

Zoom Zazen - Saturday 8 Oct 2022

What is the practice of true reality?

Let us listen to Master Wanshi again:

"It is simply to sit serenely in silent inner observation. When you have carefully probed this, you can no longer be disturbed by external causes and conditions. Empty mind means wide open, shining in a way that is both subtle and correct.

"Filled with your inner space, be fulfilled, without desire to cling to anything, go beyond your habitual behaviour and realise the Self that is not disturbed by any emotion."

It's enough just to settle into the gaze that observes impermanence, without trying to capture some awakening or state of consciousness or anything else. Let the Treasure of the Eye contemplate, without the self that falsely attributes perception to itself.

We look at the wall. So there is nothing to see. The mind observes itself in the appearance and disappearance of things. Perception without anyone who perceives.

We then naturally come to realise that there is neither inside nor outside. No more oppositions, all is One. We are truly there, in Reality. There is only the infinite space of the mind, of my true nature, the indescribable emptiness in which unfolds the dream of complete manifestation.

It is the simplicity of the now that the poet expresses:

*"Nothing to grasp, nothing to reject
Free to come and go
Covered only by blue mountains
Without the least speck of dust
I draw water and gather wood."*

Master Wanshi talks about overcoming our habitual behaviour, the thing that leads us into pain. This means to study ourselves, to see what our conditioning and habitual behaviours are, and to question them when we understand that they are contrary to our inner well-being and to our freedom. This is how we can realise the Self.

Master Wanshi does not speak of the Self (with a capital 'S') in an attempt to induce the idea of a divine entity outside ourselves, because this is not the teaching of the Buddha, who said:

"I have shown the falseness of all ideas of self and shown that there is no such thing as self in the way people think.

"But if something is true, is real, is constant, is the foundation of an unchanging nature, that can be called a Self. For the sake of beings, in all the truths I have taught, there is such a Self. And it's up to you to cultivate."

This Self of which the Buddha speaks is none other than Master Wanshi's true reality.

It is the *buddha-nature*, our original identity. It is neither the body, nor the mind, nor any perishable entity.

In the Lankavatara Sutra we find this stanza:

*"It is not one's self nor is it **other than self**;
It is not self **and** non-self, nor is it neither self **nor** non-self;
It is not what exists in perception;
It is not a conditioned entity nor pure nothingness.
There is a real self, at the heart of the aggregates, which invisibly exists,
Like the fire that smoulders in a flint,
Or the virtue of a medicinal plant
Or the fragrance of a flower."*
