
Like Water



Someone asked me:
What is the practice of a Zen student?
I said:
Like water.

Water always seeks the lowest place
It goes with gravity
It takes the shape of whatever boundaries it meets
Sometimes it looks like a cup or an ocean
The sweat on your hands
The snot in your nose
Clouds
Raindrops
Lifeblood
Constantly flowing
In and out of
Your body.

We meet it with plumbing
Strong pipes with tight joints
Water is truth
Plumbing must be honest
Water can't be fooled

Water makes everything truthful
That is its pure activity
Sometimes it appears as slime
Or poison
Or tears
It goes through infinite transformations
When it dries out it appears somewhere else
It is never lost
Or gone
It is purified by coursing through rocks and boulders.

Water is drawn to the rarified realms by the sun
Gravity pulls it to earth
It has the qualities of spirit and matter
Water becomes vapor
Becomes cloud
Retreats from earth
Loses its shape
Lets go
Returns to the dusty realms
To nourish all beings
As drops
Mud
Hailstones
Snow
Dew.

The monk is called *unsui*
"clouds and water"
The *unsui* sits upright,
Doesn't lean right or left backward or forward

Gravity pulling down with all its force
Spirit rising with all its strength
Mind open, vast as space
The life force blooming like a flower
Equilibrium of all the forces and powers
The unconditional realm in the midst of
All conditions.

The lowest place is the highest place
The shape of the cloud and water person
Is determined by the direction of the wind
Water has no special shape or form
It responds to prayers
Its love pervades everywhere and is not limited by
Self-interest.

Eno says That One is like the sun
Shining light in all directions
Illuminating the way
Facing challenges
Not turning away from difficulties
With purity
Like a lotus in muddy water.