

Zen and Mind:

Zen Questions and Zen Answers

~The way to know your true self~

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Don't look at errors of others
Don't criticize others who do not practice
Ask yourself what you have done and how
Dhammapada

INTRODUCTION

The 21st century began as 'the era of mind.' However, in the midst of endlessly advancing civilization, the mind has been left behind, and is being rapidly devastated. The confusion of society is evidenced by too many horrible incidents. A difficult age seems to have come in which hard work every day cannot sustain even an ordinary life. We should be very cautious about this because potentially all of us are suffering from distrust, loneliness and insecurity.

I fear that young people who should be fresh and active are increasingly losing even hope to live. If they cannot have healthy and sound minds, they will simply continue to lose the humanity on which they can build their faith.

The source of all problems lies in our mind. If we forget that everything has its true nature to respect and if we pursue our own self-satisfaction in the name of self-realization, the whole world will, without fail, fall into a big muddy stream of selfish desires.

We human beings are so created to love people. Still, we are killing each other in the name of race, country, ideology and religion. We have the cruelty to force other people to die or even to kill ourselves. We, all human beings, have language and mind. At the same time, this mind causes various annoying problems and frequently causes us suffering for being human.

Mind is quite peaceful when nothing happens in it. It is called 'the original mind' or 'the true self.' But the moment one is caught by the mind, all kinds of problems arise. Similarly, when one is caught by any of the body's senses, the mind instantly reacts. This is how mind is. So long as we have such a mind, we cannot be relieved from being caught, hence, suffering. This capture, to have mental attachment to something, is called ego.

Jumping to the conclusion, the relationship between the capture and ego is like two sides of a coin. It is a chicken and egg problem. They work at the same time. So there is no capture without ego. And there is no ego without attachment.

In zen teachings, to fully understand this point is Kensho, seeing into one's own nature. It is also called Satori, enlightenment. To really solve the

ego is to solve the cause of the attachment, which is to attain Kensho. How we can truly realize it? This is in fact the biggest problem. It is because all problems such as wars, nuclear arms development and environmental destruction that are caused by human beings are attributable to mind. So fundamental resolution depends upon solving ego.

Then, the question should arise: Is it really possible to solve ego, the cause of the attachment? And what on earth is the true character of ego which troubles mind? These are inevitable questions that confront us.

To solve ego is nothing but to solve mind. And to solve mind means there is not any contradiction in mind. It also shows that mind which causes all kinds of problems has disappeared. It is called Gedatsu, emancipation.

We cannot know when and where our body gets cancer or other illnesses. We may also experience natural disasters or traffic accidents at any time. We are destined to die in the end. We cannot absolutely escape from death so far as we have the body. Even if our life is not full of good things, we accept them as part of our life.

We usually think that we are present because our body is. But when we think this way, we never fail to become self-centered. As a result, complaints, discontent and anxiety turn up with very little cause. Various things appear in mind and we cannot control our thoughts.

On the other hand, everybody hopes to stay peaceful with a calm and quiet mind at all times. This is called "Heijoshin Kore Do" and is the greatest ideal and hope of all humanity. We all know that the happiest life is to solve ego and live peacefully and naturally without any anxiety.

In this "age of mind," how can we solve ego, the ultimate problem? It is now that we should face this fundamental question of mind and make a serious resolution to solve ego.

If we are able to solve this problem of the greatest importance in our life, we will surely gain a life of peace and freedom.

What is the point of spending all our life in vain for merely satisfying feelings? This small book will surely be of help to those who are serious about knowing the meaning of life.

The book consists of two parts. In the first part I explain the reasons one cannot control one's own mind. I have also made clear structural elements of mind and their relations of cause and effect. It is a kind of analytics about human being which I, a zen monk, have spontaneously gained during my own zen practices. It might be called a by-product I have acquired in the process of solving my own self. But unless we understand it, it is impossible to reach the center of this mysterious mind. This is quite essential in order to know what a human being is.

The second part is about the way to solve the problem of mind. It is about

the practice, and it is about zen. Without knowing the truth, we cannot attain true peace of mind. Nor can we be freed from *karma* (“Go”), hindrances of the past lives, which controls mind at its depth. It goes without saying that the right practice is essential to solve the roots of all confusions and conflicts. Unchanged from old times is the truth that the right practice needs a right method and a true, reliable zen master.

If we do not follow zen practices in the right way, there is a danger that we may fall into a wrong path. Wouldn't it be a great pity to end our life in vain without attaining enlightenment after a great deal of effort? We should be very cautious because, as an old saying goes, it is zen monks themselves who destroy the *dharma*, the Buddha's teachings.

In this book, I have adopted a question-and-answer method between a questioner and an answerer so that readers may find the point of zen practices. Every dialogue is what I myself answered to an earnest question. The questions are so serious and deep that we can feel the questioner's strong aspiration for seeking his true self.

In such a dialogue, you will meet the essential points about confusion and conflicts of mind. I am sure that the way to emancipation will be opened to some degree, at least on a theoretical basis.

If you read this book and feel your heart beating, the *dharma* will be blessed.

Here are words of famous zen masters.

Beating a path deep in mountains and searching for a master, only to find true self. (Tosotsu)

All the zen practice must be a real practice by yourself. All the enlightenment must be what you have truly attained. (Mumon Ekai)

Each person is abundantly endowed with it, but it does not become manifest without practice, and it will not be gained without attaining it. (Dogen)

Kido Inoue

THE FIRST SECTION

PART ONE

How Did This Mysterious Mind Come into Being?

1. True religion solves mind

A brilliant life begins with an awakening to one's real self, without any contradiction within. If one's mind remains natural in all circumstances without fear and attachment and still accords morality, one is sure to live a carefree and easy life. Isn't this the greatest and invaluable treasure?

But in real life, a great majority of people are often swayed by their minds and suffer from confusion and conflict. They are quite unstable, insecure and seem frightened. They pretend they are bold and strong so as to conceal it, unconsciously masking their true self.

Why was I born of these parents?

Why do I have such an appearance and such limited abilities?

Why do human beings kill each other?

Why do people continue to develop arms for mass murder?

Why do HIV/AIDS, drugs and terrorism keep spreading?

Why can we not do the right thing though we know it is right, and why can we not stop doing wrong things though we know they are wrong?

Why do people get fooled by an easy story and tend toward the lazy way?

Why on earth are there such feelings as greed, aggressiveness, cruelty, jealousy, love and hatred?

Why do people plunge into war for religion or ethnicity despite having a devout faith?

Why can a little schoolboy easily decide that we should immediately abandon arms and nuclear weapons, but adults cannot?

Why can I acknowledge that I am myself?

What is the true character of mind?

Can we really solve the problem of such a complex mind?

True religion and salvation fundamentally solves this problem of mind. All religions, ethics and morals take up mind as a matter that bewilders and annoys us and attempt to solve it. It may sound like a big issue, but all the problems are simply attributed to mind. The ego in particular is greatly problematic.

Intelligence is very good at explaining or analyzing ego, but it is entirely helpless in solving the problem of ego. Because intelligence is also subjected to ego. We attach great importance to intelligence. But so long as it is put under the control of ego, we should know that we can never avoid agony, confusion and conflict. However, ego has a definitive problem in that it cannot recognize itself. Therefore, intelligence is quite helpless.

We need another method and a different understanding to solve this difficult problem of ego and selfishness.

2. First, seek the true nature of ego

If we do not solve ego, we will surely become its slave and suffer from self-contradiction all through our lives. At the same time, when the ego is left to itself, its selfish actions may cause such big problems that even the destiny of mankind is affected. All the stains in the history of mankind stem from the selfish ego. To make matters worse, it is impossible to solve ego even if one prays, has faith, or makes the most of science and technology.

This is because the problem is in the person himself who prays or has faith, and in the person who is engaged in science and technology, and in the mind of the politician or educator.

The ego that controls mind at its depth is extremely large and powerful. In tragic cases, a man kills himself, and parent and child or brothers kill each other. Why do such incidents happen? This question requires investigation into its causes and immediate actions, because it is the historically decisive issue of mankind.

Though I will develop my opinions on education elsewhere, its fundamental mission is to raise a person to become independent and self-reliant as a person and to gain knowledge, reason and faith. The purpose of education is to control ego rightly and sensibly. As a mankind has dangerous and egoistic inborn instincts, the true aim of education should be to train people so they can manage themselves. So much for now.

Our original mind functions so freely and finely that it is indispensably important. But when it is preoccupied by something, it may go out of control. Because all human capacity, energy and civilization can instantly become brutal leading even terrorism or war. Its roots go far back to the first living creatures on earth well before mankind, and even to the time of microbes.

The extraordinary depth and scale of ego have been developed and built in us over unimaginably long history. If one understands this, one should see the difficulty and importance of solving this problem. Therefore, it is necessary that we should waste no time in beginning to investigate the true

nature of ego.

3. The cause of attachment lies in the instinct to survive

We, living creatures, appeared on the earth first in the form of a single cell billions of years ago. These ultra-microbes are our ultimate ancestors. They have continued to evolve into human beings of today. It is true that we have come through this surprising history. In the process of evolution, we have acquired various abilities for survival and so have characterized our DNA. These abilities are our instincts.

The strongest instinct of a living creature is attachment to its own life. It catches and eats anything knowing it can beat the other. Under extreme circumstances, this instinct may become a strong attachment to itself to survive even at the cost of others' lives. Human beings sometimes kill each other, not only strangers, even parents and children or brothers. In war, humans force people to kill others or themselves.

All cruelty, combative spirit and ferocity resulting from wild instincts or law of the jungle are simply the abilities to survive, acquired from the struggle for existence through previous lives.

4. When the instinct to survive functions, reason is reduced

Why do human beings kill each other even during highly developed times such as today? The reason is that the animal experience and capacity acquired in the process of evolution turned into the savage instincts of the law of the jungle, and became an integral part of mind. As soon as one feels danger or fear, the survival instinct takes over and responds to the situation. The feeling of danger or fear calls up the survival instinct faster than reason. At such moments, rational judgment vanishes.

The instinct to sustain one's life arises so quickly and strongly. From that moment it changes completely into such a mind that says: "I am absolutely right and others are all wrong" and dominates even reason and will.

The mind which has lost its reason is reduced to a simplistic conclusion as whether one should kill or be killed. Diminished reason works according to the logic of ego and tries to use any method in order to kill. At this point, all knowledge of science and technology is used as means to kill. Far from feeling shame as a human being, the individual feels a sense of mission even to the point of mass murder. The instinct to survive changes mind in an instant and makes it very brutal.

The mind to mobilize the entire nation to develop nuclear weapons originates from this. How difficult a species we are! In recent years, vicious crimes have greatly increased in number because the self-control of mind has weakened and the ego has gotten out of control. As soon as one is overwhelmed by the instinct to fight an enemy, one becomes irrational and brutal. This is a sad and dangerous phenomenon, but is not just somebody else's affair. If parents bring up their beloved child in the wrong way, an eerie factor of mind inherent in him may cause him to commit murder. It would be worthwhile examining the minds of our children and grandchildren. It is too late after such a dreadful incident has happened.

5. The wonder of the survival instinct

To live, we must protect ourselves from our enemies. This natural instinct produces such feelings as danger, fear, tension, sorrow and hatred, fostering suspicion. The moment we are out of danger, we feel grateful for our safety and we have developed our mind to seek peace has been developed. What a relief!

On the other hand, many living creatures survive by killing and eating weaker ones. Such characteristics as savageness, combative spirit, cruelty, aggressiveness and greed are quite necessary functions for them to survive. Discontent, jealousy, hatred and complaint were fostered as natural functions of living creatures in evolution and the struggle for survival. Failure to react instantly and automatically to an enemy can be fatal. Therefore, this function of mind works much faster than the intellect and will, and has become so strong and violent that it may lead to even self-destruction.

In the first place, just to stay alive meant that the weaker were victims of the stronger, and to win meant to evolve. This is how ego was born. One can understand well how ego came to be so self-righteous, self-centered and persistent. The intensity comes from the threat to existence itself. No wonder ego cannot be settled so easily even with great efforts.

Most people are always worried about something and feel uneasy because they have an unconscious awareness that something may be threatening them. For this same reason, our mind is captured by seeing, hearing, perceiving and conceiving. To put it simply, this unease is an unconscious feeling of our own existence and attachment to life coming from the instinct to keep our lives. This is the root of ego.

6. What is the root of self-contradiction?

It is also due to ego that people are easily hurt by words or attitudes of others. Though a person may take some offense as unforgivable, it is often trivial and of little importance from an outsider's point of view. However, the person may bear malice and be unable to ever forget it. This is clearly because his survival instinct has been activated and his suspiciousness, hate and hostility have reacted violently.

When such an instinct takes over one's mind, one reacts excessively even to trivial things and becomes overly cautious. Thus, one's mind is disturbed groundlessly by hatred or the fighting instinct.

Contrarily, when one hurts another person's feelings by what one has done or said, one is mostly not aware of it. This originates from the work of nature in which the stronger kills and eats the weaker.

This dual structure of self-contradiction is a reflection of the self-centered ego, born from the great law of life.

"You are still bothered by that small thing? No kidding! How stubborn you are!" Such direct language makes a person angry, since his mind is controlled by past perceptions that have triggered self-approval and denial of others.

The extremely selfish mind has come about in this way. All people with twisted personalities are difficult to handle because of strong functions of minds they have in common.

Those who think they can solve this problem intellectually or through education and lofty ethics are optimists. If one gives someone advice without a clear sense of self reflection, one will be sure to be hurt by the hatred and anger one gets back, contrary to one's expectations. True self-control is to always pay attention to and take full responsibility for one's speech and behavior. But it is extremely difficult, because ego begins to work in no time.

Even though we now enjoy a highly developed civilization, in fact we are deeply concerned and strongly dominated by the past. To be precise, our splendid intelligence, sensitivity and will are built on the mind of our past lives. What is generally called mind or heart is nothing but the mysterious spirit that can never be solved with only thought, will or knowledge.

When our life is threatened and hostile instincts against an enemy are awakened, we can easily wage a cruel war, an execution or a deception in the name of nation, ethnicity or god. So long as we cannot settle ego, a war or terrorism may happen at any time when *conditions* (En)¹ are present.

Repeated negotiations and agreements on political issues will not reach a

¹ When *conditions* is used as a Buddhism term, it is in italics. See also 25 of PART ONE.

solution because *karma* and historical *conditions* of a human being as an animal species always dominates intelligence. We cannot stop developing arms, and we tend to revert to animal behavior very quickly. This is because of the clear principle of causality and the *karma* which we inherit as a species.

So we must know that it is not easy to solve or normalize ego by means of excellent thought or lofty morals and ethics. We should deeply understand the importance and difficulty of education, and tackle it for the sake of mankind with the whole world. The problem of mind is nearest as well as farthest, and extremely profound and difficult.

7. Notions cannot solve mind

Our intelligence has a great creative power and understands the principles of things deeply. However, because it is just a notion, it is difficult to freely control our thinking and actions.

Therefore, even if we can keep patient for a short time, our ability to sustain patience is far weaker than we expect. Despite our great intelligence and pious faith, ego which is a form of *karma*, is much stronger than intelligence and will. As a result, we are easily drowned by greed and temptations. One cannot do easily what one knows is good, nor can one correct what one knows is bad. Efforts do not last long. The inclination to laziness comes from the subliminal mind inherited from previous lives.

However, this does not mean that there is a firm and permanent element of ego. Mind is caught by this or that matter instantly and becomes ego and brings about disaster. In such cases, ego has been caught temporarily by *conditions* and reacts accordingly. But ego itself is empty. It does not have any reality or substance.

In short, as long as one has attachments – a state one's mind is caught, one cannot control oneself. If only we truly realize this, we are done. However, it is extremely difficult, because intelligence and ideas are of no help. To realize this is nothing but the true practice and zazen. By this we may understand why the Lord Buddha and the other enlightened ones went to such immeasurable efforts.

8. The persistence of blood, family and ethnicity

Another strong element is the instinct of child-rearing that is indispensable for the continuation and prosperity of the species. The

absolute love of parents for children comes from their readiness to sacrifice themselves and their attentiveness to protecting their children. Children's survival is possible by parents who ensure their children's safety first.

The solid feeling that one's own child is dearest and most beloved has developed in this way. Without this devoted love and attentiveness, our species would surely have gone extinct. Survival of the species needed so much attachment and persistence. The attachment to blood, family and to one's race developed from the most essential and important need to protect children from enemies and to survive. A society is formed out of the feeling of love and danger.

Affection between members of a family and racial problems are not the work of reason but this beautiful, yet fearful work of attachment. Nobody wishes for war. But if a nation is in danger of being trampled by others and of losing everything, people must fight the enemy at the risk of their lives. The survival instinct is triggered in anticipation of the worst scenario. This is very natural from the standpoint of a living creature.

This is, however, thinking at the level of a beast and not what human beings should do. War is the simplest and most clear-cut means of solutions, but is the most stupid one for human beings.

Mankind still uses wars because we are dominated by ego and our minds are controlled by acts of the past. What a great pity that mankind still cannot get out of the lifestyle of animals!

9. The essence of reason lies in the ability to control oneself

The problem is how one can make this beautiful but dangerous attachment work in a holistic and healthy manner. In short, it is an issue of humanity and its principle is very simple: never let ego work. Then nothing inside would stand opposed to or cause hostility with each other.

Everyone has an intrinsic desire to live and hopes to be peaceful and to be liberated from danger and pain. Without ego, nothing motivates individuals to fight with each other, and no problem will arise. Without ego, kindness and thoughtfulness will naturally lead to respect and care for each other. This state of mind is called non-duality (Jita-fuji), oneness of oneself and the other.

We should be grateful that sound reason works in sound mind. Facing the most difficult problems, mind works most naturally and beautifully. And the desire to defy, fight and conquer is transformed into the desire to accomplish a common objective. This state of mind is referred to as "every day is a good day" (Hibi Kore Konichi) or "mind as usual is the way"

(Heijoshin Kore Do).

Reason is said to be the loftiest mental function. That is right. Its essence is a natural and original mind which is called soul. It is the heart of a person who is simply happy to see a sweet baby. This is not the work of reason or ego, but our heart is pleased at the sight of an innocent and pretty baby. We should be grateful that all of us have such a heart.

If one does not have such a heart, one needs to reflect on oneself seriously. A heart without ego can clearly follow present *conditions* that are in front of one “now.” This is self-control and the function of a universal and fair mind. It is also the essence of reason. True reason is not to say or think of lofty principles or logic.

Once upon a time, there was an ill-minded mother who always bullied her son’s wife. When facing death, the mother deeply regretted her actions and confessed, “People call me an evil spirit.” The wife responded, “But they don’t know your kindness at heart.” Upon hearing this, the mother cried out with sorrow. A broad, pure, patient and warm mind has the power even to make an evil spirit cry. The original mind works wholly and harmoniously, transcending sense of individuality and attachment. It is a spiritual substance which adapts to any place and time. In short, it is pure mind that transcends all confrontation of ego. If a person has such healthy and sound mind, his intellect, emotion and volition can function according to his nature. Thus his whole mind is beautiful and works smoothly and shines beautifully. This is the original form of mind and reason. So long as people are captured by a nation, ethnicity, or blood relatives, a belief or a doctrine, they do not have true mind. It is merely an attachment dominated by ego. Ultimately they may become dangerous and hostile, affirming only themselves and denying others entirely. Accordingly, a fundamental solution to mind is a must, and we have to master ego.

10. The sources of idleness

In child rearing, safety comes first. So it is the providence of nature to avoid danger, hardship and difficulty as much as possible and to look for safe, easy and convenient ways to do things. Human beings have possessed these characteristics naturally in the process of evolution. One will understand that the wish for peace and safety does not owe itself to intelligence and reason, but to the instinct to survive that all living creatures originally have.

This is a source of our desire to seek and enjoy an easy way of life. Though the desire for ease is important, a person becomes idle when he is captured by it. As soon as reason is lost, mind is subordinated to ego and

becomes idle, and a selfish desire to realize one's wish takes over mind.

There is still another difficult problem. When a selfish desire is denied by someone who has a sound mind, the person may hold hostility and even attack him. This is quite unfair, but he may even try to fight on the basis of legal or human rights. Thus he changes himself into a very dangerous person.

So far as there is ego, the state of affairs remains the same at all times. The habits of mind which are the source of idleness can never be overcome by intelligence and reason. Unless the separation of body and mind is dissolved, ego that is a habit of mind and causes attachment will stay as a stain in mind and cannot be removed by any means.

11. The maternal instinct is flawless

All living creatures including mice and elephants as well as human beings live healthy lives, because they rear children successfully. At the root of this is animals' maternal instincts which contain innate information about child rearing. And information about growth is also inherent in every creature's baby. The same is true for human beings. When a woman with mature maternal instinct gives birth to a child, she ought to have no difficulty rearing her child. This is because parenting is to respond well to everyday situations. That is all there is to it. This is how all creatures live safe, healthy lives.

A mother who does nothing but let her child cry all the time is simply an inexperienced and immature mother; her maternal instinct is not functioning well. We sometimes see such a mother without any apparent maternal instinct. The baby of such a mother must be truly pitied.

Information about child rearing and maternal instincts of all species are in their present complete forms after being improved over immeasurable time. This is verified by all species that continue to sustain themselves safely and peacefully.

It has taken billions of years for our bodies and minds to take this form. Child rearing is a great work of nurturing. Nothing else gives a person such precious delight, deep emotion, warmth, and enjoyment than rearing a child. The existence of a baby gives people big hopes, fulfillment and passion. We all used to be such babies. When seeing a baby, many people unconsciously recall their own early days, or find hope in the future. This may be because the baby reminds them of their lost dreams.

Though this is different from having responsibility, to have a dream or a hope surely adds vitality to life. A healthy, wholesome mother would never

tire of child care, nor would she suffer from neurosis. One of the causes of falling birth rate today is probably the significant number of young mothers who are scared of rearing a child because of their inexperience. Children should grow well. But how? How can children today grow soundly when they have been raised by today's parents, teachers and society? It is quite unlikely that sound and healthy children will grow up under parents who lack sound paternal or maternal instincts. Who is to blame? This is a question each of us must think about carefully.

12. Growth is the providence of nature

Every living creature keeps the rhythm, pace and sound wisdom of nature in a holistic state. Splendid natural wisdom passes down to both parents and babies all the knowledge and methods required for child rearing. So a mother has only to observe the state of her baby naturally and respond naturally. This is the principle of child rearing and is everything there is to it. It is not difficult. There is no need to think or learn. Otherwise, no other living creatures could have survived.

So long as paternal and maternal instincts work perfectly, everyone can gain a lot of learning, satisfaction and hope from child rearing. The natural providence of how she was born and bred already manifests itself in an expectant mother, standing ready for a new baby.

A mother instantly grasps signals of her child's growth and naturally satisfy needed conditions. The healthiest and most natural response is to let the baby feel at ease at every situation. This is child rearing. The mother has only to respond fully with responsibility and love. What is important for parenting is not to do anything beyond this until the next demand arises. Doing more will distort the wholesome providence and natural pace of child rearing.

Child rearing is holy work. Seeing the baby grow day by day gives a mother much joy and taps into deep emotions. Pure and devoted feelings of tension for child rearing make her most beautiful. True, all mothers who fully take care of their children are beautiful. Parenting is not a difficult or painful task. A wholesome mother loves everything about her child, and nothing is more charming and joyous than caring for a child. True paternal and maternal instincts really feel these emotions and are grateful for having been granted a child.

Feelings of gratitude and returning favor to our own parents who loved and raised us well should come up in our heart. At the same time, we will feel deep respect for our ancestors and realize the dignity of life. Thus the

loftiness of life will naturally be manifest and be reflected in one's personality. So we feel every child as lovable and we naturally respond lovingly.

The original maternal instinct is the heart and soul of a mother who is generous, tender yet strong, graceful and warm. The love of a mother which embraces the whole of her child is absolute and exceeds everything. A mother should not leave her baby crying because a baby will not cry for no reason.

In this way, attachment to one's child becomes a strong instinct. Paternal or maternal instincts do not have any dangerous functions that will commit a murder. Such functions occur only when facing extreme danger that threatens their life. When this happens, parents have no time to think of themselves but care only for their children. This is the heart nothing can surpass, even God and the Buddha. It is the state of no ego. Nothing is stronger nor more beautiful.

13. The mental structure of cruelty

A baby is born through sexual intercourse. Recently more and more parents cannot rear their children properly. Exhausted from parenting, parents may even commit suicide, bully or even kill their child. Why are these abnormal incidents increasing in number?

The reason is simple. Parents' paternal and maternal instincts are not yet well developed. Their humanity is underdeveloped. Their healthy paternal or maternal instincts do not fully manifest themselves, so the natural wisdom that is essential for parenting is not ready to draw on.

They are dominated by the childish demands of self-love, and their minds are full of immature traits such as jealousy, discontent, complaints, and the feeling of being victimized. They tire easily and soon reach their limits. They begin to think: "This baby has ruined my life" and suddenly they feel empty and their baby is no longer their beloved child. Brutality begins.

On the other hand, if a neighbor's child seems superior in any way and happier than their own child, they cannot help feeling jealous. This happens when parents are not mature enough to control such selfish feelings. As a result, the feelings of jealousy and hatred grow even stronger, giving way to impulsive actions. Abnormal selfishness due to immaturity causes such cruelty and even leading to murder.

This explains the shameless conduct of selfish young parents. The root cause lies in the fact that they themselves received immature parenting, and therefore, essential elements of their minds remain poorly developed.

