

Zen Master Hae–Am’s Dharma Talks

Zen Instructional Series

Zen Master Hae–Am’s Dharma Talks

**Zen Master Hae–Am (1886–1985),
Successor of the 76th Korean Son
patriarch, Zen Master Mang–Gong of Dok–
Seung Mountain**

Zen Master Hae-Am

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This book is dedicated to history of Korean Zen Buddhism

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Introduction

Zen Master Hae-Am

Zen Master Hae-Am was born Soon-Chon (the follower of heaven), the only son of three generations of only sons. He was born in the Yellow Sea (Hwang-Hae) Province, of Sea-Moon County, in the Sea-Rock City, just north of Seoul, Korea on January 5, 1886. These names imply Buddha (i.e., the sea), Mind (i.e., the moon), and Sangha (i.e., the rock where the temple or shrine is). By the lunar calendar it was December 1, 2429.

The day of Soon-Chon's birth, in a dream, an unnamed Bodhisattva, riding a white elephant, emerged from the sky's edge and descended to the location of his expectant mother. At the spot was a holy rock adorned with flowers and jewels. Upon this rock the Bodhisattva sat and entered Samadhi. After sitting for some time he arose, reached deeply into his chest, and brought out a jar of holy milk. He handed it to the woman-with-child, then disappeared. Later that morning while his mother gave suddenly appeared from no-where, hovered above the house, and steadfastly for some time.

His father died when Soon-Chon was ten (1896). At that same age, he had a chance to visit the Hung-guk temple in Yang ju City Kyong gi Province. As soon as he entered through its gate, he insisted on remaining at the temple. He behaved as one who, after aeons of searching, had, at last found his home. Who could have even imagined that that would be the last day of his worldly life. Finally, his mother had to move into the temple as well.

At age fourteen (1900), he became a monk under Po-Am Sunim and thereafter remained the monk named Song-Am (rock of Self-nature). Song-Am Sunim never received a formal education and thus, throughout his life, relied on others to read write for him.

At age sixteen (1902) his mother passed away and he became very lonely. Orphaned and feeling great sorrow and depression, he set out on an endless journey. For over six years he was a hobo-style monk, employing charity chanting to beg for food, clothes, and money. Wherever mind led, wherever foot stopped, one tattered cloth and spindly staff was all his life:

With one tattered and spindly staff
Traveled east and west; it was endless.
If someone asked, "Where have you traveled?"
Everywhere in the world has been all-encompassing.

At age twenty-two (1908) he heard, for the first time, about Son meditation and raised the great faith. Giving up his endless journey, he attended the seasonal retreats in Diamond Mountain, in Myo-Hyang (Profound Incense) Mountain, and others, in order to do the original task of the sramana (Buddhist priest).

After four years had passed and his study had not progressed, he realized that the expected results of further study would require a teacher. In 1911 the Master Song-Wol in Tong-Do Temple gave him a Hwa-du (Kong-an) and in the same year he had a chance to meet the Zen Master Mang-Gong in Su Dok Sa.

Yesterday was new spring, today is already autumn. Yearly, daily, monthly, it flows like valley streams. Looking for fame and fortune, Returning gray-haired before the desires were accomplished.

He began realize what the right teacher could do, and it was becoming apparent to him what the only task for a human being was. How lucky!

Even parents are not close.
if asked who the closest is,
Blind tortoise and one gimp-legged turtle.

Hae-Am Sunim's first meeting with Zen Master Hae-Wol and Master Yong-Song was also very significant. "Without them," he commented, "how could I am?"

Blind tortoise met the wood-board in the ocean;
the meeting with superior mind in the Eagle's Peak
(Where Buddha held up the lotus flower).

Master Mang-Gong was a great, powerful master, while Master Hae-Wol was like a compassionate father or almost a mindless Buddha; but both were the honeydew tea of dharma for Hae-Am Sunim. There were many great monks under Mang-Gong. Especially great were Tae-An and Song-Wol (sometimes called Ham-Wol), both of whom were actually older than Master Mang-Gong.

Other monks who were related to Master Hae-Am included his well-known colleagues, Jun-Kang, Ko-Bong, and Choon-Song. Hae-Am Sunim's lifelong foundation of enlightenment and sea of great accomplishment included the Zen Master Yong-Song of O-Dae Mountain, an expert in doctrinal and patriarchal teachings, as well as other great figures: Mang-Gong, Hae-Wol, Song-Wol, and his closest colleague, Jun-Kang.

Fifteen years passed during which there were continuous retreats and ceaseless re-examination for Hae-Am Sunim. Finally, on the day of Master Mang-Gong's birthday. April 18, 1929 (March 7th, 2473), when Hae-Am Sunim was forty-three, the Master was at Su Dok Sa and recalled everyone in the mountain. He cheerfully rolled up his sleeves, filled his brush with ink, and without hesitation, composed the following patriarchal transmission Gatha on silk to Hae-Am Sunim:

To: Son Master Hae-Am (Wisdom Hut)

Clouds and mountains are not the same or different,
Also has no great family tradition:
This, the wordless seal
Transmitting to you, Hae-Am.

