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# In a single moment of zazen

**Kusen by Roland Yuno Rech - Nice, June 2017**

When we enter the dojo, we put our hands in gasshō and bow to Buddha. But the statue of Buddha on the altar is just a reminder of what our true nature really is. We must become living Buddhas. But how can we become like Buddha? In other words, how can we become awakened beings? It is not enough to simply wake up in the morning while taking a coffee; we have to truly awaken to the real nature of our existence. An existence without separation from the whole universe. How long does it take?

Some people believe that it takes many years of practice to awaken. But Kodo Sawaki observed: "How long does it take to become a thief? Just a moment!" Someone has forgotten something, you take it and put it in your pocket. And in a single instant, you became a thief. In a single moment of zazen, you can become a Buddha.

It is just the moment when we let go of our thoughts. Not by repressing them, by suppressing them, but by ceasing to be attached to them. By going back to the body posture, by refocusing on our breathing, we let all thoughts go by. This action of letting go abolishes all separation. Because it means ceasing to be attached to any notion whatsoever and realizing a mind as vast as the sky, a sky which lets the clouds pass, but includes the sun, the stars, and welcomes all elements. An all-encompassing mind.

To refer to the mind that is Buddha, we speak of "mind as vast as the sky". Master Nyojo rather liked to talk about a "flexible mind", *yunan shin*, a mind that doesn't attach itself to anything, that doesn't dwell on anything. In other words, a mind that harmonizes itself with the constantly changing reality.

At the same time, we repeat the same practice every day. At each moment of zazen, we repeat the same concentration on the body, the same attention to the breathing and the same movement of the mind to let go. There is something constant in our practice, in the midst of our impermanent world.

Just like every spring, flowers bloom and trees unfurl their leaves. Spring doesn't last, it gives way to summer, but it comes back every year, just as we return to the dojo every morning. This constancy in the midst of impermanence is a wonderful thing.

If we see only impermanence, we can become nihilistic. But not clinging to anything does not mean to be a nihilist, but on the contrary to be able to penetrate deeply the reality of each moment with a new mind, and to live each day with a creative spirit. Precisely because it is a mind that does not stagnate on anything.

We repeat each day the same practice, and - at the same time - it is never quite the same. We wake up every morning in the same body, but we are not quite the same person. This means that we can create our life anew every day, even if repeating the same practice. The mind is always new, always fresh. Repetition is what deepens the practice. Always similar, but never identical.

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At the same time, constant practice is what makes possible the appreciation of each day novelty. Because - with constant practice - one abandons the mind of yesterday and of the eve of yesterday. We open a new page of our life every day, by always becoming perfectly present to each moment and to the new day that comes.

Kodo Sawaki used to say: "The eternal present, it is to become truly oneself, to become like a Buddha".