

*A
Staff
for the
Mind*

Kokoro no Tsue

Shodo Harada

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*The beloved flowers
fade and fall*

Hana wa aiseki ni yotte
chiru

花依愛惜散

This line is a couplet with “The endangered
weeds come up once again.”

These words are taken from the writings
called the Shojusan. As long as humans
have existed, we have created things
using our ability to imagine. We have



花依愛惜散

appreciated the bounty of nature, cultivating food and gathering what is necessary while discarding what isn't. In this way we have domesticated the animals that can help us, such as dogs, cats, cows, and horses, and we have designed tools to assist us with our work. At the same time, we try to eliminate plants that are poisonous to humans, and some beings, such as cockroaches and ants, we consider bothersome and attempt to destroy.

In making a garden we raise the vegetables we need and prefer, cultivating the food that sustains human life. Through growing rice, raising wheat, and harvesting vegetables, we learn to live in accordance with nature, not just with other humans. We also seek ways to grow better and larger plants. First we use chemicals to get rid of "bad" bugs, and then we research how to achieve the same result using less destructive means.

Humans try to make special things. But in doing so we upset the balance of nature and end up with plants that are vulnerable to insects and disease. It's possible to grow huge vegetables, but when we aren't there to tend them, they die and fade away. There are many examples of this. By thinking of ourselves as central, we destroy the balance in nature.

The beloved flowers fade and fall
The endangered weeds come up
once again.

People understand the beauty of flowers. In order to have only flowers, we pull the weeds. We concentrate on growing better flowers, but the flowers' life is still short. In pulling the weeds we are subjecting them to human preferences, yet in nature flowers and weeds are equal.

There are many more examples of ways in which we try to change nature in accordance with our own existence and preferences.

The beloved flowers fade and fall
The endangered weeds come up
once again.

We have to see this very clearly. The Sixth Patriarch asked Enmyo, "When you are thinking of neither good nor evil, what is your true face?" He was asking about Enmyo's original nature.

Enmyo had chased after the Sixth Patriarch, begging to be taught the truth. The Sixth Patriarch said he would be happy to teach him, but he knew that everything Enmyo heard would be flavored by Enmyo's own ideas about being a general and having practiced for a long time. Enmyo would be thinking that the southern culture in which the Patriarch was raised, and to which he returned with the Dharma, was inferior. He would be thinking that the Sixth Patriarch was only with Goso Gunin Roshi for eight months, after all. But if you look at it like this you are making a great mistake. If you want to know the truth, you have to let go of all such ideas and of any sense of your own position, dropping them completely.

Without thinking of good and without thinking of bad, how, at this moment, do you see and receive this world? How can you take it in? This is the base of the truth. This truth can't be given from the outside, it has to be known from within. Only from within can it be directly realized. It can't be known through a small, narrow perception of good or bad. It must be in accordance with the Way of the heavens and earth. This is what the Sixth Patriarch said.

To see what is true we must let go of a narrow way of seeing. We have to let go of our selfhood, our personality, our entity, and our separate individuality. These all make us narrow and restricted, putting us in the shadow of I, me, mine and turning the world into hell. We are constantly caught on our ego, but we can never be satisfied this way. It's from this place that we are all destroying the world.

The idea that there's a me is not compatible with humans' basic constructive and positive way of being. When we think just of our own personal good, we aren't looking at what's best for all of society. We must have a vow for all beings and not

just for our own limited personal interests. This is true not only among people but in all of the natural world as well. We have to let go of our selfhood, our personality, our entity, and our separate individuality. If we can open our eye to this truth, nothing is melancholic.

As the poet Bassho said,

“If we look carefully we can see the
small flower
Blooming at the foot of the fence
post.”

Everyone looks at that cherry tree whose blossoms fill the skies, but Bassho saw that tiny bloom by the fence post. It's not just the gorgeous, easily enjoyed flowers that are superb. And our ego is not necessarily bad. But if we use it for self-satisfaction only, instead of for all beings, we're ignoring our wider responsibility. We have to do something during this lifetime for all beings. Then that greatest joy comes forth.

We have to let go of our selfhood, our personality, our entity, and our separate individuality. We have to take care of the ecosystem and not just use it for personal needs. We have a responsibility to see and save this world for all future generations and not use it up selfishly. We have to align it for all eras and not resent any amount of effort this requires.

The beloved flowers fade and fall
The endangered weeds come up
once again.

Of course we want the flowers to last, but no matter how much we dislike the weeds, we can't lose track of nature's true beauty.

*Outside of Mind there
are no things*

Shinge muhō

心外無法

This line is part of a couplet by Hogen Buneki, the founder of the monastery Tendai-zan.

Outside of Mind there are no things,
I sing of the blue mountains that fill
my eyes.



These lines are part of a longer poem about sitting on top of one of the Tendai mountains and feeling how far removed it is from society. There is no truth other than the one truth of the myriad things. Masters Hogen Buneki Zenji, Seppo Densho, and Rakan Keishin all taught in this way.

Buneki was ordained at the age of seven. He studied Buddhist doctrine and then taught, cultivating his understanding until he had a deep awakening. At that time he threw away everything and went to train with Chokey Zenji. Because he had no further experiences while with Chokey, he decided to go on pilgrimage. As he traveled, his route was blocked by a great flood, forcing him to stop at the temple of Rakan Keishin.

While talking with Buneki, Master Keishin learned that he was a student of solipsism. When the flood subsided, Buneki prepared to leave. While seeing him off, Master Keishin looked at the rock near the gate and asked, "This rock, is it inside your mind or outside your mind?"

To this Hogen Buneki answered,
"Outside of Mind there are no
things,
I sing of the blue mountains that fill
my eyes."

Master Keishin said to him, "You are setting out on a long journey; carrying that rock is going to make for a heavy load." He spoke these words as if speaking to himself. But this response reverberated within Buneki. He quit his travels and stayed with Keishin, working on developing samadhi. Eventually, he became Keishin's successor.

This transient world in which we live is always changing, always in flux. "In every thing and in every fact the fundamental reality shines."

Death knows no difference between male and female. If we want to live eternally with Buddha, we can't think of Buddha as something outside ourselves. That way of seeing is relative and not eternal. If we think god is something external, then man and god are relative and not absolute.

So what do we do? We grasp this absolute master that is not apart from us. We realize

that which creates the Buddha and the world:

Realizing the form of no-form as form, whether going or returning we cannot be any place else. Realizing the thought of no-thought as thought, whether singing or dancing, we are the voice of the Dharma.

How vast and wide the unobstructed sky of samadhi! How bright and clear the perfect moonlight of the Fourfold Wisdom! At this moment what more need we seek? As the eternal tranquillity of Truth reveals itself to us, this very place is the land of Lotuses and this very body is the body of the Buddha.

Even talking about Amidabha or the Pure Land, we have to realize that which creates these and not get stuck on the concepts.



東山水上行

*East Mountain walks
on the water*

Tozan suijōkō

東山水上行

In case 57 of the collection of koans entitled Entangled Vines, Master Tozan is asked, "From where do all the Buddhas come?"

He answers, "The east mountain walks upon the water."

Another monk asked Master Unmon, "From where did all of the Buddhas in this world come?"

Master Unmon replied, "Master Tozan answered, 'The east mountain walks upon the water.'"

Tozan seems to be saying that the mountain starts flowing down the river. But what his phrase in fact describes is being able to go beyond reason to the same mind state that allowed Setcho to express:

"As I step slowly along to the sounds of running water,

My wandering gaze catches the traces of flying birds"

As we walk along the quietly flowing river, we too begin to flow quietly, and all of the great rocky mountains along the river begin to flow quietly as well.

Is the water me? Is the scenery me? Is the flowing water disappearing? The mountain and I are one and the same with the heavens and the earth. We open into that state of mind of no mountain, no river, no self. We don't have to go to the river to experience this. We experience it every day when we cook without thinking about the pots and utensils or about the body's movements; this is how we can make the best food.

Don't play the shamisen with your hands! When your heart is quiet, you forget both your hands and the shamisen, and then the sound is born deeply within peoples' hearts.

"In all the boundless realms of space and in the separation between self and other, not a single hair can be inserted; from the limitless past to the boundless future, we are never separate from this very moment."

This is another way of describing the objective world of the universe when touched by our single-pointed subjective self. To experience this is to understand the Buddha Dharma. We see a flower and become the flower; we hear the bird and become the bird. We are one and the same with the heavens and the earth. This is where our path leads us.

The past, present, and future are never separate from right now. These mind moments arise from all past mind moments and are the source of boundlessly expanding future mind moments. When we look at history we know that our true clear mind moments are what is most important.

To know the mind of this moment, we do zazen. As the Sixth Patriarch defines it, the za of zazen is to not add any ideas of good or bad onto what we perceive. When we do this, we are not moved around by anything that comes forth; nor is our thinking small or rigid or petty. We work with all of our energy. The Sixth Patriarch defined the zen of zazen as holding on to nothing at all within our mind. We are not trying to do good or be thought well of; instead our mind is always full and quiet. It is when we think busily about difficult things that we get tired, and this shows on our faces.

As Master Dogen says, "To chase after the myriad things is delusion. To allow the myriad things to come to us is enlightenment."

If we are not attentive we are caused pain from our own delusion. We must be very careful with this.

*The hidden bird
manifests true
suchness.*

Yūchō shinnyo o rō su

幽鳥弄真如

“The old pine is talking prajna wisdom.
The hidden bird is playing with true
suchness.”



The wind in the pines, the singing of the birds--these are all the teaching of the Dharma. From early in the morning the meadowlark sings with such a beautiful voice. In this valley and in that place behind the Hondo, on the mountainside, one high voice can be heard singing, and then over there, another voice can be heard, as if matching it. Everyday, getting up early, we can hear this song. Doing training together, reading the sutras, listening to people's sanzen, each day there is not a moment's rest in the schedule, no gap at all. Sometimes, when we think about wanting to slow down and take a break, this voice of nature rings through--if we lie down and listen to this song, it is pure heaven.

We think about getting up early and taking a walk up the mountain hillside, but we have to get up at the wake-up time. It is not that we are not thinking anything, nor are we trying NOT to think anything either. It's not that we have to get up at this certain time, but we want to rest from this busy, busy everyday schedule, stretch out our legs, and listen to the voice of the meadowlark in the mountains--this is heaven.

We don't need to make a special trip to view flowers--we can see them everywhere we go. It's not that we don't see them: in the garden is the plum with its leftover flowers, and the cherry blossoms are in that hiatus just before they open. We can already see the face of the coltsfoot blossom, and here and there the green sprouts shoot up. In the warm spring wind, life's energy can be clearly felt in the breeze.

In spring we have the one hundred flowers,
In summer the cool breeze,
In autumn the full moon
And in winter the sparkling bright snow.

In the spring there are many kinds of flowers: the cherry blossoms, violets, clover, and dandelions--these are heaven. In the autumn every place is bright with colorful golden leaves. Isn't this paradise? After

working we sit down in the shade, and a wind chime rings outside the window. It's as if the cool evening has come right to us. In the winter, the snow makes everything silver in one solid layer.

If our mind is clear, anytime is the best season. If we're not angry and resentful and full of negative energy, this is always the best season. The world prepares this for us, but because our mind is full of ego and desires we aren't able to know it. If we hold on to nothing, we awaken to the wisdom of Prajna and widely open our original eyes of truth. We open them, and there are not even any sentient beings to awaken, only this place as it is. This very place is the land of lotuses.

This very truth as it is. When we know this, everything is wondrous. As it says in the Kannon Sutra, enjoying our daily work and toil, we know each day's joy.

The mountain--Buddha's body.
The torrent--his preaching.
Last night, 84,000 poems.
How, how to make them understand?

These are the words of Sotoba.

Dogen Zenji also said that if our mind is holding on to nothing at all, we'll always return to our true self, and then everything we see, hear, and feel is new and is true.

The hidden bird is playing with true suchness.

Here the ultimate truth of Buddhism is found.



*I sit on a crag, and
clouds form in my robe*

Ishi ni zasureba kumo
nō ni shōzu

坐石雲生衲

This is a line from the Cold Mountain poems.

There is one who lives deep within those mountain peaks, where beautifully colored clouds swirl and embrace the mysterious rock. This is the abundant world of Kanzan, on Cold Mountain.

This is expressed in the Song of Enlightenment as well. In our mind there's a clear place where we forget our body and forget the world, and they become one and the same. We taste this flavor and, letting go of any personal subjectivity, become the world around us completely, one layer with the heavens and earth. Is it because we are a subjective being that the heavens and earth exist? Or is it because there are heavens and earth that we can be a subjective being? When everything is one, no dualities remain.

Am I the world or is the world me? "The world enters me; I enter the world." We are one with heaven and earth; the heavens and the earth are us. We have to experience this, or we can't understand Zen. And if we do experience this, then we see that everything in the heavens and the earth is who we are, that every single thing in the ten directions is our one big mysterious seeing eye.

The whole universe is me. I'm the sun and the stars shining. I'm the wind blowing in the pines and the river bubbling over the rocks--all of the world is me. In this state of mind the river's voice is the very tongue of the Buddha. That is paradise, the endless eternal world.

Seeing the Buddha is to become this. Seeing the true self has to be like this, and in this state of mind is limitless liberation. Forgetting time and space, we shine as the sun and moon and sound as the pines' wind. This must be experienced. It's as if the stamp is placed clearly in its place. From here, no questions remain.

The world and I are this serene, still place. Our mind has touched its source and the source of all Buddha Nature. The heavens and the earth are one and the same; it's my root as well. Separated from this root, there is no heaven or earth, and there is no heaven or earth separate from me. I hear the gurgling of the valley stream. The world and I are eternal; there's no such thing as holiness or ignorance. Religion has to be the experience of this.

To gather merit is not the way of deep realization; we have to know ourselves directly.

When we are doing yaza, the mist arising from the valley is our body, our child, our robe; the dew on the pine is our sleeve. We go on our begging rounds, and the dew on our sandals is our body's robe, and the sun and the moon are the Buddha Nature's adornments. We must experience this state of mind directly, diving into the Buddha Mind's infinite magnanimity. It's not about merit and morals. To get caught there is to miss this truth.

*On the green
mountain, not a speck
of dust*

Seizan tennai o zesu

青山絶点埃

One tall mountain with not a single tree anywhere: this brilliant scenery is being poeticized here.

In Nara there is a temple named Tsubosaka where a famous Kannon is honored. From ancient times, blind people have gone there to have their sight restored. It's believed that special merit can be gained by praying to this Kannon.

Sawaichi and Osato were an elderly couple. Sawaichi was blind from birth, and he was so grateful to Osato for having married him. Osato took care of him, and every day he was thankful to have such a fine wife.

But Osato started going out every night. She had heard that if you prayed at this



青山絶点埃



Tsubosaka temple it was possible for someone to be able to see again. Osato wanted only to help Sawaichi to see, and she vowed to go the temple every day for one hundred days. After having made this vow, she did not miss one day, making up reasons to explain to Sawaichi why she was going out.

She believed impeccably in one straight line, wanting only to give her husband sight. He did not know this, and because she left every day to go pray he started to be suspicious. He thought about how hard it was for her to be with someone so blind, and he began to suspect that she had a boyfriend outside the house whom she was going to see.

He started to doubt and dwell on his fears and was depressed all day every day. Many days passed, until Sawaichi couldn't stand it any longer and attacked Osato. At first Osato was quiet, but when she saw how miserable he was, she told him what she was actually doing. "In fact, what I'm doing is trying in some way to help you see! I have been going with my vow to Tsubosaka's Kannon for one hundred days." She told him that she believed he would be able to see, and on the hundredth day she explained her vow.

He said, "You were doing that for me? I'm so sorry! Your caring for me is so deep every day, how could I doubt you? I am so, so sorry for what I thought and that I could have any such ideas!"

He expressed his gratitude and asked her to take him to the Kannon. She was happy to have a chance to go to see the Kannon that day and took Sawaichi with her to the temple. There is a tall waterfall there with a whirlpool at the bottom. From this waterfall Kannon comes, and those praying to her stand nearby. When they reached the temple, Sawaichi asked Osato to return to their house to get something for him that he had forgotten. While she was running this errand for him, Sawaichi was stricken with such grief at her needing to take care of him, and at his bad karma, that he decided that she would never be free while he was alive and that he was depriving her of her life. With this thought he threw himself into the waterfall and the

whirlpool below and committed suicide. When Osato returned she had a deep sudden intuition of what he had done when she could not see him but found his staff, a bamboo stick, at the top of the waterfall.

She cried, "If I had just apologized! If he is dead, I don't want to be alive in this world." And she threw herself into the whirlpool too.

Just then Kannon appeared and received her. When Osato came to, there was Sawaichi, and his eyes were open and seeing! Seeing this world for the first time, Sawaichi was in deep wonder and amazement. When he saw Osato's face for the first time, he asked "Who are you? I meet you for the first time!" They had played together as children, and she had served him all those years, and now he was meeting her for the first time.

