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# The House is empty

**Kusen by Roland Rech - Grube Louise, May 2015**

During zazen, instead of following your thoughts, concentrate on your breathing. As you breathe out, breathe out completely, right to the end. When you have finished breathing out, the in-breath begins unconsciously and naturally.

When we concentrate on the out-breath, when we place all our energy in the *hara*, we can naturally abandon all objects of attachment and let all thoughts pass by. It's the same thing when we concentrate completely on walking during *kin-hin*, when we concentrate completely on peeling vegetables. When we are completely absorbed in each thing we do, we can abandon everything in the action itself, in other words abandon all other activities, all other thoughts and so regain a totally free, available mind. We are generally much too overloaded by our thoughts and objects of attachment.

Master Sekito wrote: « I built a straw hut where there was no object of value. Once my meal is finished, I prepare myself calmly for sleep. » When we completely finish each thing, we can regain a total calm, there is nothing lacking and nothing surplus.

Some people practise zazen all the time waiting for an illumination, a satori. Master Kodo Sawaki said, « Satori is like a thief who breaks into an empty house. He thought he would find a treasure, he made all sorts of effort to break into the house, he took risks. Finally he discovers that there is nothing, nothing to take, nothing to grab, But instead of regretting it, he suddenly realises that he is completely liberated of all fear. »

When we practise right vision during zazen, when we observe ourselves, we discover that the self is totally ungraspable. Is my ego my body? But my body does not belong to me, it depends completely on the whole universe, on cosmic energy, on the air it breathes, on the food it absorbs. If we stop breathing, our body quickly dies.

Am I my thoughts? Thoughts constantly change, even thoughts about myself, depending on the interdependent relationships in which I find myself, my ego changes, my emotions change, my desires as well.

So is my ego my consciousness? But my consciousness only reflects changing phenomena. Without objects, there is no consciousness.

This is what Kannon declares at the beginning of the *Hannya Shingyo*. When we practise *sho ken*, right observation, we discover that all the elements that make up our five *skandha* are vacuity. The house is empty. So all obstacles, all causes of fear, disappear, this is to go beyond all objects of attachment and realise true peace of mind, nirvana, above and beyond all our mental constructions.

Once my meal is finished, I can have a siesta. Once my meal is finished. That means being totally one with the meal as in zazen, we are totally one with the practice. No separation between the two. No object, no ego, nothing to grasp, total freedom.

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When I'm sleepy, I sleep; completely follow the cosmic order. If we concentrate on each practice, each practice can be completely finished, nothing is lacking. The realisation of awakening is already in the practice itself. If we realise this, we can truly practise freely, without expecting anything. Each moment of practice becomes a moment of realisation. If we don't look for anything, our room of treasures opens up naturally, as everything is already there.