

Zazen Zoom Saturday 27 Feb 2021

Once again I quote Master Keizan's phrase that I mentioned last week during the kusen:

"Being tormented by the five obstructions is the result of ignorance which consumes us because we do not understand what our own nature is, our true identity."

This statement is much more important than it seems.

We need to "*clarify the world of our experiences*" to understand how our mind grasps things and reduces itself to trivialities or constructs improbable scenarios, disconnected from reality. To do this, we need to understand what impedes the clarity of our mind and deprives us of the peace and joy of being. That's the work, to study yourself!

During zazen, we examine within ourselves what constitute the five obstructions or the five obstacles that the Buddha talks about and that Master Keizan reminds us about.

We can see that we are constantly trying to escape from what displeases us or to fight against our demons, without understanding how we ourselves create the conditions for their appearance. In fact, the desire to control or eliminate our attachments and negative tendencies feeds them, strengthens them and leads us to mental illness.

The poisons immobilise our mind in the reduced space of frustration and false hope and hinder recollection.

What can we do then?

During zazen, we can see these mechanisms fall into place in our thoughts themselves, when we revisit the past or imagine the future; and above all we can become aware that the 'me', which we believe ourselves to be, has no real existence.

According to the Buddha, there are five major obstacles to establishing peace in our minds. 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**.*

Each of these poisons could be the subject of a lecture.

It is necessary to see within ourselves these hindrance-poisons and to abolish them in order to liberate the Mind from its karmic imprisonment and allow it to find the infinite space of its nature. All poisons come from ignorance, the root of all that is unhealthy in the world. Not knowing who we are, we have created a lure, the individual 'me', to try to remedy the 'me', to try to remedy our ignorance of our own identity. And we make a lot of effort to make it exist, we lie and create painful karma.

On the other hand, we consider, based on our changing perceptions, that the world of phenomena is the one and only truth, whereas it is only a fleeting aspect of Reality.

Shikantaza-Zazen puts an end to ignorance by revealing the truth in our own minds. So what do you see? Nothing at all?

That's It!

Master Keizan continues:

"Zazen is to understand yourself. Even if you have eliminated the five obstacles, if you have not dissipated your fundamental ignorance you have not realized for yourself what the Buddhas and the Patriarchs have realized.

If you want to dissipate this fundamental ignorance, zazen is the immediate key to realizing the Way and unveil the landscape of your own homeland."