From: Mang–Gong: Wol–Myon (Moon Face)
March 7th, 2473rd year from Buddha
(April 18, 1929)

This patriarchal transmission was derived directly from Kyung–Ho and Mang–Gong, both in the modern Korean Buddhist lineage, the ancestry of which goes back to Bodhidharma and includes the Sixth patriarch Hui–Neng (Hae–Nung), and his lineage of Lin–Chi (Yhm–Je). This Korean lineage, at the end of the Koryo Dynasty, includes the Patriarch Na–Ong (1380–1436) and Chong–Ho (1520–1604) in the Yi Dynasty; after which was a three hundred and fifty year dark age for Korean Buddhism.

After this Dark Age, however, modern Korean Son Buddhism flourished. We must mention this because it really began with Kyung–Ho Sunim (1849–1912). Just prior to his time, Korean Buddhism was still faded from a lineage that had slept deeply. The great life of Buddhism had been awry until Master Kyung–Ho’s time.

As the 75th generation from Buddha, the 31st from Lin–Chi, and the 12th generation from the Korean Patriarch Chong–Ho, Kyung–Ho Sunim was able to reestablish the foundation of Bodhidharma and the Sixth Patriarch, Hui–Neng. Kyung–Ho Sunim was the modern revival of Korean Son Buddhism. Mang–Gong and Hae–Wol Sunim were in the first generation after him, but it was to Mang–Gong Sunim (1871–1946) that Master Kyung–Ho transmitted the dharma with the following Gatha:

To: Mang–Gong, the Moon–Face

Cloud, moon, stream, mountain are same everywhere.
‘Tis Mang–Gong Moon–Face’s
(this was Mang–Gong’s monk name) family tradition.
Secretly transmit the wordless seal by sharing with you;
one wonderful power overflows in your unmovable living eye.

From: Kyung–Ho; Sung–Woo (Awakened Ox)
March 27th, 2448th year from Buddha (1904)

When Mang–Gong Sunim, composed the Gatha to Hae–Am Sunim, the direct lineage was suddenly transmitted to Master Hae–Am who, without regard for fame or fortune, continued to just examine day and night. At that time, however, this young “bud of enlightenment” did not understand what had happened, so he immediately asked,

“Master, my study is still far behind; I did not accomplish the great enlightenment. What dharma are you going to transmit to the one who did not yet accomplish the Tao?”

To this question, headmaster Mang–Gong smiled slightly and answered, “This dharma is a so–called, birthday surprise.”

He, however, did not understand this unexpected, extraordinary surprise, and declared, “There are many good students of yours on this mountain; I am yet the un–perfected bowl.”

Master Mang–Gong suddenly stood up, took out his own bowl from the wall closet and abruptly said,

“If so, then keep this bowl.”

Hae–Am Sunim’s words were severed. Suddenly one ancient phrase dawned on him.

People of the true mind

have no shape to see and no form at which to look.

Word and utterance are severed;

Thought and its abiding place are also annihilated.

Mang–Gong Sunim wrapped up the Gatha in red silk and proclaimed him. No one understood it and no one questioned concerning it.

Who said, the circle does not know the circular?

After receiving the bowl and robe, Hae–Am Sunim continued to study under the great masters, caring for nothing but study. He preserved himself under the re–examination with the Good–and–Wise Ones.

“Only by the power of continuous re-examination, until the moment of death, can one be free from the suffering of Hell. Do not jump into the ocean of life-and-death by haughty foolishness.

Studying without the Master-Mentor is death.

Studying without refinement is insanity.

Studying without re-examination is disease.”

He also said that without a Master-Mentor life is only miserable; worse than having no parents.

Here is a Gatha sung by Ch’an Master Tu-Sun:

A cow in northern city had hay.

A horse in southern city had indigestion.

Looking for a good doctor everywhere,
treating a pig’s shoulder with burning moxa.

The rewards after continuous refinement and re-examination under the true Master-Mentor have nothing to do with the rewards of this ordinary world’s pursuits. The goal of the homeless one is this invisible work.

One time, an attendant asked the Zen Master, “By virtue of what seeing can the direct lineage of Buddhas and Patriarchs be transmitted to the one who is not enlightened?”

Master Hae-Am said,

“Enlightened and not enlightened are just names indicating how they are examining. If you let the word of resolve become the contents of your faith, then that is the enlightenment. If there is no faith in the mind, then the re-examination will be cut off and cause a final entry into the ocean of life-and-death. That is why it is called not enlightened.”

This is what the Master Mang-Gong called birthday surprise and the bowl of dharma, which is nothing but the holding bowl of re-examination. Because of that, it is called greatly awakened, not because of a certain enlightenment to be attained.

The Sixth Patriarch said,

Seeing Self-nature is the virtue of re-examination Equanimity is its excellence.

The Patriarch once recited a Gatha:
Since re-examining the Buddha-Patriarchs' words is
The Tathágata's enlightening mind –as–it–is,
If fire can emerge by rubbing sticks,
Red lotus will definitely bloom in the mud.

When night is deep, dawn is near. When the mind is deep, word is little. When examination is deep, enlightenment is supreme.

By chance, Master Yong-Song once asked the following Kong-an of Master Mang-Gong:

Yong-Song: Tell me, merely departing from speaking silence, movement, and stillness.

