

# Only Teaching Words

BY ZEN MASTER SEUNG SAHN

*From a morning kong-an talk by Zen Master Seung Sahn in Frankfurt, West Germany in April, 1978:*

"If you attain Enlightenment, one thousand things, ten thousand things become one; if you attain Enlightenment, one thousand things, ten thousand things each become clear. Which statement is correct?"

A student said, "They are the same."

Soen Sa Nim said, "You say the same, so I hit you. Not the same. Also not different. If you attain Enlightenment, one thousand things, ten thousand things become one. What does this mean?"

The student said, "No mind, no Buddha, it's all one."

"Then what?" The student hit the floor. "Only this?"

The student said, "Outside, the sound of cars."

Soen Sa Nim said, "Correct. So attaining Enlightenment, not attaining Enlightenment, these are teaching words. These are only teaching words. Many people are attached to these words, so they don't understand truly attaining Enlightenment.

"Here is a kong-an about this. Someone once sat Zen for ten years; he was an old man. He had an interview with the Zen Master and said, 'Zen Master, I have a question. I have been sitting for ten years, but Enlightenment has not appeared.' The Zen Master said, 'You don't want Enlightenment, so it has not appeared.' 'No, no,' said the student, 'I want Enlightenment, but it hasn't appeared.' The Zen Master said, 'So, you want Enlightenment, so it has not appeared.'

"Then the Zen Master said, 'Go to the kitchen, drink cold water.' There is a simple custom in Korea, that when your mind is not clear, you go to the kitchen and drink cold water. So the student said, 'O.K., thank you very much,' and went away.

"This is a very short interview, but very important. Everything is in it. So this morning, if you have mind, only drink cold water, O.K.?"