

this single flower world blossoms

Zen Master Dae Gak, Furnace Mountain

[Raises Zen stick over head, then hits table with stick.]

This whole single flower world is turning, turning, turning.

[Raises Zen stick over head, then hits table with stick.]

Before this single flower world appeared, complete stillness.

[Raises Zen stick over head, then hits table with stick.]

After this single flower world disappears, complete stillness.

One mind appears, all suffering appears.
One mind disappears, all suffering disappears.

If you have mind, I hit you with this stick thirty times.
If you have no mind, I will also hit you with this stick thirty times.

How do you avoid this stick and save this world from suffering?

KATZ!

Someone comes who is hungry—give them food.
Someone comes who is thirsty—give them drink.

This is the teaching of our school. This is the bone of all spiritual paths with heart:
How can I help you?

We call this Bodhisattva Action, compassion or saving all beings.

I think each of us comes to spiritual practice hoping for some relief from suffering.
Encountering the wall of self is demanding and seemingly relentless. It takes everything we have.

We come to practice hoping for the end of suffering, and realize that suffering is endless.
We come to practice hoping to find the purity of all things, and realize that nothing is pure in itself.
We come to practice hoping for continuity and stability, and we realize everything changes.
We come to spiritual practice for personal salvation, and we realize that everything is interdependent.

In the spirit of this search for personal salvation, a monk came to Joju and said,
“How do I escape the pains and sufferings of the world?” And Joju said, “Welcome.”

This single flower world blossoms.

At the end of World War II, Zen Master Man Gong picked up a flower, dipped it in ink,
and wrote the calligraphy, “The whole world is a single flower.”
But this realization of oneness is not enough. One more step is necessary.

What is the correct situation, correct relationship and correct function of this one mind?

How do we use this “Whole World Is A Single Flower” to help all beings?

[Hits table with Zen stick three times.]

If you try to help, you will only make confusion and chaos.
If you don't try to help, you evade your human job.
How, then, can you save this world from suffering?

Welcome to the Whole World Is A Single Flower conference, October 9, 1999.

