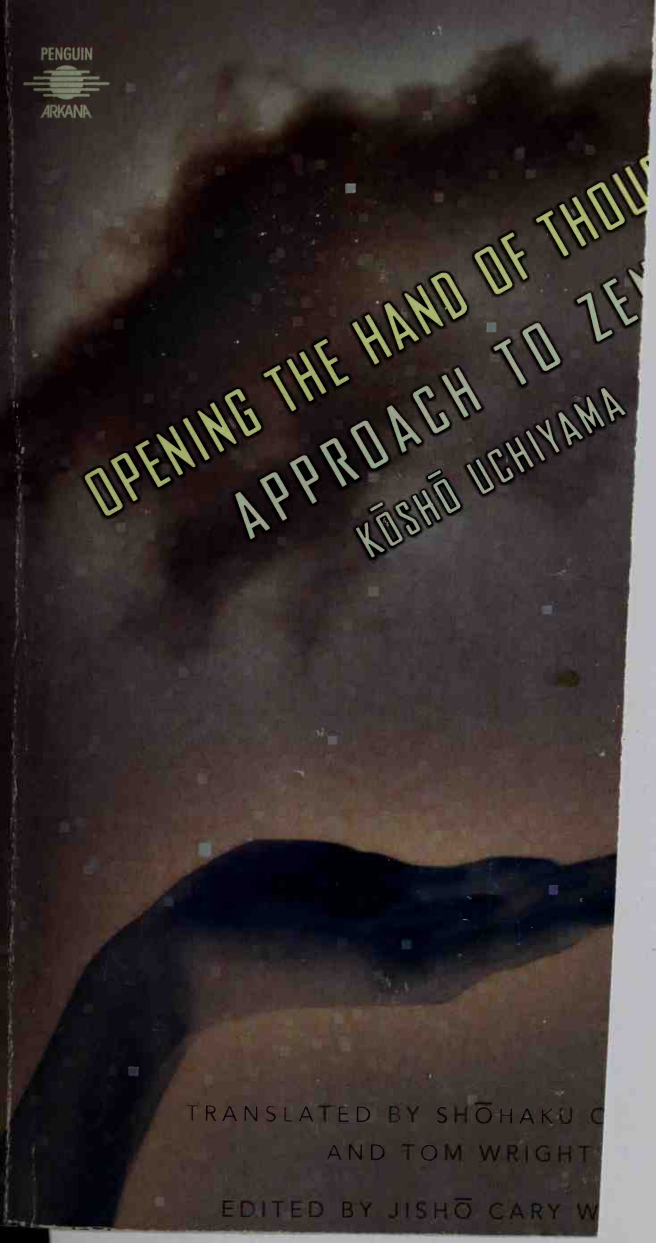
PENGUIN
ARKANA
OPENING THE HAND OF THOU
APPROACH TO ZE
KŌSHŌ UCHIYAMA
TRANSLATED BY SHŌHAKU C
AND TOM WRIGHT
EDITED BY JISHŌ CARY W

ARKANA

OPENING THE HAND OF THOUGHT

Kōshō Uchiyama Roshi was born in Tokyo in 1911. He received a master's degree in Western philosophy at Waseda University in 1937 and became a Zen priest three years later under Kōdō Sawaki Roshi. Upon Sawaki Roshi's death in 1965, he assumed the abbotship of Antaiji, a temple and monastery then located near Kyoto.

Uchiyama Roshi developed the practice at Anataiji, including monthly five-day sesshins, and often traveled throughout Japan, lecturing and leading sesshins. He retired from Antaiji in 1975 and now lives with his wife at Nōke-in, a small temple outside Kyoto. He has written over twenty texts on Zen, including translations of Dōgen Zenji into modern Japanese with commentaries, one of which is available in English (*Refining Your Life*, Tokyo: Weatherhill, 1983). Uchiyama Roshi is also well known in the world of origami, of which he is a master; he has published several books on origami.

Shōhaku Okumura was born in Ōsaka, Japan, in 1948. He studied Zen Buddhism at Komazawa University in Tokyo and was ordained as a priest by Uchiyama Roshi in 1970, practicing under him at Antaiji. From 1975 to 1982 he practiced at the Pioneer Valley Zendo in Massachusetts. After he returned to Japan, he began translating Dōgen Zenji's and Uchiyama Roshi's writings into English with Tom Wright and other American practitioners. From 1984 to 1992 Rev. Okumura led practice at Shōrinji, near Kyoto, as a teacher of the Kyoto Soto Zen Center, working mainly with Westerners. Several translations he has worked on have been published by the Kyoto Soto Zen Center, including *Shikantaza—An Introduction to Zazen, Shōbōgenzō Zuimonki, Dōgen Zen*, and *The Zen Teachings of Homeless Kōdō.*

Rev. Okumura has recently returned to the United States with his family to practice and teach; he is currently at the Minnesota Zen Meditation Center in Minneapolis.

Tom Wright, who was born and raised in Wisconsin, has lived in Japan for over twenty-five years. Most of that time has been spent practicing and studying Zen under Kōshō Uchiyama Roshi. He was ordained as a priest in 1974. He is a graduate of the University of Wisconsin and has a master's degree from California State University Dominguez Hills, in English literature. Rev. Wright has worked on the translation and editing of several texts on Zen, including *Refining Your Life*, *Shikantaza*, and *Shōbōgenzō Zuimonki*—the latter two with Shōhaku Okumura—and two on Japanese gardens. Besides working for the Kyoto Soto Zen Center, he is an instructor in the English Language and Culture Program at Ryūkoku University in Kyoto.

Jishō Cary Warner grew up in New York City and graduated from Harvard University in 1965. She practiced at Pioneer Valley Zendo for several years, and is active at the Minnesota Zen Meditation Center and the Milwaukee Zen Center. She is a student of Tōzen Akiyama of the Milwaukee Zen Center, by whom she was ordained as a priest; she was a longtime student of Dainin Katagiri Roshi of the Minnesota Zen Meditation Center, and practiced under him at Hokyoji, a developing monastery in southern Minnesota. Jishō Warner has edited numerous books on Zen and other areas of Buddhism, and on Asian art.

Opening the Hand of Thought:

Approach to Zen

KŌSHŌ UCHIYAMA

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To all who are practicing

the buddha-dharma

Sitting itself is the practice of the buddha. Sitting itself is nondoing. It is nothing but the true form of the self. Apart from sitting, there is nothing to seek as the buddha-dharma.

Eihei Dōgen Zenji,
Shōbōgenzō-Zuimonki
("Sayings of Eihei Dōgen Zenji")

Contents

Part Four

Translators' Preface

If Buddhism in general, and Zen in particular, is ever to lay deep roots in the mainstream of Western culture and civilization and not be relegated to being simply one of those quaint or odd Oriental traditions in the religious supermarket of our day, then Zen, or the so-called practitioners of it, while studying the examples of past teachers, will have to be able to see the problems modern people are faced with, as well. Indeed, if Zen is to play any role, much less a leading role, in the future direction of humankind, then those who profess to be Zen followers will have to be able to articulate clearly the problems we are facing in the world today. Moreover, a Zen that clings to the traditional garments of Zen without grasping the essence will surely end up being regarded as one of the religions of antiquity—and only that. What is that essence? To be sure, it is much easier to talk and write about what it isn't than about what it is. Yet, if no attempt is made and Zen is left only to

be understood by silence, under the guise of profundity, then surely Zen will be silently left behind.

So, then, what can be said? One expression that accurately points to that essence is, ironically, an expression predating the Buddhist tradition. This is Araniyake's statement: "All that can be said is, 'not this, not that.' " But unless such statements are put into the overall context of Buddhism and Buddhist practice, we're afraid they will be poorly understood or ignored. Perhaps the best statement that we can make about Zen comes in the form of a question we have to ask ourselves continually no matter how long we study Buddhism or sit zazen. That is, with zazen as the center of our lives, how can we go about living fully and freely in our day-to-day lives?

Opening the Hand of Thought aims precisely at this crucial question. The title reflects closely the point of Kōshō Uchiyama Roshi's writings, to explain as clearly as possible what he calls Self (*jiko*), and the activity of this Self throughout our lives. *Roshi* is the title by which he is known; meaning, literally, old or venerable teacher, it is given to Zen practitioners whose depth of understanding shines clearly through their lives.

The book is divided into four parts. It opens with Uchiyama Roshi's reflections on his life and on the nature of the self, followed by an essay, "Practice and Persimmons," based on a lecture Uchiyama Roshi gave at his retirement residence in Kohata, near Kyoto. Roshi explains how transmission of the buddha-dharma to Europe and the Americas can be compared to the grafting of a persimmon tree. He goes on to talk about the four principles of Buddhist doctrine in the context of living in the twentieth century.

Parts II and III were originally published in Japanese. Part II, "The Reality of Zazen," is a translation of Uchiyama Roshi's *Seimei no Jitsubutsu: Zazen no Jissai*, literally "The Reality of Life: The Reality of Zazen," originally published in Japanese

by Hakujusha Publishers in Tokyo. Part III, "The Life of the True Self," was first published by the Sōtō-shū Shūmuchō, Sōtō Zen Headquarters, in 1967, under the title *Gendai Bunmei to Zazen.*

An earlier version of Parts II and III was published in English under the title *Approach to Zen* in 1973, by Japan Publications. That translation was done mainly by Stephen Yenik, with help from Tom Wright. The second half of *Approach to Zen* was translated by Fred Stober, and the whole text was checked thoroughly for accuracy by the late Sumiko Kudo. By 1980, the book's first two printings had completely sold out. There were a number of passages with which we were not satisfied, so rather than go into a third printing, with Uchiyama Roshi's permission we undertook the task of retranslating large portions of it and adding a number of notes.

Like Part I, the contents of Part IV, "Practicing Buddhism, Practicing Life," are being published in English for the first time. "The Wayseeker," Uchiyama Roshi's last lecture on Buddhist teaching delivered at Antaiji before he retired as abbot of that monastery, was published in Japanese as one chapter of a book called *Gudō*, or "The Wayseeker," by Hakujusha Publishers in 1977. The last chapter, "Questions," is based on interviews with members of the practice community of Viganego, Italy, in 1979 and 1981. The last interview occurred just before two members of the Italian group returned to Italy after a short stay at Antaiji.

Some of the footnotes were written by Uchiyama Roshi, and that is indicated each time in brackets at the beginning of the note. The other notes were written by the translators to help clarify difficult passages and nuances of Japanese terms. We have also provided a brief glossary as an aid to the reader.

In closing, we would like to give special thanks to Jishō Cary Warner, who reworked the manuscript several times and

clarified the language throughout. We would also like to thank Yūko Okumura, who worked so hard in the beginning stages of putting this manuscript together, and Shigekazu Sugimura, who spent many hours correcting stylistic errors.

Shōhaku Okumura
Daitsū Tom Wright
Kyoto
November 1992

Editor's Preface

I first encountered Uchiyama Roshi's teachings in 1981, in the Berkshire Hills of Massachusetts. I lived atop a ridge and sat zazen alone in my cabin, unaware that a few rolling hills away there was a zendo where a very quiet, refined Zen practice took place. When I finally found Pioneer Valley Zendo high on a wooded hillside, it seemed a very strange place: No one said hello or good-bye, no one asked my name. But a place was set for me at lunch, and clearly I was welcome, as was the entire universe. There were two notices posted. One was the entire policy of the center: No donation requested, no donation refused. The other was the seven points of practice that are explained in the essay "The Wayseeker." I came to love the bare bones Zen of just sitting, with no distractions: no lectures, no chanting, no work. This was the atmosphere of the frequent periods of intensive practice, the sesshins. The schedule at other times was equally unusual: After morning zazen, if there was enough money, the resident monk and students stayed there

and worked in the garden, cut firewood, or studied. If they needed cash, they went out and did odd jobs—baling hay, collecting maple sap. Evening zazen completed the day. A simple life—very straightforward, very clear—but not easy.

Uchiyama Roshi was the teacher of the monks who came to live at Valley Zendo; and they tried with great sincerity to put his teaching into practice. This book presents that teaching, of zazen as the fundamental practice for the great effort of living out the life of the Self. Uchiyama Roshi is something of an iconoclast, who cuts through the accumulated institutionalized forms of Soto Zen practice in Japan with apparent ease, certainly with grace. He reaches for the vital core of that profound way of life and understanding that is Zen, and offers it here to us. *Opening the Hand of Thought* is the clearest presentation of how to actually do zazen, and how to vivify your life, that I have ever encountered. I am deeply grateful for the opportunity I have had to help bring this book into being.

Jishō Cary Warner
Minneapolis
November 1992

Foreword

The civilization that began in Greece, developed in post–Renaissance Europe, and finally came to control the modern world was an intellectual civilization that defined and categorized everything. But, having defined and categorized everything intellectually, the people of Europe and America today seem to be on the verge of suffocating and are showing a great interest in the traditional Oriental world. They seem to feel that perhaps only in the ancient East is there an unlimited depth that transcends intellectual definition. In response to this longing on the part of today's Europeans and Americans, many books have been published as guides to this "unlimited depth of the ancient Orient." As is only proper, Zen is more or less at the center of this, and an especially large number of books about Zen have been written. This is all fine, but I think there is a problem concerning the meaning of this word "unlimited."

Kyoto, the ancient capital of Japan, is over a thousand years old and has become the center of Zen and the tea ceremony.

It is surrounded by mountains, and throughout the year mist and haze occur quite frequently. This mist envelops the mountains, where rocks and stones are heavily covered with moss. These moss-covered rocks and stones in the midst of silence seem to express the meaning of the "unlimited." The mountains themselves, piled one on top of the other and surrounded by mist, contribute to this impression of unlimited depth. We become enraptured by mystical ideas and feelings. Until now, practically all the books dealing with Zen or the tea ceremony have had pictures of Zen temples and teahouses with a background of moss-covered rocks and deep, misty mountain scenery.

Of course, it's very fine that the mist makes the scenery around Kyoto so beautiful. But I think it would be a serious mistake for Americans and Europeans to interpret the "unlimited depth of the ancient Orient" to be this kind of exotic world, and I'm concerned that too many books have presented the depth of the East only in this sense. If Westerners understand the "unlimited depth of the ancient Orient" in this way, then when the haze and mist are cleared away by the true light of reason, they will find that, in most cases, they have come up with a lot of trivia and nonsense.

The true depth of the East isn't a denial of human reason. It's not some kind of depth within the fog of anti-intellectual unlimitedness and nondefinition. The unlimited of the East must still exist even after all the anti-intellectual haze is cleared away by the light of reason. The depth of the unlimited is beyond the reach of any kind of reasoning. It's like a sky without clouds or mist. The clear depth of the universe is the unlimited discovered by the ancient Orientals. It must never become a mysticism based on some kind of anti-intellectualism. It must be a true depth that emerges only *after* the intellect itself

can be sufficiently convinced that the unlimited transcends that intellect.

I don't doubt that readers of this book will feel that it is focused quite differently from previous books about Zen. I will feel that I have sufficiently accomplished my purpose if the reader understands with his or her own intellect that Zen concerns the true depth of life that is beyond the reach of that intellect. This "life" cannot be confined to East or West. It extends through all humanity.

Above all, I hope that when you read this book, you will forget your sentiments about exotic foreign lands and read with a completely fresh mind. I hope that, as you read, you will look at your own life and apply what I have written to your everyday life. That is the only place where the real world of Zen is.

Kōshō Uchiyama
Kyoto

Part One

UNDENIABLE REALITY

ONE

Foundations of a Refined Life

The Theme of My Life

I grew up during the Taisho period and the first ten years of the Shōwa period. By the Western calendar, I was born in 1912. I graduated from college in 1935 and stayed on in graduate school for another two years, finishing those studies in 1937.

The earlier, Meiji period in Japan (1867–1912) was an era that worshiped everything that came from the West. However, during the Taishō and early Shōwa periods, Japan began to look more carefully at its own historical roots. At the same time that Japanese were waking up to their own Eastern traditions and beginning to take pride in this culture, the political scene saw a rise in ultra-nationalism, culminating in World War II. In other words, the politicians took what should have been a natural pride felt by the Japanese people in their own cultural richness and tried to manipulate it for nationalistic purposes.

From the time I was in high school, I never took the slightest interest in nationalism. My eyes were always drawn

toward a much larger world, and it has always been my dream to come up with some ideas that might be helpful to other people around the world. Even before I started school, I liked origami, or paper folding. I always admired the beautiful proportions of the traditional crane, for example, made to symbolize longevity. As a child it occurred to me that originally some particular person invented those folds. I dreamed about coming up with a new idea for some origami figure that people anywhere could fold and enjoy.

However, to come up with something helpful for our age that is truly original will require more than just a clever idea and can only occur on top of a great deal of study of human culture.

Japan is connected historically, through time, to Eastern cultures, a vertical connection, and around the world to Western civilization and traditions as a trading and cultural partner, a horizontal connection. I've always thought Japan was more fortunate than other countries in Asia to have both those connections.

Almost all the countries in Asia have at some time or another been subject to the domination of the European countries. China, Vietnam, Cambodia, India, Afghanistan, and Indonesia, for example—all of them have been occupied at one time or another. While those countries were under domination after the Russo-Japanese War, Japan has thought of itself as equal to the European nations. It is in the sense of standing on an equal footing that I use the expression of Japan being connected horizontally to Western civilization. It is on the basis of these most advantageous vertical connections with other countries of the Far East and the horizontal connection as equals with the West that I have dreamed since high school of carving out new territory for humanity.

I think I derived the desire to carve out new territory as a result of my father's way of thinking. My father was the embodiment of liberalism. His slogan was more or less "Do what you want to do." However, he did set down one condition. Whatever you go into, regardless of how narrow or trivial the field might be, do it so well that you can call yourself number one in that field.

For example, I once asked him to make me a pair of stilts. And he said, "Do you think you'll be able to maneuver around on stilts fifteen or twenty feet tall?" When I told him I just wanted an ordinary pair, he refused to make me any. That was his way of implementing his philosophy: If you're going to do something, be the best.

My father worked on topographical models as part of his work, but his main work was in the field of planographic printing. He invented a particular method for making planographic prints. As a business it was a failure. He was also involved in what is called *saiji*, that is, writing on things in such tiny letters that it takes a magnifying glass to read them. On just one grain of rice he wrote the entire Imperial Rescript on Education, some two hundred characters in length!

My father was also an expert in origami. He folded all kinds of things, and took pride in being the best in the world at it. I suppose he first learned origami from his mother, just as I did; it was from my grandmother that my desire to create things through origami grew. By the time I was in college, my interest in creating new origami almost got out of hand. I invented a number of folds to make different shapes. In that sense, my father and I both made claims to being the best in our respective areas of origami. My father was famous for his style of layered origami using paper of several different colors. As for me, my claim to origami fame is making almost anything—

flowers, animals, automobiles, buddhas—by folding just one square sheet of paper.

In college I studied philosophy, with an emphasis on methodology. So applying that to the field of origami, my idea was not merely to come up with new shapes, but rather to systematize all the various folds so new works could be invented. In other words, I invented a whole expanded world for origami to thrive in. The time wasn't ripe for trying to sell wholly new ideas on origami, however, so I had to shelve that manuscript for over twenty years.

Anyway, it should be understood that that was merely in the world of hobbies or pastimes. It was simply an interest I had. Far more serious for me was concern with the overall theme of my life. This came to be centered around the issue of *jiko*, or, roughly speaking, "Self." When I use the word "Self," I mean it in the sense of pursuing a way of living out a Self that is living the whole truth of life.[1] This has been the theme of my life. Behind this, I think, lies the example my father set for me. That is, undergirding his way of life was a curiosity about anything and everything. He threw all his energy into finding out more about anything that aroused his curiosity. From my perspective, however, no one could figure out what direction he was moving in or what it was he was trying to say with his life. The result of examining my father's directionless way of life was my own chosen lifestyle. What I've been pursuing is the most refined, distilled way of living

1. In this sense, Uchiyama Roshi's definition is very close to Joseph Campbell's statement in *The Power of Myth*: "What we're seeking is an experience of being alive, so that our life experiences on the purely physical plane will have resonances within our innermost being and reality." J. Campbell, *The Power of Myth*, Doubleday, New York, 1988, p. 5.

out my life, as I wrote in *Refining Your Life,* my other book that's available in English. What I mean by refining your life is aiming constantly at wholeheartedly living out the truth of life, not some pseudo-elegant lifestyle.

That is what I've been trying to uncover. There seemed to be no thread that connected all the various areas my father pursued; in contrast to his way of life, my life has been one of searching for a way that is connected and, moreover, is the most spiritually elegant and refined way for a human being to live.

Underlying my life's theme are the vertical and horizontal connections Japan has with the Eastern cultures and Western traditions that I spoke of earlier. That is, first it was important to study and learn from the wisdom of the past. Then, after that, I needed to pursue my own lifestyle. The first thing I did to realize this idea was to study Western philosophy and Christianity. Later I became ordained as a Buddhist monk. By studying Western philosophy academically you can pretty much learn what it is all about, but Buddhism is another matter. It's virtually impossible to make much sense out of it if you don't actually practice it. So to investigate and understand Buddhism and zazen thoroughly, I became a monk. Actually, it was because I wanted to practice zazen that I became a monk. My becoming a monk was somewhat of a fabricated means for doing zazen. It's easier to do zazen if you take on the lifestyle of a monk. It never occurred to me that I *had* to become a monk. When I was studying Catholicism, I had thought about becoming a novice priest just so I could study the religion, but regulations within the Church would never have allowed me to become one with that attitude.

So here I am having lived for eighty years, and what runs through all my life is my pursuit of living out the most refined

way of life. In Buddhism this is referred to as the ultimate refuge.[2] That is the Self, or *jiko,* that I have been pursuing.

The Self That Lives the Whole Truth

This word *jiko* is one I've been using for a long time. It is a very old Buddhist term, and one I suspect is extremely difficult for those used to thinking in Western concepts to grasp. Generally speaking, a common psychological definition of the Japanese word *jiko* (which is often translated as "self") is conscious self—*ishikiteki jiko*. Next, people think of a self concerned with benefiting *me* as opposed to others, *rikoteki jiko*.[3] This is the self that arouses desires. Western psychologists would probably call this "ego."

In Buddhism, however, the term *jiko* refers neither to an egoistic self nor to some so-called conscious self. This is a major difference between the Buddhist term *jiko* and the psychological sense of self or ego. Buddhist *jiko* implies a Self that goes beyond consciousness. However, when I start to talk of a Self beyond consciousness, people immediately think of something connected to mysticism. *Jiko* doesn't mean either of the ideas I mentioned just now, nor is it something mystical. So what is it?

A very practical example would be sleep. No matter who

2. "Ultimate refuge" is a translation of the Buddhist term *hikkyōki*. *Hikkyō* means "ultimate" or "absolute," while *ki* refers to "place of arrival." In his *Bukkyō Daijiten*, Nakamura Hajime defines this term as meaning *satori*, or "to go to the end." In the chapter "Hotsubodaishin" ("Awakening the Mind of Enlightenment") of Dōgen's *Shōbōgenzō* there is a passage "*Hikkyō* is the ultimate fruit of the Buddha [embodied] in the bodhisattva."

3. In the text of this book, Uchiyama Roshi uses the term "conditioned self."

they are, everyone sleeps, having opened what I call the hand of thought. I use this expression, "opening the hand of thought," to explain as graphically as possible the connection between human beings and the process of thinking.[4] Thinking means to be grasping or holding on to something with our brain's conceptual "hand." But if we open it, if we don't conceive, what is in our hand falls away. Our true *jiko*—Self—also includes that which lets go.

When we're sleeping, it's not that everything ceases to exist. When we sleep, letting go of consciousness, our body continues to function; we breathe so many times a minute and our heart beats at a certain pace. It is precisely because our body does these things that we are alive. The next morning we wake up and open our eyes; our thoughts start up again and begin to function. And again we put to work those thoughts of who we are that we held the day before. So what lives is not just who we are this morning; it includes the thoughts of who we are that we have held until this morning. Our conscious self, what we usually refer to as our self, includes not only who we think we are right now, but also our ideas of who we think we have been in the past. In other words, what we define as self-consciousness or conscious self is the sum of our thoughts when we are awake from the time we were children up to the present. We take all those conscious thoughts and abstract them from our life and call only that our "self."

The self of Western psychology is the Cartesian "I think, therefore, I am." But actually, we *are*, whether we think so or not. Behind the conscious self is a force that works even when we are sleeping—a force that works when we are unconscious

4. "The process of thinking": This should be understood to include the emotions, feelings, and all sense perceptions, as well as thoughts.

or unaware. And precisely because of that we are alive, inclusive of that life of our thinking self. In fact, it is because of this actually ongoing life that the thought occurs that we are only our thoughts. So our true or whole Self, what in Buddhism is termed *jiko*, is not just an abstract self made of thoughts. Our whole Self includes that self, but it also includes that force that functions beyond any conscious thought. The force that in itself enables conscious thought to arise is *jiko*, or Self.

Jiko, or Self beyond consciousness, is that very force. It is the force that functions to make the heart continue beating or the lungs continue breathing and it is the source of what is referred to as the subconscious as well.

It is related to what Christians call the creative power of God. That very creative power—that which is immediately alive—and also that which is created, God's *handiwork*, that is *jiko*, too. If you want to use God as your referent, it is crucial to receive God as pure creative power, as being fresh and alive and working in and through yourself: No matter what I do or think, God has to be working through me. No matter how evil my thought is, God's power works in or through it. All that happens does so because God is in all things. Whatever is alive—that's *jiko*, or Self.

Years ago I coined the expression *seimei no jitsubutsu*—"the actual reality of life." But the expression wasn't very helpful because people would look at it and think about what it means. They would put the Reality I was trying to point to outside of themselves. So more recently I've been using the utterly unphilosophical expression *Jiko*, Self; it is what's there before it is cooked up by thought:

That which comes before boiling it up
Or frying it up by thought

That which precedes any processing by thought—
The very quick of life—that is *jiko*.[5]

Since human thought cooks up—processes—everything, it is already removed from what is fresh. Truly living out one's life—that's *jiko*. This *jiko* is wholly itself. Concretely speaking, no matter how closely we might put our heads together, whatever it is we're looking at, we're going to see it differently. Your eyes see things with your vision and from your angle, which my eyes can never see, and vice versa. The world I see is solely mine. What I personally experience—life that is fresh and wholly mine—that's *jiko*, that's Self.

The first-person "I" is totally my own life experience; it is separate from everyone else's. It's from that viewpoint that my teacher Sawaki Roshi pointed out that there is no way I can share even as much as a fart with another person. And yet, everyone living out their life as they experience it, as wholly theirs, is simultaneously the eternal aspect of *jiko*. The eternal Self is not eternal in an abstract sense; it is so in a most concrete way. There is nothing abstract about all human beings living out one and the same fresh, original life force. There can't be anything more concrete than that.

This is the *jiko* mentioned in Buddhist sutras. Walking the way of Self in the sense that I've been describing is what is called *butsudō*, or Buddha Way. This is the way I've been walking in my life. Whenever someone utters the term *buddha-*

5. "The very quick of life": Uchiyama Roshi uses the term *nama no inochi*, literally, "raw or fresh life." He describes it with the example of a freshly caught fish: Before the fish was caught, it was alive and fresh, swimming in the stream. Once it has been caught, however, it gets "processed." In the same way, all the terms we use to discuss Self—including the word itself—are a sort of processing or categorizing of what is always alive and fresh and unprocessable.

dharma or *Buddha Way*, most people get the idea of something very special or holy, but they are just the expressions of code words that have been passed down through the ages. What I've been trying to cultivate in my life is to explain these things in the most concrete way that might be understandable and helpful to anyone. Because it has been my life vow that I might express the true meaning of living out Self in a way that will communicate to East and West, I've had to look at both Christianity and Buddhism and, intellectually, at Western philosophy, to realize my own self-expression.

I've always believed that the spirit to cultivate this life of Self is very similar to the early American pioneer or frontier spirit. The difference is that those pioneers penetrated the western frontier in a spirit of staking private claim or possession to it. But this is not the attitude of one wishing to cultivate the frontier of *jiko*. Going back to my example of the paper crane, it has always been my hope that inventing new shapes that anyone can make might bring joy into people's lives. Even in that tiny world of origami. That has always been my motive for going so deeply into it. I've felt that same way about the *butsudō*, the Buddha Way—to explain it in as simple and easy-to-understand a way as possible. Pursuing my life in the way I have is the Way of the Self that has been passed down in the East from India to China and Japan.

What is most crucial is to remember to pursue the way of the Self selflessly, not for any profit. Precisely because we concretely are or live *jiko*, Self, there is no particular value in talking about it, but if we don't make every effort to manifest it, just hearing and knowing about it is useless. To concretize the eternal, that is the task before us. Even if we have a cup of cool, clean water sitting right in front of us, if we don't actually drink it, it won't slake our thirst. Only by actually drinking it

will our thirst be quenched. The expression of Self is a practice that is eternal, but to the extent that we don't walk it ourselves, it won't be realized, it won't be *our* path. May this walking—that is, the actualization of the eternal Self—be all our life work.

TWO

Practice and Persimmons

The following essay is based on a talk given by Uchiyama Roshi during his residence at Noke-in Temple in Uji, near Kyoto, in October 1977. While the talk was addressed specifically to Uchiyama Roshi's non-Japanese disciples, the essay is directed to all those practicing the Dharma, in America and Europe as well as in Japan.

How Does a Persimmon Become Sweet?

The persimmon is a strange fruit. If you eat it before it's fully ripe, it tastes just awful. It makes your mouth pucker up because of its astringency. Actually, you can't eat it unripe; you just have to spit it out and throw the whole thing away. In other words, if you don't let it really ripen—and of course, I'm using this as a metaphor for Buddhist practice—you just have to throw it away. That's why I hope that people will begin to practice and then continue until it's really ripe.

The persimmon has another characteristic that's very interesting, but to understand it, you have to know something about

the Oriental persimmon: There are two types of persimmon trees, the sweet persimmon—*amagaki* in Japanese—and the astringent persimmon, called *shibugaki*. When you plant seeds from a sweet persimmon tree, all the saplings come up as astringent persimmon trees. Now, if I said that if you planted seeds from a sweet persimmon, all the saplings would become sweet persimmon trees, anyone could understand, but it doesn't seem to work that way. Without exception, all the saplings planted from sweet persimmon seeds are astringent. So now if you want to grow a sweet persimmon tree, what do you do? Well, first you have to cut a branch from a sweet persimmon tree, and then graft it onto an astringent tree. Then, in time, the branch will bear sweet fruit.

What I always used to wonder about is how that first sweet persimmon tree came about. If the saplings from the seeds from a sweet persimmon all come up astringent, where did that first sweet persimmon come from? One day I had the opportunity to ask a botanist who specializes in fruit trees, and he told me this: First of all, the Oriental persimmon is an indigenous Japanese fruit; it goes back many, many years. It takes many years to grow a sweet persimmon: Even the fruit of a tree forty or fifty years old will be astringent! That means we're talking about a tree that's at least one hundred years old. Around that time, the first sweet branches on an astringent tree begin to ripen. Those branches are then cut off the tree and are grafted onto a younger astringent one. What took over one hundred years to grow on one tree is then transferred to another one to continue there.

In a way, Buddhism and our own lives are just like that. If you leave humanity as it is, it has an astringent quality no matter what country or what part of the world you look at. It just so happened, however, that several thousand years ago in India, in the culture of that day, a sweet persimmon was born; that

was Buddhism. Or, more precisely, it was Shakyamuni Buddha who was born—like a branch on an astringent persimmon tree that after many, many years finally bore sweet fruit. After a time, a branch was cut off and transplanted in the astringent ground of China. From there, a branch bearing sweet fruit was brought to Japan and planted in that barbaric country. That's why we can find Buddhism in Japan today.

Now, one thing about big old trees is that they wither easily. For the most part, there is not much Buddhism left in Asia today, except for Southeast Asia and some places in Central Asia, like Tibet. Japan is one of the few places you can find it, as withered and dried up as it may be. Now the sweet persimmon is being nurtured in America, and it needs to be tended and cultivated so it can flower and ripen here. It doesn't happen automatically.

What I am saying also applies to your individual life. I would like for as many of you as possible to become sweet persimmon branches bearing the sweet fruit of Buddhism, finding a true way to live as you settle on your astringent tree—which is, after all, your own life, and your family, co-workers, and society.

I have had only one concern in my life: discovering and breaking the way for a true way of life for humanity, just that. That is why I became a monk. Over the years I've never once considered becoming famous by the usual standards of fame. The only thing that matters to me is just to be an example of a true way of life that is possible for anyone anywhere in the world.

The Significance of Buddhist Practice

My starting point goes back to the most basic condition of how a person chooses to live out his or her life. Please don't mis-

understand me when I use the word "Buddhism." I'm not talking about some established religious organization. I'm concerned with how a person, any person, who's completely naked of any religious or philosophical clothes, can live out their life.

First of all, it has to be admitted that probably the vast majority of the almost four billion people living in the world today live only in terms of pursuing material happiness. In thinking about their lives, most people devote almost all their energies to the pursuit of material happiness, or health, or prosperity.

In contrast to that is the way of life in which we look to some Absolute to be the authority for our life. We depend upon some god or God or some Absolute Being to validate our way of life. Classic examples of this might be Christianity or Islam. Anyway, this is a way of life in which we look to some *absolute* to validate our life.

A third lifestyle would be that of searching for Truth. That is, we search for some truth or *logos* that has little or no connection to ourselves as individuals.

For the most part, I think these three lifestyles are a fair representation of the way most people live. You might be able to come up with other lifestyles—for example, communism. But then finally, even communism is nothing but a variation of the first kind of lifestyle—that is, a materialistic searching for happiness. Communism is nothing more than seeking after some so-called happier society through redistribution. Fundamentally, it's not different from any other way of trying to seek happiness. Or Confucianism, for example, which is also just another way of looking for happiness through political change and manners. Or Taoism, which ultimately becomes a search for happiness in the form of eternal youth.

Now, in contrast to these basic types of lifestyles, where does Buddhism fit in? Actually, it doesn't fit into any of these

styles. To explain just why, I'd like to go back for a minute and talk just a bit about my own youth. When I was in middle school, first of all, I never gave a thought to the first lifestyle I talked about just now. Pursuing happiness materialistically always seemed meaningless to me. And the second lifestyle, that of setting up and obeying some sort of Supreme Authority, never appealed to me, either. I could never get myself to believe in some great person or "Being" and just follow along. That left the third one, searching after Truth. When I studied Western philosophy in college and graduate school, searching for such Truth, what struck me about this search was the way in which it was undertaken. The tradition of pursuing philosophical Truth down through the Greek and German traditions required a certain extraordinary passion or desire. One's daily life just had no connection, no value whatever. It was supposed to be enough just to discover an abstract Truth, but the daily reality of living that existed apart from and in contrast to philosophical Truth continued to be a problem for me. So finally, although I learned a great deal from it, I could never get myself to throw my whole life into a philosophical pursuit of Truth.

From the time I was in middle school, pursuing the Truth was certainly the sort of theme or backdrop for the kind of lifestyle I wanted to live, but not truth in the sense of some sort of absolute, divorced from reality. In other words, when we talk about some ideal truth, or the way something should be in its ideal state, we can't help but feel a contradiction between that and the reality of what we are. My departure point was to move to the very edge of this contradiction and from there to discover a truth or absolute reality that no one could deny.

In the New Testament, Paul talks about the struggle between the form of that which ought to be and the longing or

voice of one's own body.[1] That is one area in which I always felt a connection with Christianity. Although I never came to believe in God in the Christian sense, I did feel strongly Paul's words concerning this struggle between body and spirit.

At that time in my life, I really didn't have a deep enough understanding to come out with a clear definition of truth in the philosophical sense. I didn't know what it was, but anyway, I was convinced that it was by truth or in truth that I wanted to live out my life.

Gradually, a feeling grew inside me that the way I was searching for was very close to that talked about in the Buddhist teachings, and so I began to look more deeply into Buddhism. Finally, I became a monk.

Anyway, after forty years, I finally feel I can give a much clearer definition of truth. Forty years! Now, in going into the definition of truth, there are two kinds of reality within our lives as human beings. One is the reality of chance or accident. The other is a reality having an absolute or undeniable nature. For example, perhaps I pour myself a cup of tea. I don't have to be pouring tea for myself, but anyway, I'm doing it. That is an accidental reality. In other words, there is no absolute reason why I have to be sitting here having tea. I just happen to be doing so. Seeing things in that way, then, all facts or realities in our life are, for the most part, accidental realities. Things could just as well be taking place in another way. There isn't anything that says or demands that something must take place in absolutely this way.

And yet, that is not to say there are no absolute realities. Now, if you were to ask just what would be an example of an absolute or undeniable reality, it would be that all living things

1. Romans 7:9.

die. That's an undeniable reality. There are no exceptions! No matter how much one is opposed to it or resists it, everything dies. This kind of reality no one can deny; it's inescapable. In other words, there are accidental realities that just happened to come about, realities that by intention or design could be changed, and there are undeniable realities that occur no matter how much we may resist them.

There is no person who has ever lived who has not died. Christians may say that Christ died and came back to life and is now living eternally. But did anyone actually witness this? No, all anyone can say is that it says so in the Bible. If you're going to take literally everything written in the Bible, then you should try reading some of the old Taoist books about mountain hermits, or *sennin*. There are all kinds of stories about these wizards coming back to life. So, is Christ just one of a whole slew of mountain hermits? I'm not talking about fairy tales. Everything that lives dies. It's an inescapable reality.

The Four Seals

Truth must consist of living out our lives in accord with certain inescapable realities—realities that come about no matter how much we may oppose them. That's how I define Truth. Buddhism as a religious teaching is founded precisely upon this kind of Truth. Going back to Shakyamuni himself, he surely lived out the reality of his life. During the period when trade between India and Greece and Rome was flourishing, around the time of Christ, when Mahayana Buddhism was developing, expressions and explanations concerning Shakyamuni's attitude and way of life became highly refined. Then, out of this, the true uniqueness of Buddhism developed. This uniqueness is embodied in the expressions *sanbōin*, the three seals, or principles, or sometimes *shihōin*, the four seals. These four seals

more or less summarize Buddhism: The first seal is *shogyō mujō*, that all phenomena are impermanent. The second is *sangai kaiku*, that everything is suffering. The third is *shohō muga*; this is sometimes defined as all things being without ego, but maybe it would be better to say that all things are without an absolute body, they have no substantial independent existence of their own. And the fourth is *nehan jakujō*, or "Nirvana is quiescence." In Mahayana Buddhism, the expression *shohō jissō*—all things are as they are—is also used for this point, meaning that everything is Truth in itself. Anyway, these four principles or concepts are unique to Buddhism.

Shogyō mujō, impermanence, is that every living thing dies. In other words, everything that has life dies. Moreover, no one, least of all the living thing itself, knows exactly when. In other words, life has a limit, and is always in a state of crisis; no one knows when it will end. This is the First Undeniable Reality.

I have mentioned that many people think that simply pursuing material happiness or riches is most important in life. But stand that way of life next to the reality of death and it completely falls apart. In other words, when a person who thinks he is happy because of his material situation has to face death, he's likely to fall into the depths of bitterness and despair.

Sometimes people from the quasi-religious movement Sōkka Gakkai[2] come around asking me if I'm happy or not. I always ask them what they mean by happy, and they generally say that happiness means having plenty of money and good health. When I reply that by their own definition of happiness

2. Sōkka Gakkai is one of the post–World War II religious phenomena in Japan. It had a particularly strong appeal to Japanese from after the war through the 1960s. The sect's religious core centers around the Lotus Sutra, and it claims to be a "purified" form of Nichiren's teachings. The political arm of Sōkka Gakkai today is the right-of-center Kōmeitō party.

they're only going to hit rock bottom when they die, they walk away scratching their heads.

