

Zoom Zazen, Saturday 11 February 2023

The point to which Master Wanshi now wishes to draw our attention is entitled 'Forgetting merit is realisation'. A title that refers to *mushotoku* practice, to non-gaining.

"Stay away," he says, "from troubled situations and face everything that comes your way. Even what is infinitesimal does not come from outside. The two forms of yin and yang have the same root, and the ten thousand images are of a single substance, without substance."

The troubled situations that we need to get away from are those that arise from our desire to possess or to get rid of [things], from our attachments to our beliefs, from the fear of facing whatever comes to us. We live in a false reality and we create with our discriminating minds a fictitious world in which we would like to live. And in this fictitious world we separate light from darkness, yin from yang, body from spirit. We lack the openness that receives the world just as it is, other people just as they are. To engage in Zen is to allow ourselves to consciously welcome our moments of liberation, of deep peace, as well as our moments of discouragement, frustration, excessive agitation. Nothing is outside, not even the tiniest thing. Nothing is extra.

During zazen, we can see the world forming in our mind in images, speculations and multiple scenarios. The pointlessness of all these imaginary constructions is revealed when we come to recognise what our likes and dislikes are, and how they lack foundation. A real work of Buddha for which our whole heart must be mobilised and take responsibility, face up to it. To accept that everything is within us and that there is nothing outside.

"Harmonising with changes and accompanying transformations," Master Wanshi continues, "the whole [totality] is not disturbed by the clouds of external conditions."

The more we practise, the more we see and understand, the more the course of things is revealed to be nothing but smoke, rippling in the sun of Presence. The sun itself is unaffected. We see things as they are, transforming from one moment to the next, retaining the beauty and the captivating magic of their illusory nature, while ceasing to captivate and capture us. Thus we rest in the boundless space of silent Presence and everything is in its place. We can welcome without fear everything that comes to us.

Master Wanshi says:

"You reach the birthplace of Great Freedom. The wind blows, the moon shines, the sky trembles, and beings do not obstruct one another."

Master Fuke often went into town ringing a bell and saying:

*"If a clear mind comes, I let it come.
If a mind in error comes, I let it be.
If the wind comes from every direction, four or eight directions, I let it be a whirlwind.
And if space comes, I knock¹ it again and again."*

To knock space again and again is to pierce emptiness. It is endless, sustained practice that at every moment knocks at the door of Great Wisdom. The door is always open. But is there truly a door?

¹ French *frappe*. Literally: beat, hit, strike, pound, bang