

## Zoom Zazen - Saturday 2 September 2023

*"If you really appreciate the true value of a single ray of light, then your Eye can adapt well to the world and its changes. See things clearly, don't let yourself be fooled, and the ten thousand circumstances won't be able to mislead you."*

Master Wanshi means that to appreciate a single ray of sunlight, or any other object, you have to really look at it. And for that there is no other way than to be one with what we are looking at. Our Eye is in fact never two with what it is looking at, consciously or unconsciously. But we are often unaware of what we are looking at because the discriminating mind obstructs direct vision. Our practice teaches us not to lose our way. It is therefore necessary to see and understand clearly the distance that this discriminating mind imagines and imposes by seeking to name, by comparing the present with the uncertain memory of past experiences.

*"To awaken," says the Buddha, "means that everything is seen in the intrinsic emptiness of its nature, its elusive miracle. Names and words are merely incidental. To be in that state which sees no division, no duality, is enlightenment."*

We can think that this is what happened when *Mahakashyapa* smiled as he looked at the flower that the Buddha was turning between his fingers: *Mahakashyapa* was looking at the flower and the flower was looking at *Mahakashyapa*. No distance, no ulterior motive, no 'me' [self]. Only the inaccessible, ungraspable present moment when the vision unfolds. Absolute calm, beyond words.

During zazen, we look within ourselves at the appearance of thoughts. We don't try to prevent them from appearing, but we create within ourselves the habit of not following and nurturing them; we see the sunbeam in its silent, luminous simplicity, illuminating the swirls of dust; we listen to the sounds of the world around us in immediate listening; we feel and taste the magical complexity of sensations. All this speaks to us of the non-duality of silence and light, of emptiness and presence, of That which perceives with that which is perceived.

When we let the conscious mind get involved in fictional stories and dreams of achievement, we fall into duality, and in this way we can see how we sow the seeds of dualistic suffering.

*"Venerable audience," said Master Eno, the 6th Patriarch, "let your mind reside in the boundless field of emptiness, without being attached to the idea of emptiness. Let it function freely."*

*"Whether you are active or at rest, let your mind reside nowhere. Forget all discrimination between the wise and the ignorant, all distinctions between pros and cons. With your mind present to the world and attuned to the course of things, you will then dwell in perpetual peace."*

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