

Zoom Zazen Saturday 3rd July 2021

Master Keizan declares:

"Sit down, and do nothing at all. This is the essential practice for practising Zen."

Indeed, from the point of view of Awakening, there is nothing to do because all beings are themselves Awakening. It's difficult to understand if our search is born of the desire to become an awakened being, a Buddha. For how can we become what we already are? Who then desires to awaken? The illusory 'me'?

We don't accept our hidden side even though it is the very engine of our generosity and benevolence. We seek to be someone whom others can admire for their wisdom, someone who is good. Zen embraces contradictions. It teaches only the recognition of the emptiness of things. We need to see, to observe impermanence, and for that we don't need to "do" anything.

In the *Shin jin mei*, Master Sosan tells us:

"To penetrate the Way is not difficult. But there's no need for love, hate, grasping or rejection."

In our awareness, the struggle between right and wrong leads to the disease of the mind."

And then he gives us this advice to put an end to doubt and suffering: *"When we remain in the here and now,"* that's to say, when we live totally in the Presence, in the fact of being, *"ideas of right and wrong can no longer penetrate our mind."*

We just sit and watch things appear and disappear. This is doing nothing. Just seeing the movement of things in our own mind. When we contemplate impermanence, when we observe the transformation of something, does it become a new thing? Or is its previous form first destroyed? Water evaporates, becomes cloud, then rain, and the cycle begins again. As it evaporates, the water seems to disappear, while it becomes a mass of particles in the form of a cloud in the atmosphere.

When a transformation occurs, it is only the previous form that is annihilated. The thing itself is neither born nor dies. By revealing themselves as they are, in their unending movement, things reveal to us the limitless space in which they are transformed. You really have to do nothing to contemplate this. Just sit and watch.

So it is with ourselves as form. The body and other aggregates are subject to impermanence but the Mind that contemplates, the Treasure of the Eye, is beyond birth and death. It is in a total Presence to ourselves that this vision-realisation that sees the Truth takes place. This cannot come about when we are restless and attached to the world of phenomena, to the personal 'me' and its commonplace and sometimes truly pathetic stories.

By doing nothing, we are Buddha, Presence. There is no longer any awareness of a 'me' attached to good and evil, right and wrong. It is forgotten. This knowing is a non-knowing which merges into the non-dual Truth, into the Void. It is the heart of zazen!

However, there is also a body that is continually transforming, revealing at every moment non-birth and non-death.

"Neither existence nor non-existence," says Master Sosan, *"everywhere before our eyes."*

And since there is a body, we must also take care of it.

Master Keizan concludes: *"Before sitting, wash your eyes and feet. Put yourself at ease, body and mind, and harmonise the two. Abandon all representations of the world and do not attach yourself to thoughts, not even sublime ones, about the Way."*
