Tenborin Zoom - 31 October 2026

Koun Ejo quotes Master Changsha many times in his commentaries in *Komyozo Zanmai*. This Chan master lived in the 9th century and was one of the successors of Master Nansen, the man who, it is said, cut a cat in two.

One day in spring, Changsha set off on a journey into the mountains. Then he returned to the temple and on entering found the eldest monk looking somewhat concerned. Here is the very interesting mondo he had with him:

'Master, where have you been? What have you been doing?'

Changsha replied simply:

'I've just returned from a simple walk in the mountains. Nothing to worry about. "

"And just how far did you go?" asked the monk.

Changsha replied:

"First I followed the scent of the grasses. Then I returned following that of the falling petals."

"Here's one who senses the spring!" replied the old monk.

Changsha replied:

'That sensation was indeed much stronger than that of the autumn dew dripping from the lotus flowers.'

Master Changsha did not go into the mountains to reflect or ponder the mystery of being, nor to seek awakening. It was a simple walk during which he allowed himself to be guided by nature. Nature does not express itself in words, but at every moment it speaks to us through the ten thousand flowers, their scents and their petals.

Master Dogen expounds the same teaching in the chapter *Sansuiko*, the Sutra of Mountains and Rivers. Nature arises spontaneously, and it cannot be otherwise. We see this truth *'everywhere before our eyes'*, says Master Wanshi.

Master Dogen writes:

"The unceasing breath of the mountains and rivers is the activity of the Great Way, the daily activity of this Present. The virtues of the Great Way and the marvellous scents carried by the wind from the mountains are ever manifest, revealing themselves naturally. Even those who dwell amidst the mountains, if they lack the Eye, cannot perceive or know them. Yet the mountains and rivers of this very moment are the realisation as presence of the Way of the old awakened ones. And it has always been like this."

Can you feel, right now, the breath and the scent of nature in your entire posture? There is never anything outside of nature, outside the scent of this 'Present' of the mountains and rivers.

They are our posture itself, where the old awakened ones breathe. It is simply That, *Nyoze*, the just-as-it-is, without beginning or end.

And yet, why do we feel that we must search for something we lack?

Koun Ejo continues:

'The great master Changsha said: "The reason why followers of the Way fail to discern reality comes simply from the fact that they continue to see things from the perspective of their personal consciousness (their thinking self). This is the root of infinite eons of births and deaths, in which those who delude themselves continue to believe that this [thinking self] *is the original person." '*

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A poem by Ryokan:

"On the distant mountains, the birds have ceased to fly.

In the silent courtyard of the temple, the leaves fall without end

in the solitude of the autumn wind.

Alone, seated, a man in a black robe."

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