Monkeys raised in a cage often cannot rear children. Why? They have no enemies. Where there is no enemy, no worry of being attacked, and where

they are regularly well fed, there is no need for anxiety or attentiveness. As a result, such animals tend to fail to give attention to their children or to develop self-awareness as a parent, resulting in the underdevelopment of their maternal instincts. There is a causal relationship between the absence of parenting instincts and the inability to parent. Parenting draws on a natural wisdom, a phenomenon that all living creatures are inherently endowed with. It sometimes needs such strong tension and strain with which parents can face life-threatening risks, grown in the natural environment.

In today's society where the basic needs of food, clothing and shelter are all met, and where a healthy rule of law has been established, a nation-wide syndrome is emerging that both paternal and maternal instincts are underdeveloped. However, nobody seems to be aware of this danger. It may be difficult to understand, but the reason for prevailing brutality is mental and quite primitive.

These overly fortunate circumstances are likely to amplify ego and all the more to cause increased complaints and discontent, leading to the underdevelopment of much more important providence and natural wisdom. Famous zen words go: "Poverty is the way." We should reflect on them again and again.

14. A dangerous parent

Tranquil and creative minds only grow in a natural and stable state. Then parenting information will function wholesomely. However, an insufficiency of maternal instincts can prevent it from functioning as it is supposed to. As an immature mother's mind is unstable and insecure, she holds onto unwholesome feelings. Therefore, it is difficult to develop mutual understanding and a feeling of trust.

The feeling of uneasiness in everyday life turns into discontent or complaint, and hidden feelings of victimization and alienation begin to form. Twisted despair may turn into hatred and anger, and further develop into self-tormenting and desperation. If supplemented with a dangerous brutality, a person can even go to the extreme of killing his parent or siblings. All of this results from the immaturity of his parents who have failed to embrace the wise providence of nature. As a child, he is not to blame.

That is to say, all living creatures grow up according to a distinct pace, rhythm and the providence of nature. The maternal instincts of parenting are naturally aware of it. If this healthy, natural wisdom does not fully grow and manifest itself, the mother cannot access the parenting information within. Then she must rear her child only by her own judgment. Day and

night, various thoughts and things bother her while parenting. Leaving the child alone no longer works and she begins to suffer from anxiety and uneasiness because she cannot control her situation.

As a result, she may follow conventional knowledge and practice, and neglect her child's own natural rhythm, pace, and the principles of nature. Her responses are off the mark and miscommunication skews the growth of the child. So by the time she notices something is wrong, the foundation of the child's mind is already distorted. What is worse, immature parents may not even recognize this danger.

The most obvious negative state of mind is one that lacks integrity of intellect, emotion and volition. Such a mind is always unstable and lacks confidence. When the mind lacks a stable foundation, trivial matters will trigger complaints, discontent, or irritation, and the mind easily spins out of control. Vitality is energy, which can turn into active or impulsive power. With such a negative frame of mind, even knowing that he must not do something, a person cannot help doing it because his mind is altogether uncontrollable. Though he himself is suffering, there is a high risk that such a person will become mentally handicapped and the society will keep its distance from him.

Human beings have souls and are not creatures that can be raised easily as if they were animal pets. We should know that the providence of nature, when followed naturally, becomes wisdom, but when defied, has a tremendously dangerous effect. This is the same principle as a cell that defies its DNA will turn into cancer. While a cancer in the body can be removed, a cancer of mind is an impossible nuisance. Too frequently it will tear itself, causing murder or suicide.

Our gigantic and dreadful egos are indeed largely inherent, but they have equally been distorted by our immature parents over a long period of time. So the time is sure to come when one's unnatural mind gives one trouble and causes suffering. An improperly built foundation of mind will inevitably help the ego grow stronger, and accordingly the life of such a child will be an awful and terrible one.

Nothing is more dangerous than an immature parent, but it is quite painful to see parents unable to understand their own misery. To be able to reflect on oneself is a human virtue. It is very important to educate children so that they can reflect on themselves properly.

15. The system to sustain the species

To secure the next generation is a prerequisite for sustaining a species,

and sexual intercourse is essential for that purpose. The species of viviparity and of certain oviparity must fight fiercely to get partners for reproductive intercourse. It is thought that this is how the fittest of species survives.

The sexual urge to sustain one's own species is so strong that it overpowers will, pride, shame and intellect. Under certain conditions, strong hormone causes sexual urges. This is built into every species. Such hormones are stronger than intellect or will and activate the sexual impulse.

This is how generations are created, enabling us to perpetuate the species until the present. At the same time, as sexual urges and attachment to sex are perpetuated, sexual crimes spread widely as human nature has decayed.

Sexual desire, lust, jealousy, grudges, anger, chagrin, grumbling, greed, and the like make the human mind uncontrollable. However, these direct and indirect factors also prevent extinction of the species. They are natural and necessary for prosperity. Selfishness and the denial of others have developed along with the growth of instincts to preserve the species. Instincts, originally for sustaining individual lives, have enabled the preservation of the species. Because existence itself is essentially selfish, self-centered and self-righteous, it is problematic.

However, only human beings are able to be aware of their wholesome human nature, while following such a robust system of sustaining the species. So far as human beings have an awareness of the need to control themselves with their shame, awe, modesty and conscience, their selves will never spin out of control.

This safety system, inherent in all human beings, is useless if it does not function. The question is how one can truly cultivate it.

16. Paternal and maternal instincts are the origin of reason

The child rearing system to sustain the species is based on mature paternal and maternal instincts. In particular, the mother's love of her child is boundless. She never demands compensation from her baby or child, whatever difficulties she has gone through.

Such self-sacrificing dedication is nothing but deep compassion which surpasses everything, even that of deities and the Buddha. A mother's love is a noble mental element that surpasses ego. Therefore, if wholesome paternal and maternal instincts function properly, people of the same species will not fight fiercely or to kill each other. They will fight only when their lives are at risk.

Original paternal and maternal instincts are stronger than cruel and

violent fighting instincts. They are the most beautiful and nurturing of spirits. Without these instincts, reason as the root of our human character would not have developed.

But as far as there are habits of mind that instantly fall into attachment, reason that is thought to be well functioning is, in fact, functioning only within certain limits. Surely everyone has reason as one of his or her mental functions. However, having the function is one thing, but having the function work all the time is quite another. We all have good faith, but good faith is meaningless if it works only occasionally.

Then what is true reason? True reason is not a psychological or philosophical concept or truth. Many geniuses have elucidated the details of reason. But they are merely a detailed account of one function of mind. They will not help in an emergency.

There is no special kind of mind called reason. When you take care of a baby, you use a pure mind. Such a pure mind is a root of reason. Reactions of mind that have no ego or impurities are reason.

Reason has several primary elements. They are first of all fairness and justice. Secondly, reason means to consider matters in light of universal truth, and to have a human and social nature which is easily acceptable to anybody who has common sense. A man with reason acts consistently according to his words, and works to increase the benefits for the whole and the future. To be practically reasonable at all times requires that intellect, emotion and will are completely integrated.

The unity of these three is referred to as the oneness of body and mind (Shinjin-Ichinyo). You are fully existing in “now,” and you have overcome ego and solved the habit of attachment. This pure, natural and free mind without any attachment surpasses reason. This is true reason, if I try to put it without going into depth about the world of zen. No trace of mental actions is left behind in this free and pure state of mind. Oneness of body and mind is a completely different world from reason. It is the supreme treasure and the most desirable life. It is the world only of the enlightened ones. It is to return to one's pure mind and to always retain the mind of absolute devotion in rearing a baby. In short, it means to abandon the attachment of ego.

17. The danger of an underdeveloped mind

Those who have underdeveloped and immature minds are likely to spread various negative influences around since their system of self-control is fragile. Ego reacts in a millisecond, not allowing the control system or reason to work. So it is quite dangerous. They are people who commit fraud,

theft, robbery, murder, and other unforgivable misdeeds. Still, they do not feel ashamed of themselves.

Underdeveloped paternal and maternal instincts are found in the mental structure of individuals' minds where important features of human nature such as conscience, loftiness, ethics, morality and faith are not functioning properly. Mind, therefore, cannot work properly and correctly. From the viewpoint of the evolutionary theory of living creatures, such people were born prematurely. Their wholesome paternal and maternal instincts which are the roots of humanity are not ready to function. Such are people who did not grow well enough in their previous lives. They are animalistic and self-righteous, and therefore dangerous.

When we try to protect these underdeveloped people on account of their human rights, we have to be cautious. Ordinary and hard-working people who live peacefully too frequently fall victim to such people. More and more people behave so selfishly, saying or doing whatever they like without a sense of shame or self-reflection. The human rights of underdeveloped human beings should not be justified by sacrificing the human rights of the victims.

18. A suspicious love

A mother accepts the entirety of her baby and forgives everything with her devoted love. Human love is so pure, great and strong that one can give up even one's own life for the sake of the beloved one, country or race. Thus, sustenance of the species was made possible.

However, because animalistic love arises from the instinct of self-preservation, a strong demand for courtship is hidden. This takes the form of approving oneself and denial of others. Once such love is betrayed, the flame of jealousy and hatred arises instantly. On some occasions, fury and resentment activate the impulse to commit murder or suicide. This is love so commonly called, dubious and flaming red.

True faith, religion and zen are the ways to overcome this animalistic love and resolve attachment. True love is a unified body and mind, the state of no selfishness, and it is pure love. A suspicious love does not only end in vain, but it may stimulate impulsive and dangerous actions. We should be very cautious about it.

19. The belief in ego may lead to war

The human mind sometimes functions in a very complicated manner. We often suffer from being unable to control our own minds. It is quite natural that one seeks help from deities or the Buddha in times of confusion and suffering.

People who have faith in deities or the Buddha believe in them most devoutly. This is very beautiful and respectable. However, what is troublesome is that the more one believes in and worships God as the Absolute, the more antagonistic one may become toward others. Thus, the more people are faithful and loyal to God, the more liable that conflict arises, for such believers are more likely to deny others because of their strong attachment to “God” and to lose control of themselves. So it is inevitable that such people may easily become intolerant of other religions.

No wonder there are endless religious wars and ethnic conflicts. When considering the situations of the Middle and Near East today, and Europe in the Middle Ages, we cannot help feeling a deep sympathy and pity. The guilt lies in those people who teach religion and enforce religious beliefs on others. Such practices are utterly against the wishes of God and the Buddha, who simply direct us to abandon ego and have a merciful mind.

Going in the wrong direction of religious belief, they use “God” as an absolute authority and abuse their ego and power. For what results? The history of human beings is a sheer expression of ego. Oh, God, what a pity! Religious beliefs thus occasionally work against reason. It is difficult for people’s minds to return to their natural state, given the persistence of these ideas since the founding of those countries and are used in the name of the country.

Why is this so? It is because the mental foundation of the person with faith retains the instinct for survival that affirms only him and denies others. Faith based on such groundless convictions is, in essence, selfishness and attachment. To have absolute trust in God, putting aside one's own mind, is to be caught by “God” who is outside oneself. Such faith risks the danger of neglecting one's intellect and reason. As long as such attachments exist, conflicts are inevitable.

Sad to say, one cannot become aware of this fact either by intellect or by reason. This is wonder and difficulty of mind. Religious beliefs that do not pay attention to liberating one’s mind but are limited to trusting in “God” outside oneself are attachment, and the cause of conflict will not be eliminated. This is truly pitiful.

I truly hope that this 21st century is the age of mind. For this to be true, we cannot avoid a thorough reexamination of true religion. Otherwise, we cannot be liberated from attachment to belief. The day will not come when war disappears on earth. War will persist as long as the ego of selfishness

and the denial of others exist somewhere in mind.

20. There is no conflict in the world of the Buddha

God or the Buddha never wishes to kill human beings or to let others do so. The teachings of the Buddha are pure, sacred and true. They provide guidance to bring happiness to all human beings without particular favor to any. They are teachings that solve the sufferings of human beings with absolute love and patience, and they bring peace. This is clearly so because in the world of the Buddha there is no separation between one and the other, there is only “now” here. The teachings tell us that the world is pure just as it is and that we should therefore abandon ego and selfishness.

Because there is no separation from the beginning, there is no cause for fighting. This is called the truth, or Nyorai. The state “now” is the sole world, absolute and pure. To understand this fact is of primary importance. As soon as one begins searching for the truth outside the state of “now,” the pure land gets far beyond one’s reach, and one will not be relieved in this life. One can join the mind of the Buddha if one single-mindedly lets go of everything, let oneself “just” purely be, and follows *conditions* “now.” This is the absolute world without contradiction in the self because there is no self in it. Because of the oneness with the mind of the Buddha, love is absolute and one can feel completely at ease.

The dearest wish of all the historical enlightened ones is that all people practice single-mindedly as guided by their masters so as to attain this true world. It is to attain oneness of body and mind (Shinjiin-Ichinyo), or *nirvana* (Nehan), the state of being enlightened.

21. The mind of the absolute self-contradiction

Human beings keep both a holy mind and a cruel mind within themselves. So we say. However, mind does not necessarily have such bipolarity. It is only when there is ego that mind functions according to *conditions*. Both are in the nature of real human beings who at once seek peace sincerely and also wage war. The mind of an absolute self-contradiction with both love and hate has developed by the laws of the jungle over the long process of evolution of the species.

Yet, although mind appears to be absolutely self-contradictory, this is not true. Because love and hate never happen at the same time nor do they function all the time. There is nothing in the original state of mind. If there

is no cause, nothing happens and contradictions cannot arise.

However, when facing *conditions* that trigger hostile instincts, the mind reacts automatically and the self-contradiction arises. It is only a temporary phenomenon that results from *conditions* at that time. As long as there is self, the self will appear, responding to *conditions* and often causing confusion and suffering. We can no longer overlook it. We should not let it respond automatically.

This is why it is most important to retain a healthy and sound mind. True religion, belief and zazen practice solve such absolute self-contradiction. This is how to attain true peace and happiness. Money can never buy it.

22. Human beings and civilization

Living in abundance, a thrifty heart of sparing things disappears naturally, because there is no need to do so. When the mind of caring for others weakens, one cannot be attentive to people and various matters. The sense of gratitude will go, care for the public diminishes, and, the basis of patience and effort will recede in mind. Instead, self-centered demands become strong.

Asserting selfish rights and pursuing greediness have been a trend for a long time. Personal claims or demands take priority over the sense of responsibility of motherhood. A woman continues to stick to her teenage desires of irresponsible freedom even in her 30s and 40s, and ultimately forgets about her home, husband and children.

Men, on the other hand, so frequently overwork every day, and break down mentally and physically. Their minds become ill unconsciously. This is an awful state of affairs. Such a family is already in danger and parents cannot afford to give their children sufficient care and education.

Thus, precious national traits and the spiritual culture have weakened greatly. Under such social factors, the natural humanity, divine providence and rhythm of life are being destroyed. The number of such families is increasing.

If people who will shoulder the next generation are unhealthy, we can easily imagine the future of mankind. Whatever efforts we the older generation make, they are of no help. This is the reality of our civilized society, which mankind has constructed with its own hands. Unless we establish a wholesome mind that will not surrender to materialism or civilization, we cannot help but choke ourselves and die in agony. The ideology of democracy that has been built on freedom and the rule of the majority, and capitalism that endlessly pursues convenience and profits have

unwholesomely captured our minds. Religion and its practice can help us. However, unless we truly overcome ego, we may avoid the fire but will be drowned instead. Reason has an important role to play here.

23. Ego is the chief problem of mankind

All the problems of environment, population, natural resources, energy and food have been caused by human beings and their minds. Even the country's leaders place their national interest first and behave as if following the law of the jungle. They push the whole nation toward ego.

The ego of the survival instinct may help preserve an individual life. But it can collectively become the ego of the nation, and think only of its own subsistence, even waging a war. Ego can turn itself into an awful power which forces ordinary citizen to die or to kill others.

Why do human beings with reason and spirituality get absorbed by a civilization of materialism and money-making and continue to live by causing dangerous problems? From a perspective of living creatures that have emerged through a long history, it might be natural to reduce numbers by fighting from ego, if ethics and conscience are put aside.

However, mankind should not be so foolish as to approve of this. To avoid our crisis, we should waste no time in devising ways to overcome ego as a priority of nations and their peoples. Taking and acting on this brave decision, we as mankind can realize true peace. A great reform of our education on a global scale is a must so we can avoid the global misery.

24. Instinct and enlightenment

In the world of animals, the law of the jungle may be natural. However, for human beings who feel and try to overcome suffering and confusion, ego is not natural. We should know that the survival instinct is natural and a matter of divine providence and wisdom, so long as we are not bound by it. We should be thankful that everyone originally has a sufficiency of this instinct. We have simply to be natural and use it well.

For instance, when feeling hungry, everyone wants to eat. It has nothing to do with reason or intellect. And one will be satisfied after eating well. This has no relation to reason or intellectual functions either. It is a fair and sound law that applies to everyone. A true and natural law is wisdom that is fair and clear. So one only needs to live by it.

However, when you see someone having a gorgeous meal next to you, you

may have a problem with your ego instantly. You should be satisfied enough already, but by knowing it, feelings of envy, jealousy and resentment may arise. Egoistic views are caused by attachment that begins with recognizing something and reacting to it in mind. Instantly mind creates conflict between you and the other. The root of problems is the self that knows and recognizes distinctions between self and other. This self that knows something is the source of ego and a selfish view. Anyone with a full stomach should have no appetite even for delicious foods. This is the original and natural mind. It is the mind of a person who knows that enough is enough. Without self, everybody is so.

Without attachment, you are saved. The wisdom of the nature is a light. But if you have attachment, you will spoil your satisfaction. Attachment darkens the true way, and ruins one's character. This phenomenon is called Mumyo, no-light, because one is in the dark about the true way. This is ego. When an instinct is obedient to the providence of nature, it functions well as a bright light, showing the way. On the contrary, when instinct is activated by ego, it easily loses reason and will. Driven by the massive energy of impulse, one's body and mind are controlled, confused and conflicted by the selfish desire. It is not instinct but ego that is to blame.

Mind is bothered by others if one is immature. To be indifferent and insensitive also means to be immature. But when one is excessively conscious of others and one cannot control one's mind, one's autonomy is malfunctioning.

25. We exist by *conditions*

Instinct, however strong it is, does not function all the time. Nor do all instincts function at the same time. Everything in this real world exists due to *conditions*, (En, *pratyaya*) and their interactions. Without *conditions*, nothing happens nor changes. When *conditions* cease to exist, their functions and relations also disappear. We exist according to the providence of nature, that is, *pratyaya*. This is difficult to believe but it is true. When we were born, we did not know we were born, or who we were. Human beings "are," simply according to *conditions*, whether we are conscious of it or not. It is the sole truth.

This is the law of *causes* ("In") and *conditions*. You only "know" matters by an intellectual act after the fact. You will understand this well when you truly achieve enlightenment, Kensho. Kensho means that you are truly awakened to your real self before your birth without any human attachments.

The facts that you were born and that you exist are the act of *pratyaya*. Your heart stops beating, and you stop breathing all due to *conditions*. When *conditions* are depleted, you die. It has nothing to do with your will or noble reason. So *pratyaya* can be referred to as precepts, or can be called “way” or the *dharma*², the Buddha’s teachings, because they are all an undeniable part of nature.

This is the truth of the universe. As we ourselves are results of *causes* and *conditions*, we cannot control things with our will. Birth and death, seeing and hearing, thinking and observing—all of them are simply functioning according to *conditions* that prevail here and now. This is the truth and state of everything.

When you become truly aware of this most important nature of *causes* and *conditions*, you will realize that all acts you make on your mind, to disturb and to violate the “path” and the *dharma*, are wrong. If you truly solve mind at this moment, you do not need to think or activate other mental functions, you will be freed from attachment. However fierce the survival instinct you may have, there will be no conflict or confusion if you follow *conditions* just “now” and are not attached to them. This is the providence of the great nature. You only have to follow it. Just let yourself be “now”. By practicing this way, your confusion and distraction of mind will gradually calm down, and you will attain a unity of body and mind. If you really master this, you have a solution.

26. To be free according to *conditions*

You eat when you want to eat. That does not mean that you want to eat all the time. You do not feel like eating because you think so. Appetite arises when hunger as a *condition* visits your body which is a *cause*. So you eat.

This cycle of “now” after “now” goes on. The feeling of being full as an *effect* (Ka) follows naturally. Next, this effect of a full stomach turns into another *condition*, and as a result, appetite is lost. Thus, by a continuous evolution of *conditions*, you stop eating. This is an *effect*.

When you work, you naturally get tired, and when you are tired, you naturally want to rest. All of this is simply the providence of nature and wisdom which result from *conditions*. All are impermanence and arise by *causes* and *conditions*. This body exists according to *causes*, *conditions* and *effects*.

² *Dharma* has multiple meanings: teachings of the Buddha, the truth of realities, and so on. It therefore needs to be understood according to the context.

When there is no *cause* or *condition*, nothing happens. If we ourselves do not exist, there are no *conditions*, and there is no appetite nor feeling full, no fatigue nor sleep, no survival instinct, no confusion nor suffering. Not one thing happens. Existence itself is a mass of *conditions*. Something begins to appear when one *condition* meets another *condition*, and it ends when the *condition* disappears. When there is no *condition* that causes a feeling of crisis or anger to threaten the survival instinct, naturally war cannot happen.

In short, this simply means that if there is no ego which has attachment, no problem arises because there is no *condition* for it. One has a body and mind but one has no attachment to them. This is why being selfless is of supreme importance. Mind without self-contradiction is most splendid. This state of mind is free and easy.

27. How to help the self

We make mistakes out of human intellectual functions. Mind works and ego arises. This is the beginning of a problem. When one asserts self, so does the other, and a relative relationship arises. Instantly one has attachment, and a mental action begins.

This is simply a habit of mind which is caused by the separation of body and mind. Self begins to work powerfully a moment earlier than intellect and will. How to control this habit is the most important objective to address.

No attachment and no habit—that is the truth and the Buddha’s teaching. The original state is the pure world as it is. It is true “now” and is the universal “now” without before and after. That is what it is and it is most certainly true. The truth is originally certain as well. But we are fooled by habits because we do not understand the truth.

We conceive of an issue, translate it into information and an idea, and this gives rise to acts of mind unnecessarily, leading to confusion and trouble. This is attachment. The fundamental cause of this problematic mind is simply the separation of body and mind. If we can get rid of this habit of separation, we can get back to the original oneness of body and mind. One will be completely free and easy because there is neither one who obstructs nor the other who is obstructed.

The thinking that “this is me” and “that is the other” is the act of self and ego. It is a separation and a habit of mind. Zazen is a practice for solving this problem. Only you can help yourself. Only mind can help mind. You must practice this after all. You can easily be drawn into joyful things, but pursuing this path is not at all easy. Nevertheless, you do it. That is zen

practice.

Ego is attachment. It is the habit of taking in something unconsciously as information. Ego is the habit of using your mind instantly when you face something. Ego has no substance. But as soon as you face the environment or *conditions*, or you see, hear, perceive and conceive a matter, you recognize it as the other and ego arises. Therefore, even if you search for ego, you will not find it. But mind exists and thinks that ego has substance. We call such a mind that imagines and recognizes substance as ego, the habit of mind. If you truly understand that ego has originally no substance, the source of attachment will drop and the self in you that recognizes the other will automatically disappear. Naturally, as attachment of mind disappears, you will instantly experience absolute peace. This is the tranquil state of *nirvana*.

Because this is a problem of your own mind, assistance by others outside cannot help. The only way to solve it is to save yourself. This may sound so simple, but it is quite difficult. In order to solve such a complex problem of mind, you need to practice hard with the right method under the guidance of a reliable zen master.

It means there is only one way. You must first hold a firm aspiration, then practice hard under the guidance of a master who teaches you the correct methods. First and foremost, it is absolutely necessary to have a strong aspiration to practice zen. Zen practice is to do it actually. Concrete efforts produce concrete results. This is the nature as it is originally.

This original nature is a solemn and universal path. So it is called the Buddha's teachings (Buppo), or the Buddha nature (Bussho). It is a most precious world where you can enjoy a rich life without owning anything. It is also called *nirvana* or the Pure Land (Higan).

Nothing is so rewarding and satisfying than reaching this state of mind and enjoying life. Even if a treatment is found to completely cure cancer, we must remember that human beings are doomed to die. The first step is to search for the true nature of ego in your mind.

Well then, how should one practice and work to reach such an absolute state of mind where there is no contradiction of self? The answer is given in the next chapter.

PART TWO

Zen and Satori

1. Is it possible to pull it out with pliers?

I have repeatedly explained that confusion, attachment and suffering begin with the separation of body and mind. People think while eating. We worry about our own thoughts while listening to others. We are bothered by others or money matters, and thus we are absent-minded most of the time.

If body and mind are united as one, confusion does not arise. Nor is one bothered by suffering. Body and mind get separated because something has entered in between.

If it were an object that one could see or touch, one could pull it out with pliers. But this thing that causes separation of body and mind has no tangible substance. It does exist, but there is no substance. It is a kind of a mysterious and incomprehensible spirit. It may be called mind, heart, or thought. For the time being, I will call it ego or self. This spiritual matter belongs to you, but you cannot handle it because it has no substance.

However, unless we find a way to manage it, we will constantly be bothered by anxiety, confusion, conflicts and an impure mind. How, then, can we solve this mysterious matter and overcome the “separation” of body and mind? That is the main theme of this chapter.

2. It is too late

Now I jump to the point. As this goes far beyond the limit of intelligence, I will get illogical and you will get lost. It is incomprehensible so please “just” read it as it is without trying to understand it.