The story of Tsubosaka is not about earning merit but about not being able to see our own truth. It's as if we're spending our entire lives behind a veil. When we can't see our inner places, the whole world lacks clarity and brightness. We have to be able to see our deep mind and let go of our cluttered thinking; only then can we touch our own true Source. For this we struggle and make effort.

In order to open Sawaichi's eyes, Osato put everything on the line and vowed to make a hundred-day pilgrimage. When our mind's eye opens, it is as if we're seeing for the first time, and suddenly, the ten thousand things are clear--the grasses, the trees, and the flowers are all enlightened together.

When we forget our hate and resentment and our bad thoughts and see everything through clear and bright eyes, forgetting others' faults and our own failures, we receive everything with warm compassion and living is so easy and comfortable!

It is truly "On the green mountain, not a speck of dust"--not the scenery over there somewhere. If our mind's eye is open we become this state of mind as a matter of course. We remain fresh and new every day, living each day with new wonder--that's a true religious life.



碧潭清皎潔



*Clear and bright in a
pool of jade*

Hekitan kiyoku shite
kōketsu tari

碧潭清皎潔

This is a line from one of the Cold Mountain
poems:

My mind is like the autumn moon
clear and bright in a pool of jade
nothing can compare
what more can I say

My mind is like the clear autumn moon,
whose brightness pierces through the air

and reaches to the very bottom of the deep pool. The sky and the water are so transparent that one beam of moonlight can pierce through all of it. This is my state of mind, which can't be compared to anything. If you think there's something you can compare it to, that is limited mental understanding and not the thing itself. Our clear mind can't be expressed in words. This is what Kanzan is saying in his poem.

Our minds are full of great accumulations of thoughts about our past experiences and feelings. These are all gathered in our awareness. But their weight presses on our mind and twists us in various ways. In the famous words of Dogen Zenji: "I went to China and learned nothing at all, only that the nose is below the eyes, and about this, no matter what anyone says I cannot be deceived. The sun rises in the morning and the moon sets in the west, and there is a leap year every fourth year."

Morals vary according to culture and era and location, but the Dharma is something that is believed by all people anywhere and in all times. The teaching of the Buddha is this law that all is in flux. We are born and so we die. This isn't about religion or race but something that's true for all people. It just happened that it was the Buddha who realized this truth, and thus this wisdom is called the Buddha Dharma. But even if the Buddha had not been born or discovered this, it would still be true. Just like the laws of math and science, it's true whether anyone believes in it or not. But how science differs from the Dharma is expressed clearly by Rinzai:

"The true Dharma extends in ten directions and has no fixed form."

This is where Buddhism is different. From the time of the Buddha the true way has been taught. He divided our awareness into eight strata, representing the various levels of awareness. The functioning of our five senses is the fifth stratum of awareness. The sixth is the roots that precede those senses. The seventh stratum is what connects the functioning of our senses with the roots, while the eighth is the collective awareness. These various types of awareness are all set into action by the

sixth stratum, which gives the orders, which are then organized by the seventh stratum. But the seventh consciousness is what leads us into mistakes of perception so often, under the influence of ego and personal preferences.

The fifth through the eighth strata can all be clarified with zazen and purified with the light of kensho. When we do zazen, the wisdom of seeing all equally can come through the five senses, while through the sixth awareness stratum we experience the miraculous clear bright mirror wisdom, and in the seventh we find the wisdom that doesn't discriminate but sees all people and worlds as equal and beyond self and other. The eighth is the clear, bright, open, mirrorlike mind made transparent.

Hakuin Zenji said about this that in the clear sky of samadhi we can experience these four wisdoms.

In this way the sixth stratum can be aligned, and then our eighth awareness, which stores all of our past experience, can function like a clear mirror, no longer fogged with past experience. While having that past experience, we can be clear in our ability and our seeing in each moment. That is where the functioning of the Buddha is born. Our ignorant mind is transformed into the four wisdoms of the Buddha and we can see through the mist and clouds of our desires and know our original mind. We can see how we are all Buddhas from the origin. Even if for a brief moment we are affected by our ego, if our mind is clear and aligned we see that from the beginning we have the same mind as Buddha. "Don't mistake the clouds for the moon, behind them is the original mind in the clear sky!"

My mind is like the autumn moon
clear and bright in a pool of jade
nothing can compare
what more can I say

It is this state of mind.

When we realize this clear mind, we realize our true state of mind. There is nothing in the Buddha Dharma but this.

*Filling my bucket from
the spring,
the moon enters too*

Izumi o soreba, tsuki
hei ni iru

添泉月入瓶

Rinzai teaches: "Sometimes I take away the person but do not take away the surroundings; sometimes I take away the surroundings but do not take away the person; sometimes I take away both person and surroundings; sometimes I take away neither person nor surroundings."



添泉月入瓶

This world has subjective and objective aspects, and our life is a combination of both. Self and others, self and world, self and society, objective and subjective. If we feel our own body as a body, it's also both subjective and objective. We always have an ultimate need to know the absolute subjective, the subjective within the subjective, the fulcrum of the truth.

If look at it meticulously, we end up with the fine divisions Rinzai outlines, but in the most basic way of looking at it, that which is me is the subjective and that which is an other is the objective. In all of their possible combinations, these are all there is to life. For us to think of ourselves as that which is subjective, relative to the other which is objective, is the common way of looking at things.

In Zen we look at the self and the world as one and the same, a united whole. Even as we try, we can't divide it. Do flowers exist because we see them, or do we see flowers because they exist? Are flowers beautiful because I can see them, or do I see them because they are beautiful? Do I see the flowers because I have eyes, or does my ability to see manifest because there are flowers? We can't divide the subjective from the objective.

When the subject and the object become one and the same, that is the experience of realization. When we become one with the heavens and the earth, we know the person of no rank in this five-foot lump of red flesh. "It's always coming and going, in and out of our orifices."

This is how it's taught: It is always coming and going, becoming the river, becoming the mountains. When it goes out it's the scenery; when it comes in it's our hunger, our ideas of beauty and ugliness. These aren't different awarenesses but one and the same awareness. When our mind and body move together in oneness, when we move in total oneness with the heavens and the earth, we can know that mind of not thinking of anything apart. This is the experience of Zen.

We see the flowers immediately as ourself; we hear the bells ringing as ourself simultaneously; we know the mountains

as ourself immediately. The river is ourself, and so is the other. We see that from the origin we are all one and the same. This experience is Zen. If we divide this into four aspects, then we have the four occasions as Rinzai puts them:

"Sometimes I take away the person but do not take away the surroundings; sometimes I take away the surroundings but do not take away the person; sometimes I take away both person and surroundings; sometimes I take away neither person nor surroundings."

Sometimes we have the subjective taken away. We may say we are working for others, but if there is a self and an other separate from the self, then it won't work. Whether the other person is suffering or miserable, happy or joyful, we've got to become that state of mind without our own existence showing its face in any way. We can't leave any trace of ourselves.

Another time we are without any objective, becoming the subjective completely, like an actor on the stage. If actors carry themselves around they can't act, or if musicians pay attention to the audience they can't play--the audience is irrelevant. If musicians aren't completely absorbed in the piece they're playing, it isn't a performance of truth.

"Sometimes I take away the person but do not take away the surroundings; sometimes I take away the surroundings but do not take away the person; sometimes I take away both person and surroundings; sometimes I take away neither person nor surroundings."

Sometimes there is no person no surroundings; all is gone, both subject and object. Doing zazen we lose track of the zendo and of self. We lose ourselves when cleaning and forget that we are cleaning, forgetting ourselves completely. The same is true when reading a book. We have to experience the world this way.

Sometimes there is both subject and object, each with its values clearly manifested. We have to live in this world too.

Filling my bucket from the spring, the moon enters too.

The moon in the deep spring is so beautiful we are pulled right into it, and that moon itself is in a vessel that becomes this moon's very purity and clarity. The moon is me and I am the moon. We enjoy this world completely.

*We speak
to our hearts' content
of mountain clouds
and ocean moon*

Kataritsukusu san'un
kaigetsu no jō

話尽山雲海月情

This line comes from case 53 of the *Blue
Cliff Record*.



話
尽
山
雲
海
月
情

The great Master Baso Doitsu had eighty-four deeply enlightened disciples. Master Baso (707-786) lived during the Tang Dynasty. One day when he was walking with his disciple Hyakujo (720-814), a startled duck abruptly flew up into the air.

“What is that?” asked Master Baso.

Hyakujo answered honestly, “That’s a duck.”

Master Baso Zenji kept up the questioning, “Where did it go?”

“It flew over there.” Again, Hyakujo replied honestly.

But Master Baso twisted Hyakujo’s nose and said, “It has not gone anywhere!”

In this way Baso gave the final conclusion. He was saying that the true mind with which we are born is not something we can know by saying this and wondering about that. If the true mind is to be expressed in one phrase it would be the phrase of Setcho Zenji: “We speak to our hearts’ content of mountain clouds and ocean moon.” In this way Setcho Zenji spoke the truth of the Buddha Dharma.

This line originated in a poem by Zengetsu Daishi, the successor of Sekiso Kyoshi Zenji, in the lineage of Seigen Gyoshi. Zengetsu’s rich and abundant poem has been the source of inspiration for many zen monks, and Setcho Zenji chose to include it with this koan. Because there are clouds, we know the depth of the mountains; because there is an ocean, we know how brightly the moon shines.

In the *Lotus Sutra*, Kasho Sonja tells the story of Choja Guji, a wealthy old man whose son had disappeared. He wanted to be able to leave his riches to his son, but he didn’t know how to find him. One day, he saw a beggar and knew immediately that that was his son. The beggar had been fed and then chased off by the old man’s staff. The old man asked the young people of the household to go and bring the beggar back, and give him the most menial of the chores. Over the years the master of the house increased his son’s responsibility within the household. Finally, he gathered

everyone and announced that this was his son, beyond any doubt. He planned to leave all of his possessions to this young man, and he asked everyone’s support.

It has always been true that from the origin all sentient beings are essentially buddhas. And it was Hyakujo Zenji who said, “Whether coming or going we have nothing to attain.” As for Baso Zenji, right in the palm of his hand he was able to awaken all beings. The wild duck of Master Baso and that of Hyakujo are the same. But Baso’s duck is the one for which “in all the three worlds, all beings are my children; in all the three worlds, all places are my home.”

The calligraphy in the tokonoma is my joy. The flowers of the season are my joy. The hot water kettle is my joy. The hot water, the tea bowl, the tea whisk, the tea preparation, the tea making master, the guest—all are so full of joy. This is Baso’s duck.



桂輪孤朗碧天濶

*The moon, bright in
the great blue heavens*

Keirin hitori hogaraka
ni hekiten hiroshi

桂輪孤朗碧天濶

This bright circle, the moon, is compared here to Buddha Nature and the world of awakening. The expansive spaciousness described here is the world of clear mind.

Our mind is truly round and endless in its spaciousness, yet it's always shining. This is the mind with which all are born. The ego comes in with habits and it limits us, but our original mind isn't limited in any way. To realize this is satori, and to believe in it deeply is to be a person of true faith.

That mind like a mirror, wide open and clear, with no edge, is the mind of all beings. In Buddhism it is called the great round mirror-like Mind, and this is our mind from the origin. To awaken to this mind is satori.

A mirror, no matter how small, receives everything it encounters. If we hold a mirror up to Mount Fuji, then Mount Fuji enters it. If we put it near the Pacific Ocean, the Pacific Ocean is reflected in it. The sun, the moon, and the millions of stars can all be reflected in it. The whole universe can be reflected in it.

This wide spaciousness is the quality of a mirror and of the mind of human beings as well. A mirror is larger than our human eyes, yet Mount Fuji, the river, the sun, the stars, the moon, the whole universe can still enter our eyes. This huge expansive limitless space is our mind. To understand this is satori.

Our ego awareness is something that is fixed and limited; it originated somewhere, sometime after we were born. It was never there from the beginning. Originally we were just like that mirror, pure and clear with infinite spaciousness. This is how our mind was at our birth. In that space the moon and the stars and the sun were all received; we accepted all things as one being and that the world is me as it is and I am the world as I am. This huge space is our mind, our most splendid being and existence.

If something comes in front of a mirror it is reflected just as it is. A man comes, and a man is reflected; a woman comes, and a woman is reflected exactly as she is. If an old person comes to the mirror, an old person is reflected; if a young person comes, a young person appears in the mirror. If a sick person comes, then in the mirror we see a sick person; if a poor person comes, then in the mirror we see a

poor person.

That which is in front of the mirror and that which is reflected in the mirror are 100 percent the same. There is no separation whatsoever between self and other. This kind of spaciousness is our original mind, with warm compassionate love for each and every person. This wide and warm mind is humans' true original quality.

People are splendid for this reason. In our mind we are huge and broad, like the full moon of the autumn.

"If there are one thousand bodies of water we have one thousand moons shining in them." If there are one thousand rivers there are one thousand moons reflected, and if one thousand people make their hearts as clear as still water, then there is Buddha Nature coming alive in one thousand minds. The moon that is reflected in the thousand rivers is the same moon, and in that way we all have one and the same Buddha Nature.

A mind as clear as the sky without one bit of cloud is truly "The moon, bright in the great blue heavens." This place is manifested here.

In the *Tanni Sho* it's written that while our body will decay, the mind does not decay whatsoever. The moon will be reflected in the river's water even if the planet is destroyed. This awakening, which is beyond birth and death, which manifests humans' eternal truth, is satori. This is true deep faith and belief.

With our mind open, we forget our own concerns for ourself and are concerned only with the happiness and needs of other people. This becomes our own joy and great happiness. We know spontaneously the state of mind that seeks only others' good fortune and joy. Even into the small lens of our eyes the entire universe can enter. We realize that since everything can enter into us, we are everything. Every single bit of it is us. We can then know this place where there is no longer any difference between self and other. This is the wisdom of the Buddha. We are the whole world, and the whole world is us. The moon, bright in the great blue heavens, is this world of complete oneness

of subjective and objective.

We know that we and the world are completely one, and there is no way for us to do anything other than to love the whole world completely. This is the compassion of the Buddha, and compassion and wisdom are the essence of Buddha Nature. To understand that we are one and the same as this Buddha Nature is satori.

It's taught in Buddhism that this one which is me is the one which is the whole world: all things are my awareness. I am everyone, and everyone is me. It all settles right there. My one is a one for all people. This is the philosophy and doctrine of Buddhism.

Thinking that one is one, that my life is for me, is not the way of Buddhism. But so often people live to satisfy only their own hunger, living their entire lives in this way.

This is so sad and miserable! If only even one more person can be glad and joyful to exist! If even one person can be beyond profit and gain and loss, the difference is immense for everyone who comes into contact with that person.

Nor is it the truth to say to do what is always good for the whole and never be concerned with the individual. This is also not the whole picture. Each person's splendidness has to be recognized and acknowledged. When the whole is for the purpose of each and every individual, that kind of life is for the first time healthy.

"All of the people in these three worlds are my children and all the places in these three worlds are my home."

This is my world, and everyone living in it is my child. This is how the Buddha taught. These are not just empty words but the Buddha speaking from his enlightenment about how things are, as they really are, just as they are.

To know this state of mind of realizing the world as my world is truly the wisdom of the Buddha. Because there is nothing separate, nothing that is not me, we love it all completely and can't do otherwise. This is the wisdom of the Buddha.

When we know our mutual mind without

any attachments, no matter what might happen we can receive all of it. The wind blows, but the moon in the heavens is unmoved by it. It has been expressed in this famous phrase as well.

No matter what wind blows, whether we're praised or insulted, we are not moved around by it. If we're criticized we don't resent it, and if we're successful we don't get conceited but stay in this wide-open abundant state of mind. If we fail or make a big mistake we don't disparage ourselves, and if we make a great success we don't get excited about it. No matter what problem might come our way, we are not moved around by anything. That we can know this huge abundant spaciousness is the Buddha Nature's great strength.

In this state of mind we love everything because there is no difference between ourselves and others. This warm love comes forth spontaneously, and this way of being a human is clear and eternal.



寒松一色千年別

*The winter pine,
the same color,
unchanging
for a thousand years*

Kanshō isshiki sennen
no betsu

寒松一色千年別

This is from the *Rinzai Records*, where it is found as half of a couplet:

“The winter pine, the same color,
unchanging for a thousand years
An old peasant plucks a flower,
spring in a myriad lands”

In the past, people marked the boundaries between their properties by planting trees. These trees would form a path through the mountains, and what a sturdy and fine sight they afforded. Even from far below, they provided a stable line for vision, standing ready through any era. These boundary trees were never used for lumber or building material and so they were never cut down. In the same way people who reach an advanced age and know the struggles of life say, "Entrust! Do not be worried and confused." Yet even though they are beyond worry and confusion, they are not without a goal.

