

Shugyo & Bodhichitta (01-29-24)

Reading from Torei Enji's "The Whip"

If you would grasp the nature of the universal body of all the Buddhas, first you must be clear about, and then you must enlighten, the roots of ignorance in you. How is it to be made clear? You must search after your true nature. How to search? In the eye, seeing of colors; in the ear, hearing of sounds; in the body, feeling distinctions of heat and cold; in the consciousness, feelings of wrong and right: all these must be seen clearly as they are. This seeing and hearing and knowing is at the root of the practice. The ordinary man sees colors and is deluded by colors, hears voices and is deluded by voices, feels heat and cold and is deluded by heat and cold, knows right and wrong and is deluded by right and wrong. This is what is meant by the saying: "the ordinary man looks outward."

The training of a bodhisattva is: when looking at some color, to ask himself what it is that is being seen; when hearing some sound, to ask himself what it is that is being heard; when feeling hot or cold, to ask himself what it is that is being felt; when distinguishing wrong from right, to ask himself what it is that is being known. This is called the "facing inward of the Buddhas." Practicing it is different from facing in the direction in which the ordinary man looks. At first, though facing the same way as the Buddhas, the Buddha power and wisdom are not manifest in him. But still, he is a baby bodhisattva, and he must realize that he has come into that company. If he always keeps to his great vow to the Buddhas, praying to the spiritual lights and being loyal to the teacher, then one day the Great Thing comes about, and he is set free in the ocean of Own-good is Others' good.

When you get up in the morning, however much business there may be waiting, first affirm this one thought, first turn to this meditation on seeing and hearing. After that, engage in the activities of the day. When going to have a meal or a drink, first of all you must try to bring this one thought to the fore, and make a meditation on it. When you go to wash your hands, first you should try to bring this thought uppermost to your mind and meditate on it. When last thing at night you are going to lie down, sit for a little bit on the bedclothes and try to bring this thought to the fore and meditate; then lie down to sleep. This is practicing the true path of Buddhas and bodhisattvas. Whip up your enthusiasm for it by realizing how if you fail to grasp your true nature as one with the nature of Buddha, you will be lost in the wheel of continual rebirth, circling endlessly in the Four Births and Six Worlds.

From the beginning, you must learn to put your whole heart into this basic meditation, going ahead with each thought and practicing on each occasion as it comes up. Keep up the right line of the meditation: when you walk, practice while walking; when you sit still, practice while sitting; when talking to people, practice while talking. When there is no talking and things are quiet, then you can meditate more intensely. When you look at things, ask yourself what it is that you see; when you hear things, ask yourself what it is that you hear. When things get very rushed so that you easily get swept away by them, ask yourself what this is, that you should get swept away by it. And even if you do get swept away, don't give up your meditation. If you get ill, use the pain as the seed-subject for your meditation.

In every circumstance, the meditation must go forward in a straight line, however much business there may be. It is not allowable that the meditation should be vivid and clear only when the surroundings are familiar and quiet.

[...] if in the course of the day there arises some resolve at practice, of the Four Principles of the Truth-hearers, or the doctrine of the Twelve Links of Dependence of the Lone Buddhas, or the Six Perfections of the Bodhisattva Way, then in that hour, seeds of the Three Poisons will be destroyed.