

## Zoom Zazen - Saturday 8 July 2023

*"Straight ahead," continues Master Wanshi, "not separated by the smallest atom, our naturally enlightened buddha-mind merges with the original source. "*

It is impossible for the rational, dualistic 'me' [self], identified with an ephemeral body-mind, to see and awaken to the truth. No understanding born of an intellect limited by words can lead us to the truth of the mystery of the fact of being. It does not depend on time or on all the efforts we make to approach it. The practise of zazen gently invites us to penetrate this mystery, in other words, to live totally at the heart of our own Presence. It is a way of taking refuge where the three times cease, where the silence of our mind welcomes the ten thousand things of our life.

The Buddha calls this refuge Emptiness, the Unborn, Suchness, the summit of Reality.

We must therefore experience emptiness within our experience of forms. It is in the body itself that we must recognise emptiness. It is enough, beyond any attempt at naming, to remain with the feeling of sensations, the hearing of perceptions, the welcoming space of every thought. There is no struggle to engage in, nor any effort to take refuge in our gaze, That which contemplates the passing of the ten thousand things. We simply stay where the three times cease and all is One.

This is truly what the *Hannya Shingyo Sutra* or the *Lankavatara Sutra* want to make clear to us:

*"Form and emptiness are not different, nor is birthlessness. We must not believe in their differentness, because this feeds the errors of all views."*

When the governor of Lang asked him what the Way consisted of, Yakusan Igen pointed towards the sky, then downwards, indicating a jug of water beside him. The governor asked him to explain. Yakusan replied: *"A cloud in the sky, water in the jug."*

*Ku is shiki and shiki is Ku. What could be simpler?*

Master Wanshi began his *"Advice for Practice"* by telling us about the field of Emptiness. In order to reside in this clear and radiant field, we must purify, heal, grind down or let go of all the negative tendencies that we have transformed into behavioural habits since the dawn of time. Meditation allows us to see how these habits are embedded in our minds, in particular the habit of systematically putting words and judgements on things. Freed from [such] habits, we can penetrate the reality that is revealed at every moment in the silence of our body-mind. That's the task!

Master Wanshi continues: *"Emptiness is without characteristic. There can be no dust such as the emotions in Awakening. Its brilliant and profoundly tranquil light mysteriously puts an end to all defilement. (This is the zazen of the Buddhas, our zazen this morning) It is in this way that the 'me' [self] is instantly dissolved and that we can recognise ourselves. We have all always possessed this field of emptiness, for it is our own essence, the very space of our mind, ourselves."*

So why don't we see this obvious fact, even after having contemplated the wall for years?

*"Simply," says Master Wanshi, "because we spend many lives creating an infinite number of projects and situations in our minds from our doubts, our dependencies and the confusion of our illusions."*

*"So, let your Wisdom unfold freely on a limitless journey, forgetting all merit and all desire for reward."*

During zazen we can experience and understand that it is in the *here and now* that the three times cease. It's *here* that each of us can let the Great Wisdom that is always already there, in our own mind, unfold and flood it with the light of Awakening. Our job as human beings is to recognise ourselves in this originally-awakened mind.