The matter that causes “separation” does not have any substance. So no skills or power, intelligence, will, or reason can identify this “matter.” Even though you cannot identify it, it certainly is inside you. Here are some clues to solve the problem.

Whenever we feel relief, confusion or suffering, the matter always appears “now” in our mind and disappears in the next “now,” even though it has no substance. However untraceable or invisible it is, there is no doubt it is a matter of our mind.

At least you may understand that this is a function of mind in the moment of “now.” A problem is the next step. The moment you recognize that

it has appeared as a function of mind or consciousness, a thought or a perception, it is gone and has ceased to exist. The moment you recognize it, it is too late. You cannot apprehend it because it has totally disappeared.

Confusion begins when you acknowledge a trace of the matter which has already disappeared, and hold on to it in your mind. This happens because of self who recognizes and perceives. This is the root cause of the confusion. This is the “separation” of body and mind. This is ego and self.

3. Don't search for a man on an inhabited island

Zazen and the practice of Buddhism can decisively solve this uncontrollable matter. How, then, can we settle a matter such as this, which has already disappeared?

It is so simple. Because it has no substance, all you have to do is just completely leave it alone, paying no attention to it. There is no one on an inhabited island. The moment you begin to have an idea or thoughts, suspicion or expectation that there might be somebody on the island, you are captured by the illusion and you get lost. As a result, you keep searching for it for all your life in vain.

If you really know the truth that there is nobody on the island, or there is no substance that you should know, then everything will be solved. Therefore, it is best if you stop searching or trying to recognize it.

Zazen is to truly experience and acquire this. You “just” have to do zazen.

4. There is no before or after “now”

If you wish to attain emancipation (Gedatsu), you should not pay attention to any matters that come up in the mind. The point of focus is before a thought arises, whether in the form of “I understand it” or “I don't understand it”, the point before an idea appears to be good or bad, a point before mind begins to work. If you practice zazen truly, you should focus on the “now” that has no before or after.

The matter has no substance. You notice it after it has appeared, and after it has already disappeared. You should be cautious not to observe or analyze mind or a thought that has appeared. By doing so you will build another thought upon the first thought. Because this process is contrary to solving your mind, you move farther and farther away from solution. This is not the aim of zazen.

Then what should you do? The matter that has come up within yourself

is neither good nor bad. It exists because it has come up. But, as soon as you acknowledge it, you will be trapped and it becomes attachment. Whatever comes up in your mind, you should completely ignore it and let it go.

5. The villain from olden times

Your mind is perfectly emancipated, whatever and however you think in mind, whether you are caught by some matter or confused about it. This is because whatever it is is a matter of a moment, without substance. That is, it is gone. That is why a new matter can appear every “now” and come and go freely. If the matter remained without disappearing, it would be terrible. Mankind could never have survived, because lots of “nows,” minds and selves coexist chaotically, and not one thing can exist. The reality is different.

Whether you are aware or not, mind, a spiritual entity, conforms to its present circumstances. Mind is perfectly attained. From its original state, mind does not have any matter that remains or is left behind. So mind never accumulates its thoughts nor does it get confused. Mind is emancipated from the beginning.

However, even though this is true, because one’s body and mind are separated, one is surely caught by what has appeared “now” in mind. One doesn’t really want to approve or disapprove of it, or analyze it. But still one is trapped and a thought arises.

This “separation” is a source of impurity which turns into ego and selfishness. It is the root cause of all evils, confusion, conflicts and suffering. So it is natural that ego has been a villain, hated from olden times. Ego leads to the separation of body and mind. From the viewpoint of separation, it is because of ego and selfishness that relativity and conflicts arise and the separation occurs. All of them are variations of mind. It may be better to call them “habits of mind.”

To remove these habit of mind means to know the “true self” and to really experience that mind is, in fact, emancipated from the beginning. Zazen is the best way to realize this purpose. Zazen is the way which can completely defeat the villain of ego.

6. It is foolish to take the trouble to find it

But it is extremely difficult to know the “true self” because it is too close to you. When you recognize that you are suffering from attachment or separation, you begin to try to get out of it, and then you get into trouble.

Trouble begins only when you recognize it. If you don't recognize it on the other hand, your suffering will persist forever and you will not be emancipated. Then what on earth can you do?

It is mind that tries to recognize or understand. It is self. Therefore, the moment you try to seek an answer with your mind or solve your suffering through the work of will, you fall into chaos. So unmanageable is mind. You may simply say, "I will forget about mind." But this is not easy. Because once you recognize your attachment, it becomes information that forms part of your judgement system. It keeps coming up on every occasion even if you try to forget it. Then you will suffer from it.

The principal aim of practicing zazen is to get away from it all and forget all these thoughts. When you have thoroughly gotten away, you will realize that everything of the past has already gone and disappeared. This realization is called Satori or Kensho.

For instance, if somebody writes "No graffiti!" on the wall, they are graffiti itself. The one (subject) that seeks is mind and self (object). So, if you search for yourself, or if your mind looks for mind, you will never find another one. The more you write such graffiti, the dirtier it becomes. You will be separated from "now" and problems will arise one after another.

To put it simply, if you don't realize that you already have it in your hand, you will search for it outside. If you know that you already have it, why bother searching for it? Whether you are aware or not, you walk every day. But if you are asked "What is it to walk?", you have a habit of searching for an answer elsewhere away from the fact of walking. Such a habit is the root of "separation" and confusion. This is ego and self.

Elsewhere is the world of ideas, concept and reason, all of which are false images and delusion. They are all thoughts and confusion which you make up with your mind. You don't realize the "itself" that is closest to you. Because of this, you are caught by various thoughts and reasons which, in turn, cause confusion and conflicts. You are already seeing it. You are already walking. You already know it. You are already enjoying it. This is "a cypress tree in the yard" (Teizen-no-Hakujushi). It is the "three pounds of flax" (Masangin)³.

7. Is zen really too difficult?

Saying "the one that seeks mind is mind itself" doesn't make sense at all. You will search for the meaning because you don't understand it. You already

³ These are examples of Koan, a zen question.

have it in your hand, but you can't find it because you are searching somewhere outside yourself. This is called Mumyo, the darkness of mind, which means one does not know the truth. It is too close to you to notice. What a pity that you don't understand yourself.

Thus, you totally miss understanding yourself, or knowing your mind, as the truth is too close to you. It is not easy to see something that is too close, or to get rid of a habit that has no substance. Fortunately, the habit will naturally give way if you practice Shikan-taza, just sitting with your whole heart, namely zazen. Zazen is the best way to realize the original self. We call it the Buddha Way.

Zen is generally thought of as incomprehensible and difficult, because the object is too near at hand to know how to grasp it. It evidently exists "now" as it is, and you don't have to grasp it. So long as you don't understand that you should not grasp it, such habits certainly come into play as we seek it by means of the intellect. It is an unnecessary act of mind, giving rise to another confusion. It is a critical crossroad where you may run the risk of practicing in the wrong direction.

Not to grasp it is to make mind not act, not to use mind at all. This is zazen. We all have a body, which includes the six sense-organs—eyes, ears, nose, tongue, body, and mind; and correspondingly the six objects of perception—color and shape, sound, odor, taste, tangible objects, and objects of the mind. They are the roots of confusion, but doing without them all is almost impossible in this world. If you practice zazen correctly, however, you will clearly recognize self and mind which you could not see before because they were too close to you.

What is closest to you is "now." It involves seeing, hearing, perceiving and conceiving; the six sense-organs, and the six objects of perception. There is nothing else that you recognize as self or mind. Zen is "just" to practice purely. It is "just" to practice zazen purely, with all your focus on it. You will never be wrong about it, because all the historical enlightened ones say so. When you truly practice "just," even "just" itself is gone. When you have become one with it, this "just" will naturally drop off.

8. Enlightenment will come to you

Through Zazen you truly experience that you have nothing to look for or know because it is mind itself. If you are nothing but zazen, there is no room or space for a habit to enter. One must do zazen in order not to use mind altogether. This is Shikan-taza, just doing zazen. It is true zazen and the practice of the Buddha Way.

There is no surer truth than zazen being zazen. This is the meaning of “just” (Shikan), another name for the “way” and the *dharma*. It means to be pure, as it is, stainless, which is what the Buddha is. Therefore, Shikan-taza is the life and essence of the Buddha and the enlightened. It is the root of compassion.

After all, if you keep it intact, enlightenment will come to you of its own accord. The zen master Rinzai calls this “to attain the enlightenment through *conditions*.” It is the moment when you have clearly realized that “now is mind” or “mind is everything.” It is the moment when you have attained the absolute state of no contradiction.

Master Dogen says that “mind is the Buddha (Sokushin-Zebutsu).” And Master Baso says that “mind as it is is the Buddha (Sokushin-Sokubutsu)” and “no mind, no Buddha (Hishin-Hibutsu).” It means that the matter by itself is the Buddha and the truth as it is.

The aim of zazen is to really acquire this truth through practice. So, don’t be bothered by mind and leave it empty, enlightenment will come to you by itself.

9. It is enough to taste the seawater just once

A human being has words and concepts that he or she has acquired through the development of his or her intellect. They direct one to keep building up the world of concepts endlessly. It is a natural course, but at the same time, humans have developed the troublesome habit of being constantly bothered by ideas and thoughts. This is the root of confusion, conflicts and suffering.

Our body properly responds to the environment of “now.” Seeing, hearing, perceiving and conceiving are all facts of “now.” Every action and behavior exists “now.” Nevertheless, mind does not stay focused, floating on the world of thoughts. The problem of mind is that it acts in separation from the fact of “now.” It is enough to taste the seawater just once for the sake of intellect. Similarly, it is important to surely experience the truth. You can never enjoy the cake in a picture, however delicious it may look.

Practicing zazen is to realize that the world you imagine from a map or a picture is merely a concept, not the truth. The moment you are awakened to the fact of “now,” you will become aware of the truth. This is an appreciation of what you actually see or hear by visiting there, of the taste of food you have eaten. Why? This is because if you know that it is the cake in a picture, you will never try to eat it. This is important evidence of appreciation and salvation. The practice of zazen can be the shortest way to acquire it.

10. Mankind develops attachment easily

Humans are creatures of conceptualization. We use words for conveying messages. The more we know, the more we want to know. We have the habit of pursuing and comparing. We easily develop attachment to various matters. From this mental activity, we get confusion, conflicts and suffering. Sadly, this is a vicious cycle and habits of our minds, which make it difficult for us to realize that this is confusion.

A person who realizes this fact and immediately takes action to begin zen practice is blessed with *conditions* as fortunate as one can have. Many people read books, seek information and try to find a solution by themselves. But any method that one has found by oneself is fake. As long as he clings to it, he can rarely be freed from attachments. Because too often people think “I know myself best. No one else can understand my mind.” to the extent it becomes their conviction. This is attachment to self, a firm belief that is very difficult to dissolve. Because your ego or self wants to justify itself more firmly when somebody else gives advice to you. The practice of zazen dissolves such habits.

11. Why did Shakyamuni Buddha renounce his palace?

In your long past lives, you needed to be able to instantly distinguish enemies from allies, the weaker from the stronger, and judge whether you can catch something and eat it or not. Otherwise, you couldn't survive. This is the way the instinct of self-preservation has taken root unconsciously and has begun to work. This is how it became a habit of mind.

This habit instantly dominates mind. It is extremely difficult to stop or delete it. A thought comes up one after another, even if you don't want to think. You cannot get rid of it, and then you fall into suffering, confusion and conflicts. Intellect, reason, consciousness and will cannot overcome this habit. Why? Because the habit works unconsciously with such speed and power that will or a thought has no way of escape. This is why Shakyamuni Buddha, despite renouncing his palace, wife and son, his honor and his property, and pursuing an ascetic life, couldn't overcome the habit.

Accordingly, if you wish to attain emancipation, never seek or try to understand it. Give up words and ideas. After six or seven years of ascetic life with hard training, Shakyamuni Buddha could not attain enlightenment. After realizing that his efforts were futile, he began to practice zazen under a

tree or on a stone. After six years of practice, he at last experienced and acquired the meaning of “no-mind” and “no-action”.

Master Dogen, too, spent fifteen years in vain caught up in thoughts, concepts and reasoning. The difficulty of clarifying mind stems from the habits of past lives that have deeply stained body and mind.

Zen practice is to abandon the body and mind, or rather, forget them. For that purpose, you must give up your own way and follow the directions of your zen teacher.

12. Even the utmost effort is useless

To develop one’s capabilities, one usually trains oneself to improve the sophistication, skill, or speed of a particular task outside of oneself. Efforts to this effect may work toward mastery and perfection. However, when one uses this approach to attain true peace of mind, one is lost in the wrong path. So one should be cautious not to follow such a path.

Once upon a time, there was a master archer named Gei in China. After his great efforts, he could shoot through even a willow leaf from hundred steps away, a hundred times without fail. On another occasion, another master archer Hiei competed for mastery with an equally renowned master named Kisho, and eventually they fought a duel. Two arrows from the two masters hit each other in the air. It is splendid to have reached such a mastery of skills by an incredible amount of effort, an unprecedented achievement. But even such efforts and achievement are not helpful in solving their agonizing minds.

True zazen as the Buddha Way is to attain emancipation. It is to practice the “way” just for the sake of the “way.” You must practice disregarding your body and mind. In order to be completely cut off from *karma*, you need to forget body and mind completely. This is zazen. You become nothing but zazen. This is Shikan-taza. Without having the first aspiration right, all unprecedented efforts will result in vain.

13. What is it that is certain?

What is certain is that mind arises “now.” And mind does not stay but disappears instantly without leaving anything behind. Mind has absolutely no substance. True, we can recall what happened in the past. But it is only an image, a phenomenon of thought. It is all illusion.

However, because this world of illusion is so common and usual, people

take these mental phenomena as themselves. This is beyond categories of truth or falsehood. People simply believe such fictitious matters to be themselves. This is sheer confusion.

Indeed, mind has no substance. But its mental function of non-existence clearly exists every moment of “now.” Non-existent does exist. It is, but it isn’t. It may take any form according to *conditions* and appear “now” after “now”, and disappear “now” after “now.” It does not stay and it leaves nothing behind. Only memory remains as information. This is the natural function of mind. There is nothing to be surprised at.

This is mind. If you truly realize that there is nothing else you should search for as mind, you will attain peace of mind. Everybody uses mind freely, in whatever way, whether you understand the subject or not. Mind does not get overlapped or complicated.

A matter suddenly comes up in mind “now” according to *conditions*, and just as suddenly disappears “now.” Originally there is no attachment, confusion, or conflict in mind. Only its function exists. Mind itself is free from problems. This is the original state of mind.

14. If you fall in love...

Why, then, do we suffer so much and feel such a pain as if we were dying? When you fall in love, why do you get captured by the thought of your lover and suffer so much? Why do you feel like killing yourself or the other out of extreme pain or resentment? Why are you afraid of dying?

If mind has no substance, isn’t it reasonable that there can be no such a thought or a feeling? Why does mind with no substance suffer or create such a nuisance for itself? This is the point. Though mind has no substance, it overwhelms one’s thoughts, and it comes up even more strongly the next moment magnifying thoughts. The repetition of this cycle deepens one’s suffering.

Once you have fallen in love deeply, the delusion of your lover haunts you twenty-four hours a day. So long as there is the “separation” of body and mind, the stains of thoughts remain. Even though a thought disappears instantly, it is reproduced every moment of “now” after “now.” Such is the horrible separation of mind and body that causes repeated misery.

Apart from the pure, confusion-free, and original state of mind, there is self with habits with which you stare at, imagine, criticize, choose, or judge good or bad, all matters arising from this function. That is, you get confused by yourself giving the confusion reasons. This is the work of ego. This is attachment, and because of it you suffer from confusion or conflicts. The root

cause is the “separation” of body and mind.

15. When you have truly attained

Mind exists only in this place “now.” This is sufficient if you only experience and realize the true mind that works freely and leaves nothing behind. You are afraid of dying just by imagining it, though you haven’t experienced it. It is because the traces of mind, such as thoughts or ideas, have not disappeared and gradually expand by the reproductive function of mind.

It is natural for a man to die when he is ready to die. When the time comes for you to die, there is no way to continue to live. So it is natural that you die. You “just” die.

If you demand something that does not exist or wish to do something that you can’t do, your disappointment mounts and you suffer all the more. This is the problematic work of ego. You “just” practice zazen in order to solve this problem and know the true mind. Enlightenment, or Kensho, is to experience and acquire this “just.” It is the way to completely solve the suffering which intellect or reason cannot remove. This is why zazen is so respectable and deep. When you truly penetrate into the truth, you clearly understand yourself and the true nature of mind. Then you can no longer be confused. This is the state of emancipation.

16. A baby’s mind is the Buddhahood

It is natural for a baby to learn words gradually. Before learning words, she used to cry out for hunger or inconvenience. It was her way of demanding or normalizing things to protect her life.

It is also natural, not by intention, that a person gradually learns meanings and formulates concepts with the growth of intellect. Having acquired a certain number of words and concepts, she begins to connect words and concepts together and to build new concepts on her own. This is so-called intelligence and cognitive ability.

When she can walk freely by herself, she moves around according to her interest following various stimuli. She does not do so with a particular purpose. She is “just” reacting to the stimuli without using her mind. This is a natural, pure action following *conditions*.

It is as if water flows with perfect freedom, or a cloud follows the wind and moves across the sky freely, according to *conditions*. It is a natural

activity without any attachment. There is no desire, no hope, no dislike, no life or death, and no profit or loss. This is the original state. There is no separation, attachment, before and after, nor any ego.

This natural, untainted mind is called “a baby mind, the Buddhahood” (Sekishin-Jobutsu). It is the state of mind before consciousness, with no separation of body and mind. The Buddhahood means the true and perfect state of mind as it is. The aim of zazen is to discard everything and become the baby mind, which is to become the Buddhahood. For that, you “just” practice zazen. When you have nothing other than zazen, you attain the Buddhahood, because there is no suffering or attachment in mind.

17. To make a clear distinction

“A baby mind, the Buddhahood” does not mean that a baby’s mind is enlightened. This is because the baby’s mind has not gone through a conscious experience and, therefore, it cannot solve problems. Master Dogen says:

Each person is abundantly endowed with it, but it does not become manifest without practice, and it will not be gained without attaining it.

Unless a person truly experiences and acquires the Buddhahood, it is as good as nothing.

Shakyamuni Buddha freed himself of everything when he threw himself into the great nature. Because he had attained Muga, no self, he did not know that he was in Muga. At the dawn of the 8th December, upon being awakened by an external stimulus of seeing the last twinkling Venus in the sky, he realized through his experience that everything had dropped off. This is the genuine Kensho and the enlightenment.

Having nothing in mind is not same as being emancipated. A baby born has not yet gone through a conscious experience of emancipation, and has not differentiated confusion from enlightenment.

A matter in itself has no word or notion. It is truly itself, and exists truly “now” as it is. “As-it-is” has no self who recognizes, so there is no conflict, no attachment and no confusion. It is a status before any feeling of liking or disliking emerges, before one formulates any assertion. This is the state of the Buddhahood and the *dharmā* in its entirety.

Therefore, if a person stays as conditioned and “just” as he is, he is peaceful and emancipated in the “now.” This is *nirvana*, the state of being enlightened, following the natural course of the universe. This is applicable

to everybody and everything. However, if one does not clearly experience and realize it, one will stay confused.

When you think you understand this fact through your own reason, it is of no help. You must personally experience and acquire this truth and become emancipated. The very purpose of zen practice is for you to personally experience it and to understand the truth. This is the status of awareness that you can't attain without thoroughly abandoning your self.

18. To know is important, but...

The intellectual function of recognition is peculiar to human beings. A man can feel at ease and be confident by recognition. To know and recognize is, in itself, neither bad nor wrong. Rather, it is necessary to be clear about where the responsibility lies.

However, the intellectual activity "to know" is to generate information in your way and process it against sheer natural facts. That is to say, you turn facts into signals. This is to conceive, to conceptualize, and to digitalize. This process will draw you into the world of illusion which drives you away from the true reality. This is an act of mind, which is called recognition or judgment. As long as your understanding depends on intellect or logic, you will continue to be dominated by mind that is incomprehensible, and you will never be relieved from suffering.

19. Facts versus images

Mind will not be liberated in such a simple manner. Uncontrollable mental activities will stimulate ideas and concepts, such as self against the other, liking against disliking, good against bad, or profit against loss. Thus, mind gets confused and problematic.

This function of mind is not only troublesome but also is uncontrollable since it has become a habit and a routine. It has become a decisive system of mental functioning, the mechanism to generate self. Thus, everyone takes virtualized information for fact and truth, and continues to accumulate ideas and thoughts upon it. This is the usual world of recognition. It seems ridiculous that one makes up a virtual reality by oneself and then is bound by it.

We have to realize that all these things are illusion. A fact and an image are totally different. But it is impossible for one to distinguish a fact from an image with consciousness, intellect or concept. You will realize that habits of

mind are unconscious processes that function autonomously. When one recognizes a fact, it is too late because it has already become the past. Only when you really experience and understand the absolute difference between a fact and its image, is mind freed from confusion and conflicts and stays at peace. Illusions will disappear and you will attain *nirvana*.

20. The beginning of a false image

Consciousness always uses concepts. Both consciousness and concepts manipulate signals as information. As soon as one has recognized that this is certainly a fact, the fact has already become a false image made of concepts and information. Being trapped in Mumyo is terrifying. Everyone believes such false images to be facts, never doubting it. Mumyo means to be blind to truth. As explained earlier, consciousness can't recognize this serious mistake.

Consciousness can only acknowledge a fact by turning it into an image. What one believes as fact is a mere piece of information or concept. People firmly believe that they can know true facts if they can use words and ideas precisely. Human consciousness is complicated, and its preconceptions commit such decisive errors unconsciously.

It is absolutely impossible for us to know true facts unless we abolish consciousness entirely. As long as one believes the false delusion of concepts to be facts, one cannot escape confusion, conflicts and suffering, because facts and concepts are contesting each other.

All historical Buddhas and the enlightened ones felt great pity and grief for human beings and made great efforts to find a way for us to understand the truth. The answer is the Buddha Way and the practice of zen.

21. Seeing, hearing, perceiving and conceiving are real and fictitious

The eye sees everything as it is without bias. Whatever it sees, it never thinks that it sees. Even if the eye sees a thing or a scene one after another, the images do not overlap and are not opposed to each other. The eye has no conflict or confusion. The eye is originally clean, not attached to anything.

The same is true of the tongue. Whatever you eat, the tongue has no attachment. It leaves no traces of taste behind and therefore can keep tasting freely. The tongue is not stained by any taste, and the taste is gone once you swallow it. A new taste is manifest every moment. In other words, the taste of a particular and temporary moment is manifest, and emptiness

(Kuu) is present in different forms. There is nothing else anywhere. This is our original state. As there is no problem to solve in the first place, one is really peaceful and free.

Thus one sees a flower with one's eyes, hears a bird song with one's ears, and tastes wine with one's tongue. At that moment, it is "just" a flower, "just" a bird song, and "just" the taste of wine that really exists. A second earlier or a second later, there is nothing, and it is absolutely impossible to see, hear or taste the flower, song or wine. Why? Because they are already in the past and do not exist now. And the future has not come yet. They "just" exist temporarily "now."

Master Yoka says:

This illusionary and temporary body is as it is the "*dharma*-body," the embodiment of ultimate truth⁴.

This means that although it is a temporary illusion, it is just true reality now and there is nothing else. It is for this purpose that you practice Shikan-taza. Only when you realize this, can you attain emancipation.

22. What is the real "now"?

"Now" exists but it does not; it does not exist but it does. This is the true "now" and the way it is. "As it is." Everything is constantly changing, and only "now" truly exists. It is never stable and changes freely into other things according to *conditions*. This is called "the *dharma* of *causes* and *conditions*," or "*causes-conditions* are Kuu of the non-self-nature." These are excellent phrases and are associated with "all is emptiness (Issai-Kaikuu)," the truth of the universe.

Let us analyze 'now' in a little more detail. The "now" which is present every moment is universal and eternal. But it is not stable and continuously changes; in this sense, it is the ever-flowing "now." If we do not understand this truth, we take our body as "self" as if it were stable. To admit it is to be bound by it. When consciousness perceives "now," even though it is ever-changing, self emerges. When one truly understands that it is confusion and illusion, one attains Kensho and is emancipated.

There is no doubt that you see with your eyes, hear with your ears, taste with your tongue. These are your own senses and your world. No one else can conceive or see for you. Acknowledging these functions each moment, no wonder you believe yourself to be real.

⁴ 幻化空身即法身, a phrase from Shodoka (証道歌).

However, feeling is but a natural function of “now.” Your eyes fully function as eyes “now,” your ears and tongue fulfill their functions “now.” Each function does not have beauty or ugliness, liking or disliking, jealousy or hatred. The function does not have any consciousness that this is me.

One becomes conscious and recognizes itself only after the fact. This is inevitably an illusion. Eyes “just” performs eyes, ears “just” performs ears, and tongue “just” performs tongue, as their natural functioning. As it is, it is the Buddha. You don’t understand this fact because consciousness obstructs you. If only you thoroughly remove your personal world of consciousness, you will realize the absolute great world.

Master Dogen says, “Stop all the functions of mind, stop thinking and imaging” and “just” see it. And you will realize the truth of “now.” All historical Buddhas and the enlightened have truly mastered this through their experiences.

