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# Nothing lasts

By Claude É Mon Cannizzo - April 2020

***"Nothing lasts, neither the good nor the bad things!"***

A poem by Dogen Zenji, to reflect on the current situation:

*"Flowers in springtime,  
Cuckoos in summer,  
The moon in autumn,  
Snow in winter, clear and fresh."*

The content of this poem is, so to speak, built only on evidences. However, when reading it, do we really understand the deep meaning of its content? Do we open up to these evidences as they are expressed? Do we recognize their depth?

"Impermanence" ... This word, which expresses the principle that nothing is immutable, is the invisible weave that composes it. Because of all the things expressed in this poem, none is eternal.

Every time the word "impermanence" resounds in our ears, we can have a feeling of melancholy, sadness or even loneliness. We tend to believe that we measure the meaning of impermanence, that we understand it as it is meant to be understood. But in spite of everything, we are - unconsciously or not - tortured by our need to keep things as they are. To keep them permanent.

But the reality is that, on the one hand, we do not accept that circumstances or things to which we are attached can change or cease (at this moment, for example, we are feeling deprived of our "freedom", limited by confinement). And on the other hand, we wish that certain things or circumstances could change or stop because we reject them (for example, we are impatient to go back to the life we led before confinement).

As in Dogen's poem, the seasons change, and each one has a beginning, a duration and an end. The end exists only because there is a beginning. (I know, it sounds like a truism.) But yet, it is our existence we are here talking about. We are so afraid of our own end that we don't see that it is only the result of our birth.

In life, nothing is ever the same for very long either. Everything comes back or returns to its source, like water that flows more or less gently depending on the ground and continues its progression to the ocean. Life is the same... This image is an invitation to live our life with strength, always keeping in mind the unavoidable reality of the impermanence that composes it.

Coming into the world is a unique opportunity to realize the nature of Buddha (of the Enlightened One). Not wasting time is giving thanks for life. Simply because each moment is important and passes as quickly as it started ...

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*"Flowers in springtime,  
Cuckoos in summer,  
The moon in autumn,  
Snow in winter, clear and fresh."*

One snap of the fingers and it's all over!

What we can also learn from this poem is that its author gives thanks for the passage of time. Not out of regret, but out of gratitude for life, Dogen gives thanks for all the opportunities it gives us to awaken. This profoundly human and ordinary dimension coming from Dogen Zenji is the expression of a great humility in the face of the fundamental reality of life. And that too is wonderful.

N.B. As in these publications I am not addressing myself only to readers intimate with Zen or Buddhist vocabulary, I would like to point out that in Buddhism, "Buddha" or "being awakened" means: "seeing life in its deepest reality", beyond duality, beyond the ordinary vision of the ego.

Take care of yourself, let us stay home.