Mang-Gong...

Yong Song: Is that the Good-Silence?

Mang-Gong: No, not at all.

This dharma discussion was dropped here. Later, Hae-Am Sunim's life-long colleague, Jun-Kang Sunim, discussed this with Master Mang-Gong.

Jun-Kang: It us as though both of you masters entered the muddy water while strangling each other.

Mang-Gong: Then how would you respond?

Jun-Kang: What could possibly be said merely departing from speaking, silence, movement, and stillness?

Mang-Gong: Very good. Very good.

Master Hae-Am did not overlook this Kong-an but examined it and had a chance to meet with Master Jun-Kang.

Hae-Am: Do you believe what you said to the Master, "What could possibly be said merely departing from speaking, silence, movement, and stillness," was right? Since it has something from which to depart, why can't you say something?

Jun-Kang...

Hae-Am: Why don't you ask me?

Jun-Kang: Tell me, merely departing from speaking, silence, movement, and stillness. “In order to answer this Kong-an you have to discover the moment before entry into the womb.

If someone asked me, ‘What is the discovery of the moment before entry into the womb?’ I would say, broken glass is non-cohesive.”

He then received a Gatha:

One word for speaking silence-movement-stillness, who could possibly break through it?

If one asked me to comment after departing from them,

I’d say, “Broken glass is non-cohesive.”

Everyone called this the enlightenment Gatha of Master Hae-Am. Every mountain was surprised by this discovery and speechless, like a person who had just slightly awakened from sleep.

As Master Jun-Kang commented, “Patriarchs are nothing but the ones who re-examine Buddha’s words.” Without ceaseless refinement of the Kong-ans, one cannot be claimed as a disciple of Buddha.

After Master Mang-Gong passed away, Su Dok Sa became an empty temple in need of a new head master. Some elder monks recommended Master Hae-Am, but at that time he refused, saying, “To be head master is worse than going to a fiery hell. Why are you concerned with such titles? Why can’t we just study together?”

Within the political turmoil of a newborn country on old traditional soil and after the Korean War, Buddhism was no longer an interest of the people. It was worship attended for miracles of escape from anxiety and hunger and by the wealthy for good fortune, while the priesthood brotherhood of landholders under the name of Buddhist work. The abbot of the temple was usually a property manager or landlord. By way of criticism, Zen Master Mang-Gong once roared out:

What is the dirtiest thing in the world?

Dirtier than dung is the maggot;

still dirtier than maggots are all abbots in the main temples.

The true students were very few. Korean Buddhist sects became vehicles for achieving fame and wealth.

Thieves were many, feigning mastery:
No good people claimed themselves as students.

When Master Hae–Am, who had never been an abbot of any temple, was nominated as head of Dok–Sung Chong lim (Su dok–Sa Temple affiliates), he bellowed out:

Who wishes to hold the dog’s collar?
It’s hollow gourd.

All the disciples were in utter agreement and appreciation of his discerning assessment of the outside world. The times were topsy–turvy. Rather than monks, many lay people came to see him and a score of thousands studied; but only sixty lay people, twenty Bhiksunis (female monks), and less than a handful of Bhikkhus (male monks) saw the Self–nature. Most came, not to study, but to accrue a popular affiliation. Verily, the times were such that instead of students looking for a master, a master, the master had to look for the students.

No need to blame the world. This kind of situation was not new; it existed in Buddha’s and Bodhidharma’s times as well as in Kyung–Ho’s time.

Even after becoming disabled from an accident, Master Hae–Am deeply sighed, citing Master Kyung–Ho’s living thunderbolt–in–daylight:

The one word breaking through the empty space,
True voice of giving and snatching away:
Looking around, there is no one;
To whom should I transmit this bowl and robe?
Why is it called bad?
Because of not believing in the dharma.
Why does one receive the sufferings of hell?
Because of not following the word of the Good–and–Wise Ones.
What is the trouble?
Letting thought arise in the mind.

The Master summarized his one hundred years of life with one word: re–examination.

While examining what you have awakened, naturally, the major Hwa–du from Buddhas and Patriarchs will be pierced through.

Even if one has seen the Self–nature, without re–examination, seeing Self–nature will soon be obscured and totally useless.

In the study of Son, the three requisite pillars are great faith, a great bundle of doubt, and great provocation.

To the one who saw the Self–nature,

What else can be the great faith other than re–examination?

To the one who saw the Self–nature,

How possibly can the bundle of doubt not be vivid while in re–examination?

To the one who saw the Self–nature,

Re–examination cannot be perfected without the great provocation.

Because of faith, it examines. Because a bundle of doubt is vivid, it examines. Since the mind is provoked, nothing else can do except re–examination.

Today’s students deal with patriarchal Kong–ans carelessly as if they were children playing with a ball, with the idea that awakening is easy, merely saying, “understood it.”

But the old Master, using his dharma sword, destroyed them mercilessly, which is the same way that all the patriarchs have brightened Buddha’s Teaching by re–examination. That is the patriarchal spirit.

Re–examining the Hwa–do of Buddhas and Patriarchs is the true nature of enlightenment, i.e., Buddha–as–it–is.

