

## INKA CEREMONY FOR

# Anne Rudloe

April 2, 2011, at Providence Zen Center, Rhode Island, U.S.A.

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### DHARMA COMBAT

**Question:** I'm actually not so focused on this particular ceremony. I'm much more interested in after the ceremony, when we have three exciting activities: croquet, or soccer, or possibly ping-pong. And I'm wondering as a dharma teacher and Ji Do Poep Sa Nim, which would you suggest that the sangha participate in, in order to awaken?

**Rudloe PSN:** You already understand.

**Q:** Please teach me.

**Rudloe PSN:** In this moment, which ball are you hitting?

**Q:** Oh, my! Thank you for your teaching.

**Question:** You and I sat a retreat together in Colorado. And I slept in a dormitory, and you slept in a tent. Now you're a Ji Do Poep Sa Nim, and I'm not. Did we sleep the same, or did we sleep different?

**Rudloe PSN:** You already understand.

**Q:** I don't.

**Rudloe PSN:** Close your eyes and see what happens.

**Q:** [Snores]

**Rudloe PSN:** There you go.

**Question:** I don't understand this dharma combat that well. I would really like to win this combat. Can you teach me one thing that will help me win this combat?

**Rudloe PSN:** You already understand.

**Q:** I really don't understand.

**Rudloe PSN:** Then you've already won.

**Q:** But I feel like I lost.

**Rudloe PSN:** That's your mistake.

**Q:** So, I lost, right?

**Rudloe PSN:** Don't make win, and don't make lose, OK? Only, what are you doing right now? ♦



### DHARMA SPEECH

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

Zen is about experience, and yet it uses many words.

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

Speaking is an experience, yet experience transcends words.

Words are words, experience is experience.

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

When should we speak, and when should we be still?

KATZ!

Inside today, many, many words; outside the sun shines silently.

Zen is also a storytelling tradition, so I have several stories I'd like to share today.

First is a very old story from ancient China, about a young Zen Master and an old Zen Master. Tu-Ja was a famous Zen Master in China, and at the time of this story he was a very senior teacher. He'd been teaching for years; he had his own temple; he didn't have to prove anything to anybody. But as has already been pointed out, young teachers, when they're just starting out, visit other teachers to test their minds against the more senior people. So one day, on the doorstep appears a young man named So-Sahn. And he's invited in and they sit down together. Tu-Ja asks, "Where are you coming from?" The young man says, "Sword Mountain." Tu-Ja leans back (probably) and says, "Then did you bring your sword?" "Yes, I did," the younger man responds. "Then show it to this old monk!" So-Sahn just points one finger at the ground in front of the old monk. Tu-Ja jumps up and leaves the room, which means he got flustered and lost the exchange. Well, he did—he made a big mistake. Later that day, Tu-Ja asked his attendant to invite the young man back for a cup of tea. His attendant reported that So-Sahn had left right after the first exchange. "For thirty years I have ridden horseback, and today I was kicked from the saddle by a small donkey!" exclaimed Tu-Ja.

This is a story about how to respond when things happen unexpectedly. Sometimes, in each of our lives, something comes up, and we need a fast response: *boom, boom!* And we don't have time to think it over, and we don't have time to call in a committee and debate and reach a consensus—we just have to act. So, this is a story about how can we do that, how our practice can cultivate that ability.

Tu-Ja's comment about being kicked from the saddle was a good one. I've kept horses for over thirty years, off and on, and I've fallen off horses lots of times—*Thump!* And every single time I've fallen off a horse it was because I wasn't paying attention. All of a sudden, the horse decided that some funny-looking bush was going to eat horses, reared back, and off I went. The horse was teaching me, "Pay attention! Pay attention!"

The other story is a little bit more recent. It happened just a couple of months ago, down in Florida. My husband, Jack, and I were driving on a little country road in central Florida, State Route 19, not too far from Orlando and Disneyworld and so forth. It's a little, narrow, country road, two lanes. This is in an area right on the edge of a national forest, an area that was all farmland and pasture just a few years ago. But Florida has an astronomical rate of growth (or it did until the recession), and what used to be rural land now has subdivisions everywhere. And those subdivisions mean that there's lots of traffic. So this little tiny road that was never meant to carry much traffic was

practically bumper to bumper with cars, and they were going 60 miles an hour. We were headed up the road and I was in the passenger seat. Suddenly Jack said, "There's a horse coming!" I was looking off to the side.

"A horse? Where?"

"No, no, it's in the road!" he said.

"It's in the road?! Stop the car!" He stopped, I opened the door and jumped out as a black horse came galloping up the center line of the road. The cars were barely avoiding the horse on either side. It had a bridle; it had a saddle. Evidently, somebody was trail-riding in the forest, a horse-eating bush appeared, and the horse did its job.

