“Omori Sogen Roshi’s classic text is a treasure for anyone wishing to learn more about the practice of Zen meditation. It is truly a transformative work.”

—Shunmyo Masuno, chief priest of Kenkoh-ji temple and author of *The Art of Simple Living: 100 Daily Practices from a Japanese Zen Monk for a Lifetime of Calm and Joy*

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Omori Roshi's calligraphy carved in wood, "Daihonzan Chozen-ji," placed at the entrance to Daihonzan Chozen-ji/ International Zen Dojo in Honolulu, Hawaii. The temple and accompanying lay organization were founded by Omori Roshi in 1972 as "a place of Zen training where persons of any race, creed, or religion who are determined to live in accordance with Buddha Nature may fulfill this need through intensive endeavor...." The name that Omori Roshi gave the temple, "Chozen-ji" means "to transcend the form of Zen." In October 1979, Omori Roshi established Chozen-ji as a *daihonzan*, the main temple and headquarters of a new line of Rinzai Zen, with Tanouye Tenshin Roshi as Abbot.

Canon

Zen is to transcend life and death (all dualism), to truly realize that the entire universe is the "True Human Body" through the discipline of "mind and body in oneness." Miyamoto Niten (Musashi) called it *Iwo no mi** (body of a huge boulder—going through life rolling and turning like a huge boulder); Yagyu Sekishusai named it *Marobashi no michi** (a bridge round like a ball—being in accord with the myriad changes of life). Besides this actual realization, there is nothing else.

Zen without the accompanying physical experience is nothing but empty discussion. Martial ways without truly realizing the "Mind" is nothing but beastly behavior. We agree to undertake all of this as the essence of our training.

All our students, strive diligently! Gentlemen of the Rinzai Honzan (Main Temple) in Japan, open your eyes to this and together let us send it out to the world.

Archbishop Omori Sogen Rotaishi,
Dated 1 October 1979

Notes

Note (*): For these phrases, Omori Rotaishi used old Japanese. The modern pronunciations would be *Iwao no mi* and *Marubashi no michi* respectively.

Acknowledgments

Finding *Sanzen Nyumon* ready to appear in English leaves us grateful to the many people who made it possible. The work of Tenshin Tanouye Rotaishi, Archbishop of Daihonzan Chozen-ji and dharma successor to Omori Rotaishi, has been foremost as he steadfastly insisted that the *kiai* or energy/spirit of Omori Rotaishi's words be of primary significance in the translation. We are grateful as well to Yoshie Omori for permission to translate her late husband's work from Japanese.

Trevor Leggett has been writing for almost forty years about the relationship between Zen and *budo* or martial arts and we have long relied upon his work in the teaching at Daihonzan Chozen-ji. We are honored that he consented to write a personal introduction to Omori Rotaishi and his text. Many years ago Jackson Morisawa first drew the figures that illustrate the principles of posture and breathing outlined in Chapter 3 and they have served us well as aids to teaching *zazen*.

Arthur Koga, Director of the Institute of Zen Studies, led the final push to get the manuscript into print. In this effort, he was assisted by Gordon Greene, Teri Kaneshiro, Kristine Khoo, Sandra Kunimoto, Beverly Mukai, Cheryl Okazaki, and Betty Whitmore. Neal Kunimura, a long-term supporter of our publishing program, provided the well-equipped setting in which Gregg Kam worked long hours to make the manuscript press-ready. Our thanks as well go to the numerous Dojo members who offered financial support over the last year of work.

Dogen Hosokawa Roshi, Abbot, Daihonzan Chozen-ji
Roy Yoshimoto

New Foreword

Introduction to Zen Training is a daring book by a daring man—Omori Sogen. Renowned Zen Master, swordsman, and calligrapher, Omori Rotaishi's impact has continued to resonate around the world, even 25 years after his death. In 1964 he wrote:

> 'Human alienation,' 'loss of self,' 'human development,' and 'restoration of autonomy' are now popular phrases. In fact, we may say there has never been a time where Zen has been needed as much as today when solutions to these problems are so urgently needed.

We could easily say the same today.

In 1972, eight years after he wrote *Introduction to Zen Training* as *Sanzen Nyumon*, Omori Sogen founded our temple in Hawaii, giving us the name Chozen-ji, The Temple of Zen Transcending Zen. This book and Chozen-ji are inseparable as they both look to transmit the essence of Zen beyond any imposed boundaries. Omori Sogen also established Chozen-ji as the first *daihonzan*, or headquarters temple, to be established under canon law outside of Japan. With the name Chozen-ji and our status as a *daihonzan*, he was challenging us to discard the forms of Zen that are obstacles to training in the modern world, but without compromising its purpose.

When the English edition of this book was first published, the Japanese edition was not altered—only photos and captions from Chozenji were added. Also added were an introduction from Trevor Leggett, a foreword from Tanouye Tenshin and the Canon from Chozen-ji. There is really no update needed to their contributions, and the photos from

1996 still reflect the striking beauty of Chozen-ji's grounds today. But the one message worth adding to this new edition is that Chozen-ji, and in turn Omori Sogen's legacy, are still vibrantly alive in the 21st century.

The training principles that Omori Rotaishi outlines in this book continue to be put into rigorous practice. In the first line of our Canon, he wrote, "Zen is to transcend life and death (all dualism) to truly realize that the entire universe is the 'True Human Body' through the discipline of 'mind and body in oneness.' Together with Tanouye Tenshin, his Dharma successor in Zen and a genius in the martial arts, Omori Rotaishi gave practical form to the discipline of mind and body in oneness at Chozen-ji. They developed an approach to entering Zen through the body and the Ways. They established zazen, the *Hojo* (martial arts form) and *sesshin* (six day intensive training retreats to collect the mind) as core practices to foster *samadhi* (a concentrated state of body/mind) and *kiai* (energy, vitality).

In its basic form, zazen is sitting meditation and provides the easiest conditions in which to experience *samadhi* by refining breath, posture, and concentration in stillness. Students start by learning to sit in a stable position for 45 minutes without moving. They face each other across the room, count their breaths, breathe from the lower abdomen, see 180 degrees with eyes gazing down, and sense everything. In zazen, the mind and body are unified like that of a swordsman facing an opponent or a cat ready to pounce on a rat. Omori Rotaishi scorns sitting vacuously as "the ghost's cave at the foot of the black mountain." He also warns:

> Zazen should never become a means of making yourself feel good nor should it be a tranquilizer to settle excitement and wild thoughts. What is of primary importance is what the ancients called 'no gaining and no merit.' Indeed, zazen consists in awakening us to our own essence so as to secure and express our True Selves in everyday conduct.

This spirit of taking the training into everyday life is a critical feature of Omori Sogen and Chozen-ji's approach to Zen. This entire process—from developing *samadhi* in stillness,

then in movement, and then in an art—becomes a Way to realize the True Self and be an artist of life. In his second sentence of our Canon, Omori Rotaishi described "this actual realization" with the sayings of two great swordsmen in Japanese history: Miyamoto Musashi's, "*Iwo no mi*" (body of a huge boulder—going through life rolling and turning like huge boulder), and Yagyu Sekishusai's, "*Marobashi no michi*" (a bridge round like a ball— being in accord with the myriad changes of life).

This process of development is not just psychological or philosophical. Omori Rotaishi's contribution to today's mindfulness movement is his insistence that the training is physical or meta-physical. True mindfulness requires deep training of the body. Musashi's or Yagyu's "mind," immovable because it does not stop on any object, is also the immovable body, which is so centered it can move in any direction. Omori Rotaishi's approach surpasses a mindfulness approach which ends in a conceptual understanding that is of limited use in facing the existential problems of our lives and our world.