Here is a Gatha sung by Ch’an Master Hwang–Pyok (d. 849):

Liberating ourselves from the six sensual dusts is extraordinary.

Playing tug–of–war while holding tightly the end of the reins;

without passing through the one time chilled–to–the–bone cold,

how dare exotic plum blossom fragrance reach to the tip of the nose?

This old Good–and–Wise One, already past the dusk of life, eight years before his death, slipped and fell, rendering his hip and knee useless.

He barely managed to live with only several spoonfuls of rice in plain hot water; sometimes one spoonful of honey with some pine nuts for nutrition. Food was as simple as his life.

However, layman students and the lines of the laywomen never stopped whether he was in Su dok–Sa Temple, at Non–Dual Shrine in On–Yang City, or in the Dong–A Hospital in Seoul. Wherever he was, it became the Chong lim; the sitting and the dharma discussions never stopped. It contented him because this was the old Good–and–Wise One’s karmic task. The weakened body, seeing the world as a shadow, was unable to distinguish voice, was unable to distinguish drum and bell. He fell into the soundless abyss; his hearing was like waiting for the echo from the horizon. Several broken teeth protruded like tombstones from his otherwise toothless mouth.

However, even in front of this old, weak, and sick corpse, why did the strong and not knowing what to do?

Why? Why?

Why could someone else have strong teeth, a better and healthier jaw, and yet not open it? Why?

What did they see?

What could they not see?

In contrast, as goes the ordinary world, people are only interested in power and gold; and the Korean Buddhist sects were no different. In fact, they were the monsters who only looked after the benefit of their own family members and pursued power with the Outlaw Kingdom. Through the eyes of power holders, Master Hae–Am was just a helpless monk and an irascible old fellow. However, even for this kind of criticism, the Master scolded his attendants who spoke ill of those people.

“After all, dragon lives among snakes!

Mind which better condition is wicked.

If you pursue something outside, then already you have slain the Buddhas and Patriarchs, not to mention having lost your life.

Do not become a follower of them; while you debase them, you become the same kind of indigent being. While you criticize them, you become a disciple of devils.

Talking hard; useless, 'til blood pours from the throat.

Prefer shut mouth for the rest of life.”

Study, Study, and again Study!

Once the great Son Master Na–Ong received a Gatha:

The primary concern of Son is faith;

Study carefully but sharpen it more enthusiastically.

When the bundle of doubt is pierced through unexpectedly,

Mud–ox plowing in the farm at the entrance of Aeon.

Days and months were faster than thunderbolt, knowing that his time would soon come.

He urged,

Ask without delay.

Nineteen eighty–four, this old Good–and–Wise One became Korean Ancient Buddha who lived twenty years more than Buddha.

On one of the hottest days in Su dok–Sa Temple, Master Hae–Am recalled all of the students to review one–by–one. He called his attendant, Myo–Bong:

In this soil, seeds are sufficient;

The West will be the new fountain.

Quickly but secretly proceed!

Not easy to spread the true Teaching.

“Where can you go with your health?”

“Teaching of the seeing the Self–nature cannot be delayed by any means. This is a first in history. There are some who, under the name of Zen, gather the people and teach the Sutras, or raise the fist and make the Hal (shout), or compose the Gathas without knowing even how to distinguish between black and white; all the while claiming themselves to be teachers of Zen life, of Zen chanting, or even proclaiming themselves to be patriarchs. However, no one does direct teaching of the Buddha–Patriarchs’ Hwa–du work, by which one sees the Self–nature.

I have been waiting for this opportunity for over twenty years and I cannot postpone it.

Claiming themselves to be enlightened; gathering the people everywhere; but, hungry students have nothing to eat. Imitating their teacher as a cub somersaulting, what will be their excuse on the Day of Judgment?

One who knows has word.

One who speaks cannot know.

Not knowing how to teach the disciples, their disease will become critical. Both teachers and disciples will become descendents of the devil.

One mink who resides in America said,

‘There are many different books published on Buddhism. Many kinds of prescriptions have been introduced, but, there is no real doctor who can properly determine how to treat the patients!’

Let’s pack up! Accomplish it as soon as possible.

Like a mouse–catching cat.

Like a birth–giving mother.

If it fails this time, there is no hope for the Buddha–dharma in the West.”

Leaving behind all the deceitful gossip and insults owing to jealousy, this old Good–and–Wise One still eagerly did his work in order to repay all the Buddhas.

Twenty–seventh day of November in 2528 (1984),

Finally faith reached ultimate peak where “faith” is no longer.

An ancient trace of Kyung–Ho and Mang–Gong; the highest teaching of mankind, Have moved to the western world to be begetter of the beginning.

Finally, the wicked ones shut their mouths for a while to find out what was going on, but the ignorant ones continued the chattering of debasement behind his back. This old Good–and–Wise One was accomplishing his only purpose: whatever the cost, he would direct seeing the Self–nature to the world.

Around scenic Los Angeles there were many communities: industrial, educational, and especially excellent scientists and artists, and many religiously open-minded people. Just south of Los Angeles, in Orange County, there were at least three million people of upper intelligence from South East Asia, Northern Europe, England, and South America. Truly, some might say that America was the “Department of the Human Race.”

