
Let the mind of the Way arise

Kusen by Roland Yuno Rech - Grube Louise, 2008

When we begin the practice of zazen, we often start each zazen by observing a mind that discriminates. That is to say a mind that distinguishes, discerns what is the right posture, that tries hard to achieve it, that observes its thoughts, that makes out their illusory and impermanent nature and tries to drop them, that tries to abandon the ordinary mind and realise the mind of the Way.

This functioning of the mind is called *shiryo*.

Shin, in sanskrit *citta*, is the mind that discriminates. It is the starting point of the mind of the Way. Discerning our mistakes, wishing to get closer to the truth is the starting point of Buddha mind. The finding that there is suffering, that our way of living, thinking creates suffering, is what makes the mind of the Way arouse, the mind that seeks to practise the Way.

But in order to realize such Way, it is necessary to overcome this discriminating mind by observing the vacuity of all forms of discrimination.

All the poles of our dualities are linked to our mental formings. Concepts like « me », « the other », « good », « bad », « truth », « false », « the Way », « the no Way », « satori », « delusion » are produced by the discriminating mind, the mind that works with words, concepts, that only exist by differing from the others.

The ego itself is constituted by this differentiation from the others. Of course, such differentiation is necessary to become an individual, but if we function only like that, then so much conflict, tension, suffering appear between us and the others and inwardly between our delusions and quest for truth. If we understand intimately that all these poles of our dualities exist only in relation to another, thus have no separate existence, autonomy, then we can put into perspective all these oppositions, observe their vacuity, their absence of own substance. All that observation is produced by our discriminating mind again, but it enables to be detached from this thinking mode.

And in this way, by fully focusing on the body posture, on the breathing, without becoming attached to our thoughts, we can experience another way of being, a different way of thinking. This is what is called *hishiryo*.

To observe the vacuity of our mental formings is *fushiryo*. It leaves room to another functioning that is beyond thinking and non-thinking, it is *hishiryo*: the mind that encompasses all poles of all dualities, the mind that overcomes all separations, all oppositions by perceiving the reality that is beyond that. This is what we experience in the great concentration of zazen, in the samadhi of zazen when we stop thinking exclusively with our head and that we think with our whole body.

The discrimination mind has led us to the doorsteps of the Way and what it takes to pass the door is to overcome such discrimination mind. It is not enough to discern that there would be a

right Way, beyond our illusory mind, one must experience it practically, and this means foregoing our ordinary way of thinking.

When the body and mind recover their unity, we contact the profound reality of our existence that can only function together with all beings. The Way that is realized is the union path with all beings. In this sense the Way cannot be lonely, even though we engage it alone, inwardly, we can only practise it by realizing our total unity with all beings.

This is why Master Dogen used to say: « Awakening to the mind of the Way, to *bodaishin*, means making the vow to help all beings to cross to get to the other side. It is the Vow of compassion of all bodhisattvas. It is the manifestation of the realized awakening mind. »