

## HALLUCINATIONS OF KENSHO

It is with some qualms that I listen to some of the things that I am told by persons who meditate, not because I am naturally sceptical but because I fear for the sanity, and honesty, of some of the people who come to see me.

There is no doubt that kensho is a wonderful thing and it is available to everyone who genuinely wants it but it is not something that necessarily announces itself to the outside world with fanfares of trumpets and choirs of angels, even if that is how it appears to the person who experiences it, which, if it is a true kensho, is unlikely. In fact, the outside circumstances of a person who has a kensho do not change at all although everything inside him does. Therefore when someone comes to me and tells stories of what wonderful understandings he has of various scriptures as a result of a believed kensho and what changes these understandings have wrought in his life, I pay no attention at all until I see the proof thereof in his daily life.

The first thing to understand clearly about a kensho is that it is true conversion and conversion implies a drastic change in the life and habits of the person who experiences it. I have heard stories of Buddhas appearing and giving comfort to persons, or welcoming them with open arms; I have heard of beautiful lights that have flashed and cleared the minds of those who have seen them, rays and warm tints that have engulfed them and "things that go boomp in the night" that have scared the hell out of them and I listen to the whole lot in exactly the same frame of mind; the only proof of spiritual conversion as far as I am concerned is to be found in daily life and not in spiritual pyrotechnics.

This being so, it will be naturally understandable to my readers that we are soon to be moving the training part of our organization into a country monastery, sufficiently far away from our so called civilization to make it possible for me to work on my trainees in an atmosphere where publicity and worldly life does not exist thus making external show impossible.

Dogen Zenji speaks of those who are deluded within enlightenment to which I would like to add the comment that there are those who are deluded within delusion. The road to sainthood is extremely thorny, no less in the Buddhist church than in the Christian one. Any desire for external benefits accruing as a result of kensho make that kensho suspect; any sign of publicizing a kensho or a sanzen interview make both of them worthless for the simple reason that the true meditation hall, which exists within each human being, is secret and sacrosanct; within it dwells the Buddha Nature which is one with the Cosmic Buddha. He who reveals such a place to others knows nothing of its worth.

There are two occasions only when a priest or master reveals that a certain trainee has had a genuine kensho. The first is the morning after the Transmission of the trainee concerned, when it is announced to the whole community and, second, if it is held in doubt by some person that a specific trainee is qualified to be a master, then the trainee's own master may either tell or, more usually, write concerning the fact to the doubting person. Normally outside these two occasions, nothing whatsoever is said concerning kensho of individuals outside of the actual monastery. Within it the subject is sometimes discussed, either during lectures or for teaching purposes, but not as something light to be talked of without deep sincerity of heart.

After reading the above it will be readily realized why I prefer to have trainees who are willing to go at a quiet pace in training rather than the ones who are constantly having outbursts of "understanding".

Unfortunately there are far too many people who want kensho without realizing what it implies. They do not realize that a complete change of heart, life, habits, outlook, even of facial expression invariably accompanies the genuine article and an abhorrence of all publicity concerning it. A truly transmitted priest says nothing of his inner life; he does not need to for it shows in his everyday activities and by them do I judge the worthiness of my trainees and their sincerity as priests.

Reverend Jiyu Kennett Roushi  
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