

## Zoom Zazen - Saturday 15 April 2023

*"Monks wearing the kesa," Master Wanshi told us last week, "are like a mirror reflecting a mirror."*

The mirror represents the normal condition of the Mind during zazen: it is empty and does not take over any of the objects it reflects, nor does it retain the least reflection of these objects. If it reflects another mirror, there is nothing left but radiant transparency. The Buddha says that this transparency is simply the awakened state of a Buddha. All things are seen, transparent by nature. This is what zazen reveals when the mind no longer grasps anything, and when there's an end to the illusion that the objects of perception are real. Then the desire to latch onto them fades away.

This is what monks who wear the *kesa* realise. They are bodhisattvas who awaken. And because the bodhisattva sees in his<sup>1</sup> own mind the transparency of all objects, of all phenomena; he becomes aware that beings - deluded by the belief that they're real, attached to the world by greed and hatred - are on their way to self-destruction. An immense compassion then fills his heart, and he feels for the first time the impulse to save beings.

Master Wanshi says of these monks in *kesas*, who are like mirrors and who feel the compassion of the bodhisattva:

*"This is called agreeing to take up the burden from the depths of one's own being, and is also to shoulder that responsibility."*

The vow to save all beings, however inconceivable it may be, is the sole concern of the bodhisattva. He looks around the world, he listens to sounds, and what he sees and hears fills him with turmoil and dismay. So many beings bear the burden of acts that will sooner or later bring them painful retribution. How could we *not* try to help them?

The bodhisattva cannot do other than accept responsibility for saving beings. He gives them his full attention, without making this desire an attachment, for he knows that only from Great Wisdom *Hannya*, springing up in his own mind, can his thoughts, words and deeds bear good fruit.

Only from Great Wisdom *Hannya* can the bodhisattva spread light in the darkness, purify the sight of beings, and free them.

Master Wanshi continues:

*"Wisdom illuminates the darkness without confusion."*

*The Great Way integrates with the body without remaining fixed.*

*From this refuge of freedom (which is the zazen of the Buddhas), engaging and transforming itself according to the play of circumstances, Wisdom is not lost.*

*It is clear that the Way cannot become stained.*

*The Valley Mind echoes the sound.*

*The Wind Master walks in the sky.*

*Unobstructed and free, beyond restraints, the monks who wear the kesa do not depend on recommendations - however subtle - and their original mind cannot be eclipsed."*

The realisation of bodhisattvas and monks who wear the *kesa* is what Master Wanshi wishes for all of us. And if we want to help others - our parents, our children, our friends and our enemies - we have to let the *valley mind* and the *wind master* settle in our mind, occupy it completely, and breathe life into our zazen & our daily action. We understand that we can only help the person we love by teaching them, through our own example, to be a light unto themselves.

Great Wisdom - which is born in our hearts through a practice both pure and self-less - is like a sun which spreads its light and warmth everywhere, without distinction. This is how all monks who wear the *kesa* should assist [others] and act - without even consciously trying to do so - to lead all beings to nirvana.

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<sup>1</sup> i.e. his or her, throughout the *kusen*