

## **One for two; two for one**

Narcissus and Echo as our divided self-notions

[Previously published as fb210728 Piya Tan]

Narcissus falls in love with himself, feeling that he is perfect in every way. We call this self-love, but there is neither self nor love. Narcissus is always looking at his other, as if it is not him or his, but he cannot have it. He is not himself; he is beside himself. He is lost. He does not realize he IS. Looking at his image (external agency, God, teacher, etc) makes him think he is the other.

The moment he touches the water, it breaks away and disappears. But this is NOT he. This is nonself: there is NO self because it keeps breaking away. Only when he is perfectly still, he sees himself. Only inner calmness gives him the full vision of himself.

Echoing impermanence

What Narcissus duplicates in FORM, Echo duplicates in sound. When we look outside for a teacher, instead of taking in the teaching (from the teacher), we can only keep echoing what the Teacher is. So we LIKE the teacher, we PRAISE him, we want to BE with him. This is like Narcissus: we keep looking at the Teacher as if he we "me" (an object, grammatical and existential).

For this reason, the Buddha teaches IMPERMANENCE: that image is the water easily breaks up because it is virtual not real. When we can only look on but cannot have; when we can only echo some sound we love but cannot have--that is SUFFERING, things just keep repeating themselves, but there is nothing there really. This is NONSELF.

No self, only self-view

When we think that there is a Self, then we have to look for it; or we can only echo, repeat, emulate it. There is no Self, on our self-view: that breaking image in the water. We need to let go of that image: we ARE, start there.

We don't have to echo the Teacher when we have the teaching. That is our understanding by which we see the truth of the teaching within us. No more need of teaching or being because we ARE.

Narcissus/Echo 'r' us

This is where we are heading. Echo and Narcissus are the 2 same aspects of our suffering because we look for answers outside of ourself. When we close our eyes, we see more--we see our true self: a radiance of boundless loss, acceptance of not just ourself but of all beings.

In the inner SILENCE of mindfulness and concentration, we do not need to echo anyone. We are that peace that we seek. To seek is to look outside; to find is to see within. When we see

the path outside, we have to take steps, each step an echo. When we see the path within, it is peace. When peace repeats itself, it is still peace.

One = only Narcissus-Echo

Narcissus and Echo finally ARE one. They were one, but we did not see this. They will be one, but we cannot see this (the future never comes.)

Only NOW we see. Now that we SEE, they are one, they IS one. We are free from language because we see. Neither of them is I; for, how can I be 2? Know this, see this, love this, be this. Peace within, a radiance that reaches out to others, lighting up the world.

R788 Inspirations 455

Piya Tan © Tan Beng Sin, 2022