One journalist, originally from Denmark, was asked to come and interview this oldest and highest Korean Buddhist leader. She published this historic event. Everyday many visitors, sometimes thirty or forty, came to see him. During the three months he was in America, about one thousand people were interviewed. Among them, three or four, after several interviews, reached high levels of dharma understanding. They were given dharma names and encouraged by the Master to accomplish the Buddhahood, But, what heavy work for this old body!

A one hundred-year-old international birthday party was held and still he continued to see the people. Finally he became dramatically weak and could not swallow even a grain of rice. This far journey to the West was new explained.

“I am ready to depart from you.”

“When are you going?”

When the temple bell crown is softened.

“To where are you going?”

To the fiery hell.

Afterward, what should we do?

“If I die in the city, put this corpse in the hearse, carry it to the mortuary, and cremate it immediately. If I depart from this world in the mountain, do not even make a coffin, but rather carry my body just like a coffin, but rather carry my body just like a dried piece of wood and cremate it with a bowl of gasoline. After the cremation, return to the main altar, burn one piece of incense and prostrate three times. Then, go to the altar of spirits (for the deceased ones) and again burn one stick of incense

and chant The Heart Sutra one time. Do not waste any materials for my body.

Also, I would not produce any sarira from my body, because I do not even respect Buddha's sarira. Even if sarira were produced, it would not be the same kind as Buddha had. If something emerges from this corpse, immediately bury or scatter it. If anyone gathers my ashes, builds a pagoda or a mausoleum, he will be my worst enemy.

Sarira originally were to be examined by the Good-and-Wise One with the true dharma eye. If the Good-and-Wise One perceives them in his palm with the dharma eye, the licentious sarira will become bloody pus, and greedy sarira will become a snake or serpent. The ignorant sarira will become a snake or serpent. The ignorant sarira will become a wandering ghost. Only the sarira examined by the master of the brightened-eye can be acknowledged as the true sarira.

Even if there is the true sarira, including Buddha's whole body sarira, one should not respect, bow, or pray in front of them, for all of these behaviors will be the main karmic cause of entering the hell. Prayers, bows, and displays of respect are derived from attachment to the truth of all that Buddha taught us.

Whatever has the form
as a whole, is all delusory.

There is no definite substance;
even illusion has no definite illusion.

This is The Dharma-of-Formlessness.

By not assuming the form, one will coincide with the Saint.

Departing from each and every form is called,
Enlightened-One (Buddha).

Now, listen to my own Gatha:

At the summit of Buddha's and Patriarchs' peak,
Ancient buried sarira have been disclosed.

Instead of seeing one's own sarira,
Everyone busily scurries after them.

I just carefully looked at Buddha's sarira,
Buddha is not in sarira.
Even though sarira came from the Buddha,
Buddha-of-seeing is watching Buddha's sarira.

Therefore, from now on, people of the True-Mind should strive hard, alert and bright, in Study. Purify and cultivate the uncountable vows for the uncountable indigent-beings until this body is completely disintegrated."

Blue-eyed students asked,
"How should we Study from now on?"

"Let the examination become your teacher; there is no other work to do besides this. I heard that even Socrates said, the unexamined life is not worth living for man."

"What, then, would be the last word?"

"Good-bye," he said in English.

After this short word he turned away. He concluded his difficult three-month journey to the Western world in this way. He insisted on passing away in America. However, his attendants knelt down and beseeched him to return to Korea for the sake of his many followers there. He returned on February 16, 1985.

He locked up his room and forbade entrance to anyone; then spent three more months before he entered Nirvana.

Anxious disciples asked,

"To whom did you transmit the Chamber of the True-Dharma-Eye?"

To the one who examine.

Since the disciples did not say a word, the old Master continued.

"Listen to my Gatha:

No form is,

No emptiness is,

No non-emptiness is."

"Is there anything more to say?"

There is nothing more to say.

He entered Samadhi for a while; then opening his eyes wide, embraced the whole universe. He then made three strokes in the air horizontally and one vertically. No one knew what he meant.

The Master's last day was eight days before Buddha's Birthday, May 19th, nineteen eighty-five (March 30, 2529 by the lunar calendar).

Many eminent monks attended his funeral from throughout the nation. Throngs of people attended the ceremony, forming an ocean of people. Who are they? Suddenly a colorful aura, as appeared at his birth, arced in the sky. Everyone was enraptured by this marvelous phenomenon and called it his power of dharma. What an auspicious occasion!

One short shrill honk from hollow goose pierced through to the stratosphere.

Now where is our old Master? Here is something we cannot forget.

Zen Master Mang-Gong once wrote a Gatha for Zen Master Kyung-Ho's (Empty Mirror) true Self-image. The Gatha is:

The empty mirror originally has no Mirror.

Awakened ox is already not an Ox.

Everywhere where there is neither Ox nor Mirror.

Living eye freely abides with inebriety and indulgence.

For comparison Zen Master Mang-Gong wrote for his Self-image:

I am not departed from Thou;

Thou art not departed from me.

Before Thou and I were born,

I don't know; what is this?

Zen Master Hae-Am concluded with a Gatha for his Self-image:

Thou art not the Thou of Thou.

I am not the I of I.