23. The root of all evil

We take the trouble of using our feelings and thoughts to compare or criticize matters, to tell right from wrong, or to have likes and dislikes. Thus we get distracted from the pure *dharma* and become confused and tense. We introduce our selves and do unnecessary things. This is the act of attachment, of ego and habits.

When you react to *conditions* using ego, the selfish coarse instincts of survival appear. Intelligence and sensitivity begin to function based on attachment. This involves you in the dangerous instincts of your past. It is the moment you begin to commit errors. This is the root of all evil.

Religion aims to conduct good things and to commit no evil. But how to make it possible? It boils down to solving the problem of mind.

24. Intelligence and human beings

Oxen, pigs and other animals live according to the instincts of survival, just following *conditions* as they change. They eat when they feel hungry. They recognize food, but they are not aware of themselves who are eating, because they do not have the faculty of knowing themselves. Therefore, they don’t have a notion of others to compare with. They have no confusion or suffering. Naturally, they do not feel insufficiency or satisfaction. They just follow their destiny, because they do not get bothered by their destinies, by what will happen tomorrow or what others are doing. Not having a notion of

destiny, they can never get the salvation of overcoming it. This is their destiny. The greatest benefit of being born a human being is that we have the mental faculties to be aware of our own existence: intelligence, reason and spirit.

Only a human being can know the past and future, the principle of *cause* and *effect*, his whereabouts, good and evil, and the truth. We can reflect on our past deeds and make efforts to do different things, thanks to our ability to know a fact. Knowing is very important, but even if we have all sorts of information and knowledge, war can happen. Knowing that others are richer rouses feelings such as jealousy, envy or hatred.

As long as the knowledge-driven self functions first, the natural self that is complete at every moment will vanish. Still, at the same time, one's consciousness is bothered by the other existence, and a sense of opposition arises. This is a dangerous situation in which various thoughts stimulate one's survival instincts and one's mind gets lost.

What is most important, accordingly, is not to be possessed by the self that is driven by knowledge. Just knowing is harmless. Stop at the moment of "now" before developing any mental function. There is no self or possession in knowing itself. This is the true intelligence, salvation and transcendence. When the intelligence responds to the real "now," one is never possessed by anything because there is no before or after in the "now." This is truly reason.

We human beings need to practice. As long as we are bound by the *karma*, reason and spirituality are covered with thick clouds, and cannot shine with their original brightness. We face many of difficult problems that risk survival of the humankind. But we will not fully solve them without purifying our minds. Nothing is more dangerous than placing absolute trust in intelligence, because it has no moral sense or ethics.

25. Truth of facts

When one really sees something, his whole body just sees it and he is not conscious that he is seeing. This may not make sense to you. But what matters is not whether you understand it or not. When you see truly, your whole body is your eyes. At that moment, you cannot put yourself aside and argue about you. Originally there is no self. You are enlightened as you are, and there is no need to say or think.

This is what I mean by no ego and no self. Without ego or self, you naturally harmonize with others, and no motivation arises for waging war. There is no time and space in truth to know or think. The original state means "as it is" before you perceive it or explain it by words. So it is called

Honrai-no-Menmoku, the true nature. It means the universal truth.

Once you have actually experienced this, you realize that the conceived self which is constructed of ideas is mere illusion. You feel a wind on the ground. But a balloon in the sky does not feel the wind, because there is no separation between the wind and the balloon; they are one in the wind. Without separation, the whole universe is in the eye, not in ideas or thoughts. Therefore, it is already it as it is, and one cannot describe it with words. This is the *dharma* of Innen-Shosho, everything arises from *causes* and *conditions*. This is Kuu, and is the truth of the universe.

Whether we attain this “way” or the *dharma* is a vital point for mankind. This is the fundamental solution. One only has to focus on “now” and remove the “separation.” However, such is the seriousness of Mujo, impermanence, that one can only practice this only “now.” If you don’t have Bodai-shin (*bodhi*-mind), the pure aspiration for enlightenment, you cannot be awakened into your true self. The life of zen is in the moment when you have thoroughly attained enlightenment.

26. A respectable person

Society consists of people. In it there are politics, economics, culture, education, arts, religion, things, money, system and organization, etc. All of these are surely important elements which support and make up society. There are also invisible matters such as authority, morals, mind, character and passion which have one thing in common: mind. The humanity of the people decides the quality of society, as well as their position, status, and quality of time.

Mankind can be judged by various standards, but the most precious value of mankind is good faith, sincerity and purity. Accordingly, a sense of duty and responsibility, effort and patience are all important elements. If a man loses humane feelings, he will have no warmth or emotion. Thus society will become tasteless, and people will find no meaning in life.

Feelings such as tenderness, compassion and sternness function freely and according to situations and one’s status. When sincerity and pure mind respond to *conditions*, they naturally turn into social justice, loyalty, friendship, piety and love. Isn’t it wonderful to have, moreover, humor, the innocence of a child, cheerfulness and passion, and rich creativity? Just being beside such a person, you will feel refreshed and recharged, your words and behaviors will become refined.

To solve the problem of mind is far more important than to seek means and tools to make you look better. What else do you need if you have true

self-confidence? So, how can you get there? You only need to take good care of “now”: “just” do honestly and sincerely whatever trivial thing is in front of you. The point is whether you can truly practice it or not. It will make a huge difference whether you can solve the most important problem in life.

THE SECOND SECTION

PART THREE

Questions and Answers about Emancipation (1)

Questioner: A zen practitioner

Answerer : Kido Inoue

1. The purpose of zazen.

Q: I hear that zazen is wonderful, but what is the purpose of zazen?

A: Just to pursue Kensho.

Q: What is Kensho?

A: It is to be enlightened.

Q: What is it to be enlightened?

A: It is really to know that there is nothing particular other than only this moment of “now.”

Q: Then, isn't it enough from the beginning to stay as it is “now”?

A: Yes. But you cannot accept it when you hear I say it is enough, can you?

Q: Exactly! I remain anxious, confused and tense as before. I actually don't think things are all right as they are. Why is this?

A: It is because you have not really experienced and understood that the state of “now” is the very truth. You are not conscious of it as you have not yet experienced the true “now.” The practice of zazen is the way to attain it. Kensho or enlightenment is to attain “now” and to know it clearly.

Q: Does this mean that Kensho or enlightenment is the experience through which one is firmly convinced that things are doubtlessly all right just as they are? One can be thoroughly convinced of it only when one has really experienced it, can't one?

A: That's right.

Q: What will happen when one attains Kensho?

A: Nothing in particular. One just sees things as they are and hears things as they are. Your mind will be peaceful only when you are aware that everything is wholesome and good as it is. You obtain the “way” and the *dharma* through this awareness. This is the Way of the Buddha and the Buddhist *dharma*. So the purpose of zazen is to personally acquire this “way” and the *dharma*. You practice in order

to attain Kensho.

Q: I understand. I have understood that just sitting in a zazen posture is not the purpose of zazen, and that merely enduring pain is not true zazen. I am glad to know that there is a far more essential aim in doing zazen.

A: Of course! Otherwise, how could all the historical enlightened masters attach such a great importance to zazen and encourage people to practice it? Lord Shakyamuni Buddha did it first!

Q: I see. That's right. Then is there a shortcut?

A: "Shohossin," the first right aspiration for enlightenment, is of paramount importance. If you do not have the right aspiration, all your efforts will end in vain. Therefore, be sure to establish the right aspiration first, then begin practicing zazen. With weak aspirations, you will achieve little or nothing. It could even make you arrogant and cause some mishap.

Q: What do you mean?

A: The thought that you are practicing zazen may lead you to feel superior, and so you may look down on others. Keep reflecting on the importance of the first right aspiration.

Q: Yes. I understand.

2. The root of all evil

Q: What is the root of evil?

A: Evil derives from ego and selfishness. As one does not know the true self, he does not understand the "way" and the *dharma*. Therefore, one becomes self-centered and filled with feelings such as greed, anger, and discontent. Such feelings increase attachment and cause one to commit evil deeds. If everyone makes egoistic demands, conflicts and confusion will naturally follow. Without ego or selfishness, there is no problem in your mind and you are peaceful and clear.

Q: Then how do the ego and selfishness develop?

A: That is a good question. Listen carefully. This is the beginning and root of the problem.

Q: Yes. But is there a right way to listen?

A: Of course there is. You have only to "just" listen, abandon the consciousness of whether you understand it or not. Then what is relevant will remain and the rest will disappear. As all indistinct and incomprehensible words will go, no questions will arise later. Thus you can avoid misunderstanding. In short, the way for you not to be caught

- by words is not cling to them. “Just” listen without using your consciousness and intelligence. That is the best way of listening.
- Q: I understand. You mean that I should “just” listen, not trying to understand, without introducing my self. Please proceed.
- A: Everybody knows the words ego and selfishness. But nobody can explain their true meaning.
- Q: Well, what does that mean?
- A: It means that ego and selfishness do not have substance. Hearing this, you probably don’t understand it and begin wondering.
- Q: Exactly. Is anything wrong with that?
- A: That is exactly the wrong view! As soon as you don’t understand the words you have heard, a problem has already arisen in your mind. You have been attached to the words. That attachment is nothing but ego and selfishness, the very root of the problem.
- Q: Eh! Such a mere mind is the source of ego and selfishness?
- A: Well, are you surprised? This is what I mean by saying that you don’t truly know your self and your mind. That attachment to words is the very root of all evil.
- Q: What? I am even more confused! Then, what is that attachment?
- A: You have been taken prisoner by doubt, haven't you?
- Q: I don't think I am imprisoned.
- A: That refutation itself proves that you are a prisoner. I shall ask you. You have said that you are even more confused and asked what the attachment is. Now, have those thoughts and feelings disappeared? Or can you get rid of them at once?
- Q: I can't. Something vague and incomprehensible is swirling in my mind. Is this attachment? Is this the state of mind of a prisoner? So am I a mass of ego and selfishness?
- A: That's right. If you “just” listen, or “just” speak, everything completely vanishes at each moment. So there is nothing to be attached to. If you have the capacity to turn the page of your mind, you are clear and free from any problem. When nothing comes and goes in mind, there is no reason for a problem to arise. Evidently, your mind in this moment is nothing but ego and selfishness. Because of them, you are attached. This being said, aren’t you now getting angry?
- Q: Very true. I don’t know why but I am somehow chagrined.
- A: You of all people! You are frank, clever, kind, intelligent and gentle. From all appearances you have no problems.
- Q: I feel more and more chagrined to hear that. I really would like to be free from ego and selfishness. I have long made it my motto to be honest, accept everything easily, and live life quietly and gallantly

without being poisoned by it... So I am shocked to know that I am a mass of ego and selfishness.

A: I am glad and relieved to know that everyone seems to wish to be honest and gentle. Everyone should be so because we know that you are born to be a human being, and you are aware of it. I truly wish that everyone would live with such a heart, because it is the most comfortable and natural way to live.

But even if you think this way in your mind, the true, real world is in the moment of “now.” You should know that the instance something works in your mind before consciousness or thought sets in, that is your mind at that moment. The moment you hear or see something, there is another self that functions earlier than a wish or a thought. This is ego and selfishness. You should be aware of this.

Q: Yes, I understand. But mind always works by itself in strange ways, doesn't it? I don't intend to object or oppose, I am just listening. But still, a question instantly arises about what I don't understand; I feel like denying or refusing whatever I don't want to approve. I always seem to be at the mercy of such feelings. I may really be a mass of ego and selfishness as you say. I hate it!

A: You are indeed honest and gentle. But this is not the time for you to grumble and cry. Anyone who is not aware of his true self will face more fearful problems.

3. All depend on mind and *conditions*

Q: What do you mean?

A: Aren't you crying anymore?

Q: It is not the time to cry.

A: You are right. When your problems of mind are not solved, your intelligence and feelings work freely by themselves according to mind and *conditions*. You may know this from your daily experiences. You naturally get cautious and avoid people who speak ill of others inconsiderately or who criticizes us nastily.

Q: It occurs so frequently. I sometimes feel pity and sympathy for such people. But I also don't want to get hurt mentally.

A: People can endure that up to some degree. But when you are severely ridiculed or your feelings are trampled on, you will find it difficult to suppress the impulse to give him a blow.

Q: Yes, I often feel that way. I fear such dangerous feelings in myself. Will you explain this?

A: How do you deal with yourself in such cases?

Q: When such rude insolence gets on my nerves, I think to myself, “No kidding! The scum of society like you should fall into a dirty ditch and die an agonizing death, because you are ignorant of the pain and suffering of others. You damn fool!” Strangely enough, the anger immediately calms down. I wonder why. However, I cannot help feeling ashamed of myself for cursing and hating someone even for a moment. This is apparently the wrong thing even for a joke. So I feel miserable at that time with a bitter aftertaste. Then I apologize to the person for my rudeness in my mind, quietly.

A: I’m not sure if that is how the minds of ordinary people work, but yours is a fairly wild counterattack! It won’t be a crime as long as these actions remain in your mind. I am surprised to know that you have something so violent in mind behind your gentle character. It is indeed difficult to know the mind.

When I say that all depends upon mind and *conditions*, it means that if you don't meet such a guy, your mind will not react that way. Without such *conditions*, there will be no such mind, feelings or emotions, either. On the other hand, facing such *conditions*, your mind will begin to act freely in many different ways. Because you have met up with such circumstances, you have had such results. This is called the *dharma* of Innen-Shosho, *causes* and *conditions*.

Whether it is good or bad is not the issue. Depending on mind and *conditions*, people may commit mass murder using nuclear weapons and kill each other anywhere in the world. Under other *conditions*, X-rays have contributed to medical treatment for the health of people. Depending on mind and *conditions*, things begin and continue to change. This is how the world is.

Q: I see. I understood very well the meaning of depending on mind and *conditions*. My mind has been a mass of ego and selfishness. It has been confused by conditions. To hold on the ideal image of myself was of no help, though I don't think it is as a principle.

I know now that an ideal image is not helpful so long as mind is occupied by the invisible ego and selfishness. That is why I am so helpless and unstable.

A: Well said. One becomes so much confused and troubled only by *conditions* of a few words. Isn't it apparent what horrible things might happen if other such feelings as doubts, anxiety, complaints and discontent, or even fighting instincts and cruelty are added?

All kinds of vicious crimes and affairs occur due to unclear and impure mind, because unclear mind turns into impurity and further into ego

and selfishness. At any rate, all evil in the world depend upon mind and *conditions*.

Q: This is so new to me. After all, the root of all evils in the world lies in ego and selfishness. I am afraid we human beings find it so hard to escape from this trap. What shall we do?

4. That is just ego and selfishness!

A: Do you want to know the real nature of ego and selfishness?

Q: Certainly! I do want to know it.

A: Then let me go back to the drawing board. Now, “just” listen. Otherwise, you are sure to be more surprised and to lament even more.

Q: Will I be surprised and lament more? Ok, I understand. I have only to give up my self and “just” listen without trying to understand the meaning. But to my regret, I couldn’t do it earlier.

A: It is a matter of course. A person who does not have the capacity to “just” listen can’t do it. If one has really achieved this “just,” the whole problem of mind will have been solved!

You have said your motto is to be a man without ego and selfishness, and to be honest and gentle. In fact, to think and hope that way is exactly the work of ego and selfishness. “I” and self, that is to say.

Q: Then, do you mean that just to hold an ideal or hope is the work of ego and selfishness? Why is it? I feel quite confused again.

A: Haven’t you made a promise “just” to listen!? But you cannot do, can you, even though you think in your mind that you will? It is because you are your self that is caught, attached or entangled. I am saying that self is ego and selfishness. Do you understand?

This is the very cause of confusion, conflicts and tension, the root of evil. When you “just” listen honestly, you are not concerned about whether you understand it or not, and there is nothing to get caught by. You get caught because of ego and selfishness in you. The very fact that you just got confused is the work of ego and selfishness! Pull yourself together!

Nobody can know what will happen in this world. Everything in our lives, be it natural disasters, traffic accidents or cancer, depends on your mind and *conditions*. It is no wonder whatever will happen. So you must hold yourself firmly.

You seem to have something to say or ask, don't you?

5. A happening at this moment

Q: Yes, I do. When I listen to you, sometimes I understand, sometimes not. Is there anything wrong with that? If so, the whole functions of mind, consciousness, intelligence and reason, would be denied. Won't it deny the life of all mankind? Is it not quite unreasonable?

A: Who said such a thing? When you insist on your reasoning, you are sure to conflict with others. That is how quarrels and fights begin. That is exactly the work of ego and selfishness. Don't you see it still? Reflect on yourself deeply.

Intelligence and other mental functions are the most special features of mankind. If they are against the natural law, mankind would have been extinct long before. I wonder why your reason gets so wild. There is no fault in intelligence and reason. But because people use them and think in such a way, the original intelligence and reason are spoiled and ruined... by ego and selfishness. Do you see?

Q: The reason I immediately give my opinions is because I have not been "just" listening. This is so-called self-assertion, ego and selfishness, isn't it?

A: Exactly! So long as you are not aware of the state of your self each moment, you cannot be part of the true world.

Q: Ha! Then, does it mean I must keep observing myself every moment continuously to know my true self? For that I have to listen intently, quietly and with my whole heart. This is how to "just" listen without ego and selfishness. I understand!

But usually it is believed that one naturally holds an opinion when he listens to others, and one who does not have an opinion does not understand what the other says. Such a person is undervalued.

A: You are still young. Haven't you come to seek my advice with a lofty aim to attain your true self, the original mind? Isn't this the reason you are listening to me?

Q: Yes, that's right.

A: Then, just pursue the essential point. Don't bother with what others might think. Don't introduce common sense or unnecessary matters. You have just begun to be aware of the fundamental point.

Q: I wonder what you mean?

A: What is called self is a kind of mental function, which appears according to *conditions* at this moment of "now," and instantly disappears under different *conditions*. You must solely direct your attention to the moment of "now." You are quick to begin to notice this key point. You are a promising novice practitioner, as I thought.

Q: Thank you very much. But I regret to say that I cannot “just” listen or continue to observe my self every moment. It is not at all easy to know the true self. I cannot believe that every Buddhist practitioner practices such a thing all the time!

6. What is the indispensable condition?

A: Those who truly strive to solve their mind indeed do so. The historical enlightened masters are ones who have attained enlightenment with great effort. We call them “attained Buddhas,” and a person who is now making such efforts is called “a future Buddha.” They are awakened to the true “way” and the *dharma*.

Those awakened masters say, “to hold the right mindfulness is extremely difficult.” Even if one takes notice of the point, namely this true moment, it is quite difficult to hold on to “now” until he has certainly mastered it. The practice of the Buddhism is to make an earnest effort to attain it.

If you begin true zazen practice, you are a future Buddha. The historical masters will watch you and protect you, putting their hope on you. Because the “way” and the *dharma* are the life of the Buddha, and persons who respect and seek such a life is a successor to the will and mind of the Buddha. So they cannot help protecting such a person. Isn't it a great compassion for which you should feel grateful?

Q: The subject has suddenly become so lofty and profound that I feel a little embarrassed. But if I can attain it, it will really be the highest pleasure of life.

I really want to make my mind peaceful, but it is always unstable and shaky. And I wish to be a man without ego and selfishness. I have made it my motto to be truly frank and gentle, and to accept everything sincerely, living a quiet and gallant life.

I am greatly surprised to learn that the way to realize my motto is in the “now,” and that if I really attain “now,” I can become a Buddha and become awakened. This is far beyond my expectation and I cannot believe it immediately. But your words are so clear that I feel like listening further. This time I feel I can “just” listen to you.

A: Is that so? You apparently are truly serious. I am very glad for the sake of the *dharma*. Ask anything frankly without hesitation.

Q: Yes. I think I must settle ego and selfishness in order to become truly frank. For that, I should “just” listen and see. The “just” is the key to everything. So if one can attain the “just,” ego and selfishness will be

solved naturally. Am I right?

A: You are right. In other words, you should not add any needless mental functions in order to become “just.” For that, it is indispensable to keep watching your self every moment without a break. This is the practice of the Buddhist Way and the practice of zen.

Master Dogen said: “To study the Buddha Way is to study self.” This means you must watch your self thoroughly without losing sight of it so as to know the true self.

Q: That is to say, the self that is watched is the one without any needless mental functions, isn't it? The Buddhist practice is to keep working to remain your pure self and nothing else.

A: Exactly.

Q: In short, “to study the Buddha Way” means to try to become the naked self, and not to take my mind off the moment of “now,” right?

A: You said it!

Q: Ah, I understand it now! This means that the self that is not naked is simply ego and selfishness. So, to solve it, I must practice the Buddhist Way and zen by all possible means and realize “just” my self. Otherwise, I will never know my true self. Is that right?

A: That's correct.

7. The moment and enlightenment

Q: Then, is the essence of “just” and “now” the same, though the words are different?

A: Aha! You are quick to understand. It is just as you say.

Master Dogen continues, “To study self is to forget self.” Do you understand what he means by the word “forget?”

Q: Yes. When I become plain and naked, self that is captured and attached disappears. At the same time, the consciousness of my self has also gone. Am I right? So to “forget” means that the self that is a matter to “study” is no more necessary, and that one that seeks and the one that is sought are unseparated. He even forgets that he is making efforts. I am afraid I still don't know what it is like exactly. But I feel that it is an important point related to “just,” which is a way to go beyond ego and selfishness.

A: Very good! You said it!

Q: Oh! I have realized it now! My mind is calm and contented, though it is not that something particular has happened to me or that I have understood something. I feel so clear and transparent as if there is

- nothing in my mind. What on earth has happened, master?
- A: You truly have strong potential! It is only a principle that you have understood, but an important point has become clear in you, and accordingly, unnecessary mental functions such as uncertain thoughts have subsided. Maybe you are somewhat convinced of what “now” and “just” are like, aren’t you?
- Q: Yes, you are right. I see that the world of enlightenment is within my reach. The Way of the Buddha is not something to believe or not. When I am plain and natural, I am peaceful. I think this is the true self. The Buddhist Way is this state of mind, to be pure and natural as it is. Nature is certainly the Buddhist way, but my whole self is also the Buddhist Way.
- Master! Have I suddenly become arrogant? Am I speaking of great importance?
- A: You presently do not feel any self, do you? That is because your mind has stopped stepping out. But isn’t there still something constantly flickering in your mind? It is as if the muddy water has settled down and only the upper part has become clear. As soon as you move, it will become muddy again. But, since you have found a point to aim at, you have only to keep this present mind of no attachment. Be “just” and “now” in earnest. Such mind of seeking truth is called Bodai-shin, an aspiration for enlightenment. No one has ever been enlightened without making serious efforts!
- Q: Master!
- A: What's the matter? With such a stern face! ... It’s all right. Make your utmost efforts. It is too early to weep. Cherish those tears.
- Q: Yes. I thank you very much. I will do my very best from now on seriously.
- A: What on earth will you do seriously?
- Q: I will practice “now” and “just.” Please let me go to the zazen hall.
- A: What are you going to do in the zazen hall?
- Q: I will “just” do zazen.
- A: Do it giving up your body and mind as if you were dead. Understood?
- Q: Yes, Master. I must be going now.
- A: “Just” do zazen and seek for nothing. Keep holding the Bodai-shin!

Thus, this Buddhist practitioner began to practice zazen. Everyone has his or her own characteristics and behaves differently on different occasions: habits, efforts, strength or weakness of attachment, and perseverance. It is inevitable, therefore, that there is difference in the depth of pursuing the Buddhist Way and the *dharma* of Buddhism.

Naturally, there is no high or low, superior or inferior in the “way” or the *dharma* in itself. Though this is true, to understand the meaning of the “way” and the *dharma* is far from the “way” or the *dharma* itself. As long as one is separated from it, one is not able to truly understand it.

One zen master once said: “I admit you have understood it, but I do not admit that you have mastered it.” He meant that knowing it was good, but he would never admit one unless one truly attain it.

Following the earlier citation of Master Dogen, he continued:

To forget self is to be enlightened by everything. To be enlightened by everything is to let your mind and body as well as mind and body of the others drop off. ”

This phrase is the essence and life of zen.

To know it, to understand it, to acquire it or to realize it is a principle, which one needs to know. However, it has nothing to do with the Buddha Way itself. To truly attain the Buddha Way is to give up one’s self who knows, understands, acquires and realizes it. This would be meaningless unless one discards the self completely and manifests the Way in actual life.

To sum up, the essence of zen boils down to be “just.”

The question, then, is how one can attain the mind of this “just.” I hope you will closely observe and study the next questioner and get some help for your practice.

PART FOUR

Questions and Answers about Emancipation (2)

Q: Practitioner B

A: Answerer: Kido Inoue

1. What are confusion and suffering?

Q: What is the root of confusion and suffering?

A: Because you have the second and third minds.

Q: What does that mean?

A: When you have only one mind and nothing else, you need not think because there is no choice. If the mind does not work, there is no reason the mind is agitated. You simply accept it. Having no second or third mind, you do not suffer or get confused. The point is to have only one mind. In this case, the second or the third does not mean numbers.

Q: Then, what is it? Will you explain more plainly?

A: Even if you have only one mind, you may imagine how you want things to be and use your mind meaninglessly. This is called delusion. If you keep imagining things that do not exist and wish for them, your suffering and disappointment will increase because you cannot get those imaginary things. We call it a fancy to imagine useless things in mind. It is also a situation of being upside down in delusion.

One should consider carefully what to choose so as not to regret one's choice afterwards. But once you have chosen, you should not work the mind uselessly. You "just" do what you should do "now." At that moment, you have one mind, and there is no other mind to be troubled or suffer.