Zen Master Seung Sahn always used to say, "Every creature knows its job; only humans don't know their job." Well, the horse knows that its job, when it's about to be attacked by a horse-eating bush, is to panic, rear and run away! The rider was probably not paying attention, and off she went.

So, I leaped out of the car, the horse was galloping at me, with cars on both sides, and I jumped in front of our car, waving my arms and shouting "Whoa, whoa, whoa!"

It sounds kind of crazy, and maybe it was, but I knew from experience that if you do this in front of a running horse, it will usually stop or veer; it's not going to run you down . . . usually. By this time the traffic coming at us had stopped too, so everybody had stopped and the horse and I had quite an audience.

Then the horse stopped, still in the middle of the road, and I held my arms toward the horse, stood still and began sweet-talking the horse: "Come on, it's OK, it's OK." This animal's body language made it clear that it was absolutely terrorized. I mean, imagine it from the horse's point of view—it's in the woods, it's riding along, it knows what it's supposed to do, a horse-eating bush leaps out at it, it reacts the way a horse always reacts and suddenly it's in this insane reality that it's never been in before with these huge things going by. So I started walking slowly toward the horse, still saying "It's OK, it's OK, it's OK," trying to get close enough to get the reins. The horse looked at me for a second and then it looked off to the side. It was about to bolt back into the traffic. So I just froze, still saying "It's OK, it's OK, it's OK." The drivers would just have to sit in their cars for another few minutes. Finally I started walking toward it again, "It's OK, it's OK—I'm going to help you!"

Well, horses aren't stupid. They're four-leggeds, and they know that female two-leggeds know what to do, and know how to fix insane situations, so it stood there and let me catch it. The traffic now was backed up five miles in both directions. I stood there a minute, still in the road, and rubbed the horse's nose, and did horse-whisperer stuff, and then I led the horse off the road.

In reality, all this happened so fast that it takes me longer to tell the story than it took to catch the horse. It was an example of “Just do it!” as Zen Master Seung Sahn always liked to say. There wasn’t any time to think. It was just reflex, and knowing about horses.

I got the horse off to the road shoulder, the cars were starting to go by again, and Jack had pulled off the side of the road. Then the thinking mind kicked back in and said, “You’re standing beside a road in the middle of nowhere with a horse! Now what?” And probably there was somebody hurt out in the forest, God knows where. We moved the horse a little bit farther away from the road, rummaged out a cell phone, and called 911.

“We’re a mile north of Groveland, on Highway 19, with a riderless horse, and there’s probably somebody hurt out in the woods, and you better do something.” And the 911 dispatcher’s response was, “Now what?”

They were going to have to find a horse trailer somewhere, get out here, and it was probably going to take all day. Fortunately, about that time, the owner of the horse came stomping up the road! You could tell that she was the rider. *Stomp, stomp!* And she had a dog, and she was still in the middle of traffic with her unleashed dog bouncing about her feet. She finally got to us.

“Is this your horse?” “Yes.” “Oh, thank goodness. Are you OK?” “Yes, I’m fine.” So, we sent her and her horse and her dog on their way. Their stable was only a few blocks away and she stayed well off the road.

That’s the end of the story, except that once it was all done, I felt so alive. It was that teaching of “only just do it!” really come to life, in a wonderful way. We go through so much of our lives half asleep, or thinking about something else, and then suddenly something happens and we’re 100 percent right there, and then we can wake up and we can function at a level that we’re all capable of, and mostly don’t do. I certainly don’t; I spend a lot of time just zoning out. It was a good feeling.

So right now, we’re sitting here in this ceremony, and you know what? It’s that same good feeling right now. It’s being alive for all of us. That’s what our practice is about; learning how to do that. Sitting cross-legged on a cushion staring at the floor—it doesn’t seem like that would have such an effect, but it does. I don’t know how it does it, but it does it. It’s a really amazing practice. So, I hope that if you see a horse running down the road at you, you’ll know what to do. If you do, it will come from your gut, not your thinking mind. I hope that we can all reach the point where we can be awake—it’s not just moments of emergency or dharma combat when we wake up; we can be awake like that in



every moment if we choose to be. It’s something we can train ourselves to do, and that’s the purpose of retreats. It’s not something we have to force or to make happen; if we sit long enough, it happens. It really does.

After the ceremony, the schedule says we’re going to have games and things. So I hope that everybody is able to be fully alive in that moment and really enjoy the games, and with the energy that comes from that, to go out and do your job, and I’ll do my job in this world, and we can save all beings. That’s what it’s about.

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

Horses live in fields, and cars go up and down roads.

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

If you’re riding, a field is a road, and road shoulders have great grass for the horses to eat. But a road is a road and a field is a field.

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

Be very careful, don’t mix these things up.  
Can you find your way home?

KATZ!

If you go out the door and to the end of Pound Road, there are several black horses quietly eating grass. Thank you. ♦