Omori Rotaishi feared creating "another addition to the useless Zen literature." However, the record of his own Zen training that he shares with us in *Introduction to Zen Training* is an act of grandfatherly kindness. Given his mastery of Zen, the sword, and the brush, and his background as a political and community leader, it is a record with the breadth and depth to help many people. It is best for answering questions you have about your own training, but it is likely to frustrate you if you approach it as a textbook. For those of us training seriously in Zen, it is a classic which inspires us endlessly and helps us fulfill Tanouye Rotaishi's charge after 9/11:

> Just ring the bell for our hope for peace for all mankind. The world is changed forever, and we won't know how it will be resolved. Our duty is to keep hope and humanity alive. Train hard! Our spirit counts.

In the words of Omori Sogen's student and co-founder of Chozenji, Tanouye Tenshin, "Train hard, the world is depending on us."

Sayama Daian, Abbot of Chozen-ji
Michael Kangen, Head Priest of Chozen-ji
July 17, 2019

Painting of Bodhidharma by Omori Sogen

Foreword to the English Edition

The previous page shows a painting of Bodhidharma by Omori Sogen. The four characters on the left are *kaku-nen-mu-sho*, "Emptiness, no Holiness," the answer that Bodhidharma gave to the Emperor Wu of China when asked, "What is the first principle of Buddhist doctrine?" Omori Rotaishi frequently painted Bodhidharma, and the subject is particularly appropriate to this book.

Bodhidharma is the monk who traveled from India to China early in the 6th century. When he realized that the Emperor of China did not understand his answer, he entered the Shaolin Temple where he meditated for nine years. In the end, he successfully transmitted Zen to Huike, known to us now as the Second Chinese Patriarch of Zen.

Omori Rotaishi was one of this century's foremost Japanese Zen Masters, calligraphers, and swordsmen. And of significance to us here in the West, he was the founder of Daihonzan Chozen-ji, the first *daihonzan* or headquarters temple to be established under canon law outside Japan. Chozen-ji and the accompanying lay organization, International Zen Dojo, were founded as "a place of Zen training where persons of any race, creed or religion who are determined to live in accordance with Buddha Nature may fulfill this need through intensive endeavor." Omori Rotaishi wrote this book thirty years ago because in Japan at that time, there was little available in print to describe the basic training principles of Rinzai Zen. We have found the same to be true today outside of Japan and have worked to bring out this

translation.

We are honored that Trevor Leggett wrote the Introduction to this text, writing from his many years of knowing Omori Rotaishi in Japan. Like D. T. Suzuki, Mr. Leggett is one of an older generation who were able to grasp the essence of Japanese culture. He is unique in that, through his long years of severe training in *judo*, he understands the culture especially through his body and it is this solid understanding that Omori Rotaishi writes about here.

Tenshin Tanouye Rotaishi
Archbishop, Daihonzan Chozen-ji

The large temple bell at Daihonzan Chozen-ji, Honolulu. The bell, cast in 1966 at the famous Kyoto foundry of Takahashi Imono Kojo, is known as the Peace Bell as symbolized by the two doves placed at the top of the bell. The inscription reads:

> Pray for the Eternal Peace of the World and for the Everlasting Friendship between Honolulu and Kyoto, 1st January 1966, Gizo Takayama, Mayor of Kyoto, Japan.

Introduction

This is a translation of a well-known Zen training manual by a well-known modern master (*roshi*), Omori Sogen. The book is essentially practical. Omori Roshi repeatedly points out that injunctions and declarations, however exalting, without right practice are thinner than paper. In this book there are a few directions on practice, ones that usually are left for oral instruction, but there is no point in commenting on the practices. The book speaks for itself and comment is a dilution.

The reader who knows of the Buddhist No-self doctrine must be prepared for references to the True Self. Zen does not encourage philosophy, but it often uses such terms of the Mind-Only school of Buddhism, with which Japanese readers will have at least a bowing acquaintance. If its main thrust has to be summed up briefly for Westerners, it could be, "The True Self is the ultimate subject. The basis for all our illusions is the act regarding the objectifications of our own mind as a world independent of that mind which is really its source and substance."

A feature of the book is its freedom from the narrowness which tends to appear in many traditions—Eastern or Western, religious or secular— under the slogan of "In or Out, All or Nothing." Omori was a keen fencer, and first encountered this narrowness there. Yamaoka Tesshu had been a great fencing master of the nineteenth century. When his teacher found that Tesshu was also becoming interested in Zen and in calligraphy, he warned him against splitting his aim, saying "You will miss all the targets." But Tesshu persisted and became a famous master in all three fields. In the twentieth century, Omori was similarly warned by his fencing teacher, but he too went ahead

and became famous in the same three fields.

He has shown an equally wide vision in the religious field. Father Kadowaki, a Japanese Jesuit, completed Zen training under Omori Roshi without needing to abandon his faith. Father Kadowaki went on to write a remarkable book, *Zen and the Bible*, which for many Christians has vivified their faith. When Omori first read the Bible and came to the passage in Exodus where Moses asks the voice in the burning bush, "Who shall I say has sent me?" he thought to himself, "Now we shall hear the name of God, something we have not yet heard." But the voice says, "I AM WHAT I AM; say I AM has sent me." Omori Roshi told me he was very impressed—it is pure Zen.

When Zen came from China, there were some changes as it mixed with a certain amount of Japanese culture and history. The Chinese monasteries, for instance, were mostly on mountains, remote from cities. The big Japanese monasteries are still called *honzan*, "mountain," though mostly they are found near or in a city. We can see from some of the incidents in this book that the Chinese pupils were not given systematic instruction, whereas in Japan there were strict schedules. The interviews with the Chinese masters were in public, whereas in Japan, the master and pupil face each other alone. Unlike in China, the warrior rated high on the scale of Japanese society. Many warriors were men of culture, poets and artists, with their work often illuminated by their Zen training. Musashi's carvings, for example, are now national treasures.

Some incidents that Omori uses to make his points can be surprising. Consider his story of Tesshu and the rats—such powers were practiced by warriors engaged in life-and-death contests, but accounts can always be brushed aside. They are attained by severe austerities—Tesshu did not lie down to sleep for years—but they are not the object of Zen as Omori Roshi makes clear. Why then are they mentioned? Because those who practice may experience something remarkable as a passing side effect of their training. If they have never been told of such experiences, they may become excited when it appears and disappointed when it goes. But if they have been told that such things are known, and not wanted, in Zen, they do not get disturbed.

Western-educated people often tend to look at the one-pointed conviction displayed in Zen stories with some reservations, fearing that conviction may be irrational fanaticism. This may be a disadvantage in confronting some of the crises which Zen deliberately produces. The West does not have the doctrine that one-pointedness in a pure mind produces infallible inspiration.

Where the Westerner may have an advantage is in his ability to stand alone, or at least in his ability to try to do so. Many Japanese shrink from the ringing declarations of George Bernard Shaw's St. Joan, "Yes, I am alone on earth ... My loneliness shall be my strength" or from the final words of Henrik Ibsen's *Enemy of the People*, "Yes, I am alone. And because I am alone, I am the strongest man on earth!" Some Japanese think such a man is like a mere dot on a big piece of paper, but Omori Roshi was not afraid to be alone—"one against a million" as he says. Alone, he was not alone; the True Self was at one with them. But, as the saying goes, this was one man in a million.

I remember an interview at one of the biggest Japanese Zen training temples, an interview which was to decide whether I could enter for a short time. After I had passed a preliminary test (sitting alone in a huge hall for two hours before dawn, secretly watched to see whether I moved), the old master of novices said to me, "In Zen, you stand alone." Then he became silent. I thought, "Of course you stand alone," and waited for him to go on. After two or three minutes he did so. I later found that there was usually a reaction to these words, and he had been waiting for one from me. It was his big gun, so to speak, but this time the target was not there. (It was, for other guns later.)

The self-reliance based on individualism may, however, be accompanied by a disadvantage: the feeling of "I am good as you are, so my judgment is as good as yours." This triple-ringed egoism is a great barrier in Zen.