Q: I understand the psychological mechanism of being troubled and suffering. But what is the root of it?

A: To put it simply, delusion and desire. They are the so-called three poisons—greed, anger and ignorance. They all arise from using the mind uselessly.

Q: I know such things. I want to know the root of the delusion, desire and those three poisons.

A: These things arise because your body and mind are separated.

Q: Do you mean that our body and mind are separated from each other?

A: That's right. Because they are separated, mind floats and flies about endlessly. You are here "now" in reality. However, your mind is not

- here because it is carried away by other things. This is a proof that mind is separate from body. Do you understand?
- Q: You mean, if mind is stably here and “now,” there is only one mind, not a second or third? Otherwise, the mind is captured by some ideas, and split into pieces?
- A: Yes, that's right.
- Q: But, from observing my own mind, I have seen that it is absolutely impossible to think of two or three things at one time. So I think that there is always only one mind at this moment.
- A: That is very good. It is praiseworthy that you have observed yourself so deeply. But you must have questions one after another and get even more confused, because you have not yet understood the root cause of why your mind is possessed with some matters. With such strong aspirations, your mind does not stop seeking for more, does it?
- Q: Exactly! I am very curious about how the mind works. But I feel very worried about the fact that I get confused by myself. I don't even know what I should ask you to solve this. Let me ask you one thing for now. Why does only one mind keep working incessantly, and why can't I control it with my own will?
- A: It is natural for you to think so. The true mind is not so small or simple that one can clarify it easily with the human intellect. I wonder if I should tell the conclusion first, because you will surely be confused to hear it. Anyway, just listen to me without holding on to words.
- Q: I should not know what will happen to me, unless I listen to you first of all.
- A: OK. Then I will tell you. Both attachment and captivity are merely functions of mind. As soon as the mind recognizes an object, it become attached and captured. Earlier I explained for convenience that the mind is divided. But that does not mean there are two minds at one moment. The division happens because of the mind of the moment. That is, as you observe and feel that your mind is divided, the true mind ceases to exist. It all happens by the good functioning of mind at each moment, and mind is always as it is at that moment. Though nothing is really divided, you tend to think as if mind is functioning abnormally. Such habits are the seeds of problems called ego and selfishness. This is the root of evil.
- Q: Then, is every phenomenon of mind that constantly functions due to ego? If all attachment and captivity are functions of mind itself, are they not true functions?
- A: That's right.
- Q: If so, it cannot be said they are the root of evil.

A: That's right.

Q: Why?

A: You don't truly understand that every phenomenon itself is just mind. Therefore, you try to seek this or that. Thus the mind is divided into two and three, and gets "separated."

2. What is mind?

Q: What on earth is mind?

A: It exists, but it does not; it does not, but it does exist. It is a spiritual entity which can become anything according to *conditions*.

Q: I don't understand that at all. I am afraid your explanation is not scientific or logical.

A: "According to *conditions*" means that there is nothing solid or tangible about mind. Mind is not something absolute or recognizable. It is indeed a spirit that appears freely at any moment of "now" after "now" according to *conditions*. It is not something you can understand by merely hearing about it. To put it simply, you just see with eyes, and hear with ears.

Q: That doesn't make any sense to me at all. Can you give me some concrete example?

A: Then, I shall ask you. What is self?

Q: It is a subjective being which has body and mind with all sorts of mysterious functions. It is subjective in the sense that it is aware of itself.

A: "To know" that this body is myself; "to know" that the self is a subjective being which has mind with mysterious functions—this "to know" is mind itself. There is no other mind. If you are really aware of this, you ought to accept that mind is the functioning of the nature. It is no-act and no-self. There is nothing particular to call mind. That is, there is nothing special to get enlightened about.

Q: Do you mean it is simply a function at that time and space?

A: Yes. If there is no "separation," everything is self and mind. The essence of zen is to really experience and attain this fact. When you truly perfect this one thing, that evil vicious habit will vanish and you will acquire this grave understanding. Such a state is enlightenment.

Q: To put it in an extreme way, it is to truly realize there is no such thing as mind, isn't it?

A: That's right.

Q: I don't think I will ever understand that. Nor I think it possible to

experience and attain it. All kinds of feelings apparently exist in us – happiness, anger, sorrow and joy. So do confusion and tension. They are all mind, aren't they?

A: I knew you would think so. Very well, then. If there are such feelings and emotions, put them out and show me here. Where is the mind of confusion and tension?

Q: That is impossible! There cannot be such a mind that I can put out.

A: How irresponsible you are! You have just told me that there is such a mind.

Q: I have certainly said there are various kinds of minds. But isn't mind such a spiritual matter that I can't take out?

A: The reason you cannot take it out is because you believe such functions as being the entity of mind. When you feel happiness, anger, sorrow and joy, that feeling is truly your mind at that moment. If you ask where that mind is, you will not find it anywhere.

Try to find it out yourself. It is only a temporary function of mind that has emerged according to the *conditions* at the moment. Without any *conditions*, mind does not function nor does it appear. It does not exist anywhere. If *conditions* ceases, the functions of mind automatically disappear leaving no traces. That is mind.

Q: I see. That is how it is!

A: Mind is infinite because it has no human and intellectual limits. It becomes anything according to *conditions*. So your intelligence is never enough to truly understand mind. If you think it is possible to investigate mind by intellectual efforts, it is a delusion. It is arrogance, illusion and fallacy. Mind is not so small.

3. Taste and mind

Q: That sounds as if you are disrespecting human intelligence. I am not convinced. Let me ask you a question. When we eat something, it has a taste. Then, is the taste itself mind, or is it the mind that knows it has a taste?

A: That is an abrupt but good question. Which do you think is correct?

Q: I am not sure, but I think that feeling the taste is a natural function, and to know the taste is an intellectual function. Both are natural and true, aren't they?

A: Before I answer that, what is the taste?

Q: Isn't it a function that takes place when something to eat touches the tongue?

- A: That's right. Then, is there something that you call taste?
- Q: Certainly there is taste.
- A: Then, take out the taste.
- Q: I cannot do such a thing.
- A: Why not?
- Q: Because there is no objective substance with the taste.
- A: That's correct. A taste is produced by the contact of a food and tongue. That is, it is a sensual and natural phenomenon, which has been aroused by *conditions*. It is, so to speak, an illusion without substance, and is only a temporary appearance.
- Q: As I said before, the taste is a sensual function and it certainly exists, doesn't it?
- A: Do you really think so? Then, is there a taste in your tongue or in the food, or in both of them or in the middle?
- Q: None of them.
- A: Why?
- Q: The taste appears as a sensation by the contact of food and tongue. It doesn't have any substance, and therefore, it is in none of them.
- A: That's right. If the taste is on the tongue, countless tastes get mixed up and you cannot feel any one taste. If it is in a food, the taste must exist just by putting it in front of you without eating it. If so, you would get nourishment without eating. Or if it is in between, you do not need a mouth and a tongue as concerns taste.
- Q: Very well, I understand it, but...
- A: However, as soon as you swallow the food down the throat, the taste will disappear all of a sudden. As taste is a sensual function produced by *conditions* of food, it is, but it is not. Because there is no substance, the taste of the next food appears suddenly. That is why you can taste the food freely and there arises no crash, accident or contradiction at all. It is the function of the Buddha Way. Everything manifests itself perfectly from moment to moment according to *conditions*. It follows that there is nothing substantial. Taste certainly exists, but just as an illusion.
- Q: If there is no substance, we cannot keep, stock or extract it, can we?
- A: That's right. As it is an illusion, it is a sheer confusion to care and have attachment to what is not. Be careful. This does not mean the whole world of cooking is a fantasy and illusion. While taste is an illusion, it is a fact and truth, so that you can enjoy the good taste of food. Even though taste does not have substance, it is still a fact. As long as it gives us satisfaction, isn't it good and sufficient? The taste itself is the world of fact without any falsehood and illusion. When you

understand that it is a wonderful, true world, you will have no complaints or dissatisfaction. You will be content. This is the meaning of “to know sufficiency is to be satisfied.”

Q: That’s great! It has really opened my eyes.

A: The mouth as *condition* and food as *condition* bring together taste. When the *conditions* are gone, the taste also disappears. How free it is! That is taste. That is the function of mind. When there is a taste, there is nothing but the taste. No other mind. It would be confusion to think there is something else. Remember, confusion comes from ego. When you have a thought in mind, self turns up, and at the same time, the other appears as an object. This is the “separation,” the source of delusions and tension.

4. Knowing and confusion

Q: Then, if the taste itself is mind in the first place, what is it that knows the taste?

A: The intellectual function of knowing is also a phenomenon of perception, which is mind. It has no relation to the sense of taste itself. Whether you perceive the taste or not, it finishes the moment you taste it. That is how “now” is. To further perceive it and know it is an unnecessary delusion and confusion. It is a fancy and a fiction.

Q: I see. I have understood that a sense of taste exists even before it is consciously perceived. I have also understood that the phenomenon and the perception of phenomenon are quite different things. Well then, what is it to “know” taste?

A: What do we do by using consciousness? We try to recognize the fact of phenomenon of taste by means of a concept. When taste is perceived, to “know” means that a conceptual phenomenon replaces the fact with information. That is, what you have known is a mere shadow of the fact by illusioning it. As there is a self who “knows,” a “separation” takes place between self and fact.

Q: So you mean that to “know” is a function of intellectual conception that disguises the pure taste? But isn’t this also a function of mind?

A: Exactly! It is simply an unnecessary function of mind. It separates the taste and the one who “knows” it. It regards the taste as an object of comparison or critique, moving away from pure taste.

The taste as it is is spoiled by the habit of self and ego. It results from the “separation” between body and mind. There is no doubt it is also mind. But, if the unnecessary function of mind spoils the truth and

causes suffering, it is precisely a confusion. Well, it seems that we are about to enter the true realm of zen.

Q: What serious facts I have learned! So long as there is self, the common intellectual activity of knowing and recognizing fact becomes the source of attachment. Does it mean that the mind of knowing and recognizing is unnecessary, and that it spoils the pure “now”? And accordingly it becomes the reason of confusion?

A: It's just as you say. As I have told you, to know and recognize something by the act of self is delusion. Everyone whose body and mind are separated says that he has known and recognized through turning the fact into information. Though he regards such a function as mind, it is a false image because it is only an idea. It is as if one sees a cake in front of him, but instantly turns it into an imagined picture of a cake and even tries to enjoy tasting it. He is completely lost in an awful delusion.

Q: Ah! I have understood! So we make full use of the knowledge, arguing that this is the truth and principle, or this is right or wrong, only to get a false image. We argue with others holding fast to the reasoning which we think to be the truth. We read books and listen to others to know more and better, with a view to deepen our consciousness, and to get more detailed information. Most people believe this is to study, and that the more we study, the better we know.

A: They surely think that all these functions are self. It might be a training of the intellect, but they can never acquire such a state of “every day is a good day” – the state of mind when one is truly awakened.

Q: I am afraid I have been practicing zen with such an attitude without noticing it. That was what I was doing when I began listening to you. But now I feel I have realized how terribly wrong the way I was walking was.

A: I am much impressed that you are really honest and frank. But it is extremely difficult to get rid of habits you have once acquired. So from now on, you should hold on to your clear and pure self without such habits.

To return to the subject. Needless to say, the whole function of reasoning is mind itself. So we should not seek or doubt it. When you have understood that the function itself is mind, you will feel at ease. Because whatever you think or feel, everything is mind.

However, as soon as you stick to the concept of the phenomenon that you have converted into information and believe it is fact and truth, you will be trapped by delusions. If you believe something that does not

exist, an imaginary world, and are caught by it, your mind will be all confusion. Do you understand?

Q: Yes. It is evidently a misunderstanding and upside down.

A: You are right. We tend to accept everything in the way we have perceived it, because thoughts are also natural phenomena and functions of mind. But in this way, we will not be able to tell the true world of the facts from a false and imaginary world. You speak on the basis of such a wrong view, as if you know the truth, so confusion arises.

Delusion and suffering such as the state of neurosis or waging a war are peculiar only to a mankind with his intellect. How foolish and pitiful it is! We should reflect deeply again and again to understand that we are making a great fundamental mistake.

Q: What a surprise! Confusion and suffering are caused by the very self who knows and recognizes. And this is ego and selfishness!

A: A great pity but it is reality. Both confusion and suffering are mind and the truth. However, you can make correction only when you become aware of the error or mistake. So, to begin with, you must get rid of the self who knows, because it is the root of confusion. Without removing the separation, you cannot acquire the truth and get over the ego.

5. The way to get over the ego is to become “just”

Q: Then, how can one remove the self who knows, and mend the separation?

A: The way is to return to the time before the intellectual activities of knowing. Master Dogen says: “Stop the functioning of mind and stop measuring thoughts and views.” Master Joshu says: “Give up attachment. Throw away all the functioning of mind.” Do you understand?

Q: Not well. We have intelligence, consciousness and a developed brain. Isn't it an absolute contradiction to return to the time before knowing? If we can go back, how can we?

A: We must immediately be aware of the real “now” before a thought arises, and of the “moment” without before and after. It is mind which is detached from words and conceptions. For that, we must make every effort not to work, use, approve and expand the mind. True practice begins here. The key to zazen practice is to forget and discard mind, leaving it untouched. It is the essence of mental training. Never

- seek it using consciousness and intellect, because it is the wrong path.
- Q: I can understand what you are saying in terms of reason. But, how can I leave and forget the words and conceptions which I have learned?
- A: You have only to leave your senses “just” as they are. That is, “just” see, “just” listen, “just” walk and “just” eat.
- Q: How can I become “just”?
- A: There is no method or means to be “just.” There is nothing in it. “Just” do everything without using intention or anything. Leave everything to the matter itself “now.”
- Q: How can I do “just”?
- A: “Just” do!
- Q: I cannot “just” do, so I am asking you how.
- A: “Just” do everything simply.
- Q: But I cannot do it, so I am asking you the way.
- A: Be simple, and you can “just” do!
- Q: What should I do in order to be simple?
- A: You have only to “just” do!
- Q: Try as I might, I do not see how to practice it.
- A: I am doing my best to explain it clearly.
- Q: I don't think so. I cannot understand it at all.
- A: You cannot understand it because you are making an effort to do so. That is ego. So give up reason and logic to “just” do everything.
- Q: We, people of today, need a clear, understandable explanation which is scientific and logical. That is the way for all of us to understand. A zen master should be able to do it!
- A: I myself didn't get such a direct, kind and careful guidance from my master.

A monk once asked Master Joshu: “I am a novice. Would you tell me how to practice?” The master said: “Have you eaten rice gruel?” The monk replied, “Yes, I have.” Joshu said: “Then, have you put the bowl away?” On hearing this, the monk immediately understood that the practice was to do everything “just.”

Whether you understand it or not makes no difference. Putting the bowl away after using it is a natural way in accordance with *conditions*. No reason is needed.

When you get up in the morning, you “just” go to the toilet and wash your face. You “just” do it all. You focus your mind on the fact of ‘now’ and do it without any thought. This is what I mean to be one with it. This is all you need to do.

Don't bring in your self who says “I know” or “I don't know.” It becomes ego as soon as you use mind and feelings.

Q: I see. So you mean that I simply try to “just” do it without caring about whether I can do so or not?

A: That's right. Now, you don't know which way to go, and you cannot do “just” even if you try. This is not the world that you can understand, much less attain, in words. Make constant efforts wholeheartedly to be “just.” This is the way for you now. When you have left the thought whether to know it or not, you will be able to do “just.” It shows that you have been freed from that much binding of self.

You will begin to be aware that your effort to do “just” has also been the self, and therefore, of no use. The key point is for you to be totally one with what you are doing “now,” abandon all mental activities such as thoughts, words, images and feelings. If something appears in mind, cut it off instantly and make thorough efforts to be “just” and “now.”

6. The nature of mind

Q: It is impossible to stop mental activities by consciousness and intellect. It would be wonderful if I could freely do so, because then there wouldn't be any confusion in myself. How can I get clues to practice doing so? What is the most effective method?

A: Go to a quiet room and leave body and mind alone to be natural, without making them work.

Q: I have tried to make such an effort in earnest. But, leaving them to be natural, I feel even more pain and irritation from various illusions and confusion. It is much easier not to do it.

A: When you try to stay natural in confusion, everything is the world of confusion, isn't it?

Q: Isn't that what is meant by staying natural without working body and mind?

A: You are working on confusion, so you are not doing nothing. You are full of confusion! Ha, ha, ha.

Q: Then, what is it like to stay natural?

A: This world of *cause* and *effect* is consisted of “now” which turns into the past each and every moment and constitutes the future. It is the fact of “now” that changes constantly but really exists. “Now” is, but it is not; it is not, but is. This is the real “now” and the fact. This whole status is the true nature, the great nature.

As it is the true and original world without ego and selfishness, this great nature is called the “way” and the *dharma*. The purpose of the zazen practice is to be aware of this “now,” the nature. It is most

difficult to become one with this nature and acquire this “way” and the *dharma*. You will surely understand it from the experiences of the historical great masters.

Q: This is great! I feel I am beginning to understand a bit.

A: Listen carefully. In fact, all thoughts, feelings and images that arise in mind disappear naturally in an instant. Therefore, you can think of one thing after another and freely feel and imagine. You have never experienced your thoughts overlapping, have you? This is the perfect free activities of the great nature and the *dharma*.

Q: I see. I admit that the Way of the Buddha is marvelous.

A: As all of us who do not know this important truth are captured by thoughts in mind, and fall into confusion and tension. We think that a series of thoughts remain in mind without disappearing. To leave the thoughts according to nature means that you don't follow but leave them.

Originally a thought is finished instantaneously. So whenever it appears, you have only to neglect it without doing anything with it. As it disappears instantly, there is nothing that is called mind.

Q: Do you mean to leave the confusion and illusion as they are?

A: That's right. This is how it is to leave them as they naturally are. That way, as a matter of fact, they become the past in the next moment and completely disappear. Therefore, they never lead to confusion.

The point is not to acknowledge any thought and not to follow it. If you are clear about this point, that is what nature is, you will feel at ease and be able to make a true practice. Do you understand?

7. To get away from thoughts

Q: I understand it as a theory. However, once a thought turns up in my mind, words follow in a chain, so I cannot get away from it. How can I be detached from thought and confusion? I want to know this now.

A: When you are possessed by the habit, you are inevitably caught and drawn into it. So you cannot help but feel painful and agonized. This is the stage when you cannot get detached from it or neglect it, and you have to endure. Everyone goes through this process in the early stages of practice. So as not to be drawn into it, you have only to focus your mind on one point.

Master Keizan says, “Put your mind on the palm.” And Master Hakuin says, “Breathe with the soles of your feet.”

These are means to remove the habit of mind scattering around.

Therefore, to be completely one with each breath one after another is a quite effective method. If you wholeheartedly focus on one breath in a quiet room, your thoughts will gradually weaken naturally, and you will become intimate with one breath, and before long you will gradually be able to breathe naturally without having thoughts in mind. You should not seek to know it, but practice in earnest.

Q: How can I be detached from illusion and confusion if I sit in a quiet place, and continue breathing earnestly?

A: In daily life, everyone acts with purpose and seeks to attain good results you image. Am I right?

Q: Yes, you are right.

A: In an effort to achieve the results you imagine, you will certainly try out various methods and processes. Your body is actually here “now,” but your mind constantly keeps working in search of better ideas. Your mind continuously uses past data, stimulated by such thoughts as comparison, right or wrong, gain or loss, and like and dislike. It never stops to take a rest, does it?

Q: I understand well. You are quite right.

A: You must get away from such an environment so as to calm down your unstable mind which is always in pursuit of imagination. You should try best not to stimulate your mind, not to use it at all, having no aims and seeking no results. For this, go to a quiet place and “just” breathe “now” after “now,” doing nothing else.

When you don’t think of anything and keep doing a simple thing in earnest, you don’t need intellectual activities. You don’t need to work on concepts or images. Your mind will become naturally quiet and settled. This is the great benefit of zazen and the fruit of your efforts.

Q: That means, if one becomes able to put his mind on one point, one can get away from the habit of losing focus, and manipulating ideas and concepts. In that way, one can leave them unattended, ignore them, and keep them as they are. Then, true nature is to do nothing and leave them as they are, isn’t it?

A: That's right.

Q: Nature in zen is not ambiguous as is commonly used in daily life. Nature in zen is first to recognize that the functions of intellect and feelings are equally functions of nature.

A: You are right.

Q: Interestingly it is not true nature when it works freely but unnecessarily. The world of zen is so deep. What arises freely in mind is thought and confusion. This is an easy explanation to understand. It is also interesting that such thought and confusion are habits of mind.

It looks like I am beginning to see the natural mind or the nature of mind, though vaguely. When I don't do anything and have nothing in mind, no thought or confusion, it is the state of the nature, isn't it?

A: It is certainly so. But that is not enough. When body and mind are doing nothing, it is nature. It is, then, limited only to a quiet and settled state of mind. But that's not all. The true natural mind is the whole of mind. Joy, grief and anxiety, all arise at any time according to *conditions*. They are all functions of nature, so we should leave them untouched as they are. One should completely neglect them without recognizing, observing, criticizing or judging. Stay detached from them. This is nature. The practice of zen is to remove the habit of arguing about nature after the fact. In short, the mind of nature is the pure function of "just" without self.

8. How is it when mind is working?

Q: In other words, whatever the mind is, it is the state of "now," and accordingly it is entirely the natural mind as it is, isn't it?

A: Yes.

Q: To go further, whether mind is working or not, it is natural, isn't it?

A: That's right. Thoughts and confusion do not have any substance in themselves. Even life and death are just an explanation of the state by a word. The self that is caught by words is in the habit of mind. Every *cause* and *effect* is not affected by any human discretion at all. Therefore, it is the "way" and the *dharma*, the universal truth.

Q: I see. Then how is it when mind is working?

A: The question whether it works or not arises from the self who interprets it in such a way. When it is working, the working itself is mind. There is no other mind.

Q: What does it mean?

A: When you are one with the breathing, there is no other mind. It means that there is no self who is aware of the breathing. The breathing itself is mind at that moment. When mind is truly working, it is working purely and does not recognize that it is working. Be careful. If you observe and recognize the fact staying away from the activity itself, this is self and "separation." It is ego and selfishness if you try to do such a thing.

Q: In short, I should be mindful of whether my mind is working or not, because I am not one with the fact. Does it mean that there is someone in me who unconsciously manipulates my mind and this is

the “separation,” ego and selfishness?

A: That's right. The purpose of practicing zazen is to remove this self which functions in mind. Moreover, as an activity itself does not have a second mind, it never recognizes itself. When you are the activity itself, there is no self who recognizes the activity; you are in the world beyond concept and recognition, and you don't have to argue about your status. People do not know this quite important fact, so they are liable to make arguments with various selfish views. That is why they are noisy and constantly in conflict.

Q: Do you mean that if we don't do anything with the work of mind, everything is natural and there is no “separation,” so there is no problem?

A: Exactly. Whether your mind is working or not, it is natural. Nature is not concerned with work or not. For example, because you have self that is attached to the object you see, notions of color and shape arise. Problems turn up. If only you settle self, everything will be as it is. There will be no gap. To realize the truth of an activity, you have to do the activity. Stand up truly, walk truly, and you will be convinced of something. That is, if time is ripe for you. Anyway, you cannot talk about it and there is nothing to talk about.

Q: I cannot say anything about it?! Words are for us to speak. So if we make use of a logic for mutual understanding, we should be able to reach an understanding at least to some extent. Please explain to me the true, natural mind.

A: You are a difficult person to ask me to speak what cannot be talked about and what does not exist. If I dare say something, I would say, “Just as it is.” You are also “just as you are.” Nine times nine is always eighty-one to everyone at any time. The sun rises from the east and sets in the west. The natural mind is as it is. There is no reason to it. It is important at this point that you are convinced that there is nothing more to say. Have you understood a little?

Q: I am afraid I haven't understood anything at all.

A: I bet you haven't. It is because you have self. You won't be convinced unless you experience it. Just like you feel it when actually you drink water. This self is the problem. There is no other way to solve it but by zen.

Q: Yes, that's right. Try as I might, it is very difficult for my self to stop saying something. So I know well that it is not the natural mind. But at least I have understood this: All things and matters, including human beings, are natural as they are, and there is no reason for it. Everything is according to *cause* and *effect* and

nothing exists wrongly. The problem lies in myself, and confusion arises from being caught and attached.

A: You are still full of arguments. You may be the type of person who will have to take great pains to make progress.

Q: No kidding! I have only begun to find out the truth a little. But knowing that what I hear is not yet the true understanding and that it is hardly possible to know the true nature, how can I settle the habit of being confused? I have already heard a lot from you...

9. Having the will but can't practice

A: The only clue is for you to do it practically, giving up all reasoning. Unless you remove the habit of trying to know by means of reasoning, you will not have a true will to practice in earnest. Give up the reasoning immediately and practice. It is the best for the sake of *dharma*.

Q: I know I need to make efforts. But if you just tell me to practice and do zazen, ...

A: If you do not want to practice, play with your reasoning. As long as you practice zazen according to reasoning, you will not make much progress. I don't like those who argue much.

Q: Please don't look down on me before I practice. I do have a strong intention to do so. I am not avoiding practice.

A: But you seem to have gotten into your head that practice is extremely hard and difficult. Or else, are you flattering yourself that you have already understood everything without practicing zazen? Almost all who like arguing are big-headed. Having the will but can't practice? That is proof of an argumentative mind.

Q: What does it mean?

