

Zoom Zazen Saturday 24 June 2023

The different translations of Master Wanshi's words which I use present embarrassing differences, not always making the teachings of this great Master easy to understand. As I don't know either the original text or Chinese, I don't want to change what he wrote by making personal interpretations that aren't faithful or are inexact. So I invite you to re-read the Zoom *kusen* that are posted each week on the Tenborin and IZAUK websites, so you can get a better feel for them and understand them for yourself.

I'd like to pick up the final words of Master Wanshi from last week's *kusen* and offer you another perspective, a slightly different, more personal formulation:

"When you recognise and completely realise what your own mind is, you see that it creates within itself all situations and circumstances, being in perfect harmony with them and responding to them spontaneously. All these situations and circumstances present themselves naturally in their innocent clarity, and you can see their brilliance. You can then understand that all these things arise from the source that is your own mind."

The world is within our body-mind. This is one of the Buhha's main teachings, which is difficult to understand because the false idea that we're *separate* from the world makes it [seem] external to us. Our practice is to restore the truth of this perception of the world: unquestionably, it is perceived *within* us, felt in our mind, in our awareness. This awareness gives birth to the world. There is neither inside nor outside, there's nothing other than our mind, our awareness - within which things disappear on appearing. To know ourselves in this way is true knowledge, and it is the absolute truth of our practice of zazen. Zazen is not about *experiencing* something, but about recognising ourselves as the exact place where the world appears, the empty space within which impermanence flows. This place and this space do not, in fact, have either form or limit. We *are* [our] awareness of the world.

And, says Master Wanshi:

"The hundreds of thousands of situations and circumstances are no longer causes, capable of confronting you. Everything arises in your own body-mind, intimately. This is the way it happens."

When you realise that all things arise from you yourself, from within you, that's *Samadhi*. There's no longer anything to look for from the outside, because no such thing exists. And you should abandon your spiritual practice if it gives you a feeling of separation or division. When we let go of everything we are *not*, what remains is *ourselves*, our true nature, Mind.

To illustrate Master Wanshi's point, let's return to this very simple, well-known and famous Zen story:

Joshu came to study with Master Nansen. He asked him:

"What exactly is the Way?"

"Heijo shin kore dō," replied Nansen. *"Your everyday mind is the Way".*

This is one of the most famous answers from a master, and do not doubt that it constitutes the truth of Zen.

"How is it attained?" continued Joshu.

"Wanting to attain it, you're already moving away from it," Nansen replied.

"But without the desire to find it, how is the Way to be known?"

Nansen replied:

"The Way does not belong to the categories of knowing and not-knowing. Knowing is illusion and not-knowing is ignorance. When you understand the Way without the shadow of a doubt, you will realise that it's as vast and limitless as immense, empty space. How could there be for and against, inside and outside?"

The Way is our own everyday mind. It knows no limit. It can only welcome the ten thousand things that arise within it. It accords naturally with all situations which are [in fact] nothing other than its very own activity.
