
Letter to the dojo - "Intimacy"

By Antonio Taishin Arana, January 2021

*"Our exhalation is that of the entire universe.
Our inspiration is that of the entire universe.
In this way, at every moment
we accomplish the reality of the great work.
With this mind, we make all misfortune disappear
and we generate absolute happiness".*

Kodo Sawaki

At the beginning of this year, we remember this sentence from Kodo Sawaki about breathing, this faithful friend that accompanies us all our life, from the moment we start to breathe in, until we die, with our ultimate exhalation.

When we pay attention to it and notice it, we do it consciously ... And when we don't, life takes care of it, and we are "breathed" by it. It is a beautiful practice to let go and only notice it, to observe that we are "breathed" without intervention, by our own breathing.

D. Lucio, Master of the second school that accompanied us for 8 or 10 years, is the one thanks to whom we got to know Bodhidharma and his gesture of cutting his eyelids when he fell asleep and threw them on the ground, giving birth to the tea plant. He questioned us, giving us as a riddle: "What always goes with you?" "What goes with you and expresses all your moods or your discouragement? »

I hope that we can sit down in the greatest simplicity possible, leaving aside expectations, "ideas about...", letting go, letting drop, being able to strip ourselves, to forget, to get rid of body and mind and so, - in this nudity – that we can let zazen do zazen, thus regaining our deepest intimacy.

In the "Denkoroku ", Master Keizan tells us a Zen story about Ryozan Enkan:

"Ryozan Enkan was a disciple of Master Doan Kanchi, and he was in charge of his bowl and kesa. Once they were on their way to the dojo, Ryozan noticed that Doan was going in without wearing his kesa. So Ryozan ran to bring it to him right away. At that moment, Doan Kanchi asked him:

"What's the matter, the great task we have to solve under the kesa?"

Ryozan Enkan remained silent: he didn't know what to answer. Doan Kanchi insisted:

"There is nothing more painful than to study the Buddha's Way and not understand this matter. Now ask me your question".

So Ryozan Enkan asked him:

"What is the matter, the great task we have to solve under the kesa?"

"Intimacy, one's own intimacy ", answered Doan Kanchi with his legendary kindness...

At that moment, Ryozan Enkan reached the Great Awakening. He prostrated himself in sanpai, and his tears of gratitude wet the kesa.

At then, Doan Kanchi said to him:

"Now that you have reached the Great Awakening, could you express it? »

Ryozan Enkan answered affirmatively. And Doan Kanchi asked him again:

"What's the big matter to be solved under the kesa?"

"Intimacy", answered Ryozan Enkan.

"Intimacy, intimacy," Doan Kanchi replied.

Keizan then says to us in the Denkoroku: "And now tell me, how could this intimacy be transmitted?"

And he wrote the following poem:

*"The transparency of water
allows us to see the bottom.*

*The pearl shines naturally
without the need to cut it or polish it".*

If the great task, the great matter we have to solve, is the intimacy of our original face, the face "before the birth of our parents", the "unborn", everything we have built, accumulated, or made since then, is too much.

So, we can get rid of it.

I wish you in these times when so many characters bring us things: Olentzero, the Magi, Father Christmas and Tió, Saint Nicholas... I wish for you that they bring you Nothing!

I embrace you in Dharma.