From ancient times Buddhism has always trod the Way, while making offerings and bowing down deeply to those who are revered and respected.

Old people of the path are to be revered and respected even by the high emperor and are considered to have four special merits: brightness, power, beauty, and joy.

As long as there are abilities and possessions to get hung up on, the ninety-eight year olds will say to the fifty and sixty year olds, "You're all still runny nosed little brats--life starts from here!"

The first virtue is to be still and dignified and yet know, "I will lose to no one." The second virtue is power; the third beauty.

We let go of desires and are thankful for all the grace in the world and offer our Buddha Nature to all beings. We gassho in grateful appreciation, allowing no gaps. Our mind clear, our life aligned, no seams in our existence.

The fourth virtue is to be joyful. Those who have faced the greatest perils and suffered the deepest pains are the ones with the face of a living Buddha. When we see their faces our worries and concerns fly away. We don't have to ask them anything; we become peaceful just from being around them.

"An old peasant plucks a flower,
spring in a myriad lands."

The old person has walked a life deeply.

When we are still in the springtime of our youth we can't know this mountain-tree state of mind. Each human being is full of a hardened lump of ego; letting go and allowing it to fall away teaches us how to become a human.

If we don't spend our time running after what we want and instead quietly purify our being, then in every day our practice becomes complete. We live long lives without thinking about it. The longer we live, the deeper our samadhi in zazen is. We see whatever arises externally, but we aren't moved around by it; deep confidence arises from this.

When we know our original mind and are not moved around, we become clear and pure and realize spontaneously that this body, as it is from the origin, is the body of the Buddha. With this mind we know the spring that arrives in all countries.



*An aged pine,
a floating cloud*

Shōrō unkan

松老雲閑

These words are from the preface added to the *Records of Rinzai* in the Sung dynasty by Babo, who wrote an exquisite poem in homage to Rinzai. In this preface Rinzai's later years are described with these words:



“Still using the copper pitcher and the iron bowl, he closed his room and stopped his words.

As the pines grew old and the clouds idled, he found boundless contentment within himself.”

The copper pitcher is the metal pitcher that is used every day for washing the face and rinsing out the mouth; the iron bowls are for food, the eating bowls used for each day’s sustenance. Rinzai had no place to go to outside; keeping only those everyday things we use all the time, he closed his room and stopped his words. Everything having to do with his students as well was now left up to those coming after. There was no more training to be done; for Rinzai all activity was finished.

An aged pine, a floating cloud

This is a truly abundant state of mind, one not caught on anything, not seeking anything, not having to do this, or needing to do that, one with no place to be stuck. To possess this kind of mind is to be like a fool, like an idiot. Babo praises Rinzai in just this way.

An aged pine, a floating cloud

Rinzai is fully expansive, having done what needed to be done and being finished with it. The Buddha as well, in the *Yuikyo Sutra*, said that he had done everything he could and left behind as many karmic connections as possible. He had completely done everything he could do. Only someone who can truly say this can know this ultimate and luxurious state of mind. To leave things up to those who follow and let go of it all and be completely in this elderly state of mind--this is the pine and the cloud, doing it together, finishing it, and celebrating it. These symbols are very celebratory.

Rinzai’s wind was often known as that of a warrior general. His whole life he taught with a great, full, huge energy, yet, at the end, in his elderly days, he was known to

be so silent, making no waves and living quietly and simply.

Rinzai’s first karmic connection also involved a pine. Shortly after he arrived at the temple of Obaku, Rinzai was deep in the mountains, planting pine trees alone. In those days people seldom rested; they were always doing something. Just sitting is not zazen. The need to be always functioning is expressed so well within the Hyakujo lineage: “One day of no work is one day of no eating.” This is a manifestation of this wind of the house of the Hyakujo line.

As Rinzai was planting pine trees, Obaku appeared and said to him, “If you look around at these mountains, there are pine trees all over the place. There are already so many trees, why are you planting more here?”

“You don’t need to plant more trees, there are pine trees all over the place!” Obaku was testing Rinzai’s inner depth.

Rinzai answered, “One reason is for the grounds of this temple to be even more removed from society in order to raise good people of training, and another reason is to serve as an example to those who come after me.” In this way Rinzai spoke. In Zen temples ever since then it has become popular to plant pine trees. In every Zen temple we can see them. Brightly colored flowers are not planted. When the trees become ancient, people can say this pine was planted by Rinzai and remember something important and deep. In this way even those who are no longer working have left something of their essence behind. This was another reason Rinzai planted the trees, although of course he wasn’t advertising himself. The Dharma is like this. There is a great tower left where the Buddha died, and at that place it’s as if he’s still here--his huge state of mind can still be tasted.

This wasn’t about Rinzai advertising himself but about expressing for future generations a place where there is no ego or idle thoughts about oneself. He’s saying very clearly that if you are seeking and needing and you think that is the Buddha Dharma, you are mistaken! Rinzai held a

spade and was digging holes for planting trees.

Rinzai hit the spade on the ground twice as if to say, "Oh, I said something so unnecessary. I said a tree would be planted for our descendants, but I can't be attached to that." Doing what we have to, without leaving any ideas about it behind, is an important part of being well ripened. To get caught on doership is to be truly unripe. To do it and then sweep it all away is the advanced state of man's way of being.

Obaku then said, "You say quite a good thing. But that functioning, from whom did you receive it?"

He was saying, "You have been hit so many times by these hands of Obaku, haven't you?" Without this pain and suffering and seriousness, it would not have been that same Rinzai. Once again Rinzai hit the ground twice. He gave a great cry as if to say, "Don't hold on to that forever! We can't go on thinking about how much we made efforts and how hard we struggled!" We have to go beyond that struggle and those efforts and offer that truth to the many people in society and raise many people of training.

An aged pine, a floating cloud

This is the mind where motivation and great efforts for society have been put away, entrusting to the next generation that which must be done. Otherwise, there is no worth to life and we are just running around busily and hurrying here and there. That can't be all there is to life. Yet without making those efforts when we are still young, when we reach old age we can't act as if we have finished it all up or behave as if we are fully satisfied. There is no value in that either.

The state of mind of "An aged pine, a floating cloud" is to fulfill life completely to the end and then to go beyond that and let go of everything.

But how many are there who reach this place? If we don't know this mind, can we really understand true joy?

*On a winter peak, a
lone pine stands tall*

Tōrei shūko no matsu

冬嶺秀孤松

On a mountain lonely and rustic, in
deepest winter there is one towering tree,
a mighty pine soaring skyward. This is
the scenery being described. There was



a monk named Chosha no Keishin who received Nansen's Dharma. On a night with a beautiful moon, Master Kyozan of the Iggyo-shu line and Chosha no Keishin were talking through the night.

Kyozan pointed at the moon up high and said, "Every one has this, but so sadly they just don't use it." This is what he said, looking very deeply.

Chosha thought this a golden opportunity, responding, "Make use of it then!"

Kyozan then said, "No you use it first, I want you to do that." He was attempting to escape.

Of course, this answer of Kyozan, as it is, is the way of using "IT," our original true mind.

Chosha got up briskly and kicked Kyozan with his foot.

"How rough you are!" said Kyozan, and without hesitation he hit Chosha no Keishin.

What is this "IT"? this "That"? What is "This"? What is it, anyway?

Kyozan got up mumbling and said gruffly, "You are just like some ruffian!"

From then on, Chosha Keishin was nicknamed Otura no Keishin. He later became abbot of a temple in Konan and became known as Konan sho Chosha. In China this was one of the most beautiful places, famous for its exquisite scenery, and Chosha was familiarly known by the name of that area.

He became a great and well-known Zen master, receiving transmission from Nansen and living in the same era as Rinzai, Tokusan, and Tozan. Having also received transmission from Master Nansen were his brother disciples, Master Joshu Jushin and Rikko Taifu.

In addition to being a Zen master, Chosha was an authority on the philosophy of the Flower Garland Sutra. He was a monk of profound depth. Nansen's teacher, Master Baso, had said of Nansen that he was the one disciple who was unfathomable. With this same profound state of mind and a deep philosophical understanding, in the

same way as Nansen, Chosha was unable to be fully revealed. Whenever he opened his mouth, he gave birth to poem after poem. A specialist in Dharma, he was splendid to such a degree that there were few like him.

When a monk would come seeking the state of mind of Zen or asking about the Dharma, if there was something that could be aligned, he would summon every possible expression to reveal it. Opening his mouth, brilliant poetry would emanate to the ten directions. If someone came to do Dharma battle with him, he would express his state of mind relentlessly and fearlessly, with no place for the other person to enter. With this state of mind he fulfilled the position of abbot at the temple of Rokuonji in one of the most scenic places in China.

Nevertheless, he was also very eccentric and, after performing his duties as abbot at Rokuonji, he became unknown to the world, retiring to work on his own state of mind.

It was to this very Chosha no Keishin that Sansho Enen, who received Rinzai's line, went for a visit. One of Sansho's disciples, Shu Shisho, asked Chosha, "When Nansen died, where did he go?"

Chosha no Keishin answered, "When Sekito was a novice he went to call on Rokuso."

Sekito had received Dharma transmission from Nangaku Seigen Gyoshi. The Dharma transmission of Rokuso, the Sixth Patriarch, was given to Nangaku Ejo Zenji and Nangaku Seigen Gyoshi, and thus divided into two lineages. Nangaku Ejo Zenji's Dharma was carried then by Baso, while Seigen Gyoshi's was carried by Sekito. When Sekito was a novice he entered the Gate of Zen by meeting the Sixth Patriarch. This is how Chosha answered the question.

Chosha no Keishin was the successor of Nansen, who was the successor of Baso. This makes him the grandson of Baso. He answered that Sekito saw the Sixth Patriarch when he was a novice. He makes such a roundabout answer and speaks as if he is talking about someone else. Chosha

no Keishin isn't caught on some small matter like where his master has gone. It was said that in Kozei there was the great Master Baso and in Konan the great Master Sekito, and they were the great sources of Zen, encompassing everything. This is not a limited meaning of Dharma restricted to the relationship between a master and disciple. The way of the Buddha Dharma swallows all that in one gulp.

But for Shu Shisho this was not a good enough answer. "Maybe that is so, that Sekito met the Sixth Patriarch when he was a novice, but I am not asking about Sekito, I am asking you directly. Where did Nansen go when he died?" He dug in again.

Again Chosha no Keishin answered, "Let's let Sekito think about that."

Chosha no Keishin wasn't moved around in the least by Shu Shisho. He paid no attention whatsoever to what Shu Shisho was going after. He was in an immovable state of mind. This can't be reached through ordinary mental construction. That which is immovable can come only from one's deepest realization and awakening. Chosha was responding from this place.

Here Shu Shisho answered, "Priest! While it may be said that you have the strength of a pine tree that soars one hundred meters, you have not got the functioning of a bamboo shoot that pierces through a rock."

He was saying that Chosha had given a superior answer, one in which Shu Shisho could see the qualities of a winter mountain's tall pine soaring a hundred meters high. But he didn't see the essence of that stone-piercing bamboo shoot, unmoved by anything and moving through everything. This is how Shu Shisho responded.

Chosha no Keishin was silent. He didn't respond with a single word. It wasn't that Chosha no Keishin couldn't say anything, but there was nothing that needed to be said.

There's no reason to be pulled around by someone else's words. This is the state of mind of the immovable Chosha no

Keishin.

Next Shu Shisho says, "Thank you, master, for answering each of my questions so kindly."

Again Chosha no Keishin was silent. Again, he spoke not a word.

Then Shu Shisho went back and told his Master, Sansho Enen, about the conversation he had had with Chosha no Keishin.

Sansho Enen replied, "If that is really true, if that is how it actually happened, then he surpasses Rinzai by seven steps. Truly that state of mind, that functioning, is seven steps beyond Rinzai."

Sansho Enen thought, if this is so, I should go and see for myself. The next day Sansho himself went to call on Chosha no Keishin. He went to offer greetings.

Sansho said that he had been so thankful for those rare answers Shu Shisho had recounted to him. He was so grateful for the state of mind they expressed and for the responses more advanced than any he had heard before or any he would probably ever hear again. He said that those truly superior answers were rare from ancient times far into the future. Chosha no Keishin was silent.

"On a winter peak, a lone pine stands tall"

During a thousand years, shaving off all of that time year by year, during the storms and snows, standing through winter's severe chill and summer's severe heat, not being moved around at all by the challenges of nature--this life energy has to be realized directly. This is truly the state of Mind of the Buddha Dharma. In each moment and in each place, not following along with the circumstances of the era, but in each and every era knowing that truth beyond any trace of laxness--to awaken to this state of mind is the ultimate point of the Buddha Dharma.



*A flower opens five
petals*

Ikke goyo wo hiraku

一華五葉開

This phrase is half of a couplet with "And of itself bears fruit."

These are well-known words of Bodhidharma. When Niso Eka came seeking him at Bear Ears Mountain Cave, Daruma was sitting, facing the wall. Niso Eka waited, and while he waited night fell and the snow piled to his waist. At dawn,



finally, Daruma looked at Niso Eka and asked why he was standing in the snow.

He answered, "For the Dharma. Please, master, open the sweet gate of your compassion and let the full vessel overflow for the sake of all beings." In tears Niso Eka expressed his deep vow.

Niso Eka had exhaustively studied Confucianism, Taoism, and Buddhism and had traveled from far away to speak with Bodhidharma.

Daruma said to him, "Throughout countless kalpas all the Buddhas did their utmost for the mysterious Way, endured what cannot be endured, and bore what is unbearable. You of small virtue and little wisdom, of slow mind and lazy heart, if you strive after the true vehicle you will labor in vain."

He was saying that Niso Eka could find what he was seeking only in his own mind. No matter how hard you study and strive to understand, there is still something that can't be fathomed. Only one who has gone beyond understanding can speak as Daruma did. This is the true serenity of mind of the Buddha Dharma.

Daruma told Niso Eka, "Bring me your mind, and I'll put it at ease for you." He had seen the depth of Eka's mind.

Niso Eka's reply was simple and innocent. "However I seek my mind, I cannot find it."

The Master granted, "There, I have put your mind at ease."

He demonstrated the final point: that which does not exist cannot be deluded. There is nothing but this deep conviction, without which there can be no serenity. In this way, Daruma passed the Dharma to Niso Eka and named him the Second Patriarch.

From here the five Dharma lineages that continued the Dharma evolved naturally. These were the lines of the Rinzaï sect, the Soto sect, the Iggyo sect, the Hogen sect, and the Unmon sect. All of these lines soothed the thirst of the Chinese and brought the waters of the Dharma to Japan, where they have continued until

today.

The first ceremony celebrating the New Year in a Zen temple honors Daruma Daishi. Following the first words of the year, we prostrate to the First Patriarch before sharing tea and beginning a new year of training. We vow for its realization, drinking tea in harmony.

"A lotus flower opens five petals." This is a vow for our descendants, but we must be peaceful in order for it to work--peaceful in our minds, our homes, our society, and our country. If the world isn't peaceful, it can't work. It's important for us to be rooted deeply in our clear mind so that we are free of resentment, hate, and attachment. These are what should be feared most; these deeply seeded emotions are the cause of our greatest confusion; they didn't just arrive today. We are heirs of our ancestors' anger and resentment, and in every era people need religion to free themselves from that. Without religion, we can't realign our mind. Through god and grace, we become able to know this deepest essence and to see all people clearly.

That said, religion can also be used to painfully twist a baby's arm, as has happened in Japan. Why did Bodhidharma travel to China? If Bodhidharma's mind had been burdened when he encountered Eka, he wouldn't have been able to free Eka's troubled mind. Extinguishing the fires of greed, extinguishing the fires of ignorance, extinguishing the fires of anger: this is nirvana, nothing else. That mind full of resentment can know the Buddha's true experience only in this way.

All around, no flowers in bloom,
Nor maple leaves in glare,
A solitary fisherman's hut alone
On the twilight shore
Of this autumn eve

This is the state of mind called "wabi." It's profundity is hard to realize. When we know it, we can live from this place and act in a way of peaceful accordance. We can live without fear, no matter what crisis might come along.

*The golden bird sings
the song of great peace*

Kinkei akatsuki o tonae
Gyokuhō hana o
tsuibamu

金雞唱曉
玉鳳啣花

According to the Chinese calendar, 2005 is the year of the rooster. In both China and Japan people are fond of birds, and New Year's Day is considered the day of the bird. When I was young my family kept chickens, and I remember it well.



There was one rooster and four or five hens, and thanks to them we would have eggs to eat, and from some of those eggs we would raise more chickens. The little chicks would follow behind the hen as she picked up food, and then she would put it right into their beaks. Enjoying this pleasant harmonious scene, we would raise the chicks.

At every house, the rooster would crow at dawn, "Cock-a-doodle-doo!" And mothers would say, "The rooster has crowed, it's time to get up!" Then we would do our daily morning chores and get ready for breakfast. Today's chickens are raised for their eggs and their meat and spend their lives in narrow cages. They are separated from nature and, with concerns about bird flu, have become unpopular. Humans are destroying the harmony of nature with their own self-centered interests.

