

Zazen Zoom Saturday 25 Sep 2021

When we first start to practice, we come to the dojo, driven by the Mind of Awakening, but also, very often, by the illusion of achieving the great awakening we have heard about. An awakening that will make us into a Buddha recognised and revered by all. The individual 'me' imagines themselves free of all suffering, knowing only bliss, and hopes they can be said to be a realised (awakened) being.

With the years, habits set in. Disillusionment appears and becomes more bitter. Beginner's faith is given a hard time, then disappears. And there is no longer any question of realisation.

What does Master Keizan say about this?

*"Although we speak of realization, it is a realization that does not see itself as a realization."*

Awakening or realization, what do we put behind these words? We limit Awakening and Realisation by taking them to be states that the 'me' could reach or objects that it could obtain. How can we believe that the illusory 'me', so buoyant and volatile, identified with an ephemeral body, could achieve anything? We must not fall into the trap of self-made mental creations.

*"Realisation is the practice of Samâdhi," continues Master Keizan. "It is the knowledge of the unborn, the absolute knowledge that emerges spontaneously."*

*Samâdhi* is *Zanmai* in Japanese. It is the heart of zazen. The Mind is free and is not attached to either of the two aspects of duality. There is no more subject or object. It is the *unborn*. As we were before birth! The *unborn* which therefore cannot die. Realisation is as we were before we existed. Beyond words, beyond all worldly representation. Before being, we knew nothing, not even the word 'knowledge'. Everything is born from nothing and everything returns to nothing.

This nothingness is called Emptiness, Great Wisdom, Ultimate Truth, Mind-only, Presence. It is our very essence. But we are not a word. We are without name. There's nobody on the zafu!

Spiritual reality is flowing now, at this very moment, as Presence. And whatever It contains, pleasure or pain, the real practice is to taste it, savour it, taste it. To delight unceasingly in the fragrance of Presence. That is Zen. It is not a realization that interests the possessive 'me', because it does not know what the very place in which it is *is*.

Zazen is as we were before we existed. Presence. Presence does not know its own existence. It has no need of anything.

So who is it wants realisation? Who seeks enlightenment?

Master Keizan continues:

*"The samadhi of zazen, the King of samadhis, is the gateway to realisation through which shines the wisdom of the Tathagata, the Thus-Come."*

*And all this happens in the peaceful practice of zazen. It is beyond the sacred or profane, confusion or knowledge. It is the realisation of the unsurpassable Awakening which is our true nature."*

This door of realisation will always be open until we see the silent light of our unborn nature. We must see what is invisible, and find what is unfindable.

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