Omori Roshi explains his points carefully, so far as they can be explained at all in words. But he also expects students to see a point. His own clothes were simple but always clean and neat. When some hippies argued that this was not "natural,"

Omori said nothing but pointed to a nearby cat, busy cleaning and smoothing its fur.

I used to see Omori Roshi when I visited Japan every two or three years. He had a gentle voice and manner, but my Judo experience could recognize the long severe training that lay behind that. He made no attempt to impress any more than a rock or a willow does, but he was impressive. He never looked out of place. When he came to meet me in his simple priest's robes, he did not look out of place standing on the railway platform. In a garden, he did not look like a human visitor; he looked part of the garden.

Trevor Leggett
London, October 1995

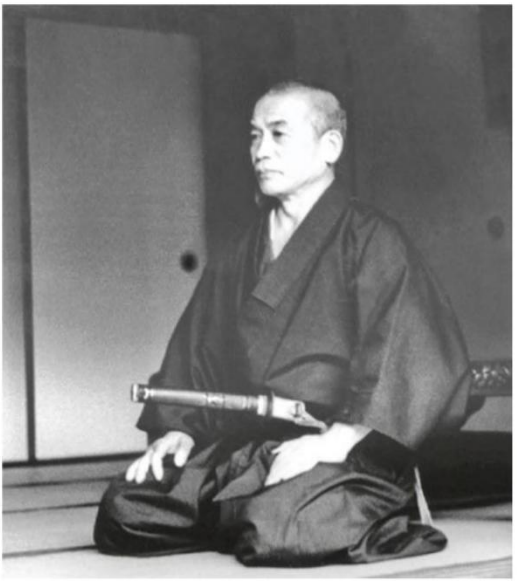
Preface

It is said that Zen, though all the while professing that the essence of Zen cannot be captured by words and letters, abounds with literature. This may be so. Even Shakyamuni,[1] teaching the eighty-four thousand Buddhist doctrines continuously for forty-nine years, taught "say not one word." Likewise in our Zen sect, although we boast of having no words or phrases, we cannot help the profuse amount of literature because it expresses compassion or what we call "grandmotherly concern."

When I look for suitable books for prospective students of Zen meditation, however, most of the books I find seem to be inadequate. It is very hard to find any that I could recommend to meet their needs, primarily because there are very few books on *zazen*[2] written by competent practitioners. As far as I know, I wonder if there are any better books on zazen than *Zazen no Shokei*[3] by Kawajiri Hogin, a lay Zen Master of the Rinzai Sect of Zen Buddhism, and *Sanzen no Hiketsu*[4] by Zen Master Harada Sogaku of the Soto Sect of Zen Buddhism. Of these two books, the former is excellent, being concise and meeting every need of the student. However, it was originally published in the Meiji Era, and, to my great regret, it is very difficult to obtain nowadays.

For these reasons, I have come to write this book after hearing repeated requests even though it looks like this may be another addition to the useless Zen literature. In fact I am embarrassed that it will hardly bear comparison with either of the two books mentioned above. However, this book can be read as a record of my Zen training—an accumulation of my experiences, ranging from my earlier days, when I threw

myself into the severe discipline of Seki Seisetsu[5] at Tenryu-ji as a lay student of Zen, to the later days spent as a training monk under the guidance of Seki Bukuo.[6]



Omori Sogen Rotaishi

However, not to be overly confident, I will be more than satisfied if this book can be used as a reference to prevent beginning students from going in the wrong direction.

Omori Sogen, Author
Early Spring 1964

View from the entrance of Daihonzan Chozen-ji, Honolulu. The Budo Dojo and Kyudo Dojo are on the left.

Notes

1 Shakyamuni. (Skt.) Literally "Sage of the Shakya Clan," the founder of Buddhism.

2 Zazen. (Jpn.) Zen meditation.

3 Kawajiri Hogin, *Zazen no Shokei* (The Shortcut to Zazen) (Tokyo: Sumiya-sho-ten, 1909).

4 Harada Sogaku, *Sanzen no Hiketsu* (The Essence of Zen Discipline) (Tokyo: Do-ai Kai, 1936).

5 Seki Seisetsu. Japanese Zen master. 1877–1945. Former Archbishop of Tenryu-ji, Kyoto.

6 Seki Bukuo. Japanese Zen master. 1903–1991. Former Archbishop of Tenryu-ji, Kyoto.

Chapter 1

Why Do Zazen

To Know Our True Self

We live day after day, year after year, sleeping and waking, crying and laughing, gaining and losing, slipping and falling. Why in the world do we live like this? Or, who is causing us to live this way? I think there are many people who go straight to their graves, consumed by their careers, without ever taking time to ask such questions. There are, however, many others who become so obsessed with such doubts and questions that they find it difficult to work. While some might say that such reflection is a pastime of the idle, we might also say that our essential difference from other animals is found in our drive to consider such problems.

If we were living in Europe during the Middle Ages, when people were regarded as servants, or even slaves, of God, we might be able to solve all of our problems simply by convincing ourselves that God's will is responsible for all the phenomena and events of our lives. Today, however, most people are no longer satisfied by that approach. Even schoolchildren would start laughing if they heard us say that our tears and laughter, wins and losses, were caused by a God in Heaven. They would say that these things are our own doing. No doubt the majority of adults are even more likely to think that we ourselves are creators, and that gods and Buddhas are products of our own minds.

For now, set aside the question whether such a way of thinking is right or wrong. When we ask, "What is the Self?," we find that we do not know our True Self. Most of us look at

ourselves as limited in time and space to what we Japanese call the "fifty-year life span and five-foot body." Such a view is fine, of course, if people could live their entire lives in peace, without problems and without questioning. But, for most people, this peace never exists. Despite all the changes in practice and doctrine, this is the reason that religion has not completely disappeared from the surface of the earth.

We often compare the state of our minds to that of our stomachs. When we are in good health, we forget that our stomachs even exist. But, as soon as we have a stomachache, we are continually conscious of the pain there. This happens because we don't pay attention to our bodies until we become ill. Only then, for the first time, we become conscious of the part that is ailing. In the same way, as long as we live in peace and good health, we are not even conscious of our own selves. Nor is there a need to be conscious.

However, in the course of our long lives, we experience grief and pleasure, joy and sorrow, ups and downs. At times, we may shrink back from the pain of living and despair at the uncertainties of life. There may be times when we are discouraged by the limits of our strength and feel the need to ponder such questions as, "What is life?," "What is the truth of human existence?," or "What is the Self?" Feeling uncertain about our own existence—the "fifty-year life span and the five-foot body"—we begin to despair. It is there and then that religion comes to our rescue as a prescription to restore us to health.

For thousands of years scholars have been discussing religion. Although they differ in the details, generally they seem to agree that the essence of religion is becoming one with infinity while living in this finite world and finding eternity in every moment of this changing life. When we feel insecure about our existence and find no solace in our small selves, we are driven by an unbearable feeling to become one with the "Eternal" and united with the "Absolute."

With regards to the methods of attaining the essence of religion, there are generally two types as described by Imazu Kogaku:[1] the meditation type and the prayer type. The prayer type of religions are characterized by the idea that the Whole

(God) exists outside the one who prays. In the meditation type, the individual is regarded as primarily identical with the Whole (God). This distinction is easy to understand.

In the prayer type of religion, it is natural that theology and philosophy must be regarded as indispensable subjects of study in order to prove the existence of God and to describe God's relations with human beings. On the other hand, in the meditation type of religion, the study of theology and philosophy is not essential.

In Zen meditation, for instance, students are expected to be individually awakened to their primal oneness with Buddha (the Whole) through the actual experience of *samadhi*.[2] Students need a teacher to guide them in the proper practice of meditation, to interpret the experience of that state of being, and to show them the proper discipline in the affairs of daily life. For these reasons, records of the lives and teachings of Zen masters are highly valued.