But just think about it. When you are faced with death, what good is being healthy? And as for money—you can't take it with you! So people who spend their lives only pursuing happiness in concrete forms cannot help but despair when death comes. That is why all of these materialistic pursuits only end in despair in the face of the First Undeniable Reality, that all things die.

From this First Undeniable Reality, what exactly is it that we have to learn? What is it that we must pursue as undeniable truth? We have to clarify what life and death really are. We have to know clearly just what it means to be alive and what it means to die. In Pure Land Buddhism, there is an expression *goshō o negau*, that is, hope for the next life. The belief is that life opens up after death. But that's not a very good understanding of the expression. What *goshō*, or "afterlife," refers to is the life that arises when one clarifies this matter of death. It means knowing clearly just what death is, and then really living out one's life. That is the most important thing we can learn from the First Undeniable Reality.

For us to remain unclear about life and death can only result in our dying in great despair and bitterness. This point leads to the Second Undeniable Reality, *sangai kaiku*,[3] that all things are suffering. Suffering is not something that comes to attack me

3. According to Nakamura Hajime, the *sanbōin*, the three seals, do not appear in the Pali Canon, but they do appear later, in the Chinese version. Traditionally, the three seals are *shogyō mujō*, all things are impermanent; *shohō muga*, all things are without a substantial self; and *nehan jakujō*, nirvana is peace prior to both movement and stillness. *Sangai kaiku*, all things in the three worlds (of past, present, and future) are suffering, is sometimes listed as the fourth seal, while other scholars seem to feel that *shohō jissō*, all things are as they are, is the fourth seal.

periodically; my whole life, as it is, is suffering. Nevertheless, I go around fighting with people, loving them, killing them, without ever being able to truly *see* that suffering. Actually, suffering in the deepest sense is all of that.[4] In other words, as long as this matter of death remains unclear, everything in the world suffers. As long as people fail to understand this thoroughly, they go through life only to fall into bitter unhappiness at the end. That is the meaning of the idea that all sentient beings are suffering. This Second Undeniable Reality is difficult to explain. It is something that isn't talked about much simply because most people wouldn't have any idea of what it's about.

I've mentioned that there are two types of realities, the one being *accidental* reality and the other being *undeniable* reality. When you think about it, I'm just an accidental reality. After all, there is nothing that says I had to be born in twentieth-century Japan. I could just as well have been born in ancient Egypt, or Papua New Guinea, or during the Heian period in Japan, or even in merry old England when Hamlet was first being played. In other words, having been born in any age or in any place is a possibility. That sort of thing is just an accident, just as my being here right now is an accident.

4. Uchiyama Roshi writes about the definition of suffering in Chapter 5 of *Kannon-gyō wo Ajiwau* ("Appreciating the Sutra of Kannon Bosatsu," subtitled "The Practice of the East," published by Hakujusha, Tokyo, 1968). "Though we can never be fully aware of all the suffering in the world, we should call out the name Kanzeon Bosatsu with our whole spirit in order that we may take on (be one with) that suffering." When I sense that immensity of suffering, then as if out of deepest grief, I cannot help but utter "Kanzeon Bosatsu" with all my heart. In other words, uttering "Namu Kanzeon Bosatsu" should not simply come out of our being troubled with some petty thing in our lives. We have to cry out "Kanzeon Bosatsu" as our practice day and night, regardless of whether we are capable of penetrating the depth of that suffering or not.

From that we can also say, then, that all the things I see in my world, as well as the world itself, are also an accident. For example, perhaps I look out the window and see that the weather has cleared up, so I think about what a nice day it is. But that is only because of where I happen to be. Somewhere else, it is surely raining right now. So, in a broader sense, it isn't quite right to say that it's a clear day. After all, somewhere there are people who are getting rained on or snowed on, and somewhere else, people must be laboring under a hot desert sun. Therefore, there's no reason to believe that only the things I see with my own eyes are absolutely or undeniably true.

There is no way we can say that our way of looking at things is absolute. Even though you may think that we're both looking at the same cup sitting here in front of us, it's not true. You look at it from your angle and I view it from mine. There's no ground for our saying that something is absolute.

Consider all the weather satellites circling the earth. From their positions, the whole world looks like a map, and cities like New York or Tokyo look like some sort of mold growing on the surface. So it looks like people are just living in the same sort of mold that grows on a piece of old *mochi*, Japanese pounded rice cake. In that sense, I have no ground for saying that the world I see is everything; even weather satellites can show me that. If we look at a picture taken from the moon, the earth appears to be nothing more than a little ball with some sort of white fuzz floating around it. In brief, everything I see is an accident.

Since my having been born in Japan in the twentieth century is just an accident, it follows that I—sitting here and looking out the window in this room of this particular house, at the moment when I write these words—am nothing but an accident. I'm only relative, I'm not absolute. If I come to the

conclusion that I am accidental, then naturally my thoughts are also accidental.

Since both my mind and I are accidental, the only thing remaining that could be called inevitable, or absolute, is God. That God must be absolute is the foundation for the rise of religions setting up a god, and only God can be true or real. Since we are nothing but things that have been created, we are just relative. This is the basis of Christian thought. The origin of this kind of religion thus begins with denial of oneself in favor of another, God.

The third way to approach life, which I mentioned earlier, says that since everything is relative, or accidental, when it is based on an individual perspective, what should be relied on is truth, or *logos*. This truth, or universality, is derived purely from human reason, or, in Greek, *nous*. This is the foundation of Western philosophy.

This kind of thought doesn't focus on the individual, but rather upon the whole of humanity. People are born and die, but though humankind was born, it doesn't die. Well, actually it will eventually—with the end of the earth or before. But humanity has been around for over fifty thousand years or more and will probably be around for another fifty thousand. In other words, it doesn't die. It wasn't born, in a certain sense, and won't die. The academic world does not take up the problem of things coming into being and dying. Rather, what it takes up is humankind as a phenomenon that was not born and won't die. However, to view things from that perspective entails coming to the realization that when I die I will be abandoned by truth.

But now, how does Mahayana thought differ from these views of looking at things? The Buddhist approach from a Mahayana perspective might be described in this way. The Third

Undeniable Reality is that all things lack substantial, independent existence; this is *shohō muga*. Since nothing is substantial by itself just as it is—there is nothing to hold on to—*shohō muga* means to let go of all that comes into one's head.

The expression "letting go of whatever arises" is my own way of expressing the idea of *kū*, or emptiness. *Kū* comes from the Sanskrit word *sunyata*. I don't read Sanskrit, but I think this word *kū* is probably a pretty good translation. This can also be interpreted as "without body or form," or not being tied to form. We can talk about this or that only because we grab on to or try to make some connection with something. Hence, I coined the expression "letting go of thought" in the sense of *kū*, that is, not trying to make a connection with some outside object. Now, the character for *kū* in Japanese can also be read *munashi*, meaning "nothing," but that is not what it means here. It means the condition of not grasping. The three Japanese words *munashi, minashi* ("bearing no fruit"), and *musuborenu* ("without any tie or connection") all have the same etymological derivation. They all mean not to make a connection with some "thing." This is the truth derived from the Third Undeniable Reality. As I mentioned before, the First Undeniable Reality is that every living thing dies, and the Second Undeniable Reality is that we suffer throughout our lives because we don't understand death. The truth derived from these two points is the importance of clarifying the matter of birth and death.

The Third Undeniable Reality is to realize that all of the thoughts and feelings that arise in my head simply arise haphazardly, by chance. And the truth or conclusion we derive from that is to let go of all that comes up in our head. That is what all of us are doing when we sit zazen.

Finally, what we call "I" or ego arises by chance or accident, so we just let go. When we let go of all our thoughts

and notions about things, everything becomes really true. This is the Fourth Undeniable Reality, *nehan jakujō*, or *shohō jissō*, all things are just what they are. Therefore, when we let go of everything, no connection is made. Everything is as it is. There is no absolute this or that. Everything exists in this way or in that way. This is what I have been calling "the present reality of life"—in other words, the reality of that which cannot be grasped, the reality about which nothing can be said.

But don't assume that things being just as they are, which is also known as the suchness of things (*tathata* in Sanskrit)—what I've been calling "the present reality of life"—is some fixed entity. It simply is not something that can be grasped or understood through reason or intellect. We let go, and that, as it is, is the reality of life outside of which there can be no other reality.

As I have said, I could just as well have been born in ancient Egypt, or in Papua New Guinea, or as an Inuit; all of these possibilities are conceivable. Yet, when we let go of our conceptions, there is no other possible reality than what is right now; in that sense, it is absolute, it's undeniable. Not only that, this undeniable reality is at the same time the reality of life that is fundamentally connected to everything in the universe. This is undeniable reality. From this, the truth to be derived is that right now is all-important.

When we think of "now" in the ordinary sense, we assume that there is a linear flow of time from the past into the present and forward into the future. Actually, it isn't that way at all. Actually, all that there really is, is now. As the *scenery* of the present, however, there is a past, present, and future. Let me say that again: Within the present, there is a past, a present, and a future. This concept of time in Buddhist thought is very important. As far as I can see, Western philosophers have taken it for granted that time flows from the past, into the present,

and on into a future in the way I first described. According to Buddhist teachings it doesn't quite work that way. The past, present, and future are all contained within the present.

Perhaps we think we have to repair a house that we think is old. Trying to repair something that appears old is only an idea, it is simply an expression of convenience. Everything around you right now is only in a condition of existence. That is true for the past and future, too.

We have to realize that there is nothing outside of the present. Quite often people become shackled by the past. Believing that one came from a prominent family with a lot of money and feeling ashamed about one's present condition is nothing more than being shackled to one's idea or conception of the past. Likewise, to feel that one has to do something to become famous in the future is only to be shackled by one's ambitious ideas about the future. What is most important is right now.

But again, within that "now" we have past experiences. Within the present, we have past experiences and a direction toward the future that we face. We have to vivify our past experiences and face toward the future—all within the present. It is the same as driving a car. First we have to learn how to drive the car. We have to learn the techniques. Otherwise, how can we possibly drive? Only if we master the realities of the past can they function in the present. Then, when we wish to go somewhere we can do so without any problem. Doing exactly that is called *genjō kōan*, the koan, or paradoxical life problem, of being and becoming. *Genjō* is the present becoming the present.

A man leaves his house after an argument with his wife, gets into his car all excited, and bang!—he gets into an accident, all because he wasn't living fully in the present. This is a case of the present not completely living in the present. Therefore, the truth to be derived from the Third Undeniable Re-

ality is that we must give life to or vivify our past experiences and face the future, while living fully in the present.

We are always living out life that is connected to everything in the universe. But when I say that, I'm not talking about someone else's life, or life in general separate from myself. That life which runs through everything in the universe is me. I don't mean me as an ego, I mean my self in the true sense. This self that I speak of is not some fixed body, it's constantly changing. Every time we take a breath we're changing. Our consciousness is always changing, too. All the chemical and physical processes in our body are also constantly changing. And yet, everything temporarily takes a form. This is *jiko* (Self).

Now, this Self—this true Self—or this reality of life, as I prefer to call it, is the foundation of all life experiences. Dōgen Zenji referred to the Reality of Life or Self, in this sense, as *jinissai jiko*, or "the self that extends through everything in the universe," and that is what I'm referring to when I say Self, or true Self.

Whatever way you put it, I am here only because my world is here. When I took my first breath, my world was born with me. When I die, my world dies with me. In other words, I wasn't born into a world that was already here before me, nor do I live simply as one individual among millions of other individuals, nor do I leave everything behind to live on after me. People live thinking of themselves as members of a group or society. However, this isn't really true. Actually, I bring my own world into existence, live it out, and take it with me when I die. Historically, this view of life has not arisen in the West. I have a feeling that this way of understanding is quite new to Westerners, but actually these are ideas that are not easily understood by Easterners or Westerners.

I can't stress enough how essential it is to look very, very

carefully at this self that runs through everything in the universe. You live together with your world. Only when you thoroughly understand this will everything in the world settle as the self pervading all things. As Buddhists, this is our vow, or the direction we face. In other words, we vow to save all sentient beings so that this self may become even more itself. This is our life direction.

Shakyamuni said it this way: "All worlds are my world and all sentient beings—people, things, and situations—are my children." Dōgen Zenji's expression *rōshin*, parental mind or attitude, came out of this. My way of expressing this is "everything I encounter is my life," *deau tokoro waga seimei.*

That is why our most fundamental attitude must be *shikan*, or just doing. It's not a matter of thinking about life. Thinking about life simply isn't enough. Our life is whatever we are encountering right now, and our practice is *shikantaza*, which is literally "just sitting," and more broadly means to function toward settling everything in our world.

Practice Is for Life

I want to take up the point of why it is so important to continue our practice all our life. The most essential point in carrying on our practice is to wake up this self inclusive of everything. This means that we have to realize that all sentient beings fall within the boundaries of our life.

For instance, imagine that you and I are sitting together talking. But talking to you, I'm not talking to some other person than myself. The face before me is reflected on the retinas of my eyes. So you are within me. I'm just facing myself. In other words, you exist within myself, and it is to that you that I direct myself. That is what "vow" is.

You should always bear in mind that all sentient beings are

suffering. Everyone is fretting about something inside their head. That is why we practice. For example, should I stay where I am or should I go somewhere else? That's the sort of thing over which we worry all too often. Actually, it doesn't matter where we practice, since that is only a minor problem going on in our head. Have you heard of the expression "Bodhidharma didn't go east and Huiko [the Second Ancestor] didn't go west?" There really is no such place as Japan. There really is no such place as America. Where you are living right now is all there is. For instance, if you were to have some idea that America really isn't a good place to practice and Japan is better, that would be nothing but a problem rumbling around in your head. When you look at things from the perspective of letting go of all your ideas and anxieties, what it comes down to is there is no America to leave or return to. To practice in Japan or in the States—either one is okay.

You might try looking at all the stuff that comes up in your head as just a secretion. All our thoughts and feelings are a kind of secretion. It is important for us to see that clearly. I've always got things coming up in my head, but if I tried to act on everything that came up, it would just wear me out. Haven't you ever had the experience of being up on a very high place and having an urge to jump? That urge to jump is just a secretion in your head. If you felt that you had to follow every urge that came into your head, well . . .

As far as human thought is concerned, anything is thinkable. But you have to have some stability, and think when all these things come up: Is this true or false? Is this best for me or not? You have to reflect upon yourself. Then, when you see yourself as relative, as accidental, you can't help but conclude that your thoughts must be accidents, too.

In bringing the buddha-dharma to ripeness in your lives and in America, you have a big, big job. Columbus's discovery

of America doesn't compare in scale with this job. When Columbus left Europe, he was already fairly certain that if he sailed westward long enough, he would hit another continent or something. But after setting out and sailing week after week without sighting a thing, people aboard began to fret and grumble. Columbus's accomplishment was that he wasn't moved by the grumbling, but persisted on his course; he lived through it all.

But to ripen and transmit the Dharma is an even more difficult task. It is no simple matter to take the sweet persimmon of the Dharma and transplant it in each of our lives so that all humanity may become a sweet persimmon tree instead of an astringent one. To do that you have to have a broad enough perspective to see that the frettings and grumblings that come up are all in your head and that they needn't be acted upon. In other words, you shouldn't use your own calculating mind to evaluate everything. Various things arise, but when you reflect deeply upon the accidental nature of yourself and your thoughts, you will no longer consider using them as a standard for your activities. In order to truly see that using your thoughts as a standard is invalid, you simply have to practice. And to sustain your practice over time, it is invaluable to practice together with others, that is, in a sangha. The *sangha* was originally the Buddhist monks and nuns living together, but now it has come to mean all those who practice the buddha-dharma, particularly in groups. Practicing in a sangha is difficult; you have to actually taste the pain and suffering that you encounter there. It's just as difficult for Japanese as for Americans or Europeans. Sometimes you feel you want to do this or that, or you want to quit the whole business, but you just have to keep plugging away.

After some time, though—and this takes years to really develop—you begin to get a perspective on things. You begin

to realize that there's nothing more important than just letting go. Don't take what I've said to mean that problems won't come up anymore; they will. But you begin to see things—ideas, plans, even how you perceive the things around you—for what they are: just secretions.

Next, in practicing, and if possible being in a sangha, you mustn't forget vowing. By "vow" I mean that you must work and function toward settling everything around you. This should be your life posture as well as the foundation for all your activities. It is essential to live with the conviction that you are making history for the next generation. When people hear you talking like that, they think you are only boasting, but actually you have to have that kind of conviction. There isn't anyone else around who will do it. You have to realize this and then plant your roots deeply. All that most people see when they look at a large tree are the leaves and flowers, but it's the roots that you have to pay attention to. A tree won't develop fully unless the roots are buried deep. When the roots are in deep, then the tree will grow and beautiful flowers will blossom naturally.

It's also important to look carefully at our motives for doing zazen. As far as I can tell, it seems that far too many people who start doing zazen immediately begin to think about satori. They get it into their heads that they have to attain enlightenment, and they sit just for that purpose. But they are way off base. That is, to sit with the idea that you are going to gain enlightenment is just ridiculous. Take one look at this from a Christian perspective and you can tell why. In Christianity, only God is perfect. However, His creation is not. That is, no matter how great a man may grow to be, he's nothing before God. Satori is the same thing. To think that people become great by doing zazen, or to think that you are going to *gain* satori, is to be sadly misled by your own illusion.

When you hear talk about ordinary human beings becoming great or gaining enlightenment, you can be sure it's not authentic. In Christianity, people don't talk about human beings becoming great. When people start talking about how great their minister or priest is, God gets lost in the shuffle. How great a human being can become is negligible.

You have to remember that fundamentally, no matter what kind of circumstances we've fallen into, we're always living in the midst of enlightenment. Finally, to the extent we live in the world of letting go of all our own puny ideas, we live in the middle of enlightenment. As soon as we let go of our own insignificant ideas, we begin to see that this is so.

We are always living out the reality of life. However, as soon as we start thinking and calculating about things, we become, in a sense, suspended from reality. That is, human beings are capable of thinking about things that aren't real. That is why I say that to realize the extent of our enlightenment is to see that proportionately we aren't very enlightened. We have to be able to see that clearly. However much we become enlightened, it just isn't very much. Our practice begins to ripen only as we start to be aware that although we live in the midst of enlightenment, the little we become aware of in life is just scratching the surface. If we don't ripen at least that much, then we can't really say we've been practicing zazen. Our practice will remain incomplete and astringent. But ultimately it doesn't have anything to do with a little or a lot. We just continue to practice, aiming to live a true way of life as best we can, neither worrying nor gauging what we are doing. In that environment the sweet persimmon branch will flourish naturally.

Part Two

THE REALITY OF ZAZEN

The Meaning of Zazen

Ants in a Sugar Bowl

One day at Antaiji, I received a visit from a fifty-year-old American Jewish man who was the president of his own company. I speak only Japanese, but since he brought along an excellent Japanese interpreter, we had no trouble communicating. He asked me the following question:

"I have plenty of money and a wonderful family, but for some reason that I can't explain, about ten years ago I began to feel a terrible loneliness in my life. So I began studying Judaism, though I was unable to find any contentment in it. Then I studied Christianity seriously, but I was unable to find any satisfaction there, either. Then, a few years ago, I heard a lecture on Zen Buddhism and began to feel that in Zen I might be able to find something that would satisfy me, and I've been studying Zen ever since. I've come to Japan to study Zen more deeply, and I wonder what you think about this feeling of loneliness I have."

In reply to his very sincere statement and question, I said, "Did it ever occur to you that this feeling of dissatisfaction or emptiness might be caused by your searching for the value, the basis, or recognition of your existence only in things outside yourself, such as in your property, or in work, or in your reputation? This empty feeling of yours probably comes up because you haven't yet found this within the reality of your own true self.[1] In other words, you feel a hollowness in your life because you have always lived only in relation to other people and things, and haven't been living out your true self."

My response seemed to fit his idea of himself exactly, and being moved by this, he immediately agreed with me.

"It's just as you say. My day-to-day life seems to be filled with living in relation to things outside of myself. I'm sure this has to be why I feel such an emptiness inside.

"Well . . . what should I do about it?" he continued.

I replied, "You will never be able to resolve the uneasiness in your life by drifting around seeking things outside yourself. It is crucial to live out the truth of the self, which is self living the reality of self. Zazen puts into actual practice this concept of self

1. "the reality of your own true self": This is Uchiyama Roshi's way of expressing the Buddhist term sarva-dharma-tathata or *shohō jissō*, which first appeared in the *Lotus Sutra*. Originally, *shohō jissō* was a purely nominative expression that could be translated as the true form (reality) of all phenomena. Later on, the Chinese Tendai teaching interpreted the phrase in a predicative way that could be translated as "all phenomena are nothing but reality"—that is, the temporary existence of all things, though having no independent nature, is a manifestation of reality. In Zen, both of these interpretations of the original Sanskrit felt too abstract, giving rise to the expression our "original face is the true form of all things." It is this undeniable truth, *shohō jissō*, that lies behind Roshi's colloquial expressions "the reality of one's true self" and "the reality of life."

living out the reality of self. My late teacher Kōdō Sawaki Roshi used to say, "Zazen is the self doing itself by itself."[2]

He nodded as if my words had been just what he had expected and went on, "That is exactly what I thought zazen was. I would very much like your permission to do zazen here at Antaiji."

My replies to his questions were not just my personal opinions. I merely told him what has been recorded in Buddhist sutras since ancient times. In the *Suttanipata*, one of the oldest Buddhist sutras, it is written, "To depend on others is to be unstable."[3] And in the equally old *Dhammapada* is the passage, "The foundation of the self is only the self."

This man was most unusual in his ability to accept these simple but very important passages with such humility and readiness. And that is why I have brought up my conversation with him: He had matured sufficiently to be able to accept immediately and without discussion these two important scriptural passages.

In most cases, however, much more explanation is necessary before a person can accept such ideas without questioning them. So now I would like to explain their meaning.

Why is it that today's wealthy and in so many ways fortunate Americans feel this kind of emptiness? I say Americans, but actually many people from well-off countries like England, France, Germany, Switzerland, Canada, and Australia feel this

2. "Zazen is the self doing itself by itself": Kōdō Sawaki Roshi's original expression *jiko ga jiko o jiko suru* is his colloquial way of expressing Dōgen Zenji's *jijuyū zanmai*, or the samadhi of freely receiving and giving [utilizing]. This might also be translated as: "Zazen is the self *making* the self into the self." The original expression uses "self" as the subject, verb, and object.

3. In this case, "others" refers not only to people, but to things and concepts as well. In other words, anything outside of Self.

emptiness, and seeking after Zen, they come to Japan, visiting a poor monastery like Antaiji. At first glance, this seems quite strange. But be that as it may, during the last few years I have had many opportunities to come into contact with such people, and in my own small way, I feel I can understand why they come and what their psychology is. Briefly, and in my own words, I think the most fitting description of people living in the advanced countries of the world would be that they are like ants in a sugar bowl.

Imagine a whole bunch of ants that have fallen into a bowl of sugar. They suck on the sweet stuff until their stomachs are swollen and practically transparent. Yet everything they see and hear—the whole world that surrounds them—is nothing but the same tedium of sugar. It is only natural that life in such a world is lonely and empty. Being inside this sugar bowl, there is not much else for them to do but bathe in the self-consoling intoxication of drugs or else commit suicide.

When I create this image of Americans and Europeans and compare them to ants fallen into a bowl of sugar, I naturally have to think about the condition of Japanese society and relate this caricature to present-day Japanese. I see them just beginning to taste what is in the bowl. They're thinking how wonderful it is to have fallen into the sugar bowl like those in the other advanced countries. Although they are thought of as economic animals throughout the world, the Japanese themselves are rejoicing in thinking that they have become a great economic power. As a Japanese, I can only say that this situation is truly regrettable.

Finally, I would add one more figure to this group. He is standing outside the sugar bowl. He watches all the people getting fat, and resentfully stamps and screams that he wants some, too. This is the man of the so-called Third World countries today.

Now, if you think that in this caricature, the ants in the sugar bowl are in the best position, those trying to fall in are second, and the ones resentfully screaming outside the bowl are the most miserable, then you are only using the yardstick of an economic animal to evaluate the situation. Looking at it in terms of real life, all three are pathetically meaningless ways of living. Each one of these lifestyles is basically one of living only in relation to others, having completely lost sight of the true self.

Living thus, one cannot live out the life of that true self. In order to understand what this "true self" is, we have to examine what we mean by "I," or "myself," and where it comes from.

Depending on Others Is Unstable

What is this thing we casually call "I"? It seems that this "I" stands out in relief only in opposition to or in encountering some "other."

For example, a man may see himself as a "husband" to his "wife" and a "parent" with respect to his "child." At work, he may see himself as a "subordinate" in relation to his "superiors" and as a man of no ability in comparison to his colleagues who have ability. Furthermore, he may regard himself as a "salesman" with respect to his "customer," a "competitor" with respect to others in the same line of business, a "poor man" with respect to a "rich one," unable to buy something he imagines as a good thing, a "loser" in contrast to a "winner," "powerless" in the face of society, and on and on, endlessly, as in Figure 1. It would be a wonder if a man who was conscious of himself through comparisons like these didn't become neurotic, overwhelmed with feelings of inferiority.

But even if he were conscious of himself only as inferior

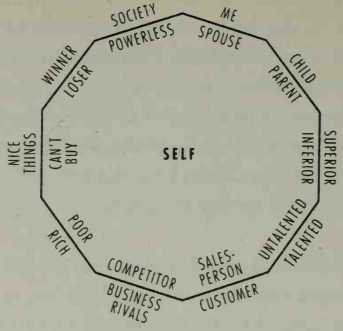

Figure 1

when comparing himself to those around him, a man might not become resentful and bitter and suffer from an inferiority complex. Another side of his consciousness might speak to him, saying, "Okay, then, I'll work hard and learn everything. I'll chase after the others and someday I'll catch up and even pass them. I'll have money and status and fame. I'll succeed!" What happens to a man with this kind of striving attitude, as in Figure 2?

Or how would it be if, due to his circumstances, a man were in a position where he could feel quite superior to all those people who have a sense of inferiority, as in Figure 3?

These last two, the striving man and the "superior" one, may seem completely different from the "inferior" one, but in actuality they are all in the same category. The point is that people conceive of "I" as something that is determined from the outside, as something defined in opposition to other people and things. Essentially, there isn't a bit of difference between these examples. There can be no doubt that ordinarily we live like this, being conscious of our "self" as something fixed from

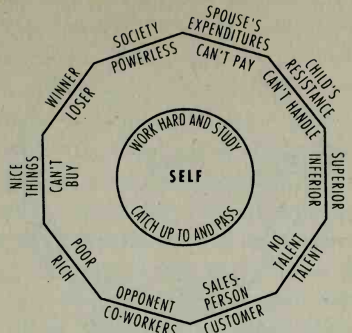

Figure 2

the outside and in opposition to others. Yet, if we think that only this is our "self," and if we live only by balancing this "self," comparing this "self" with other people and things, then I would have to say that we have lost sight of our *self as the reality of life.*

Rousseau wrote in *Émile* that any man, whether he is a king or a nobleman or a millionaire, is born naked and poor, and when he dies, must die naked and poor. This is certainly an undeniable truth. Still, we aren't naked during our *whole* lifetime. We wear some kind of clothing from birth to death. There are people who wear the splendid and gorgeous robes of a queen, and others who spend their whole life wearing poor, tattered rags. Some people wear army uniforms; others, prison clothes; and others, monks' robes.

Actually, our clothes aren't made only of cloth. There are also the clothes of class, status, fame, and wealth. I call all these things clothes because there comes a time when we are stripped naked of things like wealth. There are also clothes called "beautiful woman" or "genius." Yet, no matter how beautiful a

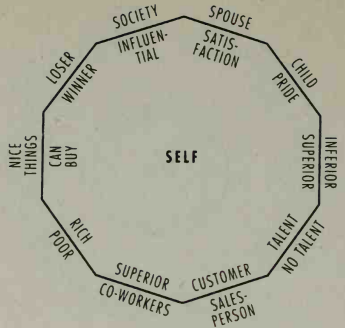

Figure 3

woman is, there will eventually come the time when she must change clothes and don the dress of an "old woman." Likewise, in the end, the genius may very well have to change into the clothes called senility. There are also the clothes of "superiority complex," "inferiority complex," "happiness," and "unhappiness," as well as those of such-and-such-ism, race, and nation. We change from one system of thought to the next, but when it is time to die, we have to take off even our clothes of racial distinction and die as completely naked selves.

Even though these are just clothes we wear in the interval between naked birth and naked death, almost all people are taken in by them. They assume that the entire problem of living is, out of all these clothes, which nice ones will they wear? I wonder if most people ever ask the questions "What is the self that is the reality of life?" and "What is the naked self?" In other words, what I previously described as a life of relationships determined from the outside and balanced against other people and things is exactly the same as the clothes I am talking about now. At any rate, while we are now undoubtedly

living out some "self," usually we are not, in fact, living out the reality of our true self. We concern ourselves only with the clothes we wear in our lives—that is, the self that is determined from outside and that lies in opposition to others. We seem to take it for granted that this is all there is to life.

As long as this is so, it is not at all strange that people should find an emptiness in their lives. Whether they suffer from an inferiority complex, burn with a spirit of competition, or hold on to some idea of superiority, it is only natural that they all feel the same hollowness in their lives. *To rely on others is to be unstable.* We can't find true peace of mind until we live out the reality of the life of the self, since *the foundation of the self is only the self.*

Everything Is Just as It Is

Doing zazen is living out the reality of the life of the self, without assuming that "I" is determined by some relationship with other people and things, such as the clothes I mentioned earlier. When we enter the world of Zen, we enter the world of practice where we live out the reality of life. Actually, this world of practice is nothing special, but it probably sounds somewhat unfamiliar, because it pertains to a world undreamed of in the Western intellectual tradition as well as in ordinary life.

Ordinarily, we live just as an "I" related to the world, an "I" that has only a social appearance and only a market valuation. In other words, we find the value, basis, and recognition of our existence only in the midst of others. We assume, on the one hand, that what is called "I" is that sort of thing, and on the other hand, that living a life of practice as our real "self" must be something special.

Western scholarship has turned its eyes away from the re-

ality of life in yet a different way. Western thinkers, beginning with the early Greeks, have become too used to grasping all existence in the form of *logos* (language). To grasp something in the form of logos is to establish precisely the relationship of that thing to everything around it *by means of logos*. Because of this way of defining, some Western philosophers try to grasp "self" and even the life force itself by definition. What we have to bear in mind here is that even the power to understand all things by means of definitions is the power of our own life. The life of the self does not come about by being defined. Life lives as real experience even if it is not understood or defined. This ought to be clear to us naturally, but it isn't at all clear even with all the Western rationalists' futile attempts at explanation. If one *thinks* about a reality that exists before the definitions of speculative thought, that in itself creates a kind of definition, which no longer exists prior to definition. Therefore, one ends up thinking that the definition is reality.

The foundation of Buddhism, with its origins in India, is that of the reality of life prior to all definitions. Different Buddhist scriptures express this same fundamental reality in various ways: emptiness of reality, reality as it truly is beyond logos,[4] inexpressible *tathata*, true emptiness. Of course, since life produces all relative definitions, all definitions are life itself, but

4. All of these are interpretive renderings of various Japanized-Sanskrit terms. *Tathata* has been variously translated as suchness, the reality of things as they are, as-it-isness. Emptiness of reality is a translation of *nyo-jitsu-kū*; reality as it truly is beyond logos is *rigen shinri*; inexpressible tathata is *haisen shinnyo*; and true emptiness is *shinkū*. The first two expressions appear in the *Daijō Kishin-ron* ("*Awakening of Mahayana Faith*"), while the latter expressions appear in the *Daichido-ron* ("*The Great Wisdom Discourse*"), a commentary on the *Heart Sutra*. The commentary is attributed to Nagarjuna.

the reality of life cannot be bottled up in definitions of it. Although it produces all kinds of definitions, the *reality of life* transcends all definitions.

Why do Buddhist teachings presuppose such reality beyond definition? The reason is simple: If we actually touch fire, we will certainly be burned, but if we merely say the word fire without actually touching it, we won't be burned. Likewise, if we only *think* of the word fire, our heads will not be set ablaze. Therefore, the *definition* of fire, whose nature is to burn all things, cannot be the reality of it. Fire exists apart from its definition. In Zen, it is said that a person knows cold things and warm things only when she herself experiences them.[5] Everything is taken in as the real life-experience of self.[6] This means there is no true value in definitions of things, reports of other people, or so-called pure observation of things, from which the life-experience of one's self is removed, observations assumed possible in Western science. As far as that goes, the difference I see between Zen and existentialism is that present-day existentialism is the philosophy of general existence, not the practice of the very life of the existentialist himself. The

5. It is said that a person knows cold things and warm things only when they are personally experienced. This comes from the expression *reidan jichi*, which literally means "heat and cold—only oneself knows."

6. "the real life-experience of self": Here, Uchiyama Roshi uses the expression *seimei taiken* as opposed to *seikatsu keiken*, which refers to each individual's experiences in life. Life-experience means that life exists as what we experience prior to the coloration of our thoughts of suffering or happiness. The significance of this is that a person who has a happy experience will tend to interpret the world in a bright way, while someone who has a painful experience will interpret the world as being dark. Here, life-experience precedes the coloration of pleasure or pain; this means self cannot be separated from world (that which is experienced), self and world are one reality. Practice as life-experience actualizes life—*self* and *world*—as one reality.

important thing for us is practice in which self truly lives out the life of self, not discussions and observations of general existence.

From the standpoint of Western thought, where everything must be defined by logos, a reality that goes beyond definition is nonsense and utterly impossible, but from the point of view of practice, the very power that goes beyond thinking and creating definitions with words must be the reality of life itself. D. T. Suzuki emphasized "Japanese spirituality."[7] This world of spirituality opens up only when we actually practice the reality of life, which transcends Western rationalism.

Now, is this reality of life that transcends definitions, language, and thought some mystical, esoteric world deeply hidden somewhere—something we are unable to talk about or even imagine? No, of course not, since in actuality we are always living out the reality of life.

Let's put our hands up to our hearts. My heart does not beat because I think about making it beat. Nor does it beat because of physiological or medical definitions. A power beyond the definitions of words or ideas is making it beat. Yet as long as it is actually beating inside me, it is the reality of my life.

7. "Japanese spirituality": The Japanese expression is *nihonteki reisei*. D. T. Suzuki used this expression as the title for a book he wrote in 1944 (Daitō Publishers).

In brief, he defines spirituality as follows: Spirituality is that which transcends the dichotomy of spiritual and material (phenomena or world). Spirituality is the foundation of spirit (mind) and material. Spirit and material are not one, but not two, either. Spiritual intuition enables us to see that reality.

He says further that this spirituality is, at the same time, religious consciousness. He explains the Japanese way of manifesting this spirituality through Zen and Pure Land Buddhism.

Also, my respiration continues without ceasing, at a rate of so many times a minute. I can take perhaps two or three deep breaths by thinking about it, but it is completely impossible for me to be in constant conscious control of my breathing. There are neurotic people who feel anxiety about almost everything, but I can't imagine anyone who is unable to sleep because of worrying about how terrible it would be if he forgot to breathe so many times a minute during the night. I go to sleep entrusting my breathing to some great power beyond my own management. Again, though this is not a power I control, since it is really working inside of me it is nothing other than the reality of my life.

This is a reality as physiological life, but let us go a little further. I was born Japanese, and perhaps you were born Caucasian. This is not something we chose by our so-called will, and yet, in fact, I am a Japanese and you are what you are. This is the reality of life that transcends our own measurement and discretion. Also, I am a Buddhist priest living a life of zazen practice in a certain temple in Kyoto, Japan. Is this way of life a way I chose by my own power? Yes, of course, in a certain sense, I did choose it. But where did I get the power to choose it? I can't help but conclude that this choice, too, has been given life by a great power that transcends my own willpower and thought, whether you call it coincidence, fate, or the providence of God.

Using our intellect to come up with some answer to this is nothing but coming up with a one-sided or abstract answer. Ultimately, all we can say is that the reality of life is as it is. The reality of the life of the self is simply to live life just as it is. Self does not exist because I think about it or because I don't think about it. Either way, this self is my life. Zazen truly puts this reality of life into practice.

I have explained that the reality of life is the very living out of life just as it is, and that zazen is the *practice* of doing just that. But is there any other way to live besides living life as it is? Is it possible to live outside of reality? Of course, whatever our way of life may be, that is the reality of life, so there is no possibility of living outside the reality of life. Nevertheless, it is possible to live losing sight of that reality, and because of that, to suffer and agonize about our lives.

One time a woman in her forties came to talk with me. She was distraught as she told me her story. She had always loved to paint and was quite talented at it. In her early twenties, her parents supported her and helped her go to Tokyo to become an artist. In the beginning, she met with considerable success. Her paintings were exhibited everywhere, often winning prizes, and even the critics gave her generous praise as an accomplished young artist. However, her brilliant beginning met with an obstacle. Just when her reputation was starting to grow and she was about to become successful, her father lost everything he had. It was still a little too risky for her to live only by her paintings, and she was also worried about her disappointed parents, so she returned to the country and did all she could to look after them. Years went by, and her parents grew quite old, but her unceasing passion for painting would not allow her to stay in the country and wither away. So she made the decision to try to establish herself as an artist. Taking her aged parents along, she moved to Tokyo, and while working during the day, she devoted herself to painting at night. She continued this effort for several years, but she was unable to win recognition the way she had in her twenties. Every painting she exhibited and placed her hopes in lost in competition. As a result, she was unable to sell any paintings and was

forced to continue working to support herself and her parents, which sapped all her energy and spirit. Lamenting her unfortunate situation, she wept over being unable to develop her talent because her family had lost all its property.

While I totally sympathized with her over being unable to achieve her goal as a painter due to the setback in her circumstances, for her own sake I rebuked her.

"You're thinking about this all wrong. It's a big mistake to think that it is only natural for a person to receive a family inheritance. What is natural is that a person has no property at all. In your case, however, you were able to study painting by means of your family's wealth until you were past twenty. That's unusual, and something for which you should be grateful. Now, even though twenty-some years have passed, you're still lamenting your family's loss. Don't you think that crying about all this is just being dragged around by fantasies of the past? Isn't it completely meaningless? You have to open your eyes to your present reality and start off with a totally naked self, possessing no property or anything else.

"Besides, you're still looking back to the time when you were in your twenties and the paintings you exhibited always won prizes for you, and wishing you could taste those days again. Isn't agonizing over things that don't work out just the way you want them to nothing but being dragged around by more fantasies? You have to forget those fantasies and wanting things to be the way they were when you were twenty, and begin with your present reality.

"One more thing. What is most basic is that you paint because you enjoy painting, isn't that so? Can't you let yourself be satisfied with just that? Going around complaining because you can't sell them is being altogether too greedy. What is wrong with having a part-time job to support yourself? If you can make a living like that and enjoy painting the rest of the

time, then you can have a rich life, since you have been given the talent to paint and have an interest in it. This is something to be happy about whether anyone recognizes you or not.

"I haven't been doing zazen because I want to make it into something salable. I've been leading a life of zazen for thirty years, but for the first twenty, I was completely ignored by the world. I practiced zazen in obscurity and poverty with hardly enough to eat. But just by doing zazen, I was able to discover the meaning of my own life even in those circumstances. During the last ten years, people who are sympathetic with my attitude toward zazen have come to join me in sitting, but even now I haven't the slightest intention of making zazen into a salable product. I'm just doing my own zazen. For you, too, painting the pictures you like is your life. Shouldn't just that be your greatest joy?" She understood completely and left with a bright look on her face.

