

Donaruzo Toranpu and His Supporters

O. Guy Morley

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Once upon a time in the Pacific Ocean, there was a tiny island state called the United State of Impossible (USI). Just like many modern countries, the USI was dominated by two major political parties, the Elphs and the Donks. And the most surprising event of that year of Monkey was that Donaruzo Toranpu, representing the Elphs, was elected the president of the USI.

It was most surprising because the chance of Donaruzo winning the election, according to the island media and analysts, was smaller than the size of the island in comparison to the Pacific Ocean. The people in the surrounding island nations were also taken by big surprise. Even to them, Donaruzo had been known for his utter inability to handle his own businesses and having absolutely no quality that would make him even a mediocre president of any organization of any kind.

While Donaruzo's supporters, mostly the Elphs, were ecstatic, the Donks panicked. In addition, a number of people who were not at all political became shocked and enraged. Tohen Boku was one of them. "Isn't it obvious to everyone that Donaruzo is a selfish and immature person who would do all sorts of damages to the people and the environment of the USI?" The negative emotions within him was so overwhelming that Tohen was no longer able to do normal things that he was normally doing. So, he took a break and retreated to a cave near the highest point of the island.

In the cave, Tohen thought and thought and thought some more. Gradually, he started to broaden the horizon with some new ideas.

First, the unfortunate situation was that Donaruzo lacked the minimum intelligence to understand what it meant to be the president of a country (or any organization, for that

matter). So, while it was certainly natural to get angry at his actions that were doing damages to the people and the environment of the USI, there was no point of funneling the anger *only* to Donaruzo. In a sense, it's like blaming an alligator on a busy New York City street. The alligator, with a tiny brain, can certainly do a lot of damages and must be removed. But since alligators don't live there naturally, the situation must have been *created by somebody*. So, while Tohen still thought it necessary to remove harmful Donaruzo from that position, he shifted his focus on how he got there for the first place. In addition, it would be Donaruzo himself who would benefit from not being in that office, Tohen thought.

So, who would deposit an alligator there? In this regard, Tohen was even more angry at Donaruzo's supporters than at Donaruzo himself. He thought that these people too lack the minimum intelligence to make a decent judgment. For example, Tohen was able to imagine that Donaruzo would privatize the island's state fishing enterprise and give it to his family for a nominal fee. Then, the fishermen, mostly supporters of Donaruzo, would certainly face a harsher working condition with less pay. Why would they still support Donaruzo?

Then, Tohen recalled what a famous psychologist Kaaru Rojaazu once told him. It was about the benefit of "active listening." So, instead of being stuck in the cave forever filled with anger, he started to listen to Donaruzo's supporters. That is, Tohen just listened to them, *suspending his own opinions and judgment*. Their argument was roughly as follows:

We are hardworking, religious, and patient folks. We are really hoping that someday, our effort will pay off. But there are bad guys who cut in front of us. They are immigrants, welfare recipients, scientists and other academics, and of course, government employees. They take everything from us. Unfortunately, these bad guys have the strong connection to the Donks. To make the matter worse, we are the ones who are always looked down; we are never respected. This is unfair. Now, we have this Donaruzo who can really understand our anger, beat the Donks, and make things great again for us.

You may have heard a similar story. For example, basically the same sentiment is discussed in the book called *Strangers in Their Own Land*. And the supporters of Donaruzo were reluctant to express their true feelings before the election, fearing that they would be ridiculed. That's why people didn't take Donaruzo's closet supporters very seriously until after the election.

So, while most of Donaruzo's supporters were incapable of understanding the complexity involved in all these, their *feelings* were genuine and true to themselves. By electing Donaruzo, they *felt* that they were gaining the respect they craved for, even though they didn't have a faintest idea about how exactly that Donaruzo would make things great again for them.

Tohen became somewhat sympathetic to both Donaruzo and his supporters. That is, while he never changed his position, he felt sorry that Donaruzo and his supporters did not see the situation clearly. Then, Tohen's emerging sympathy also triggered something new in him.

“What about the reverse? Could “they” also see something which I don’t know or understand?” Since nobody knows everything and is immune from error, “we” too must be making mistakes and doing damages to other people in many ways, possibly subconsciously. Some omniscient being may see Tohen just like Donaruzo and his supporters are seen from Tohen.

