

We'll leave the start of this kusen to Master Bankei:

"You are all originally Buddhas. It is not through your practice that you will become Buddhas for the first time, for there is not an iota of error in your original mind. But if you harbour even the slightest desire to be better than you are, and if you engage in even the slightest pursuit of anything, you are already going against the original Mind."

What our Masters teach us is that any desire to seek or any practice with a view to obtaining an imagined awakening is opposed to the vision, to the recognition of what we originally are.

It is by abandoning all personal will that we put an end to the dualism that creates division. Then the idea of a separation between our original nature and what we are in our everyday lives disappears. As human beings, we have the incredible privilege of being aware of and living the mystery of being just as we are. So it's pointless trying to awaken ourselves to a reality from which we might be separated.

We don't need to get a 'ticket' for Awakening; we're already part of it. We are both the author and the actor of this performance, a show called "Presence without a person". Zazen confronts us with the paradox of seeing the reality of things in a now that slips away every moment. But zazen also provides an instant answer: there's nothing to do, just remain open to immediate perception.

It's enough to observe the impermanence of everything that makes up the world of phenomena, from our Eye Treasure. We see the flow of the creation which is the form of original nature awakening to itself. And we can see that, as soon as we seek to grasp, to pursue, to refuse, we turn off the light of our perceptive mind and we become blind.

The fundamental principle of Buddhism is called 'Presence', with an equally powerful subtitle: 'non-duality'. Non-dual presence and nothing else. This is *Shikantaza*, our zazen practice, formulated in the *Hannya Shingyo Sutra* as *Ku soku ze shiki* and *Shiki soku ze Ku*. It is this absolute principle that all our Masters want us to understand and realise. Truth is not an idea, it is a Presence.

Master Eno tells us:

"Venerable audience, the original nature that we all possess, and the fact of recognising it in ourselves, which is the very essence of Zen, cannot accommodate oppositions such as 'for' and 'against', 'eternal' and 'timeless', 'interior' and 'exterior', 'material' and 'spiritual'. All dualism breeds confusion."

The bodhisattva Vimalakirti explains in a few words how to realise this fundamental principle of non-dualism, which underpins the truth of Buddhism:

"To enter into non-duality is to exclude all speech; to say nothing about any form, any dharma, to express nothing, to pronounce nothing, to indicate nothing. To put an end to the idea of an inside and an outside, both of which do not exist!"

Discussion in silence is the supreme discussion. There is no one speaking and no one listening. This is the zazen of the Buddhas. It is the truth of the mystery of being, of the unknowable.

Nothing is missing, nothing is in excess.

Before the curtain falls, before everything is extinguished, it is the changing clouds that make the sky beautiful when the sun sets or when the moon appears.
