

Sitting in the Moon-water Dojo-
empty flowers, myriad manifestations



Suigetsu dōjō ni zasu
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Am I the moon, or is the moon me,
Sitting until I know,
Peacefully becoming the autumn moon.

In this world there is usually a separation between what is "me" and what is not "me." We see these as two: the objective and the subjective, the person and the surroundings. To realize that these are not two, that in fact there is only one, is zazen. Rinzai says of this place, "In this five-foot lump of red flesh there is a true person of no rank always coming in and going out of the orifices. If you have not seen it yet--see it now! See it now!"

How about it? Have you seen the true Self? Even hearing this do you not yet understand? See it! SEE IT!!!! Rinzai is pursuing us in this way. That which we perceive as the world does not exist apart from who we are. It is only the external existence of the true person that is who we are. All of it is the true person that exists within us. The heavens and earth together are one layer of this true person. Passing through our eyes, ears, nose, mouth, body, it goes in and out. When it goes out it becomes the objective, the surroundings of our environment; when it comes in it becomes the subjective, the person. From the origin these are not two separate things. They cannot be anything but this true person of no rank.

The subjective is nothing but the objective, and the objective is nothing other than the subjective. It is always one and the same layer, coming and going as one, in and out, our pure life energy and actual existence. To awaken to this pure self is to know our true self.

Am I the moon, or is the moon me,
Sitting until I know,
Peacefully becoming the autumn moon.

To know this place where the subjective and the objective have become one, have become the same, is to know our true original self.

Even for a short while, won't you experience this ultimate point of zazen, where our true self is tasted in its mysterious flavor? The heavens and I are one; I am at one with all of Great Nature.

Is there a me because there is a moon to see? Is there a moon because there is a me to see it? Is there an objective because there is a subjective? There is no such comparison existing anywhere. Know the place where the subjective and the objective become totally one, perfectly matching and radiantly shining. There is no form of a ME other than that which is the shining of the moon's radiant beams. It is all settled in the mutual subjectivity, manifesting as one. The moon enters as my subjectivity, and I melt into the moon's shining. As I enter it, it enters me. The moon and I become one, the heavens and the earth and I become one. This truly serene state of mind where it is all one has to be tasted, or we cannot say we understand Zen.

If we understand this state of mind well, we know that we are the heavens and the earth, that we are all the ten directions and we are seeing it all from the same eye. I am the sun as it shines; I am the moon as it radiates. With this state of mind I go into society, and all people's suffering is my suffering, all people's great joy is my great joy. To see God and see Buddha is this state of mind; to know one's true Mind is also this state of mind.

The water has no awareness of reflecting
The moon has no awareness of being reflected
The lake of Shirosawa.

To be able to realize this place with no separation between self and other: this is Zen.

No matter how we analyze the contents of water, we will not be able to locate the moon there. Yet without any knowledge of the contents of water, as soon as the water is clear we can see the moon reflected there. This is true whether the water is a small puddle, a lake, or a great ocean. It can be muddy water or water in a bowl, water in a bucket or water in a well, it can be the dew on a wildflower or the piss of a carp in the pond; there is no need to analyze the contents of that water or to assess its value. If that water is clear and still, without fail the moon will find its way there. No matter how dirty the water is, if it settles and becomes still, the moon will be reflected there without fail. No matter how we search throughout our body, even if we do an autopsy, we won't be able to find a mirror anywhere, but if we do zazen and our mind settles and becomes clear, the mirror-like functioning of the mind spontaneously comes forth.

In the Lotus Sutra it says,

The Bodhisattva's shining moon comes forth in the sky
If the sentient being's mind is clear, the moon is received within

Our essence is just like this. No matter how many evil acts a person commits, no matter how ignorant or stupid someone might seem, no matter how uneducated, these measures of this person's value are irrelevant. In the world those sorts of values are important, but when it comes to the true body of Mind, these measurements are irrelevant. If our mind becomes clear, if we can enter samadhi, the moon will shine there without fail. That quiet mind, as it is, is the Buddha Nature received within.

If we are given the experience of this place of me being completely one with the world in serenity, we can know that true experience of our original nature and that the Buddha Nature is there from the beginning.

The meaning of "sitting in the moon-water dojo" is to realize this place where the moon and the heavens and the earth are all me, to know that we have never, not even once, been born or died. We realize this state of mind directly for ourselves. This huge world of the Buddha's enlightenment can be realized by anyone who throws himself away completely; then, when the mind becomes quiet, what is experienced there is this state of mind. This is not a produced state of mind; everyone is

endowed with it. Being overwhelmed by extraneous thoughts and attachments, we merely lose track of our Buddha Nature.

"Empty flowers, myriad manifestations."



These empty flowers are like the small, shiny appearances we see in the chill air of a winter morning. In the countryside of mountainous areas, we see this often. What is shining is the condensed air; there is in fact nothing there that is of substance. There is nothing there, there is shining.

A person of old said, "Seeing the Buddha Nature we name it that which is without anything cluttering at all." Our true nature is without any clutter, empty without a single thing. If we truly have realized that state of Mind of Mu, we know that there is no Mu there at all, no ignorant person to be deluded and no Buddha to be prostrated to. There is not even a place for that to remain.

Another person of old has said, "There is nothing above our heads and nothing holding us up under our feet." That place where there is nothing in the heavens and the earth to obstruct us whatsoever, and nothing below us to support us whatsoever, this is the state of mind of knowing Buddha Nature just as it is. If we know Mu we know that there is nothing to hang on to at all. That which we have been given the understanding of pierces through the endless past and into the limitless future. If we can understand this we know that these three great worlds, and the millions of years of this planet Earth, and even the expanse of the universe are all still only like a tiny bubble in the middle of the great ocean. That huge expansiveness is the state of mind to which we awaken.

This body of mine which fades like the morning dew,
This life, a dream of a dream.

Everyone in history, even the saints and great people, all fade like a bubble. Like lightning we shine brightly and then disappear--the scenery of one moment. Even if this world should vanish forever, in that infinite eternal Buddha Nature there is not the slightest disturbance. Our mind of determination, our deep vow that "Sentient beings are numberless, I vow to liberate them," that compassion which comes from our deep samadhi will not be destroyed even in the greatest crisis. To make that vow and be determined to keep it is the Path of the Buddha.

This is the meaning of "Empty flowers, myriad manifestations"—that our deepest faith comes from that immovable state of mind, and no matter what we encounter it is reborn fresh and never stagnant. It is always new and new again, transforming and moving as our deep vow and our truth. This is the actuality of the empty flowers in the air and of sitting in the moon-water dojo. Our actual experience of those empty flowers, the truth of that unmoved mind, and the truth that is manifested there without stopping, always new and infinitely born: this is the ultimate point of Buddhism. It has to be tasted and experienced. These eighty to a hundred years of a lifetime are not our entire future. Infinite time and space are one whole life, without stopping and always changing. To know this without getting caught and realizing this as our true mind is the Buddha Dharma.