

Once, a long time ago, there was a wise Zen master.
People from far and near would seek his counsel and ask for his wisdom.
Many would come and ask him to teach them, enlighten them,
in the way of Zen.
He seldom turned any away.
One day an important man,
a man used to command and obedience came to visit the master.
“I have come today to ask you to teach me about Zen.
Open my mind to enlightenment.”
The tone of the important man’s voice was one used to getting his own way.

The Zen master smiled and said that they should discuss the matter over a cup of tea.
When the tea was served the master poured his visitor a cup.
He poured and he poured and the tea rose to the rim and
began to spill over the table and finally onto the robes of the wealthy man.
Finally the visitor shouted, “Enough, you old fool!!
You are spilling the tea all over.
Can’t you see the cup is full?”

The master stopped pouring and smiled at his guest.

“You are like this tea cup, so full that nothing more can be added.

Come back to me when the cup is empty.

Come back to me with an empty mind.”