
Joy in the practice of Dharma

Teisho by Roland Yuno Rech – Nice, October 2020

Good morning! I'm going to talk about the joy in the practice of Zen. The reason I chose this theme is that - in general - we talk too much about suffering in Buddhism, since it is the First Noble Truth. Sometimes even, this Truth has been summed up by: "Life is suffering". However, it is not true that "life is suffering", but rather that "life implies some suffering". And not only "suffering", but what is called "dukkha" in the Buddha's teaching, which is normally translated as "suffering", when in fact it is a "dissatisfaction".

And precisely, this "dissatisfaction" is linked to the fact that we do not realize our true nature and that we are not in harmony with what we really are. And as a consequence, we are constantly tempted to desire, to obtain what we think we are missing, and we are always looking for something else. This is why greed, desire, always fill our minds, because we expect satisfaction from it.

As for joy, I think that the first thing is that there is great joy in discovering the practice of zazen (and I felt it at the very beginning of my practice). That is to say, even if there is suffering in life, there is a remedy for suffering. And this remedy (for us of course), is the practice of the Way and in particular of zazen, and its extension into daily life. And when we experience this, it gives us a great joy, because we realize that there is hope, and not only for ourselves, but also for others, by sharing the practice with others. So, I believe that this is the main source of joy.

In the practice itself, we content ourselves with simply being sitting. The expression "contenting oneself with" means that "that it is enough", and therefore, the joy coming from the practice does not depend on achieving something, but simply on the fact of practicing in itself, through letting go. And of course, the fact of "not wanting to obtain something" is in itself a great Liberation, and therefore a source of infinite joy.

This is why one can practice without tension. When we are greedy, when we long for something, it creates tensions in the body and in the mind. In zazen, we always say that "the spine and the neck must be stretched", and sometimes we translate this by saying "stretch the spine well", but precisely, we should not stretch it... It is absolutely necessary to practice without any tension, neither in the mind nor in the body.

In daily life, we are often like thirsty people who sit by the water's edge, but don't realize that there is water everywhere. That they don't even sit "next" to the water, but "in" the middle of it. We are in the middle of the water, that is, in the middle of Buddha nature, we are in the middle of a life which is in unity with all beings, and therefore in which - deep down - nothing is missing. But we always have the impression that we are missing something.

In reality, what we lack is to awaken, and the main Awakening is to awaken to the fact that there is a way, a way to fulfil ourselves, to realize ourselves deeply, spiritually, and therefore compensate in some way for all the suffering we may have in daily life, suffering that is inevitable because we encounter all kinds of difficulties: illness, ageing, mourning, etc.

The practice of Zen doesn't eliminate all these sufferings, but it does allow us to bear them and not despair of existence, and thus finally to maintain a joy of life, despite the fact that there are all sorts of reasons not to be joyful in our life. When we listen to the info news in the morning, all we hear is about disasters, about suffering everywhere. And to remain joyful during the day, we could either say to ourselves: "But that's not possible", or, to be happy, cover our ears and close our eyes. But no! I believe that we can still be joyful, if we live in harmony with whom we really are, and live it from the practice of zazen, as if the sound of the gong at the beginning of zazen, this vibration of zazen, was prolonged in our daily life.

So, the reason why we can be without tension and remain joyful is that the practice of zazen heals us from what we call the three poisons, and that is fundamental. As you know, the three poisons are greed, hatred and ignorance, ignorance being the main poison. Zazen frees us from them, because zazen is learning to know oneself. And not only learning to know our personal characteristics, our history, as we can do in a psychotherapy or a psychoanalysis where we analyze in detail the events of our life, our feelings, etc.

Of course, this also happens in zazen, because there are remembrances, phenomena of daily life which are reflected on the zazen mirror. Incidentally, we don't try to suppress the thoughts or the emotions which rise to the surface of our consciousness in zazen, but we are simply happy with seeing them, accepting them, and then letting them pass. And as a result, it makes a lot of things of our life less dramatic: the fact that at the same time we don't repress them and also, we don't remain attached to them. So, it's really being fully conscious, but not attached to what we are conscious of.

