

Zazen Zoom Saturday 9 April 2022

I would like to return to Master Dogen's recommendation in the *Fukanzazengi*, which Master Keizan takes up in the *Zazen Yojinki*:

"Think from the depths of non-thinking."

Master Dogen calls this *Hishiryō*!

Master Keizan adds:

"Think of non-thinking. How to do this? This is the essential art of zazen."

Hishiryō! How can we share this silent light in words, without making it something we'd like to achieve through our personal will? Even the usual French translation: *'au-delà de la pensée'* (beyond thought) can suggest a place that's outside, far away from us!

Hishiryō! This word describes the immediate clarity where pure Presence-self-awareness reveals itself, as soon as we stop relying on words and stop playing with our dreams. It is that which is *just before* the words and thoughts that try to grasp and to define. This is the *'just before'* that precedes any involvement in the world of illusory thoughts and mental scenarios. But how to resolve the paradox of defining that which has neither form, nor colour, nor substance, nor characteristics [distinguishing marks] and which is also called the unnameable, that which can't be located or spoken about!

Hishiryō denotes *Thusness*, the emptiness of Presence. Simply to be there, that's all. Without the need to go elsewhere or to add something to this instantaneousness.

"All things are seen," says the Buddha, "in the intrinsic emptiness of their nature, their thusness, their ungraspable miraculousness. Names and words are nothing other than appearances. When you search for what is behind the name, you find an ever-increasing subtlety that knows no division."

That state which sees no division, no duality is illumination. Hishiryō!

It's not possible to understand Hishiryō until we stop our doing, waiting, hoping; until we no longer even have a practice, including that of zazen or that of doing nothing. There remains only instantaneousness, which is none other than *Thusness*.

Thus! I am *thus!* *Such* is my nature.

It's a bit like being a doll made of salt, contemplating the ocean and the close approach of the waves to the shore. It is to melt into Presence, without fear and without regret, and to feel truly and deeply this dissolution, this return to our home-ocean.

For many meditation practitioners, there is a feeling of helplessness in the face of the incessant play of the mind chaining together thoughts without coherence and constructing fantasy-fictions. The 'me', like a monkey swinging from branch to branch, reinforces itself by trying to suppress thoughts with other thoughts. This is what maintains the feeling of remoteness and powerlessness.

Every attempt of discursive thinking to meditate, to be, to awaken, leads nowhere. It is impossible *not* to be. And it is possible to see, to feel, to perceive, to listen without thinking about it. What we are looking for cannot be anywhere other than just where we are, as we are, just before the very idea of seeking anything.

Here, now! And simply that, *is* Hishiryō.

I quote Master Dogen, to conclude:

"Practise with ingenuity the exact moment just as it is. Realisation as Presence is none other than your life, and your life is none other than realisation as Presence. Life is neither coming nor going, it is neither appearance nor what is to come. There is not a single moment outside of life. There is not a single phenomenon or a single heart that is not life at this split second."

Hishiryō is to live that instant with the whole of our heart.