In his first Dharma lecture after returning from China, Dogen Zenji said that even though he had been in Sung China for five years, he had not done any great training there. He lived for a short while at Mount Tendo, and there met Master Nyojo. The eyes are placed horizontally above a vertical nose. This is true no matter what anyone says. About this no one be deceived by anyone. As for some other thing about which we should be thankful, there's not a scrap of that anywhere.

If there is a Buddha Dharma, it's that the sun rises from the east every morning, and the moon sets in the west. The rooster crows at the break of dawn, and every four years there is a leap year. Apart from this truth, there is no living Buddha Dharma. This is what he taught.

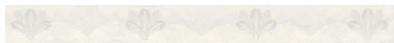
These words of Dogen Zenji are not about trying to do what is for your own profit and personal view. He's teaching us not to see the world through ego-centered eyes but to see everything as equal in every way and to receive everything in that way. When we see with the eyes of Buddha's wisdom, we live in a human way: parents live like parents and fulfill their responsibility as parents; children live like children and fulfill their responsibility as children.

"Aside from the natural way of things, there is no Buddha Dharma. I was able to be given this understanding. What is important is the Buddha Wisdom view."

Prior to having gathered any education or knowledge and prior to any experience, we are born with this pure clear mind. Consciousness exactly as it is, life energy exactly as it is, is from the origin clear and pure; there is nothing twisted or irregular there.

Because we are tantalized by our self-conscious awareness, we become confused and move blindly. While looking at an objective world we become unclear and can't see what's really there.

This is when we must align our breath and let go of our delusions; this is zazen. It's not about the form of sitting. Activity is zen, and sitting is also zen. All of the trees, grasses, and living things are already in perfect order and harmony. If we can be just as we were born as we work and move through our daily lives, living creatively and inventively, then we can know this true eye of Buddha Wisdom and become Buddha. For those who live in this state of mind there is no fear. From today onward, please live in the way of the Buddha and realize this.



One occasion
One opportunity

Ichi go
Ichi e

一期一会

“One occasion” refers to one full life span. In Buddhism it is taught that people are born and then they die, and then they are born again--there is a circle of reincarnations. A person’s life, one whole life between birth and death, is one meaning of “one occasion.”

In the world of the tea ceremony this is especially important. Once in one lifetime only, this encounter takes place. No tea ceremony is a repetition of any other. The tea utensils are never identical, nor are the guests. If everything was a repetition of an earlier ceremony, there would be no joy and nothing to look forward to. Each

time, the people who gather together are different. The joy at this combination of tea utensils and our everyday life energy is always fresh and always new. This direct perception is deeply embedded in the tea ceremony. This is why both the host and the guests put everything into preparing for the tea and attending the ceremony. Here, on the Path, we manifest that place of the guest and the host becoming one.

Yamanoue Soji, a disciple of Rikyu, was one who observed this no matter what kind of tea season it was, whether a kettle or an open fire was used, inside the tea room or outside in the garden. For the guests and for the host, every instant was a matter of "one occasion, one opportunity," the host caring for the guests, the guests respecting the host.

There was another tea master named Ii Naosuke. Ii Naosuke also had a deep respect and understanding of tea ceremony. Each master's own understanding of tea ceremony is his very own--this is another variety of "one occasion, one opportunity." For example, even if you have tea with the same people, still it is not the same occasion. This is how he taught.

Life is always in flux. Nothing is eternal or fixed.

Will I go first or will someone else
go first
We don't know if it will be today
We don't know if it will be
tomorrow
Those who are being sent off first,
Like drops of dew,
We never know which falls next

This morning a strong young
person
Tonight nothing left but a skeleton
How pitiful, how foolish

These are the words of Shinran Shonin. In his writings he teaches of the transience of human life.

"Will I go first or will someone else go first." Will I die before them? Will they die before me? It might even be today, I don't

know! Or could it be tomorrow?

The person whom I thought I would be sending off, will they actually go before me? We can't know how life goes. Like the dew of dawn, like the raindrops clinging to the branch, we can never know which will fall first. Will the drop about to fall be first? Or will it follow later? Each one falls eventually, just like each person's life.

In the morning we send off a person with a fine healthy energetic face. In the evening, we might receive them with no life left in them.

Our life energy is immeasurable, but if we think about life's fragility, about the transience of life, there's also melancholy there. Then one would have to ask, "Don't they know about the joy of the Buddha Dharma?"

This is true only if you look at the form and don't see the essence. Is the world is a sharp place? . . . a melancholy place? This isn't about the shape or form but about what's within our Mind. Is this a fortunate or an unfortunate world? This is just a matter of Mind.

"The mountain flowers bloom like
brocade
The valley streams are brimming
blue as indigo"

We can also put it this way. A monk asked Master Dairyo, "What is the Pure Body of the Buddha? What is the eternal truth?"

Master Dairyo replied, "The mountain flowers bloom like brocade, The valley streams are brimming blue as indigo."

The mountain flowers appear everywhere, in all directions. They grow up high, and then they fade and fall. The river's waters flow onward; never the same scenery twice. Yet within that changing flow that never repeats, we find that no discrimination. Our life energy can be found there. Seeing this, it becomes clear that it's not about the world of form, but the world of Mind.

How do we receive this world, in what manner do we perceive it? Here is where the essence of our life is found.

Time is thought to be something that flows from the past through the present into the future. This is the common way of thinking about time. But if we have a vow with a plan and a goal, we realize the time that goes from the future to the present as well. A vow is raised, and we decide that in our life we want to do this one thing for sure. As we use our life for this vow, it gives our life bright radiance, and each and every thing is used for bringing into actuality this vow and goal. We make effort, and the joy of realizing this goal goes beyond words. This is the time that flows from the future into the present.

But this still involves designing scenery in our heads. Where is the true life energy there? Not in our heads! Our living life energy is truly only present in this moment, right now, right here. Continuously being in this moment, digging into now--this is the true life energy.

In Buddhism it's taught that the mind of the past, present, and future is ungraspable. We can't grab hold of these moments.

The mind of the future is not yet actualized, so of course it's not yet real. But what about the mind of NOW? By the time we can say "Now," it's already past. This is why we can't grasp the mind of the present. In talking about the present we've already created a conceptualization about something that's past. We have to see that this mind of right now can only be this moment's life energy.

In the *Heart Sutra* it says to practice the deep prajna. Does that mean there is a shallow prajna as well? Shallow prajna is just a mental understanding of prajna. Even though we have a body, we have to forget that body completely to manifest that Buddha Mind. We understand this with our heads, but that isn't the actual experience of it. If it can't be used, it's only shallow prajna. Deep prajna is that life energy alive NOW, HERE. In deep wonder we perceive it vividly alive as it actually exists. This great wonder has to be experienced directly. About this, Shido Munan Zenji has said, "This deep prajna is to lose track of our body completely." We can't cling to concerns about our body. While having a body we forget it

completely. We have to take it this far.

In the *Yuima Sutra*, Yuima says to the Bodhisattva Manjusri, who has come to visit him because he is sick, "Manjusri, you did so well to come and visit. You came well without any coming and you left without any leaving." In this way Yuima greets Manjusri Bodhisattva. Manjusri Bodhisattva replies, "Yes, that is so. Once I come I do not come twice, and once I have left I do not leave twice. And why? There is nothing that comes and nothing that goes. There is no place to go to and nothing to see." In this way Manjusri answered.

If we look at this rationally, there is no way we can possibly understand what he's talking about; it sounds silly. But if we have directly touched the living energy, then it's clear. If we are thinking about our own doings and motions and actions, that is dualistic perception only. That can't be called realization of the true living energy. If we are seeing from a dualistic point of view, that can't be called true seeing. Just as Hakuin Zenji has said in the *Song of Zazen*, "Whether going or returning we cannot be anyplace else." This is also what the next lines say: "Realizing the thought of no thought as thought, whether singing or dancing we are the voice of the Dharma." In each and every instant and each and every place our total energy is absorbed into what we do. Only then, for the first time, can our deep wonder at life energy be truly experienced. We have to realize it to this point or it's only a world of concepts, and that's of no use at all.

On this point the Sixth Patriarch has said about this "zenjo" or samadhi: "Zen" is to let go of all external strata; "jo" is to have no unaligned thinking within. Zenjo is taught in this way. We have various forms--the form of being a man or woman, of being young or old, of being rich or poor, good or bad. There are so many ways to describe people, but to put aside all of these is Zen. If we think something is good, we get caught on an idea of good; if we think it is bad, we get caught on what is bad. People are like that. We are happy when praised, but if we're criticized we become perturbed.

If we only think about having a vivid lively form, we become caught on that. No matter what happens in our life, it's only a reflection in a mirror, it's all phenomena. If we aren't caught on each and every thing that happens in our life, that is Zen. If we're not caught on our own form, and not caught on each and every thing that happens to us, then our mind is not moved around. As long as we're caught on our own form and appearance, our mind can't see objectively. Not getting caught is "zen," and to not be blinded is "jo." "Jo" is to be alive and living among all the various forms and appearances of the world and yet not be taken in by these forms.

In our mind there can't be the smallest shadow whatsoever; we can't give attention to any shadow at all. If there's nothing to care about, and nothing to get caught on, living each and every moment not caught on anything, then this is "zenjo" or samadhi.

Because we get caught on form and shape, we get moved around when people praise or criticize us. We get caught when we win and we get caught when we lose.

In this manner our mind is always off-balance. To be caught on nothing inside or out, we have to hold on to no such division between inside and outside. It's said that flowing water doesn't become stagnant, while water that doesn't flow can become fetid. Our mind is always flowing and flowing and flowing, new and new and new. If we stop rather than remaining in transformation, we become attached. It's not that we shouldn't see and hear, but we shouldn't add a small self each and every time. No matter what situation we're in, we don't stop but keep going forward like flowing water. Our true nature is just like this: a pure and clear mind that does not get caught on external things. We see the outside world clearly and vividly, but we don't get moved around by what is there.

This is zazen, and zazen isn't about not hearing, not seeing, and not speaking. It's nothing so difficult as that. While seeing, our mind doesn't stop there. While hearing, our mind does not stop there. While working, our mind does not stop

there. We open our eyes and see the world clearly, but we aren't moved around by it. To see it but let each thing go is samadhi.

Regardless of the situation, we can't close our eyes. Eyes wide open, our zazen is alive. If we do zazen with our eyes closed, it has no usefulness. We relate to the world without having our mind pulled this way and that way. We don't wobble. Even though we have our own way of being, we don't get caught on that either. We have to creatively and inventively work on our mind state all day every day. It can't be done conceptually. This is why Shido Munan Zenji said we have to lose track of our body completely. "The one who wins has to take the resentment, the one who loses cannot sleep at night, the one who is not concerned with winning or losing is peaceful whether asleep or awake."

The Buddha taught that we get caught on an idea of having won or lost, but in doing so we completely lose track of life's worth. We have to know this mind which is not stagnant and realize the continuous clear moments. This is true zazen. Realizing the path of the Buddha and the way of the Buddha is to know these clear mind moments with no gaps.

For doing koans and entering samadhi this living mind has to be tasted and realized clearly. If we truly use our mind in this aligned way, then moving is Zen and sitting is Zen too. No matter what we do the whole day long, we are in a place of peace. From morning until evening and from evening until morning, our mind is not stopped by any little thing. If we can continue this all day and all night, then eternal life is realized in one moment.

When we live in each and every moment we can know each moment's radiance as well. That is our truth and also is what makes our human relationships work with each occasion being one opportunity.

This is Buddha's teaching of continuous clear mind moments. It is actualized in each sitting and each meeting that will never be repeated. In each and every moment do it completely. In this is the joy and light of life.



*One arrow smashes
three barriers*

Ichizoku hasankan

一鏃破三關

As Master Rinzai said clearly, "Mind is without form and pervades the ten directions."

For each person's mind there are laws--not the external laws of the social and physical world, but the laws of mind.

“Oh! Great all embracing Mind!
It is impossible to measure the height of the heavens,
yet the Mind is above the heavens.
It is impossible to measure the thickness of the earth,
yet the Mind is below the earth.
The sun and the moon shine with a great radiance,
yet the Mind is the source of that radiance.
Within the mind, the four seasons open in their sequence.
Within the Mind the sun and the moon move.
All of the ten thousand things exist within the great Mind.
Oh! Great all embracing Mind!”

From the time of the ancients the Buddha Dharma has been taught, providing us with the refuge of the mind's law, the mind's Dharma. This mind has no form, yet it manifests in oneness with everything, reaching every corner of the universe. This is the Buddha Dharma.

Our mind extends throughout the ten directions; our awareness pierces beyond all directions.
With our eyes it becomes seeing,
With our ears it becomes hearing,
In our nose it becomes smelling,
In our mouth it becomes tasting and speaking,
In our hands it becomes holding and creating,
In our feet it becomes carrying our body.

This is how Rinzai Zenji taught it.

That true mind of no form is always functioning through our eyes, becoming one with everything seen. With our ears and our nose, we hear and smell in oneness with the whole world. With our mouth we become this world through tasting and speaking. With our hands we can hold things and create them. With our

feet we carry our bodies.

In this way mind transforms into many varieties of functioning and extends throughout the universe as our wisdom. The Buddha Dharma's truth is revealed in this way. The Buddha sees; a willow is green and a flower is red. The Dharma hears; the bell goes gong, the dog goes bow-wow, the cat goes meow.

The great Dharma ancients all awakened to this wisdom. Bodhidharma is honored for his wisdom, but even if he had not traveled to China or even existed, still the sun would rise in the east each morning and the moon would set in the west. Whether or not the Buddha had been born, the cock crows at dawn and every fourth year is a leap year. Even if there had never been a Buddha, we could still know this Great Path. What is important is whether we have realized this Great Path ourselves. The Buddha and Bodhidharma did not create the Great Path. They just saw how things actually are and expressed it clearly. This is where Buddhism is different from most religions. In Zen in particular, we are not teaching something just because the Buddha said it or Bodhidharma said it. It's not in their words but in their way of realization that we see the truth.

As the ancients put it, “Even prior to Amida becoming Buddha we had coolness.” This is very true.

How can we realize the true Dharma of our mind? We can't know it by imagining it or by just thinking about becoming one with this world. The Dharma's not conceptual. This truth that is always shining has to be realized and clarified.

In reference to the *Shurangama Sutra*, Rinzai said, “The six-rayed divine light never ceases to shine.” Our mind is one great light and relies on nothing. Yet we know it as the source of all light. It is clear, bright, and revealed. This clear, bright light doesn't shine in accordance with something else, yet through our senses it lives in harmony with the whole universe.

We become one with this light and create the world. This is the functioning of the laws of mind. But originally this great light is not six but only one; it is this mind that

is shining brightly. What's most important is to become aware of this, to become this true master, the Buddha Nature. But our Buddha Nature is always chasing around after thoughts, and so we become confused and suffer. We get caught up by what we see and hear, when from the origin our Buddha Nature is nothing at all. If we can directly perceive that we are rooted in nothing at all, we will no longer be pushed and pulled around by things.

Our true nature from the origin is not any one thing. If we realize that we, too, are not any one thing, then no matter where we go, no matter what we see or hear, we are liberated, operating freely and openly. Even in the middle of pain and crisis, everything is liberated.

But most people forget they are the true master and, ignoring their own true nature, look for truth elsewhere. They look to words and phenomena, and then get stuck on those things. This is humankind's weak point and the origin of delusion.

When we experience our true nature, we know the truth of Zen. It's not that we do zazen and then become something special. Rather, we see that from the origin there was nothing at all. No teaching could be clearer than this; there is no clearer path. But because people misunderstand, they look for something more complicated and become confused, unable to function freely.

The master named Kinzan was famous for his travels through China as a monk with Seppo and Ganto. The three went on a great pilgrimage, harmoniously conversing about the Dharma as they went. Of the three, Seppo was the oldest, and Ganto had awakened first. Kinzan was the youngest and not yet fully awakened. Still, by the age of twenty-seven, he already had a temple.

A monk named Ryo Zenkaku came to see Kinzan and asked, "With one arrow how can we pierce through the three barriers?" There are many ways to see this, but most directly he was asking for clarification of the absolute master, for its realization and manifestation. This level of functioning was being expressed in his question.

Rinzai Zenji said that originally there is only one light that divides into six rays. We see with our eyes, hear with our ears, smell with our nose, taste and speak with our mouth, hold with our hands, and walk with our feet. Our senses and this world are inseparable in this way. We experience the outside world through these tools of the senses. But we also have a collective unconscious that gathers all past experiences within it, like a storehouse. Because we filter every experience through that collective unconscious, we don't see clearly and precisely. If we can pierce through that functioning of our senses and then through that storehouse, we experience the very source of all consciousness. This one life energy is the true master of all masters. This has to be known directly. Ryo Zenkaku was asking about this true experience, and Kinzan responded, "Put out that master of masters and I will see it for you!"

