

# Taking a step forward on the Way

**Kusen by Roland Yuno Rech - Nice, 25 September 2013**

During zazen, don't let your attention wander, stay well concentrated on the posture of your body and on breathing. As far as posture is concerned, stretch well the spine and the neck, tuck the chin in. Push the sky with the top of your head and the earth with your knees. The posture should not become slack, it should remain stretched towards the sky. To do this, you need to put energy into the lower back. Instead of following your thoughts, follow the flow of your breathing. When breathing in, be completely one with the inspiration, totally this body-mind that is breathing in, let go of all other thoughts. When exhaling, be totally focused on exhaling, a mind-body totally exhaling. This is the best time to let go of all our other concerns. There is only the reality of the here and now, this mind-body breathing in and out.

Many dissatisfactions in life result from the fact that we are not able to live fully in the present moment. The mind disperses into all sorts of preoccupations, but the real life of the moment is not really lived. Even if we study the teachings of the Buddha, of Dogen, if we cannot - in the present moment - let go of our distractions, our thoughts, then we are not really practicing the Dharma.

Practicing the Dharma does not require exceptional qualities, a structure or special circumstances. It is simply enough to see that everything expresses the Dharma, that all the phenomena we experience from moment to moment are its manifestation. Everything shows us impermanence. We exist only in total interdependence with others and our environment. This reality is constantly present to us, but we forget it. To practice the Way is to remember the essential reality of living in total unity with all beings, all the universe. And above all, to draw all the consequences for our way of being. That is to say, less self-centered, more attentive to the interdependence we create with others.

In this interdependence, especially in the sangha, remember that we are here together to progress on the Way, the Way that frees us from all the causes of suffering. To remember that this is our priority, therefore not to disperse ourselves in all kinds of other occupations. And even if we have all sorts of other concerns, they are also an opportunity to let go. Because everything that happens manifests the Dharma, and to practice it is to learn to see and to let go, that is to say to harmonize with the deep reality of life. And not to allow a gap to be created, at least not too great a gap, between our ideal and the reality of what we live, day after day, and moment after moment.

To do this, you have to realize that you can always take a step forward on the Way. Not necessarily a giant step, but a step, as in *kin in*. To take a step forward, you have to let go of the support of the foot which is carried forward on the ground. Letting go is what allows us to move forward. It is like opening your hands, which allows you to receive. Opening the mind also allows us to be receptive to the teaching of reality. Opening up to this teaching is always possible, all phenomena give us the opportunity to do so.

So, there is no need to look for the Way in the distance, to wait for particular circumstances, it starts here and now, and always continues here and now, everywhere.

But in order to realize it, we need a strong motivation, that is to say the conviction that it is really the priority of our life, because it is not even just our life, but the life of all sentient beings on this planet.

*Transcript of a recording available as podcast on the website -> Gyobutsu Ji Zen temple*