Actually, we are always living out the reality of our own lives, although it sometimes happens that we lose sight of this reality, getting caught up in fantasies of the past or in our relationships with others, and ending up being dragged around by those fantasies and by our comparisons of ourselves with others. How can we not become filled with feelings of utter isolation and loneliness, overwhelmed by our jealousy and envy of those around us, or by some other pain and suffering?

One time when I went to a place in the countryside, I could see from a distance a thick forest on the side of the mountain and was able to make out the roof of a large temple hidden among the trees. According to the story of a local villager, previously this temple had been much larger, but after it burned down, the present building was put up on a much smaller scale. Guided by the villager, I climbed up a long stone stairway. When I finally reached the top and had a look around, the temple, far from being small, was a magnificent structure,

though it didn't seem to have been built at all recently. I began to wonder about it and asked the villager just exactly when the temple had burned down. He told me it happened during the Kamakura period (1185–1333)! Perhaps it had been a much bigger temple before that, but the Kamakura period ended over six hundred years ago. I burst out laughing because I thought that when the villager was talking about "after it burned down" and all, he meant five or six years, or at most twenty or thirty years ago. At any rate, I found it interesting that these country people handed down the story of a loss they hadn't seen themselves as if it had happened only yesterday.

On second thought, a thing that happened seven hundred years ago is undoubtedly a recent event. Many Jewish people vividly remember the temple Solomon built several thousand years ago as if it were only yesterday. Actually, when we use the word "remember," we should be talking about things we ourselves have experienced, or at least events that occurred in our own lifetime. However, here they are remembering what is written in books or remembering what they heard their ancestors tell about. It would be one thing if these were simply memories, but the Jewish people are gambling the fate of their entire people for the sake of these memories, and along with the Muslims and Christians they are killing and being killed. This isn't at all a one-sided affair. It's also combined with the memories of the Muslims and Christians. Why do such things happen?

Among the mythological and sectarian religions, people act according to what they have been taught, what is written in books and what has been handed down by their ancestors. And yet, they wage giant wars and kill each other en masse. This isn't limited only to mythological and sectarian religions. It is exactly the same with all the various -isms and ways of thought. Instead of looking at the fresh and vivid reality of life with their

own eyes, people end up stifling that reality in the name of God, or justice, or peace, or with fixed dogmas and formalized thought.

As long as memories, fantasies, myths, history, -isms, and ways of thought are produced by human life, we can never say they are meaningless. However, these are not the raw (alive right now) *life-experience* itself; rather, they have a conceptual existence that is fixed within our thoughts. This past experience and past wisdom should be made to live only within the raw life-experience of the self here and now.

At times, we plunge our heads too far into memories and fantasies, or myths and history, or religious dogma and formalized -isms. When we admire these, believe in them blindly, and become frenzied and fanatical, we activate this fixed and conceptual existence. We totally confuse this kind of conceptual existence with the raw life-experience of the present and end up being dragged around by it. We do things that only stifle raw life. This is happening all the time. When an individual is like this, he can be admitted to a mental institution as a schizophrenic, but when huge masses of people begin to act according to sectarian religions or -isms, then the activity of the whole mass is schizophrenic. There is hardly a hospital where everyone could be admitted. Not only that, these groups of fanatics eventually shape the very history of man. In fact, isn't the history of mankind just a continuous sequence of this sort of thing?

If we think about it, there is no doubt whatsoever that everyone is always living out the reality of life—even if it be insane. However, going a little further, we have to conclude that the important thing is to really practice, aiming at living out the reality of life. Here is where we truly find out what it means to say that zazen puts into practice living out the reality of life.

The Reality of Zazen

How to Do Zazen

So far, I have talked about the meaning of zazen, and now I will go on to explain how to do zazen.

First of all, the room where you do zazen should be as quiet as possible. It should be neither too light nor too dark and should be warm in the winter and cool in the summer. Care should be taken not to allow wind or smoke in the room, while the room itself should be kept neat and clean. In other words, try to create a settled and peaceful environment where you can continue to sit on a regular basis. If possible, it is also good to enshrine a Buddha statue, offer flowers, and burn incense. A Buddha statue represents the tranquillity of zazen and is an artistic expression of the compassion and wisdom of zazen. This way, we create an atmosphere that supports our doing zazen. We should always take good care of the environment that supports our zazen, paying respect to the place where we sit, and bowing when entering the zendo, or sitting hall.

Next, I would like to explain how to sit. Lay down a large

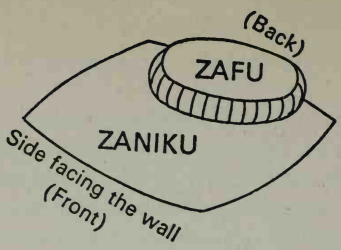

Figure 4

flat cushion, a *zabuton* or *zaniku* (see Figure 4), facing a wall, and on top of that, place a *zafu*, a round, firm cushion.

Sit down on the zafu and fold your legs. Cross them by putting your right foot on your left thigh and then your left foot on your right thigh. This is called the full-lotus posture (see Figure 5). If you are unable to fold your legs in this way, simply place your left foot on your right thigh. This is called the half-lotus posture (see Figure 6). Sit on the front part of the zafu, not on the middle of it, for the sake of good blood circulation. The zafu should be behind the place where your legs cross, and your knees should be firmly down on the zabuton. The weight of the upper part of the body should be distributed on three points—both knees on the zabuton and your buttocks on the zafu.

Sit up, straighten your back, with your buttocks naturally but firmly pushing outward. Keep your neck straight and pull in your chin. Without leaving an air pocket, close your mouth and put your tongue firmly against the upper palate. Project the top of your head as if it were going to pierce the ceiling. Relax your shoulders. Place your right hand on top of your left foot (palm up) and place your left hand in the palm of the right. Your thumbs should touch just above your palms, as can be seen in Figure 7.

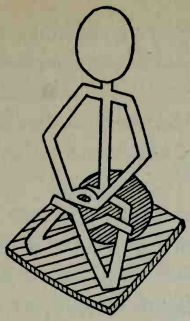

Figure 5
Full-lotus posture, or, in Japanese, kekkafuza

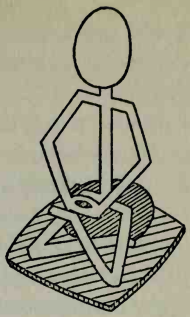

Figure 6
Half-lotus posture, or, in Japanese, hankafuza

Your ears should be in line with your shoulders, and your nose should line up with your navel. Keeping your eyes open as usual, look at the wall and drop your line of vision slightly.

Once you have taken the zazen position, open your mouth and exhale deeply. This will help change your whole frame of

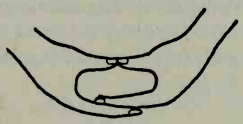

Figure 7
Cosmic mudra

mind. In order to work out the stiffness in your joints and muscles, slowly swing two or three times to the left and right, finally settling in an unmoving, upright posture. Once you have taken this immovable posture, breathe quietly through your nose. The important thing here is to breathe naturally from the

tanden, the area a little below the navel, allowing long breaths to be long and short breaths to be short.[1] Do not make noise by breathing heavily.[2] I have now pretty much outlined the zazen posture, a truly marvelous one discovered in the East. It is a marvelous posture because it is the best one for throwing out our petty human thoughts.

You will easily understand what I mean if you compare the zazen posture to Rodin's famous statue *The Thinker*. It sounds good to say "thinking," but actually *The Thinker* exemplifies a posture of chasing after illusions. The figure sits hunched over, his shoulders drawn forward and his chest compressed. The arms and legs are bent, the neck and fingers are bent, and even the toes are bent. When our body is bent like this, blood becomes congested and we get caught up in our imagination and become unable to break free. On the other hand, when we sit zazen, everything is straight—trunk, back, neck, and head. Be-

1. The area about two inches below the navel is called the *tanden*. If you are maintaining the correct zazen posture, the center of gravity of your body and mind will naturally fall to the *tanden*. In regulating the breath, the center of gravity should fall to the *tanden* by means of maintaining the correct posture. Other than that, just breathe naturally.

2. [Uchiyama Roshi's note] In volume 5 of the *Eihei Kōroku*, a collection of sermons by Dōgen Zenji, it says:

> In our zazen, it is of primary importance to sit in the correct posture. Next, regulate the breath and calm down. For *hinayana* practitioners, there are two elementary ways [of beginning practice]: one is to count breaths, and the other is to contemplate the impurity [of the body]. In other words, a practitioner with a *hinayana* [attitude] regulates his breathing by counting his breaths. However, the practice of the buddha-patriarchs is completely different from the way of *hinayana*. A patriarch has said, "It is better to have the mind of a wily fox than to follow the *hinayana* way of self-regulation." Two of the *hinayana* schools (studied) in Japan today are the Shibunritsu and Kusha schools.

cause our abdomen rests comfortably on solidly folded legs, blood leaves the head and circulates plentifully toward the abdomen. Precisely because blood circulates downward from the head, congestion is alleviated, excitability is lessened, and we no longer need chase after fantasies and delusions. Therefore, doing correct zazen means taking the correct posture and entrusting everything to it.

It is easy to say aim at the correct posture with your flesh and bones and leave everything up to that, but it is actually not so simple to do. Even while we are in the zazen position, if we continue our thoughts, then we are thinking and no longer doing zazen. Zazen is not thinking; nor is it sleeping. Doing zazen is to be full of life aiming at holding a correct zazen posture. If we become sleepy while doing zazen, our energy becomes dissipated and our body becomes limp. If we pursue our thoughts, our posture will become stiff. Zazen is neither

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There is also a Mahayana way of regulating the breath. That is, knowing that a long breath is long and that a short one is short. The breath reaches the *tanden* and returns from there. Although the exhalation and inhalation are different, they both pass through the *tanden*. When you breathe abdominally, it is easy to become aware of the transiency (of life), and to regulate the mind.

My former teacher Rujing said: "The inhaled breath reaches the *tanden*; however, it isn't that this breath comes from somewhere. For this reason, it is neither long nor short. The breath goes out from the *tanden*, but it is not a matter of it going somewhere. For that reason, it is neither short nor long."

My teacher explained it in that way, and if someone were to ask me how to regulate the breath, I would reply in this way. Although it is not Mahayana [as some fixed doctrine], it is different from *hinayana*; though it is not *hinayana*, it is different from Mahayana. And, if questioned further regarding what it is ultimately, I would respond that inhaling or exhaling are neither long nor short.

being limp and lifeless nor being stiff; our posture must be full of life and energy.

It's the same as driving a car. If the driver gets drunk or feels sleepy, his life force becomes dull, leading to an obviously hazardous situation. Likewise, a nervous driver or one who is completely absorbed in her thoughts becomes tense; this, too, is dangerous. This is true for businesswomen and statesmen as well. If they become sleepy or drunk on their jobs, or maybe overly strained or simply caught up in their own thoughts, again it's dangerous. In other words, this really applies to any kind of work. The life force should be neither stagnant nor rigid. The most essential thing is that our life force live to its fullest potential. Zazen is the most condensed form of *life functioning as wide-awake life.* It's the practice that directly and purely manifests that life. So, although it is easy to explain, actually practicing this is the most crucial thing in our life and, at the same time, a tremendous task.

When we actually do zazen, we should be neither sleeping nor caught up in our own thoughts. We should be wide awake, aiming at the correct posture with our flesh and bones. Can we ever attain this? Is there such a thing as succeeding or hitting the mark? Here is where zazen becomes unfathomable. In zazen we have to vividly aim at holding the correct posture, yet there is never a mark to hit! Or at any rate, the person who is doing zazen should never perceive whether he has hit the mark or not. If the person doing zazen thinks his zazen is really getting good, or that he has "hit the mark," he is merely *thinking* his zazen is good, while actually he has become separated from the reality of his zazen. Therefore, we must always aim at doing correct zazen, yet never perceive the mark as having been hit.

Can there really be such a strange contradiction? Generally, most people think that as long as there is an *aim*, it is only

natural that there will be a target to hit. Precisely because there is a target, we can aim. However, if we know that there isn't a target, who is going to attempt to aim? This is the usual idea about give and take. This is people's usual calculating way of behavior. However, when we do zazen, we have to let go of our self-centeredness and our dealings in relation to others. Zazen is just our *self doing itself by itself.* Zazen does zazen! Zazen is the throwing away of the calculating way of thinking which supposes that as long as there is an aim there must be a target. We just sit in the midst of this contradiction where, although we aim, we can never perceive hitting the mark. We just sit in the midst of this contradiction that is absolutely ridiculous when we think about it with our small mind. When we practice this kind of zazen and just sit, how *indefinite* we may feel![3] How unsatisfied or completely lost we may feel.

Actually, this is exactly why zazen is so wonderful. This small self, this foolish self, easily becomes satisfied or complacent. We need to see complacency for what it is: just a continuation of the thoughts of our foolish self. However, in our zazen, it is precisely at the point where our small, foolish self remains unsatisfied, or completely bewildered, that immeasurable natural life beyond the thoughts of that self functions. It is precisely at the point where we become completely lost that life operates and the power of buddha is actualized.

People who practice zazen must understand intellectually beforehand just what it is, and then when actually sitting zazen,

3. "indefinite": In other words, we divide 10 by 3 and always get a remainder. No matter how deep or from how many angles we try to understand or explain zazen, there is always going to remain an area that cannot be solved by clear or exact intellectual calculation. We are told to aim at holding the posture of zazen, yet the aiming is an action without any goal. Behind this word "indefinite" is also the realization of how petty and powerless this small ego-centered self actually is.

must just aim at the correct posture—not with their heads, but with their muscles and bones. Finally, they must drop everything and entrust everything to the correct zazen posture. Zazen actualizes the reality of the life of the self, just as it is. But there is no reason to think that we will perceive it.[4] It is impossible to look directly with our own naked eyes at the genuine or preconceptual reality of our own face. In this case, we must realize that it is only our calculating mind that is unsatisfied because it cannot see the results of its activity.

In any event, zazen is the best posture for truly aiming at reality as it is. Aiming at this posture, as it is, is also referred to as *shikantaza*—just sitting.[5]

4. "But there is no reason to think that we will perceive it": In the *Shōbōgenzō: Genjō Kōan*, Dōgen Zenji writes, "When buddhas are truly buddhas, there is no perception of oneself as being buddha," and, in the *Shōbōgenzō: Bendōwa*, he continues, "However, such things do not come into the perceptions of the person sitting, because they take place in the stillness of samadhi, without any fabrication, and constitute enlightenment itself."

5. [Uchiyama Roshi's note] "*shikantaza*—just sitting": The aim of doing zazen is to do zazen; it is never doing zazen for another purpose, such as gaining some sort of special enlightenment. I believe the following passages from the *Eihei Kōroku* and the *Shōbōgenzō Zanmai Ō Zanmai*, written by Dōgen Zenji, further elucidate this point.

> Zazen itself is satori. Zazen is dropping off body and mind and is the *shōbōgenzō-nehanmyōshin* [the spiritual wisdom of the true dharma]. Doing zazen is to practice, put into effect, and actualize this satori-here-and-now. Only when we do zazen with this attitude can our practice of zazen be called *shikantaza*—just doing.

In the preceding passage Dōgen Zenji is being quite clear in stating that satori is not so-called enlightenment. Nor is it some special experience one strives for by doing zazen.

My teacher Kōdō Sawaki Roshi often used to say, "Just do zazen, that's all." This is the same as "Zazen is the dharma, the dharma is zazen," and "Doing zazen is just doing zazen."

Therefore, zazen is all there is to do. But because there is such a great deal of doubt about what that is, many people find difficulty in developing a correct practice. So my purpose is to try to explain in the rest of this book just what zazen is. However, please understand that there is no overall conclusion for this book other than what I have just quoted—that is, to actually do zazen.

The correctly transmitted *dharma* from buddha to buddha and from patriarch to patriarch has always been just to sit. . . . This is very clear. Zazen itself is already the ultimate posture of satori. In other words, satori is just doing zazen [*Eihei Kōroku*, volume 4].

The way that has been transmitted from buddha to buddha and from patriarch to patriarch is to practice the Way doing zazen. Tiantong Rujing (Tendō Nyojō, Dōgen Zenji's teacher) said, "Sitting with folded legs is the posture of the ancient buddhas. Therefore, [entrusting the body to] *sanzen* [Translators' note: Literally, giving up to Zen; in the *Shōbōgenzō Zazengi*, Dōgen Zenji states unambiguously that *sanzen* is zazen] is dropping off body and mind. Burning incense (to settle the mind), reverent bowing before Buddha images, reciting the *nembutsu* [repetition of the Buddha's name] (the special practice of) repenting, reading the sutras, and other religious ceremonies are unnecessary. It is enough just to do zazen." [*Eihei Kōroku*, volume 6].

When Bodhidharma came to China, he didn't engage himself in all sorts of so-called religious practices. Nor did he give lectures on the sutras. He simply did zazen at Shōrinji for nine years just facing the wall. Doing zazen, just that, is the way of

I have already said that if you sit and think during zazen, then that is thinking and not zazen. Does that mean no thoughts at all should occur to us during zazen? Is good zazen that condition when all thoughts have ceased to come into our minds?

Here we have to clearly distinguish "chasing after thoughts and thinking" from "ideas or thoughts occurring." If a thought occurs during zazen and we proceed to chase after it, then we are thinking and not doing zazen. Yet this doesn't mean that we are doing zazen only when thoughts have entirely ceased to occur. How should we understand this contradiction?

Imagine placing a large rock next to a person doing zazen. Since this rock is not alive, no matter how long it sits there, a thought will never occur to it. Unlike the rock, however, the person doing zazen next to it is a living human being. Even if

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the Buddhas, the *shōbōgenzō nehanmyōshin* (true Dharma) [*Eihei Kōroku*, volume 4].

My late teacher Tiantong Rujing (Tendō Nyojō) said: "Practicing zazen is dropping off body and mind. You can attain this through the practice of *shikantaza* alone. The practices of incense burning, bowing, visualizing, or chanting the *nembutsu*, repentance, or reading the sutras are unnecessary." In the last several hundred years, it was my late teacher alone who gouged out the eyes of the buddhas and patriarchs and sat therein. Few people have clarified that sitting is the *buddha-dharma*, that the *buddha-dharma* is sitting. Even though some have understood through experience that sitting is the *buddha-dharma*, none have known that sitting is just sitting. Much less have there been any who have held that the *buddha-dharma* is just the *buddha-dharma* [*Shōbōgenzō: Zanmai Ō Zanmai*]. [Translators: The eye is a metaphor for wisdom, and this passage describes Dōgen's teacher's ability to sit in the buddhas' and ancestors' place and to see through their eyes.]

we sit as stationary as the rock, we cannot say that no thoughts will occur. On the contrary, if they did not, we would have to say that that person is no longer alive. But, of course, the truth of life never means to become lifeless like the rock. For that reason, thoughts ceasing to occur is not the ideal state of one sitting zazen. It is perfectly natural that thoughts occur. Yet, if we chase after thoughts, we are thinking and no longer doing zazen. So what should our attitude be?

Briefly, aiming at maintaining the posture of zazen with our flesh and bones, letting go of thoughts, is the most appropriate expression for describing what our attitude should be.[6] What is letting go of thoughts? Well, when we think, we think of *something*. Thinking of something means grasping that something with thought. However, during zazen we open the hand of thought that is trying to grasp something, and simply refrain from grasping. This is letting go of thoughts.

Even if a thought of something does actually arise, as long as the thought does not grasp that something, nothing will be formed. For example, even if thought *A* (a flower) occurs, as long as it is not followed by thought *B* (is beautiful), no meaning such as *A is B* (a flower is beautiful) is formed. Neither is it something that could be taken in the sense of *A which is B* (beautiful flower). So, even if thought *A* does occur, as long as the thought does not continue, *A* occurs prior to the formation of meaning. It is not measurable in terms of meaning, and in that condition will disappear as consciousness flows on.

As I explained earlier, since blood recedes from the head and excitability is lessened by keeping this posture, zazen is by nature

6. "letting go of thoughts": In Japanese, Uchiyama Roshi coined the rather unusual but colloquial expression *omoi no tebanashi*, literally, "releasing your grip on thoughts." In the Buddhist sense, the word *omoi* includes not only thoughts and ideas, but all feelings and emotions as well.

a posture in which we inherently see the futility of chasing after thoughts. So, as long as we entrust everything to the zazen posture, opening the hand of thought will come naturally and spontaneously. Again, however, human life is not a machine, so even in the zazen posture it is possible to think as much as we like. So the essential point when doing zazen is to aim, full of life, at the posture of zazen with our flesh and bones while at the same time leaving everything up to the posture and letting go of thoughts. By aiming at the zazen posture and simultaneously opening the hand of thought, both body and mind do zazen in the proper spirit. Zazen is not something we *think* about doing wholeheartedly—it is something we actually practice.

Dōgen Zenji (Zenji is a title of great respect), quoting Yakusan Igen (Yaoshan Weiyan), called this the *thought of no thought*.[7] While doing zazen with our flesh and bones, we aim at (think) letting go of thoughts (no thought). Later, Keizan

7. "thought of no thought": The following *mondō* in which this expression appears took place between Yakusan Igen (Yaoshan Weiyan), 751–834 C.E., and one of his disciples.

> When Yakusan was sitting, a monk asked him: "What do you think when you sit?" The Master said, "I think of not thinking." The monk queried further, "How do you think of not thinking?" Yakusan replied, "[By sitting] beyond thinking."
>
> When we are sitting, we do not follow our thoughts; nor do we stop them. We just let them come and go freely. We cannot call it thinking, because the thoughts are not grasped. If we simply follow our thinking, it is exactly that, and not zazen. We cannot call it not thinking, either, because thoughts are coming and going, like clouds floating in the sky. When we are sitting, our brains don't stop working, just as our stomachs don't stop digesting. Sometimes our minds are busy; sometimes they are calm. Just sitting without being concerned with the condition of our minds is the most important point of zazen.

Jōkin Zenji coined the expression *kakusoku*, which means being wide awake actually living out reality.[8]

As Keizan Zenji's expression *kakusoku* states admirably well the mental attitude of a person doing zazen, I will talk about the conditions during zazen by using the words "wake up" in this sense. This word *kakusoku* might be equally understood to mean *reality waking up as reality*. At any rate, this "waking up" is different from cognizing or perceiving, and this difference is crucial. Knowing and perceiving imply a dichotomy, a confrontation between the thing that knows and the thing that is known.

As I mentioned before, we are at all times and in every situation living out the reality of our own lives, whether we believe to be so or not. Nevertheless, we lose sight of this; we doze off or start thinking and cause this reality to appear dull and foggy. It's just like driving a car when we are either sleepy or absorbed in thought. Our life, like our driving, becomes careless and hazardous. "Waking up" means to let go of thoughts—that is, we wake up from sleep or thought and perform the reality of the zazen posture which we are practicing with our flesh and bones. In other words, it is with our flesh and bones that we actualize the reality of the self.[9]

8. "*kakusoku*": The Chinese characters for Keizan Zenji's expression literally mean to awaken and touch. The expression is used to imply living life more fully and alive.

9. "actualize the reality of the self": In this case, "actualize" is not being used in the sense of putting some potential into operation, but rather means to allow the functioning of that which is always being manifested.

Next, in as much detail as possible, I will give an analytical description of the actual internal experience when doing zazen. First of all, draw a line *ZZ'*. This line represents truly maintaining the zazen posture (see Figure 8). When we are doing zazen, this line *ZZ'* should be the reality of our lives right now, so by all means we must keep to it. But human beings sitting are not like rocks that have been set down. We are not fixed, and so it happens that we tend to move away from this line. Either thoughts come up or we doze off.

For example, thought *a* comes into our mind and we move away from line *ZZ'*. If we take this thought *a* as a basis and continue with thoughts *a'* and *a"*, we are thinking. If something about our work comes to mind and we continue with thoughts about the arrangements and management of the work, we are clearly doing nothing but thinking about our work. Then we let go of our thoughts and wake up to the posture of zazen with our flesh and bones. We return to the reality of life. I will express this waking up with an arrow pointing down to line *ZZ'*.

But after a while we become drowsy. This is *b*. If this *b* continues on to *b'* and *b"*, we are actually dozing. Perhaps it seems strange to use this progression of symbols, *b*, *b'*, and *b"*, for dozing, too, but in actually doing zazen, that is the way it is. That is, when we become sleepy during zazen and some thought floats into our head, we are already sleeping! Having some thought float into our heads is nothing but dreaming. If a thought comes to mind while we are wide awake and we chase after it, this is called *thinking*. And, if a thought comes to mind when we are sleepy and we chase after it, we are simply chasing after a dream in our sleep. Or we may be nodding away and at the same time *thinking* that we are sleepy but holding out and sitting as solidly as ever. What we are really doing

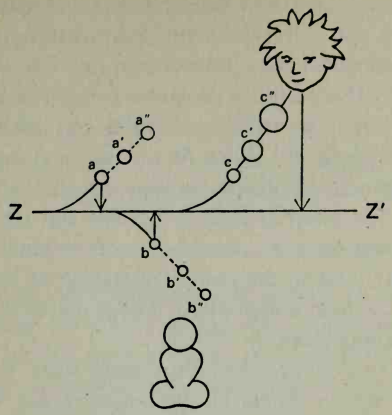

Figure 8

here is just dreaming. In actually doing zazen, there is no difference between chasing after thoughts and sleeping—at least speaking from my experience of zazen this is the case. Therefore, when we become sleepy during zazen, we have to wake up by vigorously putting our energy into our sitting with our flesh and bones and cease from chasing after thoughts. We have to "wake up" and return to the reality of life, which can also be expressed by an arrow pointing up to *ZZ'*.

Sometimes we completely forget about waking up. We may chase after thoughts *c*, *c'*, *c"*, *c"'* and end up completely separated from the reality of our lives. In other words, we may become separated from the reality of doing zazen right now. Without being aware of it, we may start associating with or carrying on a dialogue with some vivid figure *c"'* that has been totally fabricated within our own chasing after thoughts. Even at a time like this, if we "wake up"—that is, actually perform

the posture of zazen with our flesh and bones and open the hand of our thoughts—this very lifelike phantom *c'''* will disappear instantly and we will be able to return to the reality of zazen (*ZZ'*). This is a truly remarkable point. It makes us realize clearly that our fantasy *c'''* has no reality and that it is nothing but empty coming and going. At any rate, noticing things like this during zazen, whether it is at stage *c*, *c'*, *c''*, or *c'''*, we should "wake up" to zazen as soon as possible and return to *ZZ'*. Actually doing zazen is a continuation of this kind of returning up or down. That is, the posture of waking up and returning to *ZZ'* at any time is itself zazen. This is one of the most vital points regarding zazen.

Earlier I mentioned that when doing zazen, line *ZZ'*—or just doing zazen—should be the reality of our life. So it is essential to maintain that line. However, I now have to restate this: *ZZ'* represents the reality of the posture of zazen, but the reality of our life is not just *ZZ'*. If it were only *ZZ'*, then we would have no life and would be the same as a rock! Although we aim at the line *ZZ'*, we can never actually adhere to it. We tend to diverge from it and go off it in various ways. The very power to "wake up" to *ZZ'* and return to it is the reality of the life of zazen. Zazen enables us to realize that all the thoughts that float into our heads are nothing but empty comings and goings without any real substance and that vanish in a moment.

In Yongjia's text *Zhengddaoge (Shōdōka)*, popularly known as *The Song of Enlightenment*,[10] it is written:

10. Yongjia Xuanjue (in Japanese, Yōka Genkaku) was a seventh-century Chinese master. [Uchiyama Roshi's note follows.] It also says in the *Shōdōka*, "Neither try to eliminate delusion, nor seek after what is real. The true nature of ignorance, just as it is, is buddha-nature. The body itself, which appears and disappears like a phantom, is nothing other than the dharma-body (reality of life). Waking up to the reality of life, there is no particular thing we can point to and say, 'This is it.' "

The five *skandhas* [elements of all existences] are just floating clouds that aimlessly come and go,
While the three poisons [craving, anger, and stupidity] are but bubbles that appear and vanish.
When reality is *seen*, neither subject [ego] nor object [dharmas] exists.
And in a moment the *avici karma* [evil fate] is eradicated.

Truly, all thoughts, delusions, and cravings are like bubbles and are nothing but empty comings and goings that have no substance when we wake up to zazen. Even a hell like *avici*, developed by our own thoughts and fantasies, becomes eradicated in an instant. Zazen enables us to experience this as reality. The reason I have taken it upon myself to try to explain with diagrams what is actually happening during zazen is this: Usually people tend to think that doing zazen means to aim at the line *ZZ'*, to train and discipline their minds, and finally to hold firmly to *ZZ'* itself. I wish to make it clear that zazen as real life—the zazen that Dōgen Zenji called "the correctly transmitted zazen of the buddhas and patriarchs"—is not like that. Consider the following passage from Dōgen Zenji's *Eihei Kōroku*, volume 7.

The Patriarch Nagarjuna spoke thusly: Zazen is the *dharma* of all the buddhas. Non-Buddhists also practice zazen. However, they make the mistake of coloring it; their incorrect views are like thorns. Therefore, it cannot be the same as the zazen of the buddhas and bodhisattvas. *Sravakas* and *pratyeka buddhas* also do zazen, but they wish only to control their minds and seek

to reach Nirvana.[11] This is not the same as the zazen of the buddhas and bodhisattvas.

These words of Nagarjuna, who lived about 150 to 250 C.E., were quoted by Dōgen Zenji. Nagarjuna had already made clear the difference between the zazen of the buddhas and bodhisattvas and the meditation practices of non-Buddhist practitioners and Buddhists seeking only their own salvation. The zazen of non-Buddhists is not the pure zazen of life itself. It is flavored or colored with various kinds of profit and is developed from a worldly and utilitarian outlook. *Sravakas* and *pratyeka buddhas* meditate in order to gradually decrease delusion and craving, finally seeking to extinguish them entirely and enter nirvana. Neither of these is the zazen that has been correctly transmitted by the buddhas and ancestors.

In other words, the zazen we do is not something at which we succeed only when we become one with *ZZ'*, as in Figure 8. Decreasing delusion and desire and finally extinguishing them completely is not the purpose of zazen. For *hinayana* Buddhists the complete extinction of delusion and craving is called nirvana (enlightenment), and zazen is practiced in order to reach this state.[12] However, if we assume this type of enlight-

11. Here Nagarjuna is criticizing an attitude on the part of the practitioner who seeks only to control his own mind and emotions and tries to escape from the world—or, to put it another way, to escape from the provisional subject-object world.

12. *Hinayana* is a term that was used pejoratively by early Buddhists, including Dōgen Zenji, to refer to people who, although they claimed to be Buddhists, were actually wrapped up only in their own salvation having no connection to other sentient beings. In other words, they lacked a vision that would include all people. As a term, *hinayana* would seem to be the opposite of *mahayana*, but to understand it in such a way is a mistake. *Hinayana* never referred to a school, only to a narrow attitude.

enment to be the truth of human life, then this is nothing but saying that the truth of life is lifeless—death! Since cravings existing in human life are the cause of suffering, *hinayana* Buddhists struggle to extinguish them and attain the bliss of nirvana. But isn't seeking to get rid of pain and attain the bliss of nirvana itself a desire or craving? Actually, this, too, is craving, and precisely because of that, the practitioner is in self-contradiction and can't escape suffering.[13] This is why Dōgen Zenji said: "The practice of the buddhas and patriarchs is completely different from the way of *hinayana*," and why he quoted from an earlier ancestor about not trying to follow the *hinayana* way of zazen in which they try to control themselves.

The zazen of the buddhas and ancestors, the zazen of the reality of life, is not like this. Since desires and cravings are actually a manifestation of the life force, there is no reason to hate them and try to extinguish them. And yet, if we become dragged around by them and chase after them, then our life becomes fogged over.[14] The important point here is not to cause life to be fogged over by thought based on desires or cravings, but to see all thoughts and desires as resting on the

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It should follow from this that the term *mahayana*, too, although sometimes used to indicate a school of Buddhism, is also being used pejoratively by Dōgen when referring to Buddhists who have become attached to the term. Readers of Buddhist texts, especially those of Dōgen, must be careful in discerning whether he is using a term to designate a school or whether he is talking about an attitude.

13. "can't escape suffering": That is, the practice becomes the cause of further suffering.

14. "fogged over": In Japanese, the word used is *bokeru*. "Fogged over" is meant to cover both extremes of how our lives become unclear or muddled—that is, by frenetic activity or busy-ness (chasing after every whim or desire) and through sluggish activity (like laziness).

foundation of life,[15] to let them be as they are, yet not be dragged around by them. It is not a matter of making a great effort not to be dragged around by desires. It is just waking up and returning to the reality of life that is essential. If we apply this to zazen, it means that even if various thoughts like *a* and *b* do occur, they will all vanish by waking up to zazen.

Even when one is completely off the track, carried away to the point where *c*''' appears as a very vivid image, by waking up to zazen even *c*''' will disappear in an instant. Anyone who does zazen is actually enabled to experience with her whole body that thoughts are nothing but empty comings and goings without any independent or unchanging substance. However, unless we actually practice zazen, this cannot be easily understood.

I realize that to say you cannot understand this without doing zazen sounds very pompous, but the reason I say so is because usually we are unable to recognize that what we think about in our heads is nothing but empty comings and goings, due to plunging our heads too far into our thoughts and living too much in the world of thought. Once we think of something we want or like, we assume that the simple fact of thinking we want it or like it is the truth. Then, since we think this idea is the truth and worth seeking, we proceed to chase after it everywhere and our whole world eventually develops into one of greed. On the other hand, once we think of something we hate or dislike, we assume again that the simple fact of thinking we hate it is the truth. *Thinking* that since this idea is

15. "foundation of life": Here, when Uchiyama Roshi uses the expression "foundation of life," he does so in contrast to a shallower or dualistic way of living based on existence or survival mentality.

the truth we ought to follow it, we chase after it until our whole world turns into anger.[16]

The activities in our everyday lives are almost entirely the result of chasing after ideas like this, causing vivid lifelike images to become fixed,[17] and then giving more weight to these fixed delusions and desires until we finally get carried away by them. It would be even more accurate to say that ordinarily we are being flung about by desire and delusion without even knowing it. It is like a man who is drinking sake (consuming fantasies): At first he knows that he is drunk, but when it develops to the stage where the sake is drinking the man, then he is adrift in fantasies without even knowing it and acts accordingly. Almost all people and societies throughout the world today are carried away by desire and delusion. This is precisely why our zazen comes to have such a great significance. When we "wake up" during zazen we are truly forced to experience the fact that all the things we develop in our thoughts vanish in an instant.

16. "our whole world turns into anger": Uchiyama Roshi is explaining the Buddhist expression *wakugokku*. Roshi often explains this concept in the following way: Thoughts are fantasies, acts are real, and the results come back to haunt us.

17. "causing lifelike images to become fixed": In the *Shōbōgenzō: Zazenshin*, Dōgen Zenji writes: *tori tonde tori ni nitari*—"the flying bird resembles a bird." That is, there is no real substance to all of the "things" to which we attach names. That which has no form (the flying bird) here and now takes a temporary form of a bird (resembles a bird).

Dōgen Zenji's expression is his way of phrasing Nagarjuna's "Seeing the arisal of various dharmas [things] destroys the view that nothing exists [substantially]. Seeing the decay of various dharmas destroys the view that things exist [substantially]. For this reason, although all the dharmas appear to exist, they are like phantoms, like dreams" [From the *Mula-madhyamaka-sastra* of Nagarjuna: or, in Japanese, *Chūron*; or, in English, *The Middle Way*].

Despite the fact that we almost always stress the content of our thoughts, when we wake up, we wake up to the reality of life and make this reality our center of gravity. It is at this time that we clearly realize that all the desires and delusions within our thoughts are substantially nothing. When this kind of zazen experience fully becomes a part of us, even in our daily lives, we will not be carried away by the comings and goings of various images, and we will be able to wake up to our own lives and begin completely afresh from the reality of life.

So are desires, delusions, and thoughts like *a*, *b*, and *c* all things that primarily do not exist and should be denied? Of course not, because as I mentioned before, even thoughts, which produce desire and delusion, are a manifestation of the life force. Yet if we continue the thought and become carried away by desire and delusion, life becomes obscured and stifled. So we wake up to *ZZ'* and from this standpoint of waking up we are able to see that thoughts, desires, and delusions are all the scenery of life. During zazen, they are the scenery of zazen.

There is no scenery where there is no life! There is scenery only where there is life. While we are living in this world, there will be happiness and unhappiness, favorable conditions and adverse ones, interesting things and boring things. There will be pleasant times and painful times, times to laugh and times to be sad. Actually, all of these are part of the scenery of life. Because we plunge into this scenery, become carried away by it, and end up running helter-skelter, we become frantic and so we suffer. In zazen, even though various lifelike images appear to us, we are able to see this scenery of life for what it is by waking up to *ZZ'*.

Let us think about this in regard to the "I" that becomes determined by relationships with "other." We can easily see that the "I" that is determined from the outside is scenery in the life of the self. It is not that there is no such thing as an

"I" fixed from the outside. Although it produces all this scenery, my own true life is the reality of life that I "wake up" to without being carried away by the scenery. Zazen is the foundation of life where this reality of life is being manifested. In that sense, zazen is the reality of the self—the true self.[18] In other words, the most essential thing in zazen is not to eliminate delusion and craving and become one with *ZZ'*. Of course there are times like this during zazen, but this, too, is just part of the scenery of zazen. While aiming at *ZZ'*, we have a tendency to diverge from it. Despite that, the very attitude of returning to *ZZ'* and waking up is most important for practicing zazen as the foundation of life.

18. [Uchiyama Roshi's note] Zazen is the practice of the Buddha. Zazen is nondoing. This is indeed our genuine Self. As buddha-dharma, nothing else is to be sought after [Dōgen, *Shōbōgenzō: Zuimonki*].

The Reality of Sesshin

Life in any Zen monastery or center includes periodic sesshin. Literally, the word "sesshin" means to touch or listen to one's true mind. Traditionally, the practice of sesshin, which consists of specified periods of three days, five days, a week, or perhaps as long as a year or more devoted to zazen, is an important part of the formal contemplative aspect of Zen practice.

Sesshins Without Toys

I want to clarify further the actuality of zazen as well as what our life attitude through zazen is, by talking about sesshins at Antaiji and what is experienced through them.

After my teacher Sawaki Roshi's death in 1965, I began the following kind of sesshin: Sesshins continue for five days every month, with the first Sunday of the month as the middle day. There are no sesshins in February, however, due to the cold, nor in August, due to the extreme heat. Also, the July and September sesshins are only three days long.

The schedule for these sesshins consists only of a repetition of zazen and *kinhin* (walking zazen) from four o'clock in the

morning until nine in the evening. There are three meals a day and kinhin immediately after each meal. Afterward, there is a thirty-minute break when everyone attends to their personal needs.

There are two unique characteristics of these sesshins. One is that there is absolutely no talking. There are no greetings or socializing, and no sutra chanting. Also, we do not employ the *kyōsaku*, the wooden stick used to wake up the sitter. Usually the head of a Soto Zen temple does not face the wall, but I always face the wall along with everyone else without keeping watch on the other people doing zazen. These are the main characteristics of Antaiji sesshins. The only instruction added to these rules is that you apply yourself to your own practice regardless of anyone else. This style of sesshin is the result of having experienced various types of sesshins before. I have continued this practice since 1965, because I believe it to be the purest way of putting into practice the words of Sawaki Roshi: "Zazen is the self doing itself by itself."

