

Zen Story

Hello, my name is Kaneko, your navigator.

Today, I would like to tell you an anecdote about a Zen monk. Please feel free to listen to it.

I would like to introduce a koan that is found in the Hekiganroku, a book written about Zen.

Koan" means "a public idea," or "a plan of consideration. or question and answer In Zen Buddhism, a koan is an assignment given to a practitioner to seek enlightenment and investigate the truth.

In China, during the Tang Dynasty, there was a famous Zen monk named Hyakujo-ekai (749-814).

A monk came to Hyakujo and asked, "What on earth is so wonderful?" Hyakujō replied, "It is to sit here like this.

Do you understand?

What we usually think of as great is worldly value. But that value varies from era to era, ethnic group to ethnic group, and even from individual to individual. In the past, having a lot of livestock or fields was valuable, and in some ethnic groups, having a large family was valuable. In some cases, being rich was highly valued, while in others, living a life of poverty and having nothing was more precious than anything else.

By the way, Hyakujo is not interested in worldly values and evaluations, which change in various ways.

He says, "Look, I'm sitting here like this, and that's great. That's what's so wonderful about it".

That's the beauty of it. He was totally detached from the world, and he was teaching about its greatness.

The monk must have been so moved by these words that he worshipped Hyakujo. Then, to the monk's surprise, Hyakujo slapped him.

Why is that?

Even though Hyakujo had gone to the trouble of erasing "the world," a monk who seemed to represent "the world" came spontaneously and worshipped Hyakujo. The "world" here probably refers to the expectation or illusion that because he was a famous high priest, people would want to hear his teachings, and because he was a famous high priest, his words and deeds would be wonderful. Hyakujo saw the "world" in the monk.

For Hyakujo, there is nothing more annoying than this. That is why he struck the monk, or "the world."

It is an interesting Zen question and answer, isn't it?

As I write this, I am reminded of something that is personal to me.

In my life, I have been told "As expected of you, Mr. Kaneko," although there have been only a few times.

When I was a child, I was so happy, but now I feel differently.

My own analysis is, first of all, I wonder what this person is saying in comparison with what he/she is saying.

The second is the pressure to continue to live up to his/her expectations! I am under a lot of pressure to live up to his expectations.

If you replace "the person who said to me, 'As expected of you,'" with "the world," I think you can understand this Zen question very well.

Zen, I think, advocates "leaving the world." To be a monk, one must renounce worldly life and become a monk to practice Buddhism. At the risk of misrepresenting the word, there are anecdotes that at first glance seem to be "making fun of the world."

I think this koan teaches us that it is important to "get out of the world," to "abandon the world's standards," and to "make fun of the world."