Since I and Thou are non-dual,

Immediately here is true Thou-and-I.

This is the Nirvana: his worldly-age was 99, dharma age was 85 and 77th generation from Shakyamuni Buddha (in Korea).

Here I would like to conclude this story with the Master's own Gatha which he composed shortly before he entered Nirvana.

By birth limp air blew in the horizon,
By death the shadow of moon flew in the tranquil pond;
Departing from body out of Karmic circle: Where did it go?
River flows toward east outside of the Capital City.
October 15, 2529 (1985)
Recorded by His Disciple

How to Study Kong-an

On The Closing Day of Winter Retreat

Once Zen Master Hae-Am was staying in Pal jong-Sa in Seoul.

On the closing day of Winter Retreat he was asked to give a dharma talk.

He ascended the podium and began by singing a Gatha:

People today do not see old ancient star:

Today's star has shone on the ancient people.

People today and of ancient times flow like water;

Watching the bright star together is also the same.

“When you, the student, preoccupied with Study, achieve greater intimacy with the Kong-ans, more and more you will find yourself in a feeling of ennui. It is the time to remind yourself that this is a sign of great progress and the time for full-blooming. Furthermore, this is the time when you should eagerly introspect upon yourself with vigilant doubt. Returning to doubt should never be delayed.

While introverting upon the Hwa-du (Kong-an,” the head of the dialogue” means the core of the dialogue), if the introversion is pure, it will suddenly enter the place of tranquility. After it becomes tranquil, it can enter Samadhi. However, in Samadhi there can be two kinds: right Samadhi and defiled Samadhi. This also should be kept in mind.

When the power of Samadhi has increased, your body and mind will naturally be bright by the untainted faith; so, finally, you will achieve great alertness.

You should use your mind well, even finely concentrated in everyday life movements. Besides, when you are preoccupied with Study, either beginning or ending, you should never depart from the clear and bright tranquility and purity. When the tranquility is fully matured, enlightenment will be imminent. When the purity is fully matured, the brightness will be pervasive.

If the effort of returning to the vigilant doubt is sincere, and if the determination is thorough, then, whether moving or still, the outer perspective will also be like the color of the autumn sky: transparent and bright. This is the moment your study blooms fully. If you uphold and guard that well, as we have said, your brightness will be like the transparent autumn sky and your tranquility will be like the cold incense holder of the old shrine.

If the act of the mind is not darkened but is bright in tranquil stillness and alertness, your illusory and empty physical subsistence will experience being beyond the world of mankind.

The result of this vigilance with Hwa-du will be like one silk thread hanging straight down from on high; you will see that it would never be severed by any means. If you achieve this level, all the dust will be settled and brightness will pervade. But, naturally, right at this moment, if you allow yourself the idea of being awakened and claim that you are enlightened, then that consistency and loftiness from the awakened mind will immediately cease; for which you must watch out carefully.

At this level, for one who does not commit himself to tardiness, movement and stillness will be conjoined. Also, while you are awake in watchful mind and tranquil the Hwa-du will abide in front of your eyes constantly; just as, for instance, the reflection of moonlight in the water moves freely in accord with the waves, but the moonlight, itself, is not affected by the waves. It, as-it-is, has never moved. Even though defilement and delusion arise from time to time, if you introspect upon

yourself with vigilant doubt immediately, then you will not be subject to defilements and delusions.

By cultivating in such a way, one day the whole bundle of doubt will be destroyed; suddenly seeing it right will be manifested in proportional accord, as the strings of a harp. An analogy to this is the hen sitting continuously on the egg, sending down warm energy. If the warm energy is not supplied for even one moment, the egg will spoil. However, instead, the warm energy is effectuated and the hen, using her beak, then destroys the eggshell, allowing the baby chick to break through with a sound of Chirp, Chirp.

Or, it is like the bamboo stalk, which, when greatly mature, explodes by itself, Boom, Boom, as the stalk bursts forth in growth. Finally, seeing the True Self–nature (Original Face) will be completed. After that, you should go and meet the True Eyed Master–Mentor, the Good–and–Wise One and examine yourself with him hundreds and thousands of times to accomplish the Great Dharma Vessel. You should not, however, by haughty judgment, create any idea of being superior.

Without seeing the Good–and–Wise One after enlightenment, you would not be able to complete your life–task, which is a potential hazard, not just once, but endlessly and limitlessly.”

Finally Zen Master received a Gatha:

Ninety days, chained legs, ending today;

Suddenly winter retreat has no trace.

While Peter and Paul part from each other, north and south,

Stone tiger still fights high mountain peak.

Master hit the dharma floor three times and descended the podium.

True Prayer

While everyone prays without rest,

Standing or sitting, it’s always together.

If you don’t believe this; watch it carefully!

What is talking now all this time?

How do we uphold true prayer to the Buddha Statue?

One who bows to the Buddha–Statue must correctly understand whence that Buddha–Statue comes.

Whence comes the Buddha Statue?

From the radiant twinkle of your own luminous eyeball. Buddha–Statue becomes my mind; my mind be–comes Buddha–Statue; and is no longer divided.

How do we correctly bow to the Buddha Statue?

