
A mountain is neither true or false

Kusen by Roland Yuno Rech- Nice, June 2014

During zazen, we give all our energy to the posture of the body and we give all our attention to our breathing. We take care not to follow our thoughts, to stop discriminating. Of course, thoughts, discriminations arise ... We become aware of them for a moment, but we don't keep paying attention to them: we go back to the body posture and the breathing.

Doing that, it is no longer the discriminating mind which leads us. The mind in zazen must carry out this true conversion, this inner revolution of abandoning the ordinary way of thinking conditioned by "I like, I don't like", in other words by our emotions, our desires and our aversions. Not that they will be repressed or suppressed, but that they will no longer be so important.

But we cannot do this voluntarily; we cannot decide to stop discriminating, preferring or rejecting; because that would be a preference or discrimination once again. Only the great concentration on the practice with the body makes it possible to go beyond the dualistic mind and to realize what is called the *hishiryō* state of consciousness. (*Shiryō* is the mind which measures and compares constantly, therefore the way the mind and the ego function).

What makes it possible to go beyond this ordinary way of functioning is that the practice of zazen becomes stronger, more energetic than our mental habits; that the practice itself takes us beyond. It facilitates letting go. Once again, wanting to let go is very difficult, but if we absorb ourselves in the practice, letting go occurs naturally. For our energy is focused elsewhere than in the desire to grasp, possess or reject.

In zazen, we can clearly see that all the dualistic mental positions, such as attachment to notions as "true, false, good, or evil" are the product of our mental fabrications. A mountain is neither true nor false; it is just "as it is". A tiger is neither good nor bad; it is just as it is.

Human beings discriminate, because they have built an ego and they have identified themselves with this ego. So, for the ego, all what is beautiful, good, and everything that favours it is pleasant; and is bad everything that disturbs it. Even if - in daily life - these discriminations are inevitable, in zazen we can go beyond them, and thus reconcile ourselves with the reality of life of each moment and be more in the acceptance of what is such as it is. When it is hot, it is simply hot. There's no need to protest against the heat. And this avoids troubling the mind, I mean adding all kinds of emotions to the reality of what we are living in the present moment.

This does not mean total passivity towards the phenomena we encounter, but avoiding reacting emotionally, and giving ourselves time and the possibility to really see what is happening ... and therefore deciding what action to take, calmly, according to our values and not according to our desires and aversions.

So, experimenting in zazen a way of being beyond all duality, all dualism, allows us to approach the phenomena of daily life with much more serenity. This is what allows the Bodhisattva to

live in this world and to continue his practice of awakening with others, to really help them without suffering or sacrificing himself. But rather as an extension of the practice of zazen, as an Awakened way of living.