

Zoom Zazen, Saturday 1 June 2024

In previous *kusen*, reference is often made to the "Treasure of the Eye" to designate that which - within us - sees the impermanence of things and becomes aware of their empty nature. That which within us looks, is also what we call *buddha-nature*, our true identity.

Attempting to explain what the Eye-Treasure is an undertaking that cannot be achieved with words, simply because *It* is their source. The Buddha and the masters only spoke of it using koans, images and metaphors. In fact, they spoke to us only of *That*, with all sorts of associations of images, negations, strange or even paradoxical answers in order to get our minds to surrender before the impasse of language and definitions.

For us to take refuge in the luminous silence that cures the blindness of ignorance!

One day Master Hogen was cleaning the ground around a spring that was flowing with difficulty because it had filled up with sand. He said to the monk who was with him: *"The Eye of Wisdom has closed because it is blocked. Tell me: when the eyes that see truth are closed, what blocks them?"*

The monk remained silent.

Master Hogen replied in his place: *"They are blocked by the eyes."*

The spring that Master Hogen was cleaning was blocked by sand, and in the same way our Treasure of the Eye, our Eye of wisdom, is covered by the veil of illusion, obstructed by the fascination that the multiplicity of things exerts on us. This continual capture-grasping of our gaze and attention draws us further and further away from the truth, hiding it behind the shabby cloak of our desires, our conditioned needs and our addictions. We mistakenly think that everything we see and perceive is true, when in fact it's just an unceasing mirage of appearances and disappearances, a shimmering without substance.

The Buddha says :

"For the person who is still full of desires or who still aspires to be this or that, teaching about what things really are is not a path to enlightenment."

The eyes that block the vision of truth are the ones we have in the middle of our face. These are the eyeballs, the instruments of the organ of vision. When these eyes come into contact with objects and shapes, this contact produces a sensation. Depending on whether the sensations are pleasant or unpleasant, they are grasped or rejected, and this judgement blocks the inner vision of our Eye-Treasure, and therefore the vision of our resplendent empty nature.

The Buddha explains:

"When an eye and a form are present, when there is contact, awareness of vision arises. This awareness produces sensation and what is felt is processed by thought."

And what is processed by thought is projected outwards as the external world."

When our eyes grasp the ten thousand things, we create and project the world outside ourselves, while making the mistake of believing that it is real. This is what blocks our Eye of Wisdom.

That's why Master Hogen was cleaning the sand around the Source! Our only important task in this life is to open our Eye of Wisdom!

Because, as the Buddha says:

"By looking at the world from the Eye of Wisdom, everyone can enter, in their own way, into the intrinsic emptiness of their nature, that elusive miracle that is uncreated and unconditioned reality."

The immediate daily task of the buddhas is to sweep the ground around the source, so that it flows freely. This is how we should practise, with total attention that opens our Eye of Wisdom.
