

## Presence

"S: it is not easy to truly clarify an account on this subject without actual, sustained and guided practice." (Requoted from Calvino's question)

In learning about the cultivation of presence I study the pointers, and practice being present through meditation and being more present during the day. There are so many pointers and teachers offering them lately. It's good that there is access to these teachings, but their sheer proliferation can make us - well me anyway - confused.

Re: teachings. I am increasingly drawn to non duality teachings. A realisation of no-self from philosophy study was what drew me into Buddhism and Eastern wisdom in the first place. But the teachers often make realisation sound so easy. Too easy. So either my ego wants to preserve itself through always postponing realisation to some distant point in the future after 10 or twenty years of meditation.....or I really do need that kind of disciplined practice to dislodge my ingrained habitual patterns...or is that just an assumption that can be dropped too?

Cultivation of 'not knowing' is important. My teacher asked us to look at the koan about Bodhidharma and the Emperor in a videoconference class on Monday night.

"Emperor Wu of Liang asked the great master Bodhidharma,

"What is the main point of this holy teaching?"

"Vast emptiness, nothing holy," said Bodhidharma.

"Who are you, standing in front of me?" asked the emperor.

"I do not know," said Bodhidharma."

Presence is also aided by a 'not-knowing' that lets us stay open to the possibility of new ways of being, unencumbered by past knowledge, however long we struggled to attain it. My teacher suggested practical exercises, one being to stand up and then sit down again imagining there is no seat behind. Or visualizing parts of the body as if we had no prior knowledge of them.