A: If body and mind are separate from each other, intellect, emotion and volition will likewise be separate. Even if your intellect says to you, "I must practice. There is no choice," the body doesn't follow the order. This is because some part of our feelings is opposed to it, so you don't feel inclined to do it. You are not serious. It is a proof that there is self who wants to make excuses. So you will continue to get into selfish arguments. It is a great pity. This is precisely ego and selfishness.

Q: It is just as you say. This is what I am. Such an argumentative person. I feel ashamed!

10. Don't follow the wrong method

A: At last you have admitted you are not open-minded. You really are a trouble maker. Well, first, just calm down.

Q: I want to know a concrete way how I can calm down quickly.

A: Sit in an upright posture in a quiet place, forget about your body and mind, think nothing. To forget means not to worry about anything. However, you won't be able to do it as long as your mind is constantly full of thoughts. This is because your intellect, emotion and volition are functioning separately.

To calm down means that these three become one and no more separate. Take care not to use mind, not to let it move freely. That is, just be quiet, giving up body and mind. This is the quickest way.

Q: Not to think, or to forget body and mind... That is far beyond my reach at the moment! On the contrary, I will surely think all the more about what I should do.

A: That is how it is in the beginning. Trying to do something impossible, we surely tend to think more and more.

Q: Yes, quite right. Then what should I do in such a case?

A: Even if a method seems most reasonable and the shortest cut, we can easily get lost trying to hold to some clue. This is a pitiful moment in the beginning of practice. If you are not following the right master, most practitioners will give up.

Q: Then, what should we do?

A: You should practice a simple thing single-mindedly. That is to do it intently, without thinking anything. You should totally devote yourself to one thing. The practice of Buddhism is not to think but to practice earnestly. This is very important.

Q: Even if it is correct, if I only think about it and don't put it into practice, that is not the shortest way.

A: That's right.

Q: The point is to focus my mind on one point. This is to repeat a simple thing. In short, I should practice it single-mindedly. This is a far more direct way. This is what you mean, isn't it?

A: Yes. When you continue this practice intently, intellect, emotion and volition naturally become one, and confusion in the mind will also calm down. Then the zen mind will manifest itself.

Q: It is best to give up all thoughts to just practice honestly, isn't it?

A: Correct. On the entrance gate of our Shorinkutsu training hall, the writing goes:

Those who wish to enter this gate must enter it with an empty mind. When mind is empty, it is free. Once you enter, do not think about right or wrong, good or bad. Behave always according to the *dharma*. This is the way of zen by Master Toin.⁵

It is the best way to practice in just this way. The point is to do “just” “now.” This is it. If intellect, emotion and volition become one, body and mind will become intimate and firmly settled. Then you will be able to accept it “as it is.”

11. When you really see, there are no eyes

Q: What does it mean to accept something “as it is”? Do you mean what we usually see is false?

A: Eyes don't have truth or falsehood. This is true for everybody. You can see things fine and clear, because there is no reasoning or thoughts in seeing. You see things just as they are, and nothing distracts you. That is why each sight is quite different.

Q: What does it mean that there is no reasoning when seeing?

A: You will know it when you experience it yourself. When you are truly seeing, there is no one who sees, no eyes either. You are just seeing, so this is so natural.

Q: What on earth does it mean? I am totally lost.

A: Is that so? I am most gentle and clear to you. If I say more, it will all be superfluous. An experienced person would laugh at me as I will disgrace the *dharma*.

Q: I don't care about your honor. It should be your mission to help us understood taking every measure. Everyone thinks so. Isn't it compassion?

A: How much easier it would be if I could make everyone understood with words! But this cannot be helped so long as you don't understand. You are really troublesome. If only you could just give up reasoning!

Q: Why should you hesitate to teach? Are you fooling me?

A: I am not hesitating. The more you listen, the more confused you get. I say this out of kindness.

Q: It's my problem whether I get confused or not. So you should explain as clearly and plainly as you can.

A: If you insist that much, I will, but you must “just” listen. When you

⁵ A master who opened Shorinkutsu.

see things, so long as there are objects that you see and the self who sees it, you are caught up in thoughts. Therefore, there arises a distance between the facts which you see and yourself. So you cannot know the real facts. Eyes and mind are separated. Do you understand?

Q: I don't understand its true meaning at all. Can't ordinary people understand Buddhist teachings? Is it natural that we, ordinary people, don't understand it?

A: Admitting you are very frank, your remark is a bit harsh. You are apparently more confused by what you have heard. I told you to "just" listen. It is precisely ego and selfishness that obsess you with the words you have heard and make you argumentative. When you just see it with undivided attention, eyes and mind are unseparated. Do you understand this?

Q: I am not enough confident.

A: When one sees single-mindedly with full attention, there are no ideas or thoughts between the one who sees and an object. This is what we call, no separation, or being one with it. In other words, no eyes, no mind, and no self. When we say "the matter itself," it means there is no subject person. Do you understand? In brief, there are not any ideas or thoughts.

12. You can't eat the cake in a picture

Q: I am afraid I do not understand well. What does "the matter itself" mean?

A: The matter itself is not a cake in a picture but the cake itself. It is not an idea or a thought but a true thing. You can touch a real cake, you can hold it and feel the weight, you can eat it.

Q: Do you say that an idea or a thought is just a cake in a picture? That if there is no idea or thought, there is only a matter?

A: That's right. Everything is real and alive. Everything is decisive. It doesn't require imagining or thinking. It is like a difference between a real thing and its picture. You see the picture and think about it, but it is only in the imaginary world. However hard you look at it, you cannot be convinced, because it is merely a delusion. Why don't you understand this? A real cake is tasty and nutritious as well! It is totally different.

13. A flower is not a flower, and beauty is not beauty

Q: I understand it as a theory that there is a difference between the fact and its false image, or between the original and its picture. But when I see a flower, I recognize it as a flower and feel it is beautiful. Is it all a false image and mere information based on ideas and feelings? Do you say that I don't really see the flower?

A: Exactly!

Q: What! But it can't be possible. It is very odd! When you see a flower, you recognize it as a flower and feel its beauty. This is true and real. Zen often underestimates or even denies intelligence. However profound the world of zen is, if it denies intelligence as a human trait, it will neglect science and culture. That will cause people to stay away from zen!

A: Then I have a question for you. Does a flower say or think "I am a flower" or "I feel beautiful"?

Q: I don't think so.

A: Why not?

Q: A flower is simply a natural being, so it does not think or feel. A flower is thoroughly natural and follows the principle of *cause* and *effect*, from the viewpoint of science.

A: Then, when an infant who does not know the name the flower or any words sees a flower, does she think it is a flower and feels it is red or white? Or feels it is beautiful or ugly?

Q: An infant probably could not use such words and have such feelings, because her intellectual or cognitive functions are still immature.

A: You are right. Then, if the infant does not recognize it as a flower, or doesn't feel it is beautiful, does she regard it as a different thing?

Q: That is impossible. As the flower is optically captured in her eyes, there cannot be anything other than a flower. Red is red, white is white, and a beautiful thing is beautiful.

A: Then, are eyes conscious that they are seeing some object? Or do they see it, feeling it is red or white or beautiful?

Q: No way! First of all, eyes, ears and all the sense organs are simply natural functions. The eyes function according to a mere optical principle, and just reflect information from the environment – a flower as a flower, red as red, beautiful as beautiful, not beautiful as not beautiful. It can't be otherwise, as long as eyes function normally. This is the usual recognition and the scientific explanation. Because it is theoretically right, everybody will surely understand and accept it.

A: Then, another question. Is the flower seen by an adult and the same flower seen by an infant different? Are the eyes of the adult and the eyes of the infant different?

Q: They can't be different. Why are you asking such a question?

A: You told me that one sees a flower and recognize it as a flower and feels it is beautiful. It is all true and real, and it is a scientific explanation. You also explained that a flower simply follows the natural principle of *cause* and *effect*, so do eyes, regardless of words or intellectual cognition.

Q: Yes, I said so. So?

A: An infant will not use her mind or make any value judgement. She sees a thing as it is naturally. It is the pure world of truth and facts. Therefore, to her, there is no flower, no beauty or ugliness. It is absolutely pure and clear. You, too, speak of almost the same thing indirectly, but you recognize a flower as a flower. You make a separation by distinguishing beauty from ugliness, and spoil the pure world of a flower with your polluted value judgement.

Q: Very correct. But why is it wrong?

A: It is already not the nature as it is, and hence not true. Don't you understand this? The fact is that eyes, ears and all other sense organs are simply natural functions. Eyes function according to the optical principle and simply reflect environmental information. You have said that eyes just reflect an object on the retina without intention or using the mind. On the other hand, you insist that one's personal opinions and judgements are also facts and truth! Do you still not understand it? These are all false images and mere information based on ideas and feelings. All human confusion and evils arise from here!

14. The real truth

Q: If we try to explain the relations between nature and human beings scientifically, then...

A: You should leave such an argument to the world of theory. What is important is to know the real truth. A flower does not know its own beauty or ugliness, or even itself being a flower. Eyes do not feel something is beautiful or ugly. Do you follow this point?

Q: Do you mean that nature has no relationship to the world of perception? Is it that we make a mistake because of a habit of arguing about perception?

A: That's right. It is natural that a flower does not know that it is being seen, and eyes also do not know that they are seeing. This is the state of nature as it is. Nature is an absolute world which is perfectly peaceful and stainless.

Mother Nature is beyond the perception of individuals. What you have explained a little while ago was very logical and reasonable. But as it is a mere explanation, it is only the world of a picture.

Admitting it is scientific, but it remains an explanation and can't be the real truth and fact. It can't lead anyone to decisive awareness that gives conviction. Therefore, even if it sounds logical, it can't bring us peace of mind or joy. That is, a scientific explanation can't settle confusion, we cannot get either peace of mind or confidence.

Great master Sekito (石頭希遷) concluded: "Following reason is not enlightenment."

Q: To be honest, I feel like refuting you thoroughly because you seem to make light of science. Maybe I want to get the peace of mind of a logical explanation.

I also feel an utter difference between your world and mine, and I can't find the way to fill the gap. It seems I just have to listen to you. Then what is the real truth and true fact?

A: There is nothing that is not real. Everything is true and real. It can be said there is nothing that is not the *dharma*. So, when you see a matter truly, you are not conscious of the act of seeing, and the self that sees does not exist. This is the natural, true and real world.

A real rice cake is what you see. You can touch it, bake it, smell it and eat it. There is taste and nutrition. Everything is truth and a fact as it is. Nature doesn't need recognition or judgment. That is all, and there is nothing else to know or find.

Q: I can't agree that there is nothing to know or find. We can clarify everything by analysis. This is the way to know truly, I believe.

A: Is it what you call scientific or doing science?

Q: Yes.

A: Can you know the substance of a rice cake or milk with science?

Q: Yes.

A: Let us suppose that by analysis you have found everything—protein, starch, sugar, water, and so on. Then, I want to ask you a question. When you put them together, do you call it a rice cake? When you analyze milk, you will certainly find what milk is composed of. If finding it out is science, do you really call the mixture of all the materials milk? Do you find any relations between what you have theoretically clarified and the cake or milk itself? The real nature of

a rice cake is the rice cake itself, and milk is milk itself.

Q: Do you mean that the matter itself has nothing to do with science?

A: I don't know whether or not it has anything to do with science. The facts are, before science, aren't they? Whether you notice it or not, a rice cake has its taste, milk has its own flavor and taste. What is the point of using science to know the truth? The whole materials of a rice cake or milk will turn into blood and flesh in our body, even if you don't know what they are. This is the power of the great nature, the way the rice cake or milk devotes itself to provide life for human beings. What difference does it make to carry out a scientific analysis?

If you want to make a good rice cake, you should keep a rice plant and paddy healthy and pound it skillfully. It is natural and suitable to make such efforts. When the efforts are reasonable and suitable, it will work out nicely. If you call it scientific, it is all right. That is what it is.

Q: Then, is science good enough to be used as a means?

A: I mean we should not put science above and superior to facts. That will lead us to making the mistake believing that science comes first. Science is only a way to use intelligence and a function of mind. It is wrong to place absolute trust either in science or in intelligence. If you do so, you may be biased in using intelligence and mind. You should be firmly aware of this point.

In other words, if you trust science excessively, you will be confused. The same is true with faith and religion. When you face an object and recognize it as being separate from you, you get confused and attached to it. All religious wars and ethnic conflicts take place on account of attachment and bias of mind, that is ego and selfishness.

15. Genuine and fake

Q: Science is the work of intelligence. It identifies the causes of an error, mistakes and finds a solution. What sort of a mistake does it bring about?

A: Even if you make something like milk by means of science, it is absolutely not milk. It has no life because it is not made naturally according to *cause* and *effect*.

Milk is squeezed from the breast of a cow, a natural living creature that eats grasses and other food. Science may produce something similar to milk, but it can't make real milk. Scientific technology today

- can't substitute for a natural cow.
- Q: I see. So those are the limits of science, you mean? Is it so-called the “way” or the *dharma*?
- A: That's right. Furthermore, so long as things do not follow the law of nature and do not fulfill the relations of *cause* and *effect*, everything is fake. If such work becomes possible, neglecting the laws of *cause* and *effect*, we could even make human eyes. In reality, we cannot practically make even a cornea or a grass leaf. This is the rule and law of the great nature. In short, it is *cause* and *effect*. Only when there is a *cause*, is there an *effect*, mediated by *conditions*.
A seed by itself cannot bear fruit. When it meets the *condition* of soils, its *effect* will show. An *effect* is always produced by a *cause*. This is a principle, a law, a precept. Once one is born, he will die. Everything that has a form will be broken. This is why we can believe the principle of *cause* and *effect*. Science can exist only on this principle. Understand?
- Q: Does it mean that all the principles are natural? Everything?
- A: That's right. In our life, we simply follow and make use of each principle to meet our purposes. We do so unconsciously. This is not limited to mankind. Every being does so. Nothing can deviate from the *dharma* and the principle of nature. Try to look at everything in detail.
- Q: Even nuclear weapons and mass killings?
- A: Yes, of course. Everything on earth and in the universe exists according to this “way” and the *dharma*. When someone is attached to the past, having complaints, discontent, anger, or hatred, and his state of mind becomes abnormal with an intent of murder, killing can happen anytime and anywhere if only there are supportive *conditions*. When *cause* and *condition* exist, an *effect* will take place at any time. By knowing the principle of cause and effect and applying it, nuclear weapons have been produced and the mass killings have been made possible. Taking advantage of the weapons, more and more of them have been produced. This has been made possible by knowing the principles.
- Q: Are the “way” and the *dharma* virtuous? Or evil?
- A: They are beyond being virtuous or evil. The “way” and the *dharma* are universal. Therefore, the nature is not either right or wrong. The “way” and the *dharma* are called so because they are beyond right or wrong.
- Q: Then, what will become of intelligence, and of right or wrong? What meaning does it have to be scientific or rational?
- A: If you know and utilize the principles of things, you can handle the

facts of the present smoothly and naturally. We call such an attitude intelligent and scientific, I believe.

Well, let us suppose an evil ego controls intelligence and mind. From this moment on, the principles of nature will be used for evil. Intelligence functions according to what its holder desires and orders. The intelligence of a wicked person will be used to do wicked things. This is why such a large number of unbelievably wicked things happen all the time.

Intelligence has a fundamental weakness. It does not have a sense of ethics or a reflective function. We have added a moral sense, a voice of the soul to the act of unprincipled intelligence, and we call it reason. Therefore, a wholesome sense of morals is indispensable to reason. From olden times, superior functions of mind have been called reason. When it works correctly, justice is created, and we can maintain human dignity at its highest. It would be desirable for everybody to be a man of reason, but it is impossible without having a wholesome mind.

Being virtuous or evil is a judgement made by human beings. And the evil comes out of attachment. Accordingly, being virtuous or evil is simply the difference of whether there is attachment or not. Attachment appears at the moment of “now.” Once you are awakened to the real “now,” the virtuous and the evil will disappear, and things are just as nature is. Being virtuous is just following the principles of the great nature, and being evil is merely a state of being attached. Is that clear?

16. To live in accord with the principles of nature

Q: I see. I understand well the difference between intelligence and reason, and that this world is all explained by *cause* and *effect*, full of principles. But, is it not useful to scientifically analyze these principles, including mind?

A: There may be a lot of cases when science is useful, especially in the field of medical science. But the more important thing is to truly know the facts of “now,” and to take good care following them. That is, first and foremost, we should honestly follow the principles of nature, and discard ego. I admit the importance of science. However, to be intimate with the truth and not to violate the principles of nature are far more important than scientific analysis or theorization. That way, we know that everything is well balanced. Then you can feel at ease for the first

time.

You have boldly said that it is intelligence and science that identify causes of mistakes and correct them, because scientific analysis including that of mind is of some use. But as long as we do not clarify why intelligence and mind work in a biased way, or are used wrongly, we will never get away from those mistakes. We cannot attain real peace.

Q: What you say is quite right.

A: Science is a surgical knife to cut open the world of principles of nature, but it is a double-edged sword as well. It may cure illness, but if we misuse it with ego, we may risk ruining the human race. Do you still believe that intelligence and science can identify the causes of mistakes made by mind and correct them?

Q: It's quite out of question. Now I can say without hesitation that we can never solve the problems of mind with intelligence. I have understood well that zen does not underestimate science and intelligence. Rather, I have become aware that I have been bound by the concept of the scientific world. Only when one sees more important things, that everything consists of the "way" and the *dharma*, does he realize that those are the real facts and truth, and that the "way" and the *dharma* are not such a small world that intelligence can recognize. I know now the roots of peace lie just in this "way" and the *dharma*. ...So, how can we abolish nuclear weapons and wars?

A: That's easy. We have only to remove the "separation." It means ego, which is simply attachment. When there is no ego, there is no plot or antagonism. Everybody wants to avoid dangerous matters.

17. The separation and nuclear weapons

Q: How can nuclear weapons and wars be avoided by removing the "separation"?

A: Ego is invariably opposed to other people. As a separated mind is always hostile and opposed to others, you will be bothered by them and become worried about yourself. In the world today with highly developed technologies, the other party can acquire the same strong weapons and technology. Each side will become anxious about not having more and stronger weapons, and both will try to develop even more. The "separation" perpetuates it almost forever.

Q: Then?

A: If each person insists on his own selfish thoughts and forces them on

other people, fights and conflicts will naturally take place. On the other hand, if one gets rid of the “separation” and abandons his own logic and reasoning, all conflicts will surely come to an end. Peace is most important. And the true peace only lies in the oneness of body and mind.

Q: Is it so simple? Attainment of the oneness of body and mind seems extremely difficult.

A: Don't you understand it? An adult with intellect first uses his reasoning, then gets conflicted by being attached to it. You know what is correct, but you can't make a decision and do it right. Here is the biggest reason why we must remove the “separation” and achieve the oneness of body and mind.

Q: I can understand that.

A: Without any thought or reasoning in mind, there will be nothing to be concerned with or to be attached to. You can see the simple “way” and the *dharma*: I should do it because it is important. Without attachment you can easily reach the right conclusion. It is so simple and clear. You accept it because it is natural. Your mind is free without thoughts, doubts and delusions. To such people with no hostility, having nuclear weapons is dangerous. So that they will promptly be abolished.

Q: Is that so simple?

A: It is so simple! You probably thought it would require much loftier theories to solve the problem. But that is delusion and the cause of all conflicts. Ask a primary school pupil if we need nuclear weapons or not, and if we should wage a war or not. Every pupil will clearly answer “no” and “never.” Ask them if we should have nuclear weapons which are used only for mass murder, they will surely answer that we should abolish them. They hold only one truth, the *dharma* that we must not produce or use such weapons that only kill a great number of people. We are always peaceful when we follow this *dharma*. However, as we gain more knowledge, we begin to create sources of confusion by ourselves. Convenient excuses arise out of suspicion, demands and desires. As a result, the *dharma* gives way and the mind falls into disorder. Wars break out through conflicts that we make out of such excuses. So we should only know that peace will be realized immediately if we are pure and simple like children. If we are awakened at one *dharma* of “now,” and at “one truth” of breathing, not only can we gain peace but also live forever. Because each awakened one will protect the nature and environment. In short, we have only to remove the “separation” that is at the root of the excuses to solve the

problem.

18. To be truly simple

Q: How can we get to the “way” and “truth”?

A: It is very easy. Be “just” and “now.” That is to free yourself and remove the “separation” by devoting yourself wholly to one *dharma*. When seeing, if you avoid recognition, thoughts, words and conceptions, you will be awakened at the oneness of body and mind.

The conflicting self and selfishness melt away and collapse. A flower is natural and human eyes are natural. So the oneness of a flower and human eyes is also natural. There is no room for words, conceptions and feelings. You have only to be awakened in this “way” and the *dharma* which are complete just as you see or hear.

Q: Aren’t intelligence and recognition natural functions?

A: That’s right. But as you said yourself: if one is caught by them, it is not natural.

Q: Yes, I said so.

A: It seems your mind is already confused. It is because your mind is captured by the intention to solve the matter with reasoning. You are entirely filled with delusions.

Q: It looks like I am.

A: Listen simply with a pure mind. Just as science can spin out of control beyond the principles of nature, our intelligence and feelings can also lead to confusion so long as there is “separation.” Your mind is not natural. As long as mind is not natural, the separation of body and mind will never end. I would like you to understand this important point truly and to make every effort to resolve the separation.

Q: I understand it well, but what am I supposed to do?

A: Let your mind be pure. When you see a flower, there are only your eyes and the flower. If you don’t introduce reasoning, eyes and a flower are naturally one without separation. There are neither eyes nor a flower. There is only this natural state just as it is. This is really the solemn great nature and the absolute world that nobody can violate. This is the “way” and the *dharma*.

However, as soon as you introduce reasoning, you are separated from things and are opposed to them. Relativity gets in out of selfishness. Then you begin to stare at things from your individual standpoint, and criticisms and judgments arise. A flower and eyes arise, so do likes and dislikes, beauty and ugliness. Problems come out one after another.

- Q: What is wrong with it?
- A: It is a problem of whether it is true or not rather than a problem of right or wrong. People regard a false image of world as a fact, because truth is concealed.
- Q: Do you mean we make a fundamental mistake when we usually see something?
- A: That's right. As I tell you repeatedly, you should realize this first of all. What is troublesome is the habit of mind which uses unnecessary intentions because body and mind are separated. This is ego. As it is the root of the problem, you only have to get rid of the habit of "separation." You can instantly solve every kind of confusion, trouble, conflict and suffering.
- That is to say, without separation, body and mind become one. When you see a flower truly, and when there is no unnecessary consciousness of "you" or "a flower," there is only pure reality and truth, without concept or reasoning. When you have truly understood this, you will be able to live at ease. Don't you think it's marvelous?
- Q: I still don't understand. I don't necessarily call what is illogical sophistry. I know that the depth of zen can only be expressed with such twisted words. I also understand that the world of zen is absolute and free without boundaries, beyond the description of words.
- But why is it wrong to see a flower as a flower? What is not true to feel it is beautiful? Will you explain this illogical part of contradiction? Otherwise, we cannot help regarding zen as mysticism or a personal experiencism. If so, we cannot believe zen is the true salvation and the true way, can we?
- A: I see your point. But if you say you don't understand zen because it is illogical, it is hardly possible that you understand that the real great nature cannot be grasped by means of concepts or reasoning. You may well not understand at this stage. But, at least once, you must completely forget yourself and get away from attachments to concept and reasoning, and truly experience it for yourself. Concepts are concepts, reasoning is reasoning, after all.
- Q: Very well understood. I think it means there is no other way but to go beyond conception and words which have prevented me from understanding the reality. I am beginning to be convinced that those are my attachments. I also feel the only way to solve this problem is to practice zazen intently.
- But I still believe that using the very brain is the virtue and greatness of human beings, and I can't neglect the dignity of intelligence. Therefore, will you permit me to continue for a while seeking the

possibility of conception and language and finding its limits?

19. You damn fool!

A: This is not a matter of whether I permit it or not. You cannot apprehend the truth through conceptions or words. You are still within the limitations of philosophy. You had better outgrow it sooner rather than later, because it is a waste of precious time.

Q: Is it the privilege of zen that Master can say things so directly?

A: You are talking nonsense again. I simply said that as long as you don't practice and attain it yourself, you will never understand it.

Q: I will ask you from scratch. There cannot be attachment with a really quiet mind. Is that a state of enlightenment?

A: No, it is not.

Q: How is it not? A quiet mind doesn't have any words or conceptions, does it? So there ought to be no self, no confusion and no attachment in it. Isn't it the world of selflessness and enlightenment?

A: There remains one big thing. Didn't you notice it?

Q: Eh! There ought to be nothing.

A: Unless you understand this, you are not qualified to talk about zen. I am afraid it will take no less than thirty years for you to understand what I mean. It is useless for you to ask any further. You'd better leave here right now.

Q: That's impossible of you! Am I so wrong? I agree to leave here at any time. But I am honestly asking you because I really want to know. Aren't religious teachers generous enough to tell the truth? I desperately would like to know this subtle point at any cost.

A: Then "just" listen this time!

Q: Yes, I will.

A: When you see a thing, there is nothing to see, and no one who sees it.

Q: I have already heard that.

A: You damn fool! Why can't you just listen? You are still arguing. This is a perfect example of "separation," ego and selfishness. As long as you have an opposing mind, you can't help being confused and in conflict all your life. Abandon your "self."

