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# The Empty Room

*Guo Gu*

3-4 minutes

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A brief teaching from a Chan teacher

By [Guo Gu](#)

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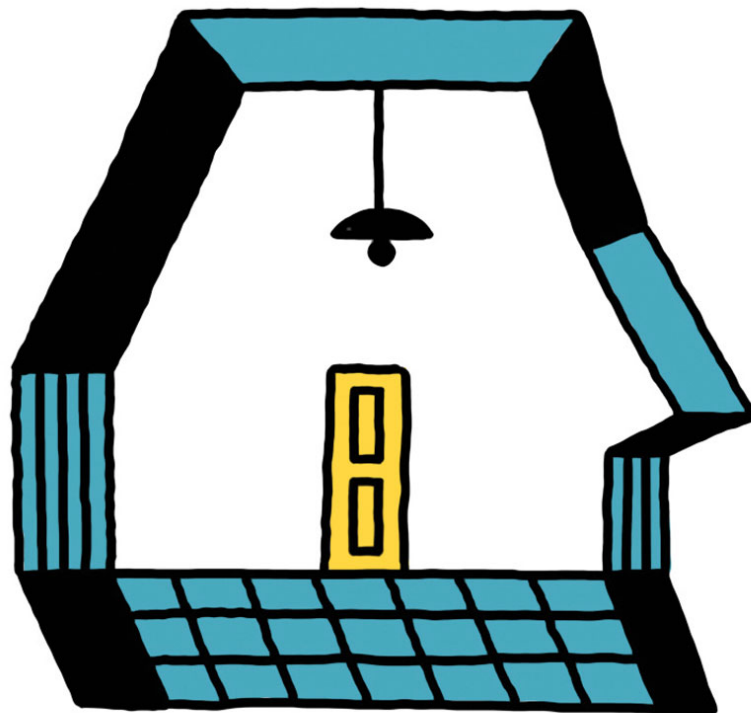


Illustration by Cristina Spanò

We are already free—we are buddhas. At the same time, we're bogged down by delusion, emotional afflictions, and negative habitual patterns, so we don't realize our freedom. An analogy for this is the room that you occupy right now. The room—its spaciousness—cannot be defined by the furniture contained in it or the presence or absence of people. Nor is the nature of the room affected by its level of cleanliness. Similarly, our [buddhanature](#) is not defined by the presence or absence of our emotional afflictions. Like the spacious room, buddhanature has always been empty, free of disturbance. At the same time, buddhanature is not a *thing* apart from emotional afflictions. It is through the vexations of our lives that we realize freedom.



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