

Three-Year-Old Moxa Grass

BY ZEN MASTER SEUNG SAHN

From a Dharma Talk in South Africa, 1989.

Zen means completely become independent. That is the Zen mind. “Ooh, Zen Master Seung Sahn some time might come to South Africa!” – that’s not correct. Keep don’t-know mind, with your center here.

Here’s a famous story. One time, in China, there was a man who wanted moxa grass – burning grass. When it’s cut, it’s necessary to keep it three years: if you keep it three years it becomes medicine grass – moxa grass. So he wanted to find three-year-old moxa grass.

He went around, around, around in China, one year, two years, three years, five years, six years. Around, around, around, around. But he still could not find it. So his friend asked him, “What are doing?”

“I want to find moxa grass.”

“What kind of moxa grass?”

“Three-year-old moxa grass.”

“How many years have you been looking around?”

“Six years.”

“You are stupid!”

“Huh? Why am I stupid?”

“If you cut the grass and keep it at home for three years, then already it would become medicine grass! Why go around China for six years? You are a stupid-head!”

Then he wakes up: “Oh, that’s right! Cut the grass, keep it at my house, then it becomes medicine grass! Why want to find it around, around?” So then he had a problem. Ha, ha, ha!

If you completely become independent, then your true master appears. If you look for a master around, around the whole world, then you will never find the true master. Not only three years – never.

In New York, one American, about to become a Japanese monk, he went around for fifteen years. One day he came into our Zen Center. “Why do you come in here?”

“I want to find my teacher.”

“Your teacher? You are a Japanese monk. Already you have a teacher.”

“Hrrr! This is not correct teacher. I want a correct, great teacher, so I am going around...”

“How many years?”

“Fifteen years.”

Then I hit with stick, pushed him and hit hard. “Ow!!!!”

I said “That’s your clear teacher, there. True teacher is never outside. True teacher is here.”

Then he said, “Okay, okay, thank you very much.” Ha, ha, ha! (*Laughter*)
So everybody has a don’t-know teacher here. Only go straight, don’t know, okay? I hope you only go straight, don’t know, your center becomes stronger, stronger, stronger, then finally controls your feeling, your condition, your situation. Then you can believe in your true self one hundred per cent. That’s the point, okay? Then sky is blue becomes yours, tree is green becomes yours, dog barking “woof! woof!” becomes yours, sugar is sweet – everything becomes yours.

Only understanding cannot help you. Everything becomes yours – very important. So I hope you only straight, don’t know, try, try, try, soon get enlightenment and save all beings from suffering.

Thank you.

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