

True Seeing

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Funyomitta told his teacher Bashashita that he wanted to become a monk. Bashashita asked him what he would do as a monk. "Nothing Special," Funyomitta said.

His teacher then asked, "What will you not do?" Funyomitta replied, "Secular affairs." Bashashita asked again, "What *will* you do?" Funyomitta said, "Sacred affairs." His teacher questioned him further: "What do you mean by 'sacred affairs'?" Funyomitta answered, "When I am tired, I sleep. When I am thirsty I drink." Bashashita said, "You already have true wisdom. I am sure that your renunciation will be extremely meritorious, and I now ordain you as a true monk."

The word "monk" comes from the Greek word "monos," which means one. To become a monk means to become one. Asked what he would do as a monk, Funyomitta didn't say, "I suppose I will polish my practice," or "I will help people." He did not say "I" at all. This true monk said, "Nothing special." Having already experienced this understanding of what it is to be a monk, he could not do anything special. The Dharma was working through him. There was no need to say, "I will do this, I will do that."

When we look at the universe as this "monos," this oneness, instead of something compartmentalized, we see the mysterious fact that death, health, and illness are one. The true face of the universe includes good, bad, life, death, health illness – all of it....

In the verse that accompanies the story about Funyomitta there is a question: "The desert of true nature does not grow the grasses of secular and sacred. Ten thousand vast miles, and not a plant to be seen. What flowers and leaves do you grow in your garden?" What flowers and leaves do we grow in our gardens? In other words, what is the scenery in our minds? Are we seeing things as they really are, without egocentric preoccupations and fixed points of view blocking our vision? Are we able to taste things fully, just being present with them moment after moment, just as they are? If we can let go of our egocentric stuff and just be present with what is here, we experience something extraordinary. The finite becomes infinite. And we take this with us, wherever we go. The flowers and trees in the gardens of our minds are purified by this experience. We do not need to talk about it; we do not need to describe it; above all, we do not need to analyze it. The point is to bring this experience into our lives; to live it....

How does our Zen training help us change? So simply. It helps us do what needs to be done, whether it's cleaning, sitting, sleeping, or eating. When we are completely engaged in our activities, we are creating some stability within the ever-changing world in which we live. There is a feeling of being rooted in this simple practice. We are no longer pulled here and there in a tug-of-war. We sit, and in our sitting, we experience the eternal, this Buddha-mind, or Buddha-nature, or whatever we want to call it, within the changing scenery. And through our practice, we maintain this mind as a presence in our lives, no matter what happens – storms, disappointments, illness – whatever happens, we find nourishment and stability. We are ready to face whatever it is clearly.