

Zoom Zazen - Saturday 15 July 2023

In an earlier *kusen*, I quoted Master Ta Mei talking about our own mind:

"If you want to know the truth," he said, "know your own mind. The source of your mind is the entire universe."

The source of our mind is within the field of emptiness. This is also what the Great Wisdom, *Hannya* is. When we speak of 'Great Wisdom', we mean Absolute Reality, synonymous with Emptiness, with Original Mind, with Buddha.

Great Wisdom is also the *Prajnaparamita*, which brings together all the Buddha's teachings. And it is equally the case that the practice of this Wisdom, the sixth *paramita*, forms the basis of all the other bodhisattva practices. Great Wisdom, *Prajna*, is inseparable from *Dhyana*, the zazen of the Buddhas.

To know the truth is to know Great Wisdom and that is to know one's *own* mind. This is what we attain at the heart of the practice of zazen.

Our own Mind is the Way itself. It is Great Wisdom. It is *Buddha*.

Remember what Master Nansen said to his disciples:

"Heijō shin kore dō - Your everyday mind is the Way."

Master Isan, in his temple, gave his monks a teaching that can also help us to understand profoundly what our mind is, through stopping our search among concepts, ideas and illusions:

"What are you looking for when you come here? If you want to become a Buddha, then know that you are already a Buddha. (This is what all the masters repeat, over and over again: 'All beings are Buddha')

"Why are you running here and there like a thirsty deer chasing after a mirage? How is that going to achieve anything? You want to be a Buddha, but you don't recognise that your contradictory, upside-down ideas, your illusory understanding, your mind that attaches itself to innumerable things, to purity, to defilement - is this very mind which is the authentic, originally-awakened mind. Why are you searching elsewhere?"

Yes, why go looking somewhere *outside* for what is already here, in this zazen where the three times [past, present & future] cease? In the ungraspable here-and-now, the very silence of our mind is the empty field where the ten thousand things arise.

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

"Sincerely let go of [all] your stratagems and shoulder your [own] responsibilities. Having turned-around towards yourself, in total acceptance of what you are, walk the Way - and a marvellous spiritual energy will completely fill you. Engage with¹ phenomena with unreserved sincerity and don't look for the slightest atom of dust outside yourself."

Master Wanshi tells us that our true nature is just *as it is right now* and that to go looking for it is an illusory undertaking. The moment in which we recognise and *realise* Great Wisdom, can only be *right now*. To sit down and let ourselves be - just as we are - is to accept our [own] responsibility. This means understanding that our very search for the truth is what makes us awaken. Trust in your zazen practice to teach you the Great Wisdom that goes beyond.

Master Obaku says:

"To understand that there is really nothing to find is what we call 'to be sitting in the place [midst] of the Way'. This place of the Way is just the absence of opinions."

"Innumerable fragments of knowledge will never be worth as much as the [complete] absence of effort in searching; this [absence] is what we'd do much better to strive for. The man² of the Way is not busy and has, to tell the truth, neither any special feeling nor any truth to bestow."

¹ literally, *live out*

² or, of course, *woman*