

Inka Speech

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Inka Speech by Koen Vermeulen JDPSN, March 9 2013, Warsaw Zen Center

[Raises Zen stick and hits the table.]

Mountain is water and water is mountain.
This is opposites world. Everything is changing, changing, changing; and suffering is everywhere. You and I cannot make it disappear.

[Raises Zen stick and hits the table.]

No water. No mountain.
This is emptiness world. In emptiness suffering did never appear. How could it disappear from here ?

[Raises Zen stick and hits the table.]

Water is water. Mountain is mountain.
This is truth world. At his point everything is clear. And the truth is only like this: suffering is suffering.

Which world is correct?

Katz!

The mountain is blue. Water is flowing.

So our teaching is clear: there is opposites world, emptiness world, truth world and finally function world.

Some years ago, a woman was enjoying holiday at the beach with her two little children: a nice little girl of 3 years old and a boy of 5. They had a great time together. That very same day the tsunami hit the coast. At first the mother could hold both of her children. But she was not strong enough. She had to let go one child if she wanted to save at least one of them. She thought that the boy had maybe a little bit more chances to survive, so she opened her hand, knowing that he really didn't have any chance at all to survive. Saving her girl meant killing her little boy. Saving the boy meant killing the little girl. This choice is so cruel: there is simply no solution.

The sun and the moon don't have to make this kind of choice. The sky doesn't have to make this kind of choice. This is our human condition. I think. Therefore I make opposites like life and death. Therefore I suffer. But if there is no I and no self-centered thinking, do you also have opposites and suffering? So, Zen Master Seung Sahn said: 'All questions come back to one point: What am I? Don't know !'

I remember the first time I became interested in this question.

In my mid twenties I had a hard time. Life was one big struggle. I couldn't sleep at night and I had a lot of doubts about myself. This went on for two years and I was completely exhausted. One evening, I went out for a walk in the fields and I realized I was about to break down. But then, in the midst of all of that, I perceived something deep, deep inside. Something where suffering cannot go. Something that cannot break down. Something that cannot be killed.

If you attain this point completely, then you transcend the world of suffering and you attain peace. However, even if *you* attain peace, *this world* is still suffering. So, you cannot stop there.

I am very grateful that I could follow the major part of my Zen training with Zen Master Wu Bong and Zen Master Bon Yo. The help of Zen Master Bon Shim was also essential. I found a few points in our teaching tradition very useful for my life. I already mentioned Don't know. Then there is also try mind and direction. I have a story about that.

A few years ago, an elderly woman came to our Zen Center. I told her that our practice is based on Don't Know mind. "Oh, I see what you mean. A few years before my husband died, he became sick. He couldn't communicate anymore. So, I had to find another way to communicate. So, I always had to keep Don't Know mind to understand his needs." Then she told me a story how she used Don't Know mind in her life. She was standing in the line in a supermarket. There was a man standing behind her with a very big mouth. He was talking loudly about his life as a mercenary in Africa: very vulgar and racist talk. It was clear that he was ready to attack anybody how would go against him. Just like our Cigaret Man, whatever you would say, he would hit you. People were shocked, and there was a real tension in the air, but nobody dared to say something. Our elderly woman also didn't know what to do, but suddenly, without thinking, she turned around and said: "If you want, you can go before me in the line." This really hit the mind of this man. He got a red face and stumbled some words. "No, no. Thank you. I'm sorry."

If you clearly perceive the current situation of our world, there is no time to waste. You have a job to do. One point must be fully clear though. Where will you do it?

[Raises the Zen stick and hits the table.]

If you say you will do it in the suffering world, emptiness world or truth world, this stick will hit you 30 times.

[Raises the Zen stick and hits the table.]

If you say you will do it in neither of these worlds, this still will also hit you thirty times.

[Raises the Zen stick and hits the table.]

If you say you will do it in all of these worlds, this still will hit you ninety times.

So, where is the correct place to help?

Katz!

Thank you for coming to this ceremony and listening.

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