The five days of absolute silence are to help everyone become their *self which is only self*[1] without socializing or diverting their attention to others. Moreover, this silence without interruption for five days makes sesshin into one continuous period of zazen. We don't use the *kyōsaku*, a stick used to wake up a sitter who might have dozed off, precisely so that everyone may

1. "self which is only self": The Japanese expression is *jiko giri no jiko*. Even in Japanese, this is not an ordinary expression and can be understood best by carefully considering the examples Uchiyama Roshi uses to explain this absolute aspect of self. This is the true self that is just itself, naked, not wobbling about relative to others and full of desires, but settled in itself. Roshi quotes from Sawaki Roshi about how it is impossible to exchange so much as a fart with another person. This example perhaps explains best in down-to-earth language the meaning of "self which is only self."

become their self which is only self. Since we set everything aside and face the wall, just being ourselves during zazen, we feel a terrible boredom. Consequently, when the *kyōsaku* is carried around, it becomes a toy and people start to play around with it. For example, someone may be sitting quietly and hear the *kyōsaku* being carried around. They begin to think about how perfect their posture is and why there is no reason for them to get hit. Or else they may think about how long afternoon hours are and how they can arrange to get hit just to pass the time.

It seems to me that we spend all our lives playing with toys. It begins as soon as we are born. The first toy is the nipple of the milk bottle. When we are a little older, it becomes dolls and teddy bears. After that, it's do-it-yourself kits, cameras, and cars. At adolescence, we move on to the opposite sex, and then come study and research, competition and sports, along with earnestness in business and search for fame. This is all just playing with toys! Right up to our death, we exchange one toy for another and end our lives with nothing but playing with toys.

Doing zazen means to actualize the reality of life. Zazen is the self which is only self without any playing with toys. Zazen is like the time prior to our death when all the toys have been taken away. Yet, even then, we look around for something to play with, if only for an instant. For just this reason, I'm concerned that when the *kyōsaku* is brought around, it immediately becomes a toy and zazen ceases to be that self which is only self. So we don't use it.

But what do you do if you get sleepy during a sesshin at Antaiji? If the purpose of the *kyōsaku* is to clear away your sleepiness, you can't help but fall asleep when it isn't being used. However, there is no need to worry—there is absolutely no one who sleeps through the entire seventy hours of a five-

day sesshin! Inevitably, you wake up. Since it is your own practice, you just do zazen wholeheartedly. Zazen is not something a person should be forced to do. It's a practice you do yourself, as the self which is only the self.

There may be an occasion when you are awake but very bored. So in order to pass the time, you may think about one certain thing and entertain yourself with this idea. Even though this is your own practice, it is ridiculous to pass the time like this, but occasionally people do. If you are mentally normal, however, you will never be able to keep it up—at a sesshin where there is only silence and long continuous hours of zazen, you'd feel like you were going crazy. A healthy mind cannot bear to struggle with and relate to one deluded thought over a long period of time. In the end, you will realize by yourself that the most comfortable thing is to let go of delusions and aim at a solid zazen posture. In other words, these sesshins are just sitting as self which is only self without any outside restrictions. Consequently, they swing you to the point where you can't help but become that self which is only self and not be caught up in delusive thoughts.

As I mentioned earlier, I, too, sit facing the wall, not toward everyone else. I do it in order to take away the relationship of watching and being watched. If I sat with the intention of keeping watch on everyone else, then that is all I would be doing, and I would lose sight of my own zazen. Also, if everyone were conscious of being watched while doing zazen, it would become a zazen carried on within the dichotomy of "self" and "other" and would no longer be zazen which is truly that self which is only self. I simply have to carry on my own zazen practice while everyone else has to practice his or her own zazen as self which is only self.

Since there is no instruction given regarding zazen, to practice a sesshin like this properly you have to have already un-

derstood what your mental attitude should be. That is why I have written books that deal with what zazen is and have gone into as much detail as possible. I hope people will sit sesshins after having read and understood this. If they still have questions, I have them visit me freely and ask their questions at times other than during sesshin.

A person who decides to do zazen after reading my books exhibits quite a different attitude from one who might just come and sit zazen unquestioningly. Many people are concerned with intellectual understanding—that is, they are full of argumentative theories. So, in order that these argumentative people may understand through their own experience that zazen is not theory—it is something you *actually do*—I have them dive right into the totally silent zazen practice described in the previous chapter.

Before Time and "I" Effort

Earlier, I talked about sesshins at Antaiji, and how we become aware of various things by actually doing these sesshins, not as theory, but as personal experience. Next, let us look at some of these things we become aware of.

The first thing we can't help but feel when sitting these sesshins is the tremendous drawing out of time. It is exactly like a couple of zen expressions: "A day is as long as eternity" and "A day is long as it seemed in one's childhood." How often in our day-to-day life do we share a joke with a friend or perhaps watch a bit of television and, before we know it, half the day or perhaps even the whole day has passed. But when we sit zazen the entire day, time just does not pass easily. Our legs hurt and we become filled with boredom. That is exactly why there is nothing else to do except live out time as the reality of life, moment by moment.

During sesshin all our activities are regulated by a bell. Two gongs being the signal for kinhin, we all stand up from zazen and begin walking. Doing kinhin, the thought arises of how fed up we already are with zazen, and then, discouragingly, we realize that it is still the morning of the second day and less than half the sesshin is over. I'm sure that everyone doing sesshin has had this kind of thought.

So how in the world do we get through the remaining time? Arriving at this point, we just have to transcend time. If we don't forget this thing called time, it will be impossible for us to continue through the rest of the hours of the sesshin.[2]

When we transcend time, forget time, we actually meet the fresh reality of life. The Japanese word for time is *toki*. I think this word is filled with deep meaning. *Toki* derives from the word *toshi*, which means swiftness or quickness. In other words, time exists because of this comparison of flowing swiftness. When we no longer compare, and just be that *self which is only self*, then we are able to transcend this swiftness, or time.

Those who continue sitting sesshin no longer recall time. Simply hearing three gongs, you begin zazen; if it's two gongs, then kinhin. Another three gongs signal that it is time to sit; then two gongs and back to kinhin. We just continue the sesshin as it is,[3] following the signals of the bell. No one thinks about whether it is a long time or a short time. Finally, without

2. Time is a human fabrication. A minute and an hour are human standards that have been established to "measure" the "flowing swiftness" labeled time. That only five minutes have passed, or that it *feels* like an hour has passed, is due to our having fixed a relative label—time—and invested a value in this fixed standard, such as time is money. However, if we let go of this comparative standard, no such fixed entity as time exists.

3. "as it is": Roshi inserts the expression *kaku no gotoku*, or *nyoze*, indicating that the sesshin continues regardless of the fiction of time.

thinking about it, five days have passed and the sesshin is over. Only then do we notice we have completely forgotten time while doing zazen, though I'm afraid that such an expression may invite serious misunderstanding. It may be more appropriate to say that, just applying ourselves to zazen, five days have passed all by themselves.[4] Actually, no matter what words we use, nothing is really appropriate. We simply have to experience a sesshin personally.

Anyway, it is a fact that this kind of experience actually shows us just what time is, as well as what *before time* is. Ordinarily, we take it for granted that we all live in time, but through sesshin we are able to experience directly that this is not so. Rather, it is the life of the self that creates the appearance of time.

When we do zazen, we fold our legs and sit without moving, keeping perfectly still. So you would have to say it is painful compared with a self-indulgent way of life in which we are usually able to move around as we wish.

However, if we begin to think during zazen about how painful it is and how we are persevering and bearing that pain, we will never be able to sit quietly throughout the whole five days. We might be able to do a couple of hours of zazen, or even four or five, strictly on our ability to persevere and endure pain, but there is no way we could ever sit a whole day, much less a five-day sesshin, simply by persevering. Furthermore, we could never sit through monthly sesshins or lead a life of zazen practice by virtue of some egotistical idea about our ability to endure pain. Even if we were able to do so, it would be mean-

4. "all by themselves": The point here is to remove any idea the sitter might embrace of thinking he has stuck it out through the five days by virtue of his own individual strength.

ingless! We would only be comparing our own ability to discipline ourselves and persevere with that of others. In other words, this would be nothing but an extension of our disposition to compare ourselves with other people. The most important thing during sesshin is to throw away even these ideas of how painful it is or how we are persevering and become submerged in zazen as it is, as that *self doing itself by itself.* Only by sitting still and leaving everything up to the posture will time pass of its own accord. In other words, only when we throw away our ideas of pain and perseverance will we be able to sit a sesshin without anxiety.

This experience is very significant. Through these sesshins, we are actually made to experience what it means to have the bottom fall out of our thoughts of persevering and suffering.

This experience has an enormous influence in our daily lives. We meet many problems and misfortunes in our day-to-day affairs, but what usually happens is that in confronting a problem we begin to struggle. And, by doing so, we force ourselves into an even worse situation. This is easily observable when it concerns someone else. When others have fallen into unfortunate circumstances, as observers we often say they should stop struggling and just calm down. As "observers," we can very coolly say this, but when the trouble is our own, we suddenly lose our ability to stay calm. How can we make this self—which can't help but struggle—stop struggling and settle down? There is no way unless the bottom of our thoughts about *our* suffering and *our* persevering falls out.[5] During sesshins we are made to experience exactly that. In other words,

5. "the bottom of our thoughts . . . falls out": This is a paraphrase of the Zen expression *taha shittsū*, which appears in the *Blue Cliff Record* (in Japanese, *Hekigan-roku*).

sesshin is the practice carried on prior to the distinction of self-power and other-power. Likewise, we practice prior to persevering or enduring.

The Scenery of Life

At Antaiji one day in early September, Jeff and Fred, two Americans who could speak Japanese very well, came to my room with some questions. They had both stayed at Antaiji for over a year and had been doing the sesshins there regularly since their arrival. "When we do zazen, don't we have to have a satori experience?" they asked.

I replied that satori and Zen seem to have such an intimate relationship in Japan that when somebody says "satori," everybody immediately associates it with Zen or vice versa. Actually, satori is a highly inexplicable thing and it would be safer not to bring it up at all. I say this because people usually speak of *satori* in contrast to *delusion*. In doing so, the discussion comes to be based on the distinction between satori and delusion set up in our ordinary minds. In other words, we are talking about nothing but the discriminations of our ordinary minds.

However, the true satori of Shakyamuni Buddha is not like this. It is said that Shakyamuni made the following statement upon attaining satori. "I attained the way simultaneously with the whole world and all sentient beings. Everything—mountains, rivers, trees, grasses—all attained Buddhahood."

For Shakyamuni, satori wasn't something peculiar only to himself. His was *the satori of life inclusive of himself and all things.* That is something that truly goes beyond the discrimination of our ordinary minds. Also, in the *Prajna Paramita Hridaya Sutra* (*Heart Sutra*) it says, "There is no birth or death, no purity or impurity, no increase or decrease." This means that satori is beyond birth and death, beyond impurity (delusion) and purity

(satori), beyond increase (gain) or decrease (loss). This satori means to be enlightened to the reality of life prior to the distinctions of self and other or delusion and satori.

If we wish to say that we have gained satori as a result of our practice, we should remember well that such satori belongs to the realm of the ego. It is nothing but a satori based on a distinction drawn between delusion and satori, between yourself and others. It is nothing but a discussion about the world created by the discrimination of our ordinary minds.

In the *Shōbōgenzō: Yuibutsu-Yobutsu* ("*Only Buddha Together with Buddha*"), Dōgen Zenji writes: "If satori arises from any preconception of satori, that satori will not be reliable. True satori is not moved by [concepts of] satori, but comes from far beyond [conceptualization]. Satori is grounded only in satori itself and can only help itself. Know that delusion doesn't exist. Know that satori doesn't exist."

Fred responded to my explanation like this: "Still, when we do zazen, there are times when no matter how much we try to stop chasing thoughts and put our energy into the zazen posture, thoughts just keep coming one after another, and we can't help but chase after them. However, at other times, we are able to do zazen with a completely clear mind without any thoughts coming up. Wouldn't you call this satori or *kenshō*?"

I replied, "Certainly when we do sesshins like the ones at Antaiji, we often have this experience. But if you call those times we can't help but chase thoughts *delusion*, and call clear-minded zazen *satori*, then delusion and satori are nothing more than conditions caused by changes in the temperature and humidity.

"At Antaiji sesshins, we have various kinds of weather throughout the year, and even during a single sesshin the weather may go through changes. If we continue these sesshins over a long period of time, we naturally come to understand

that there is a causal relationship between the temperature and humidity and our own psychological condition. For the most part, we begin to sense when certain conditions will arise. For example, when it is hot and muggy, no matter how much effort we try to put into sitting zazen, our heads simmer as though they are fermenting; there is nothing we can do about it. But when the air is dry and a cool evening breeze is blowing, our heads clear and it certainly feels as if we have become one with zazen. However, both of these are the conditions of our heads responding to the temperature and humidity. Since doing zazen means to sit and aim at being one with zazen, naturally this kind of zazen is very fine, although this doesn't mean that such zazen is good and that zazen which isn't like this is a failure.

"Regardless of conditions, what is essential in doing zazen is just to sit, aiming at zazen and waking up to zazen. In just sitting and waking up to zazen, the various conditions going on in our heads simply become the scenery of our zazen![6] Since you have already been doing zazen and sesshins here for over a year, I expect you understand this to a certain extent."

The two Americans left having had a good laugh at my explanation that satori and delusion are conditions of temperature and humidity.

Two or three days later, the September sesshin began. As the early part of September is hot, the sesshin is only three days long. As usual, the first two days were very muggy and we were doing zazen soaked in sweat. But on the morning of the third day, it cooled off refreshingly and began to feel like fall. We were able to do zazen in comfort and the sesshin ended. At the end of a sesshin everyone relaxes and we have tea together. At this time, Jeff and Fred took up the topic of the

6. "scenery of our zazen": The appearance of the world as seen, heard, felt, and so on, through our senses.

change in weather and both remarked that they had certainly experienced that satori and delusion are influenced by the temperature and humidity.

That September sesshin left quite an impression on me. Jeff and Fred completely understood what I had said because we had had our discussion just before the sesshin, and immediately after that there had been just the right weather changes to demonstrate and let them experience what I had explained.

The world in which we live is never something that exists independently of our thoughts and ideas. The world in which we live and these thoughts and ideas appear to us as a unified whole. Therefore, depending on our thoughts and ideas, our world may appear to us in completely different ways. These thoughts and feelings constitute our psychological condition. Moreover, our psychological condition is at the same time our physiological condition. When something breaks down inside of us physically, our minds no longer remain clear. And if our minds are not clear, then the eyes with which we see the world and our views of life become dark. Our lives and the whole world take on a gloomy appearance. On the other hand, when we feel sound physically our minds brighten, and consequently our outlook on everything becomes brighter.

Furthermore, our physiological conditions are tremendously influenced by the environment in which we live. The changes and conditions of climate and weather both affect us. This cause-and-effect relationship can be observed particularly clearly when you lead a lifestyle that is as unvaried and devoid of distractions as the sesshins at Antaiji.

The essential matter here, however, is the attitude of just striving to wake up regardless of the conditions, not arriving at some state whereupon all thoughts have disappeared. To calmly sit and view these cause-and-effect relationships without being carried away by them is *shikantaza.*

There are all sorts of waves or conditions in our lives: clear days, cloudy days, rainy ones, and stormy ones. These are all waves produced by the power of nature and are not things over which we have control. No matter how much we fight against these waves, there is no way we can make a cloudy day clear up. Cloudy days are cloudy; rainy days, rainy; clear days, clear. It is only natural that thoughts come and go and that psychological and physiological conditions fluctuate accordingly. All of this is the very reality and manifestation of life. Seeing all of this as the *scenery of life* without being pulled apart by it—this is the stability of human life, this is settling down in our life.

This is the same as the sesshins we do. As I mentioned earlier, we sit zazen aiming at the line *ZZ'*. Yet it's not a matter of being able to adhere to *ZZ'*, since we are always prone to moving away from it. So we move away and *wake up* to *ZZ'*, move away and wake up to it again. Zazen is the very posture of sitting, forever waking up to *ZZ'* over and over again. As long as we have this attitude, all the thoughts that occur to us when we move away from *ZZ'* become the scenery of zazen. Also, the times when we may be able to strictly maintain the line *ZZ'* as well become the scenery of zazen. It is not that the cessation of all thought is satori and good, and that the arising of thoughts and the tendency to chase after them is delusion and bad. Just sitting, transcending good or evil, satori or delusion, is the zazen that transcends the sage and the ordinary man.

In the *Rinzai Roku* ("*The Record of Linji*"), Rinzai Gigen (Linji Yixuan, died 867) says:

> The true practitioner of the Way completely transcends all things. Even if heaven and earth were to tumble down, I would have no misgivings. Even if all the buddhas in the ten directions were to appear before me, I

would not rejoice. Even if the three hells were to appear before me, I would have no fear. Why is this so? Because there is nothing to dislike.

For Rinzai, the appearance of all the buddhas in the past, present, and future was not something to rejoice over, nor was the appearance of the three hells something of which to be afraid. Of course, not being afraid of the appearance of some hell doesn't mean that for Rinzai hell had no existence. For him, hell was a kind of scenery that was different from the appearance of all the buddhas. The point we should pay attention to is that whether some hell, all the buddhas, or anything else appeared before him, Rinzai saw all of these as the scenery of his life. For us this is nothing but the scenery of our zazen.

At Antaiji, there are many monks practicing zazen, and I hope they will continue the monthly sesshins and daily zazen in the morning and evening for at least ten years. The rationale for this is that if they continue this life of zazen for ten years, monks who are in their twenties will have reached their thirties. It's a tremendous thing for a person to continue this kind of life of zazen with no other distractions around, especially since we all go through our greatest mental struggles in our twenties. There are no radios, televisions, or other entertainment facilities here. Yet if you lead this sort of life and sit zazen throughout your twenties, there is no doubt that you will come to have a commanding view of who you are. During these years, your deepest mental suffering will all come out. However, you will be able to work through these years only if you have the stability to see this suffering as the scenery of your life without being carried away by it. Working through these ten years, you will have developed a posture of living out the reality of your true Self that is not balanced against others.

When you live this way, not only zazen, but daily life itself

is such that you cannot find the value of your existence in other people and things. It is a life that is unbearable unless you discover the value of your existence within yourself.

What is essential is for us to live out the reality of our true Self, whether we are doing one period of zazen, a five-day sesshin, or practicing for ten years.

The True Self of the Zazen Practitioner

The Self Is the Universe

Our zazen is always *Self doing Self*—this is *jijuyū zanmai*, the reality of which I have been discussing.[1] But if zazen is only *Self doing Self* with no relationship to other people and things, isn't this just closing oneself up in a shell, ignoring society and other people? Isn't this just a sort of self-fascination or withdrawal from the world? If it isn't, and zazen is related to other people and society, just how is it related? I think it is only natural to be skeptical about this. This becomes the essential

1. Regarding "self" and "Self," from here on, I make a distinction between the Japanese expressions *jibun* (self) and *jiko* (Self). *Jibun* is "self" meaning living only for the sake of the individual or egocentric self, while *jiko* is "Self" living with the attitude that whatever we encounter in our lives is encountered within our Self. In the first chapters, self is always lowercased for simplicity and because the distinction between the small individual self and the universal Self had not been explicitly made. So we could have said: "the self which is only Self," and "Zazen is the Self doing Itself by Itself."

problem, especially for people who want to do zazen and are searching for a true way to live.

However, there is an even more basic question than the problem of self and others. A practitioner of zazen must re-ask the question regarding just what "Self" is.

Only after taking a fresh look at self, and at the self-other relationship, will we be able to encounter the fundamental teaching of Mahayana Buddhism. Also, the true meaning and attitude of doing zazen will thereby be determined. The rest of this book is concerned with the basic teaching of Mahayana Buddhism and also with zazen, which is the practice of that profound teaching. Since the background for our zazen must be the whole teaching of Buddhism, and since the background of Buddhism must be our very own lives, any discussion about our zazen must go at least that far.

Let us begin by discussing the problem of self and other. For "self," just what does "other" mean? Usually people think of "self" as something in opposition to "other," and vice versa. *I* becomes externally determined by relationships with *other*. That is, *I* means that self which is not other. Conversely, *other* is always seen and defined by *me* and is an other that is not myself.

Now, if *I* and *other* were diametrically opposed, while at the same time mutually interdependent, and we were to try to cut off this relationship with *other* and be *I which is only I*, this would certainly be a kind of withdrawal and escape from the world, or perhaps a kind of narcissism. It would be nothing but closing our eyes to our relationship with others and becoming self-satisfied.[2]

2. "self-satisfied": Self-satisfaction implies being "satisfied" or happy with one's position or situation, having no concern or regard for anyone else, despite the fact that one's satisfaction is dependent on someone else's

However, our zazen is not like this. That which considers this contrasting relationship of "self" and "other" is clearly our thought, but when we are doing zazen we let go of this very thought. And, in doing so, this form of "self" and "other" as a contrasting relationship is abandoned.

If we let go of this relationship in which "self" and "other" are diametrically opposed while at the same time mutually dependent, how can we talk about self any longer? Actually, during zazen we completely let go of this self-consciousness of an individual self defined by that which is outside of us, yet it is right there that we *wake up* to Self as the reality of life. Even though we aren't conscious of this self and attach no name to it, it is Self as raw living experience.

In other words, even if I say "self which is only self," that expression does not refer to a self that excludes others while still being connected to them—that is, it is not some sort of "I" as distinct from "other." "Self," here, is what wakes up to *Self which is only self* as the reality of life. Therefore, "Self" in this case is not some fixed concept regarding self; it is what we wake up to. Furthermore, the only thing we can wake up to as reality is the life of self, and this is always self which is only self.

However, this does not mean that the self-other relationship completely disappears out of existence. Rather, in terms of zazen, the self-other relationship differs completely from the usual self-other relationship. How does it differ and just what is a self-other relationship for people doing zazen?

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dissatisfaction. Victory in some competitive sport might be the most obvious example of how one's happiness (victory) is totally dependent on the other team's unhappiness (defeat). This psychology runs through all the layers of what we usually call society, right down to the happiness of netting another convert for one's team, such as one's religious sect.

The following story comes from the Edo period in Japan (1600–1868). Behind a temple there was a field where there were many squashes growing on the vine. One day a fight broke out among them, and the squashes split up into two groups and made a big racket shouting at one another.

The head priest heard the uproar and, going out to see what was going on, found the squashes quarreling. In his own booming voice the priest scolded them. "Hey, squashes! What are you doing out there fighting? Everyone do zazen."

The priest taught them how to do zazen. "Fold your legs like this, sit up, and straighten your back and neck." While the squashes were sitting zazen in the way the priest had taught them, their anger subsided and they settled down.

Then the priest quietly said, "Everyone put your hand on top of your head." When the squashes felt the top of their heads, they found some weird thing attached there. It turned out to be a vine that connected them all together. "This is really strange. Here we've been arguing when actually we're all tied together and living just one life.[3] What a mistake! It's just as the priest said." After that, the squashes all got along with each other quite well.

To be sure, it is a fact that ordinarily we live as a small, individual body that we call "I." We think that this small, individual body is our self, imagining that we are this or that; but Self, as the reality of life, is not simply this individual body. It has to be something more than that.

For example, the power that makes my heart beat, sends blood flowing through my whole body, and allows me to

3. "we're all tied together and living just one life": The use of "one" in the expression "one life" is used in an absolute, noncomparative sense. It doesn't mean one among many.

breathe so many times per minute is not something that I control or activate. The power that performs these functions works completely beyond my thoughts. Yet, because this power comes from beyond my thoughts, can we say this power is not me? As long as this power is working in me, it is surely the reality of my life. This applies not only to these physical functions; it holds equally true for the thoughts and ideas that arise in my head. At least, it certainly appears as though they are mine. But it must be said that the very power that allows them to arise is a transcendent power that goes far beyond them. However, even when saying that this power is a transcendent power beyond my thoughts, as long as it is actually functioning within me, it is surely the reality of the life of the Self. In other words, while the reality of the life of the Self exists beyond the thoughts of this individual, it is at the same time the power actually functioning in this small individual.

Just as it is with me, so it is with you, too. The self as an individual entity along with the contents of the various thoughts of this entity takes for granted that each entity or individual is a self. And, in terms of the thoughts of each individual, they are indeed distinct. But the power of life that enables us to think in various ways, and that functions inside each individual, goes beyond the thoughts of this small "I," and in this sense it is all-pervading. Just as in the story of the squashes, when they followed the vine attached to the top of their heads they realized that they were living out the reality of one life, we have to say that in this sense all existence, all living beings, are living out the power of one great all-pervading life.

During zazen we let go of our thoughts, and this enables us to wake up to the reality of life that pervades the whole

universe, which is undivided life.[4] Because we live within the thoughts of this small individual *I*, we are dragged about by them, and an *other* that is not *I* closes in on us. When we let go of these thoughts and wake up to the reality of life that is working beyond them, we discover the Self that is living universal nondual life (before the separation into two) that pervades all living creatures and all existence.

From ancient times, Zen teachers have expressed this in various ways: original self, the self that pervades the ten-direction world, the self that fills the whole earth, or universal Self.[5] In any event, whether we realize this or not, whether we practice it or not, we are all living the universal Self. As I quoted earlier, when Shakyamuni attained enlightenment he said, "I attained the Way simultaneously with the whole world and all sentient beings. Everything—mountains, rivers, trees, grass—attained buddhahood." I think these words clearly show that what Shakyamuni became enlightened to was this universal Self.

4. "zazen . . . enables us to wake up to the reality of life that pervades the whole universe": There is a linguistic problem here that needs some explanation. What we have translated as "zazen . . . enables us to wake up" can also be read "zazen . . . makes us wake up." However, "enables" seems closer to the spirit of Dōgen than "forces or makes." In Japanese, the form of the verb used to indicate command or force can also be used to indicate allow, permit, or enable. Consequently, whether we are *made* to wake up or *enabled* to wake up depends on the attitude of the sitter, since both the thoughts of "wanting to let go of thoughts" and "not wanting to let go" arise and cease of themselves.

The Japanese expression *jinissai butsuzuki no seimei* is a combination of Dōgen Zenji's *jinissai*, which implies all-pervading, and Uchiyama Roshi's *butsuzuki no seimei*, undivided life.

5. The Japanese expressions in this passage are *honrai no jiko*, "one's original self"; *jinjippōkai-jiko*, "the self that pervades the ten-direction world"; *jindaichi-jiko*, "the self that fills the whole earth"; and *jinissai-jiko*, "Universal Self."

I have just said that all of us, regardless of whether we realize it or not, or whether we wake up to it or not, are living out the Self as the whole universe. Since this is such a crucial point, I'll repeat it here. Usually we make the idea of the small individual self the center of our world and become firmly convinced that this small individual is our self, but this is not our true Self.

The reality of life goes beyond my idea of myself as a small individual. Fundamentally, our Self is living out nondual life that pervades all living things, everything that exists—universal existence.[6] On the other hand, we usually lose sight of and cloud over the reality of the life of universal Self with thoughts originating from our small individual selves. Consequently, by letting go of our thoughts, this reality of life becomes pure and clear. Living out this reality of life as it is—that is, waking up and practicing beyond thinking—is zazen. At this very point our basic attitude in practicing zazen becomes determined. The attitude of the practitioner in practicing zazen as a Mahayana Buddhist teaching never means to attempt to artificially create some new self by means of practice. Nor should it be aiming at decreasing delusion and finally eliminating it altogether. We practice zazen, neither aiming at having a special mystical experience nor trying to gain greater enlightenment. Zazen as true Mahayana teaching is always Self just truly being Self, life truly being life.

6. "our Self is living out nondual life that pervades all living things, everything that exists": In Japanese, "all living things" is *issai seimei*, while "everything that exists" is *issai sonzai*. These expressions are Uchiyama Roshi's translations of two old Japanese expressions *ikitoshi ikeru mono*—"all living things"—and *arito arayuru mono*—"all existing things."

We all have eyes, but if we close them and say that the world is all darkness, how can we say that we are living out the true reality of life? If we open our eyes the sun is shining brilliantly. In the same way, when we live with our eyes wide open and awakened to life, we discover that we are living in the vigorous light of life. All the ideas of our small self are clouds that make the light of the universal Self foggy and dull. Doing zazen, we let go of these ideas and open our eyes to the clarity of the vital life of universal Self.

In other words, when we believe that the truth of this small self as an individual entity is universal Self and actually practice the reality of life—do zazen—then we discover the attitude of zazen as true Buddhism. This zazen is referred to as the zazen of *shōjō no shu*, that is, the activity of the reality of life.[7] *Shō*, sometimes translated as "enlightenment," actually means "reality." And since we are living the reality of the life of universal Self, we practice or actualize the reality of this life. That is why it is referred to as *shōjō no shu*—the activity of the reality of life.

I said earlier that we "believe and sit," though I must now discuss the meaning of "believe" in its Buddhist sense. Ordinarily, we use the word "believe" to mean thinking what someone has said is true. In religion when an agent (a medium) of some god or God has spoken suggestively about an invisible realm (a metaphysical realm) and has said that there exists such

7. *Shōjō no shu* is sometimes translated as "practice beyond enlightenment," or as "practice based on enlightenment." Either translation implies that Dōgen Zenji is suggesting that we first have to gain enlightenment, and then we can practice. However, this is not what he meant. Practice based on or beyond enlightenment simply means practice that precedes any concept of either enlightenment or delusion. He also expresses this idea through the expression *shushō ichinyo*—"practice and enlightenment are one"—or *honshō myōshu*—"original enlightenment is true practice."

and such a god, or that man has a soul, people have assumed it to be true and have acted accordingly. This has been called belief or faith. However, in Buddhism the fundamental definition of "belief" is totally different. The definition given in the *Abhidharma-kosa* (in Japanese, *Kusha-ron*), which describes the Buddhist equivalent to Scholasticism, is that belief is clarity and purity. In other words, in Buddhism "belief" does not mean to believe in one's mind that every person has an individual soul or that God exists outside of the life of the Self.

Belief in Buddhism is not like that. While we are in fact living out life that pervades everything and goes beyond our individual thoughts, we easily lose sight of this reality of life and become confused and carried away by the ideas of our small, individual self, just like the squashes that got carried away and started fighting. In our zazen, we let go of thoughts, lower our level of excitement, and become clear and pure in the reality of truly Universal Life. This is the basic meaning of belief. Therefore, the very act of doing zazen is an expression of our belief!

Ordinarily we assume that our self is only this small, individual self and remain unable to imagine that our Self is the very life that pervades all things. We have actually lost sight of reality so much that when we hear about universal Self, despite the fact that this refers to us, we refuse to recognize it and assume that universal life refers to someone else. However, when we hear that Self is not some other person, that the truth of the Self is that we ourselves are living out the life that pervades all things, we may recognize that it is so. When we no longer doubt this, the second meaning of "belief"—"no doubt"—comes out. This is not simply a matter of hearing what somebody says and not doubting it. This has nothing to do with our own ideas and is regardless of whether we think so or not, or whether we believe or doubt. The meaning of

"belief" in Buddhism is just to not doubt that we are living out the reality of indivisible life.

The *Maha-prajna-paramita-shastra* says, "We enter the great ocean of buddha-dharma through faith." The same can be said for our zazen. When zazen is basically to sit with faith in "the Self which is the universe," it is zazen that is true Buddhism. When the meaning of zazen is clarified, that is, zazen as the practice of *shōjō no shu*—activity of the reality of life—the attitude of doing zazen in accord with Buddhism is definite.

Up to now, I have been discussing Buddhism using the expression "universal Self." The original expression of Dōgen Zenji, *jinissai jiko*—"all-encompassing self"—can be found in the *Shōbōgenzō: Yuibutsu Yobutsu* ("*Only Buddha Together with Buddha*"). But of course, we are not limited to this phrase. In Buddhist sutras and commentaries, a vast number of words have been used to express this universal Self.[8] If you run across any

8. [Uchiyama Roshi's note] The following is a list of just a few of the more commonplace expressions that have been used: *shinnyo* (in Sanskrit, *tathata*; in English, "suchness"); *hosshō* (in Sanskrit, *dharmata*; in English, "dharma-nature"); *hosshin* (in Sanskrit, *dharmakaya*; in English, "dharma body"); *hokkai* (in Sanskrit, *dharmadhatu*; in English, "dharma world"); *busshō* (in Sanskrit, *buddhata*; in English, "buddha-nature"); *nyoraizō* (in Sanskrit, *tathagata-garbha*; in English, "embryo tathagata"); *shin* (in Sanskrit, *hridaya*; in English, "Mind"); *yuishin* (in Sanskrit, *citta-matra*; in English, "Mind Only"); *isshin* (in Sanskrit, *svacitta-matra*; in English, "One Mind"); *funi* (in Sanskrit, *advaita*; in English, "nonduality"); *ichijō* (in Sanskrit, *ekayana*; in English, "One Vehicle"); *jissō* (in Sanskrit, *tathata*; in English, "all things are as they are"); *myō* (in Sanskrit, *sunyata*; in English, "emptiness"); *hikkyōku* (in Sanskrit, *atyanta-sunyata*; in English, "ultimately empty"); *nyonyo* (in Sanskrit, *tathata*; in English, "suchness"); *nyozehō* (in Sanskrit, *yatha-dharma*; in English, "in accordance with the law"); *nehan* (in Sanskrit, *nirvana*; in English, "nirvana"); *hiu himu* (in Sanskrit, *na bhavo napi cabhavah*; in English, "not-existing, not-not-existing"); *chudō* (in Sanskrit, *madhyana-pratipad*; in English, "Middle Way"); *daiichi gitai* (in Sanskrit, *paramartha*; in English, "Absolute Truth").

of these expressions while reading Buddhist texts, you should realize that they are all different names for the reality of life that we actually wake up to in zazen. You should realize that sutras are directly connected to your zazen and that they are meant to guide and teach you about the zazen you do. At any rate, throughout the history of Buddhism a great number of terms have been used to express the teaching in a variety of ways, eventually giving rise to the various traditions existing today. However, all of these expressions try to clarify that the true Self lives out a life connected to all things, and so there is nothing else to do but to actualize and practice this all-connected life here and now.

One of the teachings within Buddhism is the Pure Land school. According to this teaching, in a world of the immeasurable past there was a man called Dharmakara-biksu, who made a great vow and practiced under Lokesvararaja. He vowed that on the dawn of completing his practice and attaining buddhahood, he would create a wonderful pure buddha land. Furthermore, if there were any sentient beings who wished from the bottom of their hearts to enter this pure land, he would save them all without exception and take them there. Dharmakara-biksu actually did complete his practice and became Amitabha Buddha. He then created the magnificent pure-land paradise just as he had vowed. Therefore, anyone who is totally disillusioned by this corrupt world, believes in this vow of Amitabha Buddha, earnestly desires to be born in the pure land, and chants his name, will at that very moment be saved and reborn in the Pure Land simply by the virtue of that deep faith.

This teaching of the Pure Land school looks completely different from the Zen school whereby one realizes satori within one's own zazen practice. In fact, it seems to resemble a teaching of salvation similar to Christianity. However, even

Amitabha Buddha of the Pure Land school is just another name for universal Self, here given the name of a buddha. Of course, Amitabha, also known as Amitayus, isn't the name of a person who actually existed historically. In Sanskrit, *amitabha* and *amitayus* mean "infinite light" and "immeasurable life." In other words, that life which connects all things.

If we analyze this Pure Land teaching, it looks something like this: Usually we get completely lost in the thoughts of our small, individualistic selves, but in terms of fundamental life—life that pervades everything—we are already saved by the vow of Amitabha Buddha. Believing in this vow and becoming clear and pure in Amitabha Buddha, we chant the *nembutsu*, "*Namu amida butsu*—I put my faith in Amitabha Buddha." This attitude is exactly the same as our attitude in doing zazen.[9]

It should be clear now that in Buddhism, whether we do zazen or chant the *nembutsu*, our attitude toward these practices demonstrates the same attitude toward life. That is, Buddhism teaches us about this incomparable or absolute attitude toward life.

In other words, this small *I* is embraced by the immeasurable and boundless Amitabha Buddha. This has nothing to do

9. [Uchiyama Roshi's note] In the *Daijōkishinron-giki* ("*Commentary on the Awakening of Mahayana Faith*") the Buddha's vow is described as follows: "The true mind of the sentient being turns around and awakens the sentient being himself. . . . In other words, this true mind itself is the Buddha's vow of compassion." Since we are already living out life connected to all things, we are awakened and led by that life. Buddhism expresses this fact by saying that the Buddha saves sentient beings by means of vows. Therefore, you should understand that even if I talk about the vow of Amitabha, I am not talking about some other person or thing called Amitabha. Amitabha is not outside of the Self.

with and is beyond my small limited thoughts of whether I may think it is so or not, or whether I believe it or not. I am, in fact, embraced and saved by the immeasurable and boundless Amitabha. Being thankful for this, I chant *Namu amida butsu.* When we say this with our mouths, it is expressing our deep sense of gratitude. When we perform it with our whole body, it is the zazen of believing and sitting, or zazen as the activity of the reality of life. In other words, when people of the Pure Land school chant *Namu amida butsu,* they are doing zazen with their mouths, and when we do zazen, we are performing *Namu amida butsu* with our whole body.

In this sense, our zazen must always be one of just sitting, believing that life actualizes life through life, that buddha actualizes buddha through buddha, that Self actualizes Self through Self.[10] We don't gradually become enlightened and eventually attain buddhahood by means of zazen. This small individual *I* we talk of will always be deluded, but regardless of that, zazen is buddha. Therefore, we take the Buddha's posture with the body of this deluded being and throw ourselves

10. "life actualizes life through life . . . buddha actualizes buddha through buddha . . . Self actualizes Self through Self": In Japanese, the expressions *Self, life,* and *buddha* form the subject, the verb, and the object of the sentence. The point of these unusual expressions is to cut through the idea of doing zazen for any other reason than for its own sake. They are expressions reflecting the same point as *jijuyū zanmai,* that there is nothing outside of Self. The subject, the action, and the object of our lives is our Self. This expression is difficult to understand not because of translation difficulties in rendering the original Japanese into English, but due to the difficulty of expressing the buddha-dharma in words.

into it. In the *Shōdōka*, it is expressed like this: "With one leap we immediately enter buddhahood."[11]

11. Dōgen Zenji went to China in 1223 and, after visiting various teachers, finally practiced under Rujing. The records of the teaching he received from Rujing are called the *Hōkyōki*. The following is from the *Hōkyōki*.

> Rujing addressed the monks, "Sanzen is dropping off body and mind. Without employing the burning of incense, services, rituals, or the chanting of sutras and the special practices of *nembutsu*, or repentance, just do *shikantaza* (zazen)."
>
> Dōgen asked, "What is dropping off body and mind?"
>
> Rujing replied, "Dropping off body and mind is zazen!"

In other words, to give yourself up unconditionally to zazen—to surrender to zazen—is dropping off body and mind. Dropping off body and mind is to really sit zazen. So it's not a matter of gradually dropping off our body and mind by means of zazen. Zazen itself is the reality of dropping off body and mind. Sitting, practicing, and putting our faith in zazen is dropping off body and mind. In other words, *satori* means to realize that practice is satori; satori is not something we gain gradually as the result of practice. This certainly becomes clear in the quotation just given. This attitude is called *shōjō no shu*, "the activity of the reality of life," or *shushō ichinyo*, "the identity of activity and the reality of life."

