

"I Want!"

A kong-an interview with Zen Master Wu Kwang

We used to have a different translation of the second great vow: "Desires are inexhaustible. We vow to extinguish them all." Once, during an interview, a student asked Zen Master Wu Kwang:

"Desires are inexhaustible. What does this mean?"

Zen Master Wu Kwang: "I want!"

Student: "Then how do you extinguish them all?"

ZMWK: "I want!"

Commentary: Human life is "I want!" Even to direct yourself toward extinguishing desires is a want or desire. Strictly speaking, desire or even preference is not the problem. Clinging and self-centered craving is really the core of the issue. Why do "I want," and for whom? How do I use the energy of desire to go beyond just I, my, me? When you're hungry, eat; when someone else is hungry, give them some food.

