

# CENTRE DURCKHEIM

*The way of action ... for wisdom in practice*

## *D'instant en instant*

*(quarterly newsletter of encouragement to the daily practice of meditation of full attention)*

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### ***The spirit of discipline – what does it mean?***

(Dominique Durand)

If this letter intends to encourage the one reading it to the practice of “sitting still in silence”, I should underline the immense privilege that we have of being able to renew, day after day, with the Essential, with the core of existence, with this moment where we can feel we are being acted out by life.

The term « privilege » can startle at first, but we need to disconnect it from its usual meaning, which tends to make it a personal code of exception, to rather perceive it as the result of discipline.

Indeed, is it not the most utmost privilege to have faith in discipline? Somehow, as if a constraint became a chance: to be able to renew the intensity of presence to an event can only be experienced as an opportunity...

Is it not another way to consider the exercise to reconsider discipline like a benevolent surrounding that one gives himself to be at the closest of what he lives? To remain as close as can be of a quest without a goal, and which reinvests the absence of answer in the strength of action which manifests itself in every moment. Thus, the spirit of repetition makes sense; discipline becomes a particular disposition which nourishes the activity.

And, supposing we treated the most direct information akin to a partition, which is a straight back, crossed legs, immobility? Renaud Capuçon recently mentioned in a broadcast the experience of repetition of the same Beethoven sonata, not over a few weeks, but well over a lifetime. A straight back, legs crossed (the partition) are not final or absolute, they are the quest of our entire Being toward the right expression. However, discipline never consists in considering a right expression as complete. Is it not particularly in this respect that we become disciples?

Discipline needs to remain desirable of tireless renewal, the quest itself and the goal also become sources of joy. On this matter, we can here mention Spinoza's excerpt from the « Ethics », quoted by Jean-François Billeter: « beatitude is not the reward of virtue, but virtue itself. » Comment that can be transposed as: the privilege is not the reward of discipline but the discipline itself.

Amongst all of the ideas that we have of meditation, we are particularly fond of imaginary projections born from our expectations and we do not care enough about the initial input which is stance, form, breath and immobility.

The discipline is linked to the steady endeavour of recognition of what lies under the look of things, creating a climate where it is no longer a question of choice but where it becomes a necessity. Discipline is not a constraint; it is a state of mind.

When one asked G. Dürckheim: « Why meditate? » and he answered: « Because it is time », it was not a quip. The discipline is not an answer as to Why; at least the discipline referred to here. It is precisely freedom that is a privilege. Is it not the essence of Zen to act without a goal? The privilege of not having to justify the practice, extracting oneself from the laws of cause and effect and considering it in an entirely uncommitted way. It could so be that discipline might free us from our expectations and thus from a Zazen that echoes our I... because in the service of our ego.

Discipline is thus much more than a framework; prevarication having no justification here, the daily exercise of Zazen becomes an activity entirely free of all intention and nourishes all of our daily actions which are no longer engaged by the diktat of our ego but by the freedom of Being.

Is this not a privilege?

## ***To meditate... without a goal!***

(Jacques Castermane)

*Meditation of full attention*, an exercise of absolute presence, is not a method used to achieve a goal.

*Mindfulness based meditation* differs entirely from the form of meditation which has pervaded the East and the far East for over 25 centuries.

Zen approaches reality in a pre-scientific way; perhaps even in an anti-scientific way, says D.T. Suzuki (1). While in the western world the scientific study of reality consists in considering reality through an “objective” approach (emphasizing the conscience “of”, the thought, the conceptualisation, the analysis and the reasoning), the Zen master advises his disciples to carefully consider their absolutely “subjective” interior life.

The expression “to practice *mindfulness* on the act of breathing” invites the one whom meditates to have a dualistic perspective on reality: I, who am sitting (N°1) and something, my breathing (N°2). This reflects the scientific study of reality which consists in viewing it in an objective way by constructing a polar perspective which opposes a subject and an object.

The Zen approach is entirely different. The person who practices meditation is invited to pay *attention* to the experience “IBreathIn” at this very moment, for this very moment. “IBreathIn” as a single word, without a space between the subject and the verb; for there is neither distance nor time lapse between what I name “I” and what I name “BreathIn”. The Zen method invites us to apprehend reality from the inside, how it truly is.

How many time have I heard Graf Dürckheim say: “Breathing does not exist! Someone is breathing right now. Walking does not exist; someone is walking now”.

Science offers discourses on breathing, discourses on the dissected, fragmented, fractioned body (Körper), from a dualistic viewpoint; these theories are an obstacle to the experimental knowledge of the “whole living body in its -Unity- ; of the body the Man - Is- (Leib).”

The experience IBreathIn, IWalk, ISee, IHear, ... the experience IAm is what Zen designates as the experience of our *True Nature*, of our own essence, says Dürckheim.

To meditate without a goal... is not without effect.

It is when seized by the experience of his/her *true nature* that the human can experience the qualities of being that designates a man as a human being: inner quietness, confidence, inner peace.

No need for a scanner, an MRI, an electroencephalogram to objectivize if you are really calm, serene and at peace; you feel and experience it naturally.

The confusion between the word “conscience” and the word “attention” is common to many authors whom nowadays write about “meditation”, without realizing the detrimental effects this type of confusion can involve. We all know that a word sometimes misses its target. Ideally, the words “conscience” and “attention” would generate identical actions toward a common goal. However, it is far from the case. A process of discernment which is out of reach of the people who do not have a sufficiently profound experience of the exercise which is inextricably corporal and spiritual, or that think they can teach it after only a few weeks of training (!)

(1) cf. LE NON-MENTAL selon la pensée Zen – D.T. Suzuki – Ed. Le courrier du livre

*Translation to English* : Céline Jouenne