Part Three

THE LIFE OF THE TRUE SELF

The Structure of Life

Aimless Modernity

A comical fellow named Hachiko had just begun to learn to ride a horse. The horse, however, was instinctively aware of the rider's poor skill. When they passed by a grocery shop on a busy street, the horse came to a halt and began helping himself to some vegetables, showing no sign of moving on. The angry shopkeeper goaded the animal on its rump with a stick. The horse reared and took off in a gallop down the street. Hachiko held on to the mane of the horse and tried not to be thrown. A friend of Hachiko's happened to be walking down the same street. At the sight of Hachiko's frantic efforts he yelled, "Hey, Hachiko! Where are you going?"

"I dunno," came the reply, "ask the horse!"

This is a silly anecdote, but I have repeated it here to show the similarity between ourselves and Hachiko.

"Hey, human race! Efficiency! Efficiency! Where on earth are we going?"

"I dunno," comes the reply. "Ask the machinery."

"Hey, modern people! You take pleasure in your civilization, but where are your lives headed?"

"I don't know. Ask the civilization."

"Hey, mankind! Why are you making H-bombs and guided missiles?"

"I don't know. But somehow we seem to have fallen into this plan of human annihilation."

Our situation in the world today is exactly like poor uneducated Hachiko's frantically embracing that galloping horse. While grabbing scientific and technological progress, we lack the power to control it. Consequently, the direction in which to proceed is unclear. Though we run around crying "Efficiency! Efficiency!" and make every effort to be more efficient, living in our splendid, modern civilization, where are we to settle?

In the past we found direction, and sometimes peace, by worshiping some god or gods. Since we cannot see God with our eyes or touch him with our hands, our only knowledge of him is what is proclaimed about him. This proclamation is referred to as divine revelation, and in my opinion it is a myth. Finding direction by worshiping some god is to be led about by myth. Most of the ancient wars were promoted by oracles and revelations from their respective gods; they were wars of one myth against another.

In ancient times, men may have offered human sacrifices to obtain divine help if they were attempting to build a large dam. In those societies it might not have been considered either cruel or unlawful. Nor would the religion that endorsed such a ritual have been thought of as a particularly evil one. But in modern society, what if a human sacrifice were offered at the opening of a dam construction project? Obviously, it would be considered both cruel and inhuman. Moreover, it would be a criminal offense. The religion demanding such a sacrifice would be thought of as an unsocial and immoral superstition rather

than a religion, since the requirements for building a dam are sufficient funds and labor, along with the application of appropriate technology, not human sacrifice. For the same reason, religions that claim to cure disease or to grant favors through rituals and prayers or sorcery are now justifiably considered to be useless paganisms. For this we should be grateful to the progress of science in its pursuit of a better life.

The scientific concept of the world has replaced the old mythical ones and the old teachings are no longer accepted as naively as before; science has helped us overcome certain anxieties about understanding and living in the world, which used to be a main focus of religion. Consequently, the ground for belief in a god's existence has become very weak, and most so-called religious truths have come to be treated as pagan superstitions. There is no longer a place for the "soothing" religions that hope to solve problems by mysterious, magical powers, when these same matters are gradually being resolved by natural science. Therefore, if the continued existence of religion is to be justified, then that religion will have to concern itself with overcoming those anxieties that are unassailable by scientific advances and with helping us find a new basis for a sense of direction in our lives. What it will have to do is to deal with the pursuit of peace in the purest sense.

So often we take our so-called civilization for granted; and though one of us barehanded could not fashion a single board or post from a tree nor move a single boulder nor mold a steel girder, still we live and work in fine houses and beautiful buildings. Moreover, most of us know nothing of how to spin a single thread of yarn, are unable to weave even one bolt of cloth, yet we wear the finest clothes and follow the fashions of the times. Most of us couldn't imagine harvesting a single grain of rice or wheat, yet we have never suffered from starvation. On top of all this, we surround ourselves with electrical appli-

ances and other such modern conveniences and live in great comfort. If we compare our situation to that of ancient Egyptian civilization, our lives would be comparable in luxury to that of a person served by dozens of slaves. We are kings, who through television are entertained by the best performers in the country and, by modern transportation, are carried to our destinations at speeds the Egyptian pharaohs couldn't imagine no matter how strong their palanquin bearers were.

Now that we have such a life, would you say we are living with no wants or discontentments, with complete peace of mind? Unfortunately not. On the contrary, most people today feel dissatisfied with their present way of life and, because of that, run around trying to make more money, or enjoy an even higher standard of living, or go on strike for better wages. On a larger scale, countries are ever ready to wage war against one another for their national interests. In the future, when through even greater technological advances people will have no material wants, do you think the discontent that causes national strife and international wars will also cease? If you do, you are being far too optimistic. The higher the standard of living a people achieve, the higher the level they want to achieve. The more power a nation is able to gain, the more it tries to acquire. This spiral perpetuates itself because the knowledge to develop our standard of living, which is the wisdom of our modern scientific and technological civilization, was born in a matrix of dissatisfaction: Dissatisfaction is the mother of invention and progress. That is why no matter how much scientific or technological progress is made, people will never be satisfied. As long as they walk along this path shouldering the bag of desires and dissatisfaction, even several hundreds or thousands of years from now, every time they open that bag, they will always be pulling out their dissatisfaction.

That we make continuous scientific progress resulting in greater human comfort is fine, and that we possess the dissatisfaction that serves as the force for developing and progressing is also certainly a wonderful thing. The problem is that dissatisfaction with the present easily leads to impatience for our desires to be fulfilled, and that engenders a behavior of daggers drawn toward any and all competitors, resulting in the total loss of any peace in our lives.

In other words, no matter how far science progresses, it is not going to be the answer to our lack of peace of mind. No matter how much technological advancement is made, progress can never bring about spiritual peace, because it lacks a base for that peace. And life devoid of peace can never be fulfilled by the advances of a higher standard of living. For example, even though in our old age we may be assured of living in a home that is like a hotel or be able to go into a hospital equipped with all the most advanced medical facilities, this alone will hardly be enough to enable us to spend our days in peace.

The "soothing" religions have lost their place due to the advances of modern civilization, and we can be grateful for that, but this civilization is a crazy one, galloping onward like a wild horse, having lost all peace of mind. It is becoming increasingly urgent to establish a true, genuine religion alongside this civilization based on science and technology that will enable us to regain spiritual peace. We must pursue in a practical and serious way a religion incorporating peace in the truest sense—a peace that cannot be achieved by the development of scientific technology but is not incompatible with it.

Goethe writes in *Faust* to the effect that as long as he marches on, man is torn between choices. Is that to be the fate of humanity? Or is it possible for us to discover a path whereby

we may progress while being at peace, or, being at total peace, a path whereby we may make progress?

Self Settling on Itself

Dissatisfied with the ability of technology to fulfill their lives, Westerners have come to show a deep concern for the East, straining to look into its essence and exploring Buddhism, which reveals a remarkable and unique characteristic among religions: Buddhism does not raise the question of god. Consequently, for a time Christian-influenced scholars even denied it was a religion. However, it is nonsense to decide whether or not a teaching is a religion by the presence or absence of the concept of god. If we decide that something qualifies as a religion only on that basis, then religion must have disappeared when the mythological worldview came to be replaced by the worldview of natural science. The presence or absence of a god concept is not fundamental, since religion must be that which teaches humanity what is most important in life and offers genuine spiritual peace. In this most fundamental sense, Buddhism is pure religion.

As I have just stated, Buddhism is a religion that does not raise the question of god, so what, then, is the basis for peace of mind? Here is where the fundamental posture of Buddhism lies. In contrast to a posture of bowing down before the God of Christianity or some god of another religion, the fundamental posture of Buddhism is the self settling on the true, immovable self. Usually we are dragged around by our unstable thoughts, but the fundamental posture in Buddhism is to settle upon our undeniable, our true, immovable self without being dragged about by such thoughts. This attitude has remained unchanged from that of the founder of Buddhism, Shakyamuni Buddha.

In the *Suttanipata,* which is said to be the oldest Buddhist scripture, the Buddha says, "Live in the world relying on the Self alone as a foundation, be freed from all things, depending on no thing." In the *Dhammapada* he says, "The foundation of Self is only Self." And, in the *Nibbana-suttanta,* "Take refuge in Self, take refuge in dharma [truth], take refuge in nothing else." These passages from the earliest scriptures reflect the basic attitude of the founder himself.

However, with even the slightest misunderstanding of this attitude there is a danger of a very foolish civilization being created. One mistake, and today's scientific civilization becomes one of madness. If you take one distinctive feature of human nature and develop it without seeing the truth of human life, the result is likely to be either insane or foolish!

Just as modern civilization insanely exerts itself, ignoring the truth of human life, so immediately after the Buddha's death practitioners with a *hinayana* attitude developed a mistaken trend. They misinterpreted the spirit of the Buddha's words "self settling on itself, seeking nothing else" to mean that one should become fixed on death. They thought that by extinguishing outwardly directed desires they could arrive at a quiet nirvana. Consequently, their samadhi of self settling on itself came to mean an escape, a seclusion, a life devoid of activity other than that of waiting for death. It goes without saying that therein the truth of human life was lost.

The misconception that Buddhism is isolationist and pessimistic can no doubt be attributed to this misinterpretation. To be sure, it must be admitted that if one is not careful, the samadhi of self settling on itself can have a retrogressive trend or tendency to indulge in escapism. This point must always be borne in mind as we uncover Buddhist samadhi, or zazen, buried in the East.

In contrast to isolationism or escapism, practitioners with a

broader, more Mahayanist attitude developed a living samadhi. "Samadhi" means Self settling on true and immovable Self, but "immovable" should not be interpreted to mean functionless or fixed in an inactive state. Since Self is life and life is activity, life completely unhindered by anything manifests as pure activity. This is immovable, unshakable life.

Within the manifestation of pure life, the Mahayanists found where Self should settle, and this led to the development of Mahayana Buddhism. In brief, Self settling on Itself does not mean to be dragged around by desirous thoughts; nor, on the other hand, does it mean to become lifeless, with vital life function wasting away. Life must function as activity that manifests life as life. And through this kind of activity an immeasurable and alive world will open before us.

In order that our discussion not remain abstract, let us return again to thinking of the concrete everyday world. For instance, let us pose the question of why we work. We could reply that we work in order to eat, or to better our standard of living, or to become famous. However, all of these responses originate out of our own carnal thoughts and desires and not from the life force itself.

The lily blooming in the field—why does it bloom? It doesn't bloom for any particular purpose; it blooms solely because it has been given life. "Consider the lilies of the field, how they grow; they toil not, neither do they spin. And yet I say unto you, that even Solomon in all his glory was not arrayed like one of these" (Matthew 7:28–29). Here the glory of life simply appears. In the same way, the violet blooms as a violet, and the rose expresses its life as a rose. The flowers blooming in the field do not feel with pride that they would win first prize in a beauty contest; they do not feel that they are in competition with other flowers. The violet does not develop an inferiority complex, thinking, "The roses are big and beau-

tiful, but a little violet like myself is useless." It doesn't say with greed and impatience, "I've got to become more efficient." It simply manifests its own life force with all its might.

Of course, if a violet plant cannot produce even a small violet, it is unable to make seeds and continue its line. Nevertheless, when it does bloom, it does so for no purpose. Just bringing forth flowers is its life. There is a passage in the *Lotus Sutra* that reads, "All things are the truth in themselves." In Zen, a similar expression is, "A willow is green, a flower is red." In short, Buddhism as a religious teaching is one simply of manifesting the world of life in which a violet blooms as a violet and a rose as a rose.

In the *Amida-kyō* (*Amitayus Sutra*) of the Pure Land teachings, paradise is described in this way: "Blue things are blue, red things are red . . . this is the Pure Land [paradise]." This point demands our close attention. Without thinking, we imagine how wonderful it would be if blue things could become red, that poor people would be happy if only they could become rich.

Obviously, I don't in any way mean to imply that it is bad for poor people to become rich. But happiness does not invariably come with wealth, nor unhappiness with poverty. If you fix it in your mind that the materially rich are happy and poor people are unhappy, then when you are poor, you will surely be unhappy. It's a mistake to hold on to such a conception. For those who think this way, no matter now much money they have, the time will come when it will be useless. At death, such people will fall into the depths of misery.

We can't find a line above which a person is rich, while below it anyone is poor. Since rich and poor are nothing but comparisons, when we let go of the comparison we will always be able to settle just as our self.

Even though some people may call me poor or rich, they

are simply comparing me with someone else, trying to put a label on me, so it has nothing to do with the reality of who I am. Returning to the reality of my life just as myself—just manifesting this life—is the meaning of the saying that blue things are blue and red things are red. This is the pure land.

In other words, without being tossed about by personal feelings and ideas, just returning to the life of my true Self, without envying or being arrogant toward those around me, neither being self-deprecating nor competing with others, yet on the other hand not falling into the trap of laziness, negligence, or carelessness—just manifesting that life of my Self with all the vigor I have—here is where the glory of life comes forth and where the light of buddha shines.[1] Religious light shines where we manifest our own life. In Buddhism, the world that unfolds as Self settling on Self is not a world where the strong devour the weak or where people struggle for mere survival, nor is it a world of escapism or seclusion where one has forgotten to bring forth the flower of one's life. It is a world that opens the flower of Self alone; it is a world that opens the present alone. Buddhist samadhi—that is, zazen—is the foundation for the manifestation of this life. In the succeeding pages, I will try to explain the structure of the manifestation of this life and also how zazen becomes the center and motive for that manifestation.

1. In Dōgen Zenji's *Shōbōgenzō: Kōmyō* is the following passage: "The light of the buddha-patriarchs is the whole-ten-direction-universe, all the buddhas, all the patriarchs, buddha and buddha; it is the light of buddha, the light *is* buddha. The buddha-patriarchs lighten the buddha-patriarchs. The buddha-patriarchs practice and realize this light; they become buddha, sit buddha, and actualize buddha."

Interdependence and the Middle Way

If we are going to look more deeply into the Buddhist notion of life, we shall have to take up the teaching of interdependence and the Middle Way. When I speak of the Self settling on Itself as I have earlier, I necessarily have to question what this Self is; for what is called "self" in Buddhism is quite distinct from that which we ordinarily speak of as "I." It is not just in regard to the term "self," but also in regard to the world we see that the Buddhist way of looking at things is totally different from the common-sense way of thinking. The Buddhist teachings explain self as life, and the living world in which self lives, as interdependence or the Middle Way.[2] Therefore, in order that readers may correctly digest the zazen of self settling on itself as Buddhism, I have to talk about interdependence and the Middle Way, though it may seem somewhat indirect.

The early scriptures known as the *Agamas*, or the *Nikayas*, refer directly to these teachings: "Truly seeing the aggregation of the world, the view of nonexistence does not arise. Truly seeing the annihilation of the world, the view of existence does not arise. The view that all things exist is one extreme; the view that nothing exists is the other extreme. Being apart from these two extremes, the Tathagata teaches the dharma of the Middle Way: because this exists, that exists, because this arises, that arises."[3]

The entire teaching of interdependence and the Middle Way is explained in this one quotation from ancient scripture.

2. "Self as life" is the subject, while "the living world in which self lives" is the so-called objective world.

3. This passage appears in the *Samyutta Nikaya*. It is translated here from the Japanese edition of the *Tripitaka*, which is the complete traditional Buddhist canon. (*Taishō Shinshū Daizō-kyō, Zoagon-kyō*, pp. 301, 262.)

Moreover, what is expressed here is the very essence of the spirit that developed as Mahayana Buddhism. Although the language of this passage is too simple to be easily understood, we can try to get a sense of it in terms of our everyday life.

The scripture says of interdependence: "Because this exists, that exists, because this arises, that arises." But what does this mean? It means that all concrete entities occur in accordance with various conditions, that they always happen based on conditions and never apart from or separate from such factors, and that all abstract entities have meaning because of their mutual relations. Accordingly, what is being said here is that there are no independent substantial entities—that is, no things existing by themselves.

Let me take myself as an example. Usually we think of our "self" as an individual independent substance, as an enduring existence. But if we think about it carefully, this is by no means the case. I have an album of photographs taken of me every few years from infancy to the present.

When I look at it these days I'm filled with an utterly strange feeling. It so clearly shows the changes I have gone through while gradually advancing in age. How my face and figure have changed with the years! I can only wonder at the marvel of creation. Within this constant change, what endures? The birthmark under my eye, the peculiar slope of my head—only these meaningless facts remain. And if it is true that I am only what endures through time, then this birthmark and this oddly shaped head are what I truly am. Consequently, I cannot help but wonder whether these pictures are all of the same *I* or not.

Not only the appearance of the body, but the inside as well, is gradually being regenerated and transformed; so what does not appear in photographs is also undergoing change.

Moreover, the content of my thoughts, which I refer to as

I, has also been radically changing, from infancy to childhood, adolescence, maturity, and now in old age. Not just that, even this present *I* is an unceasing stream of consciousness. Yet, taken momentarily at a given time, we grasp the stream of consciousness as *I*.

In this respect, we are as selves quite like the flame of a candle. As wax melts near a lit wick and burns, it emits light near the tip of the candle. For the most part, this place from which light is emitted remains the same and appears as a fixed shape; it is this seemingly unchanging shape that we refer to as flame. That which is called *I* is similar to the flame. Although both body and mind are an unceasing flow, since they preserve what seems to be a constant form, we refer to them as *I*. Therefore, actually there is no *I* existing as some substantial thing; there is only the ceaseless flow. This is true not only of this sentient being *I*; it is true of all things. In Buddhism, this truth is expressed as *shōgyō mujō*, the First Undeniable Reality, that all things are flowing and changing, and *shohō muga*, the Third Undeniable Reality, that all things are insubstantial.

Impermanence is ungraspable, but this never implies nonexistence. We live within the flow of impermanence, maintaining a temporary form similar to an eddy in the flow of a river. Though the water is always flowing, the eddy, like the flame of the candle, arises out of various conditions as a form that seems to be fixed. That there is this seemingly fixed form based on various conditions is interdependence. In the case of the flame, it is the interdependence of such things as the wax, the temperature, and the air; in the case of the eddy, it is the volume and speed of the current, the topography, and so forth, that form the conditions of its existence.

Not only such things as eddies and flames, but indeed everything in the universe can be considered in a similar way. For example, we who live in the age of natural science can

easily appreciate that no matter how solid a thing may appear, it is not really different from the flame or the eddy—its apparent solidity is merely a question of degree.

Now, let us return to the problem of *self.* Of course, I, too, am an interdependent existence that is impermanent and at the same time takes a particular form. Buddhism teaches that our attachment to our self as though it were a substantial being is the source of our greed, anger, suffering, and strife. It is crucial that we reflect thoroughly on the fact that our self does not have a substantial existence, but merely an interdependent one.

What is it that we think of as our *self*? Physically, this self originates in the union of sperm and egg and is brought to its present form through the combination of such factors as temperature, moisture, nutrition, and the like. And what is it that makes up our mental life or personality? Here again, I have not chosen this self, but have simply received life in my mother's womb unconsciously (in Buddhism, this is called *mumyō*, or ignorance). I received the foundation of my personality plus certain hereditary elements from my parents, and the circumstances of my birth also determined the age I was born in, my nationality, and my family environment. Without realizing it, I was educated according to my particular society and internalized my experiences within the context of this environment. In this way, through the combination of an accidental set of factors, the views I now hold have been formed.

So our *self* is a random collection of elements and circumstances and not some sort of lump, as it is usually understood. This self may become deluded, but as it is not a fixed entity, this delusion also breaks apart. The true reality of life is expressed in the Buddha's twelve-fold chain of interdependence, insight into which is said to have been the source of his enlightenment.

For the time being, let us put aside the important problem

of delusion, the view of myself as an independent substantial entity, and concentrate further on this question of self, that is, this interdependent being. While the self as an interdependent being remains merely a collection, insofar as it possesses some form as a random collection of elements it is not nonexistent. This is the point of the scriptural passage from the *Samyutta Nikaya* quoted earlier: "Truly seeing the aggregation of the world, the view of nonexistence does not arise."

But, if this present *self* is not nonexistent, can we say that it is a constant entity? No; rather, it is continually breaking apart and changing moment by moment into a new form. This is the meaning of "Truly seeing the annihilation of the world, the view of existence does not arise."

Consequently, the Buddha said: "Being apart from these two extremes [the views based on existence or nonexistence], the Tathagata—the Enlightened One—teaches the dharma of the Middle Way." This means that our very own life cannot be grasped as a lump (existence), nor as nonexistence. In other words, without being caught up in our thoughts, the Middle Way is nothing other than seeing interdependence as it is, moment by moment, seeing our life as it is.

Therefore, the middle way in Buddhism does not mean taking some in-between position that has been conjured up in our heads, nor acting in a compromising way. Rather, despite the fact that we latch on to our ideas of being or nonbeing, taking the Middle Way means to demolish all concepts set up in our minds and, without fixing on reality as any particular thing, to open the hand of thought, allowing life to be life.

Delusion and Zazen

The zazen taught in Buddhism is the actualization of the Middle Way that lives at the very quick of life; it is life as life—

that is, as *interdependence.* In short, zazen enables life to be life by letting it be.

One might well ask: Whether we exert ourselves or not, aren't we always living life as it is? Isn't it nonsense to speak of living apart from life? This is indeed so, and is the basis of the Buddhist "all beings have buddha nature"—that is, *actualizing life* is our nature.

Nevertheless, it is also true that we aren't always living fully, aren't always actualizing our life. This is because unlike the flowers in the fields, human beings bear the burden of thought. Thought has a dual nature: Thought springs from life, and yet it has the ability to think of things totally ungrounded and detached from the fact of life. This is delusion and it leads to some strange consequences.

"I've got to whip *A* in the upcoming election" (despite the fact that the speaker is presently alone in his room and not in the midst of competing with *A* at all). "I'm going to get my hands on that mine and make myself a fortune" (though the immediate fact here is that the speaker is not holding the mine, nor is there any price tag hanging from any piece of the ore).

As I quoted earlier from the *Nikayas*, "Truly seeing the aggregation of the world, the view of nonexistence does not arise. Truly seeing the annihilation of the world, the view of existence does not arise." Being detached by our thoughts from reality, we fabricate seemingly substantial and accumulable entities such as money, position, or power in the midst of this insubstantial world, which is the view of existence. In order to possess these things, we become greedy and deceitful, hating and injuring each other, or else we hold on to feelings of inferiority that develop into neuroses in the course of our struggling.

Even though this world of interdependence is not substantial, provisionally it has a certain order. Yet we ignore that

order—the view of nonexistence—and pursue selfish desires, throwing all our energy into killing one another and destroying the things around us, living for the moment, and in the end short-circuiting our lives.

In other words, it is our thought, whether it is through the view of existence or of nonexistence, that becomes the basis for distorting our lives and preventing life from manifesting in a straightforward way as it truly is. In Buddhism, thought as the foundation of these views of existence and nonexistence is referred to as ego-attachment. Ego-attachment is our clinging to "substance" we call *I*, which in our ignorance we have falsely constructed in the constantly shifting world of interdependence.

In other words, egocentricity lies at the basis of whatever we see or do, tagging along with us. Being dragged around by egocentric thought, our life cannot manifest directly and winds up becoming distorted and disabled. This being dragged about by egocentric thought is nothing other than the "original sin" committed by humankind in its beginning. Adam and Eve truly put us in a mess.

I saw a fascinating cartoon in the newspaper recently. Adam was trying with all his might to vomit up something he had eaten. Eve was standing beside him with a worried expression, saying, "Adam, hasn't that apple you ate come out yet?" It was a rare kind of cartoon. We live in an age with lots of problems, yet in addition there is the basic problem depicted in the cartoon. If humanity could only once and for all vomit up that apple, as depicted in the cartoon!

In Buddhism, true zazen is, in a sense, the posture of *vomiting up that apple.* But when did we eat that apple? It was by no means in some remote mythical past. As I discussed earlier, we are merely interdependent existences, a collection of such accidental factors as heredity, the overall current of the times,

and the social context in which we find ourselves. Without any good reason, moved by ignorance, we pompously stick a label onto this aggregation, calling it "I." We firmly believe that this is our self, and we cling to ego as though it simply existed in the natural order of things. Actually, outside of the power of ignorance, which causes attachment to the ego-self in each moment, where is that apple we ate? That apple is precisely what we are eating again and again in our attachment to ourselves.

Yet to vomit up this apple is by no means an easy matter. Even if we understand that there is no reason to stick the label of "self" onto an aggregation of various coincidental factors and to get attached to this label, and, moreover, understand that this attachment to ego is the source of various evils, delusions, and sufferings, and therefore ought to be vomited up —even if we understand all this, we still cannot vomit up the apple. For our ego-attachment does not occur merely on the surface of consciousness; we are eating that apple prior to our conscious awareness—that is, in the depths of our subconscious. Indeed, it may well be that in our very desire to throw up the apple, the poison of the apple is at work. In this matter, human intellect serves no purpose at all, for it is precisely *using our head* that is being called into question.

The practice of zazen, discovered and perfected in the East, is a unique cultural development for dismantling this lump of ignorant ego-attachment. Zazen is the posture that throws away this "self" composed of ignorance and no longer entertains the thoughts of ego-attachment that push up from within. As for the actual posture of zazen, it is just the opposite of Rodin's *The Thinker*, whose back, waist, legs, arms, and even fingers and toes are all bent. Calling such a form *The Thinker* sounds nice, but actually it is a posture given over to fabrication, to peering into an internal hell. The zazen posture is the opposite of *The Thinker*'s: Everything is straight. In the zazen posture

we are able to calm down and our mental excitability diminishes. It is by nature a posture in which it becomes impossible to think continuously about the same thing, one whereby the fictions we set up in our heads dissolve. Therefore, when doing zazen we just sit, letting go of everything that comes up. All that has been learned is given back to learning, all that is memorized is given back to memory, all that has been thought is given back to thought. To let go of everything—that is the posture of zazen.

When we are doing zazen, does this mean that thoughts no longer arise and that our heads become empty? No, of course not. As long as we are alive it is only natural that various thoughts arise, even when doing zazen. What is crucial is to let them come and go of themselves without pursuing them or driving them out. For example, a thought comes up; if we follow it, then we are *thinking* and no longer sitting zazen, even though we are in the zazen posture. In zazen, it is important not to chase after thoughts. On the other hand, when a thought comes up, should we try to wipe it out? If we do, then we end up thinking that we have to try and wipe out that thought. Rather, when doing zazen, we commit everything to the posture, without chasing after or chasing out thoughts. We just take the correct posture with our flesh and bones and maintain it.

Again, even though we take the zazen posture, if we doze off we are napping and not doing zazen. In the same way that doing zazen is not thinking while sitting, neither is it napping or dozing off while sitting. Therefore, full of vigor, we should aim at the correct zazen posture with our flesh and bones. Just practicing this is doing zazen.

Moreover, it is of utmost importance here not to indulge in self-observation. Self-observation, or observing the effect of our zazen, such as being calmer or more agitated, not only

misses the mark, but the moment we do so, we impair zazen and go off the track. Zazen has nothing to do with thinking about results. It is essential just to aim at the correct posture with our flesh and bones without trying to observe the effect of zazen.

We may feel that being unable to observe the effect of our zazen will bring about tremendous dissatisfaction. It is only natural to feel this, for zazen throws out our petty thoughts that seek satisfaction and manifests life purely as life. The feeling that something is lacking is no more than our petty thoughts of being unfulfilled. Sawaki Roshi used to say, "There is no reason to expect the reality of immeasurable and unbounded life to satisfy your puny little thoughts."

Only when we throw away all such ideas and let go of them will our life find peace in the purity of full life. Since it is human thoughts and getting caught up in ideas of existence or nonexistence that throws our lives into anxiety and drags us into suffering, fighting, hopelessness, and despair, it is through the posture of letting go of these thoughts that we are able to discover the absolute peace of life.

Nevertheless, this peace is not the cessation or extinction of life; it is not seclusion or escapism. Far from it. Living in peace is the unfettered realization of life as life and is not at all off in the clouds. Rather, all reality, undisturbed by thought, is reflected as it interdependently appears and disappears. Genuine peace is like a clear mirror that simply reflects all images as they are, without adherence. Zazen is practicing the Middle Way itself with our bodies.

That this Middle Way is itself true life can be seen in our daily lives as well. A simple example of this is driving a car. When we drive while absorbed in our thoughts or tensed up, our life becomes totally confused and we cannot manifest our life as it is. This makes our driving highly dangerous. At the

same time, it is hazardous to drive when sleepy or drunk, which also blinds us. We can drive safely only when we are relaxed and at the same time wide awake.

Zazen is the posture through which our life force manifests itself most naturally and purely.

EIGHT

The Daily Life of the Zazen Practitioner

Zazen as Religion

Behind zazen there must be the religion of Buddhism, and behind that, our own lives. Consequently, the true or genuine zazen found in Buddhist scriptures was never intended as a means of disciplining the mind or of becoming physically healthier. Our ideas about a mind to be trained or a body to be made healthy are expressions of the view of existence that presupposes that there are things that are accumulable. The wish to train and discipline our minds and bodies is nothing but our own egoistic desire. For zazen to function as religion, it is of primary concern to give up this ego-centered way of thinking that clings to body and mind.

In Buddhism as religion, zazen—in which we let go of all these human thoughts and feelings—is the foundation of our lives. It is zazen that protects, guides, and gives strength to our daily actions, as well as to our lives as a whole, and in turn to the society in which we live. Therefore, we can say that zazen is for the Buddhist much as God is for the Christian. In Psalms

46:10 it is written, "Be still, and know that I am God." Zazen certainly actualizes this in the purest way. In Luke 17:20–21 it is written, "The kingdom of God comes not with observation: Neither shall they say, Lo here! or Lo there! For, behold, the kingdom of God is within you" (see also Matthew 12:18, Acts 17:27–28, Romans 14:17, First Corinthians 2:9). In zazen we can see directly this kingdom within us. In Matthew 6:5–7 it is written:

> And when you pray, do not be as the hypocrites are: for they love to pray standing in the synagogues and at the street corners to be seen by other people. I assure you, they have been paid in full. But, you, when you pray, enter your inner room, and with your door closed, pray to your Father who is there in the secret place, and your Father who sees in secret will reward you. When you pray, do not repeat as the pagans do.

There is no purer way of expressing this attitude toward prayer than zazen. "My Father, if it be possible, let this cup pass from Me; however, not as I will, but as you will" (Matthew 26:39). "God be merciful to me a sinner" (Luke 18:13). "Our Father who is in heaven, your name be kept holy. Your kingdom come, your will be done on earth as in heaven" (Matthew 6:9–10).

The essence of this pure prayer is all included in the prayer that takes the form of zazen. How can we approach truth—or, to a Christian, God—through the zazen we practice with bodies that are full of confusion and evil? For that, zazen must have vow and repentance as a backing. To express this from the opposite side, zazen as true religion must include vow and repentance.

Doing zazen is throwing out all human thought, and this letting go constitutes the throwing out of man's arrogance. In doing so, we become, as the Bible says, "as God wills," and then "the works of God will be manifest" (John 9:3).

What this means will be clear when we compare zazen with the rest of our lives based on thought. We are constantly discriminating and dividing everything into this and that, based on our thinking. However, to throw out thought and not tie one phenomenon to another constitutes being prior to thought. Hence, it is to be before the separation of things into this and that. When we are practicing zazen we exist before separating this moment from eternity or subject from object. This may sound merely theoretical, but for a practitioner of zazen, this is not the result of reasoning; rather, zazen enables one to experience this directly.

Although zazen is prior to the separation of all things, this is not to say that in zazen we lose consciousness; since life is being vigorously manifested, all things are reflected, and it is not a losing sight of self here and now. But what does it mean to say that in zazen, although everything is before division or discrimination, there is no loss of self here and now? It means that self here and now is eternity, the whole earth, all sentient beings.

This is a remarkable thing. I'm not saying it is logically so, rather that since the reality of zazen is such, we are concretely enabled to directly experience through zazen the Self in which this moment is one with eternity.

Living by zazen as religion is found in our functioning day to day as a *person*, a role that is itself the personified union of this moment and eternity. Living every day by surrendering to zazen, being protected and guided by zazen, means to live hav-

ing a direction—that is, living without being pulled around by the thoughts and emotions rampaging inside us. At the same time, this means to live aiming at enacting the unity of the present and the eternal.

Since we take that which precedes division as reality, our direction will be one of no longer setting up the various objects of our desires, or opponents, or competitors. As long as we walk—that is, practice—in this direction, we will not labor under the burdens of greed, impatience, or envy; we will not go around cheating, deceiving, wounding, and killing one another. Rather, as self which is only self, we possess absolute peace within us. Yet, at the same time, since we function aiming at manifesting the most vigorous self here and now that is one with eternity, we need to make unceasing effort.

Our life as a person lies precisely where we live in peace while progressing: progress while living in peace! Dōgen Zenji refers to this as the identity of practice and enlightenment. This is without a doubt the structure of the actualization of life.

In the *Shōbōgenzō: Yuibutsu-yobutsu* ("*Only Buddha Together with Buddha*"), Dōgen Zenji writes, "The activity of *buddha* is carried on together with the whole earth and all living beings; if it is not activity that is one with all things, it is not *buddha activity*." People who practice true zazen can confirm as actual experience what Dōgen Zenji is pointing out in this passage as the foundation of daily life. To act in accordance with the entire earth and with all beings is zazen practitioners' whole life course and simultaneously is their direction here and now. In Buddhism, this life direction is referred to as vow.

I have spoken of zazen as religion, including several passages from the Bible; however, I should point out that living by vow is quite different from the religious life of the Christian, for in Buddhism there is no notion of sacrifice. What the Christian does in the spirit of sacrifice, the Buddhist does on the basis of

vow. The spirit of sacrifice arises from first separating "I" and "thou," and then "I" is given over to the service of "thou." But Buddhism looks only at that one life prior to the division of "I" and "thou." Thus we may say that the encounter between "I" and "thou" in Buddhism may be compared to that between a mother and her child.

The mother takes care of her child, but in doing so, she is not sacrificing herself; on the contrary, with a nurturing love she looks after the child as her own life. The *Lotus Sutra* says, "The three worlds are my possessions, and all sentient beings therein are my children." This is the fundamental spirit of Buddhism, and the source of this spirit is nothing other than settling in the zazen that precedes all distinctions.

In other words, for the person who sits zazen, vow is nothing other than the practitioner's own life; so we see all encounters—with things, situations, people, society—as nothing but our own life and we function solely with a spirit of looking after our own life. Therefore, like the mother's caring for her child, we aim to function unconditionally and tirelessly and, moreover, to do so without expecting any reward.

It is not to profit personally or to become famous that we take good care of things, devote ourselves to our work, love those whom we encounter, or demonstrate our concern for social problems. I take care of my own life—I take care of the world as my own life—moment by moment, and in each situation I enable the flower of my life to bloom, working solely that the light of buddha may shine.

In this sense, the activity of buddha being carried on together with the whole earth and all living beings is the aim of zazen practitioners' daily life as well as the aim or vow of our overall life. It is through zazen that we make this vow our own.

Even though in our zazen the direction of our activity is

carried on together with the whole earth and all beings, there is no way we can carry out perfect action like a buddha. To think that we have achieved perfect action is simply to commit arrogance in front of zazen. For thinking in such a way is, after all, nothing more than our own human judgment. In our zazen, precisely since we have taken such a vow, we cannot help but repent of being unable to fulfill it.

Will the matter be settled simply by feeling bad about being unable to fulfill it? No, before the Absolute, this will not do. A pickpocket might confess before the boss of his gang, "I'm sorry, I blew it." A soldier might confess at his court-martial, "I'm sorry I wasn't brave enough to kill the enemy." In other words, our thought of having done something bad is only based on some conventional standard or idea that frequently changes. However, before the Absolute, it is totally meaningless.

To truly repent does not mean offering an apology; rather, repenting requires standing before the Absolute and letting the Absolute Light illuminate us. What does it mean to be illuminated by the Absolute? In the *Samantabhadra Bodhisattva Dhyana Sutra* we find, "If you wish to repent, sit zazen and contemplate the true nature of all things." In other words, it is in doing zazen that true repentance is actualized.

Truly we who practice zazen hold this vow, and function with it as our life direction, while at the same time, we just return to zazen repenting at being unable to carry out that vow. Living by vow and repentance, watched over, protected, and given strength by zazen, constitutes the religious life of the Buddhist practitioner. Where there is no vow, we lose sight of progress; where there is no repentance, we lose the way. Vow gives us courage; repentance totally crushes our arrogance—it is precisely this kind of posture that constitutes an alive religious life.

A person who discovers the direction of his life in zazen—that is, who vows and who at the same time lives by repentance through zazen—is called a bodhisattva. This means that a bodhisattva is an ordinary human being who has found his life direction in *buddha*, that is, in zazen. Even as ordinary human beings, when we live by vow the meaning of our lives totally changes. Hence, a bodhisattva living by vow becomes distinguished from a person living by the continuation of his karma. There is no need to deprecate ourselves thinking that since we are ordinary human beings, we aren't qualified to be bodhisattvas. Precisely because we are ordinary human beings, we possess this earthly flesh; yet, since we aim in the direction of buddha (zazen), we can make our effort in peace. I hope that without holding back in any way, all of us who practice zazen will aspire as bodhisattvas, letting go of our thoughts, working and living out universal Self in each daily activity throughout a whole lifetime.

How to describe concretely what it means to live and work as a bodhisattva, waking up to universal Self—this is the question Dōgen Zenji addresses in the *Eihei Daishingi* ("*Regulations for Eiheiji Monastery*"). This book was considered so indispensable by the followers of Dōgen that they were required to carry it with them wherever they went. Also, when living in a monastery, they always constantly reread and checked with this book while carrying on their daily activities. I believe that it is a truly incomparable religious text, which gives practical guidance regarding how to put zazen into practice in our daily lives. I also find it regrettable that the *Eihei Daishingi* has been relegated to Zen priests who follow Dōgen's teachings and is not well known to the general public. Hoping to introduce just a little of the contemporary meaning of this book, I have writ-

ten a commentary to the first chapter which is called *Tenzo Kyōkun* ("*Instructions to the Head Cook*").[1] In this text Dōgen Zenji speaks of the spirit of the bodhisattva's actual life in terms of three minds: magnanimous mind, parental mind, and joyful mind.

To look at what is meant by magnanimous mind—or, in Japanese, *daishin*—we need to look at how we see others when we experience the reality of life itself. This reality of the universal Self is Self connected to all things. Through it we live that life of the Self which has no limit and is devoid of any other (outside) people or things, so no matter what happens, we are always living out the life of Self which is only Self.

One might reason that during zazen, since we can put down our work and discontinue communicating and associating with other people, it may well be possible to become just one Self which is only Self, but that it is impossible to be that Self in our daily lives with other people and the outside world existing right in front of us.

But it isn't a matter of becoming just Self by means of some special device whereby we erase all the other people who are before us. Rather, the reality of life is that we are always living out the Self which is only the Self, just as during zazen.

We *assume* that we are all living together in one commonly shared world. However, this is not true when looking from the perspective of the reality of our actual life-experience, which we learn about through letting go of our thoughts in zazen.

1. This commentary, along with a translation of the *Tenzo Kyōkun*, is published in English as *Refining Your Life*, translated by Tom Wright (Tokyo, Weatherhill, 1983). It was published in Japanese as *Jinsei Ryōri no Hon—Tenzo Kyōkun ni Manabu* by Sōtōshū Shūmuchō, 1970. The *Chiji Shingi* chapter of the *Eihei Daishingi* was published by Hakujusha Publishers under the title *Seimei no Hataraki—Chiji Shingi o Ajiwau* ("*The Function of Life—Appreciating the Chiji Shingi*"), 1972.

For example, when you and I look at a cup, we usually assume that we are looking at the very same cup, but this isn't so in terms of true, raw life-experience. I am looking from my angle and with my power of vision and you are looking from your angle and with your power of vision. There is absolutely no way to either exchange or understand each other's experiences.

