

INKA CEREMONY FOR

Arne Schaefer

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DHARMA COMBAT

Question: You told me that one and a half years ago you were told that you can do this job and you said, “Yes!” Why?

Arne PSN: You already understand, Michael!

Q: No, I don’t!

Arne PSN: For you!

Q: Thanks.

12] Question: Arne, you are becoming a teacher; so I understand you will be giving lots of Dharma talks, right? I have a problem. Always when I hear Dharma talks I get really sick. But when I don’t hear Dharma talks I also get really sick. So what can I do?

Arne PSN: You already understand!

Q: No I don’t understand!

Arne PSN: Just listen!

Q: Thank you for your teaching.

Question: Hallo Arne!

Arne PSN: Hello Namhee!

Q: I am a bit nervous . . . for you.

Arne PSN: Thanks for your compassion!

Q: Today at six o’clock we came by bus from our hotel to Won Kwang Sa Temple and we passed many lakes, very beautiful with the morning fog. And I asked myself, “What a beautiful lake, how deep is it?” Then I thought, “Maybe I ask Arne.” *[Long and loud laughter from the audience.]*

Arne PSN: You already understand!

Q: No I don’t.

Arne PSN: On our way back to our hotel by bus we stop at the lake and you jump in the lake and find out. *[Loud laughter and applause from the audience, but the questioner didn’t like the answer.]*

Not enough? Go and have a bath! ☸



DHARMA SPEECH

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

Zen is rooted in Buddhism and in Taoism.

Buddhism teaches first get enlightenment, then instruct all beings.

Taoism teaches to live a life in perfect harmony with the universe.

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

The Sixth Patriarch of the Zen Lineage, Hui Neng, said, “Originally nothing.” That means originally no Zen, no Buddhism, no Taoism, no roots.

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

But aren’t roots very important? Without roots how do we know where our place is? Without roots, how can you get energy and grow?

KATZ!

Look outside: After a long, cold winter, all the trees are at their place and new green leaves are growing.

Standing here in front of you and giving my first Dharma speech as a JDPSN is something special. Coming to that point was a long way somehow. There were two incidents in my life that were very important and that I would like to share with you.

First, I grew up in a small town in the middle of Germany. Everything was fine as far as I could understand it. A few months before my eighteenth birthday, I learned that my mother had blood cancer and was to die soon. Although my mother had had the disease already for several years, I didn't know it, because my parents thought it was better not to tell me when I was a child. Then, when it got serious I had to learn that my mother might die from it soon. Rationally of course I could understand, but my heart could not. She was always there and I could not imagine a life without her. I remember that I talked with my mother about death and she said she was not afraid of death, but rather of all the pain that might be caused by the metastases. My sister, my father, and I were sharing the times at her bed when the doctors told us it was going to be very critical. On the night she died it was my time to be there at the hospital, a one-hour drive from home. I called my father and sister to come. I felt it was OK to let her go. She would finally find peace after all the pain she had endured. My family came and we stood around our mum. I was holding her hand and I could feel her pulse getting weaker and weaker and then vanished. At that moment my heart completely fell apart. That was a kind of pain I have never experienced before, one I even didn't know about! Leaving the hospital and my dead mother behind it felt like I had completely lost the ground under my feet—I felt completely uprooted.

Dae Soen Sa Nim always taught, "A good situation is a bad situation; a bad situation is a good situation." At that time of course I didn't know that: I just felt this tremendous suffering and I was looking for help. I needed an answer for the purpose of life. Everything had become meaningless for me.

So I started to look around. After a while I made a decision to go on a longer journey and travelled to Asia. My family was not so unhappy. They were afraid letting me go so far away, but also accepted my strong wish, although I could not explain well why I wanted to go. In Indonesia I visited Buddhist Temples like the Borobudur and in India I stayed a while in McLeod Ganj, a village up the hills of Dharamsala, where the Dalai Lama and many Tibetans are living in their Indian exile. I attended some lectures and got some basic teachings about Buddhism and meditation. Back in Germany I was seeking for a sangha and started with the Tibetan Kagyu Tradition. But soon it felt like this is not yet my practice and I continued looking around.

Then I moved to Berlin and started to study religious studies and philosophy. A friend said to me there would be a Zen talk nearby at a museum and asked me if I would

join him there. So there I was sitting in the audience and for the first time meeting people from the Berlin Zen Center and a teacher of the Kwan Um School of Zen, Dharma Master Poep Mu (who would later become Zen Master Wu Bong). Poep Mu JDPSN was talking about the famous kong-an of an old woman burning a hermitage. Most of you know this story: this old lady was supporting a monk for ten years and after ten years she wanted to find out what he had attained. So she sends her beautiful daughter in beautiful clothes to test this monk. This daughter presented all the nice gifts her mother had given her to the monk and he was very grateful. Just when he said "your mother is such great bodhisattva supporting me for such a long time" the young girl sat on his lap, embraced him, and asked him: "How do you feel now?" He said "rotten log on cold stone, no warmth in winter." So this young girl thought, "Wow, this is a great monk!" She went back to her mother and told her: "He is a great monk, he has a strong center, his mind is not moving, and he must have attained something!" Her mother just said, "I am not interested if he has a strong center. I want to know what he said." The girl told her what he had answered. Upon hearing it the mother got very furious, ran up the hill to the hermitage, and beat the monk with a stick out of the hermitage, yelling at him: "Get out of here! I was feeding a demon for ten years," and burnt down the hermitage.

