

Zoom Zazen - Saturday 3rd June 2023

Master Wanshi continues his teaching:

"Don't follow trends that change with fashion; go beyond the duality of light and darkness. This is why the unique path of the Patriarchs has been so wonderfully transmitted. When the lingering dusts of the world are swept away, their influence ends. Worldly knowledge is in no way comparable to returning to the origin and obtaining certification.¹"

Even if Zen teachings ask us to expect nothing from our practice, we must believe that it is possible to go beyond the obstacles and pains of the world.

Committing ourselves to the path of the Buddha and the Patriarchs means understanding that the origin of suffering lies in our own minds, where we create our attachments and opinions, where the illusions that arise are taken for reality. This requires us to observe and clarify the judgements we make about things and about the movement of phenomena. Conscious vigilance must be part of our daily way of being. For, as a rule, we merely skim over things without seeing their marvellous nature.

Master Gensha, who declared after his awakening that the whole universe is one bright pearl, said to the monks in his temple:

"You act just as if you were sitting at the bottom of a great ocean, completely submerged, engulfed, and [yet] constantly reaching out to passers-by to beg for water."

"Why is that so hard to realise?" asked a monk.

"Because it's too close, so close you can't see anything," replied Gensha."

Our work as Buddha is always done here and now. It's closer than close, so close that we can't see. So how can we return to this origin, so close that we cannot see, and obtain certification?

"We must go beyond the duality of light and darkness. To clarify our vision of duality. In other words, to stop seeing an inside and an outside that cannot be found," said Vimalakirti.

There *is* no duality between Buddha and myself. This ephemeral body appears and disappears in That which is my original nature. When we keep ourselves still, in our original mind, the lingering dusts of the world are viewed as transitory reflections. Seeing them in this way puts an end to their influence and their power to ensnare us.

"The only thing I recommend you to do," says Master Bankei (1622-1693), *"is to keep to original mind. There's no specific rule, but you need to make up your mind to sit in the lotus position for as long as it takes to burn a stick of incense, every day. OK? As long as you keep to original mind without deviating from it, there's no other awakening to seek. Whether you are asleep or awake, you are a living Buddha. Sitting meditation means only one thing: being comfortably settled in our original mind. In fact, the whole of your daily life should be seen as sitting meditation."*

Zeshin realised the true nature of things simply through hearing the nightingale sing.

"Running after words, chaining sentences together, when will you see an end to it? Your own nature is empty and calm. So let things take care of themselves, I have nothing else to transmit."

"Don't tell me you're not being taught? Here and there, a nightingale sings supreme Zen."

When we realise that the song of the nightingale is born in our own mind, there's nothing left to search for and nothing is missing. No words can really express it, and the duality of light and darkness is transcended.

¹ i.e. *confirmation of insight*