This is not only true for seeing; it is true of every perception and sense experience—hearing, smelling, tasting, and touching. The world in which we actually live and experience life in its vivid freshness is a world that is mine alone and yours alone. This holds true even more for our thoughts. As in the proverb "Several men, several minds," everyone has completely different thoughts, just as everyone has a completely different face. Even though it may seem that people who believe in the same philosophy or -ism use the same slogans and key expressions and follow the same formalized way of thinking, there can be no doubt that behind those expressions their understanding in terms of vivid reality is as diverse as the people, and because of that, they sometimes openly disagree and internal discord arises. For this reason, we can say that these people are all living out their respective lives, too, for if it weren't so, the people themselves would be nothing but lifeless, standardized mannequins. Anyway, if we assume that all of mankind is living in the same world and has the same ideas, this is a crucial mistake. Even when it seems that we are communicating by using the same words, this is communication only in a generalized and abstract sense. So we must conclude that in terms of raw life-experience everyone lives in a different world and lives out his or her own world of Self which is only Self.

Furthermore, we often say things like "I know you very well." But this hardly means that I know everything about you. It only means that I know the aspect of you that appears before

me. For me, you are nothing but the *you* which is within my own Self.

Therefore, when we talk about vivid life-experience in which we let go of our thoughts, this is not limited only to the times when we are doing zazen, it applies equally to our daily lives. Living out Self alone at all times is not some special thing, it is a most natural and fundamental reality for all of us. Having become habituated to give and take with "others" whom we have arbitrarily fabricated in our own minds, we have lost sight of the truth in terms of vivid life-experience. The most concrete and readily understandable example of this is the way people in society think about money. Money has no value except that which is created by the promises people make in their heads, yet most people think of money, which is useful for trading with others, as reality. So they lose sight of the reality of their Self that much more!

If we take a fresh look through our zazen and practice living out the reality of fresh and immediate life, then it will be clear to anyone that whatever happens, there is nothing outside of living out Self which is only Self. This is what is called magnanimous mind, the attitude that never discriminates. Without discriminating in terms of "I like that, I don't like this, I want that, I don't want this," since everything I encounter lies within my life-experience, I look on everything equally as my life. My life is not limited to the physical pulsation of my heart. My life exists in every life-experience—that is, everywhere life functions. Life manifesting as life, whatever or wherever I encounter—that is my life-experience. That is why in Buddhism "Self settling on Itself" is the same as the universe settling on itself! The magnanimous mind of a bodhisattva sees the Self as one with the universe, and since everything we encounter is our life, we seek to manifest that life regardless of what it is or what happens, without discrimination.

With this magnanimous mind, which throws out the thoughts of the small self and ceases to discriminate, it becomes clear that my whole world—all people, affairs, everything—appears before me as my present circumstances, the scenery of my life, the content of my Self. This is exactly the same as in zazen when all the thoughts that come and go are the scenery of zazen.

The very same thing can be said about time. Usually we assume that time is something that is flowing from the past, through the present, and toward the future and that we live within time. However, if we think about this in terms of raw life-experience, we realize that this is not at all so. The past has already gone by and doesn't exist, and the future hasn't come yet, so it doesn't exist, either. Actually, there is just this one moment of the present; both past and future are nothing but the content, the scenery, the situations that float into our minds within this momentary present. One might be tempted to say that this isn't true, since "old" buildings and "old" books are in fact right here. However, as the reality of life, these buildings and books exist only in the present, and thinking that they are "old" is nothing but the present thought in my head. In other words, my presently existing head gives the attribute of "old" to the buildings and books that exist right now. Therefore, in terms of raw life-experience itself, we are always living out the present that is only the present, the now that is only now.

So what in the world does it mean to live and work as Universal Self? Clearly, it is living and working in the now that is only now, as the Self that is only Self, no matter what happens. Whatever we are now faced with is what lives and functions as our life. With this attitude toward life there is no past, future, or other person before the eyes of our Self; there is only living out the reality of ever-present life.

The reality of life that zazen wakes us up to is actually a life attitude wherein we work and live out a Self that is only Self, a now that is only now. It is an attitude of facing whatever it is that is before us, regardless of what might befall us.

What a vast, boundless life unfolds before us! Ordinarily, we spend all our time comparing and discriminating between this and that, always looking around for something good to happen to us. And because of that, we become restless and anxious about everything. As long as we are able to imagine something better than what we have or who we are, it follows naturally that there could also be something worse. We are constantly pursued by misgivings that something bad will happen. In other words, as long as we live by distinguishing between the better way and the worse way, we can never find absolute peace such that whatever happens is all right. This anxiety or lack of peace of mind is like that felt by the Japanese high-school student aiming to succeed in the entrance exams.

When we let go of our thoughts that distinguish better from worse and instead see everything in terms of the Universal Self, we are able to settle upon a different attitude toward life—the attitude of magnanimous mind that whatever happens, we are living out Self which is only Self. Here a truly peaceful life unfolds.

In Buddhism, we hear the expressions paradise and hell, and in Christianity, heaven and hell. In our day-to-day lives, we hear about happiness and unhappiness, or fortunate circumstances and unfortunate ones. We assume it to be perfectly natural that paradise, heaven, happiness, and fortunate circumstances are *good*, and that hell, unhappiness, and unfortunate circumstances are *bad*. This type of categorization or discrimi-

nation is nothing but a distinction we make in our minds and is totally removed from the reality of life. Yet precisely because of these distinctions, we get all excited over wanting to go the better way and trying not to go the worse way. As long as we act like this, we completely lose sight of absolute peace.

For example, if we fall into hell—some unfortunate circumstances—we run around thinking it is unbearable and trying to reach paradise, or happiness. So the situation is like the devils in hell entertaining themselves and playing with us as a cat plays with a mouse.[2] The more we try to run away, the more the devil plays with us, becoming more and more vicious.

The important point here in terms of the truth of Self is not to run away from the worse way (hell, unhappiness, or bad circumstances) and turn toward some better way (heaven, happiness, or good circumstances) by discriminating between better and worse using our heads. Rather, what is crucial is magnanimous mind, with which we take the attitude of living straight through whatever reality of life we are presently faced with. In other words, if I fall into hell, then hell itself becomes my life at that time, so I have to live right through it, and if I find myself in heaven, then heaven becomes my life and I have to live right through that.

When we settle on an attitude toward life whereby Self lives out its own reality of life, I do not mean to imply that heaven and hell, or happiness and unhappiness, cease to exist, but that it becomes clear that all these are just the scenery of our lives. In the life of the Self, various scenery unfolds, but the absolute reality, the undeniable fact, is that whatever happens, Self lives out Self which is only Self.

2. [Uchiyama Roshi's note] In the Buddhist "hell," there are terrible devils under the command of the King of the Dead, Emma, and these devils have various ways of torturing people who fall into hell.

Whatever happens in our lives can be accepted, since we are Self living out Self in all circumstances. So we may imagine that we are left completely directionless. But this is not the case, since the Self which is only Self is not devoid of scenery. Self as the reality of life unfolds the rich quality of life—the scenery of the Self, the circumstances of the present. This present which is only now is not flat-surfaced: Both past and future exist as the very clear scenery of the present.

Usually, we do not take these circumstances of the present moment to be the scenery that unfolds within the Self. Instead, we analyze this *now* and set up other people and things before ourselves. We place ourselves within the illusive flow of time from past to future and become bound by our relationships with others, bound by the force of habit of the past, and bound by our goals for the future. Being totally tied up, we are dragged around by the expectations of our small egos and end up floundering in desperation.

When we see everything as the scenery and circumstances of the here and now, how do we function as Universal Self within this moment? Through the life circumstances of this Self, we function in a lively and vivid way by utilizing—giving life to—the past in terms of our own wealth of experiences and by responding to directions toward the future.

As long as we wake up and live as Universal Self, we work in the direction where all things are alive. And since everything we encounter is our life, with the attitude or spirit that our Self is taking care of its own life we aim at giving life to all things, all situations, all people, all worlds. This is parental mind—*rōshin* in Japanese—the mind of a parent looking after its child, mentioned in the *Tenzo Kyōkun*. I live by giving life to you, and within my living the Universal lives, because you and I and all things are already living nothing but that life which is connected to everything—Universal Life. This parental mind

is the natural functioning of magnanimous mind, with which we work to enable the flower of life to bloom in every encounter.

In winter in Japan, all the plants wither away, but suddenly when spring comes, many varieties of wildflowers bloom in the fields. Each of these wildflowers is blooming forth the life of spring. From the opposite point of view, by the coming of the life we call spring, the violet blooms as a violet, the dandelion as a dandelion, the lotus as a lotus.

In the same way, the flower of my life blossoms when I work to make the flower that is the world, people, and things I now face blossom. And within the blossoming of the flowers of my life, the flowers of all things come to blossom. Likewise, the flower of your life blossoms when you work to enable the flowers you now face to blossom, and therein blooms the flower of Universal Life.

On the other hand, Universal Life is stifled by an attitude that sets up this world as just a place to compete for survival, one in which people merely rise and fall. This attitude sees the law of survival of the fittest as absolute truth and within that framework manifests a spirit of comparing, rating, and competing with others, kicking one another down the ladder, winning and losing. It sees winners degenerating in their own extravagance and losers going from frustration to neurosis. People with such an attitude end up without even being able to make their own flower blossom. How can Universal Life bloom in this environment?

In my explanation I have been using the expression the *blooming of the flower of life*. However, just as a reminder, this is not a matter of setting up a goal of making a flower bloom and then achieving that goal. For Self, a goal is something outside of itself, so if you work toward such a goal outside of yourself, Self alone disappears. We are always Self which is only Self, yet

this Self is the very life force that pervades all things. Although the manifestation of this Universal Life force is the direction of life itself, it is never activity directed toward a goal. In other words, a delineated goal does not exist for Universal Life. There is only the direction of the manifestation of the life force.

This applies equally to zazen as well as to the practice of the Buddha Way. If in our practice we try to achieve some goal by means of zazen, even if the goal is satori, then we have become completely separated from true zazen and practice. Precisely because we live the life of Universal Self, we just practice and manifest that life force. In this sense, our attitude of arousing the mind of the bodhisattva and of practicing should not be one of moving toward some goal; rather, it should be an attitude of purely manifesting the life force. This is something we ought to consider very carefully.

The reality of the life force changes moment by moment. Therefore, Self must work in the encounter of every moment and in the direction of the manifestation of the life that pervades all things. Here is where we come to find the true value of life—living out Self alone, no matter what happens. In the *Tenzo Kyōkun* this is referred to as *kishin*, or joyful mind, the mind that lives in accord with the true value of life. Joyful mind is the dynamic aspect of parental mind and it manifests as a feeling of truly being alive. By "joyful mind" I don't mean the feeling of excitement at the fulfillment of some desire. Rather, joyful mind is discovering one's worth and passion for life through functioning as parental mind toward everything we encounter. It is said that motherhood is a great path for a woman to become an adult and realize the true passion for life. Similarly, when we see each encounter as our life, and function with the spirit that each and every encounter is our child to be looked after and taken care of, then we will discover true ardor and passion and joy in being alive; and right there we will

become true adults. Any bodhisattva aspiring to live the Way of Buddha will without exception possess these three minds of magnanimity, joy, and parental care.

Please consider the foregoing discussion in light of the following passage from Dōgen Zenji's *Shōbōgenzō: Yuibutsu-yobutsu* ("*Only Buddha Together with Buddha*"):

> All the buddhas have completed their practice, become one with the Way, and attained enlightenment. How are we to understand the identity of ourselves and the buddhas? The practice of the buddhas is carried on together with the whole world and all sentient beings. If it is not Universal, it is not the practice of the buddhas. Therefore, from the time we first aspire to the Way until we attain Buddhahood, both practice and attainment of Buddhahood must be one with the whole world and all sentient beings.

I cannot conclude this section without reflecting once more on modern civilization and reconsidering the question of human progress. As I said in the very beginning, human progress is by no means the same as the advancement of natural science; nor does it follow the path of the development of material civilization. Human progress lies in each and every human being becoming an adult. Look at the state of our species on earth today—completely at the mercy of selfish desires, doing little but complaining about and berating fellow human beings, and injuring one another. How much more childish can we get?

What does it mean for the present-day person to become an adult? It is nothing other than each one of us becoming a bodhisattva, where we see every encounter as our child and discover our joy and ardor in life through looking after each of our children. When this becomes a world of bodhisattva

adults in which we watch over one another and care for and help each other, then humanity will have come of age and we may rightly say we have progressed. I propose that a bodhisattva, protected and guided by zazen and living by vow and repentance, must be the true ideal image of a human being for the coming age. Does my proposal strike a responsive chord in you?

Part Four

PRACTICING BUDDHISM, PRACTICING LIFE

The Wayseeker

"The Wayseeker" is an essay based on the last lecture given by Kōshō Uchiyama Roshi before he retired as abbot of Antaiji, then located in Kyoto. It was given there on February 23, 1975. Uchiyama Roshi served as abbot of Antaiji for ten years following the death of his teacher, Kōdō Sawaki Roshi, who passed away in 1965. It was snowing heavily. The lecture lasted for over two hours and there were about one hundred people in attendance.

In this essay Roshi presents what he feels to be seven salient points to follow in practicing Buddhism.[1]

Seven Points of Practice

1. Study and practice the buddha-dharma only for the sake of the buddha-dharma, not for the sake of human emotions or worldly ideas.

2. Zazen is the most venerable and only true teacher.

3. Zazen must work concretely in our daily lives as the two practices (vow and repentance), the three minds (magnan-

1. This final lecture was published in a special edition, number 110, of *Mamizu*, a magazine published by Hakujusha Publishers in Tokyo in 1975.

imous mind, parental mind, and joyful mind), and as the realization of the saying "Gaining is delusion, losing is enlightenment."

4. Live by vow and root it deeply.

5. Realizing that development and backsliding are your responsibility alone, endeavor to practice and develop.

6. Sit silently for ten years, then for ten more years, and then for another ten years.

7. Cooperate with one another and aim to create a place where sincere practitioners can practice without trouble.

Opening the Hand of Thought

1. Study and practice the buddha-dharma only for the sake of the buddha-dharma, not for the sake of human emotions or worldly ideas.

This is the most important point for us as students of Dōgen Zenji. No one emphasized practicing buddha-dharma only for the sake of the buddha-dharma more than he. I think the most important expression in his teaching is buddha-dharma. Despite that, we've become so familiar with the expression that we often pass over it without considering what it really means.

Lately, I've been looking over some commentaries and modern Japanese versions of the *Shōbōgenzō: Genjō Kōan* ("*The Koan of Being in the Present*") because I'm going to translate it into modern Japanese and write my own commentary. At the very start of the chapter are the words "When all dharmas are the buddha-dharma . . ." Yet no one seems to have picked up

on the word "buddha-dharma" and deeply investigated its meaning. Really, we don't know what it means at all. We should start, therefore, by examining just what buddha-dharma really is.

I've been thinking about it for a long time now, because the essence of Dōgen Zenji's teaching is buddha-dharma. Recently I've felt very keenly that the koan of Sekitō Kisen's "no-gaining, no knowing" expresses the meaning of buddha-dharma best. This koan is the ninety-first case in the third volume of *Shōbōgenzō: Sanbyaku-soku* ("*Commentary on Three Hundred Koans*") compiled by Dōgen Zenji. Sekitō (Shitou, in Chinese) was one of the great Zen masters of the flowering of Zen in China in the eighth century. He was asked by one of his disciples, Zen Master Tennō (Tianhuang, in Chinese):

> "What is the essential meaning of buddha-dharma?"
>
> Sekitō replied, "No gaining, no knowing."
>
> Tennō asked again, "Can you say anything further?"
>
> Sekitō answered, "The expansive sky does not obstruct the floating white clouds."

I was deeply moved by this koan while I was staying at Jippōji temple in Tanba (a part of Kyoto Prefecture) from 1945 to 1948. I asked Sawaki Roshi to write the calligraphy for the words "The expanse of sky does not obstruct white clouds floating." Later, the calligraphy was framed and now hangs at Antaiji.

The expanse of sky does not obstruct white clouds floating. It lets them float freely. I think these words from the koan fully express the meaning of buddha-dharma.

At first Sekitō answered "No gaining, no knowing" to the question "What is the essential meaning of buddha-dharma?"

From looking at the Chinese it might appear that he said "I don't know." But that's not what he meant. He meant "No gaining, no knowing *is* buddha-dharma." No gaining, no knowing is the attitude of refraining from fabricating. In other words, it means to be free from the ideas we make up in our head. I call this opening the hand of thought.

When we think of something, we grasp it with our minds. If we open the hand of thought, it drops away. This is *shinjin datsuraku* ("falling off of body and mind"). When hearing Dōgen Zenji's words *shinjin datsuraku*, many people imagine something like their body becoming unhinged and falling apart. This is not the correct understanding. When we open the hand of thought, the things made up inside our heads fall away; that's the meaning of *shinjin datsuraku*.

This expression "opening the hand of thought" has to be equal to the ancient masters' finest phrases. For example, Zen Master Bankei coined the expression *unborn buddha-mind* (*fusshō no busshin*). This line was wonderful during the Tokugawa period. But unborn buddha-mind doesn't mean much to people these days.

Bankei said that all problems are resolved with unborn buddha-mind. In the same way, all problems are resolved by opening the hand of thought. When we try to put everything in order using only our brains, we never succeed. Since all our troubles are caused by our discriminating minds, we should open the hand of thought. This is *shinjin datsuraku*—body and mind falling off. That is when all our troubles disappear.

There is a short poem that says:

When the quarrel over water
Reaches its highest pitch
—A sudden rain.

People are fighting with each other, each family trying to draw more water into its own paddy field during a dry summer. At the height of the conflict, it suddenly gets cloudy, starts thundering, and big drops of rain begin to fall. The rain resolves the fundamental cause of the fight.

In the same way, if we think something is a big problem —should we choose *A* or *B*, for example—we struggle to resolve it in our heads. But if we open the hand of thought, the problem itself dissolves. When we are sitting, we open the hand of thought and let all our thoughts come and go freely.

"What is the essential meaning of buddha-dharma?"
"No gaining, no knowing."
"Can you say anything further?"
"The expansive sky does not obstruct the floating white clouds."

This koan describes what zazen is quite well. What on earth is buddha-dharma? Fundamentally, it is just opening the hand of thought. And to practice opening the hand of thought concretely with the body and mind is zazen.

We can also say that buddha-dharma is the dharma (Reality or Truth) realized by a buddha. The word "buddha" means "one who has awakened." So buddha-dharma means "what awareness is," or perhaps "way of awareness."

What is this way of awareness? Let us first consider what it means to be unaware, or oblivious to what is going on around us. All human beings are deluded by our brains and become absentminded because of our discriminating minds. One of the many varieties of absentmindedness is falling asleep. This is not so serious, because to awaken from sleep we need do nothing more than be full of vigor.

We also get caught up in desire, anger, and group stupid-

ity.[2] These are more difficult to deal with, because they are fabrications conjured up in our heads. We create various illusions in our minds and then jump in, becoming immersed in them. There's a place in Japan called Yawata near Funabashi in Chiba Prefecture. There used to be a big thicket there. Once you lost your way in it, you could never find your way out, so there's an expression, *"Yawata no yabushirazu"*—"Being lost in the bamboo thicket of Yawata." Anyway, we human beings make up illusions like the *thicket of Yawata* and then become lost and confused in the jungle we ourselves have created.

How can we awaken from these illusions? The only way is to open the hand of thought, because our thoughts themselves are the source of illusion. When we let go of our thoughts and become vividly aware, all the illusions that create desire, anger, and group stupidity vanish immediately. This is the way of awareness. We must neither fall asleep nor get carried away by our thoughts. The essential point in zazen is to *be*, vividly aware, opening the hand of thought.

Buddhism emphasizes *mujō* ("impermanence") and *engi-shojō*—all phenomena are the results of causation and are without permanent or independent substance. In other words, the reality of life changes from moment to moment, and there is no permanent or enduring substance. Although since antiquity people have said that a diamond cannot be destroyed and have used it as a symbol of "absolute permanence," in fact a diamond is simply compressed carbon, which is combustible. Further-

2. "group stupidity": The original Japanese expression is *gunupu boke*. Sawaki Roshi talked at length about this in various lectures. By *group stupidity* is meant a sort of mental paralysis of the individual to use sound judgment and being dragged around by the power of the group or society. *Boke* is the noun form of the verb *bokeru*, which includes both a sense of forgetting and of growing senile.

more, modern science has shown that elementary particles are always changing. Everything is constantly changing. The reality of the impermanence that we awaken to is satori, yet some people aim at shooting down and carting home a ready-made satori or enlightenment, like some kind of trophy. It's impossible.

The only true enlightenment is awareness of the vivid reality of life, moment by moment. So we practice enlightenment right now, right here—every moment. This attitude is expressed in *shushō ichinyo* ("practice and enlightenment are one"). This is an essential point of Dōgen Zenji's teaching—not to obtain enlightenment as a result of practice, but to be vividly aware and to open the hand of thought from moment to moment, because it is our thought that binds us. You should understand this true enlightenment of buddha-dharma. Enlightenment is not like a sudden realization of something mysterious. Enlightenment is nothing but awakening from illusions and returning to the reality of life.

While Dōgen Zenji used the phrase *shushō ichinyo* ("practice and enlightenment are one"), Shakyamuni Buddha called it *pratimoksa.* The Sanskrit word *pratimoksa* means "precepts." In the *Yuikyō-gyō* ("*The Sutra of the Last Discourse*"), which was the final teaching of Shakyamuni Buddha before his death, there is a passage that reads:

> Bhiksu, after my death, respect and follow the *pratimoksa.* If you do, you will be like a person who has been given a light in the dark, or like a pauper who acquires a great treasure.

These are Shakyamuni Buddha's last words. He said his disciples should respect and follow the precepts. *Pratimoksa* has also been translated into Japanese as *shosho gedatsu* or *betsubetsu*

gedatsu,[3] or emancipation through the observance of the precepts. Each precept that is kept liberates us from its corresponding evil. Where we observe that particular precept, there we are immediately emancipated.

I think this idea of *pratimoksa* is the origin of Dōgen Zenji's *shushō ichinyo*. *Betsubetsu gedatsu* means that if we uphold a certain precept, we will be emancipated to the extent of that precept. If we open the hand of thought right here, right now, and experience reality, that is true enlightenment. In this way, Dōgen Zenji expressed the spirit of Shakyamuni Buddha in his own words when he said "Practice and enlightenment are one."

It seems that very few people who study Buddhism these days pay any attention to the idea of *pratimoksa*—I asked some students from a Buddhist university whether they knew about *pratimoksa* or not, but none of them had heard of it. Shakyamuni Buddha said very clearly that after his death his disciples should respect *pratimoksa* more than anything else, so it must be very important. This spirit of *pratimoksa* is the same as that expressed in "practice and enlightenment are one." Therefore, instead of aiming at some ready-made enlightenment, we should practice opening the hand of thought and just be aware of the vivid reality of life in every place and in every moment. This is buddha-dharma.

Now, what does "practicing buddha-dharma only for the sake of buddha-dharma" mean? As I said before, it means to

3. *Shosho gedatsu* literally refers to emancipation here and there, while *betsubetsu gedatsu* refers to emancipation gained by upholding particular precepts. Upholding each particular precept brings the benefit (emancipation) from upholding that precept. For example, if one vows not to kill any living thing and is able to uphold that precept, then the benefit of not killing will accrue.

practice opening the hand of thought. For example, we usually grasp the idea of life and death with our thinking minds. As people get older, they often express their fear of death. When they were young, they never thought about the fact that, sooner or later, they were going to die. But now, as they grow old and death is approaching, they suddenly remember. They get scared and inwardly terrorized, agonizing over what they can do. They become seized with fear because they are only thinking about death *in their heads.* Life and death are both just ideas in their heads. They assume that when a living being dies, it must be painful. In other words, by pondering life and death within the illusions they've fabricated, they lose themselves and become paralyzed with fear. But in reality, life and death don't take place in our heads. They occur beyond human thought. They occur where the hand of thought is open.

To practice opening the hand of thought, right now, right here, knowing that the reality of life is beyond human thought—that is what it means to practice buddha-dharma only for the sake of the buddha-dharma. It is definitely not to practice letting go of thought for the purpose of gaining some utilitarian reward conjured up in one's head. If you practice zazen to obtain some goal—to become healthy, tough, or brave—you are going in an entirely wrong direction.

A Westerner visiting Japan came to see me and asked if we could attain spontaneity through practicing zazen. I thought it was a strange question. Someone told me that spontaneity is really popular now among Americans who practice zazen. I guess the word "spontaneity" refers to the Buddhist term *zenki.* I suppose someone translated it that way. So I understood the question to mean: Can zazen help us gain, for example, the power to shout "Katsu!" the way Rinzai did? I replied that I didn't need such pointless spontaneity and that if you are really spontaneous, you don't need to chase after such nonsense.

American Zen got going with LSD, and then for a while in the sixties, spontaneity became the fashion. America is a country of pragmatism. For example, when the bill collector comes around demanding his money, it's very convenient if you can shout "Katsu!" to chase him away. It's very handy in terms of your human feelings. You'll feel good—cheerful, pleased, gratified—in your deluded mind. But this kind of human emotion has nothing to do with buddha-dharma. You have to understand that practicing the buddha-dharma is nothing like drinking a bottle of soda pop, belching, and feeling refreshed.

Today many Westerners practice zazen, but one thing many of you don't really seem to understand yet is practicing buddha-dharma for the sake of buddha-dharma. People just want it to be useful or to satisfy their desires. That's no good. The true Buddha Way is to practice buddha-dharma for its own sake.

What is the most important thing in your system of values? If you think it's something made up in your head, you're totally wrong. The highest value isn't something made up in our heads—it arises when we open the hand of thought. Opening the hand of thought is *itself* what is most valuable. This is the meaning of "practicing buddha-dharma only for the sake of the buddha-dharma." Think about it.

I'd like to have those practitioners coming out of a Western tradition really understand this point. There are too many teachers who don't make any effort to transmit the buddha-dharma only for the sake of the buddha-dharma. They attract people by dangling some attractive carrot in front of them and then claim that by practicing zazen you can acquire the ability to shout like Rinzai and chuck out the bill collector. But that kind of zazen is not true zazen, no matter how hard you prac-

tice it. True zazen is not practiced for the sake of some value promoted by desire. Anything our discriminating minds believe to be valuable is not of absolute value. Letting go, opening the hand of thought, is the reality of life; and it is that reality of life which should be most valuable to us.

In Paul's Letter to the Romans (3:4) he says, "Let God be true though every man be false." A lot of people get very uncomfortable when I quote anything from the Bible, but important sayings are important, and this one is certainly true. In reference to our practice, everything we make up in our heads is false; only "opening the hand of thought" should be our standard of absolute value. We should respect the buddha-dharma of letting go of thought as being most valuable. So it is important not to practice for the sake of human emotions or worldly ideas. But we should be careful of a potential trap in this attitude. When people hear that they shouldn't practice for the sake of human emotions or worldly ideas, sometimes they separate buddha-dharma from these things completely and fence off a small area of existence, claiming only such and such is buddha-dharma. For example, as part of one of the esoteric practices of the Shingon school, a special place for practice is set aside. This is known as *kekkai no dōjō* (in Sanskrit, *simabandha*). Here, various items are displayed on an altar called a *gomadan* used for making burnt offerings. They think of these as the only holy places of the buddha-dharma. Or they set aside some holy mountains, prohibiting women, because women are somehow considered impure. This attitude is completely different from that expressed in "The expansive sky does not obstruct the white clouds from floating."

In more complicated cases people insist on buddha-dharma as being something special in order to boost their own egos. There are a lot of teachers who talk of buddha-dharma only

for the sake of buddha-dharma as a kind of smokescreen behind which they are just trying to get their own way. This point requires a great deal of caution. The basis of buddha-dharma is "The expansive sky does not obstruct the white clouds from floating." We must neither oppose nor deny the existence of human emotions and worldly ideas.

What this boils down to is that all we can do is persuade ourselves to follow the buddha-dharma only for the sake of buddha-dharma. We practitioners ourselves must maintain an attitude of practicing buddha-dharma only for the sake of buddha-dharma, without the justification of human emotions and worldly ideas. No one can stop people from saying you did such-and-such contrary to buddha-dharma for the sake of buddha-dharma. But we shouldn't judge people by this standard. The buddha-dharma isn't something like a national law, by which one can judge the behavior of others. Quite a few priests go astray on this point. They speak fancy words to other people for the sake of their own cravings. For example, they'll talk about *dana-paramita*, which is generosity or charity, as being the chief virtue, and tell you how you should practice it. Then they collect the money and pocket it themselves! This is inexcusable. We can't demand that others practice generosity without practicing it ourselves.

The most important point in Buddhism is that each of us practices it for our self. We must apply every teaching and every practice to ourselves. In understanding buddha-dharma for the sake of buddha-dharma, this attitude is essential.

2. Zazen is the most venerable and only true teacher.

Honzon, although generally referring to the enshrined buddha statue, actually means that which is most revered. That is, as I mentioned earlier, the zazen of opening the hand of thought. Letting go of thought is the highest value and is most worthy of veneration.

Once a visitor to Antaiji wanted to pay reverence to the buddha statue in the zendo. When I opened the door, he was surprised to see an electric fan above the altar and exclaimed that it was irreverent to put a fan above the Buddha. People in Kyoto think that the buddha statue is the most venerable thing in a temple. But in Antaiji, the *honzon* is on the other side of the hall. Zazen is the most revered one. The electric fan is installed above the buddha statue to keep the room cool in the summer for the people who sit. It's important to keep the room cool in the summer and warm in the winter. The buddha statue is just an embodiment of zazen as the most venerable thing: Actually, opening the hand of thought for oneself should have ultimate value.

If we're not careful, we are apt to grant ultimate value to something we've just made up in our heads. Worldly types are always in a haze, thinking money, fame, or status is the most valuable thing. Since we sometimes become absentminded and forget what is most important, we need to practice and reflect upon ourselves continually. This is what I mean by saying zazen is the most venerable thing in our lives.

This applies equally well to the notion of a true or genuine teacher—in Japanese, *shōshi*. Dōgen Zenji said, "If you cannot

find a true teacher, it is better not to practice."[4] Who or what is a true teacher, then? If we mull it over in our heads and decide that so-and-so must be a true teacher, we're making a big mistake. We're only trusting our misguided thought that a certain person is a true teacher.

Zazen, which is letting go and opening the hand of thought, is the only true teacher. This is an important point. I have never said to my disciples that I am a true teacher. From the beginning I have said that the zazen each of us practices is the only true teacher.

Since Sawaki Roshi passed away, I have been giving *teishō*, dharma lectures, to my disciples. But this is just my role. I've never said that I am a true teacher or that I am always right. Whether you think I am a true teacher or not is only your opinion. A true teacher is just not that sort of thing—the zazen of opening the hand of thought is, for each of us, the true teacher. Please do not forget that zazen is what is most venerable and constitutes our true teacher.

Gain Is Delusion, Loss Is Enlightenment

3. Zazen must work concretely in our daily lives as the two practices (vow and repentance), the three minds (magnanimous mind, parental mind, and joyful mind), and as the realization of the saying "Gaining is delusion, losing is enlightenment."

Some people believe that all activities that use the same posture as zazen are alike. Many non-Buddhists—for example,

4. This quotation can be found in Dōgen Zenji's *Gakudō Yōjin-shū* ("*Points to Watch in Practicing the Way*").

the practitioners of yoga—have sitting practices. Seichō no Ie (one of the popular *shinkō shūkyō*, or new religions, in Japan) has a kind of meditation that looks like zazen. Southeast Asian Buddhists also practice sitting meditation. Altogether, there are quite a number of sitting practices. The posture may be the same, but actually, the spirit is different.

What I am attempting to do through my writings is to compile a text to clarify just what true zazen is for people. I've been working pretty hard at it. And, of course, it is even more important to train people who can teach true zazen directly. These two things—writing texts and teaching my students—have been my most important work over the last ten years. Fortunately, the number of disciples who can teach is growing, for which I am grateful.

As I said earlier, the content of zazen is determined by our attitude toward it. Our zazen is not the practice of the so-called *rokudō zen* ("zen of the six worlds"). *Rokudō zen* is made up of *jigoku zen* ("zen of hell"), *gaki zen* ("zen of the insatiable spirits"), *chikushō zen* ("zen of the domesticated animals"), *shura zen* ("zen of the competitive spirits"), *ningen zen* ("humanistic zen"), and *tenjō zen* ("zen of heavenly beings").

What is *jigoku* zen? Well, there are some people who are afraid of even the sound of the word "zazen," and a surprising number of these people are Zen priests! Some monks stay at officially recognized monasteries called *senmon dōjō* for a certain period to receive a certificate that enables them to run a temple of their own. Although they hate zazen, they are forced to sit. This is as miserable for them as being in hell. Doing zazen with that kind of attitude is called *jigoku* zen. It's really meaningless.

Next comes *gaki* zen. This is the kind of zazen practiced by people who chase after enlightenment with the same kind of desperation as starving ghosts who crave food and are never full.

The third type of zen is *chikushō* zen. *Chikushō* refers to domesticated animals like dogs and cats. Let's face it, there are some people who stay in monasteries because, as long as they follow along, they are fed. Occasionally, this type strays into Antaiji. They stay here because they can get fed; they sit sesshins just to kill time. *Chikushō* zen is a waste of time and this kind of person should be tossed out.

There is a Japanese expression *yoraba taiju no kage*, which means to look for shelter under the shade of a big tree. It's a terrible mistake to take shelter at Antaiji, which is really the equivalent of the shade under a patch of grass. We don't serve fancy food, just brown rice, miso soup, and pickled daikon radish. Nothing much at all. It really is pointless to try to be a house pet here.

Fourth, we have *shura* zen. This is the zen in which people compete over who is most enlightened or whose practice is most severe. They beat each other with the *kyōsaku* (meditation stick).

Then comes *ningen* zen. This is zazen practiced for utilitarian reasons. Some people sit to reap some reward, to get their heads straight, improve their health, and so on. There are an awful lot of books published on *Zen for Health* or *Zen as Psychotherapy*. These are good examples of *ningen* zen—zen out to improve humanity. People who always expect to get something in return are practicing *ningen* zen.

The sixth type is *tenjō* zen. The people who practice this want to be hermits or saints. Lots of Americans seem to like this type of zen. I guess they want to escape from the noisy, materialistic society of America and live in the remote mountains enjoying the silence. This is Zen undertaken as a hobby or a fad. It has absolutely nothing to do with the buddhadharma.

To recognize true zazen, we have to look at our practice

from an absolute perspective. If you are caught up in one of these limited kinds of *rokudō* zen, you can no longer see the essential point of buddha-dharma. And what is that? As I said before, Buddhism teaches impermanence and the quality of nonego. Letting go and opening the hand of thought is the basis of buddha-dharma.

The saying "gaining is delusion, losing is enlightenment" has a practical value in Buddhism. In the ordinary human framework, we are always trying to fulfill our desires. We're satisfied only when all our desires are fulfilled. In Buddhism, though, it's just the opposite: It's important for us to leave our desires alone, without trying to fulfill them. If we push this one step further—gaining is delusion, losing is enlightenment—then we're talking about active participation in loss.

Let me remind you that I'm not talking about saying "Losing is important, so . . . go and collect what you can get from other people." That just makes you the "someone" who gains! Rather, apply this saying just to yourself and give something up. For breaking the ego's grip, nothing is more effective than giving something up.

At this point, we should remind ourselves of the clear distinction between conditioned self and original Self.[5] The conditioned self is what we usually think of as "I." But if we peel away the skin of this conditioned self, we lay bare the original Self. The conditioned self is always trying to fulfill its desires; this is the so-called karmic self. Human beings are born with brains, and we naturally have a tendency (or karma) that leads us to fabricate a maze of illusions in our minds. This is conditioned self. But it's a big mistake to assume that the condi-

5. "conditioned self and original self": Conditioned self is a translation of *seirai no jibun*, while original self comes from *honrai no jiko*. Conditioned self is also referred to as karmic self.

tioned self is the true Self. The true Self appears when we strip away karmic or conditioned self. And that means "opening the hand of thought." This is original Self.

There is a koan that asks, "What is your original face before your parents were born?" One might naturally assume that there is some special thing called "original face," but that is not the right approach. When we open the hand of thought, letting go, the original Self is there. It's not some special mystical state. Don't seek it somewhere else. When we open the hand of thought, that is original face. When we refrain from grasping our thoughts, we realize that the force that animates our lives and the force that moves the wind is the very same force. Our lives and the force that moves the wind are the very same. Our breath and the wind blowing are one.

Ordinarily, we think we are alive because our brains are in control. This is a grave mistake. The range our brains control is pretty limited. We drink a cup of tea when our brains conceive of wanting to drink something. We can do this as our brain orders us to. But generally, only things such as our hands, legs, and tongue consistently follow the orders issued by our brains. It's virtually impossible to exercise total control over our hearts or our lungs. We breathe in our sleep. It's not really a personal effort. When we're asleep, we open the hand of thought, breathing without worrying about it. I breathe even when my brain isn't conscious of it, don't I? This certainly is me. This is the original Self.

One of the words that Dōgen Zenji connects to other words throughout the *Shōbōgenzō* to strengthen the expression is *jin* ("whole"). I've been told that this word is difficult to translate well into English. Dōgen frequently uses expressions like *jin jippō kai* ("the whole-ten-direction-world"), *jinissai* ("everything"), and *jinchi, jinkai, jinji, jippō* ("the *whole* earth, the *whole* world, the *whole* [all] time, the *whole* dharma"). In

short, it means something that includes everything. In other words, my life. Our real life is connected to everything. Our minds conceive of "I" as only "myself," as something independent. But if we open the hand of thought, such a conception vanishes and we can realize "I" as being one with everything.

It's incredibly difficult to understand this *life which is one with everything.* I have been practicing zazen for some thirty years since becoming a monk, and the one thing that is gradually becoming clearer to me is that "I" am one with everything. Zazen is good for nothing; it really is useless.[6] But the longer I practice, the clearer it becomes to me that nothing is separated from me. Please try it and see: If you put your whole energy into practicing zazen, continually opening the hand of thought, you will clearly see that you are connected to everything.

Where do we go after death? Nowhere. Life is universal. When we're born, we come from this universal life. We are all, without exception, universal. Only our brains get caught up in the notion that we are individual. We're universal whether we think so or not, and reality doesn't care what we think.

As long as we are living, we eat cabbage and rice, pasta and fruit, bread and wine, or whatever. Our bodies are collections of such stuff. Superficially, it seems that our bodies are separate from the rest of the world. But as a matter of fact, heat and moisture are radiated, and nutrients and light are constantly being absorbed by our skins. Everything is coming and going with remarkable freedom. We really are universal. Where are

6. "it [zazen] really is useless": Here, Uchiyama Roshi is trying to get people to stop looking at zazen as something merely utilitarian or beneficial to society. This expression was coined by Sawaki Roshi.

we going after death? Back to the universal life. That's why the Japanese refer to the recently deceased as *shin ki gen* ("one who has returned to the origin"). This universal life is the original Self.

By the way, it's no use saying that everything except what our brains come up with is universal. Thinking is also one of the functions of the original Self. However, our brains can also think of things that don't exist. For example, I can think that I did such-and-such yesterday, even though yesterday has already gone. It's not present. I can also imagine something about tomorrow. That's not real either, because tomorrow hasn't come yet. We're thinking about something that is not real right now, right here. This is a fabrication. To do zazen means to see this illusion for what it is, to understand that it is an illusion.