But often at the end of zazen, a deep intuition emerges of the remedy that we will be able to bring to the sufferings or the contradictions of our daily life. It's as if we were stuck in these contradictions (or afflicted by pain), and then suddenly at the end of zazen, we tell ourselves: "But no, we can also see things differently".

Seeing things differently is a source of liberation and great joy. For example, about mourning: we can be saddened by someone's death, but we can also pray for a good rebirth, adopt the Buddhist point of view of rebirth and say to ourselves: "Death is not the end of everything", and pray for a good rebirth for the deceased person. This will give us joy, because as soon as we pray for others, as soon as we are concerned about others, we are giving, and giving in particular is an important source of joy. And there, we give the energy of our practice for the good of someone else, who needs to be helped in his new existence to be happy, quite simply. And therefore, giving is a great source of joy.

Now about the three poisons: we talked about greed, of ignorance; but there is also hatred, which is almost the opposite of joy. When one is inhabited by hatred, one is as if poisoned by this extremely negative feeling which consists in wanting revenge, of wanting the misfortune of others, because one hates them because they have done us harm. But to be free from hatred and to be able to forgive is also a source of joy. Learning forgiveness.

Another aspect of the joy of practice is that it heals us from lacking, and especially from the fear of losing what we possess. This is something that is highly developed in our materialistic and modern society. For many people, their happiness lies in what they own, in what they have finally managed to obtain, a new car, a nice house or something else, and this is addictive. This

doesn't mean that you have to live like a beggar, but you need to put the importance of the material goods you own into perspective and not expect excessive joy from them. Rather, find joy in spiritual realization, in the relationship with others, and not so much in the relationship with objects, or possessions etc.

In other words, the practice of the Buddha Way helps us not to depend on what we can lose. In fact, Kodo Sawaki used to say: "Practicing Zen, the Buddha Way, Zen Buddhism, is learning to lose". That is to say learning to lose without being afraid of losing, and without having regrets for what we have lost, so as not to spoil our joy of life because of it.

When we are sad, the opposite of joy, we try to free ourselves from this sadness, and it is normal. But when we are happy, we don't need anything, we are fully satisfied. We can have a free mind, free of all worries, in any case as far as our own ego is concerned. On the other hand, we can worry about others and share. To be attentive to share is what is for us the source of joy, the source of peace of mind, of generosity in the existence. In principle, it should radiate around us. When I see people around me who are sad, who are not joyful, I am immediately concerned, and I want to know what is happening to them, why and how, to help them remedy their misfortune.

It reminds me of a phrase from Ryokan that I like very much. In a poem, he ends by saying: "Dear friends, if I have any advice to give you, to be truly happy, we don't need many things. »

I also think that a source of joy linked to our practice is that we gain confidence in the fact that we are capable of transforming phenomena. In everyday life all sorts of things happen to us, happy things and unhappy things. Obviously, we get attached to happy things, and we don't like unhappy things very much. But if we take confidence in the fact that even the unhappy things that we observe, that we live and experience, can be transformed thanks to the mind that we develop in zazen, finally it gives a great confidence in life, and it doesn't affect our joy of life (not too much in any case). I find this is also very important: to have confidence, to have faith, true faith in oneself, faith in the fact that we are capable - thanks to our practice of the Way - of transforming phenomena and of remedying the causes of suffering.

Moreover, the Four Noble Truths tell us that: there is suffering, certainly, there are causes to suffering, and we discover them in the practice (greed, hatred and ignorance, the poisons we have just been talking about). But there is also *nirvana*, the cessation of suffering. Suffering is not something inevitable and eternal. There is no eternal damnation at all in Buddhism. This is why Buddhists are joyful people, because they don't have at all the prospect of eternal suffering. On the contrary, the great source of joy is to realize that there is a cure for everything, because nothing happens without a cause.

