

## Zoom Zazen Saturday 9 November 2024

There is once again mention of *Samādhi* in Wanshi's comments.

In India, the word *Samādhi* commonly refers to a grave or tombstone, the place of endless rest. But the term *Samādhi* also refers to the highest level of human consciousness that a being can realise.

The word *Samādhi* is composed of "*sama*" meaning equanimity and "*dhi*" meaning the capacity for intelligence linked to reflection and discrimination. When the meditator reaches this state of balanced intelligence or wisdom, we speak of *Samādhi*.

In Buddhism, *Samādhi* is that moment, out of time, when there is no separation between ourselves and zazen. Living this *Samādhi* means that there is nothing left for us to rest on, nor any place to dwell. It means feeling at one with all that *is*. It is not linked to causes and conditions, it *is*.

During zazen, we experience this *Samādhi* when we no longer attempt to voluntarily turn away from thoughts and images and sensations, nor to grasp them, nor to remain in them. There is no idea of reaching or concentrating or looking for anything. There is no one. *Samādhi* is non-attachment par excellence.

As Master Ryokan told us last week, *Samādhi* means obeying the truth of the present moment by letting yourself go with the flow and being carried along by it. Those who abandon everything and embrace the following of the Buddha-Way are [traditionally] called '*stream-entrants*'.

*"At the very moment when Samādhi is realised,"* says Master Wanshi, *"and there is unity with all dust, all phenomena, then all Samādhis become one Samādhi, and everything becomes as clear as the ocean-seal."*

In the Chinese Buddhist schools, when people spoke of the "*ocean-seal*"; they meant the ultimate knowledge of what *Thusness* is, the pure nature of things. When the flood of illusions dries up, the mind regains its luminous clarity, and from It and in It the multiplicity of myriad forms appears spontaneously and simultaneously. This is how it is with the ocean: as soon as the wind blows, the waves appear and as soon as [the wind] calms down, the ocean calms down and all forms can be reflected in it.

Master Dogen said:

*"To be a Buddha and a true Zen practitioner, it is essential to live the Samādhi of the ocean-seal."*

Let's not think that this kusen is talking about something that doesn't concern us. Master Wanshi and Master Dogen, speaking of the *Samādhi* of the ocean-seal, are trying to make the Inexpressible accessible to our understanding, because it is This that constitutes the heart of our zazen practice, of our very existence.

*"So,"* continues Master Wanshi, *"study the ocean-seal in all directions as if you were intensely examining a pearl between your fingers (a reference to Master Gensha, who constantly repeated that the whole universe is one bright pearl); abandon everything completely and be One with everything, without relying on any external condition whatsoever. This is called the pure and glorious emergence of the non-ego."*

So it is in the absence of the self that the *Samādhi* of the ocean-seal is seen to be our pure nature. And, of course, even though *That* is seen, there is no-one who sees *That*.

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