

Tenborin Zoom Zazen 04 April 2026

In the book of '*Awakening by Light*',¹ it is written:

"To know the Enlightened One, the Buddha, is to know the light. An unchanging concentration of light that transcends the two extremes of the profane and the sacred, of the absolute and the relative. It is the light of inconceivable knowledge of which Manjusri is the manifestation. This is what is realised in the practice of sitting, in which there is no effort. Shikantaza."

The name Manjusri means 'beautiful and glorious', - terms equally applicable to both sexes since the bodhisattva is depicted as female as often as male. Manjusri embodies the essence of Transcendent Wisdom that we realise in the openness of *non-duality* and *non-doing* of zazen.

In the *sodo* in Japan, where monks and nuns practise zazen on the *tan*, it is the statue of Manjusri that is placed on the altar. In his right hand he holds a sword to cut through illusions, and in his left hand a scroll of scriptures representing the teachings - teachings that illuminate the path to awakening - the path of light of which *Shikantaza* is the living, effortless practice that Manjusri manifests in his own form.

To know the Buddha is to know the reality of things and to illuminate them with one's own light. All dualism disappears.

Vairocana, addressing the Master of Secrets, continues:

"The practice of the Great Vehicle awakens the mind that carries you towards the unconditioned, guided by the non-ego"²

Koun Ejo draws a parallel with the words of Sosan, who writes in the *Shin jin mei*, the poem of 'Faith in the Mind':

"Do not seek enlightenment; simply let go of your opinions and your false views."

This means that there is no point in seeking awakening until our illusions have been illuminated by that light within us which knows no dualism. To uproot the 'self' that clings to concepts, opinions and all manner of fake news is the sincere and detailed work to which zazen takes us. We observe, from beyond thoughts, the magical play of the unceasing appearing and disappearing of forms. We eventually come to see that this play is unreal. To believe it is real is to allow ourselves to wander endlessly in *Samsara*, and it is to distance ourselves from who we truly are. The right path is to see the illusory nature of this ego so as to lose all interest in this fabrication.

Koun Ejo continues:

"There is no ego [self] in the Treasury of Unconditioned Light, nor even any interpretations of what it might be. 'Self' and 'opinions' are the same word - expressions meaning the face of ghosts or wandering spirits. The only reality is this light. It is pointless to form ideas or hold any opinion whatsoever about the ego [self] and what concerns it. Nor should there be any ideas about the Buddha and the Dharma."

It's pointless to speculate about what the *self*³ is, because this simply amounts to deceiving oneself all over again.

The same applies to speaking about 'the Buddha' or 'the Dharma'. Why?

The only true knowledge is direct, immediate. A total engagement — *body-and-mind* — in silent Presence.

"Understand." continues Koun Ejo. *"Perfect knowledge is like an immense ball of fire."*

So let us allow ourselves to be totally consumed by this ball of light which is our own nature.

¹ Chapter 9 of the *Avatamsaka* (Flower Ornament) *Sutra*

² or *the no-self, selflessness*

³ or *ego*