a big mistake! So our Kyol Che Ceremony was a big mistake, and this Hae Jae Ceremony is also a big mistake. (The audience laughed.)

When human beings are born, that is already a big mistake. Practicing means using Dharma to correct this big mistake. In America, when a baby is born, people say it cries, "Waaah!" Koreans say a baby's first cry is "Ku-aaa!" That means "Save me!" or "Help me!" A baby crying "Ku-aaa!" at the moment of birth already has I-my-me; that is a big mistake.

If you have no I-my-me, Dharma and tight are not necessary. If you do have I-my-me, Dharma has already appeared. A long time ago the Buddha said, "When mind appears, Dharma appears; when Dharma appears, form appears; when form appears, suffering appears. If mind disappears, Dharma disappears; Dharma, disappears, then form disappears; form disappears, then suffering disappears."

When a baby first cries "Ku-aaa!" mind appears and so Dharma also appears. So "tight Dharma" is very important. How tight should it be? For 90 days, only tight, tight, tight. Then maybe "I" will become smaller and smaller and smaller. When "I" becomes like smoke and disappears, tight is no longer necessary. It has already become loose.

So today, this is what loose means. Tight, tight, tight, then what is tight? There's nothing there. Nothing is loose. So did you get loose? Did you get nothing? If you have no I-my-me, tight is not necessary. If you have I-my-me, then today is not Hae Jae for you; you must still keep Kyol Che. That is very important, so be careful!

At the Kyol Che Ceremony we talked about understanding our True Self. That is called Enlightenment. Enlightenment is not special. It means 100% belief in your True Self. "What am I?" You must believe in your True Self 100%. One day is 24 hours. It is possible to believe in yourself 100%. When thirsty, I

drink. When I am just drinking, I can believe in myself — no thinking. There is no I-my-me, O.K.? When you are completely asleep, there is no I-my-me. Where did it go? I-my-me has disappeared, so my opinion, my condition, and my situation all disappear. If you are completely asleep, this is better than thinking or sitting. So nothing is better than something good.

Enlightenment is the name for understanding your True Self. So we will check the Mu Mun Kwan to learn how Zen Masters and students of long ago got Enlightenment. First let us look at "Pai Chang's Fox," the second gate of the Mu Mun Kwan. Everybody is familiar with this story. Long ago in China, Zen Master Pai Chang used to give a Dharma Talk like this, seated on a high rostrum, two times every month. Whenever he gave a talk, an old man would come to sit with the monks and listen to the speech. One day, after all the monks had left, the old man stayed behind. Pai Chang asked him, "Who are you?"

"I am not a human being. I am a fox."

"A fox?" asked Pai Chang. "Why have you come here, fox?"

The man replied, "I have a problem, Zen Master. In the distant past, in the time of Mahakashyapa Buddha, I was a Master, the same as you. Once a monk appeared and asked me, 'Does an enlightened man fall into samsara (cause and effect)?' I answered, 'He does not fall into samsara (is not subject to cause and effect).' Because of my mistaken answer, I have been reborn a fox for five hundred generations. Now, please, Master, give me one sentence to liberate me from this fox's body!"

Pai Chang said, "Ask me the same question."

"Does an enlightened man fall into samsara?"

The Master said, "Cause and effect are clear."

Upon hearing these words, the old man got Enlightenment. Bowing, he said, "I am already free from my fox's body, which can be found in a cave on the other side of this mountain. Would you please bury it as you would a dead monk?"

That is very interesting, but Pai Chang's speech is the worst speech. "Cause and effect are clear," he said. How could the fox lose his fox's body and get Enlightenment upon hearing that? I have a big question: does it mean that everybody loses their human body when they get Enlightenment? If so, they become what? God? Buddha? Which one?

Next, let's look at another famous kong-an, the third case of the Mu Mun Kwan, "Gu Ji Raises a Finger." Whenever he was questioned Zen Master Gu Ji would just stick up one finger. When people asked him, "What is Buddha? What is Dharma?" he just raised one finger. His young attendant saw that every day. One day when Gu Ji was away, a visiting monk asked the attendant,

"What is your Master's Dharma?" The boy stuck up one finger. When Gu Ji heard of this, he cut off the boy's finger with a knife. As the boy ran out screaming in pain, Gu Ji called to him, "Attendant!"

"Yes, sir?" the boy turned his head.

