

Zoom Zazen 24th April 2021

Master Keizan continues the *Zazen Yojinki* by addressing the subject of the attitude of the mind during zazen.

"During zazen, sometimes the mind sinks into sleepiness, or floats in mental agitation; sometimes it seems obscure and sometimes penetrating."

In Japanese, these two opposite attitudes are called *kontin* and *sanran*. Both terms are the observation of the absence of our presence. We are all familiar with these two states of mind. Often when we become aware of having been in this absence, we feel that we are meditating badly and wasting our time. This is an unnecessary judgement because it is giving way to another agitation of thought which arises in the mind, disappointed that we are not meditating well or that we are not getting there.

But, to get where?

The greedy 'me' has an idea of the awakening, expects a result. Everything that does not fit into the framework of its beliefs and expectations is judged false, incorrect and useless. And very often, to this opinion is added guilt. Judgement means that we deny what happened in ourselves the moment before. It is to deny ourselves, to cut ourselves in two, to ignore the form that life has taken so as to appear in the space of our body and mind. Learn to ignore all judgements about the appearance and disappearance of thoughts and their content. Simply return to the awareness of your Presence. And rely on your breath.

We must absolutely understand that zazen accepts everything. Zazen cannot be grasped by thought. Meditation is simply learning to return to the peace of our homeland by turning our attention to the silent Presence. This awareness of abandoning the world of thoughts and simply Being is spontaneous. Being present is formulated by the statement, "I Am". No more, no less. This is the way of the Buddha, the Middle Way.

In the *Zazengi*, "the principles of zazen", and repeated in the *Fukan zazengi*, which I invite you to re-read and deepen, Master Dogen teaches:

"Do not desire to become a Buddha. See your attachments and learn to free yourself from them. Let the ten thousand dharmas (i.e. all the personal stories) rest. Do not think about good and evil, do not judge right and wrong. Make sure that they interfere with neither the mind, nor the will, nor the sensory consciousnesses. Reject every desire, every concept and every judgement.

Learn the turning around that directs your light inwards and illuminates your true nature. The mind and body of themselves will drop away, and your original face will appear."

By faithfully following Master Dogen's instructions, we can see our true formless face, return to our homeland and find true rest. This is called samadhi, the heart of zazen, the state of being without subject or object.

At this very moment, now, we know that we are. This knowledge is the same for all of us, this morning as well as in every moment of our ephemeral lives, even when we're far apart. It is because we know what we are that we know, and are aware of, all our joys and sufferings. When we observe ourselves intensely, we see the awakening of this beingness [Self] at every moment. It appears, is experienced, and then in the same instant, vanishes into an untraceable emptiness. This is how we can experience a state of continuous presence which is samâdhi. That which sees all this is the Treasury of the Eye. Buddha!

It is vital to understand and realise, in our zazen, that That which sees the awakening of being [existence], observes or rather studies, perceives, is there when things appear and always there also when they disappear. And all this happens in our own Presence. The consciousness of things comes and goes; Presence is always there! Pure Presence is what eternally prevails when consciousness merges with its source. When consciousness is no longer there, only Presence remains.

"Think from the depths of non-thinking," says Master Dogen.

"How do you think from the depths of non-thought? This is beyond thought, Hishiryô. This in itself is the essential art of zazen."

To be attached to nothing other than ungraspable Presence is to walk the Buddha Way and return to our homeland.
