

Zoom Zazen - Saturday 15 October 2022

The practice of true reality means, according to Master Wanshi, that :

"You must have a broad, undivided mind, and not rely on others. Through an attitude of righteousness and independence you learn not to pursue situations that get out of hand."

For Master Wanshi, being broad-minded means that one is not closed off or restricted by opinions, or attached to questionable personal representations. When it is understood that no entity called the 'self' has any reality, and therefore we have absolutely no power over things, we can accept what comes to us, as it is, without trying to change or control it. This is the beginning of a wisdom that knows how to distinguish between what is illusory and what is real, and that no longer sees any difference between the beautiful and the ugly, between illusion and Awakening.

No one can teach us to bring forth the mind of awakening. We must not rely on others, or even on the Buddhas. We must do the work ourselves. It is in our own mind that the light shines and the world appears. That's where we have to see reality. The real is the middle of our daily life. We must learn not to pursue situations that take us away from it, maintaining an upright and independent attitude.

Uprightness is following the Dharma by respecting the precepts.

Independence means not blindly following the opinions of others and learning to listen to our own hearts.

We must stop worrying about appearances because attachment to them prevents us from realising that we are not, and never have been, apart from the original mind.

The truth is that we travel, but it is always from here to here, always in the Reality of the now, where there can be no separate self.

*"Right now, right here, the heart opens, without before or after.
At the foot of the cherry tree, all around us,
the world is nothing but cherry blossoms."*

Master Wanshi continues:

"You can reside in this state of righteousness and freedom and become equitable, pure and clear-headed. Bright and penetrating, you can immediately return to action, attune yourself to all things, face up to circumstances, and live with them."

It is easier to just be what we are than to want to appear to be this or that, or to play a character who sets out to trick others with false, hypocritical language, even to the point of confusing themselves with their own mystifications.

Often practitioners feel a division between zazen practice and daily life. No doubt there are still expectations or illusions about the meaning of Zen, because when these are dispelled, there's no longer any difference between practising in the dojo and everyday life. The self loses its robustness and gradually forgets itself. We can then see that we are verified by things themselves. They come to us and the right attitude is an open, free and complete acceptance, as happens during zazen where nothing can be grasped or rejected. Unconditional acceptance allows us, when we leave the dojo, to return to action, to movement, without creating a separation from practice.

Master Dogen puts it this way:

"It is when the dharmas (the phenomena) practise us that there is Awakening. In the practice-realisation of the Buddha-Way, encountering a dharma, one penetrates it completely; encountering the practice, one implements it completely."

"Alignment between conduct and the Way can only be achieved when the mind ceases to grasp and reject, and when all desire for attainment is let go."

To completely penetrate the dharmas, the phenomena, is to understand their impermanent and fleeting nature, and to stop taking them as real. It is this understanding that puts into action, within ourselves, the practice of true reality, naturally and without the fruitless efforts of our personal will.
