



News letter 2018 nr. 2
Zen Heart Sangha Nederland
23 April 2018

How do I want to live? - Michel Sensei

Two people are preparing to receive Jukai (which will take place in the August sesshin in Holten) and so I am preparing for it as well. Just recently I was rereading Chögyam Trungpa Rinpoche's book "The Path is the Goal." He writes about working with the six Paramitas, the six Perfections or rather Cultivations, that are intimately connected with the sixteen precepts of Jukai. At the heart of all this lies a fundamental question: How do I want to live? How do I want to find peace within myself and how can I live in peace with the world around me? Working with the sixteen precepts is of such importance that Eihei Dogen writes that these precepts are "The single most important matter of our school."

But if we were to use these precepts as strict commandments and restrictions, something is going wrong. If we see them like that, there's a good chance we will just get more and more caught up in inner and external judgements and condemnations. And those will lead to just more internal and external conflicts and a deepening gap between ourselves and the world around us as well as between ourselves and our self.

Sometimes I wonder why our ideas about morality (the Paramita of Sila) are so often strongly set in black and white. It's right or it's wrong, good or bad. We have strong opinions (we often call them convictions) and sometimes I get the feeling that morality seems to be about expressing those opinions with force and to stick to them. Perhaps this is because otherwise we are afraid to get confused. Or worse: To get it WRONG, to make MISTAKES.

Question is; is the world a better place, and would we be better human beings, if everything is always clear and sharply divisible in right and wrong, good and bad, without any space for ambivalence and doubt? How much space would we have then? How much compassion and humaneness would remain?

Taizan Maezumi Roshi is very often quoted saying: "Practice is about closing the gap between yourself and your self" (which you can put in writing in different ways; a space can make a difference, although perhaps in this case it makes no difference at all).

How much space do we need to close the gap between ourselves and our self? One could argue that this is a weird question. Leaving no gap between myself and my self, requires such proximity that there cannot be any space left. But perhaps bridging the abyss that the mind imagines between myself and my self is easiest when we enter the vast spaciousness of our heart, in which self and self are seamlessly one and at the same time meet. Could anything be more intimate?

Perhaps morality can also be interpreted as cultivating a culture of awakening. The cultivation of an attitude, a way of living that essentially wishes to develop and promote awakening within and around ourselves. A culture that involves us in helping everyone on the path. A culture of trying to be open and attentive, present and available, here, now.

Chögyam Trungpa tried and he did more than most. That doesn't mean he had no blind spots. He had his traumas, made mistakes, developed addictions. He did some damage here and there. But at the same time his

entire life was one hugely spirited attempt to create, feed, promote and cultivate this culture of awakening, devoted to the well-being of all beings.

The same is true for Taizan Maezumi Roshi. He too made mistakes. He too had his faults and his blind spots. But through it all, there shines this clear light of compassion and passion to promote the culture of awakening. Through it all there is the radiance of the original intention. The intention to do good. To do good for others.

Announcements

Sesshin, 14 – 20 May, 2018

As announced, there will be a week-long sesshin in Holten. You can sign up via email to info@zenheart.nl.

Privacy regulation

As of 25 May 2018, the Zen Heart Sangha will need to be compliant with the new General Data Protection Regulation (AVG). At our website we will publish a privacy statement which will describe which data we hold (name, address), how we were informed (by consent) and how we apply these data (usage for announcements etc).

Agenda

14-20 May 2018 – Week-long sesshin, Holten
29 June -1 July 2018 – Weekendsesshin, The Hague
16 July 2018 – Summer closure
17-24 August 2018 – Week-long sesshin, Holten
27 August 2018 – Start of normal program

Colophon

This newsletter from the Zen Heart Sangha will be published three to four times a year.

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