No matter what we think about it, we cannot be separated from the original Self. We are universal whether we're alive or dead. At the same time, it's also true that we cannot be separated from our conditioned self, either, which has the karma to produce all kinds of delusion. So we can conclude that the human condition involves existing in the midst of this relationship between conditioned self and original Self.

From the perspective of conditioned self, original Self represents the direction toward which we should aim. This is the meaning of "vow"—going in that direction. The first of the Four Bodhisattva Vows is: However innumerable sentient beings may be, I vow to save them all. This means to settle as universal life wherever that life naturally settles. The second vow is: However inexhaustible my delusions (desires) may be, I vow to extinguish them. This means refraining from being dragged around by one's thought. But as long as we are human beings, we're going to have a mind that fabricates illusions, and so we have to study the buddha-dharma to clarify the reality of our self. This is the meaning of the third vow: However

limitless the dharma(s) may be, I vow to comprehend it (them). The fourth vow is: However endless the Buddha Way may be, I vow to complete it. We thereby vow to settle down as the original Self.

In the *Daijōkishinron-giki* ("*Commentary on the Awakening of Mahayana Faith*"), we read: "The true Mind of every sentient being itself teaches and leads each sentient being. This is the Vow of Buddha."[7] Vow is not a special speculative approach to something outside ourselves. The true Mind of sentient beings (that is, original Self) itself is vow. Thus, when we consider original Self from the vantage point of the conditioned self, we realize that we cannot live without vow.

On the other hand, when we consider conditioned self from the ground of original Self, we realize that we are not what we should be. We can't actualize original Self because we are restrained by the handcuffs and fetters of karma. In this frame of mind, we can't help but repent. In the very nature of the relationship between original Self and conditioned self, vow and repentance naturally emerge. It's a mistake to consider it from only one perspective.

For example, Buddhist priests generally moralize too much. This is no good. If we reflect upon ourselves intently, we can see that no one is entitled to preach just moralisms. There's no use trying to hide the fact that none of us can carry out all these moralistic teachings. When speaking moralistically, if we don't include our own faults in the form of repentance, it's just a kind of lie. I think this explains why most people are unmoved by sermons. People listen to me without yawning, I guess, because when I speak in a moralistic way, I also reveal

7. *Daijōkishinron-giki*: Written by Hōzō (643–712) in China as a commentary on the classic text *Daijōkishinron* ("*The Awakening of Mahayana Faith*").

that I myself can't follow what I'm proposing. I try to expose my own faults as a form of repentance. And when I repent, the flame of my vow burns brighter.

As humans committed to a life of zazen, we should maintain both attitudes: vow and repentance. These are our two practices.

You must grasp this: "One zazen, two practices, three minds." Don't try to find this expression in any sutra. It won't be there. I made it up. No Buddhist dictionary explains it—yet. Someday it'll be there.

Anyway, the three minds—magnanimous mind, parental mind, and joyful mind—describe the way in which, as conditioned selves, we should function to reveal our original Self.

I have already described magnanimous mind as the act of opening the hand of thought and refraining from any comparison or discrimination. For example, the word "big," which is written in Japanese with the same character as the "magnanimous" of "magnanimous mind," doesn't imply "bigger than something else." Anything only relatively big isn't really big, no matter what size it is.

I was amazed when I heard that there are some researchers who study the genitals of fleas. Apparently they classify them according to their shape: some form an equilateral triangle, others an isosceles triangle, still others are flat, and so on. They can tell from these distinguishing marks whether a certain flea lives on bears in Alaska, Siberia, or Hokkaido. Their research is very interesting. In any case, it seems that the genitals of fleas are proportionately quite big. I'll bet there are even parasitic microorganisms that live on the genitals of those fleas.

By contrast, if you send an artificial satellite up into space, the details of the earth's landscape are indistinct. Once I saw a photograph of Japan taken from such a satellite. Even though I knew I lived in Japan, I couldn't see myself in that photo-

graph. I could see Lake Biwa and Kyoto, so undoubtedly I was there somewhere. But because the picture was taken from orbit, I was smaller than a microorganism on a flea. My point is that when we compare the sizes of things in a *relative* way, we really can't tell which is big and which is small.

In Buddhism, "big" refers to something beyond comparison and differentiation. This is revealed when we open the hand of our thinking that discriminates between things. When we entirely let go of thought, magnanimous mind is there. Then we encounter everything as *jinjippō jinissai jiko*, the all-inclusive self (*jinissai jiko*) that is one with the ten directions (*jinjippō*). Whenever or wherever I am, I just live out the Self which is only the Self. This is magnanimous mind. To take care of only one's own small purse is the small mind at work. Whenever, wherever I live out the Self in my own Way—that is magnanimous mind.

As a natural outgrowth of an attitude that whatever I encounter is nothing but myself, I take great care of my life, the approach toward everything that is called parental mind.

The love between lovers is different from conjugal affection. A marriage based exclusively on eros is bound to come to a sad end. Before marriage, there's no real need for the parties to serve one another. All they need is love. She loves him; he loves her—and that's it. After marriage, when they start living together, romantic or erotic love alone isn't enough. Conjugal love between husband and wife requires each to think of the other first. One has to take care of the other.

This is important because often people are adults only physiologically; spiritually, they're still children. When childish people get married, it's only natural that they'll have trouble, because such people always expect others to take care of them. Only people who have matured and can take care of others have parental mind.

Human beings have to become mature in the real sense of the word. This morning a couple who had married only yesterday came to visit me. I talked with them about this point. If you're an adult only in the physical sense, your marriage is likely to collapse. Maturity means meeting others with parental mind. I realized this through my own mistakes, and I offer this advice to every newly married couple.

What's more, in Buddhism this mature attitude, meeting others with parental mind, is enlarged and applied to the whole world. In the *Lotus Sutra*, this is expressed in the verse:

In this triple world,
All is my domain;
The living beings in it
Are all my children.

This is the mind that sympathizes with everything, that penetrates into everything—not for itself, but for others.

As a natural extension, we need to find the real meaning of our life in taking care of others and in putting our life-spirit into that attitude and effort. To find our life worth living isn't the same thing as just feeling a constant emotional happiness. The life-spirit that meets everything with parental mind: That is joyful mind.

Joyful mind, parental mind, magnanimous mind: These are the three minds. We who are committed to a life of zazen must maintain the two practices (vow and repentance) and the three minds in our zazen practice. An attitude of feeling safe and at peace as long as one is sitting is no good at all. All sentient beings are crying out in one form or another, they're suffering and in distress. We have to foster the vow deep in our hearts that we will work to settle all sentient beings. Vow is fundamental to our practice. Even though we take this vow, it's

difficult to carry it out, so we have to acknowledge this about ourselves with a repentant heart. Then we have to actualize our vow through the functions of the three minds.

Living by Vow

4. Live by vow and root it deeply.

When I think of vow, I always remember the section on Bodhidharma in the chapter called *Gyōji* ("Protecting and Maintaining Practice") of Dōgen Zenji's *Shōbōgenzō*. *Gyōji* describes the purest and most concrete form of vow. I recommended to one of my disciples, who was going to America to practice, that it would be a good idea to chant the section on Bodhidharma in *Gyōji* every day.

> The First Ancestor in China came from the West under Hannyadara's decree. It took him three years to come to China by sea. He surely experienced innumerable hardships, wind and snow, and faced great danger sailing on the wide ocean. In spite of those difficulties, he arrived in an unknown country. Ordinary people, who hold their lives dear, can't even imagine doing such a thing.
>
> This *gyōji* ("protecting and maintaining practice") must have stemmed from his great compassion and vow to transmit the dharma and save deluded living beings. He was able to do it because he himself was the "dharma-self-of-transmission" and for him the whole universe was "the world of transmitting dharma." He did it because he understood that the whole-ten-direction-world is nothing but Self and that the

whole-ten-direction-world is nothing but the whole-ten-direction-world.

Wherever you are living is a palace; and there is no palace that is not an appropriate place to practice the Way. This is why Bodhidharma came from the West the way he did. He had neither doubt nor fear, because he was living in "the world of saving deluded living beings" (the world of vow).

I became a monk in 1941 and started to practice at Antaiji in 1949. Creating the next generation has been my vow since I was a middle-school student, and becoming a Buddhist monk was one step in actualizing that vow. After I became a monk, the flame of my life blazed even brighter, despite the monastery buildings being terribly dilapidated and my life being very meager. When times were hard, I was encouraged and given strength most by that section of *Gyōji* in the *Shōbōgenzō*, describing Bodhidharma's life.

In those days my life was so wretched I felt as if I were being trampled on. I was trampled over and over again the way we stamp on weeds, and I was never able to put forth even the tiniest bud. When things were tough, I chose to stick with my vow and bury it deeply in the earth to take root there. If I hadn't, that vow would have died, because I was always being trampled down. But because the flame of that vow burned within me, the more I was trampled, the deeper I rooted my vow to create the next generation.

I think it was the same for Bodhidharma. He took the great trouble to travel all the way from India to China, where he met Emperor Wu of Liang. But the emperor couldn't understand the Indian monk, so Bodhidharma went to Mount Shaolin. In short, that was it; he was trampled on. Still, he had vowed to transmit the dharma and save living beings. Because

of that vow, he was able to live out his life. And while he was practicing zazen quietly at Mount Shaolin, he rooted the vow deeply in the ground.

Then came his disciple Eka (Huiko). He, too, was trampled down his whole life, even after he had become a disciple of Bodhidharma and practiced zazen. Through the times of the Third, Fourth, and Fifth patriarchs, they all had a hard time. But they rooted themselves in their vows. By the time of the Sixth Patriarch, spring finally came and Zen started to bud. Today it is even said that Zen is the foundation of all East Asian culture.

The same thing happened in my life. When I was practicing in my younger days, I was totally trampled on. But now spring has gradually arrived; quite a few people have gathered to follow in my footsteps either as lay practitioners or direct disciples. Suppose that each of my disciples has his own disciples and that this were to continue for several centuries: It would be like a nuclear explosion! They can't help but create the new age of the buddha-dharma.

This is not my selfish ambition, but my vow as buddha-dharma: the vow to transmit the dharma and save deluded living beings, to live out life wherever, whenever, whatever happens. The Self-of-the-whole-ten-direction-world grows by the vow: However innumerable sentient beings may be, I vow to save them all. This is why Dōgen Zenji wrote, "He did this because he understood that this whole-ten-direction-world is nothing but the true Way, that this whole-ten-direction-world is nothing but Self."

You have to expect to be trampled on by difficult circumstances, maybe even for many years, but don't lose your life force under all that trampling. Unless you have that vow, you *will* lose it. Only when you live by vow does everything you meet—wherever, whenever, whatever happens—reinforce your

life as buddha-dharma. As long as you have that vow to live out your life wherever you are, sooner or later spring will come. And when it does, you will have the strength to grow. This is the life force. You have to thoroughly understand that this is completely different from selfish ambition.

I believe that vow is very important, so important that after Sawaki Roshi died, I made it a rule to chant only the Four Bodhisattva Vows before and after my talks. There's no need to argue difficult philosophical matters. Just these four Bodhisattva vows . . . they're essential.

Development and Backsliding

5. Realizing that development and backsliding are your responsibility alone, endeavor to practice and develop.

There is a saying in Dōgen Zenji's *Tenzo Kyōkun* as follows: "A foolish person regards himself as another; a wise man regards others as himself."

Some people say we are living in the age of indifference. There are people who are as indifferent to themselves as they are to others. They really are foolish; they're completely mixed up. Actually, there is no such thing as "other people." Other people are also your Self. Hence, "A wise man regards other people as himself." To live out your life as that Self that is one with everything means that when you encounter other people, you should live out your Self in that very meeting between you and others. Martin Buber talked about "I and Thou"—he called the Self that meets other people as a part of "I" by the

name "Thou." Basically, what's most important is the attitude of putting yourself in another's shoes.

Furthermore, you have to live out your Self as your own responsibility. Ultimately, development and backsliding depend only on yourself. It really is pointless to say that you became rotten because of your circumstances, or that your education is responsible, or that the blame belongs to somebody else. The fundamental attitude of a practitioner must be to live out one's own Self.

You can spend your whole life oblivious of what's happening around you, or you can live your whole life with an aware mind. To live blindly is utterly meaningless. Bodhi-mind—or way-mind, or awakening mind—is that mind which constantly reminds you to wake up in the real sense.

So: "Realizing that development and backsliding are your responsibility alone, endeavor to practice and develop." Sometimes people stray into Antaiji who are indifferent to themselves and don't understand this attitude. We have to watch out for that.

Sit Silently

6. Sit silently for ten years,
then for ten more years,
and then for another ten years.

There is a saying: "one inch sitting—one inch buddha." It's silly to understand these words to mean that if you sit a little bit, you're a little bit of a buddha. A little bit of a buddha is no good. "One inch sitting—one inch buddha" means that

one inch is altogether buddha, so we should resolve to sit as much as possible.[8]

I've heard that in the Rinzai sect these days, monks stay in the monasteries for only two or three years. In the Soto sect, it's even worse. Young people can receive qualification as a priest in as little as three months depending on their educational background, and then they leave. It really is nonsense. They just can't become true monks in two or three years.

We have to live out our Self; everything depends exclusively upon ourselves. We have to practice long enough to realize this attitude. We have to sit silently for at least ten years. When I became a monk, my father told me about the proverb that goes "Sit for three years, even on stone." So he told me to practice silently for three years. After three years had passed he said to me again, "Bodhidharma sat facing the wall for nine years." And so *I* sat facing the wall for nine years.

But after ten years of practice, I made up my mind to practice ten more years. If you've been practicing for ten years, you can see just how long the next ten years will be. You begin to get it: "Aha! Ten years isn't so long." At first it seems that even one or two years of practice is too long and hard. But after ten years, it's not so difficult to make up your mind to practice ten more.

"One inch sitting—one inch buddha" is true. *One inch sitting* (sitting for just a short time) is also good zazen, since there's no specific amount of time we can say that we should sit for.

8. Common sense tells us one inch is a little bit, but "one inch sitting—one inch buddha" cuts through our ideas of measuring and counting. It means that comparison is irrelevant, so we should throw away our comparing mind and sit knowing that the wholehearted sitting of a beginner is as much buddha as the wholehearted sitting of the most seasoned practitioner.

But the more we practice opening the hand of thought, the clearer it becomes to us that "self" is not the same as "thought." We come to see decisively that the true Self is not something made up in our heads. True Self is the Self of everything, the Self of the whole dharma world, the original Self that is manifest when we let go of thought. In other words, if we practice for a long time, there will be some result.

Even if we sit only for a short time, that is all right, there is no question that we become aware of reality in our sitting. Beginners' zazen and zazen after ten years of practice are no different. At the same time, I still maintain that it is essential to practice zazen continuously for a long time. Actually, we have to keep practicing our whole lives. To be aware of our true Self, we should continue to practice as long as we live.

There's a passage in the *Shōbōgenzō: Shoaku-makusa* ("*Refraining from All Evil*") that says: "When all evil truly comes not-to-be-produced, the power of practice is completely actualized. This actualization embraces the whole earth, the whole world, all time, the whole dharma. The measure of its actualization can be found in the measure of refraining [from evil]."

Instead of trying to avoid doing something evil by means of moral effort, when we actualize the Self of the whole earth, the whole world, the whole dharma—in other words, when we settle in the universal Self—all evil naturally comes not-to-be-produced. "The measure of its actualization can be found in the measure of refraining [from evil]" means that when we practice zazen continuously, we will understand deeply that whenever, wherever, whatever happens, everything is universal. It is in that manner that all evil comes not-to-be-produced. That's why we have to practice for many years—in fact, as long as we live.

People practicing in their twenties and thirties don't seem

to crave fame or profit so much. During those years, one's sexual desire is much stronger than any lust one might have for making a name for oneself or building up wealth. In one's forties and fifties, however, when the sexual drive seems to calm down to a certain degree, the desire to become well known or to make one's mark in the world raises its head. In any event, to spend your life being blinded and dragged around by your own desires is a pretty pathetic thing. Either way, what you do with your life depends on you. With that understanding, just sit silently for ten years, then for another ten, and after that, for ten more.

Cooperate to Practice

7. Cooperate with one another and aim to create a place where sincere practitioners can practice without trouble.

A place of practice to the practitioner is something like soil to the farmer. A good practice place must never be a place for carrying on religious political intrigues, nor a place to try and make headway on the pseudospiritual ladder. To be in a practice and then get caught up in sexual affairs, or money, or fame—or even, to be blinded by your own practice—is a waste of time. I've spent my life trying to improve the *soil*, or practice ground. There's an old saying that goes, "The poor farmer makes weeds, the mediocre one makes crops, but the skilled farmer makes soil." I've tried to make Antaiji a place where sincere practitioners can live and work together with the least amount of trouble.

There's another aspect to this point of cooperation. Sometimes people will cooperate with each other not only in work-

ing or practicing zazen, but also in playing around and drinking. These things are not bad in and of themselves, but I think we have to be careful not to simply cooperate in diversion.

It is important that every one of us cooperate with each other, to protect and maintain an atmosphere conducive to practicing together. There is no one who can claim to always embody bodhi-mind, the mind that aspires to practice and attain enlightenment. Each of us gathers and contributes his or her own little bodhi-mind to the general effort. Sawaki Roshi often said that a monastery is like a charcoal fire in a hibachi. If you put in just one little coal, it will go out right away. But if you gather many small coals, each glowing just a little bit, then the fire will flare up. In the same way, every one of us should contribute a little bodhi-mind and thus enable our sangha to thrive.

Leaving Antaiji

The preceding seven points cover the things I kept before me all the time I was abbot of Antaiji. I'd like to pass them on to you, hoping they will serve as a point of reference.

As one last thing, I wrote a poem, titled "Leaving Antaiji." Actually, I'm not sure whether it really qualifies as a poem or not.

Leaving Antaiji

As an old man
I have my own practice.
It is different from that of youth.
It is not working facing outward,
but just facing inward,
gazing at myself.

And like the clouds that
disappear into the expansive sky
I, too, will
disappear
quietly.

Lately, I have fully realized that when we open the hand of thought, we are the Self of the whole dharma world whether we think so or not.

Do you understand this Self of the whole dharma world? Anyway, everything is one with everything whether we think so or not. That is our true Self. Perhaps you don't believe it. But the reality of it is this: If we open the hand of thought, we are one with the whole universe. One of the crucial points to keep in mind is what role we should be playing right now, right here.

While Sawaki Roshi was alive, my role was that of a novice monk. I played that role for a pretty long time. I was a novice until I was fifty-two or fifty-three years old. Even though I was a novice, I was already an old monk. I played the role of the old novice right up to the end. That was my role.

After Sawaki Roshi passed away, I took on a new role—that of an abbot. Giving talks and being a teacher have been part of my role. I have spent all my effort at fulfilling that role.

Then my role became that of retiring. It would be silly to think that being a novice was no good, being an abbot was good, and that going into retirement was becoming worthless again. People too often think that way. But it isn't true. I think the most important thing is our attitude toward each role—devoting ourselves to it entirely. An old priest counseled me not to retire. He said once retired all your power gets taken away by your disciples. Personally, I don't think that way at all. It's just another role.

The reason I declared when I became abbot that I would retire after ten years is that the population of old people is increasing in Japan. Old people should retire to make way for the younger generation. Otherwise there's going to be trouble. So I wanted to set an example for others.

We shouldn't imagine that life after retirement has to be miserable or impoverished. To be old is also one of our roles. When we're young, our role is to work; upon retirement, we take up another role. Since we have less income, we should simplify our lives as much as possible. That is the way to fulfill the role of an old person. We shouldn't judge it as being miserable. It's important to devote ourselves to that particular role. We function through our roles, exert ourselves in our occupations as a role. And, finally, we die as one of our roles.

I also wrote another poem:

Anyway, this "I" is
the Self of the whole dharma world
whether I think so or not.
This Self of the whole dharma world fulfills
the role of life when in the role of life,
and the role of death
when in the role of death.
Life is the manifestation of the whole-function.
Death is the manifestation of the whole-function.[9]

As I said before, we don't *actually* live and die in our thoughts. When we are alive, life is the whole—all is alive. When we are dead, death is the whole—all is death. When we are alive, the entire Life beyond thought is living. When we die, all of Life including thought will die. When we are alive,

9. "whole-function": In Japanese, *zenki.*

the Self-of-the-whole-dharma-world is in the role of life. Then, when we die, the Self-of-the-whole-dharma-world is in the role of death. This is the meaning of "Life is the manifestation of the whole-function./ Death is the manifestation of the whole-function." After I retired, being retired became the manifestation of the whole-function.

When I announced my retirement, the mother of one of my disciples visited me and said, "You're retiring too young." But I don't agree. When I became the abbot after Sawaki Roshi's death, I often said that gave me the role of teacher. So I devoted myself to fulfilling that role. I don't think you should be a teacher for too long. You can be a good teacher only in the beginning, because you're filled with the passion to educate. After a time, however, even if your technique has improved, you lose that passion. The passion to teach is more essential than any teaching technique.

The students you teach when you're a young schoolteacher will remember you and come to visit you in later years. But the students you teach as you get older don't visit you after they graduate. It's the students you taught when you first began teaching, when you had that passion to educate but no technique, who miss you and visit you after they've graduated. It's for that reason that it seemed best to me to retire after ten years.

Some people asked, "Since you're retiring so young, does that mean you are planning to practice *insei*?"[10] They were referring to the practice of some of the early emperors of Japan, like Emperor Shirakawa or Goshirakawa, who interfered with

10. *Insei* means to govern from the shadows—that is, to hold control even though the nominal head might be someone else. There have been a number of emperors in Japanese history known for having ruled from the "shadows" of their retirement.

the government after they had retired. I didn't want to do that. Being retired is a role in itself, as I said before. So I had to die completely to active service. On the contrary, I knew I would have to be taken care of by my disciples, because I'm getting older and older; I didn't think I should practice *insei* and interfere with my disciples. I decided to die completely to that kind of life and will lie happily *in the shadow of the grass*—that is, in the grave, knowing you're all practicing sincerely. I will die sorrowing there if you live blindly. Please let me lie cheerfully in the shadow of the grass. I ask this of you wholeheartedly.

Questions

The following questions were asked by Western students who either stayed at Antaiji or visited Roshi after his retirement, while he was staying at Noke-in, a small temple located between Kyoto and Uji. When Uchiyama Roshi was the abbot at Antaiji, the monastery was located in the northern part of Kyoto. Since then, it has moved to Hyogo Prefecture, about four hours by train from Kyoto.

On Zazen

Question: You have explained in detail how to actually do zazen, but isn't it extremely difficult to sit zazen without forgetting all of these things?

Roshi: Heavens, no. As I have repeatedly said, zazen is nothing other than the simple act of actually sitting, aiming at the zazen posture with our flesh and bones. In the *Shōbōgenzō: Zuimonki*, Dōgen Zenji writes:

> Is the Way attained through the mind or body? In the philosophical schools, it is said that since mind and body are not separate, the Way is attained through the body. Yet, it isn't clear that we attain the Way through the body, because it says "since body and mind are not separate." In Zen, the Way is attained through both body and mind.

As long as we merely think about buddha-dharma with the mind (intellect), we will never grasp the Way. When we let go of our minds, and set aside our own views or understanding, the Way will be actualized. For example, Reiun [Zhiqin, in Chinese] clarified true mind (the reality of life) when he saw peach blossoms, and Kyōgen [Ghixian, in Chinese] realized the Way when he heard the sound of a piece of tile hitting bamboo. They attained the Way through their bodies.

Therefore, when we completely set aside our thoughts or views and practice *shikantaza*, there is no doubt that the Way is attained through the body. This is why I encourage you to practice zazen wholeheartedly.

When I say to aim at the correct zazen posture with your flesh and bones, it is simply a restatement of "the Way is attained through the body."

Using words only in a provisional sense, I have made a lengthy explanation of zazen in an effort to express the fact that living out Self as the reality of life isn't a matter of words or intellect. So after you first sufficiently understand what zazen is intellectually, the important thing is to actually practice it, aiming at the posture of zazen with your flesh and bones, without any regard for words or intellect.

Question: Isn't our aspiration to do zazen and to practice also desire?

Roshi: There is no doubt that usually when we first decide to practice and do zazen, we think that we will somehow improve ourselves. As long as we hold on to such expectations this is simply a continuation of desire, because it is a projection of a goal outside our present self and a wanting to become that

self. This desire attributes the meaning of life to the search for a goal. Therein, we become completely sidetracked from the manifestation of the actual life of the Self. In the *Shōbōgenzō: Genjō Kōan*, Dōgen Zenji writes: "When a person first seeks the dharma [truth], he is far from even the periphery." However, true improvement of oneself doesn't mean to put aside one's present self and chase after some goal in the future or outside oneself. Rather, true improvement means to understand that we have to actualize the reality of the life of the Self here and now. When our attitude changes in this way, then this is no longer called desire. It is simply the manifestation of our own life unrelated to any goal outside of ourselves.

What should we call this power? We don't call it desire; it is simply life force. When living beings such as plants or animals are injured, they heal naturally. Grass by the roadside that is being crushed by a rock pushes out from the side of the rock and continues to grow. Can we suppose that the power to heal or the power to overcome obstacles is desire? Hardly. This natural effort is life force! The power that enables us to do zazen and practice is the same. It is a power that projects no goal or expectation; yet it is a power that manifests and actualizes the reality of life of the Self. When actually doing zazen, in letting go of these thoughts, all delusions and thoughts themselves exist without being obstacles.

Question: You have explained that since we are not like rocks, it is only natural that thoughts come to our minds when we sit zazen, but it seems that when I sit, delusions and fantasies arise more than usual. What should I do?

Roshi: It is not that delusion and fantasy arise more than usual because we do zazen. Usually we live surrounded by even more delusion and fantasy; however, we become so steeped in

it that we become numb to it. So we live from day to day unaware that such delusion and fantasy are arising. In contrast to that, since we sit still during zazen, our usual condition of being filled with delusion and fantasy stands out very clearly. It only *seems* that we have more delusion and fantasy than usual.

However, as I have repeatedly mentioned, zazen is not an attempt to extinguish delusion and fantasy, since even their arising is an aspect of our life force. So there is no reason to extinguish them. Yet, needless to say, to be carried away by them is to injure life itself.

During zazen we let go of thinking so delusion and fantasy can exist without being obstacles. That is why it is said that zazen transcends ignorance or enlightenment or that it goes beyond the distinction between sage or ordinary man.

Question: Is zazen a religion?

Roshi: Zazen may or may not be called a religion depending on how the word is defined. In most cases, the word "religion" is used to mean a sect or creed or doctrine; however, zazen is in no sense a doctrine or creed, nor should it be.

Continuing from the religions of ancient times right on to the present day, religion has been concerned with people's relationship to an authority above them. People come under a suggestive spell through the words of that authority and proceed to call the complete submission to that authority religion. However, Zen is not a religion in this sense, either.

Zen Buddhism does not recognize any authority outside of the Self. This is the traditional way passed down from Shakyamuni, who himself in his final teaching said to his disciples, "Take refuge in Self, take refuge in dharma, do not take refuge in anything else." Also, just before the Buddha's death, Ananda, the only attendant with him, wanted to call together the rest of his many disciples, but he wouldn't allow it. He said, "Peo-

ple do not belong to me." He simply lived out his own life refusing to become the object of worship of his disciples and followers. This was his basic attitude toward life. There are very moving passages about this in the *Sutra of the Buddha's Last Travels* (*Yugyō-kyō*), which is one part of the *Long Sayings of the Buddha* (*The Digha Nikaya*, from the Pali, or *Chōagon-kyō*, in Japanese). I won't quote them here, but I highly recommend this sutra to anyone interested in studying the basic attitude of Shakyamuni.

Zen Buddhism has inherited Shakyamuni's basic life attitude, which is to just live out the life of the Self. Therefore, we simply actualize within the Self the most refined attitude toward life. If religion means the teaching about the most refined attitude toward life, then Buddhism is certainly pure religion. And, as I mentioned previously, this Self is not simply an "I" opposed to other people and things. To live out the life of the Self does not mean the self-intoxication of some egocentric self. On the contrary, this life attitude is one of discovering the life within the Self that is connected to all things. It means to live aiming at manifesting the life in each and every encounter, and seeing all of these encounters as alter-selves of our own lives. This life attitude is referred to in Buddhism as compassion. A person unable to find compassion toward others within the Self cannot be called a person of zazen who has awakened to the reality of the life of the Self.

In the Bible it is written: "Thy will be done" (Matthew 6: 10); "Whether you eat or drink, or whatever you do, do all to the glory of God" (I Corinthians 10:31); and "We love Him [God] because He loved us first. . . . He who loves God must also love his brother" (I John 4:19, 21). This basic Christian attitude toward the religious life is also the basic Buddhist attitude.

Question: You said that during zazen we must sit, letting go of all thoughts, but shouldn't we sit keeping in mind those ideas that are most essential to humanity, such as compassion, love, justice, and peace?

Roshi: If you think about these ideas and grasp them with thought, actually they become transformed into something else. For example, the justice and peace envisioned by a democratic people and the very same thing envisioned by a communist people are completely different, since they are only their respective ideas of justice and peace. Consequently, they disagree with each other and wage wars of mass slaughter under their respective banners of peace and justice. Only in waking up to the reality of true life do we actualize a life attitude that is in accord with compassion, love, justice, or peace, as a reality beyond words and concepts.

Question: Why must we do zazen for many hours? Also, is there a minimum that we must do?

Roshi: Zazen has nothing to do with a length of time. From ancient times it has been said that one minute of sitting is one minute of the Buddha. Since we live out the reality of the life of the Self with the same attitude, one period of zazen, one sesshin, or a whole life of zazen practice should not be differentiated. Therefore, we have done however much zazen we've done, and there is absolutely no such thing as passing by sitting a long time and failing by sitting only a short time. Zazen transcends time or any distinction of passing or failing based on some length of time.

Hearing this, we might be tempted to say that since zazen transcends any length of time we will try to get by doing as little as possible. This sort of self-centered calculating, however, isn't the attitude of a person who does zazen. On the contrary,

the attitude of a person who does zazen should be one of doing as much as possible precisely because it has nothing to do with any length of time. And, since zazen is living out the reality of the Self, we should aspire to continue practicing it all our lives. At Antaiji, we do a lot of zazen, but this isn't because we want to be boastful in front of others or in order to pile up merit. Since we know that zazen has nothing to do with time, we just do it.

Furthermore, even though zazen has nothing to do with any length of time, if you start off doing thirty minutes or an hour at a time, thinking that that is zazen, you'll become very hesitant to sit for long hours. But if right from the beginning you sit past the point of being fed up with it, then you will be able to sit without any fear or hesitation. For this reason, it's better to sit as long as possible from the beginning.

Until now humanity has been very poor materially, so that most people have been pursued by having to earn a living without the margin of time and spirit for practicing and aspiring to truly manifest the life of the Self in its most refined form. However, the number of wealthy people is increasing. Inevitably, those aspiring to truly refine their own lives will also increase. At the same time, they will awaken to their own life force, raising the life of all men on earth to something truly noble, and will not become merely extravagant animals.

Zazen is not something that should be spread through advertising or by loudspeakers; it ought to spread quietly as the numbers of people who actually practice it increase. I firmly believe that zazen will someday become the power that guides the world of mankind.

Question: In modern-day terms, what is the significance or meaning of bodhisattva? We can read the old mythological stories about bodhisattvas, but what connection do they have with us today?

Roshi: A bodhisattva is an ordinary person who takes up a course in his or her life that moves in the direction of buddha. You're a bodhisattva, I'm a bodhisattva; actually, anyone who directs their attention, their life, to practicing the way of life of a buddha is a bodhisattva. We read about Kannon Bosatsu (Avalokiteshvara Bodhisattva) or Monju Bosatsu (Manjushri Bodhisattva), and these are great bodhisattvas, but we, too, have to have confidence or faith that we are also bodhisattvas.

What's the difference between people who live their lives having direction and those who don't? Most people live by their desires or karma. That's what the expression *gosshō no bompu* means.

Gosshō are the obstructions to practicing the Way caused by our evil actions in the past. *Bompu* simply means ordinary human being—that is, one who lives by karma. Our actions are dictated by our karma: We are born into this world with our desires and may live our lives just by reacting or responding to them.

In contrast to that is the expression *ganshō no bosatsu*, or, a bodhisattva who lives by vow.

The life that flows through each of us and through everything around us is actually all connected. To say that, of course, means that who I really am cannot be separated from all the things that surround me. Or, to put it another way, all sentient beings have their existence and live within my life. So needless to say, that includes even the fate of all mankind—that, too, lies within me. Therefore, just how mankind might truly live

out its life becomes what I aim at as my direction. This aiming or living while moving in a certain direction is what is meant by vow. In other words, it is the motivation for living that is different for a bodhisattva. Ordinary people live thinking only about their own personal, narrow circumstances connected with their desires. In contrast to that, a bodhisattva, though undeniably still an ordinary human being like everyone else, lives by vow. Because of that, the significance of his or her life is not the same. For us as bodhisattvas, all aspects of life, including the fate of humanity itself, live within us. It is with this in mind that we work to discover and manifest the most vital and alive posture that we can take in living out our life.

Question: In our community we have a problem that keeps coming up. Should we adhere strictly to the rules we've made to support our practice, or should we sometimes bend the rules to take into account what people need? Which is the bodhisattva way?

Roshi: In Dōgen Zenji's *Eihei Daishingi*, in the section entitled *Chiji Shingi*, or "*Regulations for the Officers*," there is a wonderful story where the same kind of problem arises.

> Kisū (Guixing) Oshō [*oshō* is an honorific title for a well-respected master] in Sekken (Shexuan) was noted for his severity in training his disciples and for simplicity and frugality in his own daily affairs. He was highly respected by the monks who practiced under him.
>
> When Zen master Hōon (Fayuan) of Mount Fu in Jōshū (Shuzhou) and Gie (Yihuai) of Mount Tenne (Tianyi) in Esshū (Yuezhou) were once young practitioners, they traveled a long distance with some other young monks just to train under Kisū. It was the dead of winter when they arrived, but Kisū Oshō only

shouted at them and told them to go away. On top of that, he tried throwing water over them to get them to leave. Their robes were completely drenched. Everyone left angrily except for Hōon and Gie. They simply spread out their *zagu*, their bowing cloths, straightened their robes, and sat zazen. Kisū Oshō approached the two once again. "Haven't you guys gone yet? Get the hell out of here or I'll beat you!"

People who are searching for the Way can't be called true seekers if they're going to pick up and pack their bags just because they get a little water thrown on them. If you're serious in your searching and desire to become someone's disciple, you have to be prepared to take whatever comes. To practice Buddhism means to encounter the reality of life. Before I became a monk, I studied Western philosophy and Christianity. But neither of them was the path I chose to walk. I finally settled upon Buddhism, and within that world, I intuitively felt that the zazen Dōgen Zenji taught was what I wanted to practice. Up until I made that decision, all my studies were only in my head, only intellectual. I was living within a world of ideas. To actually become a monk, however, meant more than just struggling with ideas, it meant I had to meet the reality of my life head on, whatever it was, without trying to escape. When I became a monk, I practiced under Sawaki Roshi at Daichūji. We were up every morning at four A.M. for zazen, then we chanted the morning sutras, ate breakfast, and worked outside until dark. In the evening we sat zazen for two more hours. Until going there I'd really been leading an easy life. We were in bed by nine P.M. every night, but I was always cold. I could never get to sleep. Four o'clock would roll around and we had to get up. I'd always be shaking from the cold.

I'll tell you what was going through my mind in those days.

I kept feeling this was the first time in my life that I was confronted with the reality of life, and that it was essential for me not to look for a way out. There is a Buddhist expression, "Don't love dragons like Sekkō." There was a man called Sekkō who loved dragons. Sculptures, paintings, figurines, ornaments—his whole room was filled with dragons in one form or another. Well, one day a real dragon who happened to hear about Sekkō figured that since he loved dragons so much, surely he would be delighted to meet a real one. But when the dragon stuck his head through the window of Sekkō's room, Sekkō expired on the spot!

In other words, Sekkō is a symbol for those who prefer imitation to the real thing. You can apply this to practice as well. For example, a person who tells everyone how important practice is and then gives up soon after he starts because it's too hard to take is like a person who just likes sculptured dragons. When you meet a real "dragon" you should be filled with joy and resolve to wrestle with it.

> Hōon approached Kisū Oshō. "We've had to walk more than a thousand miles to get here. Don't think that you can drive us away by beating us or by splashing a little water on us."

Anyone who is planning to devote himself or herself to Buddhist practice has to have the power to overcome adversity. The power of life buried in your deepest parts will never arise until you have become convinced that you're walking the only path open for you.

For example, as weak-kneed as I was in those days, somehow I became a monk and managed to make it through the war and its aftermath and to live at Daichūji despite the chaotic circumstances at that time. I was able to get through it all be-

cause I was convinced that there was no other way of life for me. There is no way you could have gotten through those days thinking that if this or that didn't work out you could always find something else. This is something we should always be sure of—that is, always walking the path that leaves no room for doubt or turning back. Only then will the power arise within you that will enable you to say, "Don't think you can drive us away by beating us or by splashing a little water on us."

"You can beat us to death and we still won't leave."

People might have the idea that things like beatings never occur in monasteries, but the fact is, they do. You'll never be able to practice Buddhism if you're afraid of taking a beating. Of course, I don't mean you should risk your life in a foolish way. Anyone can risk their life when they're emotionally upset about something, but to risk your life over many years is totally another matter. It's nothing to have a little water dumped over your head, but just to sit facing a wall with the attitude that it's nothing at all can at times be incredibly difficult. Yet, once you sit with the conviction that zazen is the ultimate activity and perform that activity with the sense of it being nothing at all, then just that becomes ultimate activity.

Kisū Oshō laughed. "All right, you two may stay and practice zazen here."

Only when they proved that they were in earnest about walking the way of ultimate reality were they allowed to stay on and practice.

> Shortly after, Hōon was asked to serve as tenzo [to take charge of meal preparation]. The monks in the monastery were suffering under the severity of the discipline. It happened that one day Kisū Oshō left the monastery for the day.

So, after a short time, Hōon became the tenzo of the monastery. Now, this Kisū Oshō really went to extremes with his severity, and the monks, having nothing substantial to eat, were suffering miserably. But one day, Kisū Oshō happened to have some business to take care of and left the monastery to go down into the town for the day.

> Hōon stole the key to the storage room and took out enough flour for noodles to make a feast for all the monks.

Here's an interesting point about Dōgen Zenji. Almost all of the scholars who read the *Shōbōgenzō* or *Zuimonki* and write about Dōgen create the impression that he was all purity and innocence and would never think of stealing. Yet here he is praising Hōon's theft of the flour.

You have to keep in mind that everyone's chafing under the harness of Kisū Oshō's discipline—they're all suffering from malnutrition! But Hōon knows that there is plenty of flour in the storage room, so why not use it. And, since he is the tenzo, he takes the key, goes into the storage room, and hauls out a load of flour and proceeds to put together a meal to put the monks back on their feet.

This was all very admirable of Hōon to do—as long as he remained fully aware of what the probable consequences would turn out to be, a beating by the abbot. To be willing to put yourself out for everyone—that's the attitude of a bodhisattva.

All our actions should be taken with the spirit of giving life to the overall situation surrounding us. And despite thinking in those terms, if you make a mistake, then you have to be willing to pay the price. It's no good being afraid of the hell you might have to pay for the deed. So what I want you to take particular note of is Dōgen Zenji's especially pointing out Hōon's method. Later on in the chapter, Dōgen praises Hōon, saying, "Among the examples mentioned we should learn particularly from Hōon's attitude. The attitude he showed toward his practice is extremely rare—his manner of doings things is something that should be considered carefully." This is the kind of man Dōgen was and reflects the underlying tone of the entire *Chiji Shingi.*

Suddenly, Kisū Oshō returned.