While you bend your body, bowing to the Statue, you should mobilize a great sincerity, not to the Statue, which is the twinkle of radiance from your luminous eye–ball, but directly to the mind.

To what do bow?

You should know to what to bow since the Buddha–Statue is no other than my mind. Bowing to the Statue is bowing to the mind. But how is this possible, the mind has no from, size or trace?

Holy Object does not exist and is not the mind. Therefore, the Statue is no longer an object of prayer. Thus remains the formless mind–itself–as–it–is.

How do we uphold prayer to the mind?

A student should bow while within the living doubt of the Hwa–du, “What is this?” This is bowing now to the Statue. Here the mind is totally revealing itself and can be called true prayer to the mind. Neither this corpse nor the mind can bow; you can name nothing in the world that can bow. We do not know what bows; therefore, we must ask, “What is this?”

By asking this, you obviously do not worship a physical form of worshipping the true Buddha. How? Because true worship is beyond the physical eye. If you make contact with outer form, then you do not truly worship. As Bodhidharma warned us, you will thus sow evil seeds and, not only fall into True Hell, but lose your own life.

It is the same when chanting the names of the Buddhas and Bodhisattvas. While keeping in mind the thought, What is this which is chanting? —whether Amitabha Buddha, Avalokita, or Ksitigarbha Bodhisattva— it is same this is true chanting to the mind. In the living doubt, “What is this?” the chanter becomes more sincere, able to see the

form of the word mind or of the Buddha Statue. In this way of praying and chanting, and of reading the holy books, the Hwa-du will also naturally be studied at the same time to accomplish the Great Tao.

What Is This? {Zen Koan}

Mud-ox from bottom of the ocean running away, holding the moon in his mouth;

Stone-tiger in front of boulder is sleeping holding a baby in his arm;

Iron-snake is passing though the Diamond-ball;

Mount-Sumeru riding on elephant's back, being pulled by the sparrow.

The Original Face

True, profound Dharma has never been created nor annihilated. How often have we transformed our bodies; sometimes born in heaven, sometimes born in the ghost world? Whatever countenance we possessed has depended on differing transformations and karmic result, while the suffering and pleasure have alternated back and forth accordingly. Good karma results in being born in the heaven or human body, while bad karma molds the ghost or animal bodies, etc.; whichever we have produced at the moment of death. The sufferings from these alternations have never ended throughout this million-kalpas-karmic-cycle.

Then, what is the cause?

It is where all indigent-beings have forgotten their own Self-nature. The mind is deluded, so to speak. It Self-nature is originally bright, how did it become deluded? Defilements, delusion, and greed have covered the pure mind and blocked its luminosity. More clearly, using an analogy, it is the bright moon net disclosed in the dark night because of black clouds. These black clouds are equivalent to defilements and delusion; the bright moon is the pure mind. Therefore, by carefully cultivating ourselves, like one breeze from the West dispersing the clouds, we should disperse the cloud of the mind, so that our bright, transparent, and original moon can be found.

How do we find it?

We see things outside by eyes; however, the dead corpse also has eyes but cannot see. There is one thing, independent of physical eyes, which can see whatever it wants to see. Yet, no matter how hard we try to introspect upon what sees here, there is not even one form that can be seen.

When not even one form can be seen, no matter how hard we try to introspect upon what sees, right at this moment, “The West wind has already blown and scattered the black cloud, and the bright moon has already been exposed.”

When not even one form can be seen, no matter how hard we try to introspect upon what sees, right at this moment, “Love and hatred have already been annihilated.”

When not even one form can be seen, no matter how hard we try to introspect upon what sees, right at this moment, “Liberation from life-and-death has already been accomplished.”

When not even one form can be seen, no matter how hard we try to introspect upon what sees, right at this moment, “The sea of suffering has already been crossed.”

The indigent-beings’ “Life-and-death” is derived from their contemplating only the physical bodies. Life-and-death itself originally does not subsist.

While originally they do not subsist, everyone has, rather, one bright, self-divine light of Buddha-nature, which is magnificently luminous in ten directions in the world of each and every being and of everything.

When and how does it come to be? When color can be seen by the eye, and when sound can be heard by the ear, then right at this moment, it actually comes to be. Now, even though we say that color comes to be eye, and sound comes to be in the ear, what if there is neither color in the eye nor sound in the ear? Then where does it come to be?

When there is neither color nor sound, this has been tranquil; and then by sudden karmic chance, like this book of Dharma talks you are now reading, it comes to be.

This disclosure of be-coming itself cannot be expounded by the three different time of Buddhas. It cannot even be transmitted one to the other by the Good-and-Wise Ones (Master-Mentors).

In this be-coming itself, all karmas are cut off from object; thus out of the relativities is “the True Essence (Original Face) of every Buddha and Bodhisattva in the Ten Direction World.” of all the Good-and-Wise Ones, and of everyone here. Even though every indigent-being has continuously maintained and used this since ancient time ‘til now, it has never been diminished. This is what is called the True Original Face which “each and every indigent-being has maintained and carried from the beginning.”

Now listen to my Gatha:

Body is our chamber of right dharma,

Mind is obstruction less candle.

All Dharma has been disclosed, it is empty;

Everything can be seen very clearly.

Re-Examination Is the Faith

In the Sutra, it says,

Faith is the mother of enlightenment.