And if we are able, through meditation, to become aware of the causes of the suffering we have (or that other people around us have), as soon as we know the causes, there is a cure, as for diseases. Of course, there are incurable diseases, or incurable at this moment. But that doesn't mean that they will always be so. In any case, as far as psychic suffering, moral suffering is concerned, there are remedies. And not only zazen by the way: there are other remedies, as psychotherapies, the relationship with others and so on. In any case, zazen is particularly good to remedy the causes of suffering and therefore finally prevent us from being too much disturbed by this suffering, from losing confidence and thus also losing the joy of living.

There is a fundamental joy in becoming aware that it is an incredible chance to be born in human form. There are people who would have dreamed of being an animal or a tree, because apparently trees do not suffer too much (which is not true by the way, because now we are discovering a lot about the sensitivity of plants). In any case, to be happy to be born in human form is something extraordinary. This means that - whatever our condition is (which can sometimes seem miserable) - being born as a human being is a great opportunity.

Why? Because it gives us the possibility of waking up. In Buddhism, we never talk about the awakening of animals, simply because animals do not have the same developed consciousness we have. They can be quite happy to live, but they have not the awareness of being happy or unhappy ... At least I don't think so, I don't know, maybe they have it? But in any case, we have the chance to being aware of what's happening for us and specially to become aware of the fact that there is a remedy, and even more so when we encounter the practice of a Way like zazen. But this is also true for people who meet Christ when they enter a church and are transformed by it. There is not only Zen in life.

In any case, I remember that, when I discovered the practice of zazen in the temple of Kodo Sawaki, (I think it was in July 1972 in Japan), I was overwhelmed by an extraordinary joy. That's why I also like to talk about it, because for me, it was striking. The first zazen, this joy, it was even "too much", it was such a strong emotion that I was almost dizzy. I had to concentrate on the exhalation to calm this joy and continue zazen. Otherwise, I would have got up and started dancing in the dojo.

These are the essential points that I noted. I would like to continue this not as a conference, but as a workshop, that is to say - as everyone has the experience of joy as well as unhappiness, sadness – to evoke a little bit the questions and possible answers to these emotions. Because joy is an emotion.

Sometimes it is said that "Emotions are not good". In Arnaud Desjardins' teachings for example, I remember this repeated temptation to consider emotions almost as a sin, that is to say as something that must absolutely be avoided, because it's what disturbs peace of mind, like happiness etc. I'm not sure what to say. I had discussed it with him and finally he said: "No, it's a misunderstanding about what I teach. But it's true that a lot of people think that about my teachings". But Zen doesn't aim either at all to make us apathetic. Apathetic means "without passions, without sensations, without attachments, without emotions ". We can even practice Zen and be attached, but be aware of this attachment and avoid that this attachment becomes a cause of suffering, of excessive suffering in any case.

For example, I see here people who are mothers. It is normal for a mother to be attached to her children. A child could not survive if his mother was not attached to him. So, it is completely natural, and it is also a source of joy, because - when you are attached to someone - you have joy in pleasing them, in taking care of their health, in giving them many things, in educating them, ... So, even attachment is not necessarily opposed to joy. There are attachments that are positive in a way, that are justified and that go in the direction of life. And there are attachments that leads obviously to unhappiness. All addictions, for example, are terrible... Drinking a glass of wine or two with friends, celebrating together and partying, is a source of joy in everyday life. But becoming dependent on alcohol is a great misfortune, a great suffering.

I say all this because it is an opportunity to clarify certain things about the practice of Dharma. Dharma practice is not at all something austere. In Zen monasteries in Japan, I found that the monks were very joyful. This struck me very much. At the Antaiji monastery, where I went for the first time, there was a short break after zazen and the meal. And the monks were laughing, they were really joyful, they had a really festive spirit. And yet they led a very simple life.

