

CENTRE DURCKHEIM
A Path step by step

Encouragement for daily practice

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The Wheel of Transformation

The italicized quotations in this letter are taken from the book written by K.G. Dürckheim:
"The Way of Transformation – Daily Life as Spiritual Exercise."

A person engaged on the Way of Zen, seeking to rediscover his essential being – his true nature – will never cease engaging in a relentless transformation.

This transformation is the "*dynamic creation of life*" that animates all living beings, a process we can experience and bear witness to in our existence: it is a path to maturity and an awakening specific to the human being.

"Man possesses a consciousness through which he becomes responsible for his own becoming. This is both his chance and his peril, for he can fail himself."

To find one's self is to fully become oneself as a human being: the work of a lifetime of self-discovery, of practice and attention to be cultivated and developed throughout our daily existence.

Zen is not an escape but rather a dive into the world as it is. In this book – The Way of Transformation – Dürckheim speaks of "*these false prophets who promise the troubled man a cheap sense of peace, a bourgeois complacency*" and of "*these false practices who turn man away from his true centre*".

Man is thus deceived as to the meaning of his profound restlessness, which cannot be healed by seeking fixity or by reaching a definitive goal, nor by a relative wellbeing. It is the attention given to, and the respect for, the need to entrust oneself to a transformation willed by "the Great Life" which will free him from a sclerotic and reductive EGO.

To open oneself to the wheel of transformation is to discover the Path that never ends and to accept to live as a "*Person in Becoming*."

This wheel has five radiuses', five "axes of work", which leads man to break the shell of EGO, to open, blossom, and fully live his life in the world without losing himself, while maintaining contact with Being, the vital centre of his Person.

These are the wheel's five radiuses': 1) vigilance or "*our critical watchfulness*", 2) letting go, 3) union with the profound, 4) becoming new or renewal, 5) the consecration of the Path in our Daily life, or the "*Transparency of Being*".

"Our critical watchfulness", consists in increasingly recognizing what prevents the expression of our depth – the true Being -, and in regularly questioning our fixed, egocentric attitudes (postures, reactions, mechanisms...), as well as our habit of capturing everything with the mind (refusing/preferring, fixing, comparing, analysing). To abandon the ego and lose our usual markers and their illusions is a "*hard encounter with the world as it is, the abandonment of a false desire for a flawless harmony, to discover what awaits us beyond contradictions.*"

This *"beyond the contradictions"* is a path of welcoming and integration, a process of integrating all aspects of ourselves and our existence, rather than eliminating what is unpleasant or opposing everything that disturbs us.

Thus awakens the *"conscience of what is false"*, that is to say, all that depends on our rational consciousness - that is refused or blocked by it - the man on the Way must relate to what within him makes him livelier, more fluid, more transparent to his true nature: *"his life core."* This core is the centre of his foundational sensorial consciousness, also called oceanic consciousness, which responds to the forces of life that animates us and opens us to the wholeness of our Person and our existence. *"Hara, vital centre of Man"* is not accessible to the mind. To recognize that thought is a function in human existence, and not its Essence, is the challenge of Zen. To remain centred is an attitude of the whole being, to be found, exercised and cultivated through paying attention to the living body.

"The realization of the Person is the fruit of a permanent exercise. When man accepts this perpetual practice, he is on the Way."

The two radiuses, "letting go", and "union with the profound" are the foundations that allow us to emerge from the *"static order of the I, surpassed by the evolving order of Life."*

"Letting go is abandoning an attitude which pushes us to only trust what we can attain or do through our ordinary consciousness, in order to acquire a new consciousness that preserves the dynamic creation of Life." The union with the profound is to feel, integrate and serve at the heart of ourselves and our existence this permanent gesture of transformation, which is the act of being, or *"Being in action"*. To not be afraid of impermanence (everything changes all the time), to not hide behind a comfortable and fixed posture, *"such is the dignity of the audacious."* With this opening to renewal, *"man cannot cease, at every instant, to feel responsible for his attitude as well as for his existence."*

The *"transparency to Being"* is a way of living constantly brought back into play by the wheel of transformation, making us more and more available to an inner transformation, undoable, called for and willed by our depth.

The Way does not question the world, the Way does not burden us with guilt, it does not judge us, nor does it make us heroes or victims, but rather invites us to not ignore our true Essence. The Way begins from our existence in the world, often made of daily struggles and efforts to survive, to maintain our position - the domain of the ego and its conflicts; and opens us to a peaceful and vivifying existence, nourished by the recognition of our essential being, source of transformation carried by Life, the domain of Confidence and inner Calm.

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