

How a Living Bodhisatva Influenced Shinzen Young

00:00:00 Some of you know, some of you actually knew Nicola Geiger before she passed away.

00:00:14 So this is a woman that I met in Japan who was German and had lived through World War

00:00:26 II as part of the resistance to the Nazis.

00:00:32 They even made a movie about the group called The White Rose.

00:00:37 So she had to go, it was like Schindler's List, you know, I mean, she lived it.

00:00:42 She was only 20 years old at the time.

00:00:45 And she'd just been through everything.

00:00:47 I mean, she'd been tortured, interrogated, raped, you name it.

00:00:52 It had happened many times.

00:01:00 So I met up with her.

00:01:05 I didn't know who she was or whatever.

00:01:11 But she said, well, if you ever come to Kyoto, come visit me.

00:01:17 She was running Friends World College, which is a Quaker college that has campuses all

00:01:23 over the world.

00:01:24 And she was interestingly engaged, she worked for Amnesty International.

00:01:29 She was in fact their specialist on human rights violations in South Korea, which at

00:01:37 that time was very bad on human rights violations.

00:01:42 And she was actually like, it was like this, it was very cinematic.

00:01:50 I mean, she was engaged in like secret espionage stuff because she was trying to save the life

00:01:58 of Kim Dae-jung.

00:01:59 Now, you may or may not know the whole story, but eventually Kim Dae-jung became the president

00:02:06 of South Korea and Korea became democratized.

00:02:10 But he was in prison at that time.

00:02:13 And she was doing all sorts of stuff with Amnesty International to make sure that he

00:02:19 didn't get killed.

00:02:22 So she was like, you know, you would think someone that had been through that themselves

00:02:27 would want to sort of distance themselves, right?

00:02:32 But no.

00:02:33 Anyway.

00:02:34 So how this relates to challenges and what have you is, so she says, come visit me if

00:02:44 you're ever in Kyoto.

00:02:50 So I was in Kyoto, I came to visit her.

00:02:53 And she said, come up to my living room here.

00:02:59 Sit down.

00:03:01 Do you know why I invited you to come here?

00:03:07 I said, no.

00:03:10 And then she proceeded to tell me exactly where I was at in meditation and what I needed

00:03:19 to do to take the next step.

00:03:23 That was sort of surprising.

00:03:25 But then later on, after I knew her story, she had been trained to meditate from the

00:03:32 time that she was three years old.

00:03:37 Her father had been a meditator and they were associated with Hermann Hesse and the League

00:03:51 of the Journeyers to the East and this whole group of Europeans that were interested in

00:03:57 sort of Buddhist kinds of things during the Weimar Republic.

00:04:03 Anyway so I mean she'd been trained, that's why she survived all that stuff and prospered.

00:04:10 She had enlightenment experiences while these horrible things were going on to her.

00:04:19 So eventually it became evident why she had this perspicacity to see through you, literally.

00:04:30 So anyway, apropos of challenge, what she pointed out to me was that I didn't like people

00:04:36 and that I withdrew from people and that I was going to have to learn to like being around

00:04:45 people.

00:04:50 It was true.

00:04:51 I had spent my entire life as a loner.

00:04:54 I was very uncomfortable around people.

00:05:06 What I have in her was a role model for what she was talking about.

00:05:11 She was the first role model.

00:05:13 Later on I had others.

00:05:17 But what did she do?

00:05:20 Well she just hung out in her house and people would come to be with her.

00:05:31 What kind of people?

00:05:33 Every kind of person.
00:05:36 The entire spectrum of humanity.
00:05:42 From the best to the worst.
00:05:47 The best being the Zen masters and Catholic priests.
00:05:54 She was friends with Father Johnston, for example.
00:05:59 And the worst being Yakuza, if you know what that is.
00:06:05 And left wing international terrorists, like the real deal.
00:06:15 And everything in between would pass through her living room and she would
give each one
00:06:27 of them what they needed.
00:06:30 So that was a big change in my habit patterns, that I had to learn to love to
be around people
00:06:37 and be with people.
00:06:39 It might not seem like that big a deal, but that was a challenge.