

## Zoom Zazen 24 Oct 2021

After talking about discipline, Master Keizan explains to us what zazen concentration is.

*"We speak of the practice as a continuous concentration.*

*"Zazen is dropping off the body and mind, abandoning confusion and the desire to understand, freeing oneself from the desire to change, ceasing to be agitated."*

A continuous concentration is what we call *Samādhi*. No more dualism between the subject who meditates and the meditation. There is only contemplation, without anyone. "An empty zafu" which is not a nothingness. For the fact of knowing or being aware is behind this contemplation, as with any other objective experience. This knowledge of the fact of being radiates in us with complete clarity in this zazen without dualism. It is not, then, a question of someone who is concentrating. Simply peaceful Presence which is called *Shikantaza*.

And if there is still someone who tries to concentrate, it's because there is a goal to achieve, and that is no longer the zazen of the Buddhas.

Experiences change unceasingly, but 'knowing' permeates all experience, whatever its content. Forms, sensations, emotions, perceptions and mental constructs, what we call the aggregates, constitute the objects of the experience of knowing.

*"The floating clouds of the five skandhas (five aggregates), come and go in the sky. Why should we want to grasp these illusions?" says Master Yoka Daishi in the 'Shodoka' - The Song of Awakening."*

The sky is not affected by the shape or path of the clouds. Similarly, the Mind is not disturbed by the content of our experiences, our emotions or our thoughts. They are known, they become apparent, and the space in which they appear is not, however, altered. The Mind knows the aggregates because they appear in It as experiences. But the Mind does not seek to grasp or modify the experience that unfolds in the aggregates.

So what does it mean to "drop off body and mind"?

Dropping off body and mind is the expression Master Nyojo used when he struck with his sandal a sleeping monk in the dojo. When he heard this "*Shin jin datsu raku*", Master Dōgen was deeply moved. So much so that he made this word one of the principal maxims of his teachings in the *Shōbōgenzō*.

But no one can drop off their body or mind by an effort of concentration, even across many *kalpas*.

Human beings identify with their bodies and also believe that there is a thinker inside them, or that they think in a voluntary, free way, or that their brain does all this!

The Buddha taught again and again that the aggregates are impermanent and that they cannot constitute our '*self*' [our '*me*']. Of course there are thoughts, but no entity that could be called a thinker exists. This is what we need to study in our work on ourselves.

Dropping of the body and mind is in fact to put an end to the idea that this ephemeral body and this changing thought process (mind) are our identity - and to understand that Heaven is our own true nature. This understanding is liberation.

Master Keizan continues:

*"Give up confusion and the desire to understand, free yourself from the desire to change and stop getting agitated.*

*Do nothing. Be like a fool, or an ignoramus, like a mountain or like the ocean, without a trace of movement or of stillness.*

*Stay concentrated without an effort to concentrate. It is a concentration without the practice of concentration. Because it does not have any object, it is called the Great Concentration."*

And I end with these words of Master Yoka:

*"Dear friend, don't you see this man of satori? He has stopped studying and lives effortlessly. He neither tries to dismiss illusions, nor to find the truth."*

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