20. "Just" listen

- Q: Ah, Yes! It is just as you say. I have a habit of uttering my opinions at once, and this is ego and selfishness, isn't it?! To listen, doing away with such a habit is the meaning of "just" listen, isn't it?!
- A: Exactly. To do away with self is what I mean by having a pure mind.
- Q: I feel like that I have gotten a very important point. Now I will "just" listen.
- A: If you keep practicing this "just" without separation, you will reach a point of time when the separation is totally dropped and you realize the truth. When you reach that place, your self, who has been practicing all along, vanishes from the consciousness. This point is very important. When self disappears, the separation also disappears. Then one becomes directly one with the object you are looking at or listening to. As body and mind become one and the relativity drops out, you become united with everything. Do you understand this principle?
- Q: The moment I began practicing "just" listening, I feel like your words reach my mind directly. Strange to say, it is not whether I understand or not, your words penetrate into my heart directly as they are.

21. To be enlightened by *conditions*

- A: Very well, indeed. You seem to be able to "just" listen. Your selfishness has dropped that much. The more it falls away, the easier you will feel. Master Dogen made reference to it and said: "To study the Buddha way is to study self. To study self is to forget self." This is the state of mind in which thoughts and perceptions subside, and the "separation" between body and mind disappears.
- There is nothing, not even a quieted mind. Don't get this point wrong. While there is still a quieted mind that insists that there is no self, there is certainly self and its habits. Because you can't drop them off entirely, the *dharma* will never enter you. You can't become enlightened because your whole past has not dropped off. Do you understand?
- Q: "Nothing" means there is no one self who says there is nothing. That is true nothingness! What will become of him when he himself and all his belongings have dropped off?
- A: Master Dogen goes on saying: "To forget self is to be enlightened by all things. To be enlightened by all things is to let your body and mind as well as the bodies and minds of others drop off."
- When one has dropped off one's self completely and become one with

nature, one comes back to oneself by external stimuli, such as when one hears a sound or receives some other stimulus, this is the moment of Gedatsu, emancipation from worldly attachments. We call this state to be enlightened by *conditions*. It is the moment when there is really nothing and one realizes the fact of emptiness. This is enlightenment. When the muddy water in a bucket is left untouched, the mud settles after a while. But it will get muddy again when it is moved. When mind is only quieted, true enlightenment may be far away, because the mind may soon be confused and troubled again. Enlightenment means that the bottom of the bucket drops off. So the water will not get muddy any more, nor will it reflect the moon. Got it?

Q: So, that is true enlightenment! I feel I have begun to understand just a little the importance of dropping my self completely.

22. It is useless for you to listen any further

A: That is good. Body and mind, now and self, oneself and others, the environment and human beings—they are originally one. Being one means non-duality. All things originate from one. Everything has the same essence with nature. You have only to know this truly.

Q: I am confused once again. I don't understand at all why one's self and others, the environment and human beings are one, and how they are united and integrated.

These unscientific, unintelligent words are incomprehensible and confusing. They make me feel uneasy and uncertain. Because they are so illogical, I cannot help thinking that zen is extremely mysterious. Isn't it possible to improve these weird expressions?

A: You get close to awareness of an important point, yet you still try to understand with words. You see, this is a fundamental point of importance. I don't mean being one is to be smashed together like a dumpling. As there is no "separation", they are extremely intimate.

If you really get this point, all the problems will be solved. In other words, it means to know your self truly. You get confused because you don't know your self. You distinguish yourself from others, body from mind, nature from the environment, and you get attached to it.

Things are not bothered by their names or words. If you take the words for facts, it is natural that you won't understand. You will never accept that those clearly different things are the same. The "way" and the *dharma* are an entirely different world. The more you analyze them scientifically with your intelligence, the more confused you will

- get. Anxiety and conflicts come out of this confusion.
 You confuse yourself in the first place because you hold onto “separation” and are caught by words.
- Q: You are exactly correct. No doubt I am surely contradicting myself and this makes me feel uneasy. At the same time, it is true I certainly am and am aware of this. Nevertheless, if such quite different things as oneself and others, the environment and human beings are identical, you ought to explain it to me even using logic.
- A: You are back at the drawing board! Attachment is so difficult to work with. Now, listen carefully. Eyes see things just as they are. That is what the environment is, as well as human beings and other things. Nothing is added to it by mental and intellectual functions. This is a world far beyond intelligence and reasoning. So it is useless for you to listen any further.
- Q: Please don't speak in such a way as to make me lose hope. I feel more and more interested in practicing. So let me hear you talk more, since demand for higher achievement will invigorate the *bodhi*-mind.
 Now that such a desire has grown in me, I think it natural I want to learn more. In turn, you should have a mission to teach. I am honestly and sincerely asking you to teach me.
- A: Are you really sincere? All intellectual understanding is delusion. How many times must I repeat it? When you hear too much, you may suffer from indigestion afterwards. Do you still want to hear more?
- Q: Of course, yes!
- A: Then what do you want to hear?

23. When you see a thing, there is nothing to see and no one who sees it

- Q: Going back to what you explained earlier, I do not yet understand “when one sees a thing, there is nothing to see and no one who sees it.”
- A: You know what you don't understand. That is “separation” and ego. Because the self who tries to understand gets in the way, there is no way you can understand it. You must “just” see it, forgetting that you don't understand. This is the true state of “when you see a thing, there is nothing to see and no one who sees it.”
 If you become one with “I don't understand it,” the one who says it will be gone. When your mind is totally concentrated, you are one with it. The object you are seeing has no thought by itself. Seeing has no thought by itself. Nothing originally separates you from the matter, so you are integrated with it. You must realize that there is no

- “separation.”
- Q: My goodness! I don't understand at all. Please illustrate with an example.
- A: So I have told you, the more you hear, the more confused you get! Before you study, you think you will study hard. Once you are actually studying, do you study thinking that you will study hard? It is energy before you begin. But once that energy turns into action, you just study, don't you?
- Q: That's right.
- A: Once you are in the middle of it, do you think about studying while you study?
- Q: No one would do that.
- A: Then how do you do it?
- Q: I simply study.
- A: That's it! You study forgetting that you are studying, and even forgetting yourself. You “just” do it, don't you?
- Q: Indeed! I see.
- A: The same is true when you see something. Do you think about seeing it when you see it?
- Q: No.
- A: You realize you were seeing after the fact of seeing. As long as you recognize yourself as the one who sees something, you are not truly seeing. You are caught up in analysis and reason.
- Q: Now I understand at last! That is what you mean when you say a person becomes one with the thing. That is the moment he really sees it. This is the meaning of being one with the environment; a unity of oneself and others, oneness of body and mind!
- “When one sees a thing, there is nothing to see and no one who sees it” is a perfectly clear state in which there is no habit of recognition and thinking, no attachment.
- A: That's right. It is a real state of the fact when you see something.

24. Eyes are originally enlightened

- Q: There is nothing more to it?
- A: Correct. Therefore, you only have to “just” do anything, giving up the self regardless of whether you understand it or not.
- Q: When there are no thoughts, desires, even self, isn't that enlightenment?
- A: You are circling again. You should not use the word “enlightenment” so

lightly. I am talking about the “way” and the *dharma*. There is no such a thing as enlightenment in the first place. As it is the “way” and the *dharma* from the beginning, you don’t need to think about whether it is enlightenment or not.

Eyes are originally eyes. Eyes have no reason or need to become enlightened. They have no confusion, attachment or suffering. They are originally enlightened. They are in a free world of their own.

Lord Buddha says: “Above heaven and below heaven, I alone am the Honored One.” Everything is exactly like this: nothing violates and nothing is violated. Eyes are not disturbed or hindered by an ear, a mouth or anything else. If only you truly understand the world of “just,” everything will become clear and evident.

Q: Indeed!

A: However, if you are not aware of the truth, you will not gain wisdom. The important thing is to know that wisdom is there from the beginning. Enlightenment is a supreme state when one has really experienced it. Self-awareness at this moment is completely different from intellectual understanding. It is a real experience. It is just like the light of wisdom in the room of darkness that instantly makes everything clear and evident.

25. Genuine zen practice

Q: I see!

A: In any case, as long as you have ego and habits of mind, the *dharma* will not be yours. That is why you can’t reach the true solution. Everybody must have experienced, at least in one instant, a pure and clear mind in which there are no idle thoughts, passions or ego. When you have a full focus on something, your mind is totally concentrated, and there is no other mind. In fact, if you continue such simple concentration, you can get rid of “separation.” You should be grateful to hear it.

Q: Indeed! I have certainly experienced such a state of mind a couple of times before. It was what I should look for.

A: Though it looks similar, it is not enlightenment. Even if it is not, you have certainly experienced being one with an object and caught a glimpse of the world without self. So you should deepen this realization as a focal point. If you keep practicing this simple and empty moment of “now,” you will surely attain true “now” and true “just.” This sincere effort is a practice of living zen. Therefore, anyone

who has the *bodhi*-mind can attain it.

Q: I didn't know that zen practice is to keep up the "now" which is completely calm and without any confusion or attachment. Why is it so?

A: That is an unnecessary question. Why do your eyes see? Why does a pickled plum taste sour? You should leave these questions to a specialist or someone else. It is far more important to be "just," leaving the eye as it is, taste as it is, and sound as it is. This is the real practice and purpose of zen. It is to remove "separation." Do you understand what I am saying?

Q: I can understand much better than before. Strangely enough, I feel it is my own matter.

A: Is that so? But even if you have understood it, you are liable to be caught by words and begin to ask questions. Do you think that this is all right?

Q: You've got me there! You are right. But I can't accept myself in such a state. So I swallow my pride and beg you. I feel like something is beginning to melt in the depth of my mind.

A: We have accumulated a great deal of knowledge on how to live a better life. That is so common. But if one is caught by his accumulated knowledge, the water is muddied. This is a common state of mind. But if you throw away the bucket, there is no dirty water and the moon shows no reflection. Because it is "just" as it is. This is the true world. Then you have done it completely and the "separation" has dissolved.

Q: In short, I have to throw away the bucket?

A: Exactly! You are a bucket, and when you throw it away, there is clear, decisive proof that one has been freed. It is Gedatsu. But it has no visible shape, and people often mistake a quieted mind for Gedatsu. This is why you need to ask a master to verify it. When you selfishly believe you have attained it, it becomes a conviction and your practice stalls.

Q: What happens then?

A: One will make no progress from there, however hard he may make efforts. So most probably he will stop practicing.

Q: Why does he not make progress with all that effort?

A: Because he has mistakenly understood mere awareness that is not truth as if it is truth and has made a firm conviction. Then the conviction gets in the way and prevents him from throwing away his self.

26. Conviction gets in the way

Q: What do you mean by “conviction gets in the way”?

A: Conviction is to be convinced and to stop doubting. Mentally, it is a kind of attachment. From the moment you turn something into conviction, it ceases to be a matter of judgment, and it gets out of the scope of intelligence. Even if you are aware of these shortcomings, such convictions are likely out of your reach and difficult to correct. Conviction is valuable, but if it is not correct, it will become a major attachment and binding mental function. You may have had an experience like this: When someone blames you for something you have nothing to do with, you will hate him for not listening to your side of the truth.

It’s a past event and you know he is not such a bad person, but such feelings about him will remain. This sort of things happens all the time, regardless of intelligence.

Mind makes such a grand functioning. This is because there is really not such a thing as mind. Mind is a kind of spiritual essence which appears temporarily according to *conditions* of that moment. Compared with this grand functioning, intelligence is merely a very small part of the whole.

Q: That sounds frightening! I feel as if I have seen my limitations that I cannot overcome by myself. What shall I do?

A: There is no other way but to continue practicing just as your master tells you, trusting him thoroughly. I can say that the key to the *bodhi*-mind is here. The *bodhi*-mind is a sincere mind which makes utmost efforts, so it can break such petty convictions. This is why the *bodhi*-mind is so precious. Before long the “separation” drops off and disappears. As a result, you will be freed from attachment.

Q: What will happen if I keep practicing with a sincere *bodhi*-mind?

27. Listening to, contemplating about and practicing the Buddhist teachings, one enters into *samādhi*

A: You are sick of wanting to know. All your concerns will go when you practice. Knowing that you can know it, why do you want to know so much?

Q: It is natural, because I want to practice with firm convictions.

A: Your conviction is so fragile that it will easily shrink when you hear another logic. While there is “separation” in you, your mental

structure is destined to function only relatively. So it is inevitable that you will be unstable.

Are you going to practice zen trusting in such an unreliable conviction? If your conviction is firm enough, you won't be confused or troubled by others. Then, you wouldn't have to practice, would you?

Q: I correct what I have said. I am afraid the anxiety of what I don't know will worry me.

A: It must be so. Everybody is so. That is why I tell you to trust your master. Trust is the beginning of the way. A zen saying goes: "Listening to, contemplating about and practicing the Buddhist teaching, one enters into *samādhi*."

Q: What does it mean?

A: "Listening" is to listen to the *dharma*. However, as a person tries to listen to it as a theory through his intelligence, he falls into his selfish view. So he must check carefully to see if he has correctly understood what he has heard. In short, "contemplating" is to elaborate and confirm. If there is any point that is ambiguous, unclear or questionable, you must ask your master at once and correct it. When your view is correct, you will act accordingly. This is "practicing." In this way, concrete practice is accompanied by concrete results.

Master Dogen says: "Practice leads to realization." This is "one enters into *samādhi*." That is the way to attain the wisdom of the Buddha, that is, to be awakened to the "way" and the *dharma*. Without asking, you cannot understand it. When you do understand it, you only have to practice intently as you are told.

Q: The phrase "Listening to, contemplating about and practicing the Buddhist teaching" is so simple and easy to understand. I am fully convinced. If you show me concretely the results I will get, I will be induced even more hopefully. Entering into a completely unknown world needs firm resolution, doesn't it?

A: It sounds plausible. But an argumentarian like you is really difficult and troublesome to deal with. Don't your wife and daughter feel you are nuisance? Because you are not clear-headed at all.

28. The importance of awareness

Q: I want to be clear-headed, so I will try to put aside my self-esteem and beg you to preach to me.

A: In any case, you don't need to know or hear any more, you only have to practice from now on. Hearing more, you will surely be caught by the

words. If you are given the answer before solving the math quiz, you will lose appetite to solve it. Can't you just listen, so you don't get injured? You keep breaking your promise.

Q: I promise to do my best "just" to listen to you this time.

A: I believe your words. But I have finished telling you several important points.

Q: Even though they are the same, I will try to accept them in a different way this time. So please.

A: I will be glad if it is true. So listen to me as simply as possible. First and foremost, don't leave "now," and do "just." Don't let other thoughts come in, but concentrate whole-heartedly on what you are doing now. Practicing this way, you will naturally reach the fact of "now." You will realize that there is no thought or feeling in the fact of "now." You will experience for the first time the fact, as totally different from thoughts or feelings. This is the first awareness.

The importance of this awareness is in the clear distinction between delusion and fact. You can discern the fact of "now" from illusion, and it becomes possible for you to abandon illusions and simply follow facts. Here you have finally grasped an important way of practicing. So this awareness is a great foothold because you move into genuine practice from here. You must hold on to this point; otherwise, your precious time and efforts will end in vain.

Q: Then, it is definitely essential to attain this awareness as soon as possible, isn't it?

A: You are right.

Q: Then, how can I reach there soonest ?

A: As I said, you should not let go of "now" for anything. Whatever you do, do it "now." To hold on to "now" is the same as to watch yourself. Then whole-heartedly concentrate on what you are doing "now" without using any thought.

Q: Is it all right to concentrate intently on the "fact" I am doing "now" without using thought?

29. Pure zazen and pure acts are the life of the Buddha

A: That is right. Because zen is to become one with just one matter without using thought. "Just" do it according to *conditions*. You keep doing one matter after another smoothly, at each moment of "now" after "now." We call it "just" acting. It is the practice in the action of everyday life. If you are able to do this, your practice is fairly advanced

and the goal is close.

“Just” means to be simple and pure without any thought or intention. There is no self in it. And to “just” sit is called Shikan-taza which is identical to Zenjo (*dhyāna*) as the Buddha put it. To do nothing but to see is to “just” see. There is no one who sees it, and nothing to be seen. There is only to see.

To do nothing but to walk is to “just” walk. There is no I who walk. There is nothing but to “just” walk. If there remains “just” or to walk, it is not a true “just” nor a true “walk.” The goal is a state where you have become one with nature.

Q: I see. That is what it is. There is no self, not even “just” in pure mind, pure “just.” This is true “just”, isn't it?

A: Exactly! You seem to have become less argumentative.

Q: Indeed I feel less like using logic. So is this to be simple and frank? I feel at ease and clear-headed.

A: You seem to be honest by nature. Therefore, you have to “just” listen all the time.

Q: Yes!

A: The *bodhi*-mind is “just” pure mind.

Q: I somehow get it. But what does it truly mean?

A: Ordinary people do something with “separation.” So there is invariably self who has delusions or thoughts and argues about it. Contrarily, the Buddha has only one pure mind and is one with it, having no self. In short, the Buddha is a man of “just.” Therefore, you should practice to be “just” attain it, and be a person of “just.”

Q: That is why you repeatedly say do “just” and “now.”

30. Don't underestimate the practice of zen!

A: Exactly! You know now that Buddhist practice is to “just” do it. While you are arguing about something, you are using ego and you are far from true practice. True practice is to “just” practice whole-heartedly. The practice of the Buddhist Way is to “just” do zazen and “just” act intently.

Q: Some chemical change seems to have taken place in me. I have somehow come to understand that the problem lies in my self who tries to know, and that the self is the root of attachment. This understanding has nothing to do with a logic and is quite different from understanding concepts or perception. Strange to say, I don't find my mind that tries to understand.

- A: Well, well, then “just” listen that way. When you are thoroughly doing “just,” you are away from the functioning of thought and consciousness, so you have no sense of time or space. You are one with “now,” and you have dropped your self.
- Q: Is it a state of so-called Muga, selflessness?
- A: Again you are trying to explain things? “Just” listen!
- Q: Oh, yes, I must be more careful.
- A: You still don’t concretely understand that as soon as you put up self, you run into problems. It is because you have ears, self and mind. They are simply attachments. Give them all up and become like dead wood. Be more careful and practice “just” listening more truly. You are now practicing zen of “just” listening. Such thoughts as “I understand” or “I got it” are completely useless. They are only attachments. So you must practice sincerely, wholeheartedly.
- Q. Oh! That is “just” listening. I have to be so meticulous.
- A: Of course. Don't underestimate the practice of zen!

31. Proof of attainment and Shin-in

- A: There is nothing in “just.” “Just” is truth because it has nothing impure. This original state as it is is called Nyorai, or the Buddha. Therefore, “just” is the state of the Buddha. When one has fully attained and has become nothingness, one will experience an impactful self-awareness prompted by the stimulus of external *conditions* such as sound or words. This is the moment of enlightenment. When Master Dogen experienced it, he said: “My body and mind have dropped off. This is the dropping off of body and mind.” It is a state when you are totally freed from attachment by dropping off body and mind. Here, the “way” and the *dharma* are realized. Nothing other than this can be true. Anything that has come in from outside is not a true treasure, as the zen saying goes. So logic or convictions are useless. The real “way” and the *dharma* must be a true experience of awareness, enlightened by *conditions*. Furthermore, you need to have that experience examined by a master to see if the experience is true. That is the life of zen and Shin-in, the seal on mind, or the proof of enlightenment. It's origin dates back 2600 years when Lord Shakyamuni Buddha approved the attainment of Mahakasyapa. This is the famous flower sermon on Vulture Peak: the Buddha lifted a flower and smiled. The fifth patriarch called in the sixth to-be patriarch Eno in his room, examined and proved his

enlightenment. Later, the great master Yoka visited his master Eno to request examining him. In this way, the seal of the Buddha has been passed down as a seal on mind, from master to disciple, mind to mind. You should understand how precious and difficult it is to attain. What the great masters have passed down is great treasure today. What on earth is this *dharma*? That treasure is to be “just”. This is the very essence of zen life.

32. Attaining Kuu

Q: That is the world where one’s life is at stake! I have never heard such a serious sermon. Then, how can one realize such “just” without self? Is it the awareness that one can attain only by thoroughly becoming one with matter?

A: That's right! Everything will drop off when one has totally abandoned self. It is called “emptying” oneself. When you have attained “just” or “emptiness,” you will leave the self that has been attached and confused. It is also called “emancipation.” It may also be called “dropping off” as your self drops and disappears. At this moment, the truth of mind gets clear. This is called Kensho. Words are different, but they all point to the mind of the patriarchs. Kensho is an experience once for all and the state when someone truly becomes one with matter.

Q: This is really wonderful! I am completely overwhelmed. Then, what is Kuu?

A: It is being perfectly free; and it has no fixed form; it does not belong to an individual. It can become anything according to *conditions*. Life and death depend on *conditions*. If you search for the meaning or explanation of Kuu, you will surely fall into an endless maze of perceptions. Therefore, you should never try to understand it.

Q: If Kuu is the essence of all things, then, in order to attain Kuu, one should experience oneness of body and mind, and thoroughly become one with it. Correct?

A: Certainly! No self, no “separation.” Just as you perceive – seeing or hearing, as they are. Matter becomes anything according to *conditions*. It is also said, “*Causes* and *conditions* are empty by nature.” They all mean the same thing. This is the essence of the universe. As no words can express it, we call it Kuu.

Eighty-four thousand teachings of Shakyamuni Buddha and all the sutras preach Kuu and mind. This is the so-called truth and *dharma*.

Q: Oh! How amazing it is! Then what is the difference between “now,” “just,” “to be one with matter” and Kuu?

A: They are all the same. It has to be so because none of them have any substance. People tend to think that if their words are different, they are different. It is because they think from their own point of view. They are caught by words because they use intellect to understand things.

When you know the essence of truth, you don't need words. That is the power of a person who has attained Kuu and Kensho.

Q: I understood that there is no other way but to actually experience the truths. Briefly, when I whole-heartedly become one with matter, I attain Kuu, naturally dropping off body and mind. Thus I will experience and understand the truth of Kuu. Is that right?

A: That's right.

Q: When one fully concentrates on doing zazen, one gets rid the “separation” and becomes “now,” “just,” and “one with matter.” That is the moment of attaining Kuu, isn't it?

A: Exactly! You are now listening far better. However, this is all useless unless you truly practice.

33. The self disappears

Q: What will happen when one fully concentrates on zazen?

A: You are again asking too many questions! When one fully concentrates on zazen, there is only zazen! When you walk, there is only walking. As zazen is the *dharma* and truth, you will be clear that there is no confusion, no attachment, and no self. This is the true zazen.

Q: If there is only zazen, what will become of the person?

A: Don't be foolish! You already have the answer. Now you just do it.

Q: I have been taught that “Listening to, contemplating about and practicing Buddhist teachings, one enters into *samādhi*.” I don't want to misunderstand this crucial point. So please.

A: It is surely important for the sake of the *dharma*. When there is only zazen, you forget that you are doing zazen and the you who is doing zazen will also disappear. As there is only “now,” time disappears. Moreover, space also ceases to exist because there is no one who is doing zazen. Only zazen is. This is the true “just” zazen.

Q: What does it mean that both zazen and self disappear by practicing zazen?

A: It is “just” zazen in which you have nothing to think and speak about.

Zazen is the world, the world is zazen.

Q: Does it mean there is nothing to worry about in it?

A: You are right. However, it will take an enormous amount of effort to reach this point.

Q: That effort is to thoroughly concentrate on “now,” “just” and “to be one with matter”?

A: Exactly. That is the true living zen practice. There is no intentional action. There are just *conditions*. When practicing zazen, you do not need to think. So there is no intellectual or mental functioning, there is “just” zazen. That is the true zazen.

34. Nothing will happen to them

Q: Is it “now,” “just” and “one with matter”?

A: Correct!

Q: Is it the case that a habit of mind that acknowledges the other party is gone and mind is completely clear?

A: That’s right. Master Dogen says: “Zazen is not practicing zen to become something, but is just a blissful gate of the *dharma*.” Practicing zazen for a long time does not always lead you to be “just.” While the habit of thought keeps functioning, mind never gets settled. You must know as early as possible the state of mind without habit, its original state. It is for that purpose that you do zazen.

Take breathing, for instance. You should thoroughly concentrate on it. That way you will detach from everything else. And to detach is to leave things as they are. When you are completely one with matter, you are awakened to the oneness of body and mind. Then you will realize that there is no self. This decisive moment is the state of bliss. As there is no self, there is nothing at all. Nothing is more peaceful than this. Therefore, it is called “the blissful gate of the *dharma*.” This is truly the greatest peace and *nirvana*. In that state, you are thoroughly relieved.

Q: Practicing hard, I think it important to persistently do zazen for a long time. But am I right to understand that effort will be useless if it is not to be “now,” “just” and “one with the mater”?

A: That is correct.

Q: However, if every intellectual, mental activity stops, wouldn’t this cause many problems in our social lives?

A: Not at all.

Q: What will happen to information from our senses such as seeing and

hearing?

A: They will remain as they are.

Q: When you are doing nothing, you certainly don't need any intellectual or mental activity. But in our daily lives, we have to produce results at work. That means we have to see what's going on using our sense organs every "now" after "now.". What happens to sensory information in these cases?

A: Nothing happens to them.

Q: If the system of thinking breaks down or slows down, the state of things might get serious.

A: I do not mean that the six sense organs—eyes, ears, nose, tongue, body and mind—stop functioning, nor that the six corresponding objects—form, sound, smell, taste, touch and mind object slow down. Rather, the information gained is simple and pure, without extra thought or blurriness. In fact, more precise judgment will be possible.