Gu Ji raised one finger. The boy suddenly got Enlightenment.

In our school, when I ask students, "Where are you coming from?" everybody hits the floor. "What's your name?" Hit the floor. "How old are you?" Hit the floor. The next time, I will bring a knife and hit your head O.K.? Be careful! (Everybody laughed.) Then maybe you will get Enlightenment. So ask you: this young attendant only saw one finger and — poof! — he got Enlightenment. What did he attain? Maybe somebody will raise one finger. Then I will cut off your finger, O.K.? Next time, be careful!

The next question is case #7. Someone asked Zen Master Jo Ju, "I have just entered the monastery. Please teach me, Master."

Jo Ju said, "Did you have breakfast?"

"Yes, I did," replied the monk.

"Then," said Jo Ju, "wash your bowls." Hearing that — poof! — the monk got Enlightenment. That is wonderful, you know? A short cut, very easy! (Everybody laughed.) The young attendant lost a finger and got Enlightenment; this monk ate his breakfast and got Enlightenment. That's a wonderful way to get Enlightenment. So what did they attain? It's very simple, O.K.? All the Kyol Che people understand; they already have become Buddha. (Maybe becoming Buddha is not necessary!) But that is a very important kong-an. Did everybody get Enlightenment? You have supper before this ceremony? After supper, what did you do then?

Next, we'll look at another kong-an about Zen Master Jo Ju, case #19 in the Mu Mun Kwan. When Jo Ju was young, he became a monk and studied all the Sutras. Finally, after many years, he began to sit Zen. For 30 years he only sat, sat, sat — not thinking, only going straight. He was almost done. Yes, he understood that everything is truth, but there was one thing he didn't understand. So one day, when he was 60 years old and still hadn't attained Enlightenment, Jo Ju went to visit Zen Master Nam Cheon. He asked Nam Cheon, "What is the true way?"

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

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

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

"If I do not try," said Jo Ju, "how can I understand the true way?"

"Rock-head! The true way is not dependent on understanding or not understanding. Understanding is illusion; not understanding is blankness. If you correctly attain the true way of not thinking, it is like space, clear and void. So why do you make right and wrong?" Hearing that — poof! — Jo Ju got Enlightenment. That is very easy, too. Don't make anything. Then your mind is clear like space. Why make something? When Jo Ju heard that,, he got Enlightenment. What did he attain? That's the point! So everybody knows that thinking is no good. If you are thinking, you don't understand.

Gate #23 is also a famous kong-an, "Don't Think Good and Bad." The Sixth Patriarch, Zen Master Hui Neng, had already gotten Enlightenment and transmission. He was traveling to South China and was pursued for a long way by Hae Myung, a very strong monk who had previously been a great general. The Patriarch, seeing Hae Myung coming, laid his robe and bowl on a stone and said, "This robe symbolizes faith; how can it be fought over? I leave it to you to take it." He went and hid behind a tree. Hae Myung tried as hard as he could to pick up the robe and bowl, but they were as immovable as a mountain.

"Maybe the Sixth Patriarch has magical powers," he thought. Then he said, "I don't want this robe or bowl. I want the Dharma! I beg you, Dharma brother, please teach me!" The Sixth Patriarch came out and said, "O.K., you only want the Dharma — that's a simple thing, not important. I will teach you: don't think good and bad. At that time, what is Hae Myung's original face?" Hae Myung was instantly enlightened. It was very easy. Only looking at what preceded his Enlightenment, "Don't make good and bad. At that time, what is your original face?" it's very easy. Did you get it, everybody? Did you get something? Are you hungry or thirsty? So it is also very easy to answer the question, "What did he attain?"

Next, we will examine case #28, "Well-Known Yong Dam." Dok Sahn had already become a great Sutra Master. For 30 years, he only read and studied the Sutras all the time. After ten years of study, he concentrated on only the Diamond Sutra and wrote commentaries on it. When he traveled, he always carried the Diamond Sutra and heavy volumes of his commentaries. He was called Ju (Diamond), and everybody knew he was a great expert on the Diamond Sutra. One day, he heard that people were practicing Zen in South China. He knew that this was demons' work because everybody only faced the wall for 90 days. Many times they fell asleep; many times they woke up. Sometimes their minds went to New York, Boston, Korea, Europe. Hearing about that, Dok Shan thought, "That is the work of demons. How can people get Enlightenment or become Buddha acting like demons?" So the great Diamond Sutra Master traveled to the South to teach these Zen monks correct Buddhism.

