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# Penetrating the Way is not difficult

**Kusen by Roland Yuno Rech - Nice, April 2015**

*“Penetrating the Way is not difficult,  
But there must be neither greed nor hatred, neither choice nor rejection”.*

These first two verses of *Shin Jin Mei* express the essence of the Buddha Way, the essence of our zazen practice. The Way, the Tao, is at the same time the cosmic order, the ultimate reality, and at the same time the practice, the path, which allows the human being to harmonize with what is really this ultimate truth, or reality.

Generally, our vision of reality is distorted by our emotions, that is to say our preferences and aversions. We judge what is good or right according to our *karma*, our conditioning. The practice of zazen allows us to put this *karma*, these conditionings at a distance, by seeing them manifesting themselves in our mind in zazen, but by not clinging to them anymore, that is to say by seeing them for what they are, just “conditionings”.

Not to adhere to them, not to be conditioned by our mental habits, our history, by the society, the fashion, the ideologies, does not mean never make any choice, because in our life we are constantly obliged to make choices. Even in zazen, when we are assailed by thoughts, by concerns, we can make the choice to let them go, or sometimes also to take care of them, to think about them.

So, to penetrate the Way does not lead a totally contemplative life, outside the action, and to avoid any form of choice. But it means being able to make choices free of our selfish preferences, no longer being conditioned by our emotions. This does not mean not to feel emotions anymore, but to see them for what they are and not to let them rule over us.

Letting go of our daily routine to come to the dojo and do zazen means giving yourself the possibility of experiencing another way of being, freed from the weight of the past, of seeing life each day in a new light. This is what Kodo Sawaki called “removing the *karma*-colored glasses that distort our vision of reality”.

But zazen is not just a happy parenthesis, a return to a peaceful mind in the middle of a life immersed in phenomena, agitated and often painful. It is not only a parenthesis because what we experience in zazen transforms us in depth, transforms our way of seeing things in life, allows us to see them from a deeper point of view. And therefore, to make choices which do not only take into account our small personal interest, our preferences or our aversions, but which also take into account the common good.

For our real life is a life of total interdependence with all beings. To disregard this interdependence is to condemn ourselves to suffer and to make others suffer. To take it into account is to give ourselves the possibility of leading a happy life, which has meaning, which does not generate conflicts, or in any case which does not generate too many conflicts. It also means giving ourselves the possibility to harmonize within ourselves the emotional aspect, which cannot be abolished, and the wisdom, which must guide us at the end.

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So, is it not difficult to penetrate the Way? It is not easy either, because it is going against all our mental habits. But since following our mental habits makes life difficult, finally entering the Way is not so difficult. And the more we practice it, the easier it becomes, the more natural, obvious it becomes. The more our mental complications dissolve, dissolve into the vast mind, the mind that has the ability to embrace contradictions, which are - in fact - only apparent.

This is why starting each day with the practice of zazen is the best way to make of each day an opportunity to practice the Way, not only during the hour of zazen, but in all the successive moments of the day that begins.