

## Zoom Zazen - Saturday 21 May 2022

*"The Spring brings forth the flowers and the flowers bring forth the Spring."*

This is how Master Dogen expresses the unity between the essence expressed by Spring and the phenomena which are the flowers.

Phenomena, beings, things are flowers of emptiness which, like simple flowers, bloom, blossom, fade and die. Always in the now of Spring.

The flowers of emptiness are impermanence itself, which offers itself to our gaze at every moment. Sensations, perceptions, emotions, thoughts!

*"There is," says Master Dogen, "appearing and disappearing, which manifests as Presence."*

There is Awakening and illusion, which manifests as Presence. There are sentient beings and there is the Buddha. They are One in Presence!

It is this unity between the spring and the flowers that is revealed to our eyes during zazen. We see impermanence itself, and therefore the emptiness, of everything that appears to our perception.

And the more our gaze is refined, in seated, silent Presence, the more our own immediate and elusive nature is revealed. It is untraceable for the discriminating mind, we must go beyond words!

We look within ourselves. The gaze turns towards its Source and discovers itself to be One with the flowers of emptiness that it contemplates. That which looks is One with that which is looked at. We know ourselves in this way, in an instantaneous vision, in a pure innocence, that of rediscovered unity.

There is no *method* for looking. It's a natural faculty that's carried out consciously and also unconsciously. It's our everyday gaze. It is enough not to stop contemplation by trying to identify the

flowers; to stop trying to name them and not try to gather them so as to possess them.

The pure vision that emerges from this attitude of letting go is that of pure Presence, emptiness, which the Buddha taught and which the Masters have transmitted.

Zazen is to watch the blossoming, flowering and extinction of flowers of emptiness. Beings suffer because they do not understand the nature of flowers - neither their radiance, nor their light, nor their leaves, nor their blossoms - because of their short-sightedness and their limited understanding.

*"Only, says Master Dogen, do the Buddhas and the Patriarchs know the blossoming and decline (extinction) of the flowers of heaven, earth and the universe."*

We only need to sit in front of the wall for this knowledge to reveal itself before our eyes. We simply look within ourselves without intervening, without grasping. Then we can understand that we *are* the Eye that contemplates the flowers of emptiness, the Eye-Treasure. And we realise, without knowing how and without even needing to know, that there is no separation between That which looks and that which is looked at. *Ku soku ze shiki.*

Essence-emptiness *IS* all phenomena. The flowers of emptiness are themselves emptiness.

*Master Dogen writes: "It is by contemplating the flowers of emptiness that the Buddha and the Patriarchs obtain gentleness and patience, realise Emptiness, overflow with compassion, actualise the Way and harvest the fruit of Awakening."*

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