

Zoom on 23 January 2021

Last week I concluded the kusen by quoting Master Keizan:

"The light of the Spirit shines from a past without beginning and illuminates the Present. This spirit is without characteristics, non-dual and it is only imagination to believe it different from forms."

The light of our own mind is what illuminates the empty, impermanent and ungraspable nature of what we perceive: phenomena, perceptions, sensations, forms.

The light of our own mind is pure attention; a conscious presence illuminating and revealing the impermanent nature of all things.

Our meditation is therefore an act of consciousness during which attention is focused on the nature of things. Seeing them as they are means watching their appearance-disappearance in our own mind, the place where they are perceived. This leads us to see and realise that everything that exists is like a dream or a magical illusion appearing in the mind. It is to stand in Awakening, to see Awakening, and that is the realisation of Zen: practice is realisation.

In our meditation, when we are fully conscious of our Presence itself, we can call this realization. It is a moment, out of time, where there is no longer any difference between That which looks and that which is looked at. There is no more than the simple fact of being. The heart of zazen is this Samâdhi, *zanmai*, which occurs spontaneously in us when we accept this abandonment which consists of disappearing in the very space of our own mind. This creates in us, then, this revelation that we are Awakening, the light shining of itself within itself.

"The realisation of the nature of one's own mind", says the Lankâvatâra sutra, "guarantees the abolition of duality. The Buddhas have purified themselves of duality, for suffering begins with duality."

No duality means that there is no longer either subject or object, either before or after.

"Simply the mind, simply the body," writes Master Keizan. "To see them as identical or different is to miss the target. The body appears in the mind; there is consciousness of sensations and form. When it appears thus in the mind, the body seems to be different."

But it is like the movement of the waves: when one wave rises, a thousand waves follow. At the moment where a simple mental fabrication comes into being, countless others manifest themselves.

"Thus the four elements (water, earth, fire, wind) intermingle with the skandhas (aggregates) like the mesh of a net; the limbs, the five senses appear, and so on until they constitute the thirty-six components of the body and until the emergence of the chain of twelve interdependent causes that activate Samsara."

If Master Keizan takes time to remind us of this whole process of the appearance of things in the mind, it is so that we ourselves become aware of it and give ourselves time to see it and check its accuracy.

We create the world in our own minds and, simultaneous comic and dramatic irony, we believe that it is outside to us and that we are separate from it. We create the duality that produces and sustains our suffering.

Zazen restores the truth in its light and its oneness, as Master Keizan explains:

"The mind is like the water of the ocean and the body is like waves. There are no waves without water and no water without waves. There is no separation between water and waves. Movement and stillness are no different".

A meditation that consists of surfing only on the waves will never reveal to us the depth of the ocean. A meditation that consists of trying to stay in the depth of the ocean will obscure the magical and wonderful play of waves and of manifestation.

"The realisation of Mind-Only makes it possible to no longer believe in the reality of external objects, and this liberation from misconceptions coincides with the Middle Way. In the absence of any fictitious idea, the spirit reverses its support in suchness".

This is how things are. There is nothing to grasp or reject, nothing to lean on, and that is what freedom is.

* * *