

To see the roots and not only the foliage

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(Whatever the conditions of our lives, all we have to do is pay attention and learn to stay focused on what is really important).

Every human being asks himself one day the question of the meaning of his existence, of the origin and purpose of his life. For some, this question is there in itself, for others it arises when confronted with the reality of impermanence. At the loss of a loved one, when suffering from realizing the fragility of what we thought was stable, established, acquired.

The inevitability of death makes us feel, even confusedly, that everything we do in life is relatively futile, because doomed to disappear. And when we feel this, the question of the meaning of our life, of life, arises.

The Way and the practice of Zen meditation allows everyone to be able to answer this universal question.

What is really important?

What is really important at any given time?

Am I paying attention to what is really important?

Am I paying attention?

The right way to ask this question is not necessarily to think about it all the time, but rather to keep this question alive within us, keep this question present and active and so that we can allow ourselves to work through it.

Being so aware of the extraordinary fragility of our life becomes the source of a fully conscious, responsible and truly happy life.

This is the basic question to stay awake, to remain attentive, to be vigilant and alert, and not to live without the reality of one's existence. How can we live from the fundamental reality of our existence? That is to say, is the essential point, what is really important, at the origin of my way of being?

Do I live in harmony with what is truly important?

The way I live, my daily action, my choices, are they in harmony with the fact that I am an active part of the living?

Is the way I participate in the world respectful of the world?

What separates us from attention and inattention is very thin, it is practically invisible. Constantly we are distracted, because we simply have this habit of being distracted.

It's a kind of laziness that prevents us from getting out of this habit of being distracted and it is reinforced by the fact that today's society encourages us to remain distracted.

There are a lot of phenomena that constantly arise and society is constantly producing new ones. But all the phenomena that arise are only a mirror of our own distraction, of our own difficulty in keeping in touch with what is really important, in living in the reality of our existence of every moment.

We remain distracted from the essential point, because we are blinded by this attachment to what we believe we are, to this autonomous and separate personality.

To practice zazen is to go back to the essential!

It is - at last - opening a door in the inexhaustible flow of our distraction, in the inexhaustible flow of the phenomena lived through the filter of our attachment to the Self. This door that zazen opens in us, leads to the root of all the phenomena, to the root of our distracted mind, of our laziness, to the root of all our behaviours, of all our attachments.

Zazen liberates us from ourselves.

Fundamentally we are all awake, the important point is to realize it.

Being confronted with the reality of one's existence, with the question of one's life and death sets us in motion, and this motion is a quest towards understanding oneself, others and the universe.

The reality of illness, old age and death was the confrontation with the existential question for the Buddha. This is what set him in motion, what took him out of his habits of prince, out of his distraction, out of this life that was all planned for him because of his birth, because he was born the son of a king and one day had to take on this responsibility.

Had he remained distracted, he would have succeeded his father, he would certainly have become a great monarch and would have occupied a place in Indian history.

But it is not the life he chose to live; it is rather the life he chose to leave. This life that others had planned for him.

If we don't make the effort to turn ourselves towards the Way and therefore one day leave this life which has been traced out for us by others, by society, we won't be able to find the way to the essential, the path of the question: "what is really important for the woman or man that we are?"

Every journey begins with a first step

The first thing is to be open to this call, to this question, to be totally impregnated with it. Because, deep down, this question is the question of our existence, it is a universal question for all human beings, it is the question of the meaning of one's life.

Working on this question is a long way.

The reality is that we cannot escape this question.

The distraction is either to be afraid of being confronted with this question, or not to be sufficiently awake to it.

Some people are awakened to this question at birth, others at death. Whatever your moment, please don't miss it, it's really fundamental.

This question allows us to live from the fundamental point of our existence, to be in harmony with the root of whom we really are, not only in meditation, but also in every activity of our daily life.

It is a gate to ourselves, our true Self, and therefore also to others.