Hōon's been working on this fantastic meal, and just as it's being put on the table and everyone's gathered around, who should be there sitting down ready to eat along with everyone else but Kisū Oshō!

> After the meal, Kisū Oshō, sitting outside the hall, called for the tenzo. Hōon came and Kisū Oshō asked him, "Did you steal flour from the storage room for that meal?"

You can be sure he was hopping mad, since he'd probably been saving that flour for some time.

> Hōon took no time in replying. "Yes, I did. Punish me as you will."
>
> "Well, whatever it cost, get out, go sell your robes

and bowl, and pay for it! And after that, you'll get thirty strokes and a boot out of here!"

Kisū Oshō really let him have it with both barrels, not just by making him pay for it, but giving him thirty strokes besides.

Hōon left the temple and found a place to stay in the nearby town. As the lodging was owned by the temple, Hōon had a brother disciple go to the temple for him to ask the abbot's permission to stay there. However, Kisū Oshō refused.

In those days in China, temples often had guesthouses located nearby. Hōon probably figured Kisū Oshō would allow him to stay there since it wasn't on the temple grounds proper, and asked a friend to try to arrange it. But Kisū Oshō turned him down flat.

Hōon then asked through his friend simply to be allowed to return to live in the main hall and follow along in practice with all of the other monks, completely forfeiting his former position in the temple. Again Kisū Oshō refused.

One day, when Kisū Oshō happened to leave the temple again on business, he saw Hōon standing in front of one of the lodging places owned by the temple. "So this is where you've been staying. You know, this is temple property. How many days have you been here? And when are you going to pay for the room?"

Good grief! Now the abbot figures out how many days he's been there and demands that he pay the bill!

Hōon said nothing.

Here's one of the most important passages in this section. In our day-to-day life, where it's possible to defend or explain our actions, then I think we ought to do so. But you know, there are times when defending ourselves or attempting to explain our situation just doesn't work. At those times, what else is there to do but shut up and die?

Once there was a monk in our sangha named Dōki Zentetsu. He was really quite a stable fellow, but he was conscripted during the war and later died in battle. Just before he died, we received a long letter from him. In the letter he wrote: "There are many young men like myself here who could get shot at any moment. I really wonder about the sanity of it all, but if I do get hit, what else can I do but shut up and die?"

So, although it's important to try to keep alive by staying out of the line of fire, there come times when you find yourself standing right in it. I mean, life just isn't so cut-and-dried that it's possible for us to eliminate that possibility. So far I've been fortunate enough to have lived for many years, and for that I have to be grateful. Yet there were any number of times in my life when I knew that the day would arrive when there would be nothing else for me to do but be still and die. And there are times when defending yourself just doesn't work and there is nothing else to do but "shut up and die."

A person who feels he has to defend himself every time his teacher says something to him isn't really practicing Buddhism. There are times when an evaluation or criticism by others hits home, but then there are other times when it's way off the mark. If it's correct, then you ought to sit on it for a while and consider the matter. If it isn't, then it should be enough for you to tell yourself it's off the mark and let it go at that. If you aren't able to forget criticism by others, how can you really be

living out the full reality of your life? To practice Buddhism means to confront and live out the reality of your life, so if some unwarranted criticism comes along, your practice is to live it out—that is, by not getting all in a lather over it.

> Hōon went into the town on *takuhatsu* ["begging"], and returned in full all the money owed to the temple.
>
> One day, Kisū Oshō happened to see Hōon out on *takuhatsu*. Returning to the monastery, the abbot told the monks that Hōon truly possessed the attitude of one who is seeking the Way.

This is the first time Kisū Oshō ever praised him!

> Shortly after, he called Hōon and allowed him to return to the temple.

Well, finally he let him back in, but confidentially, Kisū Oshō seems a bit too severe for me.

People have the image of Dōgen Zenji being someone who would certainly have frowned upon anyone who had stolen something that didn't belong to him, and to be sure, in this case, too, what Hōon did was technically wrong. Yet when the whole community was suffering from malnutrition, it was vital to have the kind of spirit he had. Of course, be careful that you don't go out and twist what I've said to mean that stealing from others is perfectly all right. You have to remember that after Hōon stole the noodles from the storage room and Kisū Oshō told him to pay for it, Hōon didn't just fold up. He went out and paid dearly for it.

Here's another example. I have people coming here every day to talk with me about their problems. There was one girl a while back who came in and just broke down completely.

When I asked her what the problem was, she said she'd gotten pregnant. Apparently she had slept with some guy whom she didn't even know that well after having gone out and gotten quite drunk. I asked her how she felt about marrying him, but she said she didn't even care for him and couldn't consider it.

So what should she do? Well, I advised her to have an abortion. She agreed and I referred her to a friend of mine who happens to be a gynecologist. Of course, what I told her to do wasn't good. It was wrong, or, in Christian terms, sinful. Therefore, if she was going to pay for it in hell, then I would have to go with her. That's something I had to fully accept the moment she came to me for advice. When someone comes along who's completely at a loss as to what to do and asks for advice, as a bodhisattva you can't just say that you don't know, it's not your problem. That's just shirking your responsibility. Not having to take responsibility for what you say or do is the safest way out. But when someone's all mixed up, what choice have you but to be forceful in replying? What I advised her to do wasn't a good thing, and if later on she had had to suffer the consequences because of something I'd told her to do, then I would have to be willing to suffer those consequences with her. That's the kind of reasoning or resolve I felt I had to have to deal with that particular situation.

Anyway, you should know that it's not enough for a bodhisattva of the Mahayana to just uphold the precepts. There are times when you have to break them, too. It's just that when you do, you have to do so with the resolve of also being willing to accept whatever consequences might follow. That's what *issai shujō to tomo ni* ("together with all sentient beings"—regardless of what hell one might fall into) really means.

Take a look at Hōon here. With the whole community suffering from malnutrition, who wouldn't do what he did? Up to that point, Hōon comes out looking like Robin Hood. That,

in itself, wasn't all that unusual. Up to the point where Hōon took the key and stole the food from the storage room, he's looking good as far as all the monks are concerned. But then, Kisū Oshō stands in a completely different position. He had to find out if Hōon took the noodles merely to enhance his own reputation in the monastery or if he did it fully willing to accept the consequences.

That's why Kisū had to be so severe. So Kisū Oshō carried out his role as the leader of the community, and Hōon bore the burden for what he had done, not merely being content with being well liked by the other monks.

There are many stories like this one in the *Chiji Shingi.* A bodhisattva should study this well, since the teaching is so practical. It's not enough just to know the definition of bodhisattva. What's much more important is to study the actions of a bodhisattva and then to behave like one yourself.

Regarding the question "What is a bodhisattva?" you could also define a bodhisattva as one who acts as a true adult. That is, most people in the world act like children. There is a chapter in the *Shōbōgenzō* entitled *Hachi Dainin Gaku* ("Eight Aspects of an Enlightened Being"). The word *dainin* means "true adult" or "bodhisattva." Today most people who are called adults are only pseudoadults. Physically, they grow up and become adult, but spiritually too many people never mature to adulthood. They don't behave as adults in their daily lives. A bodhisattva is one who sees the world through adult eyes and whose actions are the actions of a true adult. That is really what a bodhisattva is.

Question: At Antaiji, we have heard of a kind of love called *rinjinai*. What does this expression mean and how should this kind of love work in a sangha?

Roshi: In Christianity we hear the words "eros" and "agape." The Japanese expression *rinjinai* can be compared with "agape." Ultimately, the love of a parent for a child, or a husband for a wife, or any man for a woman, would belong to the kind of love we refer to as erotic love. *Rinjinai* would be the love of God toward man. That is how man came to know love (agape). This is right out of the New Testament. Through God's love for man, we know God. But since we can't see God with our eyes, we love Him through the encounters with all the people we meet. This is *rinjinai* in Japanese; the expression literally means love for our neighbor.

In general, when we talk about love, people usually just think of eros. It was out of the Christian tradition that we first heard of agape. God first loved us and we return that love through our actions toward those around us.

Question: To be loved by God, in Christian terms, means that love from above comes down to man. Or, to put it another way, the love of God is the love of the Absolute toward the relative, which is God's creation. As you mentioned before, we know love because God loved us first. Does a similar way of thinking exist in Buddhism also?

Roshi: Well, agape is the Christian way of expressing these things, and the way I described *rinjinai* is the way I would describe it as a Buddhist. I have explained in my lectures that everything is within me and that all things are the contents of my true Self. Therefore, taking care of everything around me is the same as taking care of myself.

In Christianity, when you talk about God's love, people too often assume that such love is outside of themselves. On the other hand, when I am asked to define God, I recall the expression from the Old Testament where God says of Himself, "I am that I am." Or, God is all things. Therefore, God loves all things and takes care of all things. That is *rinjinai* or agape.

In other words, the Buddhist way of expressing this is to say that all things are part of the body of Life, so I take care of them. Christians would be more likely to describe agape by saying that we take care of all things or love all things because they are all parts of God's body.

Question: During a dharma lecture several years ago in France, Reverend Viallet, who later became your disciple, presented this sort of koan to our group: A communist went to the master and said, "I can't practice because the ideological differences are too strong." The master replied, "Well, I'm a communist, too." Then the fascist went before the master saying that he couldn't practice zazen, either, for the same reasons. The master gave the same reply—I'm a fascist, too. To other people's comments as well, the master replied in the same way: I am that, too. Then one day, when all these people happened to be talking among themselves, they realized that they had been tricked by the master. They were furious and finally decided to arm themselves and go teach the master a lesson. When the master saw them coming, he shouted out "Zazen!" and they all fell down in a faint.

What should I do if I am confronted with people who have far different ideas from my own and who consequently risk becoming an enemy? Should I consider the master's use of psychological violence as a weapon a good example of Zen behavior?

Roshi: I wouldn't call shouting out "Zazen!" a psycholog-

ical weapon. What the master is saying here is simply that everyone should return to the reality of their own lives.

I can hold up a cup and say it is red, but from that side of the table you might be able to see only white. It's really just a matter of how you look at things. The communists fight with the fascists, saying red, while the fascists on the other side say white.

Actually, though, it is neither one. The cup is just what it is, I am the reality I am, and you are the reality that you are. Now, when reality settles on itself, that is what we call the reality of Life. Sitting, returning to the reality of what one truly is, is zazen. In other words, philosophies and ideologies are nothing but singular ways of looking at the world. When you look from some angle it is only natural that everyone's view will be different. As long as people look at things from an angle, there is always going to be conflict; it will never end.

The idea of putting an end to looking at life from some angle appears in the *Suttanipata*, in the words of Shakyamuni. When everyone's running around shouting that he is the one speaking the truth, what else is there to do but to tell everyone to shut up and sit down? What is most essential is that each person return to the reality of his or her own life and sit within that reality. So there's no weapon involved here. It just makes sense to live in this way. There is certainly nothing wrong with people in the world quieting down a little bit. Doing zazen means just that—to let go of all viewpoints and return to the reality of life.

I suppose this story is one that Reverend Viallet thought up himself. It is very amusing, but I doubt that it is based on some particular event in his life. It is interesting and I suppose reflects very closely the situation there in Italy. I suspect he simply thought it up. But it's a very good story. Of course, all the ancient koans grew out of stories like that.

Question: When I practice letting go and devote myself to zazen, what about the rest of my life and the people around me? Will what is best for me be good for them, or will I wind up neglecting them?

Roshi: When I talk about letting go of whatever comes up in our heads, I'm talking about the spirit with which we sit zazen. We let go of the thought that arises, or the feeling of being tired or sleepy, and return to doing zazen. And in doing so, we begin to see that all the things that arise in our heads are no more than secretions. It is that very understanding that is so important.

Actually, as I said earlier, precisely because we practice letting go, we begin to see all our thoughts, feelings, and so on as secretions arising in our heads. Even though I refer to all this as a secretion, there is nothing inherently bad about it. Where we ought to be putting our heads to work, let's put them to work, since it is through our heads that we come to know all things. Accordingly, everything we see, hear, touch, experience—all these things become the content of our life. That is why we have to allow all of these things, which are a kind of scenery, to become reflected through us. If there is anything that is not being reflected, then we aren't functioning in a complete way.

For example, if I'm driving a car and I sit in the driver's seat, all of the pedals, the steering wheel, and whatnot, have to be reflected within me. Also, what is outside the car as well—the scenery of the city I am driving through, the traffic signals and road signs, the people crossing the street, and the oncoming traffic—all of this has to be reflected through me for me to be able to drive freely and safely. Don't ever mistake letting go of whatever arises to mean that everything becomes just an empty void without reflection. The very reason for practicing letting

go is so that everything *can* be reflected through us! You should be very careful in understanding this point.

When you carry on your activities with that attitude, then for the first time you can act freely, since all that is reflected is the content of your life! Letting go doesn't mean that you come to some point where you no longer think. It's only when everything is being totally reflected that you can act freely. So don't misunderstand the expression. "Letting go" and "losing your head" aren't the same!

Please think about this. It is when you aren't letting go and are pondering something that everything ceases to be reflected. For example, some fellow leaves the house after arguing with his wife and gets into his car. As he's driving along he gets all caught up in the argument in his head. Bang! The person crossing the street wasn't being reflected within the man, and he runs over the pedestrian and kills him. This type of thing happens every day! Precisely when you practice letting go, everything can be freely reflected as the scenery or content of your life. And in turn, you become able to act freely. That is the meaning of letting go.

Question: I have heard the expression *jijuyū zanmai*, but I don't really understand it. Would you explain it?

Roshi: Dōgen Zenji referred to the Self as *jijuyū zanmai*, which is literally the samadhi of self-receiving-and-employing. *Jijuyū zanmai* is the samadhi of Self receiving life and turning around to put it to work to make it function. Samadhi is the spirit of encountering all things with the same attitude, an attitude of evenness. Since everything in and around us is constantly changing, we have to practice this samadhi inside and outside the zendo throughout our whole life. Everything that I have been talking about with you is nothing other than ex-

pressing *jijuyū zanmai*, that is, zazen. Sitting zazen is the Self sitting alone. Yet, at the same time, all things are the content or the scenery of that zazen or Self. That is the meaning of *jijuyū zanmai*. In Christianity, there is God—that is, all over all. But in saying that, it doesn't mean that one over all doesn't matter. Each individual is an expression of the will of God. And to demonstrate His will, God sent His Son.

On this point there is no difference between Buddhism and Christianity. Ultimately, they are both saying the same thing. It is just that Christianity speaks of God in a sort of mythological or anthropomorphic way, and in that sense is easy to understand. However, in Buddhism, the pursuit or question of Self is immediately put forth. In a sense, Buddhism is more logical in its approach. In either case, what is ultimately important is *jijuyū zanmai* as I have been describing it.

In describing zazen, Sawaki Roshi used to define it as the "self selfing the self." My way of describing zazen is that you live out your own life regardless of the circumstances that you might encounter.

Usually people assume that they are born onto a stage (or world) that already exists, that they dance around on the stage for a while and then leave (die). That is the ordinary way of looking at the world. Actually, though, when I am born, I give birth to my world as well! I live together with that world; therefore, that world forms the contents of my self. Then, when I die, I take the world with me; that is, my world dies with me. That is the rationale behind Sawaki Roshi's noncommonsensical expression, "self selfing the self." You give birth to, live out, and die together with your world. That is what is meant by the Reality of the Life of the Self . . . and to actually manifest the self-that-selfs-the-self is called *jijuyū zanmai*.

Ji is the character for self, while *juyū* is formed by the characters for "receive" and "employ." What *jijuyū zanmai*, the

samadhi of self-receiving and self-employing, means is that you are always living your own life, regardless of where or what situation you are in. And to personally experience that best, we do zazen. When we do zazen, we become nothing other than ourselves! Though we become nothing other than ourselves alone, the whole world is contained within that Self.

For example, generally speaking, people want things to go smoothly and avoid anything that involves suffering. Or, to put it in simple terms, paradise is good, hell is bad. In reality, whether I am in heaven or hell, I am living out my own life. Since both of them form the temporary scenery of my life, I am in no position to say I like paradise but don't like hell. If I fall into hell, then I have to be willing to serve out my time there.

We are always going to feel uneasy as long as we try to get into heaven or paradise and try to avoid hell. It is vital to cultivate the spirit of willingly living in either situation. Ultimately, *jijuyū zanmai* is the one total act of living our whole life in a way that holds life most precious. I composed a short verse that I call "Poem on Life Driving" about this basic attitude:

Good or evil, likes or dislikes
No matter what I might fall into
Each encounter is my life.
Letting go, yet with every intensity
Holding life precious, living, just living.

Going Home

Question: Tomorrow we will return to Italy. What should we keep in mind when we return there?

Roshi: First of all, know that you are going to die. Most

people in the world today are like artificial flowers. They look nice for a while and they don't wither. But they have no smell, no life. They are lifeless. Once they become soiled even a little bit, they can be thrown away.

Also, artificial flowers don't bear fruit. Only things that die bear fruit! People in the world today are like artificial flowers in the sense that they have no life. They think only about their existence apart from their death. Forgetting about death, existence in terms of money, position, and power becomes all-important. In Buddhism, your life is not something exclusive of your death.

For example, in Japan automobile accidents are on the rise. I hear the chances of dying in a traffic accident are one in a hundred. Some people think, hmmm, one in a hundred. That's pretty good odds. What they forget, though, is that when you die in an accident, it's not 1/100 that dies. All 100 percent goes!

In the same way that there is no way for you to avoid death, you must cultivate an attitude whereby you can't avoid doing zazen, either. Death is not some generalization. It is personal! Before God, you stand alone. You have to have the spirit of you yourself personally taking a hand in making the twenty-first century.

In our practice, whether it be at Antaiji or anywhere else, after we become used to the lifestyle, there is a point where we continue simply by force of habit or from the momentum that has been built up. Especially when the lifestyle has few changes in it, the tendency to do so is much greater. We must be careful of this. That is why we study with a teacher. Except for Christ's immediate disciples, it doesn't appear that a teacher-disciple relationship has been emphasized very much in Christianity. In Buddhism, however, this tradition has been quite important. This is difficult to explain, but fundamentally, when

you become a disciple, you become a disciple not of your teacher as a person, but of the buddha-dharma. After staying with Sawaki Roshi for twenty-five years, I finally realized that. If it weren't for that, I would have quit. Every day I wanted to escape from Antaiji. He was always hollering at me. Sometimes he was right, but there were plenty of times when he was off base. You see, a teacher is not almighty. He's human. Of course, in a sense, you become a disciple of so-and-so. But more fundamentally, you become a disciple of the buddha-dharma. And as a disciple of the buddha-dharma, you use your teacher as your "practice stage."

In the Bible, we read about how God loves us, and because of that, we return that love. However, as honorable or noble as the idea is, if we don't put that into practice it doesn't mean a thing. That is where the teacher-disciple relationship in Buddhism comes in. Serving a teacher is concrete, it's practical; it's not intellectual.

Returning for a bit to the teacher-disciple relationship, even when your teacher is wrong about you, just that provides, or should provide, a strength or resolution within you to move deeper into your practice. Every time your teacher is mistaken, you realize further that you are not the disciple of a person, but of the buddha-dharma. My relationship with Sawaki Roshi was never one of teacher and disciple seeing eye to eye. That is just the kind of tripe scholars write about.

Question: I understand what you are saying to me, and because of that I am concerned with returning to Italy, where we will have no teacher to practice and study under. What is advisable for us?

Roshi: In that case, you must become each other's teacher. In the Tendai teachings, there is an expression: *ichigū o terasu mono wa kuni no takara nari.* This means that one who lightens

just the smallest corner ("corner" simply meaning one's surroundings) is a national treasure.

For example, people who go around wearing a scowl on their face all the time commit a "facial crime." You have to learn how to best serve one another. When you use one another as the stage to practice on, then both your worlds can't help but become brighter. And from there, you both have to take into consideration the people who live in your neighborhood. You have to function in a way that lightens their burdens, so they begin to think that it is really good to have people like yourselves living near them.

Buddhism is not some sort of philosophical or intellectual debating arena. Of course, there are many teachings in Buddhism. And, as expressions, many of them seem contrary. These seeming contradictions seem like pearls of wisdom to those scholars who only look at language. If you don't practice Buddhism, it's totally useless.

Question: Now I have the momentum to practice, but after a while in Italy, I am concerned that my Buddhism might just return to a conceptual or intellectual Buddhism, which is overwhelmingly predominant in Italy today. What should I do about that?

Roshi: Oh, that's easy. Just sit zazen. What it comes down to is either you are sitting or you aren't. When you sit down on the cushion, fold your legs, and face the wall, that is it. What is intellectual about that?

Then you practice letting go. That is *jijuyū zanmai*. That is *shinjin datsuraku*—dropping off body and mind. And, in your daily life, you simply continue to practice letting go. There is so much neurosis today because people don't practice letting go. They are always thinking only about themselves, ignoring everyone around them. If you just practice letting go, and have

the spirit that at any moment it is all right to die, then all neuroses will go up in a puff of smoke!

If you are worried about dying, then you are not now living right here. You live and die despite your petty concerns and worries about your death. To focus upon death is vital, but that doesn't mean you have to become pessimistic. You have to cultivate a spirit such that since you know death will come at any moment, you make every effort to live with full intensity right now. You practice that intensity by letting go and being open to whatever arises.

You may say that you are weak, that you aren't strong enough to face death, but that is only an idea in your head, or else a comparison with people around you. Of course, we all have different capabilities. But even though you may be "weak," death will show you no mercy. If you don't practice with what you've got, what or when will you ever practice? Don't arbitrarily put limitations on yourself. If you don't prejudge your limitations, you will be amazed at what is possible.

Whether you are concerned with your physical limitations or about whether your practice will become intellectual, just remember that you can't raise a cabbage by going out to a seed you have dropped in the ground and imploring it to grow! You grow cabbages by rolling up your sleeves, cultivating the ground, checking the soil, adding the proper fertilizers, and so on. In other words, you deepen your practice by practicing it.

Appendix 1

Kinhin

About Kinhin

"Kinhin" literally means to go straight like the warp or vertical thread in a piece of cloth. The word is used in Soto Zen to describe the slow concentrated walking that takes place between periods of zazen. It serves the physical function, of course, of helping to stretch the muscles in the legs and allowing the blood to circulate. However, besides its physical function, kinhin should be thought of as a kind of walking Zen. That is, the very same attitude that one sits with when facing the wall should now be applied to one's walking. The only difference is that now the body is moving. So walking alertly, opening the hand of thought, is equally important when doing kinhin.

How to hold one's arms or what steps one should take have varied over the centuries. The following explanation applies to Soto Zen temples in general, but it is always best to check about the details when entering a temple for the first time.

When the bell for kinhin rings twice, first rock to the right and left two or three times while still in the sitting position. Then get up quietly. Stand in back of your zazen seat and turn 90 degrees to the right. (At this point in an official *sōdō*, a monastery that trains priests, everyone will be standing in a straight, single line.) Put the thumb of the left hand in the middle of the palm and make a fist around it. Turn this hand downward in front of your chest. Cover your left hand with the palm of your right hand. Keep your elbows away from your body and make a straight line with your arms (see Figure 9). This is called *isshu*. In some temples, the arms are held in the position shown in Figure 10. In this case, the hands are wrapped around each other as for *isshu*, but they are not turned downward. This is called *shashu*.

Straighten your posture, making sure your neck is also straight. With your line of vision falling about five or six feet in front of you, walk clockwise quietly, starting with your right foot. Take one step for each complete breath.

One step, however, actually means advancing only about half the length of your foot, as shown in Figure 11. Don't slouch or look up and down or to the left and right. Don't shift your shoulders and chest. Your walking posture should appear as if you were standing in one place. Walk quietly without dragging your feet.

Always look straight ahead, and when you have to turn due to the configuration of the room, always turn to the right. Just as zazen is the way the Buddha sits, kinhin is the way the Buddha walks. More than anything else, it is important to practice with correct posture, wide awake, coordinating your walking and breathing.

At Antaiji sesshins, there is ten minutes of kinhin after fifty

Figure 9
Isshu

Figure 10
Shashu

minutes of zazen. The bell is rung once to signal the end of kinhin. After the bell is rung, walk at your normal pace following the person in front of you. Walk around the room and return to your original seat. At this point, you may go to the restroom if you need to. The next period of zazen will begin shortly. The bell to begin zazen is rung three times.

When you arrive at your seat, face toward it and bow. This

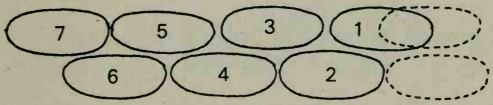

Figure 11

bow is called *gasshō*. It is a silent greeting to the people sitting to your right and left and signifies that you are going to do zazen together. Then, turning to the right until your seat is behind you, bow once more to those on the far side of the room. Turning to the right again, take your seat and begin zazen. Bow in the same way when standing up after finishing zazen. This expresses your gratitude in being able to carry on

your own zazen practice with the help of the people who are practicing with you.

In addition to these instructions on kinhin, there are various ways of entering and walking in the zendo and taking your seat. For further written information, please refer to a small volume entitled *Shikantaza* (translated by Shōhaku Okumura and published by the Kyoto Soto Zen Center in Japan). This book contains several pictures that should be helpful. It is best, however, to receive concrete instructions upon entering a temple.

Appendix 2

How to Make a Zafu, or Sitting Cushion

Necessary materials:

Two round pieces of fabric 12 inches in diameter
One long piece of fabric 65 by 8 inches

Sturdy fabrics that are not slippery work well.

Instructions:

1. Cut out the two circles and the long rectangle. You can piece the long rectangle from two shorter pieces of fabric.

2. At one end of the rectangle, fold 1 inch of fabric to the back and sew it down.

3. Mark half-inch seam allowances along the long sides of the rectangle on the back side of the fabric (measure half

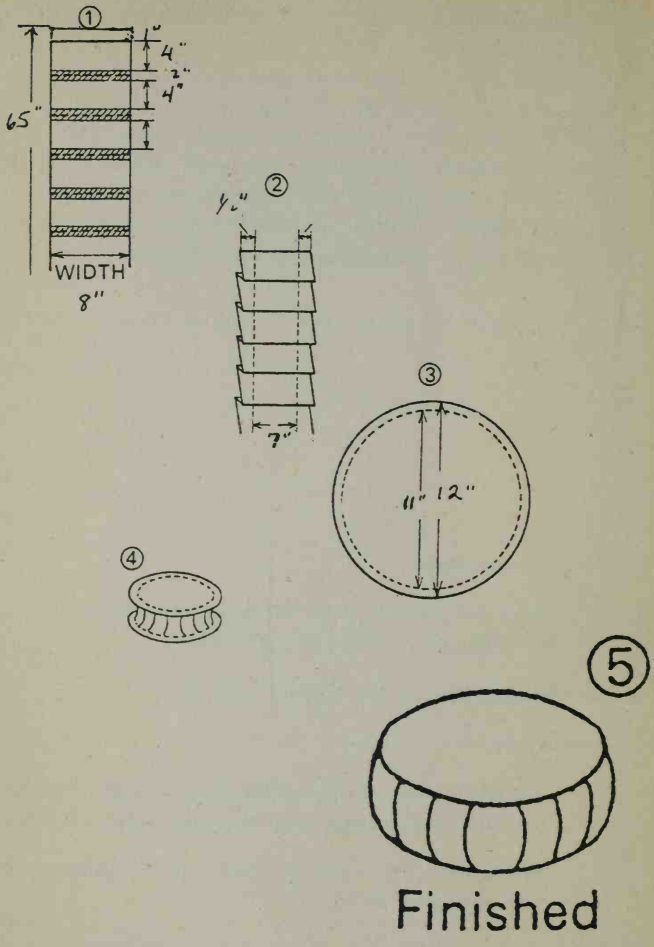

Figure 12

an inch in from the edges along the long sides and draw lines the length of the fabric).

4. To make pleats in the long piece of fabric, measuring from the newly finished end, mark 4 inches from the end along each seam allowance line and draw a line across the fabric, then 2 inches more, and so forth every 4 and 2 inches, until you have ten 4-plus-2 sets of lines and approximately 4 inches of fabric left at the end (see steps 1 and 2 of Figure 12).

5. Still working from the back side of the fabric, make pleats in the long piece of fabric, following steps 1 and 2 of Figure 12, folding the 2-inch sections under and matching the 4-inch lines to create 1-inch-deep pleats. Baste them in place (see step 2 of Figure 12).

6. On the two round pieces, mark a line half an inch from the outside on the back side of the fabric, all the way around, to create a seam allowance, as in step 3 of Figure 12.

7. With the back sides of the fabric facing out, pin the long pleated piece to one of the round pieces, matching seam lines, starting with the unfinished end of the rectangle. The finished end should overlap the unfinished end by about 4 inches.

8. Sew the long piece to the round piece along the seam line, sewing twice around the circle for strength (see step 4 of Figure 12).

9. Repeat with the other round piece, pinning and sewing it to the long piece, back side out. There should be a hole where the two ends of the long pleated piece overlap (see step 4 of Figure 12).

10. Take out the basting stitches and turn it right side out.

11. Stuff it firmly with kapok. You can put about 2 pounds of kapok in it. The kapok will gradually get packed down from use; you can add more kapok as needed (see step 5 of Figure 12). Kapok is a mass of silky fiber from the seed pods of the tropical ceiba tree. It is the best stuffing for zafus because it stuffs densely without matting, and is resilient and breathable. If you can't find kapok in your area, you can use cotton batting (although it tends to get matted) or polyester batting (which is hot to sit on, as it doesn't breathe); foam works less well.

12. For sitting zazen, you can place the zafu on a folded blanket or a rug, if you do not have a zabuton.

Glossary

Agamas and Nikayas: Among the earliest Buddhist teachings.
ancestors: A term for Zen predecessors, it is used in place of "patriarchs," and is often coupled with "buddhas," as in the phrase "buddhas and ancestors."
Antaiji: Established in the northern outskirts of Kyoto early in this century as a research center for Eihei Dōgen Zenji's works, particularly the *Shōbōgenzō*. Abbots Kōdō Sawaki Roshi and Kōshō Uchiyama Roshi retained the research aspect of the temple, but also formed it into a practice center. From the late 1960s through the mid-1970s, Antaiji drew practitioners from all around the world. All the abbots of Antaiji resisted pressures for the temple to become an official training monastery, in order to stay out of the limelight. With Uchiyama Roshi's retirement, the succeeding abbot moved Antaiji out of Kyoto and into the mountains. The number of practitioners dropped drastically and, at present, the temple has only about a half dozen residents.

Bodhidharma (in Japanese, *Bodaidaruma*): The founder and first ancestor of Zen in China, early in the sixth century. An Indian, he traveled to China, where he propagated Zen by sitting in a cave above Shao-lin-ssu (in Japanese, Shōrinji).

bodhisattva (in Japanese, *bodaisatta* or *bosatsu*): Anyone who seeks enlightenment through vows to save all sentient beings.

buddha-dharma: In a narrow sense, the Teaching taught by Shakyamuni Buddha and his successors. In a broader sense, the Truth or Reality of life.

conditioned self: What in Western psychology might be termed ego.

daishin: See MAGNANIMOUS MIND.

dharma: (1) things, phenomena; (2) the object of our thoughts; (3) the Buddha's teaching; (4) Law, truth.

dharma world (in Sanskrit, *dharmadhatu*): The entire universe inclusive of all things.

Dōgen Zenji (1200–1253): Founder of Soto Zen in Japan. He is referred to as Dōgen, as Dōgen Zenji (an honorific term; see ZENJI), and, more formally, as Eihei Dōgen (Zenji). Dōgen wrote voluminously on the interpretation of Buddhism and Zen, as well as on Buddhist practice. His more philosophical writings are included in his ninety-five-chapter *Shōbōgenzō*. His writings on practice include the *Eihei Daishingi* ("*Regulations for Eihei Monastery*"), *Zuimonki* ("Dōgen's informal talks"), and *Gakudō Yōjinshū* ("*Points to Consider in Studying and Practicing the Way*").

faith: The process of clarifying and becoming lucid about the structure and workings of the life force.

hinayana: Originally, a pejorative term applied to Buddhists who seek salvation only for themselves. Dōgen used the term to suggest a narrow attitude in regard to practice.

interdependence (in Japanese, *engi*; in Sanskrit, *pratitya-*

samutpada): The doctrine that all things are dependent on every other thing.

jijuyū zanmai: The total immersion of one's life whereby everything encountered is encountered totally and not half-heartedly.

jinissai jiko: A term coined by Dōgen to indicate an all-inclusive definition of Self.

joyful mind (in Japanese, *kishin*): Having a deep sense of joy and thankfulness to be able to carry out whatever task is at hand.

kakusoku: Literally, "wake up and touch." It means to wake up to and have intimate contact with true reality—and to actually live out that reality. It is very similar in meaning to *jijuyū zanmai*.

karma: One's actions, often connected with causal relationships.

kenshō: To see into or realize one's true nature.

kinhin: Walking Zen, often practiced between periods of zazen.

kishin: See JOYFUL MIND.

Kōdō Sawaki Roshi: See SAWAKI ROSHI.

kyōsaku: A bamboo or wooden stick used to wake up the zazen sitter who has fallen asleep.

magnanimous mind (in Japanese, *daishin*): The mind or attitude of viewing a situation or one's life from as broad a perspective as possible.

Mahayana Buddhism (in Japanese, *Daijō Bukkyō*): The teaching that any practice is never for oneself alone, but for all people.

Middle Way (in Japanese, *chūdō*): The Buddha's teaching, also expounded by Nagarjuna, that reality lies beyond all sensual or intellectual dualities of pain and pleasure, or right and wrong.

mumyō (in Sanskrit, *avidya*): Darkness or ignorance.
nehan jakujō: One of the three signs of the Buddha's teachings, intended to draw ordinary people away from the illusion of life and death and toward Nirvana or peace beyond all understanding.
nembutsu: Recitation of Amida Buddha's name—that is, to say "*Namu amida butsu*," which means "Homage to Amida Buddha."
nyoze: Like this.
opening the hand of thought (in Japanese, *atama no te banashi*): Uchiyama Roshi's expression that graphically describes the mental posture during zazen.
original self (in Japanese, *honrai no jiko*): The original state of things prior to processing them by thought.
parental mind (in Japanese, *rōshin*): Literally, the attitude of a parent toward her or his child, but in a broader sense, a person's attitude toward everything she or he encounters in life.
patriarch: See ANCESTORS.
pratyeka buddha: (in Japanese, *engaku*, also *byakushibutsu*, also *dokkaku*): One of two kinds of Hinayana sages, one who attains liberation without a teacher's guidance.
Pure Land Buddhism: The Buddhist teaching propagated in Japan by Hōnen and Shinran that all people are saved by Amida Buddha and will eventually go to the Western Paradise or Pure Land.
reality: In Buddhist terminology, *shinnyo*, the ultimate reality.
reality of life (in Japanese, *seimei no jitsubutsu*): An early expression of Uchiyama Roshi meaning True Reality, or in Buddhist terminology, *shinnyo*. "The activity of the reality of life" is a translation of *seimei no jitsubutsu no hataraki*—that is, the work or function of the life force.
repentance: The attitude or posture of a repentant Zen prac-

titioner is not merely to feel sorry or remorseful but to sit zazen. Zazen is the ultimate posture of repentance.

roshi: In Zen, a highly respected teacher, traditionally the head of a training monastery. It is used at the end of a name, as in Uchiyama Roshi and Sawaki Roshi.

rōshin: See PARENTAL MIND.

samadhi: (in Japanese, *zanmai*): In a narrow sense, a focusing of one's concentration on one object, but in a much broader sense, being concentrated and pouring all one's energies into each activity.

sanbōin: Literally, the three seals of the Buddhist Law or Teaching. They are *shogyō mujō*, all things are impermanent; *shohō muga*, there is no unchanging, substantial self; and *nehan jakujō*, peace beyond desire. See SHIHŌIN.

sangai kaiku: Suffering, the Second Undeniable Reality. See SHIHŌIN.

sangha (in Japanese, *sōrin*): The gathering of three or more people to practice Buddhism.

satori: Realization or enlightenment.

Sawaki Roshi: Former abbot of Antaiji, he died in 1965, at which time his first disciple, Kōshō Uchiyama Roshi, became abbot. Kōdō Sawaki Roshi spent only a few days each month at Antaiji during his tenure as abbot because he traveled around the country continually, conducting sesshins and giving dharma lectures on Zen.

self, Self: Used here generally to distinguish conditioned or desiring self, and *jiko*, or universal Self.

self making the self out of the self, self doing itself by itself (in Japanese, *jiko ga jiko o jiko suru*): An enigmatic expression of Sawaki Roshi indicating that the subject, object, and function of Self is *jiko*, or Self.

Self which is only Self (in Japanese, *jiko giri no jiko*): Coined

by Uchiyama Roshi to urge followers not to *speculate* about what Self might be. The expression is meant to indicate that there is nothing outside of Self. It should be understood in a nondualistic way.

sesshin: Long periods of zazen, sometimes extending several days or weeks.

Shakyamuni Buddha: The historical figure who attained complete enlightenment under the bodhi tree; the founder of Buddhism.

shihōin: The four seals of the Buddhist teaching. They are the three seals, or *sanbōin*, plus *sangai kaiku*, the Second Undeniable Reality, that all beings suffer. See SANBŌIN.

shikantaza: Eihei Dōgen Zenji's expression for zazen. Literally, *shikantaza* means "just sitting," or "only sitting." See *Shikantaza—An Introduction to Zazen*, Shōhaku Okumura, Kyoto Soto Zen Center, 1985.

Shōbōgenzō: The major philosophical explanation of Buddhism by Eihei Dōgen Zenji, containing ninety-five chapters.

shōgyō mujō: See SANBŌIN.

shōhō jissō: All things are ultimate reality as they are. The expression appears in the *Lotus Sutra*.

shōhō muga: See SANBŌIN.

shōjō no shu: Practice based on enlightenment.

shushō ichinyo: The identity of practice and enlightenment.

sravaka: Originally, a disciple of the Buddha; later, a follower of Hinayana who contemplates the principle of the fourfold noble truth to attain nirvana.

tanden: An area a few inches below the navel and around the abdomen.

tathata: Suchness, thusness.

three minds (of Dōgen): See MAGNANIMOUS MIND, PARENTAL MIND, and JOYFUL MIND.

three seals: See SANBŌIN.

universal life, universal Self: Refers to the eternal aspect of life and Self.

vow: Life direction.

Way, Buddha Way: To seek or follow the Buddha Way means to focus all your effort on the most genuine way to live, and to continually refine your life.

zabuton: Large square cushion on which a smaller round cushion called a zafu is placed during zazen.

zafu: Round cushion used to sit on during zazen.

zazen: In the narrow sense, the term is used to indicate a particular sitting posture, though Uchiyama Roshi uses the expression "a life of zazen" to point out a lifestyle centered on a sitting practice. The attitude with which one sits subsequently affects one's attitude during all one's actions. The word should not be confused with the English word "meditation," even though many Zen Buddhists use the word synonymously with it, simply because the English word already carries its own connotations.

zendo: A hall used just for sitting in zazen, or a place dedicated to zazen.

Zenji: An old Buddhist term that originally referred to any Zen practitioner, but in later periods came to be used exclusively in the Zen schools as an honorific title meaning "Zen teacher or master." In the Soto Zen tradition only the abbots of the two head monasteries, Eiheiji and Sōjiji, are called *zenji*. It is used after the name, as in Dōgen Zenji and Keizan Zenji.

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