

Zoom Zazen 28 September 2024

The practice of zazen has stirred many unmoving practitioners when, one day, they come to sit in the calm of the dojo. Almost all of them say that they felt something indefinable. For the first time, they had the feeling of "touching" within themselves the essence of life, of being in touch with the immensity of the space of silence and of having found what they had always been looking for and waiting for. That's what many people say. Then the years have gone by and many of them have become caught up in the current of life, to the point of forgetting that first call of the mind of Awakening.

In order not to ignore this call, we must agree to let zazen direct our lives, freeing us from any idea of a goal that the illusory 'me' [self] might imagine. Our practice must exhaust this insatiable 'me' [self], which is always greedy and frustrated. We can see how we continue to nurture it by believing it to be true, even while we understand that it is always striving towards an imaginary future, getting tangled up in unrealistic scenarios and remaining blind to its neurotic addictions.

Zazen opens up the space of our mind so that we can realise that this is truly the interplay of impermanence, karma and the illusion of the self. This opening occurs naturally when we give up our attachment to the mistaken idea of being the 'me' [self] who is going to find the opening to Awakening. We stop waiting and projecting ourselves elsewhere than where we simply are. We become the Treasure of the Eye that gazes upon impermanence without judging it, without grasping it and without wanting to change it.

Master Wanshi gives us this advice:

"To sit is simply to be like the great ocean that takes in hundreds of rivers while retaining its own unique flavour. To move forward freely is similar to the movement of the great tides driven by the wind, reaching the shore together. How could they fail to reach the original source? How could they not realise the great work that is unfolding before our eyes?"

The whole of nature is perfect. It does not depend on our acceptance or opposition. When we stop identifying with the perishable body, everything that is inside and outside of us joins the movement of the rivers flowing towards the great ocean. Even if we don't always understand that our identification with the body is a mistaken belief, our most important interest must be to realise our true nature and to return to the source, to be in harmony with the ten thousand things.

To know our true nature means to return to the truth that sustains all life. This is what we must recognise, within ourselves, by understanding that the game of creation is just a disappearing apparition that is born in the heart of our perception and immediately disappears there. That which within us sees and knows this is our true nature, the Treasure of the Eye. There is nothing else to do but contemplate the movement of the tides as they are driven by the winds. Zazen offers us nothing else.

Master Wanshi concludes his remarks with this statement:

"The monk who wears the kesa follows movements and responds to change in total harmony.

What's more, aren't you the very person whose mind created all the conditioned illusions? You must integrate this idea perfectly."

We have created within ourselves the illusion by which our suffering is produced. It is therefore up to us to see clearly and to put an end to the causes and conditions which are at the origin of the perpetual wandering that is Samsara.

"Look clearly and directly into yourself," says the Buddha. "You can be skillful at untangling knots, but if you don't see the knots within yourself, how will you be able to undo them? Don't stay trapped in time and space. This is the way to free yourself from the material world and the attachments it generates."