I do not think it necessary to deal with prayer-type religions here, but I would like to write further about the meditation type of religion. For example, the founder of Rinzai Zen, Rinzai Gigen (Lin-chi I-hsuan)[3] often said, "On your lump of red flesh is a true person without rank who is always going in and out of the face of every one of you." The "lump of red flesh" refers to the body; the "true person without rank" refers to all categories of men and women—rich and poor, young and old. To put it another way, it refers to the true person who cannot be limited by the categorization or measurement of the everyday world. We may say that the true person pertains to the Whole just as the body pertains to the individual. In other words, Rinzai is saying, "All of you, look carefully at the individual that is your body. Isn't the Whole that is unlimited by anything also found there?" Recognizing that an individual is by nature the Whole is what Imazu means by the meditation type of religion.

In this way, the Whole is not any God, Buddha or Absolute Being apart from the Self. It is the individual that is fused to the Whole. Here we can know that the individual is that which is fused to the Whole, and the Whole is that which is fused to the individual. In this sense, when we learn that this lump of

red flesh, this five-foot bag of dung, is really infinite and eternal, unlimited by anything, we are liberated from our limited viewpoints. What we call the source of human personality—the True Self—is said to be this kind of eternal existence, yet it does not exist outside the living body. The realization of this fact is the essence of the meditation type of religion. At the same time, it is the way of human self-realization in Rinzai Zen.

In Zen we often use the phrases, "to die the Great Death" and "to be reborn to the True Self." I think these words truly express the character of Zen. "To die the Great Death" is to root out ideas and beliefs we commonly accept, such as having a "self," and to negate the small self or the ego. "To be reborn to the True Self " is to affirm the Whole and our true selves without ego. To phrase this in terms of one sect of Buddhism,[4] it may be called the exalted life of the Absolute Buddha. Therefore, in Zen one awakens to one's True Self and takes firm hold of it. To give life to one's True Self sufficiently in all the affairs of daily life and to practice living as a human being while purifying the entire world is perhaps the most complete way of saying it.

If this is Zen, it should be clear what problems Zen addresses in the modern world. "Human alienation," "loss of self," "human development," and "restoration of autonomy" are now popular phrases. In fact, we may say that there has never been a time when Zen has been needed as much as today when solutions to these problems are so urgently needed.

Now, Here and I

Let us accept that there are two types of religious methods: the prayer type and the meditation type. I will discuss the meditation type and how it can help us to seek the unlimited within the limited and to touch the eternal in the moment.

In the T'ang Dynasty of China, there lived a Zen man named Kyosho Dofu (Ching-ch'ing Tao-fu.)[5] In his youth, he trained diligently under Zen Master Gensha Shibi (Hsuan-sha Shih-pei)[6] but for some reason, Zen realization always seemed to be beyond his grasp. One day, seeking guidance, Kyosho

spoke to his teacher about this. At that moment, Gensha heard the murmuring of the mountain stream and asked,

> "Do you hear that sound?"
> "Yes, I hear it," Kyosho replied immediately.
> "You should enter Zen from there," instructed Gensha.

Is limitless Zen in the murmuring of the mountain stream? Or is it that at the moment Gensha heard the rushing sound of the water, he touched the eternal? Rinzai often said, "Right here ... before your eyes ... the one who is listening to this lecture." In other words, "Right now at this very moment, who is the one listening to this lecture?" Can we say that this is the infinite eternal Buddha? If we think of it in a shallow fashion, I am afraid it would only mean living on the impulse of the moment the way dogs and cats do. Therefore, I must add the following explanation, though it may be redundant.

It is often said that truth is something that is universally valid. To put it simply, it is something which can be applied anytime, anywhere, and to anyone. For instance, fire is hot no matter what time it is. Fire was hot thousands of years ago as surely as fire will be hot hundreds of years from now. Of course fire is hot today. Furthermore, fire is hot in America, and it is hot in Russia as well as in Japan. Fire is hot no matter where it is. Moreover, fire is hot to you, to me, and it will burn anyone who touches it. In this way it is true that fire is hot anytime, anywhere, and to anyone. Therefore, the fact that fire is hot is recognized as an indisputable truth.

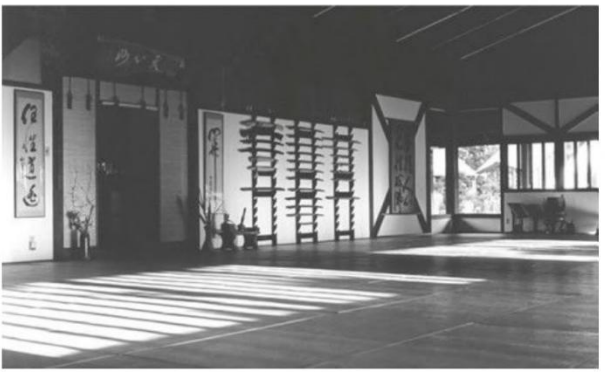
Let us see just where that fire which is hot anytime, anywhere, and to anyone exists. Can you see that it is nowhere except in theory and has nothing more than an abstract existence? It is not the real fire which will burn your hand if you touch it. Similarly, that which does not have universal validity anytime, anywhere, and for everyone is no more than a partial and arbitrary view of things; what is universally valid in itself is abstract and conceptual and cannot be real and concrete.

The reality that would satisfy the thirst deep within our minds and hearts is not found in abstraction. We are not ghosts. How could anything abstract which is valid anytime,

anywhere, and for everyone become a religious objective which would actually relieve our thirst?

If Rinzai's "right now, before your eyes, the one who is listening to this lecture" does not become the concrete "now, here, I," it will not have an active life in reality. On the other hand, if it is merely "now, here, I," it is no different from the impulsive way of living only for the moment in the world of dogs and cats, or even earthworms and maggots. There is not one speck of human dignity or freedom of personality in that. The eternity of "anytime" shines in this moment "now" while the unlimitedness of "anyplace" is manifested in the limits of "here." When the universality of "anyone" dances out in the individual "I," for the first time you have the world of Zen.

It may be said that Zen uncovers the form of one's True Self in the experience of oneness in this physical body. In terms of time, there is eternal life without birth and death. In terms of space, there is infinite light with no limit in space. I think this is what Priest Gensha taught his young disciple Kyosho when he expressed the anguish of his inability to gain a foothold in Zen.



Budo Dojo, Daihonzan Chozen-ji, Honolulu. The calligraphy is by Omori Sogen Rotaishi. The swords to the right of the *Butsudan* are used for training in the martial arts.

Omori Roshi's *enso* engraved in marble, Daihonzan Chozen-ji. The circle does not represent anything in the conventional sense of the word but it can be said to mean "absolute."

Notes

1 Imazu Kogaku, *Shishi Sojo Ron* (A Treatise on the Transmission of the Teaching from the Master to the Student) (Publisher and Date unknown).

2 *Samadhi*. (Skt.) A state of complete concentration and relaxation.

Lin-chi I-hsuan. Chinese Zen Master. d. 867. (Jpn., Rinzai Gigen).

[3] The phrase comes from his work, *Lin-chi Lu* (Jpn. Rinzai Roku) (Record of the Words of Lin-chi) (Publisher and Date Unknown).

[4] Tariki (Other Power) Buddhism calls for reliance on the saving grace of Amida Buddha.

[5] Ching-ch'ing Tao-fu. Chinese Zen Master. 868–937. (Jpn., Kyosho Dofu).

[6] Hsuan-sha Shih-pei. Chinese Zen Master. 835–908. (Jpn., Gensha Shibi).

Chapter 2

The Aim of Zazen

For some years now, interest in Eastern culture, especially in Zen Buddhism, has been increasing among people in Europe and America. Not only are Westerners reading books on Zen, but the number of those who actually attempt to sit in meditation has grown as well. If we consider that the founding patriarch of Zen, Bodhidharma,[1] was called a "blue-eyed barbarian monk" and that Shakyamuni Buddha also belonged to the Aryan race, it could be said that Zen meditation originated in the West. Even in Japan, as talk of human development becomes more widespread, the number of young men and women who do zazen is rapidly increasing.

