
The Way Is Beneath Our Feet

By Roland Yuno Rech

Excerpt from the book "Le Vent Pur" (The Pure Wind), a collection of teachings on the Denko-Roku of Master Keizan

During this sesshin, I am going to talk about the transmission of the essence of Zen between Master Toshi Gisei and Fuyo Dokai, who became the forty-fifth patriarch of our lineage. Although this transmission took place in China in the 9th century, the experience transmitted is still and always true. It expresses the essence of our practice of here and now – in this sesshin.

Fuyo Dokai, who became a disciple of Toshi Gisei, asked him one day:

- The words of the Buddhas and the Patriarchs are like tea and rice, but is there something more that might help beings?

Toshi Gisei answered:

- The power of the emperor, does it depend on the emperors of long ago?

Fuyo Dokai was just about to answer when Toshi Gisei put his *hossu* against his mouth and said to him, - When you begin to think straight away you merit 30 strikes of the *kyosaku*!

It was at this moment that Fuyo Dokai was deeply awakened.

"The words of Zen Teaching are like tea and rice." In other words, they concern the reality of our daily lives.

We teach how to practice Zazen, the points of the posture, how to breathe, how to think without attaching to our thoughts, how to concentrate on walking, on *kin hin*, on the gestures of the ceremony, on *samu*...on being completely present each time in our body; accomplishing each thing totally, without expectation of personal benefit; simply giving all our attention to this practice-with-others, all our energy. This, in itself, is harmonising with the ultimate reality of existence.

It is not any kind of 'special technique' for awakening. There is nothing to hide in this teaching. Some people sometimes think that this practice is nothing other than a special technique for enlightenment – which is always somewhere else! They practice, but as they practice they are waiting for something, expecting something. Their mind is always 'somewhere else.' And so they rid the practice of its profound meaning. They are always left with a doubt: isn't there something else? Is it possible that it is just that?

Surely, satori is much more than the action of peeling vegetables or stretching the spine during zazen... Dominated by the mind that always wants to grab something, we believe in a hidden truth, as if something were constantly eluding us. But it is precisely the teaching of Buddha and all the patriarchs that we should abandon this mindset and be content to be one with each action, each practice, abandoning the idea that there is something beyond the practice.

When we understand this we can practise with faith, profound confidence; when the practice becomes really and truly the absolute thing of our life, such as it is, of which nothing is lacking...This practice then becomes real realisation; a total reconciliation with the self. Only then can we cease to be divided within ourselves, on the one hand engaged in living our lives in the here-and-now, on the other, waiting for something else...As if it wasn't sufficient to be totally present at this particular moment.

During this *sesshin*, please, totally concentrate on every action. Give yourself the opportunity to feel that you have no need for anything else! This experience is here, for all aspects of your daily life; to become also your 'absolute' life.

Like this, each of us can find true peace of mind: instead of 'haunting' our own lives like a ghost. Each one of us can feel truly at home everywhere we find ourselves and greet every day as a good day. Life, such as it is, is the true life. No need to be nostalgic, to miss things. To see this you only need to change your point of view, to stop looking so far in the distance. Because The Way exists exactly under our feet, right here right now.