Now I would like to continue this *teisho* in the form of a dialogue. Are you joyful? Or is there someone who is sad at the moment and has no joy in life? No? That's already a good thing, and it makes me happy ... »

Question 1: *"Each time we practice zazen, should we feel more joyful after zazen than before?"*

Roland Rech: "You do not "need" anything! It's not "that you have to", because if joy becomes a kind of obligation, of duty, you will become sad because you will feel guilty of not being so. It can often happen that we arrive at the dojo to do zazen and that our day has started in a rather grey way, and that we are not very happy, or that we had a lot of problems during the day ... But generally, what happens after zazen is that all the preoccupations we had before are well put into perspective and attenuated, and that finally, we can find a joy we wouldn't have had if we hadn't done zazen".

Question 2: *"Sometimes in zazen we become aware of a sadness we didn't notice in daily life".*

Roland Rech: "It's true, that is to say that zazen is like a big mirror which reflects not only the thoughts, but also the emotions and the emotional background, our mood in a way, and sometimes we are not conscious of our mood. When we ask people: "How are you doing?", they answer: "I'm fine, I'm OK!" because they haven't bothered to try and find out how they really feel.

I think it's very important to be aware of "how am I really doing, of how I am now". What is the background of my life right now? Is it a beautiful setting? Or its atmosphere, if you like. If you realize that there is a sadness that you are not aware of, that you are basically in an almost depressed state, or in a slight depression, you have to be concerned about it and ask yourself "What's going on?" And perhaps realize that - deep down - you are depressed because you have lost something that you were attached to, and that you did not take the time to mourn for what was lost.

It is very important to mourn, because it is precisely what allows you to regain the joy of life after having suffered, after having recognized the suffering. It is normal to suffer. As I said earlier, Zen does not consist in becoming apathetic, that is to say indifferent. Not at all. It's a great misfortune even to be indifferent. There are people who have been lobotomized. The most famous case is that patient in the 19th century who had an accident and a piece of metal went through his skull. He didn't die from it, but very curiously he became totally indifferent, apathetic. He was living normally, but he had no emotions. And this lack of emotion was something really terrible. Emotions are part of life; they are also what allows us to give directions to our life. Does that answer your question? »

Question 3: *"There's a question that people have asked us on Facebook: what do we have to give up to see our true nature and find that inner joy? And how can we bring this joy to others?"*

Roland Rech: "How can we let go? Doing zazen! The practice of zazen itself is the source of letting go. But in everyday life too, we can practice it. Besides, it's a good exercise, first of all to be conscious and try to return periodically to ask ourselves what state of mind we're in: what is our mood and our emotions of the moment. And then, secondly, to ask ourselves: "Why? Why am I happy? Why am I sad?" and ask ourselves if there is a cure for that. And generally speaking, there must be a cure, because an emotion always comes from a thought. There is no emotion that comes "just like that". It's not as the instinct to eat, it's not the same thing. The instinct to eat comes from hunger. Emotion comes from the psyche; it comes from our thoughts.

So, emotions are also there to guide us in life, to make us aware that, when we suffer - even if we were not really aware that deep down, we were a little depressed – it is because there is something wrong. And it's important to start thinking and to analyze, to try to understand: "what is wrong?" And also, "what could I change?" From the moment we are aware of what is happening, and above all aware of the cause of what is happening to us, we can still hope and find a remedy to it, simply by changing our state of mind.

For example, the most terrible thing which obviously mourning is, cannot be remedied. You have lost a loved one, someone you loved very much, and you can't resurrect him or her. There is something relatively irremediable in this loss, in this mourning, and therefore in this suffering. But at that moment, there are still things to be done. For example, we have to remember our relationship with this person, remember what he or she has brought us, and therefore express it to him or her. Because we can talk to the deceased, in writing or verbally, in front of a photo at home. We can speak to a deceased person and express our love and wishes.

It moves me to talk about this, but it's a joyful emotion, because I practiced this for my father, for my mother, for people close to me, and I know how beneficial it is.

