

Book Of Serenity, Case 23 (adapted)

Written by News Administrator

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The case:

When students came to see Master Luzu, he simply turned to face the wall in zazen.

Hearing this Master Nansen said - "this will carry on until the year of the donkey"

Nansen then said "when students come to me, I tell them to experience the state before discrimination. However I don't even have half a student"

Commentary:

This koan is about teaching.

In Chinese astrology there isn't a year of the donkey.

Nansen is saying that zazen is eternal but also that this way of teaching is eternally deficient.

It is not just a matter of gestures.

But then Nansen, although a great teacher himself, seems to suggest that his verbal teaching was also deficient.

It is not just a matter of words.

We need to understand that neither Luzu or Nansen, or anyone else, are teachers; because the true teacher is a momentary person.

Sometimes he conceals himself within the teacher. Sometimes within the student.

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Sometimes partially in one and partially in the other. Sometimes in brightness. Sometimes in memory.

The true teacher always manifests only in this relational space. Because this relational space is without limit, likewise their manifestations.