This was a very strange answer indeed. Kinzan was being asked about piercing through all the senses and the collective unconscious. His true master was being asked about, and pierced, but then he asked the monk to bring forth that master. Saying that he would see it for the monk really missed the point.

Ryo Zenkaku then said, "Is that so? I guess my arrow did not hit the target. You should have realized this state of mind, but my skill is crude, and my shot didn't make it."

In saying this, the monk was functioning well. When he asked his question, he had really held the true master and was looking for it. When Kinzan answered in a way that was completely beside the point, Ryo Zenkaku was not afraid to say so. He responded luxuriously, "Too bad the arrow missed," and left easily.

Then Kinzan called out after him, "Hey, wait!"

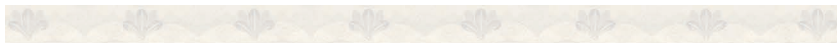
It would have been better for Ryo Zenkaku if he hadn't looked back, but he did.

Kinzan said, "Don't talk about anything like an arrow piercing through." He had already been done in, yet he continued to talk about the arrow.

Ryo Zenkaku said nothing. He didn't answer.

Up to this point Zenkaku had been doing well, but he didn't have the clarity to see that Kinzan had been done in and yet was continuing to talk. Now Kinzan went beyond him, saying, "One like you would take thirty years and still not know what I am talking about." This of course is meaningless.

What is important here is the true master among masters. If we are aware of this through our own experience, we have no reason to be silent. We can function when we need to and realize what we need to. This is the true master of masters. But if this is insufficiently experienced, then Kinzan can be shot in any way Ryo wants, and there is no manifestation of Zen truth in that. Then it becomes vague and without true function.



益
海
乃
後
張

情
州
牛
與
木



*When the cow in Kaiju
eats grain
The stomach of
the horse in Ekishu
becomes full*

Kaijū no ushi ka o
kissureba
Ekijū no uma hara haru

懷州牛喫禾
益州馬腹張

This phrase is from the third section of the *Kaian Kokugo*.

“10. Refrain from wrath and indignation. Do not be indignant when others disagree with you. Each feels and thinks naturally in his own way. If he is right, you are wrong. If he is wrong, you are right. You are not always wise, and he is not always foolish. We are all wise and foolish. How can you lay down a rule to distinguish the right from the wrong? If someone is indignant to you, think of your own fault. Even if you believe that you are right, follow the majority.”

Those are the words of Shotoku Daishi in his seventeen-article constitution. What I think is good, someone else thinks is bad. What I think is bad, someone else thinks is good. I am not necessarily correct, and he is not necessarily foolish. Thinking in terms of good and bad, profit and loss, is the way of the ignorant.

If we both throw away our anger, we throw away our differences. Each person's mind is different, and we all have a truth that we put forth. But something I think is good, another thinks is bad. I'm not necessarily a sage, and he's not necessarily a fool. We both are ignorant, he and I. We both have opinions and make discriminations by thinking about good and bad, but from there, nothing absolute can be decided. Sometimes we both are foolish; sometimes we both are clever. In this, we are like the vase that has no right or left side. Even if I get angry and disagree, I must remember that I am not perfect either and be aware of my mistakes and insufficiencies and the things I cannot yet resolve. Even if I understand well how things work, I have to be mindful of doing things harmoniously. This is the tenth section of the seventeen-part constitution of Shotoku Taishi.

Today we have so many problems because of the conflicts among people's ideas and their notions of good and bad. As long as we hold on to these opinions, we will be eternally unable to know liberation.

The Buddha told people not to kill, but this was not only a negative order not to kill, it was a directive to love all things. In order not to kill we must love everything;

that love is the source of the wisdom that is necessary to keep everything alive. If we can truly love everything, then even if we are told to kill something we can't do it.

It's our lack of wisdom that kills things. Thus, we are told to love everything and hold it precious, and in that there is no separation into "he is good, he is bad; he is right, he is mistaken." We have to throw away all of those mental distinctions and return to the empty mind prior to our dualistic consciousness and experience. We need to return to the root source of all states of mind. If we can realize this state of mind, we know that mind prior to any awareness of good and bad. We can know that place before our parents' birth, before even our parents' awareness of what's good and what's bad. We need to know the original mind with no judgment, to clarify it and not get caught on ideas of good and bad. It's the vow of Amida Buddha to liberate all beings whether they are young or old, good or bad. He does not divide people in those ways but teaches only to give rise to the mind of deepest trust, and those who are in this mind are already liberated.

In the verse *On Believing in Mind* the Third Patriarch, Sanso Kanchi Zenji, says, "The Great Way knows no difficulties, if we refrain from picking and choosing." Our mind free from preferences is bright, clear, and revealed. This is our most important state and the source of our natural wisdom. This isn't about becoming a mental idea of mu, trying to force a state of nothingness in such a way that we are anesthetized by it. We must find love for all beings and all things; in everything we discover we must experience that great deep Love. To have clear awareness that can see this world appropriately is our responsibility.

In the *Kegon Sutra*, Priest Shusho Toju said that the natural blessings of the world are the sun rising and the moon sinking and the winds blowing from all directions. The people who work in the mountains go to the mountains, and everyone loves peace. There is no one who prays for war. Everyone takes turns being master and being guest, and our mind's true source loves all beings without pause. This is our true mind, and this is where:

When the cow in Kaiju eats grain
The belly of the horse in Ekishu
becomes full

These two places, Kaiju in Konan and the Ekishu area, are so far away from each other! The cow eats grass, and the horse's belly gets full. This is also how Master Shusho of the Flower Garland Sect expressed the Dharma Body.

*Vast emptiness,
nothing holy*

Kaku nen mu sho

廓然無聖

This is Daruma Daishi's phrase from the famous first case of the *Blue Cliff Record*. Daruma Daishi is the first patriarch of Zen. It took him three years and many struggles to travel from India to China. He arrived in Kochu in the year 520. The mayor of Kochu, Shoko, was a cousin of Emperor Wu, and he informed his cousin about Bodhidharma's arrival. This emperor had offered everything to Buddhism, and now this master of meditation was arriving. The



emperor went to where Bodhidharma's ship was docking to welcome and receive him.

Dharma was already quite elderly, around 140 years old. Emperor Wu was 57, at the height of dualistic thinking. When they met each other it was the emperor who spoke first, explaining that he had done everything he could to build temples, raise monks, and translate sutras. It's said that he asked, "What is the merit of this?"

In this era in China there were already many sutra books translated, and the idea of gathering merit was very popular. This emphasis on accumulating merit was central to the emperor's question--people gathered merit to guarantee a good next birth, and this was why the emperor had seen to the building of temples, the carving of Buddhas, and the translation of sutras, literally building a Buddha Land. The emperor's question was an obvious way for him to express his vow within his understanding of Buddhism.

But Dharma Daishi answered, "No merit."

This was a flavorless, boring answer. He wasn't saying that there is anything wrong with merit, rather that having a mind that depends on and thinks about such things is the problem. That's not true merit. In Buddhism it's taught that the sky's height can't be measured, yet the Mind embraces the heavens and is above the heavens. The thickness of the earth can't be measured, yet the mind is below the earth. The radiance of the sun and the moon is endless, yet the Mind is before them. The four seasons rotate in turn within Mind, and the sun and moon rise and set within Mind! Oh, great all-embracing Mind!

To awaken to this great Mind is the true merit. This is what Bodhidharma was saying. It's an incomparable and rare world that exists right in the midst of the emperor's morality and has been pierced beyond all morals by Bodhidharma. The true joy realized in this awakening is the difference between heaven and earth.

Emperor Wu changed direction and next asked, "What is the ultimate truth?"

The Emperor Wu thought of things such as the teachings of Prince Shomyo Taishi or Fu Daishi. He had trained true translators and created a great university where the exhaustive study of Buddhist doctrine could be pursued. This ultimate truth was considered to be of utmost importance in that kind of study. The teachings of the Buddha had formerly been just for a few ordained people. They would let go of their desires and realize the state of mind of the Buddha. They turned their backs on society and worked only on deepening their awakened mind.

For people in society there was no relevance in this. People in the world couldn't abandon their jobs and families. They had to fulfill their responsibilities. They couldn't go about like ordained people, going deep into the mountains where society couldn't follow and vowing for their own deep state of mind. Five hundred years after the Buddha died, Mahayana Buddhism's teaching was becoming widespread. Within society people were thinking about how to actualize the Buddha's teaching, making the truth clear.

This was considered the ultimate truth of the Mahayana: Mind and practice are not two. But while being in society, how could one clarify one's mind? This is what the emperor was asking. The emperor wore the clothes of royalty, but over them he wore a kesa. He taught all his officials the sutras and was even named the Buddha Nature Emperor, teaching that religion and politics are not two, that country and Buddha are not two, that ordained and lay people are not two. Thinking of himself as one who truly manifested the Buddha's highest teaching as a leader in society, he asked, "What is that highest teaching?"

To this Bodhidharma replied, "Vast emptiness, nothing holy."

Vast emptiness implies the huge autumn sky with not a cloud to be found. It's that state of mind. Nothing holy means that there is no division between holy and ignorant, sacred and deluded. There is only this clear bright open state of mind. All things are endowed with this ultimate truth.

There was such a difference between the two men's states of mind. There is nothing you can do about something like that! Emperor Wu was so thankful for anything and everything holy, while Daruma had no interest in anything like that and would sweep it out from under anyone he encountered. For him, there was not a single thing to be so thankful for. This is where their differences lay.

Since the conversation was going nowhere, the emperor finally asked Bodhidharma, "Who are you?"

You are supposed to be a great Buddhist monk from India who has received all of the highest teachings. Are you not someone to be thankful for? You say there is nothing holy, what about you? Are you not someone to be thankful to?

Daruma answered simply, "Don't know."

We need to know this truth that goes beyond our physical body and state of mind. In that true state of mind which is separate from our world of thinking and ideas, our conditioned filters, there is no holiness and no ignorance, no male and no female, no one who is ordained or a layperson, awakened or ignorant. The only thing that can be said about this is, "What is it?" Nothing else!

Emperor Wu was only 57, in the midst of his busy working years, still unripe and full of ideas about things. Old Daruma was so mature and well ripened, but even his blade couldn't enter there. There was nothing more Daruma Daishi could do there. He had come to China to find someone who would continue the truth, and he couldn't compromise in his search. He simply went away.

Crossing the Yangtze River, he traveled to Bear Ears mountain. Deep in the mountains at Shorinji he sat facing the wall for nine years, clarifying his own state of mind and seeking a true disciple.

It's the same today as it was for Daruma. True seekers can't be found anywhere. Everyone is so full of ideas and doctrines and theories. Humans are so high on themselves that they miss the huge great flow of the whole world and go against it

rather than being flowed along by it. We have to be able to cut it all with one slash, to cut through it and then use that flow. Without that kind of power and ability, there is no Zen, no Buddha Dharma. We can't just say that humans are free and splendid. Only when this truth is clarified can such a thing be said. Then, for the first time, whether in the midst of birth or death, whether giving or receiving, we are limited by nothing. Only when we know this freedom completely are we independent and emancipated, only then can we say that we have realized the Path. Daruma's truth is what is most necessary for all of us today.

Barrier

Kan

關

While the Priest Seppo Gison was abbot at Zuioji, the monk Suigan Reisan trained with him until he reached the age of fifty-three, truly a huge vessel fashioned from a towering tree. Practicing alongside him were Hofuku, Chohei, and Unmon, all of the same lineage.



On the last day of a ninety-day training period, Master Suigan addressed the assembly: "During this period, I was too kind and spoke too much. How about it, have my eyebrows fallen out? Please, look at my face carefully and see!"

The sutras say that if someone teaches mistaken Dharma, his eyebrows will fall out and he'll plummet into hell. But Suigan's mind wasn't dualistic in that way.

Shido Munan Zenji (1603-1676) taught this way too. He was once visited by an old grandmother who said that every day she chanted the Buddha's name. She inquired if this would guarantee her going to the Pure Land when she died.

Master Shido asked her, "Nembutsu--the chanting of the Buddha's name--when you do it, is there anything in your mind?"

She replied, "No, no! I forget everything when I chant!"

"That's it--when you are holding on to nothing at all--that IS the Pure Land. You are already there!"

With those words the grandmother was deeply awakened.

As Shido Munan also wrote in a poem,

"In one straight line our body dies completely,
we forget our self and work. That is the Buddha as it is."

Suigan was saying, "I taught the true Dharma, my intention was to share that teaching, but has everyone realized the state of mind of the Buddha or not?"

Suigan approached everyone in this way. It was how Suigan expressed his state of mind, from that place where he held his sharp focus.

His brother disciples were quiet, but then Priest Hofuku Juten said, "You thief! You try to steal from me like that?"

Priest Choke (840-932) said, "So many hairs there! You've so many bushy hairs growing above your eyes. No need to worry about losing them at all!" Was he trying to fool Master Suigan?

Finally, Priest Unmon Bunyu (864-946), the youngest, said, "Barrier!"

He fit it into a single word, speaking directly in accordance with Suigan's words.

Was this barrier of Unmon's a place of forgiving and acknowledgment, or was it the opposite, a place of refusing to allow and not acknowledging at all?

Speak! You cannot pass my place so easily!

A barrier is a challenging place that has to be passed through. When countries are divided, when you cross from one side to the other, there is always a barrier that has to be passed through.

Today in Europe when you cross the border between two countries, there is a place where you have to show your identification and be passed through customs, where anybody suspicious is stopped. In our homes, we have foyers, where we meet guests, allowing some in and telling others to leave. It is the host or master who decides.

If we think about it, there are many barriers in our lives. There are the grueling gates of completing each level of schooling. Then come the barriers of job acquisition, and the pickier we are about the company for which we want to work, the more narrow and rigid the barrier is through which we have to pass. Yet we have to pass through all of these, or what we vow and hope for can't be realized. We all have barriers awaiting us; some are external, others internal.

In ancient times in the Orient, a man's time of passage was at the age of forty-two, while a woman's time was at the age of thirty-three. These ages represented physical barriers as well as times of mental change and adjustment at which we can more easily become sick and even die. This is why in the olden days they also celebrated sixty and seventy-seven and eighty-eight as times of passage. We can live to one hundred, one hundred ten, one hundred twenty, but finally we reach the barrier no one can avoid, our death--but can we pass through there?

These are the words of Daito Kokushi

(1280-1331) upon his realization of the barrier koan:

“I’ve broken through Cloud
Barrier--
the living way is north, south, east
and west
Evening I rest mornings I play, no
other no self,
With each step a pure breeze
rises.”

Daito Kokushi spent much time with this barrier koan when he trained with Daio Kokushi. For three years he worked relentlessly on it until one day he saw a key lying on a desk and in that moment saw clearly this barrier of life and death. The state of mind of Unmon when he said “Barrier” was completely seen through by Daito Kokushi at that time.

To realize this is to be like a dragon, sitting in the morning and working during the day; even if ogres appear, we don’t become distracted or confused by them.

The original true eye of seeing is here. In this world there is no birth or death, no concern with whether the economy is bad or good or how our circumstances are going to change or what those changes will bring. With this all-encompassing seeing eye, everything we do will go into piercing this Barrier. Then, without fear, we’re unmoved by turmoil and never lose this clarity. This will be the actualization of our mind and the sloughing off of the rigidly narrow, egoistic view.

*A stove in summer,
a fan in winter*

Karo tosen

夏炉冬扇

In summer, when it's hot, a fire is unnecessary. In the winter, we don't need a fan. Yet this phrase speaks of a stove in summer and a fan in winter--things we don't need, things that are extra.



夏
爐
冬
扇

In the summer a stove does not come immediately to hand, nor does the fan come out immediately in the winter. But if we are not ready ahead of time, the things we need won't be present when we do need them. Even if we say we don't need these things, we can't ignore them. Because we prepare in our daily life, things are ready when we do need them.

This is how our zazen is too. For a moving, working, and functioning person to sit down and do nothing is unnecessary. When we're able to move and work, to purposely sit still isn't a priority. But our life is more than our work. We have to cultivate our mind, working on the root of our best possible functioning, or it's lost.

"A stove in summer
a fan in winter"

In summer we don't need a stove. In zazen we don't need our functioning, nor do we need to sit when we are functioning. To align our mind and have good functioning within is to know one aspect but not the true base.

We have to maintain the fireplace in the summer and take good care of the fan in the winter. This is how we give life to both things when the time is right.

There's the story about the starving, skin-and-bones monk who goes to the agricultural minister's headquarters to ask for some millet. The head commissioner says that soon they will have thirty thousand dollars, can the monk wait until then? To this the monk answers that the night before, as he was walking to the agricultural headquarters, he was called from behind. He turned around to see who was calling to him, and it was a small skinny fish trying to swim in the water pooled in the tracks of a cart. The fish said to him, "I am just a low-class worker from the great city, but what I need more than anything is one cup of clear water to swim in." The monk told the fish, "I am going to Konan and to the Yangtze next week, and I will bring you lots of fresh water." And the fish responded that by the next day he would be found on the shelf at the market as a dried fish.