So, even if the greatest psychic suffering is mourning, there is a cure to it, and it is not inevitable. The practice of zazen helps us to be more conscious of what we feel, of what's happening in us, of why it happens. And above all, we become more creative instead of going around in circles in negative thoughts: mourning and hating death, "because it shouldn't have happened".

We can finally turn the situation in a more positive way, and first of all by agreeing with our right to be sad. Because you shouldn't blame yourself for being sad either: it's a stupid guilt. You have every right to be sad, it's normal ... Just be aware that it will pass, that time will do its work and that on average, the suffering that comes from mourning lasts a year or sometimes more.

Nor should this be made a criterion. There are psychotherapists who say: "If you suffer from mourning for more than a year, it is pathological". No, it's not pathological, there are people who need a year, two years, three years, ten years to grieve.

And then the fact of accepting suffering instead of repressing it frees the mind to welcome life in the here and now and find sources of joy, because we are never in just one situation. You are in one situation, but you meet others, because every moment of life is new, every circumstance

is new. Even if we always do the same work, if we have the same relationships, we can live them differently, because everything is constantly changing. And so, impermanence is - on the one hand - a source of suffering because it is a source of loss, but - on the other hand - it is also a source of joy and trust, because we know it will pass. When a mother wants to console her child because he has lost his toy, she also tells him: "It will pass".

Question 4: *"Are there limits to joy? What are they? Can one be too joyful?"*

Roland Rech: "Yes, if we explode with joy! (*smile*). No, you can never be "too" joyful, but when the pressure of joy is too great, you have to dance or sing, finding ways of expressing this joy, so that it doesn't bubble up inside, and you should express it. Besides, expressing joy is communicative. How many singers or musicians transmit joy to others, simply by their way of expressing joy! Like music ... For example, as soon as I hear the Pakistani Sufi singer Ali Khan, he immediately makes me happy, and some of his songs are extraordinary".

Question 5: *"Speaking of death, I have the impression that the suffering we have with regard to the death of others is for me selective. I know that we can suffer from death, but for example, all my life I have heard my father say: "I would like to die standing up". And I told him: "But when you die, you are lying down". And he would say: "Standing up means dying in good health".*

And when my father died at the age of 80, he was really in good health, and I didn't suffer, because I said to myself, "That's wonderful, because he died without suffering". On the other hand, I had a sister who was afraid of death and who died young and suddenly. And that's how I came to Zen, because I didn't want to have to go to a shrink. And so, I asked where I could find help. Somebody told me: "Start meditating", and I looked for some place to meditate and found the Nice dojo.

I said to the person who was my first teacher: "I came to heal myself from death, because I am suffering". He told me: "You are going to do zazen, go and sit down".

I thought I was going to be taken in hand and consoled. Then I began zazen, and I realized that, while doing zazen, another suffering was imposed on me, that is to say a physical suffering: I had to sit like that, stay like that, not speak and not look around, but to stay facing the wall. And in doing this, I realized that I was so concentrated on this zazen process that I forgot about death.

When the teacher told me that I had to let go, I told him: "Since I've been doing zazen, my whole life comes out, it's like a film". Then he said: "Don't panic, you mustn't force yourself. Just let go, let go".

Then another day, I spoke with a yoga group and people told me: "How do you do zazen?" I said, "When I do zazen, it's in silence, it's silent. We don't have someone who sings or who tells us: "Lie down, etc.". ». And they told me that it was weird and that it must be difficult. I answered them: "No, because now it's not happening any more, the film is no longer coming, and I found the joy of doing zazen. In the beginning, it was very difficult, but now doing zazen has come into my life, and it allows me to find peace ... That's it".

Roland Rech: "Sometimes it's difficult, because it goes against so many conditionings that we had in our lives. Unfortunately, we don't begin to do zazen in early childhood, so we accumulate many things in life, many conditionings, and we have to free ourselves from them. In fact, we have difficulty to free ourselves from it by our own will, but if we abandon ourselves to zazen. It is zazen itself which heals us ".

