

Zoom Zazen - Saturday 20 May 2023

Just let go of everything!

That's what Master Wanshi urges us to do in engaging in the practice. A practice of surrender, of renunciation. That word [*renunciation*] announces a process that seems discouraging at first sight, whereas we expect our practice to bring us joy, relaxation and tranquillity. For the egotistical self, any effort that does not contribute to an immediate satisfaction is unpleasant. The ego makes surrender and renunciation something painful. But this is only a flight in the face of the fear that it [*the ego*] has to disappear. What does Zen teach?: don't *think* about surrender or renunciation, just do it, now. We must become surrender itself.

Even as beginners, we've all of us realised this surrender in our meditation, or in some situation - simple or exceptional - when we've been overcome by the self-evident fact of Presence. This is what we enjoy in practising zazen, without even really understanding it. Yet it's simple: in Presence, we live the moment itself, the only point of encounter with the Real, with the truth of ourselves. We are then ourselves - conscious, without *me*..

In the practice of Zen Buddhism, the true renunciation is to accept losing the sense of the *self*. We realise it naturally, unconsciously, automatically by remaining in the very heart of Presence. This is it: realisation. To practise is to give up the sense of our own individuality, of our *self*, while continuing to perform all the tasks of our life with the utmost attention. *Everything* is meditation. It is not a matter of being in *samadhi* or not being in *samadhi*. There's no more right or wrong. Simply let go of everything and settle into the awareness of our own presence.

Staying immobile in this Presence is settling into *non-abiding*, ceasing to identify ourselves with an ever-changing body, with floating sensations and emotions. We become aware at every moment that all these perceptions are not our true nature, although we are never apart from them.

The accomplishment of this surrender of the *self* connects us to all existences.

Master Wanshi puts it this way:

"Thus you sparkle and respond to the ten thousand things, in total unity with them. None of these ten thousand things is hidden. They are all disclosed, in indisputable clarity, seen in all their spontaneous and ungraspable mystery."

This surrender to which we are invited, guides us towards a path of honesty, of clarity. We let go of what is false in us and the veil that hid our nature finally opens. And yet, nothing is really different. Giving up everything brings the simple joy of finding ourselves in the truth of ourselves, which is always there!

"It doesn't come from outside," says Master Dogen. "It's just like the god of spring meeting the spring. In other words, at every moment we have to meet our buddha-nature. To exist and not to exist is like pine buds in the spring, chrysanthemum buds in autumn."

"Even though the Buddha-Way and Buddha-Wisdom manifest throughout the universe, we cannot claim that we acquire them. The whole universe is its own truth and this truth cannot belong to any being. It contains nothing more than itself. It is the inexhaustible source of all life. All things appear in their own eternity."

Just talking about it doesn't make it possible to understand or to awaken! Zen is to practise what can't be explained so as to find at last what cannot be found.

Here's a poem by Master Ryokan to conclude this *kusen*:

*I play ball with the children. I juggle while they sing.
I sing while they juggle. One game follows another, I
don't realise that time is passing.
A passer-by stares at me and laughs: "Why are you
behaving like that?" he asks.
I lower my head without answering. I could explain it to
him, but why bother?
You want to know my secret feeling?
That's simply the way it is.*