As Zen teachers we are truly grateful for this trend, both within Japan and in the West. But once we examine people's reasons for sitting, we find that they are extremely varied and sometimes not necessarily sound. Therefore, our joy over the trend cannot be unqualified. It cannot be said that all of those who knock at the gate of Zen for the first time aspire to understand the essential meaning of Zen.

When we read newspaper and magazine articles about the health benefits of putting strength in the lower belly while sitting, or statements like "zazen is good for your health," we may expect that many readers who are sick and weak will immediately take up zazen as a way to good health. Also, as the world becomes increasingly chaotic and confused, anyone can easily become spiritually tired and prone to neurosis. Therefore, surely there must be many who sit in meditation as a kind of mental therapy.

When I reflect upon my own experiences, they are now so

vague that I cannot recall what my purpose was when I first began Zen training. I do recall that in grade school I read a story about a man named Oki Teisuke. It said in one passage that Teisuke had the wits scared out of him when a strange young man doing zazen "in icy silence" suddenly shouted at him. After being told that this spiritual forcefulness was fostered by Zen training, Teisuke himself began to train. I remember not knowing the word "Zen" so I would often look it up in dictionaries and ask people its meaning. But I still did not understand it, and it always remained in back of my mind. Years later that may have been what led me into Zen.

Certainly Zen teachers of long ago heard of students using Zen for good health and spiritual renewal or heard of students training in Zen because they were fascinated by the power of scaring the wits out of someone with one shout. But they must have wept at the thought of Zen being used this way.

Deciding clearly why you study Zen is an important question, one that will determine whether you succeed in Zen training or go astray. This is the main reason why Zen teachers have always insisted upon this point. The traditional instruction is, "If one does not have true resolve to attain enlightenment, all of one's efforts will be in vain." That is true in any learning, not only in Zen. Just as you focus on a target before you aim an arrow, if you focus your mind and decisively determine the direction in which you are going, you are already halfway there. This means that "for what purpose ... ?" is a question of great importance.

In the first section of the classic text *Zazen-gi* it is said:

> Bodhisattvas who study *prajna*-wisdom[2] must first have deep compassion for all beings and a deep longing to save all of them. They must practice *samadhi* meditation with great care. Refusing to practice zazen only for their own emancipation, they must promise to ferry these sentient beings over to the other shore.[3]

From a different perspective, though, we must recognize that lecturing about the significance of resolve and focus will probably be in vain when dealing with those who know nothing of Zen. No matter what your purpose when you begin

your training, it is the teacher's responsibility to guide you onto the proper path. For example, if a person starts off doing zazen for health purposes but then is able to receive proper guidance from a teacher, gradually that person will advance along the way, will start to see into his true nature, and may finally attain enlightenment.

Types of Zazen

According to Harada Sogaku Roshi, there are two or three hundred kinds of Zen.[4] Even in Shakyamuni's day there were said to be 96 kinds of Ways, each cultivating a samadhi similar to that of Zen. Therefore, it could be said that there were 96 different types of Zen within early Buddhism.

But Ways for the cultivation of samadhi are found not only in Buddhism. In one type of Confucianism, particularly Sung Confucianism, "quiet sitting" was practiced. In the Western tradition, Protinus, Eckhart, and even Jesus are said to have engaged in a kind of "quiet sitting." Their meditation may have been similar to zazen. In the Shinto rite of pacifying divine spirits there is something called "sinking the freely-moving spirit into the center of the body." Some people say this is a kind of Zen.

In addition, in those performing arts and martial arts that are concerned with the integration of mind and body, acts are carried out—at least to a small degree—with mind and body in oneness. The realm of samadhi is in all of them regardless of small differences between them. Nanin Roshi[5] is said to have commented while watching an acrobat ride a ball in Asakusa, "If he became one with the universe with a spin of the ball, that would be splendid Zen." This means that there should be a connection even between acrobatics and Zen. Thus to put it in extreme terms, it is logical to say that there are as many kinds of Zen as there are human beings.

There are various ways of classifying types of Zen but the most representative is considered to be the five types discussed by the 9th century Chinese Zen Master Keiho Shumitsu (Kuei-feng Tsung-mi.)[6]

Zen Outside the Way (*Gedo Zen*)

Common Zen (*Bompu Zen*)
Small Vehicle Zen (*Shojo Zen*)
Great Vehicle Zen (*Daijo Zen*)
Supreme Vehicle Zen (*Saijojo Zen*)

To Master Shumitsu, our self-nature—"the original mind," "one's True Self," or "the root of one's personality"—has exactly the same nature as Buddha. It is something that originally was universal and not limited by anything; thus it makes no distinction between sacred and profane. However, just as there are different starting points for climbing Mt. Fuji, there are shallow as well as profound starting points for Zen training. Because of this diversity there is no escape from the development of several types of Zen.

Gedo Zen (Zen Outside the Way), the first type listed, is best considered as a Way apart from the principles of Buddhism. In terms of substance it means seeing the Way or truth outside of yourself. Shumitsu defined Gedo Zen as religious discipline following teachings based on a perspective outside of Buddhism.

The phrase "perspective outside" is somewhat difficult to understand, but it probably means to determine superiority or inferiority by a measure that is separate from the Dharma,[7] to rejoice in the good and to detest the bad. Because the ego is the yardstick by which superiority and inferiority is measured, training in Gedo Zen means that the ego remains at the center of the act of accepting or rejecting. Consequently, no matter how far you train, you cannot leave the world of dualism.

The second type of Zen is Bompu Zen (Common Zen). According to Shumitsu, it entails "correctly understanding cause and effect though still training with the dualism of joy and loathing." In general, though expounding a belief that good causes bring good effects and bad causes bring bad effects, it is a type of training which does not embody any penetrating truth. Those who practice Zen to cure an illness or for the sake of their health should probably look at this type of Zen. In general, though, Gedo Zen and Bompu Zen are called "Zen in the midst of delusion."

The third type, Shojo Zen (Small Vehicle Zen), is training in which you are enlightened to the one-sided truth that the ego

is empty and has no real substance. It describes training in which you think about the existence of truth or Buddha and then become trapped by your thoughts. There are various interpretations of Shojo Zen, but here I think it would suffice to simply interpret it as believing in the truth of Dharma but lacking in the altruistic spirit of sharing your understanding of Buddhist Truth with others. You are too intent on your own gain and think only of your desire for the perfection of your own personality.

As for the fourth kind of Zen, Daijo Zen (Great Vehicle Zen), Master Shumitsu called it training in which you are enlightened by the realization that the ego and the Dharma are both empty. It is training with the realization that subject and object, ego and the surrounding environment are all void. Training in Daijo Zen is like carrying many people on a large ship from this shore of delusion to the other shore of enlightenment, simultaneously emancipating oneself while rescuing others, and praying for the perfection of personality with self and others in oneness.

The fifth kind of Zen, Saijojo Zen (Supreme Vehicle Zen), can also be called *Nyorai Shojo Zen*. Master Shumitsu said that it is training through which one has a sudden realization that one's mind is originally pure, that from the beginning there is no suffering which arises from our attachment to desire. We are naturally provided with uncorrupted wisdom. This mind is Buddha and in the end nothing else. "Uncorrupted" is the condition in which our attachments to desires and passions are severed and we are enlightened to the fact that the mind we are born with is originally pure and unsoiled without one speck of desire. It is something absolute, the same as Buddha. In short, it may be said that Saijojo Zen consists of experiencing the Absolute, realizing the Absolute, and acting out the Absolute in our daily affairs.