When you were a fetus, you had ears, eyes, mouth, and nose similar to those of an adult; but, they were sense-organs of limited functioning, You did not hear, see, talk, or smell as well as an adult, and you needed continuous nourishment and maternal protection until mature.

Likewise, when you begin to understand the core teaching of the Patriarchal Kong-an, by listening to the Good-and-Wise One, a spiritual transformation ensues, and you are no longer an ordinary human being, but the fetus of enlightenment. This new fetus, however, is like a seed without soil or water.

As the seed of a saint, the understanding, thinking, speaking, and distinguishing are not as mature as those of an enlightened master. You need ceaseless practice with, great respect for, and careful help from your teacher (Master-Mentor) who is the mother of Tao and a necessary condition of the great enlightenment. Until you become a mature master, you need care. Continuous protection by the master, as well as constant

re-protection by the master, as well as constant re-examination and respectful practice with the master, are all contents of the teaching of the Patriarchs.

When Chao-Chou was enlightened, for example, Ch'an Master Nam-Chon recommended that he leave and teach in the other mountain. But Chao-Chou said,

I will stay for a while and serve you just until you die.

When the master died, Chao-Chou was already eighty.

Having no teacher for the enlightened student is more critical than having no father for a son. This is the reason Chao-Chou, through his retreat-less faith, turned down Ch'an Master Nam-Chon's recommendation to complete his profound work.

One student asked a question of the master,

How is it when one has just been enlightened?

The Master said,

Before the wind of spring, flower didn't bloom.

Now it's blooming season, unless the shoots are blown away.

There is no hope without continuous reexamination. The exercise of re-examination creates the master of wisdom. One should listen to the Good-and-Wise One very carefully. By this direct dialogue with the master, delivered from the beginning on through this moment, one's becoming a master is as near and natural as the dawn following long night's wandering. With ceaseless examination under your master, and because of this retreat less and strong faith, doubtlessly the flower of enlightenment and strong faith, doubtlessly the flower of enlightenment will bloom and brighten.

One will become a saint;
because when the night is fully dark.

The sun has to rise soon.

Without the seed of a saint,
who could dare expect this wonder?

Therefore, to successfully become a saint, you must follow the dharma-words of the teaching as passed on directly by the Patriarchs. The

Dharma–words you are examining are the revelation of the Self–nature. Hwa–du itself becomes a more utilized, faithful, and unique Study by examining through dharma–words because the ceaseless re–examination naturally requires the great faith, the great doubt, and the great provocation. But, without a sincere, primary examination, Hwa–du is merely a brain–game. Only by continuous re–examination does it become alive, dealing with the life and death question, and become a true mirror of Self–nature.

In order to become a saint, you must continuously protect this fetus to see the blooming season.

These are the words of the holy ones; shouldn't we heed them?

What To Love

For the truth–seeker preoccupied with Study, that which must principally be avoided is maintaining the idea that “I have accomplished this–and–that” by upholding some format of understanding.

What is the best way to eliminate such a format?

Foremost, one should introspect upon oneself with vigilant doubt regarding whatever is to be known. Searching for different expedient methods or means will only increase the confusions in the mind by creating otherness (objectification), while vigilant doubt will void all in general.

The next consideration is affectionate attachment, as between children and parents; affectionate attachment combined with feeling seems best for this lifetime. However, in later life the relationship may become antagonistic, even to the point of committing murder and sending each other to hell. Rather than have such a result, what would be the best way for people to get along with each other and still be born in paradise?

For the one with whom you have a personal relationship, do not relinquish control of your mind to the attachment of love by pursuing the feeling; — rather introspect upon yourself with the same living doubt as when praying and chanting Buddha, God, or any other great being's name. Then, naturally, all the hidden power of goodness will be experienced. This is called true love and is the true way to care for and love someone.

All of you should know that the worldly relationships are nothing but karmic shadows, temporary and apparitional; appearing and disappearing in vain, like a movie film. If this is not realized, then the so-called suffering from life-and-death, defilement, and delusions will be endlessly maintained. To love or like only one's physical body, which is no different from a dead corpse, is illusory.

Then, what is true love? If the body is illusory, then what is not illusory? Should it be mind? Or spirit? Since mind is just a name, it does not subsist. How can one even call it spirit or mind? Then for what should one care?

When someone calls to one, "Hello," there is one-thing which knows how to respond,

"Yes." When a child calls, "Mother," there is one-thing which knows how to respond,

"Yes, Dear." This is the one-thing each of us originally possesses; this one-thing can be called neither the mind nor the body. It has no name and cannot be known by intellect, but it is also very obviously present.

Now this is the only one-thing you should love and -p397- care for. To love this one-thing is to care for parents and to love.

Now listen to the Gatha!

Sleeping with Buddha every night,

Even rising together every morning;

Standing and sitting consecutively,

Talking and being silent, dwelling and visiting.

Tis not separated at all,

Just like your own shadow;

Want to know where Buddha has gone?

Just look at voice of this one.

Epilogue

(optional)

(Click here to input the text of the epilogue, if any.)

Afterword (optional)

(Click here to input the text of the afterword, if any.)

Conclusions (optional)

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