

Tenborin Zoom 06 June 2026

No-one truly knows if Bodhidharma really existed in this world. Nevertheless, his encounter with the Emperor and the few teachings attributed to him have had a profound impact on generations of masters and disciples.

Here are a few lines that Bodhidharma is said to have written, among the few teachings he's believed to have imparted:

"For the relaxed mind, the immensity of silent light is identical to emptiness. If you are able to abide in non-duality, you are at the very depths of your heart. All things, in all circumstances, are like an illusion. Fundamental nature is empty in itself. What is the point of wanting to eliminate anything?"

This is an invitation to open ourselves up, to forget even our own name, so that we may settle into the space of our own mind, without expecting anything. Relaxed, let our attention turn towards space. From the very edge of words, beyond the end of a thought, let us fall into the intervals of silence between words and thoughts. These are the gateway to the world of non-duality where the truth of our original nature is revealed.

Master Doshin, the 4th Patriarch, taught:

"In the interval where your mind, having just left one thought, has not yet been captured by another, you are a pure being. "

We become aware of space, of the background where words and thoughts make their appearance-disappearance. When our attention shifts from words towards space, we can feel the silence, breathe in the infinite void that has always been with us. Zazen takes us to the place of emptiness. When we are there, everything is non-dual, and this is the deepest part of our heart

"If you are able to abide in this non-duality, you know what your own heart is."

To know this non-duality sets us free. We practise, without intention, the 'non-doing' of the Buddhas. We understand that every attempt to grasp or reject, to add or subtract, is a self-manipulation of the discriminating mind based on dualistic notions. By the simple act of doing nothing, zazen teaches us to see the futility of our conditioned patterns and to extricate ourselves from them without effort. Freed from the past, we return to the space of the One Mind. We see only the illusory nature of phenomena and circumstances. It is a pure transparency that shines forth of its own accord. And there, there *is* no one. There, 'I do not know' is the only answer, and it fills us with light.

Koun Ejo continues:

'Let yourself be absorbed by this koan and you will attain freedom and bliss. The body becomes light and the whole universe is illuminated.'

Can we allow ourselves to make this surrender, which asks us to forget everything to which we are attached, everything we believe ourselves to be?
