

Zoom Zazen Saturday 24 August 2024

During zazen, there is no point in trying to make yourself empty, otherwise you are manipulating yourself. Any search for a special state during zazen is an error of appreciation and understanding. We simply observe that thoughts take us away from our presence and we let them go just as they came: like that, appearing-disappearing.

When we notice that thoughts are invading us, we simply need to return to feeling our body. Don't let our inner space fill up with constant thoughts. We feel the weight of our body on the zafu; we feel our back which rises naturally or we feel if we are making an effort to sit up straight. We observe whether there is tension, heat, energy or some other sensation. Feeling naturally brings us back to Presence.

If we find it difficult to stay present, we need to turn our attention more subtly to a part of the body. For example, the hands, feeling them in their most delicate sensations. And if we find it hard to feel, closing our eyes will help us to go inward, without getting caught up in dreams or sleepiness.

We should maintain our perception of sensations and move gently towards That which perceives them. Let yourself be absorbed by this samadhi that the Buddha calls "pure awareness of self". Only Presence. This is the zazen-samadhi of which Master Hakuin says:

"Zazen-samadhi is the path that liberates, the pure Mahayana beyond all praise, the observance of the precepts itself, the unreserved practice of the paramitas, the heart of repentance. The benefits are countless and produce the path to a right living. There is nothing more precious, nothing more important than maintaining authentic awareness of this zazen-samadhi.

Try not to interrupt the maintenance of authentic consciousness while walking, standing, sitting or lying down. In all places, think carefully about at what moment you have lost authentic consciousness, and at what moment you have not lost it."

Maitre Deshimaru told us all the time that zazen is the greatest of the precepts. It is from practice without a goal that the understanding comes of what is real and what is not, of that which is Buddha and of what is the illusion that hides it.

It is with the mind of zazen that we must practise the precepts and the paramitas: this is the pure Mahayana, the Great Vehicle that contains all beings and carries them across to the other shore.

The Great Vehicle is great because it includes all beings and the entire universe. It transcends all personal practice. It is zazen without condition, without contradiction: there is no longer any object, no longer any subject. Just Presence. And in this Presence, the whole universe appears.

"It is impossible to grasp this in words, because the Great Vehicle neither comes nor goes," said the Buddha. It neither remains nor passes away. It is not an idea or even the absence of an idea. It neither begins nor ends. And yet each moment reveals it."

Zazen-samadhi, just presence to oneself, a presence that includes others, the world. Buddha reveals himself in this body. We are in our own home, in the Self, in the samadhi of the present moment. Awakening awakens to itself.

Man Shan said:

"The whole world is in the eye of the monk, the whole world is in my illumination, the whole world does not appear outside my presence, and this I verify and I know at every moment."

The path that liberates is zazen-samadhi, the pure Mahayana, the observance of the precepts, repentance, the practice of the paramitas, the path of a correct life. Its benefits are countless.

We can see flowing out the source of zazen-samadhi within our own Mind.