The ideal is important, as is the doctrine. But most important is today's living, watching our footsteps and being right here, right now, totally present. By doing so, our mind is always, "A stove in summer a fan in winter."

In this place, in this moment, be clear in how you are. Without this there is only a conceptual understanding of Zen. We do not need a stove in summer or a fan in winter. To not be caught in the ritual but to do what is necessary is the truth of Zen.

If we aren't careful, we get caught in ritual and form and think we don't need this or that, getting caught on ideas about things. But it's not like that. It's only about giving life to everything there is. That's where our truth resides.

*To leave home,
yet not be on the way*

Kasha wo hanarete
tochu ni arazu

離家舎不在途中

“Though he has left home, he is not on
the way”

In the *Records of Rinzai* it is written that
after taking the high seat Rinzai said these
words:

“One man is endlessly on the way,
yet has never left home,
Another has left home, yet is not on
the way.
Which one deserves the offerings of
humans and devas?”



Once he said in his high seat that one would be on the way for a full kalpa. This is a very long time, the time it takes for a boulder of forty cubic meters to be worn away by the tip of the sleeve of a heavenly being who comes down to dance once every hundred years. Her sleeve brushes that boulder once every hundred years, and the time it takes for it to be worn away is one kalpa. It is a very, very long time, very close to endless time.

We often hear in science that there is no final destination. There is no point at which the truth in science will be completely understood and discovered. One after another new discoveries are being made and new understandings are being reached. There are still unknown stars at the very edge of the universe. Even when we verify new stars, there are still more stars beyond those. In our mind there is a deep world, but no matter how deeply we look into the nano-world, our exploration of that nano-world is also not yet complete. This is how our scientific discoveries expand and evolve infinitely.

The world of humans is also infinite—from parent to child, from parent to child, humanity continues into the future as well as arising from the infinite past. For all of this time we have been on the way. No matter how many years this world exists, there is no final destination where we can say, “This is the final place.” If something we have worked for is realized, something more to be done will be discovered. To complete this next part is what our life is about. I think that this is where our efforts and our taste for truth can be found. Our life is infinitely on the way. There is no such thing as “this is good enough” in our life; there is no such destination.

For the cultivation of our deep character and our way of being, there is no “this is good enough” either. It seems that until we die, dying and being reborn, dying and being reborn, we eternally continue our training.

There once was a man named Mr. Kikugoro who was the sixth generation of his family of master dancers. Even on his deathbed Kikugoro was saying clearly, “Not enough yet, not enough yet, dancing and dancing

all the way to the other world.” Even a great master such as this, at the very edge of death, is still saying, “Not enough yet, not enough yet.” Still not satisfied with how much he had done, still dissatisfied with how much he has not done.

Until our final hours we practice; to the other side we continue our training. This is the occupied by the true dancer or martial artist; this is where the true artist’s state of mind is found.

But if life is eternal, and there is never any finality, does that mean we’ll always be dissatisfied for our entire life?

“Though he has left home, he is not on the way”

There is no place as comfortable and easy as our own home. There, we can relax and sit comfortably. This is the nature of our own house, our home; it’s a destination. Our life is always on the way, and we are eternally still cultivating our mind, yet there has to be a place where we can always rest our mind as well. Every single day is the eternal work, and every single day is the destination. This state of mind is the state of mind of Zen. Humans have to keep looking forward and keep evolving. In each day we’re thankful and feel this fulfillment at being alive. While every day being thankful and fulfilled we also continue to develop day by day. This is “Though he has left home, he is not on the way.”

What is this progress we are talking about? To put one foot ahead of the next is usually considered to be making progress. As we put one foot forward, we have to keep the other firmly on the ground. In order to move one foot ahead, the other has to remain solidly placed. One after the next we alternate which foot goes forward and which foot stays firm. Because our feet go forward we make progress. Because one foot is moving forward we are on the way, and because one foot is firm on the ground we are at home. In this way we can make stable progress.

It can’t be like it is so often today, with everyone hurrying to get somewhere, to achieve a result, with everyone wanting to do this and that and all at the same time. If

we lift both feet off the ground we will fall flat, but if we don't move either foot we won't go anywhere. We are eternally on the way, yet we do not leave our home. One footstep after the next we continue. Every day we live in this way in deep gratitude.

There has to be that state of mind of gratitude and joy.

There once lived in Japan a man named Taiko Hideyosho. He was born near Nagoya, the son of a farmer, and then he became very popular and politically strong. Someone asked him, "In what state of mind have you realized this?"

He answered, "I didn't think about trying to become a great leader. When I was in the lower ranks I just threw myself into my work and became absorbed in it with my whole being. I wanted to become a samurai and did all the work and became the head of the samurai, and then I was done in by a minor lord. But since I was working so hard this minor lord became a great lord, and more and more people around him pushed me to the front and put me into power, just because each job was done so thoroughly."

At each time and in each situation if we put everything we are into what we are doing and do it completely with our whole being, then naturally we move forward and proceed. In life we have to continually be progressing while each day, every day, also knowing deep satisfaction.

To live in this great peace and tranquility is what it means to be endlessly on the way yet to never have left home.

If we can live like this it can be said that our Zen training is working. But what about the one who has left home yet is not on the way? He is no longer in this world of satori, and he is also no longer on the way. Which is the more advanced? It is said that miso that does not stink of miso is the superior miso. Satori that still smells of enlightenment is not the true enlightenment. It also can be said that Buddha Dharma that has the stench of the Buddha Dharma is not the true Buddha Dharma. Things that stink of Buddha Dharma, that stink of enlightenment, are

not the true way. Only when these are all let go of and thrown away can we say it is the true Buddha Dharma.

A person who is on the way but not on top of the mountain and not at the crossroads, not in the world of the absolute nor in the world of the relative, not at the destination but not en route either--if someone like that were around, who would it be? This must be the priest Hotei. Or is it the state of mind of Ryokan?

Which type of person should receive the offerings of the heavenly beings and of the people on earth? Which is it? Should the one who is making lots of efforts receive the offerings? Or should it be the one who makes efforts but has no sense of making any efforts? Which is more advanced? Saying this, Rinzai draws no conclusion but just comes down off the high seat. Rinzai's state of mind only goes that far.

To what extent can each and every person realize this high peak and continue without leaving a single footprint behind? This state of mind is the same for both, but it is rarely realized. How unfortunate it is that people are always stuck in a low-quality state of mind, wandering and wobbling around.



結果自然成

The fruit ripens of itself

Kekka jinen to naru

結果自然成

This phrase is from the poem Daruma Daishi presented when giving his transmission to Niso Eka Daishi, after Niso Eka had expressed his state of mind.

“I came from India, so far away, to
China
To keep the Dharma alive and to
liberate all beings
A lotus flower opens five petals
And of itself bears fruit.”



Daruma Daishi came to China from India, as is expressed in the words, "What is the intention of Bodhidharma in coming to the East?" Was there a personal will there, or was there no personal will? This place, where there is will but not will, is where the truth of Daruma, and the ultimate truth of Zen, is clarified. If there is personal will, we can't get caught on it, or we become nothing more than a businessperson. Daruma Daishi was not so shallow. With no intention, he couldn't have come to China. Yet, even though he had an intention, he wasn't attached to it, or he couldn't have become this huge state of mind.

"I came from India, from so far away, to China." Of course Daruma Daishi wasn't acting out of ambition but was following the instruction of his teacher, Hannya Tara Sonja. The Buddha said to Kasho Sonja that he must not let this Buddha Dharma decay. "All humans' truth is this; this clear eye of seeing the Dharma storehouse. Don't let it fade away." It has to be continually passed along to liberate all beings. It can't be allowed to decay. Each of the patriarch's deep efforts and truth have been offered to this.

It's not about our own small motivations or interests, but about the Dharma as it is. We give everything we have and everything we are to this, the root source of all humankind. Because everyone over and over again falls victim to their egos and their attachments, they give rise to great mistakes. This is a source of great confusion no matter the culture. Hannya Tara Sonja said to Daruma Daishi that he had to teach this Dharma to all people so that it could continue. "I came from India, so far away, to China. To keep the Dharma alive and to liberate all beings." For this he came, the living Dharma of the Buddha.

In that era the sutra books and theories were readily available, but it was all scholarly. The Buddha's experience was not being realized but was instead being studied through myriad philosophies and theories. Instead of realizing it from experience, people were coming up with ideas about what the experience was. The truth of the Dharma can be found only in

that direct experience of clearly realizing the true mind. "To keep the Dharma alive and to liberate all beings."

Many scholastic studies about the Dharma had been made available, along with rituals and ceremonies, but there's no awakening in them. Mental understanding isn't the same thing as deep awakening. With study there is merely an increase of knowledge and no clarification of the deep Mind. With only that, the Dharma decays. Delusion can't be freed and the truth won't be known. "To keep the Dharma alive, I have come here to China." This is how Daruma Daishi expressed the truth beyond words and phrases. Eka Daishi was transmitted this truth. Sansho Kanchi Zenji, Doshin Daie Zenji, Goso Gunin Zenji, and Rokuso Eno Zenji, in turn, all received the transmission of this truth, and Rokuso Eno Zenji then passed it to Nangaku Zenji and Seigen Gyoshi Zenji. These were all deeply advanced disciples who spread Zen throughout China from Kozei to Konan.

From Seigen Gyoshi Zenji came Sozan Ejaku, who with Tozan Ryokai gave birth to the Soto sect. Then with Hogen Bunneki Zenji the Hogen Sect was born. Unmon Bunneki Zenji gave birth to the Unmon line. The flow of Nangaku brought forth Baso Doitsu Zenji, Hyakujo Zenji, Obaku Zenji, and then Rinzaï Zenji, and from there the Rinzaï line was born. Issan Reiyu Zenji and Kyozan Ryokai founded the Igyo Sect. Thus, were the five lines born, yet we can't let these five names fool us.

In Zen there is only one truth. For this truth to be transmitted we have the people who have manifested it as living, breathing Dharma. This truth is manifested by these people, but each and every one of them, while having an individual value, has realized the same source as Shakamuni Buddha, and in this way the One Awakening of the Buddha came to Daruma and then flowed into these five vessels. This whole world became a Buddha-land and was able to shine as it had been prophesied.

There had been five crushings of everything Buddhist. While all of Buddhism was decaying, only Zen stayed alive and

spread throughout China. This was how all humankind could be realized, not through words and phrases but with each person's Buddha Nature being awakened. In this is the liberation of all beings. Today all over the world we are fighting religious wars one after the next because we do not know the true source of all religions. All of them share the same source, and this must be clarified. If we know this source, then the peace of the world will be born naturally and spontaneously because there is only one truth. That which is local and divided will not bring peace. We can't lose the essence and look for the form--that is what has led to the problems that keep arising today. The resolution lies in each and every one knowing that true mind and in that mind becoming the true refuge of all people.



觀



鑑



機



Observe!
Reflect!
Just that!

Kō Kan I

顧鑑機

Unmon Daishi preferred teaching with one-letter Zen expressions, and often used these three: Ko, observing; Kan, "REFLECT!"; and I, "THAT!"

He preferred to teach using these letters, but of course his teaching was not about explicating the names of the letters themselves. Unmon would not have bothered with using words just for the sake of their meaning.

Yet we can use these three words to see our own footsteps, to clarify our true deep mind and know our own clear nature. Through them we may taste this infinite flavor.

When monks came to Unmon with Dharma questions, no matter what they asked, Unmon would say, "Ko Kan I." This became known as Unmon's "three-letter Zen."

He also had a one-letter Zen.

A monk asked Unmon, "When you kill your mother and your father, even when you commit a sin that great, can you still turn to the Buddha as the one possible refuge?"

Unmon answered, "Ro," "revealed."

Another monk came and asked, "What is the Treasure House of the true Dharma?" He was asking, "What is the truth to which the Buddha awakened?"

Master Unmon answered, "Fu," or "all-embracing."

Another time a monk asked, "What is the profound truth of the sanzen room which cannot be reached by words?"

To this Master Unmon answered, "To," meaning the incomparable truth; another time he answered "Ju," to do it completely with nothing left out.

A monk inquired, "There are three bodies of the buddhas, with which of the three does the Buddha give the Dharma teaching, is it with Dharmakaya, Sambodghaya, or Nirmanakaya?"

Unmon said "Yo," meaning fulcrum, or "So," which means the Patriarchs or ancestors. He used each and every letter freely to take away the functioning of the monk who had asked the question. He met each monk's needs with no gaps. This was Unmon's functioning. If a monk came on strong, then Unmon was strong in his

response. He met each person directly with what that person had presented him, appropriately responding with three words or one, without the slightest hesitation.

As we saw with "Kan" (barrier), Unmon's words can't be chewed, They have no flavor, and to try to chew them would be like chewing iron. But they can sweep everything away--all previous education, all conditioning, and any superfluous thinking.

It was the monk Bokuju who taught Unmon this way, and it was also Bokuju to whom eventually Master Obaku's line was transmitted. Bokuju, who also raised Rinzai, had the functioning of lightning; you couldn't get anywhere near him.

When a monk would come to his gate he would shout, "Speak speak! Say an enlightened word!"

If the monk did not answer, Bokuju would slam the gate in his face. Unmon was given this treatment and turned away three times.

The third time Unmon was so determined not to be shut out that he stuck his foot in the gate as Bokuju slammed it shut, breaking Unmon's leg. As Unmon screeched in pain, he was deeply enlightened on the spot.

Unmon received treatment for that leg and spent the next three years with Master Bokuju. Master Bokuju then sent Unmon to study with Seppo Zenji. Although Unmon was deeply enlightened with master Bokuju, Bokuju knew how excellent Master Seppo was and sent Unmon there to deepen further.

Having gained Master Bokuju's sharpness and Master Seppo's greatness of person and depth, Unmon raised many great masters, including Master Tozan, famous for his answer of "three pounds of flax," as well as Master Shikan and Master Kyorin. Master Setcho Juken also was, of course, of the Unmon line.



Mu

無

Twice the terrorists have attacked London, and even now the horror of those attacks has not allowed life to return to normal. The fear continues. Those who were killed were written about in the paper, while those who survived are filled with the possibility of their own

deaths. It is said that humans can become Buddhas, but they can also become devils. Those possibilities seem apparent when something like this happens.

When people, through no fault of their own, are killed by those who are so dissatisfied and discontent, the entire world becomes a battlefield. When people are under severe pressure, their dissatisfaction can explode. Then hate gives birth to hate, anger gives birth to anger. There is no solution to this. When someone wants to kill people in great numbers, there's no way to prevent it or to prepare for it.

People all over the world become more insecure and full of fear. Buddhism says that human beings have five types of eyes: physical eyes, heavenly eyes, eternal eyes, Dharma eyes, and Buddha eyes.

If we look at human beings with our physical eyes, there is no question that we are animals. The heavenly eyes see things that are far away; they have no perception of a physical body. Eternal eyes see humans as they really are, in true emptiness; these are the eyes of wisdom. Dharma eyes are those that see the emptiness and see this world and humans as beautiful; these are the eyes of the artist. The Buddha eyes see all beings as our own children, to be loved from pure compassion. To see everything as empty and every person as our own child is to love everything dearly. To open the eye of compassion is enlightenment or satori.

Our transient naked eye sees humans in their animal form. If there is any way to stop the idiocy of people today it is through Buddhism, which sees and knows all people as Buddhas.

A great and famous Zen master named Master Joshu Jushin (778-897) lived during the Tang Dynasty in China.

Once a monk asked Joshu, "Does a dog have Buddha Nature?" The monk wanted to know if even a dog has Buddha Nature.

The Buddha taught that all things--even plants, trees, and grasses--are without exception endowed with Buddha Nature. Does this hungry, greedy dog, who goes

searching from garbage pail to garbage can, also have Buddha Nature? This mind that is always looking for something, wishing for something to be thankful for and always getting caught on everything that happens, this unawakened person like me, is there really Buddha Nature there? This is what the monk was asking.

This type of question makes use of the commonplace things among which we live. In making use of those things, we find the true mastery of Zen.

Without hesitating, Joshu replied, "MU."

This answer of Joshu has become an enormous challenge used by all people of training to realize truth. New people of training have to pass this barrier before going further with their training. It's basic that all beings are from the origin Buddhas; this is a given, a bottom-line understanding. Joshu did not negate this. If we look at it in a different way, he is saying that the substance of Buddha Nature is Mu. Joshu is presenting this from his own experience, and it's from there that this mu is born and has profound meaning. To realize this we have to know the same experience; an intellectual explanation won't do. If we don't go beyond that, we can't realize the true experience of all existence.

Buddha Nature is that with which we all are endowed prior to our personality and our character. It's the same in everyone and unites all beings. It is pure human nature.