In later periods, this kind of Zen became known as Patriarchal Zen. It was also characterized by the phrases "special transmission of the teachings outside the scriptures" and "no dependence on words."

While Master Shumitsu's classification of Zen may be understandable on the whole, it can be difficult to understand

the distinction between Great Vehicle Zen and Supreme Vehicle Zen. It is natural that they should appear to be different if we choose to regard them as different, but on the other hand we may say that they are different in name only.

According to Zen Master Daikaku, "Zen is Buddha's inner mind."[8] He said, "If we train in the Dharma with one mind (an absolute non-discriminating mind), how much merit would that be when compared with training in the 10,000 acts of 10,000 goodnesses?" Furthermore, "Even if we train by performing the 10,000 acts, we cannot attain satori[9] without knowing the Dharma mind, just as it stands to reason that we cannot become Buddha without achieving satori." In other words, training based on the truth that "sentient beings are originally Buddhas" and deciding once and for all that "this very body is Buddha" is Supreme Vehicle Zen of the Correct Transmission of the Patriarchs or Patriarchal Zen.

Accordingly, if we put it in extreme terms, all types of Zen other than Patriarchal Zen are inauthentic. However, in a positive sense, it may be said that Zen Outside the Way (Gedo Zen), Common Zen (Bompu Zen), Zen of the Mouth and Head (*Koto Zen*), Literary Zen (*Moji Zen*), Zen for Health (*Kenko Zen*), Zen for Medical Treatment (*Ryoyo Zen*), and all the rest exist within the realm of Patriarchal Zen.

Mistaken Aims

So many types of Zen have evolved because the talent and ability of students vary. There is a saying, "A cow drinks water and gives milk; a snake drinks water and gives poison." Although originally all water tastes the same, it becomes different when a cow drinks it and when a snake drinks it. Depending on your goal or motivation for training, Zen also changes, becoming Patriarchal Zen for some or Zen Outside the Way for others.

There is an amusing story about a man who was given a rare sword. He showed it to the priest at his family temple because he could not read the inscription on it. The priest read it as "*Hahei Gyoan*," which means "When the waves of the mind are calm, discipline is easy." But when he showed it to a

scholar of Chinese he was told that it said "*Nami tairaka ni shite yuku koto yasushi*," meaning "When the waves are flat, traveling is easy." Finally he took it to a sword merchant who told him that the characters inscribed were those of a man named Naminohira Yukiyasu.[10]

Although none of them were mistaken—they all gave a possible reading of the inscription—no one was strictly in keeping with the intended meaning of the inscription. When people with only a shallow experience define Zen simply as a way to promote health or a way for human development, it is an embarrassment for Zen even though Zen has these aspects.

It is said that Zen exists in all the activities of daily living, such as doing, dwelling, sitting, and lying down, but here I am limiting its usage particularly to mean zazen. What should the aim of zazen be?

I have already said that Zen is the shortcut to knowing one's True Self. For human beings—limited in time and space to a fifty-year life span and a five-foot body—the aim of Zen is to touch the infinite life and the absolute world, to comprehend that such is one's True Self. To Shakyamuni, all sentient beings have the same essential nature as Tathagata.[11] However, they are not able to realize it because they see things upside down in delusion. But when we break through that delusion, the illusion caused by selfish desires and doubt, and come into contact with the Absolute for a fraction of a second, we realize our original True Self. This experience is called *satori* or *kensho*.[12] In short, this is awakening to one's True Self. It may be said that the aim of Zen is to have that kind of experience.

If we train in the correct manner, with the aim of awakening to one's True Self, will we ever stray off the right path and commit serious mistakes? Yes, it happens quite often. That is why students are traditionally cautioned to choose the right teacher.

I think the greatest mistake that those who practice Zen make is to think such phenomena as "self," "nothingness," and "emptiness" have a fixed existence. It is not only beginners who have delusions about such things. This is a characteristic of Western thought in particular and it is also a strong

tendency in those who are engaged in modern scholarship.

A traditional story told about the early training of Zen Master Baso Doitsu (Ma-tsu Tao-i)[13] illustrates this mistake:

In his youth, Baso did zazen diligently every day. Seeing this, Priest Nangaku Ejo (Nan-yueh Huai-jang)[14] asked Baso, "What do you expect to accomplish by doing zazen?" Baso answered, "I sit because I wish to become a Buddha." He had forgotten that zazen itself is Buddhahood and probably was trying to become a Buddha through zazen. To demonstrate his mistake, the priest began to polish a roof tile vigorously while Baso was doing zazen. Baso became puzzled and asked, "What are you doing?" "I'm thinking of turning this into a mirror," replied Ejo. "Will a roof tile become a mirror if you polish it?" asked Baso. Priest Ejo glared at him and answered, "Can you become a Buddha by doing zazen?" Priest Ejo added, "If your carriage stops moving when you are on the road, do you hit the carriage, or do you strike the rump of the ox that is pulling it?" Baso did not know how to answer.[15]

There is a world of difference in the interpretation of this dialogue depending on whether we think it occurred before Baso attained satori or after he already was enlightened. Dogen Zenji[16] cited this story in a section of his *Shobo-genzo*, giving lavish praise to Baso's level of Zen realization. If we interpret the story as Dogen Zenji did, the meaning of it changes completely. For now, however, I will follow the traditional interpretation of it as a story of Baso's immature youth, in keeping with the surface meaning of the words.

From Ejo's viewpoint, he is warning Baso that thinking that the form of Buddha lies outside zazen and searching for it by means of zazen is misdirected, like wildly striking the cart instead of whipping the ox when the oxcart stops moving. Ejo continued his admonition:

> You students, are you trying to learn zazen or are you trying to learn sitting Buddhahood? If you are learning zazen, Zen is not sitting and lying down. If you are learning sitting Buddhahood, Buddha is not a fixed form. According to the teaching of non-attachment or non-settling down, you should not adopt this or reject that. You students, if you try to become a sitting Buddha you kill the Buddha, and if you

> become attached to sitting you will not reach that principle.[17]

If we interpret this literally it probably means the following:

> You students! Are you trying to learn zazen or are you trying to become a Buddha? If you are trying to learn zazen, you must not be taken up by the form called "sitting" because Zen is something beyond sitting and lying down. Again, if you say you are trying to become a Buddha, you cannot become a captive to the one set form called "sitting" because Buddha is something absolute.

Since that which is called "teaching the Dharma or the true principle" is not something which has substance, we cannot formally make distinctions between accepting or rejecting what is good and what is bad. If you students consciously try to become a Buddha you will grow more distant from Buddhahood. You cannot become a Buddha unless you kill the Buddha which is dualistically conceived as an object. Also, if you have been attached to the form of sitting, no matter how long you train you will not be enlightened to your True Self. This is probably what Ejo meant.

When you do zazen with the intention of seeking a Buddha with form or think of your true self as having a fixed existence, it is just like trying to turn a roof tile into a mirror by polishing it. I am afraid that as your samadhi power grows stronger, the more you will stink of Zen. This is because you forget to cut your ego and only paint more and more layers on it.

The next thing to be discussed is the misunderstanding that doing zazen is the same as entering the psychological condition called "no-thought" (*munen muso*). Two scientists at Tokyo University, Dr. Hirai Tomio and Dr. Kasamatsu, have made great progress in showing that the brain waves of Zen monks in samadhi resemble those of people in very light sleep.[18] Once the results of those experiments were published, many intellectuals suddenly became interested in Zen.

Such interest was heartfelt but most of these people seemed to decide that any practice that calms one's spirit must

be similar to the practice of "no-thought" Zen. Of course that is not a bad thing; it is very welcome. Certainly the calming effect has been scientifically demonstrated by the measurement of brain waves and thus cannot be denied. I do not have the slightest intention of perversely contradicting them by saying that Zen excites rather than calms the spirit. However, if Zen is only for calming the spirit, would it not be more expedient to take tranquilizers or drink alcohol and pleasantly fall asleep than to sit for a long time enduring the pain in your legs?

