
The celestial kingdom

Kusen by Roland Yuno Rech- Grube Louise, May 2015

Some people seek the Way to escape from their daily life, and then, the Way becomes a kind of drug, which is obviously not right. Some practise their religion to gain Paradise, or nirvana, to escape from samsara, from their daily life ... but Zen is the religion of the daily life, the practice of the Way which transforms our everyday life and all our activities into opportunities to realize the Way. To understand that and go deeper in that, is the meaning of a sesshin.

Master Dogen teaches this in the *Shobogenzo Kajo*. "Ka" means the house, but also the family, the Zen family, and "jo" means what is constant, what repeats itself daily.

And it is the everyday life which repeats itself daily. But the way of living this daily life in accordance with the Dharma is the constant teaching of all the Buddhas and Masters of the transmission: it means stopping separating the ideal and the Reality, the everyday life and the celestial kingdom. Therefore the way of living the daily life, as drinking tea or eating rice, has been constantly transmitted since Buddha. Even if forms have changed from time to time, the mind which is transmitted is the same, the spirit of unity with our daily life.

About this matter, Fuyo Dokai asked one day his Master Tosu: "May we say that the daily activity of the Buddhas and the Patriarchs, to drink tea and of eat rice, is their essence, is their spirit, and is there something else to add? »

This teaching is often seen as too simple. What is the essence of Zen?

"Have you eaten your gen mai? Yes. Then go and wash your bowl."

It is Master Joshu's answer to a beginner.

For most of the people, this kind of answer, this teaching, seems too simple: they always imagine that there is something else which is hidden, which is not revealed, and that it would be necessary to discover it and something else to obtain.

Master Tosu answered Fuyo Dokai: "When the imperial power is established throughout the country, is it still necessary to go and seek the authority of the former emperors?"

If the essence of Buddha's awakening is realized through our body, our mind, in zazen and in daily life, do we need to seek or to wait for something else? Is there something to add? If we really practise *shikantaza*, the zazen in which we simply sit without worrying about anything else, do we need to look for something else or to add something to this practice?

Then, as Fuyo Dokai wanted to answer, his Master Tosu put his hossu against his mouth and said: "You should have already received 30 kyosaku strikes when you wanted to ask this question".

Hearing this, Fuyo Dokai awakened. He made gasshô and started to go away. Tosu called him back: "Hey, come back!" But Fuyo Dokai did not turn around, he blocked his ears with his fingers and went away. He had reached the state of mind where there is no doubt anymore, where no more explanation is needed.

It is what each of us can realize, if we practise with trust each activity of the daily life during the sesshin: zazen, gen mai, samu, the ceremony, the rest, the bar. When body and mind are in unity with everything we do, without thinking of anything else, without neither looking for anything else, nor waiting for something else, *mushotoku*, without any goal. Then we harmonize naturally with the Way, there is not opposition anymore between our daily life and the awakening. The Celestial kingdom is here and now.