

Zoom Zazen, 9th December 2023

It's really difficult to accept that our practice and all the efforts we make to be a good person, a good bodhisattva, don't seem to bring us any immediate merit. The person we think we are, and call "me", is not motivated by non-profit, which Zen calls *mushotoku*. Our system of thinking about the world, of engaging in our relationships, has been conditioned since birth by the notion of *profit*, of *retribution*. We have the greatest difficulty in becoming aware of this conditioning. The idea of profit, born of the poison of greed, constantly underlies our hundreds of activities, without us even realising it. And this makes us dependent on the idea of satisfaction, of reward, of an imaginary result, thus depriving us of our original freedom.

Can we see the futility of the illusion produced by the poison of greed? It blocks our path to independence, to the joy of being, and simply enjoying our true nature.

Can we admit that because of our continual and haphazard involvement in the play of phenomena, our addictive greed and our continual desire for possession, we allow the false illusion of the fictitious 'me' [self] to lead us away from the truth of ourselves, plunging us into frustration? This is what we need to be aware of during zazen as we contemplate that which appears and disappears.

There's a kind of blind absurdity that consumes us inside. We won't see it as long as we remain dependent on the puppet of our 'me', manipulated by the strings of our conditioning.

During zazen, we must go where there is neither blame nor reward, good nor evil, movement nor rest. This is where the posture of the Buddhas naturally leads us. We take this backward step, abandoning our addiction to trying to grab hold of whatever comes our way. We return directly and naturally to this motionless silence, in the middle of the circle from which the light of our own Presence streams forth, pure awareness of the presence of self.

Master Wanshi tells us, *"You will be free and perfect if you abandon any idea of obtaining merit."*

It's by returning to the centre of our vision that we can see the ever-greater subtlety behind things. We become aware of what the brilliant Source is. It is our own Mind, in which appear: beings, situations and phenomena. We can finally understand and experience the fundamental unity of our Mind, our true Self, with all existences and all phenomena.

Births and deaths are spontaneous and their play, which has no beginning and no end, teaches us *mushotoku*, the original non-profit that is played out in the whole of nature. From zazen, we can understand the misunderstanding and misguidance that greed produces through our attachment to 'me' and mine.

"Then, when you can merge without the self with all things," Master Wanshi continues, "you can face all situations, and you then possess the immaculate seal that certifies the ten thousand forms."

Mushotoku is the non-doing of zazen. It is also *Muga*, without me, not me. This is what we practise now, in our very posture, in this openness where nothing is needed to prove that we are. We listen to the sounds of life, without adding either comments or judgements. *Nyoze*; it is what it is!

Let Master Wanshi's words flow in the silence of your mind, without even trying to understand them with other words.

"Crossing worlds, united with causes and conditions, in joy you can meet Samadhi at the very heart of illusions. See and accept the raison d'être of these illusions, which is to sweep away your 'me' so that you are no longer filled with, or dependent on it."
