

## Zoom Zazen - Saturday 6 Jan 2024

*"Wonder of wonders," exclaimed the Buddha at the time of his Awakening, "all beings are the pure nature of Awakening. The ten thousand things, all the flowers, trees, rocks, rivers, everything shines with a dazzling light. How fresh everything is!"*

In the *Mahayana*, the world of forms and the ten thousand things is no more stable or meaningful than an optical illusion or a hallucination. Like a dream! A dream that has no substance and is therefore also the symbol of emptiness. A dream that shines in its own right.

To see that everything is a dream, neither illusion nor emptiness and yet both illusion and emptiness, is to realise the pure nature of Awakening.

*"This Awakening," says Master Dogen, "is the dazzling light that floods each of the countless blades of grass."*

It is the light of Awakening, immaterial, timeless, that shines and reveals to us what this dream of beings is, the ten thousand things and the multitude of blades of grass. Like the projector light that animates the film and that we forget as we watch the characters move across the screen.

Life is a dream. The whole event is this dream. Human beings are busy with the ten thousand things, and their entire activity is nothing other than a dream within the dream that is Awakening itself.

Each one of us can become aware, in our own meditation, of the attractive force of the dream, and of its power over our existence. Human beings never stop wanting to realise their dreams, within the dream of life. Dreams are free-floating, fanciful, fleeting and, through rigorous observation, with the gaze of zazen, we understand that they are conditioned by the passions and fears that inhabit us. And even though we can see their empty and illusory nature, we nonetheless allow them to influence our actions and relationships thoughtlessly, to the point of suffering.

It is said that dreams have meaning. It's the job of some therapists to encourage their patients to discover this. But is there anything that can give meaning to our dreams?

In general, our dreams are about ourselves, about fulfilling our own desires.

But would it be possible to welcome others into our dream and transform it into an offering to them? To dream of giving others what is good for them, what they hope for without even being aware of it. Wouldn't this be giving the dream a real purpose, to dispel the blindness that reigns in Samsara and from which we all suffer?

We can do this. It's what Buddhas and bodhisattvas do. This is what the Prajnaparamita expresses in this quotation:

*"The bodhisattva works in the dream. Even if the Perfection of Wisdom (Prajnaparamita) does not recognise its own existence, it can nevertheless be realised. It is like a dream that reveals no dharma and yet presents itself everywhere before our eyes. "*

So can we dream without lying to ourselves or to others? Can we dream without imagining or wanting anything for ourselves? To dream so that peace and love extinguish the fire of passions and illusory wars? To put an end to pointless suffering?

For our dream to become Buddha's dream and encompass all beings, we must recognise our own limitless Mind. It is neither inside nor outside us, neither below nor beyond, neither before nor after, but it is in it that the dream appears and that we become aware of it. In this dream, it is the Buddhas who explain to beings what the dream of the Awakening of the Ten Thousand Things is. And it is also all the Buddhas, no doubt about it, who come to whisper to our minds, at the heart of zazen, the words of love that we are going to say to others, the words that can extinguish the fire of passions and calm the boiling of unhealthy emotions. Let's open wide the eyes, ears, nose and hands of our mind.

So, in this New Year, let us have the wisdom and courage to express and teach the dream of the Buddhas to all beings for their own good. By putting our whole heart into it, this dream will become the dream of peace that we will share with them, all together.

Like the Buddha, we will then be able to say:

*"All beings are the pure nature of Enlightenment. The ten thousand things, all the flowers, trees, rocks, rivers - everything shines with the dazzling light of Awakening."*

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