

Emptiness has no form. It is therefore not visible to our eyes. However, it permeates all things and is at the same time both their source and their ultimate peacefulness [relief]. We have the ability to become aware of it, which Master Wanshi calls "to observe Buddha".

The Mahâyâna presents *Sunyata*, emptiness, as the principle common to all opposites: all forms are emptiness and emptiness is all forms. This is explained and summarised in the *Hannya Shingyo* sutra. When we see the world - inner and outer - we see emptiness in their indivisible unity.

The true nature of the world of phenomena is *Sunyata*, which means "the peacefulness of multiplicity". No multiplicity, i.e. no concept, no formulation, and includes the expression "non-being", can express the true nature of the world, buddha-nature. To understand emptiness by means of *Prajna* wisdom means to realise Nirvana. This is the understanding that zazen offers us when we live fully the ungraspable Presence filled with our evanescent sensations, our momentary perceptions and our ephemeral thoughts.

This is what Master Wanshi is also trying to tell us when he writes that "*Supreme emptiness crosses billions of years of dust.*" It's like saying that Presence is each and every thing that is revealed at each moment. It's like understanding that the luminous dust that twirls in a ray of light is also light.

Master Wanshi explains:

"Emptiness is like an energy that swirls around and transforms every misunderstanding. It is full of dignity and relies on nothing but itself. It radiates beyond all uncertainty. It maintains itself in its own absolute truth. It moves through the world, facing up to every situation. It is the effortless Awakening that unfolds without leaving any trace.

To talk about emptiness is as difficult as describing the colour of the sky. It's blue, that's all there is to it! But as emptiness is our own nature, our very mind, we

have a spontaneous intuitive understanding of it, if we turn our gaze inward toward ourselves. It's simply to understand with our body and our intuition that the stars and galaxies we see in the night sky can only ever be seen in our own Mind.

We who follow a meditative path have a tendency to make buddha-nature into a goal to be attained. Master Wanshi tries to explain to us how to observe Buddha. He tells us that Buddha *is* reality, emptiness itself illuminating the dust of the world without itself ever becoming dusty. It is the very quality of our mind that is unaffected, in its purity, by the whirlwinds of thoughts and the multitude of perceptions that it welcomes and allows to pass through.

In describing the vision of emptiness as being Nirvana, the Buddha tells us:

"You cannot have Nirvana outside the world. Their identity is the truth of reality. The wise man lives this truth at the same time as he works for good. Without ever deviating from the understanding of the truth, he sees that all things are devoid of any entity or existence in themselves, and he encourages all beings to free themselves from the concept of the 'me' [self].

"Emptiness means emptiness of all notions and presumptions. Empty of any presumption, the world is like a magical creation, the body is a miracle and wisdom is a wonder. They are magical in their coming into existence and passing away. Everything that has an existence and an end within time is illusory and magical. Only nirvana has neither beginning nor end; it is by its very nature reality, without error, beyond illusion."

Nirvana is the intimate and total recognition, in body and mind, that each one of us *is* Buddha. So let's look deeply into ourselves, just as we are.
