

In China during the Tang dynasty Nansen received Baso Doitsu Zenji's Dharma transmission. Nansen was famous for the words, "Everyday mind is the Path." As a matter of course in our everyday lives we all see and hear and talk. We laugh and cry and get angry. That is our everyday way of being, and it's also the path to satori. That way of being, as it is, is Zen. But it's true only if we are free from stagnancy and ego clutter.

Along with Nansen's monks, the statesman-philosopher Riko Taifu did sanzen with the master. But he couldn't drop his mental baggage. Once he told Nansen that he'd read something interesting in the works of Jo Hosshi: "The heavens, earth, and I are of one root, all of the ten thousand things and I are the same body." He told Nansen, "What a mysterious, excellent thing Jo Hosshi has said! Don't you think it's superb?" Riko Taifu was quite satisfied with himself. He proclaimed, "He is one with the heavens and earth and of the same root. The mountains and rivers and cows and horses are all the same. There is nothing more than this in Zen's satori either!"

Nansen looked at the flower in front of him, a chrysanthemum, and said, "People of the world today look at this flower, they see it as if in a dream."

Do those who look at the flower really see it as one with all things? Can they see it as it is, without adding their own ideas about it, like tacking on the wonderful words of Jo Hosshi? Why do you want to be satisfied with playing with ideas? Nansen responded firmly with a stinging rebuke.

The words of Jo Hosshi express truth. But only looking at them intellectually isn't the same thing as knowing the experience for oneself. We have to know the experience of losing our own body and letting go of our thinking to know what it means to be one with the flower and not see it as a dream. If we don't, then we can't say we are one with all beings completely.

The actuality of being one with heaven and earth and knowing we are of the same root can't be divided into subjective and objective. It's not about understanding this. But when the eyes that see the world and the world that is seen become completely one and the same, then for the first time we know the true essence of life.

To merely say that we are one with the heavens and earth is far removed from the actual expression of clear original mind. "For him mountains and rivers do not appear in a mirror." In these words there's no idea about reflecting or being reflected. Only pure shining in bright oneness. This has to be experienced, or no matter how skillfully you explain it it won't be realized.

It is not about understanding words but about experiencing it for ourselves. "Am I the moon or is the moon me?" This cannot be known except in direct perception of that bright autumn moon. Where do I end and where does the moon begin? This cannot be told. Only that state of mind where the dividing lines cannot be known, that place of no dualistic division.

Dogen Zenji said it as, "Hearing it as it is, without thinking about it, our ears just as it is, the drop of water from the eaves." And Daito Kokushi said, "If we see it with our ears and hear it with our eyes it is beyond doubting, the rain dropping from the eaves."

We don't see with our eyes or hear with our ears but do both with our whole body. We hear with the raindrop from the eaves and become that drop totally.