

## Zoom Zazen - Saturday 14th October 2023

*"The whole of nature is born at each moment.  
The whole of nature dies at each moment."*

This is something said by Master Engo Kokugon, which Master Dogen quotes in his chapter *Zenki* and from which he draws inspiration to encourage us to focus our attention, during zazen, as in everyday life, on the absolute reality of the present moment. The present moment, however, cannot be grasped, at one and the same time existing and non-existing - but it is the place where things are simultaneously manifested and reabsorbed: it is the Source. To return to the Source is our practice and the very aim of our ephemeral existence. It is Awakening to reality and understanding the meaning of our existence.

*"In Awakening," continues Master Wanshi, "the six senses, their six faculties and their six objects are transcended. Freed from passions, with all resistance gone, the understanding of what lies beyond is no longer limited. Perfect and brilliant, this understanding is freed from the ten thousand illusory reflections and can no longer be mistaken. Then, in every speck of dust, infinite possibilities are revealed."*

This understanding, which is Awakening, is not intellectual. It is beyond words. It reveals itself to our eyes in the silence of the mind, in the absence of the 'me' [the self]. And for this reason, Master Wanshi calls it *Mokusho*, silent illumination, which is sufficient unto itself. It is light, spontaneously shining without any cause and flooding the space of our mind, with which it perfectly coincides. It is nothing other than our posture of zazen, silent, alive, vibrant, shining in Presence.

We may think that this understanding, which is illumination, is not accessible to us, but this is just yet another thought. As we are now, sitting on this zafu, we are reality, the Awakening that reveals itself while fading away. Nothing can be anything other than the reality of Awakening, eternal impermanence. And each speck of dust, shining in the sunlight, is the manifestation of Awakening in the form of a speck of dust.

*"Sit down and be calm within yourself," says Master Dogen, "look at and reflect on what is happening within you at this very moment. Can we not say, yes or no, that all the things that are present are connected, and are all connected with life?"*

*"There is not a single moment, not a single thing that is separate from life. There is not a single phenomenon, not a single thought, not a single speck of dust that is separate from life."*

Life springs from the Source at each moment and plays the symphony of birth and death. Samadhi is the realisation of this intimate, intensely-close unity with life, body and mind abandoned. We then understand that we have never been apart from Awakening. It is the very breath of our breathing. It is every blink of our eye, every thought that is born and disappears, each speck of dust that shines in the sunlight of our mind.

Master Wanshi concludes this last passage on the return to the Source with these words:

*"Unendingly, all the doors of Awakening open majestically in a hundred thousand samadhis, and all the dharmas, the phenomena, are accomplished. All you have to do is welcome them all together and harmonise with them. To reach this moment out of time, you must return to the Source and place yourself at the service of the Patriarchs. Be in unity with them, examine yourself minutely and move forward."*

The Buddha said to Subhuti:<sup>1</sup>

*"In Supreme and Perfect Awakening, O Subhuti, one acquires absolutely nothing, and that is why it is called Supreme and Perfect Awakening."*

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<sup>1</sup> In the *Diamond Sutra*