Question 6: *"I'm worried about the relationship between Buddhism and social life, political life. Buddhism was spread at the very beginning by Emperor Ashoka, who was a bloodthirsty warrior, and I wonder if he didn't establish Buddhism, once his empire was established, to obtain social peace, and that therefore it was a bit a kind of pretext. I also observe this practice that you have to accept the politicians you have, even if they are bad people, and I wonder if this is not a way to prevent the people from revolting. To what extent have politicians been able to change the laws of Dharma? And also, shouldn't spiritual and political powers be more separated?"*

Roland Rech: "It is the case now: in general, spiritual and political power are separated. In any case, in the French Republic, the separation of Church and State has been established for a long time.

But this question is a bit complicated. It's true that traditionally religions were used by the authorities to maintain the people in a state of resignation, of acceptance. That's why revolutionaries, those who really wanted to change the order of society, fought religions as "the opium of the people", as Karl Marx said.

Buddhism is not "some opium". We see monks who are quite committed in some countries. I don't believe at the moment that Buddhism is being used for political purposes, but it could have been. Fortunately, in Japan, for example, the Emperor Meiji at the time of the great cultural revolution (at the end of the 19th century) did not use Buddhism for that, but Shintoism, the religion of the *kami*. In the end, I think it's a good thing. On the other hand, we're not going to get into a discussion here on the relationship between Zen Buddhism and politics, because it would take too long.

I don't believe that Buddhism nowadays is a cause of resignation to what is happening in the social field. In Europe, and in France in particular, there are schools that are called "committed Buddhism" and I find that very good. They are very involved in social actions, and they try to put into practice the great principles of wisdom and especially compassion that are developed through the practice of Buddhism.

The only thing we can regret is that these "committed Buddhists" often neglect a little too much the practice of meditation itself in favour of social commitment, and that's not right. In my opinion, we must always keep a balance between the inner life and what we express externally. On top of that, we don't necessarily need to be involved in politics or trade union actions: there are other ways of living in daily life, in relation to our colleagues, and with others in general. All the contacts we have in social life are opportunities to express the Dharma.

In any case, it is certain that zazen should not be limited to what happens in the dojo. Zazen must be able to lead to a transformation of our daily way of life and radiate around us".

Question 7: *"How to find joy in a boring job with difficult tasks, in a stressful and sometimes aggressive daily life?"*

Roland Rech: "It's true that it's difficult in these cases, we can't deny it. But you have to try first to remedy this stress, because you alone do not have the power to change the circumstances around you. But you can try. We must not hesitate to try to improve what is happening around us and what causes suffering and stress. But above all, what we can do is work on ourselves to react internally in a different way, to be less affected by external circumstances that we don't always, or unfortunately rarely, master".

Question 8: *"You often talk about asking yourself the question: 'What's going on?' on the level of emotions, or other things that happen inside us. I think that another question we should ask ourselves (but I don't know if we talk about it very much) is: 'What can I do about it?' In fact, in zazen, when we've realized something, and we let go and tell ourselves: 'Well, that's how it is', it relaxes, we are less tense about what irritates us and so, we relax. But at that moment, if you ask yourself: 'What can I do?' it is often a source of positive inspiration to others".*

Roland Rech: "Yes: meditation and action are very important. We often have the impression that meditation makes us passive. We meditate, we reflect, we understand many things, but what do we do with what we have understood? Zen in particular is a way of acting in daily life. All the actions of our daily life can become forms of practice of the Way.

That is why, for example, after zazen, we do *samu*, which is an action. "*Samu*", what does it mean? It means working, making a physical commitment to do some service to the community. So, it's an action.

Sometimes we asked ourselves whether we shouldn't, as a Zen dojo, commit ourselves to relatively visible social actions: offering *gen mai* to people who don't have food, or committing ourselves to cleaning certain particularly dirty places, doing a cleaning *samu*. But in the end, we always came back to the fact that: "It's good, but is better to do it as an individual", and not implying "See, we are the Zen dojo" and then hoisting the Zen banner, to say: "There we are, doing good around us" (*smile*)".

