

Zoom Zazen, Saturday 3rd February 2024

We return to the teachings of Master Wanshi.

Today's teachings are simple and don't really need much comment. But we need to hear them again, because they are what we need to develop in our practice:

"Study the Buddha deeply," he says. "Look for what is infinitely subtle in the teachings of the masters of his lineage."

Clarify what your own mind is and immerse yourself in it. Walking silently in the silence of contemplation, grasp what the source of the Dharma is.

Don't be narrow-minded. If you try to split hairs, you will create limitations and obstacles. Be magnanimous, beyond appearances."

Is it so difficult to be the Buddha we are?

When we go beyond thoughts, into the very space that contains them, we find an immensity that is none other than our own mind, our unlimited nature that allows the world to be contemplated. This is the Buddha.

The entire universe is given to us at every moment, but all too often we prefer to busy ourselves in pointless activities, in a fever that is frequently painful. And this hides from us the Buddha that we are.

When our contemplation becomes deep and silent, no longer interested in the theatrics and limitations of the 'me' [self], time finds itself reduced to the beauty of each moment. It is like flowing water, elusive yet eternal. The river of time becomes the mirror in which the ten thousand things are reflected, and this is what the Buddhas rapturously contemplate. For time, like a fairytale setting, never ceases to vanish, only to blossom anew.

We can only contemplate this continual blooming by remaining totally open to the appearance and disappearance of things, at the very heart of birth and death. Zazen means to create this openness that spontaneously allows the Buddha to appear. The doors of our mind open onto the ungraspable reality of the Buddhas.

The Buddha offers us these words, recorded in the *Prajnaparamita*:

"There is the door that opens onto the view of the essence devoid of essence, onto that which is the true nature of the world.

And there is the wonderful door that opens on an intensity of sights and sounds, colours and beauty.

And there is the door of harmony¹ and well-being, through which we look respectfully at all the limitless structures of the world as we gaze at the star-studded night sky.

And there is the door of exquisite happiness, which would never wish to possess any worldly treasure or even to possess this happiness itself.

Finally, there is the door to complete awakening."

In reality, all these doors are already wide open. We cross the threshold every time we sit down in self-forgetfulness. Then, beyond appearances, our nature harmonises with the ten thousand things, and the least of these things reveals completely that which is Buddha.

¹ or... balance, stability, tranquillity