

Regardless of where and how we find ourselves in this life... all of this is workable, all of this is a gift.

- Ryushin Sensei, Zen Mountain Monastery

Last week I had the opportunity to witness a Jukai ceremony, a ritual in which students who had completed several years of formal training were invited to receive Buddhist Precepts. In preparing those present for the ceremony, Konrad Ryushin Marchaj, Sensei of the Zen Mountain Monastery gave a talk explaining what it means to relate to others and the planet from a Buddhist perspective.

"Regardless of where and how we find ourselves in this life - in our sickness, in our joy, in our ecstasy and dismay, in the difficulties we may encounter and the ease - it doesn't make any difference. From the perspective of recognizing that we are at the center of our lives," he said, "all of this is workable, all of this is a gift."

In being witness to the difficulties my patients have experienced in my 28 years in practice, and in experiencing my own times of difficulty and joy, ecstasy and dismay, this is a breath of fresh air. "We don't have to reverse, apologize for or justify what happened before," the Sensei went on to say. "We recognize the unique opportunity of the fact that what's happening right here, right now is what we can address... and that is worth addressing because it is the only thing that I can actually use."

Working with the difficulties and the strengths that my patients present to me is a great opportunity to help, not only in addressing discomfort and illness, but in helping them to enter a deeper process of healing that can profoundly affect their lives and the lives of those around them. As with the people who seek my help, I have seen time and again that the very circumstances that cause discomfort are the doorways to a deeper understanding of myself and the world I encounter every day. If I encounter what I find with honesty and compassion I have access to a kind of magic that paves the way to a genuine connection with happiness and health. Nothing that shows up in life is wasted.

I am fortunate to be continually inspired as a practitioner by witnessing the transformations that take place in my office. Patients often have contact with this through Cranio-Sacral therapy in the form of what we call a Still Point. It is an experience of profound stillness, a direct experience of the deep relaxation and unencumbered connection that resides within each of us. It is a wonderful feeling. "Just come, come to stillness," counsels Ryushin Sensei. "Come to the direct encounter with who you are and then take that on the road."

As we encounter ourselves, working with whatever we find with honesty and compassion,

we can celebrate the fact that we each are presenting and offering something unique and valuable to the world. We offer the ingredients of our lives to this wonderful mystery in every moment. "All of this is workable, all of this is a gift" says Ryushin Sensei. "A gift within which I can transform this world. What an amazing way to look, and to shift everything that will happen from this point on."



'Thus' by Maezumi Roshi

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