

Zoom Zazen Saturday 14 August 2021

Master Keizan continues his recommendations on the practice of zazen:

"Zazen does not depend on teachings, practice or realization, but these three approaches are part of it. It is not the essence of zazen to say that realization is based on the notion of enlightenment (or satori). And having a practice based on stubborn effort is not the spirit of zazen either."

This is a direct teaching that has become one of the fundamental maxims of Zen. Master Hyakujo constantly reminded his monks: *"Do not become attached, do not seek."* This teaching is, in fact, taken from the Diamond Sutra:

Kōnin, the fifth Patriarch, asked Enō to come to his room at dusk. When they came face to face, he recited to him passages from the Diamond Sutra, and when he quoted the phrase: *"Keep your mind attentive and free, dwelling on nothing and nowhere,"* Enō was deeply moved and he awoke.

This is expressed in the sutra in another equally clear and essential way: *"The mind that rests on nothing is the true mind."*

Freedom is the natural quality, the very essence of our own mind. But we deny it and lose it by attaching ourselves to objects and opinions, to false, illusory beliefs such as that of a 'me' that is independent and can control things.

Things are what they are. They do not have a 'me'! To be attached to them is to take their impermanence for reality, like believing that water is solid.

In a teaching in the Prajnaparamita, the Buddha explains:

"The existence of things is devoid of the illusion that they have a self (a 'me', a substance of their own), says the Buddha."

It is through blindness to the transparent, substanceless nature of things that people affected by this blindness suffer and live in complications of ideas and religious or worldly emotions that they believe to be definitive, well established and therefore real.

Thus blinded, these people project this world, created by their 'me', onto their ideas of the past, present and future moment. They try to freeze reality into permanent forms and categories. In this way they obscure the path of deep vision, the path of spirituality that reveals the original clarity, freedom and radiant transparency of 'that which is'.

The radiant transparency of 'that which is' is what zazen reveals to us. As the Diamond Sutra says, we can see that the mind rests on nothing, because there is nothing to rest on, in this continuous impermanence. And looking at it, we practice a total perceptive attention that no longer seeks to grasp the objects of perception. We disappear as a 'me' separated from things *as they are*.

There is no longer any question of approaching the teachings, the practice or a realisation. There is only the radiant transparency of 'what is'. We then have no need to grasp or reject because there is no one to do that.

The Buddha says in the *Prajnaparamita*:

"When a disciple attains the deep vision, they never covet and cultivate infinite knowledge. The very attitude of not coveting or cultivating reveals all things to them. They see every possible structure, from sense objects to Buddhas, as transparent by nature. This radiant transparency is, in reality, quite simply the state of total awakening of a Buddha. The now awakened disciple is thus immersed in infinite wisdom."

This infinite wisdom is the heart of zazen.