These people simply misunderstood "no-thought." They are overlooking what Kanbe Tadao asked concerning zazen: "Doesn't a state of consciousness exist in Zen meditation which doesn't exist in the mere passivity and ecstasy found in Yoga?"[19] In Zen we think that state of consciousness is where the secret of samadhi concentration lies; zazen is not merely a discipline to lead us into the state of "no-thought."

This "no-thought" group paints on layer after layer of illusion as they try to become Emptiness or Nothingness, only strengthening their ego-centered viewpoint in the process. As a result they fall into the practice of the so-called "Zazen lacking dynamism" as described by Suzuki Shosan.[20] These people sit in meditation like a lifeless stone *Jizo*[21] in the mountains.

If we practice this type of zazen, perhaps to cure an illness or become healthy, it is not unlikely that we will end up frightened at even the sound of a rat's footsteps. This is all because our aim of zazen is mistaken. Suzuki Shosan is known to have once said to people training under him:

> You seem to practice "Empty Shell Zazen" and think that not thinking of anything is "no-thought, no-mind." You even start to feel good sitting vacantly. But if you do that kind of zazen you'll lose your vigorous energy and become sick or go crazy. True "no-thought, no-mind" zazen is just one thing—to have a dauntless mind.[22]

At another time he said, "Since you cannot do real zazen no matter how much I teach you, I think I'll show you from now on how to use the vigorous energy you have when you are

angry."

Even someone as great as Zen Master Hakuin[23] appears to have mistakenly thought that an empty state of mind was satori during the early years of his training. According to accounts of his life, he made a pilgrimage to Mt. Ii in Shinshu to see Dokyo Etan.[24] Seeing Hakuin's rampant pride, Dokyo grabbed his nose and said, "What's this? See how well it can be gotten hold of." At this Hakuin broke into a cold sweat and fell flat on the ground. There was also a period when Dokyo would abusively shout, "You dead Zen monk in a grave!" every time he saw Hakuin.

Even the famous Daito Kokushi[25] wrote in verse, "For more than thirty years, I, too, lived in the cave of foxes (the state of self-deception); no wonder people still remain deceived." Looking at this verse, even if the depth was different from Hakuin, Master Daito seemed to have found the realm of no-thought congenial for thirty years.

If we study Buddhist doctrines and write them out for ourselves, we may be able to keep from becoming inert. I think even I could write a few introductory articles in order to keep students from developing bad habits. But is there not a more direct way?

In the distinguished book *Zazen no Shokei* by the lay Zen Master Kawajiri Hogin, he writes, "Because zazen is training to realize the One Mind of yourself, it is a mistake to set up an aim outside of yourself ... Not setting up an aim is the true aim."[26]

Ultimately, I think that the best way to avoid bad habits in Zen is to not set up your aim outside yourself but to return to yourself and examine the very place you yourself are standing. In order to do that without pursuing the past which has already gone by or facing the future which has yet to come, I think it best to examine whether or not you are confronting the absolute present which cuts off such notions as "before" and "after." The present moment has been compared to the geometrical one-dimensional point which eludes our attempt to grasp it. Can we appreciate the experience of that moment as it happens before any intellectual judgment or discrimination sets in?

It has been said that the word *majime* (seriousness, straightforwardness, honesty, and truthfulness) is derived from the phrase *ma o shimeru* (to close up the space-time in between).[27] If you move unconsciously— without any room for thoughts to enter between thought and conduct— that is always being in the present. There is a Zen expression, "We are always aware of the Threefold World (past, present, and future existences), the Past and Present, and the Beginning and End." It is necessary for us to examine ourselves to see whether or not we are in that state.

Next, having already discussed the oneness of thought and action, let us take up the same problem from a spatial point of view. This time I want to suggest that we examine ourselves to see if we are in *majime*, the state of mind and body in oneness—so well integrated that there is no room for even a single thought to enter. Further, you should see whether or not self and other—that is, self and strangers, self and family, self and society—are unified in the place called "here." In this place Self and object fuse and become one body in an experience known in Zen as "the boundless realm of time and space where not even the width of a hair separates self and other." If you reflect over what you experience when you are walking along a street or using chopsticks you will probably agree with what I have written.

There is a story about a man named Heishiro of Ihara that is traditionally told on the fifth night of the *rohatsu sesshin*.[28] Heishiro, watching bubbles of foam floating in a pool below a waterfall, observed that they all differed, some traveling one foot, some two or three feet, others even twelve to eighteen feet, but all eventually disappeared. He sensed in these bubbles the transience of life and was suddenly attacked by an uneasiness he could not stand. That night he entered the bathroom alone and did zazen in his own way.

At first he was almost overwhelmed by delusive thoughts attacking him as if they were a swarm of bees from a disturbed beehive. He was full of anxiety but he clenched both fists, opened both eyes wide and shouted, "Damn shit!" He struggled against delusive thoughts and illusions but, after a while, he no longer remembered anything. Upon hearing the cry of

sparrows he came to himself. The day had already dawned.[29] This is a good example of completely transcending time and space.

There is a similar case that actually happened recently. One evening a housewife took a short break from her work and did zazen in an upstairs room of her house. She thought only five or six minutes had passed when she heard noises downstairs. She went to look and found that it was already the next morning and her family was busily getting breakfast ready.

This kind of experience is not limited to those who do zazen. It is an experience available to anyone to a greater or lesser degree when you do anything to your utmost, even in your daily life. At the very least, if you always check to see whether self and other objects are separated or joined and see where you yourself are standing you will also know whether the direction of your Zen training is correct or mistaken.

What is Zazen?

So far I have been using the term "Zen" in some instances and "zazen" in others without making a clear distinction between them. I have even interchanged their meanings at times, but here I would like to explain the word *zazen* more formally. When I speak about zazen, what comes to mind first is the following passage from the *Dan-gyo*, a record of the life and sayings of the Sixth Patriarch of Zen Buddhism, Eno Daikan (Hui-neng Ta-chien):[30]

> Za (sitting) means to not give rise to thoughts (no dualism) under any circumstance. Zen (meditation) means to see your original nature and not become confused.

If we interpret this passage in the orthodox way, "sitting" cannot be said to be only the body sitting vacantly. However, to use a somewhat extreme example, if one does not entertain idle thoughts and fantasies while sleeping, this too can be rightly called "sitting." If we speak of the original meaning in the broadest sense of the term, that is what Eno probably meant.

Be that as it may, I am going to use a more common

seeing we only see what is real in reverse. In this sense, we may say that kan is the renunciation of the viewpoint held before there was proper concentration and a recognition of the world from the viewpoint of satori.

The act of correctly seeing this world from this state of concentration (jyo) and the world of samadhi is called "wisdom." In other words, wisdom is the act of perceiving things of this world as they truly are. The Tendai term *shikan* (perception in concentration) corresponds to the term *jyo-e* (wisdom attained in concentration of mind) used in Zen. Just as in the phrase *jyo-e enmyo* (full and clear perception in the wisdom of concentration), jyo (concentration) necessarily gives birth to e (wisdom) and e (wisdom) must be based on jyo (concentration). Otherwise, no matter how clear our perception, it is nothing but worldly knowledge and discriminating knowledge and can never be called wisdom. Further, to have concentration without wisdom is to idly come to a standstill in an empty world. Therefore, this concentration cannot be called true samadhi.

I have now analytically explained the terms "sitting," "zen," "concentration," and "wisdom." What we must note carefully now are the following words attributed to the Zen Master Eno:

> It is only by entering into samadhi that I can discuss seeing one's true self-nature (kensho) without also talking about self-liberation.[33]

Hearing this, Priest Inshu asked Eno, "Why don't you discuss self-liberation when you enter samadhi?" His teacher replied, "To discuss by discriminating is dualistic teaching and not Buddhist teaching," meaning there is no samadhi nor self-liberation outside of seeing one's true self-nature. It is not that the cause known as "entering into samadhi" is followed by the result known as "seeing one's true self-nature." Seeing one's true self-nature in itself is samadhi, and samadhi in itself is seeing one's true self-nature.

