

Kyol Che Dharma Speech 1981

BY ZEN MASTER SEUNG SAHN

The following is a condensed version of the formal speech given by Zen Master Seung Sahn at the Kyol Che Opening Ceremony on January 10, 1981. In accordance with Korean tradition, Providence Zen Center Head Dharma Teacher Louise Sichel bowed to Zen Master Seung Sahn three times and led him to a high podium. Then Chogye International Zen Center Abbot Mu Jin Sunim chanted three times a request for Zen Master Seung Sahn to share his teaching.

One day long ago in China, the great Zen Master Lin Chi was walking past the Dharma Hall. Just then two monks appeared and at the same time they yelled "Katz!" at each other. Seeing this, an attendant asked the Zen Master, "Zen Master! At the same moment these two monks yelled 'Katz!' Is there a host and a guest?"

"Yes, there is," replied the Zen Master.

"Then which one is host and which is guest?"

"You ask them."

So today I ask you: which one is the host and which one is the guest? You must attain that. How do you attain that?

KATZ!

Already host and guest clearly appear.

Then Zen Master Seung Sahn chanted a poem:

10,000 Dharmas return to One
Where does the One return?
When a dog barks: woof, woof,
Know that the guest is at the front gate.

Tomorrow we begin our 90-day Kyol Che. That is very special. But also it is not special. It is special because in this world everybody only keeps I-my-me mind — holding something, checking something, wanting something, attached to something — for their whole lives. But the people who will sit Kyol Che want to let go of everything and practice. If you let go of everything, your mind will become clear like space. Then your eyes are clear, your ears are clear, your nose is clear, your tongue is clear, your body is clear, your mind is clear. If you see clearly, then what? The sky is blue. If you hear clearly, then the dog barking, "Woof, woof," is very clear. If you smell clearly, then the smell of

incense, the smell of shit, are very clear. If you taste clearly, sugar is sweet; salt is salty. If your touch is clear, cold is just cold; hot is just hot. If you think clearly, when you are hungry, eat. Very clear. Not special.

So everything is truth. But how much do you believe that? Every day we use truth, but we don't understand truth. We are living in truth, but we don't understand it. Why don't you understand it? Because you don't believe your eyes, ears, nose, tongue, body, and mind. The sky is blue — nothing special. But you don't believe that. "That's the truth? I don't know..."

So practicing means practicing believing in my true self. What am I? Don't know. But everybody has their opinions. They also have their condition and situation. So they can't believe their eyes. They only see their opinion.

If you want to become clear, you must let go of everything in your mind. That is the first point. Then you can see clearly; you understand truth. Then you understand what is correct and what is not correct.

Nowadays, in the United States, many relationships are broken. Do you know the expression, "Blood is thicker than water"? That is not true now in America. Many people think, "I don't like my brother. I don't like my parents. I like my cat. I like my dog. My dog and cat are better than my parents." That is not correct! This is a little crazy. Zen means finding your correct relationship and understanding your correct function and situation.

Today I'm going to talk about some great Zen Masters. Sometimes their speech was not correct. Also their teaching was not correct. So I am going to hit these great Zen Masters, O.K.? First we will look at the 29th case of the Mu Mun Kwan. One day the Sixth Patriarch was visiting a temple. The temple flag was flapping in the wind. As the Sixth Patriarch approached the temple he came upon two monks arguing. One monk said, "The flag is moving." The other monk said, "No, no — the wind is moving!" They argued back and forth. Then the Sixth Patriarch said, "It is not the flag; it is not the wind. It is your minds that are moving." Then the monks said, "Ahh, you are correct — our minds are moving! Thank you very much."

But this is not correct. Maybe Georgie would say, "You too! Your mind is moving too." (Soen Sa Nim laughs.) Possible, yah? One monk is attached to the flag, one monk is attached to the wind; the Sixth Patriarch is attached to mind. What are some not-attached words? You must find them. Ninety days. Try, O.K.?

Next, Zen Master Jo Ju also made a mistake. In the Blue Cliff Record, the 45th case, it says that a monk asked Jo Ju, "The ten thousand Dharmas return to One. Where does the One return?" In the opening poem I answered, "When the dog is barking, know that the guest is at the front gate." Not bad, O.K.? But Zen Master Jo Ju said, "When I was in Ch'ing Chou I made a cloth shirt. It weighed seven pounds."

Too long! "When I was in Ching Chou" is not necessary. Also, "I made a cloth shirt" is not necessary. "This shirt weighs seven pounds" is enough! Why is a long answer necessary? His answer is like this: if you draw a snake, then the snake is enough. But then you give it legs; and then you put socks on them! (Laughter.) When Jo Ju says, "I was in Ch'ing Chou," that is adding legs. When he says, "I made a cloth shirt,," that is the socks. Just now what do you see? What do you hear? Return to the point. A simple answer is enough.

Jo Ju was a great Zen Master. There are many good answers to this kong-an, but this bad answer helps our practicing. He made a mistake, so we are talking, so that's very good for our practicing. When you put your thinking in order, you can answer any kong-an correctly. Then you can find your correct situation and your correct relationship to all things.

Once you believe in your true self, you can understand other people's situations. Then you can help your family, then your friends, then your country, then all beings. If you cannot help your parents, how can you help the people in Cambodia? If your wisdom grows and your action is correct, then one action helps your parents, your friends, your country, and all beings. Never separate. That's the point, O.K.?

Kyol Che means Tight Dharma. In Kyol Che you cannot go out, you cannot act on your desires and your ideas. So you must use Kyol Che to make your great-faith rope, great-courage rope, and great-question rope tight. When these ropes are tight around your feelings, opinions, condition, and situation, then your small mind will die. Then this tight rope is no longer necessary. Then this tight great-faith rope becomes a great vow; your tight great-courage rope becomes great compassion and your great-question rope becomes only going straight on the Bodhisattva path, life after life. So you must make this change.

That's your direction. But an eminent teacher said,, "Originally there is nothing — complete stillness." Complete stillness is no mind. What can be tight? So if your mind is tight, you have a problem. But if your mind is not tight you also have a problem because you still have your opinions, condition, and situation. So if you say your mind is tight, this stick will hit you thirty times. If you say your mind is not tight, this stick will also hit you thirty times. Today is the opening of Tight Dharma. What can you do? Tight? Not tight?

I will show you. An eminent teacher said that if you are attached to emptiness, you lose your body. But if you don't completely attain emptiness, then you continue to be trapped by samsara. So what can you do? Only go straight don't know. If you try that for 90 days, nonstop, then you will understand, O.K.?

Long ago a monk asked Zen Master Jo Ju, "The 10,000 Dharmas return to One. Where does the One return?"

Jo Ju said,, "When I was in Ch'ing Chou I made a cloth shirt. It weighed seven pounds." At the beginning of this talk I said, "When a dog barks, know that the guest is at the front gate."

Is Jo Ju's answer correct, or is my answer correct?' If you find the correct answer, I will hit you thirty times. If you cannot find the correct answer, I will also hit you thirty times. What can you do?

KATZ!

The dog is barking — "Woof, woof." The shirt weighs seven pounds.

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