



LASZLO KENEZ (Dharma Gate Buddhist College w Budapeszcie)

A taste of the Zen arts: how art can be meditation and why it could be important?

Lecture and presentation

MAY 21 , 2025 at 11.30

Faculty of Oriental Studies, Hoża 69, Great Hall (335)

Prof. Laszlo Kenez writes:

„In the first, theoretical part of the lecture, I will briefly introduce the characteristics of Buddhist meditation, outline its two basic types, distinguish it from relaxation and recreation, and show how its practice can become a regular, long-term research. The aim of meditation is not just to change the state of consciousness, but to gain insights and change the way our mind works in the long term. Moving on, I will outline the general features of Zen Buddhist practice, highlighting its specificity in creating the possibility of meditation by placing the practitioner in various situations rather than by giving instructions. The next step: the primary aim of teaching the art is technical, namely to acquire a specific skill, that is to say, this learning process is cultivation, which, like tilling the soil, bears fruit. Meditation, on the other hand, has not a particular purpose, but a pure quest for self-knowledge, and therefore self- cultivation. The practice of the Zen arts is thus a voluntary admission into special situations that provide a specific opportunity for self-knowledge, providing meditative research material for self-development. In the second, practical part, I would like to illustrate some of the above, partly by involving the participants. There will be introduced the *shakuihachi*, the Japanese bamboo flute, and become participants in the process of practicing on the instrument. Thus, participants are not attending a concert, the aim is not to relax, have fun or relax while listening to music, but to be put in a situation of sharp focus, to have the opportunity to look at the inner events created by the situation. If there is interest, there is also the possibility of tasting two other Zen arts and, taking the above into account, of experiencing calligraphy and Japanese swordsmanship, which open up a different perspective from cultivation, meditation as a means of self-improvement. Finally, we can have a short discussion together to answer the question of why this could be important in today's world.”