Eno also said, "Seeing one's true self-nature yet not being disturbed is called Zen." From this point of view, both samadhi and self-liberation are due to the nature of the "seeing" of

> conducting oneself according to the Way with both mind and body realizing it.

Hu Shih continues,

> Even though one sits in the full-lotus position and becomes immovable like a mountain, one's mind is lost and scattered — this is the second kind. The third kind is where the body sits correctly and the mind is not dissolute—inwardly its roots are all quieted and outwardly it does not run wildly about after all kinds of karmic influences.

I do not know whether or not there are classifications other than Zen Master Toin's which divide zazen into four kinds. Although I do not know what the similarities and differences might be, I think it will be very interesting to base my own classification on that four-part division.

The first is for those who sit but do not practice Zen. It corresponds to the first category used by Hu Shih. This kind of sitting follows the prescribed form of the full-lotus or half-lotus position, but it is still not well-integrated sitting. This is an experience many of us had when we first learned zazen, probably because the instruction we received was not good.

When we went to a class for zazen, senior students taught us how to cross our legs and position our hands—the form, but they did not teach us anything about the content—the way of getting into the state of samadhi. Consequently, I thought for quite a long time that if I sat according to the set form I would somehow be graced with satori by Heaven. But even if I *had* been taught how to be well integrated, in the beginning I still would have been likely to remain separate from objects, seeing myself and other things as two. But I simply did not know anything about that. Perhaps it is just that it is very difficult for anyone to understand what the truly integrated realm is. Master Toin states,

> Evil passions, earthly desires, carnal lust, taken all together, are due to two conditions: low vital energy and scattered wits.[37]

In short, even though we sit with the form of Bodhidharma, if the essence of our sitting is like that described

"Walking is also Zen, sitting is also Zen; Zen is speaking, being silent, moving, resting," is that self and object are mutually integrated to such an extent as to become completely unified. After transcending integration, no matter what the surroundings, you are in a deep samadhi in which you do not lose your calm and immovable Zen concentration.

While it is not a mistake to say that a wave of your hand or a kick of your leg are all expressions of Zen, such a visceral understanding comes to those who have thoroughly seen their own true self-nature. For novices, it is a distant future ideal they can reach only with severe training. In principle, there is no denying that clearing one's throat or lifting a single finger are the workings and doings of Buddhahood, but in reality, unless we become so integrated with things in themselves that it is no longer possible to search for our own self, it is neither the workings of Buddha nor the doings of Buddha. Then we can be active in that realm of integration after having forged our integration sufficiently in zazen, no doubt our walking will also be Zen and our sitting will also be Zen. However eloquent we may be, unless we sit at least for the time it takes one stick of incense to burn we are studying Zen without sitting.

Hida Harumitsu, the founder of a discipline called "The Correct Method of Centering Oneself in Training," once had a sitting competition with Master Toin. According to Hida, Master Toin sat with ease at first in the full-lotus position, then gradually raised the upper part of his body. At the very instant that Hida thought, "Ah, right there!," Master Toin's upper body suddenly stopped moving. His center of gravity had settled right in the center of the pyramid formed by the posture of his legs and torso. With his compassionate eyes, calm expression, dignified appearance, and stately posture, he was immovable. There were no vulnerable openings, only the great spirit reflected in his posture of full emptiness. After all, it goes without saying that as long as the term zazen is used, it must be substantiated by such a way of actual sitting before it may truly be called Zen.

We often have visitors, some of whom evidently have read widely on Zen Buddhism, who like to discuss difficult theoretical problems. Judging from their words, they seem to

deities, that guard the entrance to Buddhist temples.

[21] Jizo. (Jpn.) A small statue, sculpted in stone, of a bodhisattva who vowed to deliver all people from this suffering world.

[22] Suzuki Shosan, *Roankyo* (Donkey-Saddle Bridge) (Collected by Echu, 1660).

[23] Hakuin Ekaku, Japanese Rinzai Zen Master. 1689–1769. One of the most important Japanese Rinzai Zen Masters. He is often referred to as the father of modern Rinzai Zen.

[24] Dokyo Etan. Japanese Rinzai Zen Master. 1642–1721.

[25] Daito Kokushi. Japanese Rinzai Zen Master. 1282–1338. The founder of Daitoku-ji in Kyoto. Also referred to as Shuho Myocho.

[26] Kawajiri, *Zazen no Shokei*.

[27] Hata Shinji, *Makoto no Michi* (The Way of Truth) (Publisher and date unknown).

[28] *Rohatsu sesshin*. (Jpn.) The intense training period held in commemoration of the training that led to Shakyamuni's enlightenment on the eighth of December.

[29] The story comes from Hakuin's essay, *Rohatsu Jishu*, that appears in Torei Enji's compilation *Goke Sansho Yoro Mon* (The Gate to the Details of the Essence to the Way of the Patriarchs of the Five Branches of Zen) (1827).

[30] Hui-neng Ta-chien. 638–713. (Jpn., Eno Daikan). The quotation comes from his work, *Liu-tsu-ta-shih fa-pao-t'an-ching* (Jpn. Rokuso daishi hobodan-gyo) (The Platform Sutra of the Sixth Patriarch) (Publisher and date unknown). Also known by its short title, *T'an-ching* (Jpn. Dan-gyo).

[31] Machimoto Donku, *Kanchu Jubu Roku* (Head Notes to Ten Zen Texts) (Kyoto: Baiyo-shoten, 1913).

[32] *Hannya Shingyo*. (Jpn.) Abbreviation of the full Japanese title, *Maka hannyaharamita shingyo*, translated from the original Sanskrit *Mahaprajnaparamita-hridaya-sutra*. A sutra presenting the essence of the transcendental wisdom of the Emptiness. Shortest of the four sutras that constitute the *Prajnaparamita-sutra*, also referred to as the Heart Sutra.

[33] Hui-neng Ta-chien, *Liu-tsu-ta-shih fa-pao-t'an-ching*.

[34] Dogen Zenji, *Shobo-genzo*, *Genjo Koan* volume.

[35] Iida Toin. Japanese Soto Zen Master. 1863–1937. The comment comes from his book, *Sanzen Manroku* (A Random Record of Sanzen Interviews With the Zen Master) (Tokyo: Chu-o Bu'kyo-sha, 1934).

[36] Imazeki Tenpo, trans., *Shina Zengaku no Hensen* (The Transformation of the Study of Zen in China) (Tokyo: Toho-gakugei-shoin, 1936).

Chapter 3

How to Sit in Zen Meditation

Preparation before Sitting

The reader's preliminary knowledge of zazen may still be inadequate, but since I could never write exhaustively about that background, I will now begin to discuss the actual practice of zazen.

Specialists use the term "sitting" for zazen. From that starting point, I would like to interpret the term and develop my explanation. If zazen is sitting, what condition does sitting refer to? If we look up the word *suwaru* (to sit), it is defined as "to be settled and unmoving; well suited."[1]

However, the word suwaru does not only refer to the human act of sitting. The word has many other usages such as saying that a ceramic vase "sits" well or that a man's hara "sits" or that a chop "sits" when stamping an ink seal. All of these refer to a stable, non-wavering, and well-ordered condition, suggesting the state of things as they were originally meant to be. I think it follows that if the same word is applied to humans, it is used for the condition in which mind and body are balanced, harmony is maintained, and there is no movement or disturbance. It also suggests putting one's mind and body in that state.

Bodhidharma said, "Detach yourself from various things in the external world and inwardly your mind will not be agitated. By using your mind like a wall you should gain entrance into the Way." If we interpret these difficult words

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