

Zoom Zazen - Saturday 29 Jul 2023

Master Wanshi's advice is becoming more and more subtle, and explaining it to you can only be a suggestion that you must verify and deepen for yourself at the heart of your practice of the Samadhi of zazen (*Zanmai*).

Listen carefully to what he says:

"The Way goes through the empty centre of the circle. It is there that it reaches emptiness, where all appearances are forgotten."

The circle is the Ring of the Way, with neither beginning nor end. And it is at the centre of this empty circle, that Presence abides, [the place] where our life arises and fades away. When we hold ourselves in this empty centre, we understand that only the present moment is real. Let's look closely.

Zen is nothing other than living this present totally, savouring it with all our senses, letting go of any desire to grasp it. At the centre of this circle, there is nothing, neither appearances nor illusions. It is simply our mind itself, where everything is just as it is, free and pure. The total unity between ourselves and the world of phenomena is restored. The 'me', with its compulsive desire to divide, control and its wish to manifest, has disappeared.

In this Samadhi (*Zanmai*) of our practice where everything is unity, there is nothing more than Great Wisdom (the empty circle without boundary) which welcomes into its light all the manifestations that occur within it. It is sufficient to itself, because it is the only reality. This is what is called in the language of Zen: ***Jijuyū Zanmai***.

It's a good thing to provide a brief explanation of this saying about ***Jijuyū Zanmai***. It is a fundamental concept if we're truly to understand the Zen we practise.

In ancient Buddhism, the Buddha Vairocana, became with time the first of the five transcendental [Cosmic] Buddhas, that's to say the original Buddha. He is often depicted performing the mudra (gesture) of Supreme Wisdom. His symbols are the Wheel of the Law and the sun. The sun illuminates all beings without making any distinction between them. Vairocana, this unlimited sun, shines in our own posture. And when the light of his Wisdom shines like this, it lights up our whole inner world. This is what it means to enjoy the benefits of our own practice. When ***Jijuyū*** Samadhi (*Zanmai*) unfolds in our practice of zazen, in our body-mind, we experience Supreme Wisdom and joy.

Jijuyū is the practice-realisation that is sufficient unto itself.

But Vairocana, at the heart of our own mind, also "externally" illuminates beings and lavishes his teachings on them through the very light of his own Dharma body. This is ***Tajuyū***, and in this sense, our practice is the light that illuminates others and enables them to taste the joy of realisation. ***Tajuyū*** is the pure expression of the bodhisattva of compassion that we [ourselves] are.

Here's what Master Rinzai says about ***Jijuyu***:

"If you want to become like the Buddhas and Patriarchs, look for nothing outside yourself. The pure light of your own mind is nothing other than the Buddha's Dharma body."

Master Wanshi adds:

*"When the original light of Vairocana shines, thousands of worlds appear. Each thing in the universe is nothing other than the realm of ***Jijuyu*** of my own nature, and the essential reason for it."*

Things appear in our mind for no other reason than to be seen in their purity and their original light. That's just how it is. There is, in fact, no-one at the centre of the empty circle. And to find yourself there, to understand and see this, is to realise ***Jijuyū Zanmai***.

For Master Dogen, our inner light, that of Vairocana, is the force that pulls us towards our realisation:

"It is from our practice alone that realisation arises. Our true Treasure does not come from outside. Realisation comes through practice. I've never heard of anyone who achieved the slightest realisation without practice."

To describe the realisation of zazen, Master Wanshi writes:

"Your pure and supreme nature shines forth, radiant simply with its own light."

It's simple. Everything is always already there, shining with the light that is none other than the light of our own mind.
