

## Zazen Zoom Saturday 20 Feb 2021

Master Keizan has absolute faith in the practice of zazen:

*"As long as you just talk about it or think about it, it means that opinions haven't calmed down and the mind remains blocked, and it's like standing in front of a closed door.*

*Shikantaza puts all things to rest and penetrates us completely. It's like coming home, and sitting down in peace. "*

Opinions that do not settle are all the thoughts that concern the life of our 'me', the continual flow of our floating ideas and conditioned beliefs, the waves of existence that we think we can control. But can we control the waves?

Magandiya, a layman who followed the Buddha, asked him:

*"What are your beliefs? What's your approach to life? And what is your future destination? "*

The Buddha replied:

*"I have studied all the opinions that people hold so dear, and I don't say 'I say this' or 'I say that'. I observe all human opinions, **without grasping them**, and this is how I found truth and inner peace.*

*For one who has found this clarity, there is no such thought as superior, equal or inferior; for to think like that is to immediately engage in controversy. Why should a wise man argue that "this is true", or "that is a lie"? And if he thinks neither 'equal' nor 'unequal', with whom is he going to argue?"*

It means developing equanimity, that is, immersing yourself in the gaze that rests on things without grasping them. Equanimity is the primary quality of our mind, of our bodhisattva nature. It is the Treasure of the Eye which, in all simplicity and innocence, contemplates impermanence without getting involved in the game of opinions, that is to say without grasping anything. It is the practice of zazen.

Understand clearly that as soon as we seize, we lose our original freedom. Our own Mind, as vast as the ocean, clings to the two extremes of dualism and strays into points of view, identifying itself with them, thus reducing itself to the mere movement of a few waves.

The Buddha ends his response to Magandiya:

*"One who travels the world independently, free of opinions and points of view, is not going to seize them*

*to enter into discussions and controversies.  
As the lotus rises on its stalk, unsullied by  
mud or water, the word of the sage  
expresses peace without sullying the  
opinions of the world."*

Until opinions have calmed down, the Mind remains blocked. We see this during zazen. This obstruction takes us into the thick fog of conflicting opinions. We must therefore free ourselves from what causes our detention in the prison of opinions and controversies. How can we regain peace and transparency of the Mind?

Master Keizan continues:

*"To be tormented by the five obstructions results from the ignorance that arises because we do not understand what our own nature is, our true identity."*

We need to "clarify the world of our experiences" to understand the way our mind grasps things and reduces itself to trivialities. This is work, studying yourself!! During zazen, we examine within ourselves what are the five obstructions or the five obstacles that obscure our vision and deprive us of the peace and the joy of being.

We constantly try to confront these obstacles in our daily lives, but in fact this desire to control or eliminate them feeds our attachments to our opinions and our illusions. These poisons enclose the mind, immobilize it in the reduced space of the

suffering of Samsara and obstruct contemplation.

There are five major obstacles on the path to liberation. Here is what the Buddhist dictionary says:

*Nîvarana, a Sanskrit term which designates the group of five factors which trouble the mind, disturb the vision, oppose the perfect or even partial concentration of Samadhi and hinder the discovery of the truth. They are **greed** (or attachment to desires), **wickedness** (or malice, hatred), **inflexibility** or sluggishness of mind, **restlessness** and remorse, and **doubt**.*

We must see within ourselves these obstacles and eliminate them to free the Mind from its karmic imprisonment, and to allow it to regain the infinite space of its nature. *Shikantaza-Zazen* accomplishes this liberation.

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