Around this time, Tohen read an earlier draft of *Donaruzo Toranpu and His Supporters*. In the story, there was the teaching of the great Gottamageta Buddha. “There is suffering everywhere. The only way to address suffering is to become aware of reality through direct experience.” Although Tohen was never and would never be religious, the essence of Gottamageta’s teaching was inspiring. With this new insight, Tohen started to “see” himself as well as others in a new way. He already knew that Donaruzo and his supporter had been suffering. But more importantly, he started to examine suffering around himself: his anger (especially when Donaruzo was elected), his fear of losing what he has (including his mind and body), his analytical skills (even though it was useful for him to get here, ruminating would be harmful), and even his emerging sympathy to Donaruzo and his supporters (if he is fixated and stuck to that idea).

Tohen was a scientist (although officially, he was called “magician” in that era). So, he always thought that “scientific” truth is *the* truth. However, Gottamageta’s teaching challenged this assumption as well. “What does this direct experience have to do with science?” Well, the embarrassing fact is that science has always been full of errors. For example, according to the “scientific” knowledge of Tohen’s time, the Sun was still orbiting the Earth. Although Tohen never suspected this particular point, he was trying to refute the flat Earth theory. So, Tohen was aware of the limits of science.

To dig deeper into the foundation of science, Tohen reviewed his old notebooks in mathematical logic, taught by the island’s supreme logician Kaat Gooderu. The material didn’t make much sense when he was younger and more interested in eye-catching applications of science, such as the use of metal for making fishing hooks. But now, he was motivated to make use of this old knowledge.

The essence was like this. Even within the most precise systems of logic, all the conclusions are obtained from axioms (i.e., assumptions) and rules. That is, logic begins with an almost *arbitrary* starting point. If these starting points are consistent with our realistic perception (direct experience?) and the manner of obtaining conclusions is legitimate, the logic would appear realistic and useful. However, it is always possible to create a variety of logics, some of which can be inconsistent (possible to obtain incompatible conclusions), incomplete (impossible prove some true statements), and/or simply utterly exotic. It’s entirely up to the starting point. Although this may appear strange to some people, the same idea is still seriously discussed by logicians of today. So, even logic and thus science (based on logic) entirely depend on the starting point.

This review made Tohen feel humble. In a sense, he was no longer as confident or arrogant

as before. Even mathematical logic is a matter of assumptions. In the end, it is indeed the direct experience that still mattered to him and everyone. With this realization, Tohen began to feel clearer and more open minded. Even *his* supposedly “logical” thinking about Donaruzo and his supporters may not be as consistent or complete as he was thinking. Now, he was more focusing on change in himself than complaining “others.” Of course, this did *not* mean that he accepted the actions that do damages to the people and the environment of the USI. He continued to resist such actions. In fact, he was able to see the nature of such damages more clearly. If we recall the alligator in NYC, it wouldn’t be a matter of simply removing it. Of course, you don’t want to use a bomb to terminate the alligator. The neighborhood would be destroyed. You don’t want to introduce a T-Rex, another teeny-brained creature, to remove the alligator either. There is no reason to invite even a bigger disaster. You need to be careful and strategic.

Many other things came to Tohen’s mind as well. The USI election system had been in place for thousands of years. It was antiquated; it must be revised. “Why do selfish and irresponsible people always control the politics and business? Why do “ordinary” people need to suffer?” There must be underlying problems that most people are not really aware of. For example, Tohen couldn’t eliminate the feeling that there is something wrong with the islanders’ mainstream approach to parenting and education.

Tohen hoped that analogous and meaningful changes occur to Donaruzo and his supporters as well. However, he was not that optimistic; it won’t happen over night or probably not even within a life time. It might take thousands of re-incarnations (if there is such a thing) for Donaruzo to be a responsible person. Then, most of the re-incarnated versions of Donaruzo could still haunt future generations. The year 2016 may be just one such time. And the world will certainly change from time to time. Tohen thought that he could not prepare for all potentially good and bad situations. The only thing he could do would be to hold on to his direct experience, try to see thing with clarity and open-mindedness, and act responsibly.

By the way, Tohen was thinking about some more specific ideas along the line. We will see if we can explore them at some point in the near future.