It can also be called the true Dharma, that law which is true for the original mind of all beings. Because it is a law of mind, it has no form and no substance. It has no color, yet it has light and a life energy that brings wonder. It is energy that has no form yet has the ability to make all things happen, to move everything. This is why none of the dualistic opposites of the world--such as male versus female, political power versus powerlessness--have anything to do with true wisdom. The energy of this is the same in every era, forever, without change.

This energy is shared by all people. Even if we die, it doesn't die. It's beyond birth

and death, embracing everything while going beyond space. It transcends all time. That which is unlimited and unable to be described is Buddha Nature. Because we don't realize this we are confused and deluded from dusk to dawn. To this question Joshu answered succinctly, "Mu."

The person who compiled the Mumonkan, Mumon Ekai Roshi, took six years to realize this koan. He wrote that all day, every day, he carried this mu, forgetting everything else until he even forgot to keep his feet moving. Then, when he heard the drum signaling a ceremony he suddenly broke through completely. In the first chapter of the Mumonkan, Joshu's Mu, he writes, "With all of the 360 smallest joints, the 84,000 pores, we bring forth this great doubt and day and night work intently at it. Do not attempt nihilistic or dualistic interpretations. It is like having gulped a red hot iron ball. You try to spit it out but can't."

Your whole body, your whole mind, has to go into this from the top of your head to the bottoms of your feet. With your whole body and mind you have to throw yourself completely into this, giving rise to this great doubt. You must bring the actuality of your concentration into full view. You have to melt into oneness with Mu.

Your whole body and mind are thrown into that mu as you become it. Day and night, work intently at it. Do not attempt conceptual interpretations. From morning until night and from night until morning, become a complete fool: muuuuumuuuu. Bring your awareness into one word, focus your attention into one point, and come to know this place where it is as if you have a burning red hot iron ball in your throat that you can neither swallow nor spit out. Entering this place, you are aware of nothing but mu. This is what is most important; this is samadhi. Samadhi is the central point of Buddhism, the fulcrum. To understand the truth of any religion there has to be this pure concentration.

Continue with not a second of laxness--mu mu mu--keeping it going until you enter samadhi. Cut away all of the illusory discriminating knowledge and

consciousness you have accumulated, and keep on working harder. All of that muddy past awareness and ideas, all of that gathered previous knowledge you thought was necessary, all of it obscures your clear awareness. With muuumuuuuuu, concentrate and let go of all of that extra thinking. Then you return to the state of mind you had at birth and continue for one week, two weeks, one year, two years, until your efforts come to fruition and there's no longer any sense of a difference between inside and outside, self and other. You become one layer of mu--no more self, no more heavens and earth, only one layer of mu. Then it's as if you have seen a dream but are unable to speak of it. Yet no matter how fantastic this state of mind is, you can't tell other people about it. No one can understand. You are like a mute seeing a dream and laughing, but no one else can get it. You are certain that this is the place the Buddha was talking about and smile.

But this is not yet enlightenment. Suddenly you smash the barrier. You astonish heaven and shake the earth. You kill the Buddha if you meet the Buddha, and you kill the ancient masters if you meet them. On the brink of life and death you are utterly free. In the six realms and the four modes of life you live, with great joy, a genuine life in complete freedom.

The actual experience of that place of no more inside or outside, just one layer of mu, is truly wonderful, but this is still not the complete picture. There is no you there, so the ability to create is negated. That which creates the heavens and earth, that true self, has to be realized. It must be manifested. This place of no inside and no outside is what the ancients called the Great Death. From there, from that absolute mu, you have to come back to life, exploding into the place that startles the heavens and the earth.

Within each person's actual truth we die and die and die, and then with one touch from the outside our mind is reborn completely with vivid life energy. Startling the heavens and the earth, we are suddenly reborn. It can be only this way, as if the skies are falling. Everything we ever held

on to is let go of, and we can then realize this world of nothing at all in one instant of experience. If you know this experience, it is as if you have snatched the sword of the great General Kan. You kill the Buddha if you meet him, and you kill the ancients if you meet them. A totally free and infinite functioning is born. In this whole world there is nothing to be thankful to, nothing to enter your awareness in any way. This is because even an idea of something to be thankful for is already dualistic. In clear awareness there is nowhere for even the tiniest bit of shadow to enter.

On the brink of life and death we are utterly free. There is no way for even birth and death to remain. Even that great problem is no longer something to be attached to. In all the modes of life we know great joy. We become all life-forms--we know this world, the animals' world, or any world. We have nothing to be deluded by. We are attached to nothing and moved around by nothing. As Rinzai puts it, to be in hell is like being at the amusement park. Even if we are right smack in the middle of the worst hell, it's as if we are in the best amusement park.

In telling us how to do mu, Mumon says to put it all aside and look at mu with everything you have; all of your concentration, every bit of your body and mind. If from morning until night you continue your attentive focus with no gap, then it is as it was described in the old days: from a flavorless stone, a spark will rise. But most important of all is to allow no gaps for thoughts. This is the only way it works. Mumon Ekai teaches us from his own experience and kindly explains in greatest detail. This is the true teaching for this koan, not Joshu's one word of "Mu." We are not looking at anything extra or holding anything else in our mind when we do that mu. Our practice ends with that, but the actual case continues: "It is said that there is Buddha Nature in a dog. So why does the master say mu?"

The Buddha said that all beings have Buddha Nature, so why do you say Mu about this dog? Why do you say there is nothing there?

Joshu replies that it is because of the

karma of our five desires. Joshu makes the truth of the matter clear. He acknowledges those desires and the various conflicts in society. But then why does the Buddha say we are all Buddhas? If we have Buddha Nature, why do we argue and why are we deluded? If we are honest, we will always come up against this problem.

Joshu's answer is succinct: "Look! Or have you lost the Buddha Nature? Don't think anything extraneous!"

Here Joshu says it clearly. It's not about analyzing the six realms; that kind of mentality is mistaken from the bottom up. Joshu is not thinking about those various realms but is saying not to double your awareness. This is why his teacher, Nansen, said, "The three thousand Buddhas don't know it but the raccoon and the bear-cat do--why?" What is being said here is that this karma has to be seen. Our eyes and ears and nose and mouth and body and feelings, all of our six roots, have to encounter that sword of mu. Everything we touch with our eyes, ears, nose, mouth, and awareness, all of it, every attachment, has to be cut away to become that one mu, or else it is impossible.

A different monk asked, "Does a dog have Buddha Nature or not?"

This was the same question, but Joshu saw what this monk needed and said, "U."

The monk said then, as if grabbing Joshu's tail, "If we have Buddha Nature, why did we dive into this shit bag?"

Joshu answered, "Knowingly we transgressed."

In the records of Joshu a high official asks Joshu if even he, Joshu, one of such profound wisdom, will still fall into hell? Joshu replies, "Me? I am going straight in ahead of everyone!"

The official was amazed and asked, "How can you say that?"

"Because if I don't go there, how will I be able to meet you?"

In the Vimilakirti Sutra it also says that the sicknesses of the Bodhisattva come because of the sicknesses of all people. "In the six realms and the four modes of life

you live with great joy, a genuine life in complete freedom.”

Joshu said only “Mu,” but the greatest truth of the whole of the heavens and earth is manifested there. All of the roots of the six realms and four modes of life are ripped away. All of it is extinguished and let go of, and all of the roots of delusion and attachment are obliterated. This is the great Wisdom. All of our conditioned thinking forms the great doubt, and there is no person of training without this doubt. When our eyes are opened, we awaken to great faith. Here is the foundation of all religion.

And so Mumon Ekai Zenji says in his poem:

“The dog! the Buddha Nature!
The Truth is manifested in full!
A moment of yes and no
Lost are your body and soul!”



且坐喫茶



*Sit down and have
some tea*

Shaza kissa

且坐喫茶

Well! Sit down and have some tea! Stop working and sit down; have some tea and get settled. Enjoy this tea, and see for yourself how easily you return to your centered state of being--you will see it well!

But just putting your legs out in front of you won't do it. From a Japanese point of view, "just a little" is not sufficient here. It has to be a thoroughly well settled moment, and there is a way of doing this.

It may seem like a rigid and restricted way to do things, but we put down a cushion and sit on that cushion and drink our tea. Sitting right here is what brings a settled feeling. Here, the candy and tea are brought to us. It may take a long time for this aspect of Japanese culture to seem natural. But to sit in this way has the effect of bringing us back to our physical and psychological center.

Those who practice the traditional Japanese comedy routines say that it is very easy to make people who are sitting on the ground cry, less so for those who are sitting on a chair, and most difficult for those who are standing. To be able to deeply laugh and cry, sitting on the floor is best.

A sitting pose is frequently used in the Orient. We sit down, open the screen door, stand up to go through the door, and then sit down again to close the door. Our culture is centered around sitting to do things. We don't stand to see things in the tokonoma. Instead, we sit on the floor, which enables us to see the flowers and the scrolls in the most natural way, not looking down at them from above but seeing them from their same level. Japanese culture is built around sitting on the floor. We have low ceilings because they are best for sitting in a room on a tatami mat. Our gardens are designed to be viewed from the floor of a porch. The Japanese way of sitting on the ground has a very natural and settling feeling to it.

On the other hand, you can't move quickly when sitting on the floor. Sitting in a chair is better when you need to move quickly. Thus, those from a very active culture will mostly sit in chairs.

In Buddhism it says that there are four postures that we use during the day: sitting, standing, walking, and lying down. The most stable posture is to sit. Standing is the most active posture and thus is not so settled, but it's good for looking

externally with our senses. When we sit in a chair we are there momentarily, so we are half centered, but when we sit all the way down on the floor we have to stand up to move and thus are better centered inside. Lying down is the posture used for resting, so it is a difficult posture to use for looking within. Buddhism is born of sitting. The statues of Buddhas functioning in society are usually standing, and there are also some Bodhisattvas with a leg half down, half contemplative and half in action, and some Bodhisattvas sitting on a chair or on a lion. Yet most of the statues of the Buddha show him sitting, because Buddhism is born from sitting.

Of course there are many kinds of sitting. We can be half kneeling or with our legs loosely crossed or with one leg out. In Japanese culture sitting generally means to sit seiza, on our knees, close together.

There are many ways of sitting, but the Buddha's sitting posture is in full lotus with the right foot on the left thigh and the left foot on the right thigh. This is the traditional zazen posture. In this posture, with our eyes half open, our mind becomes taut and we can dig within. There are many places where you can learn about zazen in detail. Our sitting first allows us to align our mind. Then, in accordance with that, we align our external world, extending outward to our neighborhood, our country, our society, our whole world. This aligning of everything in extension happens more and more as we sit, affecting all of our functioning and action.

First, sit and be settled. Even if it is for only a short time; look at your own mind's stability as what is most important. Today people are running around way too much. We don't have to sit FOR something. We can sit here just for sitting.



至

道

無



*The Great Way is
without difficulty*

Shidō bunan

至道無難

These words are found in Sanso Kanchi Zenji's *On Believing in Mind*. Sanso Kanchi Zenji was the successor of Niso Eka Daishi. It's unclear when and where he was born and died. He may have been born to a family that served at the palace. When he first met Niso Eka Daishi, he faced him and said, "Your disciple is sick with leprosy." At that time, leprosy was considered to be caused by one's own bad karma.

Because this was the belief, he asked Niso Eka Daishi, "What was the great sin that I committed to give rise to having leprosy? What sin gave me this sickness? Please rectify my sins. I beg you to do this."

Eka Daishi said, "Bring me that sin, and I will resolve it for you and fulfill your vow."

Kanchi Zenji didn't know how to respond. After a while he said, "I can't put that sin out there, even if you tell me to. I can't do that."

Eka Daishi then said, "There. I have resolved your sin. But please see that in Buddhism there is no existing sin. To see THAT was your own purification. You were being moved around by your concept of that sin. Now you have seen that there is, from the origin, no place for such a thing. In seeing that, you have instantly purified the sin."

With his sins purified, Kanchi Zenji lived the rest of his life as a monk, offering his body to realize the Buddha Dharma and bringing that mind to all people. He made this his life.

It was Kanchi Zenji who gave his Dharma to the Emperor Genso. His On Believing in Mind is a guide to practice that is kept close at hand by all monks and practitioners. To believe in mind is basic. Zen is not about having a god to believe in, nor about worshipping something external; that's not a part of Buddhism. We can't know if there is a god or not, and something external may or may not be available. To believe in something we can't be sure of is pointless emotion, not wisdom and highest awareness. Without wisdom, you can't have a religion that people will be able to believe in. To what do we turn for refuge? This has to be our foundation. So many people are interested in Zen because it's a religion of wisdom. The religions that have been popular up until now have been emotional. People can't go along with that any longer.

So what is it we have to awaken to? This is the question. What are you? What am I? What is alive here? What is confused here? What is deluded here? Religion must show us how to become clear about these things to the deepest reaches of our being. We

have to look objectively and clearly at the furthest depths of our mind by digging down and cutting away.

We have to know what we ourselves are. This is Buddhism. Even though knowing our own minds is what is most important, this is seldom understood. This is what Buddhism addresses. This is believing in mind. We must clarify and see directly this true nondeceiving mind, the mind that believes in mind. The "believing" that is written about here is not that of a divided mind that believes something relative to another mind that can be believed in. These minds are all one and the same. This has to be seen clearly. The mind and the believing are not two; they are not separate.

In Buddhism there are sects. The Pure Land sect, for example, believes in Amida. But Shinran Shonin said that one who finds joy in the believing mind will see that Buddha Nature itself is Amida Nyorai Buddha, and Amida himself is Buddha Nature. There is nothing apart. That believing mind is within us, and that is the Buddha himself. Our Buddha Nature is the Buddha. One who can find joy in the believing mind is Buddha. Amida Nyorai Buddha must be expressed as deep faith from within, or it isn't real.

Shinran Shonin also said that those lost in desires and full of extraneous thinking have nothing to believe in and no clue about what will happen next in this changing, undependable world. Only the chanting of the Buddha's name, "Namu Amida Butsu," is true. Whether there is actually an Amida-sama or not, I do not know, but to chant that truth is all that I do know is true. It is not something over there, but that which is right here. That deep belief is a living "Namu Amida Butsu." To know that mind is what is most important, and this is believing in mind.

In the way of Zen, satori or kensho is not something to be sought somewhere far away; it's that mind within each of us. To see this is enlightenment; enlightenment, just as it is, is the believing mind. There is no kensho without believing, and no true believing without the experience of kensho.

Here Sanso Kanchi Zenji says in his first line that the Great Way knows no difficulties. So where do we take refuge in our everyday life? We have to see this and be clear about it. Each day we sit and stand and walk and eat and work. We function in these ways all day long. The way in which we live and move, that which moves and expresses itself, the expression of that essence with nothing wasted--this is the Path.

We must not be pulled around by our many thoughts and wisps of ideas or by the many interactions we have with other people. If we can live our daily life free of these concerns, then how stable and clear our lives would be. If we can't, we lose our true goal and are moved around by everything that comes along. No matter what situations or emotions we encounter, we will have no problem if we can avoid being pulled around.

This is true for a great piano player as well--unconcerned with whether the audience approves or not, for a great player, that piano is all there is. The same is true for a sculptor or any artist. It has to be like that, or it is not the true thing. If we are booed or disapproved of, we become disappointed. But are we creating art or music just for the sake of approval? Of course we want people to be deeply moved by our art, but if people do not understand, we can't be thrown around by that lack of understanding. Whether the other person falls or stands, we need to be able to respond without being moved one single bit from our own place of essence. We can't be moved around and confused by situations and circumstances. We need to follow one straight line which we know and walk well.

In all the ancient religions it was taught that to live in obedience to the orders of the heavens was the path. If we know the mind with which we are endowed, we can live in a way that is moral and ethical. This is how it has been taught in Buddhism.

What that means is that Buddha Nature is in each and every thing and being. Believing in mind is to know that this Buddha Nature is in all things; that is what is most important. If we do not know that, no matter how fine or splendid our

practice is, it will not be the Great Way. Our true deep root is the true path.

To follow the Great Way we don't imitate someone else but instead fill the heavens and earth with our own confidence. Unless we know the Buddha Nature with which we are all endowed, we can't function clearly. To understand this Buddha Nature and function from there is the Great Way. Then we act, not from unawakened mental understanding, but out of the true ethics and morals that arise from clarity of mind.

The Buddha Way is the Path, and how to walk that path well was taught by Nansen Fugan Zenji and Joshu Jushin Zenji, of the same lineage. Nansen and Joshu and others of their lineage taught that the everyday path is the true mind. That which arises from that true mind we had at birth, that mind as clear as an autumn sky, is always virtuous. This is what Nansen taught. Children are closest to that state of mind. They also make mistakes, but because their minds are so uncluttered they are not vicious or twisted. As we get older, we become more calculating. Before children learn social values, they may do bad things, but because they are still so pure and unsullied we can see their true humanity shining though.

