
The source of wisdom

Kusen by Roland Yuno Rech - St. George, CH, November 2018

Somebody who starts practicing the Way often seeks to remedy his dissatisfaction. We feel that we are missing something in life, something we hope to discover through meditation. But in fact, what we lack is wisdom, that is to say a deep understanding of life. Zazen helps us to achieve this understanding by getting us to know ourselves. Not only what characterizes us, what makes each of us different from other beings, but what makes us similar to all beings, in the depths of our being, by this essence of the existence that we share with all beings. That is to say, the fact that we exist only through our interdependent relationships with each other, as I always insist.

Understanding this interdependence is truly the source of wisdom. It explains causality. If things happened by chance, we would not be able to control or master them. Although chance exists, it is often – in fact – only the ignorance of the true causes of what is happening. Therefore, wisdom consists in deepening our understanding of causality.

This is what allows us to understand that suffering has remedies. It's just as a doctor's diagnosis: understanding the causes of the disease allows us to cure it. Also, we can realize how lucky we are to have encountered the Buddha's Way, the practice of zazen, which allows us to repeat the same experience as him, the same experience of awakening to the deep reality of existence. This is why we can be joyful to have met this Way and to share it together.

Sometimes some wise men are sad. They are "little" wise men. They only see the surface of phenomena. But when one understands their root causes, one can realize the Great Wisdom and there is no more reason to be sad, because one has the means to act to remedy suffering. All the Buddha's teachings are skilful means to remedy suffering. That is why in our Bodhisattva Vows, we vow to study all the teachings: to give us the means to remedy the suffering of beings, our own and that of others.

And since the source of all these teachings is the practice of meditation, zazen, then the essential thing is to concentrate on a daily practice of zazen. If the practice of zazen is purely occasional, for example once a week, it is not very effective. Because even if we reach some understanding, if we don't practice regularly, we can't remedy our past conditioning. This is the reason why some people enter a monastery, in order to devote their whole life to the practice of the Way.

But the whole world can also be seen as a monastery. Every place is a good place to practice the Way, even better than in a monastery, because we have to be constantly creative to find the way to practice the Way in the midst of phenomena.

And this is what makes this practice in daily life so exciting. Every morning, when we wake up, we can rejoice: here is a new day that presents itself with all kinds of opportunities that will be given to us to practice the Way. Then we can rejoice. And in this practice of the Way, there is

also the practice of helping others to remedy their suffering. And that too is a source of happiness.

Putting ourselves at the service of others gives a deep meaning to our life, because it is what harmonizes us with the Dharma, with Buddha Nature. This is what Shakyamuni did, as did all the Masters of the transmission, up to Kodo Sawaki and Master Deshimaru. When we study their lives and teachings, it is a great source of inspiration.

And when we come together to practice a sesshin, it is the best opportunity to practice the Way. So, it is a particularly happy moment in our lives, and we can be happy that we are given the opportunity to practice it, to thank all those who have made it possible for the sesshin to take place, all those who have taken responsibility for organizing the sesshin and for taking on the *samu* necessary for the sesshin to function properly.

Even those who have no particular responsibility, by their simple presence and practice in sesshin, allow the sesshin to take place. Without a practitioner, no sesshin. Without a practitioner, no Way, no Buddha ... only theories. Even though there are many teachings in Buddhism and Zen, the only thing really important is what we can practice ourselves, and what encourages us to practice.

So, I wish us all the best for our practice. Don't forget the practice. Master Deshimaru's last words were: "Continue zazen eternally! ». It is to encounter eternity at every moment, which is beyond the passing of time.