When Poep Mu JDPSN told this story he of course asked the audience, "What was the mistake of this monk? Why did this old woman get so furious and beat him out of the hermitage?" I was sitting in the audience thinking, "I don't understand! Why did she do this? He was practicing so strongly; he had a not moving center!" This case caused a big question in my mind. So there was the hook and I swallowed it. Poep Mu JDPSN had talked about this *don't know* and the summer I met him I did the summer Kyol Che in Warsaw and several YMJJs—I really wanted to find out about this *don't know*. The following winter I went to Korea to sit Kyol Che at Shin Won Sa Temple. It is very wonderful that today there are several friends present with whom I spent the Shin Won Sa retreat. Even Zen Master Dae Bong (who at that time was called Do Mun Sunim JDPS, and who was leading his first Kyol Che) is here!

The beginning of the three-month retreat was very difficult. You did not have mobile phones or Internet connection, as I can see nowadays everyone has and uses during Kyol Che. We all had to stay for the whole three months. There were no people coming and going. After a while I got used to the daily schedule. Looking at the calendar and seeing how many days we still had to go became less and less painful. There was an everyday routine and each evening I was surprised another day had gone. In the middle of the retreat we had the intensive week before Buddha's Enlightenment Day. We would have only

three hours of sleep and on the last night we would sit all night through. During this intensive week there was suddenly a moment where thinking was completely gone. There was silence and peace inside of me that I had never experienced before. I got a taste of *don't know*—finally I got a taste of our true root, the root of all of us and the root of the whole universe. Until then the teachings just made sense to me, but that moment was hitting me. With that moment came a wish that everyone could have this kind of experience for just a part of a second. Then the whole world would be different! We all want to be happy, but we don't know where to find true happiness and we do so many things that don't help us. That is our tragedy! If everyone would just get a glimpse of it, would connect with its true roots for a millisecond, then we would know where to find true happiness. It is always there, it is always available. That moment was the very strong mind medicine I got from this retreat and it was the answer to my questions. Actually I was thinking of becoming a monk at that time, because I was so grateful for this experience and wanted to encourage others to make the same experience. At the end of the retreat I was asking Dharma Master Do Mun Sunim about becoming a monk and he said that I have to understand my karma. Becoming a monk might be a great mistake. That was really a very good answer for me! I went back home to Germany and thought, "If I have the karma, then it will happen. If not, then not." And, as you see, it didn't. But the wish to support others to start and continue practicing has always been with me.

During the past two weeks while I attended the winter Kyol Che here in Won Kwang Sa I did consulting interviews, and some older students, even Dharma Teachers in long robes, asked me, "How did it happen that you did not stop practicing? Why did you continue?" I guess all of us know these doubts about practicing, when our checking is very strong and we think that our efforts should bring more results than only *don't know*. This experience of stillness and happiness, connected with the strong wish that everyone could have a little taste of it, kept me going. Whenever I was back in the land of suffering from my thinking I remembered that moment of perfect stillness and unlimited compassion. So I really believe in our practice and in what we are doing. And since that moment the challenge has always been to keep a balance in life, spending the right amount of time with practicing, with sangha, with family, with friends, and with work. With time everything comes together.

So I am very pleased to have this great honor to become a teacher in this tradition, and I feel very happy to continue to practice with all of you. And as many have already told me, this is just the beginning for me. I want to thank you all for helping me so far and for continuously practicing together and doing it with the right spirit for all sentient beings.

Finally, I want to express my gratitude to my teach-



ers and especially to Wu Bong Soen Sa Nim, who has guided me until today and has always helped me. If I had a question, I always got good advice from him. I want to encourage you all, if you ever have a question, please be openhearted and address your teachers and sangha friends. (Just before my dharma speech I was told to keep it short and so I forgot to express my gratitude to my wife. I want to catch up on this opportunity now: Thank you Irmi, for all your love and support.)

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

In Zen we say everything is already complete, everything already has it.

That means harmony is complete and also disharmony is complete.

Harmony is disharmony, disharmony is harmony.

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

In this hit, no harmony, no disharmony.

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

Harmony is harmony, disharmony is disharmony. So which of these three statements is correct?

KATZ!

I am very happy to see you all from all over this world sitting here together in harmony in this dharma hall. Thank you. ☸