

Zoom Zazen Saturday 2 October 2021

This morning is the last zazen of the sewing week in Lanau.

In the sewing room, an old, damaged *kesa*, worn for more than forty years, has been cut up. Then many disciples folded and embroidered each piece. And seven strips of three pieces each were assembled. Then the overlays were put on and sewn. A new traditional *funzo-e kesa* took shape. It is not yet finished. The frame and a large lining still need to be put in place, followed by the straps. This *funzo-e kesa* does not belong to anyone. It thus becomes the symbol of Transmission in the Tenborin *sangha*. This is how we protect the Buddha's Dharma.

Sewing the *Kesa* means aligning the moments of our life, point by point. Sometimes simple, sometimes difficult. Illusions, dreams, failures, expectations, joys, are the points of the *kesa* of our life. Nothing can be rejected from the karmas we have created and we carry them forever. Only a total acceptance of our weaknesses, our attachments, and even our mediocrity, allows us to make it the Buddha's *kesa*, which frees us from suffering. Because it is a *kesa* without form, without colour, without limit, it envelops and protects us.

"Since the distant past," says Master Dogen, "the kesa has been called the robe that removes fever and suffering. And when the multitude of the Awakened realise the Way, they always wear this robe. If you don't wear this robe, it will be difficult for you to join the assembly of the Awakened."

Buddhas, monks and nuns wear the *Kesa* because it contains the totality of the suffering of beings. This is why it becomes the body, the heart and the marrow of the Buddha's Dharma. Even when it is transformed, it is always a new *Kesa* that appears and is transmitted from generation to generation. It is with this same spirit that the Lanau *funzo-e kesa* is made, and that is why it is passed on correctly.

Each stitch of the *kesa* was sewn at the appropriate moment, in the awareness of Presence itself. A Presence inhabited by the spirit of compassion and by generosity without calculation. Every moment in which the *Kesa* comes into being and takes shape bears witness to the Transmission through the ages. The true *Kesa* has, in fact, neither beginning nor end. It is the form through which the Dharma appears to beings. It is the distinctive mark of the Awakened.

We receive it with faith,

"For in seeing and revering the Kesa, we see the Buddha," adds Master Dogen.

When Master Dogen saw for the first time, in China, the monks putting the *kesa* on their heads and chanting the *kesa* sutra with their hands joined in *gassho*, he wept and, at the same time, he was filled with joy. He then vowed to correctly transmit the authentic lineage of the Buddha's Law. This is what continues to this today.

May true faith illuminate and give life to this vow that we secretly make in our hearts.
