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# The mind without opposition

**Kusen by Roland Yuno Rech - sesshin du Vallon (Vosges), April 2012**

When we practise zazen for a long time, as in a sesshin, the mind is naturally cleansed. This is called *sekishin*, a mind without ego, without opposition.

We continue to practise with this mind, which is also deeply sincere and direct, uncomplicated. Like the mind of a small child which doesn't linger on anything, neither thoughts nor emotions, that harmonizes with the reality where nothing remains. Thus we find within our practice, the mind of ancient buddhas, *kobushin*.

Though we shouldn't be nostalgic about the mind of ancient buddhas.

Once, a monk asked to Daisho Kokushi : « *What is the spirit of the ancient buddhas?* »  
The master replied: « *Walls, tiles and stones.* »

In other words, "*nothing special*".

The mind of the ancient buddhas is that which appears in each phenomenon we meet, each manifesting the ultimate reality, just as it is, *immo*, just like that. If we meet this mind in our practice, we realize that the everyday mind, the ordinary mind, is the Way, nothing special. It is the last aspect of the mind Dogen talks about in the *Shinjin Gakudo*.

After a sesshin everyone goes home and gets back to his daily life. Sometimes we might miss the sesshin and the mind realized during the sesshin, and we tend to oppose this mind to the ordinary mind, the daily mind. We tend to turn the Way into something special that would rather be found in particular places such as temples, monasteries, or simply in the dojo where we practise zazen.

Once, the young Joshu asked his master Nansen: « *What is the Way ?* »  
Nansen answered him: *The ordinary mind (i.e the daily, every day mind) is the Way; heijoshin kore do.* » It became a very famous koan.

When we hear that, we are surprised at first, as was Joshu, who asked: « *But should we be heading towards it?* »

Nansen answered: « *If you try to head for it, you move away from it.* »

Then Joshu got even more surprised: « *If we don't try to get close, how can one know that it is the Way?* »

Nansen answered: « The Way doesn't belong either to knowing or not knowing. Knowing is illusion, not knowing is confusion. If you realize the way of no-doubt, then it is like an immense and unlimited emptiness, like the vast sky. How could there be truth or falsehood in the Way? »

It is in that instant that Joshu realized awakening, upon hearing the answer of Master Nansen. Afterwards, whenever he was asked: « *What is the Way, what is the essence of the Way?* » He answered: « *Have you had breakfast yet?* » « *Yes* » « *Then go wash your bowl!* »

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The Way is not something special. It is simply to concentrate here and now and to be at each moment in total harmony with the reality of the moment. In a reality where nothing remains and where there is nothing to be grabbed, thus where we can completely drop our ego. In doing so we don't really abandon anything, nothing is sacrificed since the ego and all its attachments were nothing but mental productions.

Dropping the ego is just returning to our real normal condition, harmonizing with our true Buddha nature, with what we always have been, but got away from, lost sight of, pursuing all sorts of delusions.

Practising a sesshin, doing zazen, bring us back in contact with our innermost reality, and harmonize us naturally and unconsciously with our true nature. If we wanted to achieve that consciously and deliberately by practising with a personal consciousness, aiming at realizing awakening, the true self and rejecting illusion, then it would be impossible.

For we would remain prisoners of the functioning of a dualistic mind, which is the cause of all sufferings. If we want to know what is the Way, it means we turn it again into an object we want to get hold of, something special, and our whole approach becomes distorted. Even if we seem to be practising the Way, in reality we are completely beside the point.

If we simply just practise moment by moment, no longer trying to grab or reject anything, dropping all our views on the Way, on Buddha, on satori, then awakening occurs naturally and unconsciously. And our life harmonizes naturally with the cosmic order, as expressed in a poem of Master Mumon about the everyday mind:

“Hundreds of flowers in spring  
Moon in autumn  
Cool breeze in summer  
And snow in winter  
If there is no vain clouds in your mind  
Then each season is a good season for you.”

We could add: “Each moment is good moment and each place a good place.”