That purity comes from knowing the clear mind that is the Great Way without difficulties. Ethics is not a complex problem. What is truth? What is the original nature? To know these for ourselves is what is important.

*Just avoid picking and
choosing*

Tada kenjaku wo kirō

唯嫌揀擇

The Path of the Buddha is said to be a teaching beyond words and phrases. It can only be realized by going beyond mental understanding and living it as one's own experience. In our daily life we constantly dwell on ideas and judgments, planning



唯嫌揀擇

and deciding. We have a complex system of thinking. But that's not all there is.

Thinking is one way to approach things, but to function from a place of essence we have to be able to use all things freely. We begin with mental understanding of something, and then we realize it with our whole body and being. Only then can we express it with our whole body. Art and sports and everything else is like this. To understand something only with your head is the way of the amateur, and we can't do that forever. We have to graduate to well-practiced, high-quality actualization.

This kind of awareness is essential to everything. First we understand something, then we learn it with our body, then we practice it until it becomes second nature. No matter how well we have understood something with our heads, it must also be practiced and learned with our whole being. Sports, piano playing, poetry writing, and sculpture, for example, must be deeply understood not only with the head but with the whole body. We have to make it our own from our own experience. Only then do we come to a deeper understanding. If it's not like this we can't move. If we don't put our efforts into something until it is purified and worked through, we can't create something of superior and high quality.

The Way of the Buddha is a teaching to enable humans to realize that high-quality, well-clarified, and purified way of being. "When we are hungry, we eat; when we are tired, we sleep." But this is not some unawakened person who just eats when hungry and sleeps when tired. Here there is one of no delusion, no complex ego, and no blind action. In accordance with the heavens and the earth, when hungry we eat, when tired we sleep. Only when we enter it in this way does it become a living Zen.

This way of being arises not from our insecure, unstable, egoistic state of mind but from that which fills the heavens and the earth with huge abundance. We must realize this state of mind in whatever we do.

There are many writings that manifest Zen

well, including The Song of Enlightenment and the verse that begins "Oh! Great all embracing Mind." The paths of flower arranging, tea ceremony, calligraphy and brush painting, Japanese archery, noh drama, and many others, in fact all of the paths of Eastern art, manifest Zen well. Their ultimate truth is their connection with Zen. They can be purified to the point at which we have extinguished all of our outside thoughts and attachments. This true flavor is what is called Zen. And from there overflows humans' highest quality of activity and way of being.

The Great Way is without difficulty.

If any preference is included here, it all becomes a great mistake. Having a preference is to think that we should do it this way, or we should do it that way, but not if it is like this, or not it is like that . . . to think about things with dualistic mental interpretation. When we fall into such a narrow perspective we are no longer on the Great Way. This is why it's said that the Great Way is without difficulty, as long as we can avoid picking and choosing.

We have to become like a child who is truly empty-minded, knowing that huge abundant state of mind where no self-conscious awareness can exist. To live in this state of mind is the Great Way.

In terms of morals and ethics, we can say that we should not bring in our own personal profit and needs--there is no reason to be concerned with anything like that. Furthermore, our personal emotions are what always obstruct us the most. We have many emotions, but when we mix them into how we act we make big mistakes. If parents, for example, think that their older child is lovable but the younger one is terrible, that creates an enormous problem for everyone. If teachers allow prejudice to influence how they educate their students, that is a grave mistake.

When dealing with people in society, if we add in personal love and hate and other emotions, we easily stumble. Of course there is an instinctual, deep-rooted love and hate in our preferences for some forms and people over others. But when that love and hate affect our actions, we are no

longer just as we are and things become complicated. What is most important is the action that comes forth from a huge and magnanimous mind, that huge sky without a trace of a cloud anywhere. For realizing this we have various arts and paths as well as morals and ethics. Strict rules of behavior and polite ways are also necessary.

Yet if these rules and manners are simply forced on us by society, it would be a great mistake. We have to use those rules and manners to express a way of being with nothing wasted, to manifest that huge and magnanimous mind. But a life in which at least the rules are observed is better than an unawakened life.

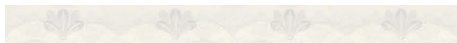
We can't let our mind be controlled by concepts such as "straight" and "backward," or dualistic ideas such as "good" and "evil." If our mind is ruled by such ideas it will influence our behavior. In our daily life, at this time and this place, we realize that our best refuge is to hold on to nothing at all. Our source is that place of no preconceptions. When things are finished, we let go of them immediately.

"Not adding on anything to the first mind moment, we let go of any associations or second mind moments completely. This has more value than ten years of pilgrimage."

This is how Master Rinzai put it.

We do not fret over things that have not yet happened. We let go of things that have already taken place immediately, without dragging along anxieties or shadows. Instead of piling up attachments, we live in a bright clear state of mind and grasp the real world from that state of mind. Then our way of seeing will not be twisted and confused, and there will be no difficulty on the Great Way.

The Great Way is without difficulty
Just avoid picking and choosing.



和



敬

清



寂



*Harmony, respect,
purity, tranquillity*

Wa kei sei jaku

和敬清寂

These words are used in Zen but especially they are used in reference to the tea ceremony. They are in fact words spoken by the head tea master, Murata Jiko, when the Shogun Ashikaga Yoshimasa asked him, "What is the mind of tea."



Murata Jiko answered succinctly, "Harmony, respect, purity, tranquillity." Since then, these words have been thought of in conjunction with tea.

No matter what else might be said about the world of human relationships, it needs to be peaceful and tranquil. When it is not, people are unstable and insecure. But what is this peace?

The first part of the kanji for peace looks like a mouth surrounded by many things to eat. Kanji is truly thorough! Even a baby is happiest and will stop crying when it can put its mouth to a breast. Any group having a meeting will do better with something to eat and drink. For any gathering to go well, we need something there to put in our mouths.

The second half of the kanji for peace looks flat and balanced. It is because things are not flat and balanced that the world descends into confusion. Some people have too much, while others don't have enough. This disparity is what causes conflict. We can't look at this only conceptually. If all 6.3 billion people actually had equal amounts to eat, they could be peaceful and harmonious. It is our responsibility to see that that happens. Yet just saying peace, peace, peace and trying to help by holding meetings is not sufficient. Harmony also requires respect for each person's deepest character. Then we are like friends, intimate not just in form but with each other's deep character. This is the level on which we must be intimate. Regardless of our class or caste or culture or language, we're all humans, and we have to respect each other's deepest character, or it won't work.

We have to feel this respect not just because we are told to but because we have a clear mind to respect with. Otherwise it is only a ritual. If our mind is not truly balanced, we can't respect others in a balanced way. That clear mind also has to receive what all people have to say, in all kinds of situations, or the things we encounter will confuse and twist us and make us unstable and insecure. No matter what comes to us from the outside, we must have an essence that is not moved around by anything. If we are not as peaceful as the bottom

of the ocean, it is not true peace. That is why we need "Harmony, respect, purity, tranquillity."

These words and ideas have been used for many centuries, teaching that in our human relationships, we find peace by respecting each other's deepest character. In the Lotus Sutra there is the story of Jo Fukyo Bodhisattva, who did not recite sutras or sit zazen but prostrated to everyone he encountered, saying he had deep respect for them and they would become a Buddha. He prayed to each person, but those who were prayed to didn't think they were so worthy of respect. Because they disliked themselves, they would get angry and spit at him and hit him and yell at him. But he would simply reply, "I have a deep respect for you; I see in you the deep Mind of Buddha." This Jo Fukyo Bodhisattva was one of the Buddha's past lives.

It is said that any religion that isn't like this won't last. Religion can't be just a matter of praying to a God. We must find and awaken to our deep godlike potential. This must be realized deeply and then polished and respected in each other.

At the doorway to the tea ceremony room a fan is placed on the tatami, marking a definite entrance. Then we go to the tokonoma, the place where even in a regular house we find a space for our mind to become settled. Our house is a place to rest our tired body, but it also has to be a place to find peace and a settled mind. The One Drop Zendo's are also places where we can respect each other and find peace. The tokonoma was originally a Buddha altar, and that is why incense is offered to the Buddha's words that hang there, and light is provided to light those words and our travel. To the right is a candle, to the left is water, and in the middle is an incense burner.

Hung in the middle of the tokonoma are the Buddha's or Patriarchs' phrases. They always hang there, providing a place of refuge for our mind. The words are a resting place, a staff for our mind, so we can sit down silently. In the tea room the tokonoma is for bowing to and honoring, not as a matter of form but from the true

depths of our mind. If we always do that with respect for all people who share this same deep mind, we will all be awakened to that.

Then we look at each tea utensil very seriously, examining it and seeing the value in each one. The beauty and the flavor of each has to be looked at carefully to see its highest quality. We can't just look vaguely, there is no exchange of mind in that. A scholar of justice once said to his students, "Do you know that justice and law are the most feared subjects? But they are only about respecting society and the people in it, not about studying punishment. You have to see all things clearly before you start this study. Go and see things that were used as tools before the time of Christ, look at things in the museums and how they were used. You have to learn how to see things deeply. If you can't pray for the best for society, you can't understand justice. We have to study all things and see them well to know what will be useful and best for each person."

We look carefully at each individual tea bowl. We touch the life energy of one flower in a vase. We smell the incense and feel the warmth of the water, and there our very mind's depth is warmed as well. Not as things but as real live people we greet these utensils, and our deep respect grows and is cultivated.

As we give our mind to each and every thing, we know the source of peace and harmony. It is not only about respecting people and character, but so often we can't even do that. We are always judging the ways of others or their past deeds or their bad habits. We are always looking at their weaknesses. But if we do that we can't truthfully respect them. As Jo Fukyo Bodhisattva did, we have to let go of all ideas of good and bad before we can truly respect someone, and we can't enter the tea room sincerely unless we are peaceful in our own mind. We must have a mind like a mirror that simply reflects and does not judge. Then we can see in the same way as God, who gives rain equally to good people and bad, and realize that we have that very same mind inside us.

Vimalakirti is the one who gave birth to the tea room garden, a small garden outside the tea room that is like the one written about in the Vimalakirti Sutra. Vimalakirti's room is called a hojo. It is the size of four and one half tatami mats, just big enough for a human to live in the least possible space. Vimalakirti was sick in such a room when Manjusri came to visit with many Bodhisattvas, but there was nothing at all in the room. Vimalakirti was just burning incense and waiting. In the tea ceremony as well, nothing extra is added. There is only the fragrance of incense and flowers; everything else is empty. Thus is the empty mind of the tea master expressed. The guests purify themselves by washing their hands at the rock basin and then enter with a purified mind.

Japanese used to go up mountains repeating, "Six Senses Purified, Six Senses Purified." All of the senses and the whole body become pure when we climb a mountain. We see the mountain, and our eyes are purified. Hearing the birds, our ears are purified. We drink the clear river's water, and our mouth is purified. We sweat, and our body is purified. We climb the mountain and think nothing at all, and our mind is purified. In this way, we make all of our senses pure. This is the purity of "Harmony, respect, purity, tranquillity."

Here is where the ideas and doctrines of all religions return to the pure source of true religion. For all religions this idea of purity is important, or it is not true religion.

Yet we also have so much past experience and knowledge. As Bankei Zenji has said it, "That old barrel--if we burst the bottom out we have three barrel staves and one empty circle or enso." We are so full of emotions and past experiences and ideas that are so interesting, or so frustrating. Those ideas are fine when they arise, but if we keep piling them up our mind becomes like a tank filled with methane gas. We must not let that make us dark and heavy. That ego sludge at the barrel's bottom has to be burst through. All the sides then fall away, and there is only that circle of the bottom of the barrel. One circle, our true pure clear mind, the mind of God, humans' original mind, which is

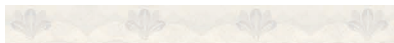
empty like a mirror, pure and clear.

We have added things to that original mind and lost sight of its clarity. If religion is necessary at all, it is to let go of what we have become stuck on and awaken to our original mind. For doing just this we have zazen. When we let go of everything we have accumulated, we can see directly what is actually there. Then we can use our experiences and knowledge without mistake, for all beings and for all of society. For this we have to purify that mind, this clear "Harmony, respect, purity, tranquillity."

As the Buddha said, we have to extinguish the flames of greed, extinguish the flames of ignorance, and extinguish the flames of anger, and then we will know nirvana's tranquillity. If we realize the true source of our mind, we know this pure and clear place, and from there we respect all beings. This is the source of peace for the whole world.

"Harmony, respect, purity, tranquillity."

Not just for tea ceremony, but as the source of peace for all humankind.



Dream

Yume

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In life we have dreams, we have hopes, we have high ideals--this is how young people are taught. But what does it mean to have a dream? What kind of a hope will it be? What high ideal should we have? Each person's dream is personal; each one's ideals and hopes are different. But a dream is something that feels far from



reality. Hope feels like something way over there and far away, and high ideals seem so conceptual.

Buddhism teaches:

“The colorful flowers are fragrant,
But they must fall.
Who in this world of ours
Can live forever?

Today, cross over the deep
mountains
of life’s illusions.
And there will be no more shallow
dreaming,
no more intoxication.”

Kobo Daishi left these words, and they are used for studying the basic alphabet, since the first letter of each word makes up the alphabet in order.

Everything in this world is in flux. No matter how real we may think things are, it all passes. We all think our life is special and that we will have a great life. But no matter what a great life we live or how excellent the work is that we do or how outstanding the research or art is that we produce, we die and leave. Even the most superior and advanced people die. We are all leaves that fall.

We live in a dream, in delusion. In the world outside, we can all see the beautiful flowers and hear the birds sing. We see all that, but what is it that is alive inside that? No one understands that or tries to see what that is. We see a superficial layer of the world and acknowledge that as important. If we are approved of and appreciated, we think we are good; if not, we feel bad. We don’t see that it’s all in flux and transient, a dream of a dream.

Even the great samurai Hideyoshi, who had all the political power and wealth anyone could want, said at his death that it was all nothing but a dream of a dream of a dream. No matter what we attain, we can see that it is all only that. No matter what we realize, we have to see that it is all only a dream. People see that dream, but instead of realizing it is a dream they

take it to be real and permanent. But in Buddhism we recognize it all as a dream and awaken to what is real.

It is not bad to have a dream in life. Because we dream, we can achieve things. All of today’s science and advanced technology came from dreams. We can now fly in planes. People sitting in their houses needed this or that, and so we have radios, computers, and other more complex inventions. Rifles don’t suffice any more, so now we have atom bombs. Seeing the moon, we thought about going there, and that dream led to space travel.

Dreams bring excellent discoveries and appear to be progress, but have humans become any better because of all of those things? Have our values improved? Not one single bit. We are still full of conflict and anger and resentment. Our insecurity has not been lessened at all. It’s only increased, and the world is no more at peace than before. We chase dreams, but we forget to realize ourselves. We can fly great distances, but that which is closest to us, our own self, we know nothing about.

Today if we are told to have hope, we have to ask why? What can we depend on? We never know what is going to happen next in this world. We never know how it might be destroyed, or when. So why should we have hope?

Today everyone is losing hope and forgoing any ideals of a high standard. It’s really hard to see humans lacking any goals, living with no hopes, dreams, or ideals.

We must have hopes, dreams, and ideals, but we cannot lose our source, or all of those are only slogans. More than a hope, idea, and dream for tomorrow, we have to see the reality and value of who is alive right here and now. Unless we see the splendid value of each person, what dream or hope or ideal can there possibly be?

On the eighth of December under the bodhi tree the Buddha awakened and said, “How wondrous! How wondrous! All beings are endowed with this clear bright mind to which I have just awakened. Only because they are attached and full of ego

they cannot realize this!"

This was the first great discovery of humans' most splendid quality, and it was truly a revolutionary discovery. This wasn't a discovery about political or economical power, but about the deep inner experience of humans' freedom and equality and awakened mind. In Buddhism we realize that value in each and every person. The Buddha Dharma is not about discovering things far away but about recognizing what is right within us.

To study the Way is to study the self.

To study the self is to forget the self.

To forget the self is to be enlightened by all things.

To be enlightened by all things is to remove the barriers between one's self and others.

With this we see each and every person's most splendid and highest quality. Truly, we each awaken to how we are each a Bodhisattva and are giving life to this world. If we awaken to that, we can see every single thing as a thing of value and no longer need to depend on dreams and hopes and ideals. Instead, we can depend on our own life right at our very feet. We can see clearly.

One who plants a rose has to choose the soil carefully according to what is best for that rose, planting it where it can grow well. If we have a hope and an ideal, we will get a good result if we have good soil and make the right efforts. If we have an awareness of our true splendid character, then we can see that our dream is without fail right at our own footsteps. We see that our ideals are at our character's deepest source. Our dream is the goal of our life, but that life cannot be superficial and miss the essence, or it will be only a dream of a dream. We have to be attentive and see this world clearly and deeply.