On the way, he got very hungry and thirsty at lunch time one day, so he wanted some food. He went to a tea house. (In China, where the water is very bad, tea and light food is sold at small restaurants called tea houses. It's like a snack bar where people come to drink tea, rest, eat, or sleep.) So he went into the snack bar and met an old woman there. The old woman saw a great monk

appear and said, "Oh, a Buddhist! Oh, welcome, great monk! Where are you from?"

"I am from the North."

"Where are you going?"

"South."

"Why are you going south?"

"Because I heard that in the South, all the monks are practicing wrong; they only face the wall and sleep, sleep, sleep; then they get Enlightenment and become Buddha. They don't understand Buddha's teaching." He had a lot of energy up.

"Oh, what do you teach?"

"I teach the Dharma."

"What kind of Dharma?"

"I teach the Diamond Sutra," he said pointing to the commentaries he carried everywhere with him.

"Oh, you are a Diamond Sutra Master. That is wonderful!"

"But you come here; I want some lunch."

"Lunch? O.K., but first I have a question for you. If you can give me a good answer, I'll give you anything you want to eat, free — fruit, rice cakes, or anything. But if you cannot answer, I cannot sell you anything."

"I understand the whole Diamond Sutra. Go ahead and ask me anything."

"O.K., O.K., I'll ask you. The Diamond Sutra says, 'Past mind cannot get Enlightenment; present mind cannot get Enlightenment; and future mind also cannot get Enlightenment.' You said 'lunch'. (In Chinese and Korean, the word for lunch, chin-shim, also means 'point mind'; this is a pun.) You say lunch (point to mind). What kind of mind do you point to? Past mind? Present mind? Future mind? If you point to past mind, you cannot get Enlightenment. If you point to present mind, you cannot get Enlightenment. If you point to future mind, you also cannot get Enlightenment. So which mind are you pointing to?"

Dok Sahn stopped and could not say anything. He had energy up, and his face kept changing, showing many colors. He wasn't hungry anymore. He said, "Then I ask you, is there a great Zen Master in this area?"

"Yes. The great Zen Master Yong Dam lives just a few miles south."

"O.K. Thank you very much." Without having any lunch, he left to see Zen Master Yong Dam. When he got to his temple, they talked and talked and talked. Being a Sutra Master, Dok Sahn referred to many points in the Diamond Sutra. Each time he did so, the Zen Master would only say, "Yes, that is correct. You are correct. Right." Many hours passed this way, and at midnight they were still talking.

Finally a monk came in and said, "It is very late. You must go to sleep." So Dok Sahn picked up his bag and robe and opened the door to leave. But outside it was pitch dark and he could not see where to go. He said, "Zen Master, outside it is very dark; I cannot find my direction."

"No? O.K., then." The Master lit a ricepaper candle and handed it to him. Just as Dok Sahn took the candle, Yong Dam blew it out. At that instant, Dok Sahn got Enlightenment.

That is also very easy! (Laughter) Zen Master Dok Sahn got Enlightenment. What was he carrying? At that time, Zen Master Yong Dam blew out the candle. Then it was dark, and he got Enlightenment. So, what did he attain?

Today everybody has heard many stories about getting Enlightenment. So I ask you, how many times have you gotten Enlightenment? Many stories talked about it, right? So getting Enlightenment is not special. Put it all down — your opinion, your condition, your situation. Then your mind has no inside, no outside, no subject, no object. Just one time, inside and outside become one — that is getting Enlightenment. If you are still keeping small things inside, you cannot get Enlightenment. Enlightenment is not special. It means when you are doing something, do it. When you see, just see. When you hear, just hear. When you smell, just smell. When you taste, just taste. When you touch, just touch, O.K.? When you're thinking, just think. Just think, O.K.? Don't check your thoughts. Just think. That is Enlightenment. It's not special. Therefore Zen Master Nam Cheon said, "Everyday mind is Zen mind."

At the Kyol Che Ceremony we looked at the following kong-ans. Someone asked Zen Master Jo Ju, "Does a dog have Buddha-nature?" He said, "Mu." That's not correct speech. Does a dog have Buddha-nature? Everybody understands that, so you must make Jo Ju's answer correct. On Hae Jae day, that is your job. At this Hae Jae ("loose") ceremony, we must correct all Zen Masters' bad speech, wrong speech, and incorrect teaching.

