

We practice from the perspective of the Buddha, not the self.

At the start of the Heart Sutra, there is an exchange between Sariputra, one of the buddha's historical disciples, renowned for his wisdom, and Avalokitesvara, the bodhisattva of compassion. Significantly, it is Avalokitesvara rather than Sariputra who, while sitting in zazen, realises that the five skandas are empty, and hence all suffering is relieved. You could say all suffering is relieved because Avalokitesvara, the five skandas and emptiness are all synonymous.

Were Sariputra, from the position of the self, to perceive the emptiness of the five skandas, suffering would not be relieved. The whole world would become suffering.

So, the suggestion is not that in zazen we see emptiness, but rather that the five skandas see the emptiness of the five skandas. And suffering falls away.