Question 9: *"This morning, just before starting this workshop, we did a kito for the disaster that occurred in the hinterland of Nice. We had announced this kito on our Facebook page. And in his commentary, a user asks: 'You'll have to explain to me how an "agnostic" Buddhism manages this obvious philosophical contradiction of making a kito, which is more or less a supernatural approach ... But having said that, I find this gesture particularly welcome and supportive".*

Roland Rech: "I was like this person before, I saw the *kito* a little bit as magical, and I didn't believe in it too much. Until I became a teacher and was asked to do a *kito* for people who had been in a car accident in Argentina and had fallen into a coma.

And so, although I didn't believe it, out of compassion for the people who made the request, the survivors of the accident, I did the *kito*. And the next day, the people who had asked for the *kito* told me that the injured people had come out of the coma a few minutes after the end of the *kito*, taking the local time difference into account. This amazed me and I said to myself: "There's really something going on here, and it is worth it ..."

It was in contradiction with my previous beliefs. I fundamentally believe in the value of experience ... I am someone rather like the Buddha, i.e., rational, because Buddha is very rational: "there is suffering, there are reasons for suffering and therefore we can find remedies". It's a rational approach, and it's therapeutic ... I was not at all inclined to believe in phenomena that seemed irrational, but I finally tell myself that it's not so irrational than that.

We live in a certain world, at a certain level, but there are other levels (called in Buddhism "the invisible world") and in this invisible world, things happen in the order of interdependence that are not perceptible by our usual senses, but which function. I now believe in this, and I even imagine that - in a few years (or more) - we will find a scientific explanation for the existence of these "parallel" worlds.

Moreover, there are already theories that are currently being developed, such as the "string theory" etc., which show that there are parallel worlds and that therefore, things are surely happening at that level. It is a level which is beyond our usual perceptions. Moreover, our sense organs are extremely limited. There are things which we do not perceive, but which exist and which certain instruments allow us to measure (at the vibratory level, wave level, etc.) But we don't feel them...

So, I believe that we must not be stubborn, or put blinkers on and say: "What I don't feel doesn't exist". I don't understand how it works, but from the moment it happens, thus there is necessarily a cause that is unknown to me. And I accept the fact that it happened.

And so, if I use the *kito* as a means of help, while not really understanding what is going on, it is a matter of Faith. Faith is "believing because I don't understand". If I understand, it is not a matter of Faith anymore".

Question 10: *"Is the practice of Zen compatible with the Christian faith?"*

Roland Rech: "Yes, of course. This is a very classic question and I have answered it hundreds of times (*smile*). It is compatible for many reasons, the main one being that Christianity is the religion of universal love (because the love of Christ is universal) and that we ourselves wish to live in this state of love, of compassion.

In Buddhism, we speak of "compassion" and in Christianity of "love", but basically it is the same thing. Compassion is altruistic love.

In fact, there are many Christian religious who practice zazen. Some have written books and testified about this. The first is Jean Baptist de La Salle, a Jesuit father. He wrote "Zen meditation and Christian prayer". He was a Jesuit, but also Zen master, and he created a dojo in the South of France. Furthermore, he practiced and taught zazen. And there is even a Father Benoit in Paris who said Mass in the zazen posture.

So, it is no longer necessary to demonstrate that there is complete compatibility between the practice of Zen and Christianity. There may be certain forms of Buddhism which are more difficult to reconcile, but I don't know the details of the various beliefs. But Zen is not based on beliefs and therefore cannot be in contradiction with other beliefs: that's the principle.

Zen is really a practice and an experience, which is universal, which doesn't depend on culture, knowledge, beliefs ... but which just depends on the experience you can have when you sit facing a wall, when you turn your gaze inwards and discover the things that are happening. You can't not accept them, because they are happening. That's the experience, that's it ...

Have a good weekend. Good continuation for your practice and be happy!"