A long time ago, when asked, "What is Buddha?" Zen Master Ma Jo said, "Mind is Buddha; Buddha is mind." That is very bad teaching. I ask you: what is Buddha? What do you say? If say, "Mind is Buddha; Buddha is mind," this stick will break your bones, O.K.? (He laughed.) The next day, when asked again, "What is Buddha?" he said, "No mind, no Buddha." The wrong direction! What is Buddha? If you live outside the Zen Center you only need to pay \$35 and come here for three-day Yong Maeng Jong Jin and you will understand that. Then you will be better than Zen Master Jo Ju or Zen Master Ma Jo. That's very cheap! (The audience laughed.)

The next one is a little bit difficult. One day Zen Master Dok Sahn went into the Dharma Room carrying his bowls. The Housemaster said to him, "The bell has not yet been rung; the drum has not yet been struck. Where are you going, carrying your bowls?" Zen Master Dok Sahn returned to his room. When the Head Monk heard about this, he understood, "The great Zen Master doesn't understand the last word!" What is the last word? Why did the Zen Master act this way? After he made a mistake, why did he return to his room without saying anything? Maybe he was a little crazy. Maybe he was deaf. Maybe he was thinking a lot at that time. Maybe he was asleep: sometimes when you go to sleep thinking, "I want to wake up at 11:00," somebody knocks on your door at 10:00 and you wake up, thinking you are late. So maybe he dreamed that somebody knocked, or that the bell was rung and the drum struck, so he thought he had to get his bowls and hurry to the Dharma Room. So maybe he had a dream. If he acted this way because of a dream, that's no problem. It is very important that he made a mistake. When you make a mistake, how can you correct it? How do you make a bad situation correct? How do you make a good situation correct? Good and bad do not matter. Correcting them is important. Zen Master Dok Sahn had already made a mistake. How could he correct it? That's the point. If you completely attain the last word, you can correct this mistake.

Next, we'll talk about the Sixth Patriarch's mistake. One monk said, "The flag is moving." Another monk said, "The wind is moving." The Sixth Patriarch said, "It's not the flag that is moving; it's not the wind that is moving. Your minds are moving!" This is a bad answer and bad teaching, because when he said, "Your minds are moving!" the Sixth Patriarch's mind was also moving! If a clear-minded student came up and said, "You, too!" then the Patriarch would have a problem. So one monk was attached to the flag; the other monk was attached to the wind. The Sixth Patriarch was attached to mind., What are some not-attached words? Give me a freedom sentence — just like this. Everybody understands what just-like-this words are. Today is the Hae Jae Ceremony, so everybody must answer.

The next question is very important. One day Zen Master Nam Cheon, Zen Master Kui Jeong, and Zen Master Ma Gok went together to pay respects to the National Teacher. When they got halfway there, Nam Cheon stopped and drew a big circle on the ground and said, "If you can answer correctly, we'll go on; if not, I won't go on."

Kui Jeong said, "Oh, I can answer." He sat down in the center of the circle. Then Ma Gok did an Oriental woman's bow, very gentle and slow.

Zen Master Nam Cheon said, "I'm not going."

These two Zen Masters said, "What does this mean? Why won't you go?"

"Because your answers are not correct and not complete." So, everybody, what is the correct answer? That's the point.

Getting Enlightenment is very easy; it is not difficult. Only ask what the correct situation is at that time. If your mind is clear like space, the correct situation will be reflected clearly. Before, we talked about how many people got Enlightenment. Then we examined many kong-ans. They are only reflections and have no I-my-me — no opinion no condition, no situation. A reflection simply appears. That is the point.

Our Hae Jae Ceremony has lasted almost two hours. So I ask you: Hae Jae means loose; Kyol Che means tight. Tight Dharma — loose Dharma. Originally this world is complete stillness. How did you tighten your Dharma, and you did you loosen your Dharma today? Somebody may say, "Oh, that's an easy question; I understand it." If you say that, this stick will hit you 30 times. Somebody else may say, "I don't understand. What is a good answer?" This stick will also hit him 30 times. Then what can you do? It is complete stillness. How did you tighten your Dharma; how did you loosen your Dharma?

KATZ!

Today we had supper at 5:30.

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