Q: What then?

A: The six sense organs will be the six sense objects. That's all there is to it. You will realize that this world has no attachment or contradiction. Whatever you see or hear, everything is as it is. So, it is always stable and you will not get carried away or distracted. You can "just" do your daily work smoothly and undistracted without using thought. This is the power of a person who has practiced in the right way.

35. Confusion arises from the ego

Q: If that is the case, it seems that our conversation just now has lacked a focus and has been wide of the mark.

A: You are right. I am now talking about the crux of the practice. That is, how to solve and bring a confused and troubled mind back to normal. So I am explaining the way to solve the root of attachment and gain peace of mind. I am talking simply about pure practice.

However, you are trying to apply points of practice directly to your daily work; that is why you get confused. It is as if one drives on a public road as soon as he has studied the logic of driving. Such an unreasonable idea arises because you try to sum up zen practice with daily work using one logic. When your body and mind are separated, you tend to understand everything using one logic. This is a habit of mind. You are trapped by your own logic.

You should do away with your trapped self and "just" practice. If you imagine a solution in your mind and then try to get close to it, you will

- get confused and your mind will fall into disorder. This is a habit of mind and confusion due to self.
- Q: I understand it well. Then why does such self-contradiction take place?
- A: Because you don't "just" listen. Instead, your thinking is functioning even more strongly. This is how you lose the main point and get caught by words. Your thoughts and feelings are easily stimulated, and this generates questions and arguments, reproducing worldly desires and suffering. They all arise from self and separation, and cause all kinds of unwanted consequences.
- Q: Including war?
- A: That's right.
- Q: Then, if we follow "now," "just" and "matter as it is," no problems will arise? If there is no useless manipulation of information by mind, will we not get caught? Is that what you mean by "just" listening and not losing the point at issue?
- A: Yes. When you "just" listen, the message enters you as it is, because nothing stands in the way. Matters with related *conditions* will stay, and other unnecessary things will pass by. But when you use your thoughts to say there are some things that you don't understand, this bothers your intellect which forms question such as "Why?" or "How?" By "just" listening, such troublesome functions will not come up, and your mind will remain clear. It is, therefore, best to "just" listen. You should not mix this with worldly affairs. As the world requires tangible results, you will need to listen so that you can understand what's going on well enough. This is the difference between the world that seeks forms and the world that has nothing to seek.

36. Zen practice and the real world

- Q: If I can do this all the time, I can manage my life smoothly without getting confused. Right?
- A: That's right. As there is no idea of this being one matter or another, no thoughts of loss or gain, what you do is pure. This is called "the Buddha does a Buddha action." For example, to put the shoes of others neatly is said to be the act of the bodhisattva. In other words, one acts according to *conditions* of "now," and "just" do what there is to do. This is the "way" and the *dharma* as it is. It naturally manifests itself as a whole-hearted act. This is the state of the Buddha, and the way leading to it is the right practice and the

- Buddhist Way. The mind of “just” is such a wonderful state.
- Q: What should we do then in order to work smoothly and naturally in the daily world?
- A: It is not possible to do so unless you certainly attain “just” and “now.” You must first practice zazen seriously and attain the awareness of “now.” As the diffusion of mind settles down, you will become intimate with the real “now” and gradually you will become able to do things smoothly and without distraction in the real world.
- Q: Is it absolutely impossible to do things smoothly without distraction unless I become aware of the real “now” without “separation”?
- A: I don't say it is absolutely impossible. But it is extremely difficult to solely follow *conditions* of “now” among the myriad *conditions*. As long as there is “separation,” mind has a built-in structure to become diffused. You are bothered by every single matter, and it becomes difficult to do things smoothly, whole-heartedly.
- As a caution, don't regard your work and practice as separate matters. As the practice is to become one with the work and to do it whole-heartedly, you can do it. But work changes frequently and you need to consider various matters carefully. That makes it difficult to do things simply “now,” but you can do it if you really want to do it. After all, all you have is just “now.”
- Q: Anyway, I've got to attain the true “now”, the very crux of the matter.
- A: You are right.

37. Difference between facts and false images

- Q: I feel I am now able to accept what you say. Scientifically speaking, everyone is aware that this world is made of causes and effects, and as common sense, it is full of pure principles. I also understand that there is no time to be captured by my personal opinions and perceptions. Then, does becoming enlightenment mean to be awakened to this principle of the great nature, selflessness and no use of intention?
- A: That's right.
- Q: For this, practice is absolutely necessary to overcome the self who has attachments?
- A: Yes, it is. But why do you ask the same question over and over?
- Q: I cannot help doing so. Does overcoming the self mean that I will fully become one with matter?
- A: That is correct.

- Q: Is that the time when I have realized the pure world and the original self?
- A: Yes, it is. You sound as if you have progressed in understanding the *dharma* principles. However, be careful. As long as you have the self that says you have understood it, the self will cause much suffering. You must have understood now that you only have to whole-heartedly concentrate on *zazen*, forgetting that you have understood it. The only way to drop off the self with attachment and to achieve oneness of body and mind, is to thoroughly forget your self. From the moment you have truly attained it, the difference between the past and “now” will become clear, and the distinctions between facts and concepts will also become evident. So you will not be confused any more. No problem will arise from there. To realize that distinction is to realize the truth, which is called emancipation or enlightenment.
- Q: Does that mean to make a clear distinction between the world of eyes and the world of ideas of processing information, between facts and false images?
- A: That's right. This great self-awakening is a natural phenomenon of the moment when you are awakened to the real “now.”
- Q: I have long wanted to ask you, what is the real “now”?
- A: I will ask you a question in return. Is there anything that is not “now”?
- Q: Nothing! Because everything is just “now.”
- A: How do you know there is nothing that is not “now”?
- Q: ...?
- A: The reason is because there is self who knows there is nothing. While there is self, you are separated from the real “now.” Do you understand? This is what is called separation or relativity. Without self, there is no mind that uses thinking. All there is is “now.” Hence, in no way does “now” know “now.” It is already really “now,” so you don't need to know it over again. Therefore, to recognize “now” is simply an intellectual act to grasp that “now” that has passed. This is attachment, an illusion and a false image.
- Q: Is it the awareness that I have mistaken a false image of my own for a fact? Will I attain such an awareness only when I drop off my self and become one with “now”?
- A: You are right. You will have totally become one and have dropped off your self, so there will not even be awareness of it. Because there is only the fact. When you happen to be awakened by some stimulus, *conditions* from outside, you will be surprised to find that all false images have gone. Only when you wake up from a dream, do you realize it has been a dream.

When you are truly awakened to “now,” you will be aware of the transience of a dream and the futility of false images. Thus you will naturally acquire a great insight and confidence. Whatever you have attained in your dream is all a dream. When you are aware that it is a dream, everything is in your awareness and you can’t be confused.

There is only the real state of “now.” To truly know your real self means to become one with “now,” and even further to drop off “now.” The true state is no state. It is extremely difficult to attain. Without hard work, it will be a dream of a dream.

Q: Allow me to be stubborn, but does the true “now” mean the world that has no thought, no concept, no mind or feeling? A world before the self comes into being?

A: Exactly. Truth as it is is the state of “now.”

Q: I wonder why we don’t realize it despite the fact that we are in the middle of “now.” Quite strange.

A: It is a great pity that is the reality. The reason is that “now” is everywhere. It is too close to us to be aware that we don’t have to look for it using thoughts. We have such a habit of introducing self who thinks “I understand it” or “I don’t understand it,” whether to approve of it or not, and so on. This is the “separation,” ego and selfishness. Without “separation,” there is no ego or any selfish view. No false image.

It is because everything is evident as it is in every moment of “now,” manifesting the *dharma*. In short, don’t look for “now” and be “just” without any thoughts. That is already the *dharma* and the truth. If you drop off your self, you will recognize it naturally.

38. Totally confused

Q: So in a nutshell, a golden rule for emancipation is to be entirely one with “now”?

A: Yes, it is. But you are really stubborn!

Q: I am stubborn when I get serious. Isn’t it the case that I only have to be whole-hearted?

A: Yes.

Q: By the way, people often get absorbed in games, horse racing or mahjong. Can it be said they are one with such things, and can they be said to be Buddhist practices?

A: That’s totally out of the question! One plays them just for the purpose of enjoying them, and is absorbed in winning or losing. There is no aim

of overcoming his self or of attaining truth. Players are just lost indulging themselves in the satisfaction of feelings and desires. They don't even notice it, as they are completely drawn in it and absorbed in such transient dreams.

Q: So they are totally confused!

A: Exactly! First and foremost, you have to see that these are fundamentally different things. Being one with something in a dream is all sheer confusion. Such a path surely leads to hell. You shouldn't be drawn in anything except the "way" and the *dharma*; otherwise you will only get much harm and not a single benefit.

39. Evils and tempting traps overwhelm you

Q: Why do human beings get so intent on matters of interest and joy?

A: It is a very interesting question. When you are attacked by your enemy, your life is at risk. You have no choice but to run away. There is no room for hope or desire.

On the other hand, you are curious about matters of interest or joy. People always want to gain things without anxiety or difficulty. So they are easily trapped. Their minds are always standing by, and when some *condition* arises, they get absorbed in it right away.

Q: I see. That's a clear logic and I am fully convinced.

A: This is why you must constantly cultivate mind to seek and attain truth. You can sit up all night for something you are interested in. But you don't want to continue doing hard and painful things. Out of your desire not to do such things, all kinds of possible excuses keep coming up and help you not to continue with it.

A man originally has the instinct to handle crises to sustain himself. But at the same time he also possesses both a demand for relief and a desire for pleasure. This is why he is so easily trapped into evil and can't escape from temptation. However much you indulge in pleasure and pastime, you will never be released from separation and the trap. On the contrary, your yearning for amusement will be firmly established with the habit of playing. It is such a nuisance.

Bad habits are easy to develop, but good habits are hard to cultivate. You should be very careful. You are argumentative. Be careful not to be trapped with logic.

Q: I have guessed so. I well understand that there is a big difference in the setup of mind just as between heaven and hell. It is a matter of so-called aspiration, and of purpose.

A: So there is a saying: “Without the right aspiration to attain enlightenment, all practice is in vain.” After all, what matters is the aspiration that hits the mark, especially in the practice of zazen. Zazen is the most intimate and closest to the “way” and the *dharma*. Nothing is superior to it. The opposite is to pursue desires and emotional satisfaction, overwhelmed by worldly desires. Aspiration for the “way” and the *dharma* requires right aspirations that flatly avoid those desires.

40. Shikan-taza is the only way to enlightenment

Q: Why is the practice of zazen most precious?

A: That is a good question. The reason is because zazen is the shortest way to total concentration. When you wholeheartedly concentrate and “separation” drops off, you have realized the Buddhahood all at once! Is there any other way as wonderful as this? Absolutely not.

Master Nyojo, a master of Dogen, said: “Shikan-taza is the only way to enlightenment.” The central guidance of the Buddha was in the earnest practice of *dhyāna*, that is zen meditation, as that is the way through which one can attain *nirvana*—just as the Buddha did. So you will see that the most sacred way is to Shikan-taza, to do zazen and become one with it.

Q: I have nothing to say anymore. I understand why the Buddha and all the patriarchs practiced zazen at the risk of their lives. However, I am still not determined to practice zazen right away. Why is that? Even though I am aware that is the only way.

A: Life passes quickly. You are easily absorbed in worldly pleasures, because they satisfy your desires and bring you into secular desires all the more. The human mind gets trapped and absorbed so easily. The right aspirations that keep you away from such distractions is a must. If it is something pleasant and enjoyable, you don’t mind spending money, travelling far in nasty weather. However valuable and precious it is, you don’t feel like doing it if it is hard and painful. Living creatures have a peculiar inclination to avoid danger and suffering, and to seek safety and comfort. We live in a historical time when we can satisfy those demands as much as we want. The aspiration for self-realization has been overtaken by freedom and rights, and people have lost the desire to make further improvements, but instead have become lazy.

Q: I see. I understand that very well. The wonder and joyfulness of

human beings are deeply rooted in both the instinct to survive and the advancement of civilization. They are closely connected with an instinctive element in our body and mind.

A: That's right. It is the so-called *karma*. As long as mind is bound by *karma*, one is sure to become self-centered. And the mind of opposing self against the other functions to raise ego and selfishness.

Q: I see. Therefore, the practice of dropping off body and mind of the past is essential by becoming one with “now” and “just”? Shikan-taza is the way to it. Am I right?

A: Very well! While you stay in the environment in which you are inclined to use intellect and operate conceptually, it is very difficult to get out of it. Zazen, on the other hand, does not require using any perceptions or feelings. Therefore, it is far easier to get perfectly concentrated.

Q: I understand well that Shikan-action is to become one with the action whole-heartedly and that Shikan-taza is to just do zazen and do nothing else, not to use body or mind.

A: Very good! Well said.

Q: Once I use concepts and bodily movements, it is difficult to concentrate on one thing, and I lose focus. Shikan-taza is far better, and the rest depends upon how serious I am. Is this correct?

A: That's correct. If you do zazen single-mindedly and determinedly, you can attain results much faster. The faster you turn a centrifugal separator at high speed, the sooner foreign substances can be removed. If impure items are removed from something, it naturally becomes pure and genuine.

Zazen is zazen. It is pure in itself. You only need to become one with zazen. But as zazen and the self are separate, you will find it difficult to do Shikan-taza at first. Therefore, you should keep your right aspiration high, and do zazen seriously. Shikan-zazen. Practice hard until you attain a pure zazen with all your body and mind.

41. Enlightenment is to distinguish “now” from the past

Q: I see that to concentrate and wholeheartedly just do zazen is good. But if all information of the past drops off, and so do words, thoughts, concepts and image, how can we function as a human being? What will become of knowledge and the spiritual culture?

A: This is a repetitive and unnecessary question. Memory or information of the past, experience, knowledge and culture—these are neither lost

nor weakened. The moment you eat a pickled plum, its taste will surely live in memory for the rest of your life.

Q: This happens to everybody without being conscious of it. But why is that?

A: What you have acquired through experience is, as it were, the logic and principle of the thing. It will be more convenient to use it. Our mental functions are originally so made as to draw on information whenever necessary, and use it as a way to make judgements.

Q: Do we have such functions originally within us?

A: That's right. So it is not a matter of whether you have been enlightened or not.

Q: I see. I understand it is sheer nonsense to worry that zazen should reduce human functions. Instead I imagine that those functions will become simpler and clearer with zazen. Is that right?

A: You are right. In addition, if mental functions lead you to a conclusion, you don't have to think any more. That is, because all information, words and concepts become unnecessary, and you can drop them and stay clear. This is quite realistic, and the function of mind is originally so free.

However, this is not the case if "separation" prevents you from distinguishing the "past" from "now." Other options continue to bother you even after you have reached a conclusion, and you can't maintain concentration. If you can't do something well, you will keep regretting that you didn't take the other option.

Q: Exactly! I can't be totally confident, and is it because there is the self who looks back and feels regret?

A: Yes, it is. Anyway, you have to distinguish the true self from the confused self. This is to distinguish "now" from the past. When you are totally one with "now," you will clearly see that the past does not exist.

Q: Truth is "now." We can't do anything with the past, but we still cling to it. Unless we truly acquire "now," there will remain a self that clings to the past. Then we instantly lose focus and become anxious. As a result, we can't gain confidence. Is this correct?

A: That's correct. And that is why the practice of zen is great and necessary. The only way to reach a solution is to distinguish "now" from the past. It means to remove the "separation" and to get back to the oneness of body and mind.

42. Zazen transforms the structure of mind

- Q: Mind which has no attachment will not get caught by its own logic. So one will always be able to get along with others easily. There can be no collision. Is this the way an awakened person can't be in conflict with others?
- A: Exactly!
- Q: If so, it is not a matter of whether the functions of intelligence decrease or not. Rather, there must be a major change in the structure of mind itself.
- A: That is for sure. The oneness of body and mind is for the world both inside and outside of you. As no one stands against you, you will directly face "now." It is a structure that won't have any problems.
- Q: What sort of state is the structure of mind when body and mind are one? I guess there can be no structure in the mind of "just."
- A: You are asking again what words can't explain. Words can't describe "just." The sense organs of eye, ear, nose, tongue and body function immediately in relation to their corresponding objects—sight, sound, smell, taste and touch. However, as long as body and mind are separate, the intellect will instantly see them as objects and fall into the trap of logic. That is the state where the stimulus of the outside world and information about the past are directly combined. But the mind of "just" will take those objects just as they are. And that's it.
- Q: What does it mean?
- A: A structure of mind with attachment will instantly react to whatever one sees or hears.
- Q: Does it mean that mind that is caught is constantly unstable due to the stimulus of seeing, hearing, perceiving and conceiving?
- A: Yes, that's right.
- Q: Is that the reason one can't see the true and real "now"? Is it because of this mental structure that one can't have confidence or peace of mind? I believe it is the state of being disintegrated viewed from the point of the oneness of body and mind. Is this "separation"?
- A: That is exactly right! Unless you manage to get out of such a state, you will not understand why this "now" of yours is so uncertain, unclear and unstable. First of all, you should deeply observe yourself. You will find "separation" and lack of focus here and there within you. You are disintegrated.
- Q: I see. I want to know more about the directly combined status that you mentioned earlier.
- A: The moment you see something with your eyes, you immediately react to the stimulus from your eyes.
- Q: Of course! I think it is a natural function and I don't see any problem

in that.

A: If there is no self who reacts, you will see it just as it is. The same is true with beauty or a flower, or anything else. If there is no separation and your body and mind are one, the thing is as it is. No problem can arise.

Q: That is true.

A: If you understand both, you have only to practice it thoroughly, so that you grasp things as they are, see things as they are, hear them as they are, and be yourself as you are. "Just" do it without using any thought, without regarding the object.

43. A beauty is not a beauty

Q: I want to ask you again from the beginning. When one sees a thing with one's eyes, if the thing is as it is, a flower is a flower, and a willow is just a willow, right?

A: That's right.

Q: If so, a beauty is a beauty, and a woman who is not beautiful is not beautiful. But, when I see her as she is, it is meaningless to say she is beautiful or not beautiful. What does this mean?

A: It is a very good question. Frankly speaking, however, your question is already caught by eyes. As long as you don't understand it first of all, you will never succeed in your practice.

Q: What? A beauty is a beauty, a flower is a flower, as it is. I see it naturally with my eyes. How am I caught?

A: Then I ask you. Do your eyes say or think that she is beautiful or not, or it is a flower, or a willow; it is red or green?

Q: They can't!

A: Why do you know that they can't?

Q: Because eyes originally don't have will, intelligence, or feeling. They are "just" reflecting the color and shape of the outside world.

A: Then how can one recognize that a woman is beautiful or not; it is a flower or a willow?

Q: Because the moment I see something, I naturally know it at once. So I acknowledge a flower as a flower, a beauty as a beauty. Isn't this natural?

A: That is the point. If eyes do not have any intelligence, words, theories or sense of values, how can they recognize a flower or a woman?

Q: Ah! I understand! Immediately when I see, I acknowledge that it is something. This means the information gained through seeing,

hearing, perceiving is connected with intelligence or conceiving and other functions of the mind. So I make a judgment unconsciously. This is the mechanism that leads to being caught.

A: That's right.

Q: Is this what you mean by the state of being directly connected?

A: Exactly. This is a very important point, because it is a point of connection between confusion and truth, or its junction.

Q: So, this is it! There is no way I can understand the crucial points of your teachings, as long as I don't get this point. Eyes and all the other sense functions have no perception or intelligence. There is only the fact of "now." All there is is a natural sensation and the stimulus of perception. A flower is not an idea of a flower, and a beautiful woman is not a beautiful woman! Aha ha ha..

A: You are right? It looks as if you have dropped off something and are feeling clearheaded, doesn't it?

44. It is "just" as it is

Q: Indeed, you are right. This "now" does not require any intellectual activity. So giving it any value is all illusion! The moment I got this point, I feel like my vision is clearer. At last I have realized the state in which there is no self! I have come to understand the famous words of the Chinese zen masters like this: "A cypress tree in the yard," "Three pounds of flax," "Neither wind nor the flag," "The wind moves, the flag moves." They are not difficult. It is "just" as it is!

A: That's exactly right. Without separation, everything is as it is. There is no need for reasoning.

Q: That I understand even more clearly. I have long believed that there is truth somewhere to find, and I could not find this fundamental truth. I have believed that the truth can be understood by conceptualization and perception and I have thought it is the truth. But they have nothing to do with the truth.

A: You are quite right. Don't you feel a bit easier?

Q: Far more than a little. I feel as if the scales have dropped from my eyes. You have been saying that the truth is beyond words, and has nothing to do with consciousness or intelligence, and that this is the real world of fact. But I could not understand that earlier. Now I am beginning to understand that a fact is indeed "now," here, this, and the absoluteness in itself. I have been just caught by my own thoughts. This habit of mind is the separation, self and ego, isn't it?

A: That's quite right.

Q: A recognition that it is a flower, a willow, a beauty, money, or loss and gain instantly happens within ourselves, because things and recognition are directly connected. So, when mind rises to recognize something, it is already caught by it.

A: Yes. You are right. If there is no "I," there is no other. Everything exists according to *conditions*, matter is separated into the sea, a tree, human beings, flowers, a willow, an eye, an ear, a nose, and so on. But its origin is one.

Heaven and earth are one, all things are one, myself and the other are one. Since this is the real nature, when I drop off self and return to the real nature, I will not be caught by the name or looks of things. If I don't use reasoning, there is the real nature.

45. We are originally pure

Q: The moment an idea arises and an intellectual phenomenon begins to work, the live and real "now" has been changed into an imaginary world of information, hasn't it?

A: You are right. I have been saying this all along. A matter is originally just as it is. "Now" is as it is. There is nothing to gain or to discard.

Q: I have begun to understand at last that this is the "separation," the habit of mind and the cause of confusion. And I feel much at ease.

A: We are originally pure without any confusion or attachment. Only because you introduce your self, you begin to get confused. Do you understand?

Q: Yes. I see that.

A: Therefore when you truly see, there is no idea or concept, or even an object. Obviously, there is no beauty or no non-beauty.

Q: I understand that and I feel the world is brighter than before.

A: It is proof that you have become free from ideas.

46. Dislocation of mind and its structure

Q: When mind is directly connected with the past, stimulus and the world of ideas are united, and we can't help reacting to things and becoming confused. This is why we are always captured by eyes and ears and cannot see the reality of "now."

A: Exactly!

- Q: Because there is no boundary between the past and “now,” we can’t distinguish the world of illusion from the real world of “now.” Accordingly, information moves both ways and in multiple directions, stimulating each other and instantly our feelings get complicated. This is how we get into confusion and conflict. Am I correct?
- A: That's right. It looks like you have finally reached an understanding of this.
- Q: And this is why self reacts instantly to the stimulus of senses, isn't it?
- A: Yes.
- Q: If so, as soon as I am conscious and aware of something, I am caught up in past information.
- A: It is just as you say.
- Q: Then, as words and ideas begin to work on their own and capture my mind, I get confused and troubled.
- A: That's right.
- Q: This means that intelligence automatically reacts and begin to analyze perceived information, and thus forms reasoning. When I get caught, self and ego begin to work.
- A: You are right.
- Q: If the habit to react automatically is the “separation,” is it a kind of structural defect of mind?
- A: Yes. Your understanding seems to have deepened. Let me add a few words. A necessary reaction to “now” takes place according to the “way” and the *dharma*. It happens without self and “just” according to *conditions*. As it is natural and not using intention, it is beyond good or evil. It is consciousness without intention or self.
- Q: Consciousness without intention or self?
- A: Mind itself is a natural function which appears abruptly according to *conditions*. It is, therefore, no-intention and no-self. When we call it a worldly thought or desire, we reflect on it by recognizing its function, so we spoil the natural function of mind. If we leave it as it is, it is not a worldly thought or desire. Most people don't get this point. Whatever mind arises “now,” it is the natural mind. So you can’t say it is right or wrong.
- Q: Oh, dear! It is surprising that mind functions so. The self that critiques it at once forms a “separation” and instantly produces internal conflict?
- A: You are making good sense! That's what it is. Therefore, it is best not to use your mind, leave it as it is whatever comes up and stay in “now.” Then whatever it is will disappear instantly leaving no trace. Mind is so made originally to work freely.

- Q: I see! That is why I have only to be “just” and “now.” I should not recognize thoughts that come up, and leave them as they are.
- A: That's right. When you react to a stimulus from outside, you are already caught. Its root lies in the separation of mind, which gives rise to self and the other.
- Q: I see. The root of all problems is unfailingly “separation,” isn't it?
- A: Yes. On the other hand, when you attain oneness of body and mind that has no separation, you and the outside environment are one. You see it just as it is, you hear it as it is. There is nothing before you see it, there is nothing after you see it. It is complete as it is. When you get rid of “separation,” you can get this point clearly.
- Q: This means that eyes and ears are complete as they are and what I see or hear is complete as it is. This is the real “now,” isn't it?
- A: Yes. That's right.
- Q: Therefore, eyes, ears, nose, tongue, body and mind will perceive color and shape, sound, odor, taste, tangible objects and objects of mind, as the work of the great nature. They have no relation to our recognition and consciousness. And these functions are originally no-action and natural, aren't they?
- A: Exactly!
- Q: It follows that such intellectual functions which turn them into words, theories and information are only illusions of the real “now.” Does it mean that the real fact of “now” is fundamentally different from such intellectual functions?
- A: That's right.
- Q: That's what I thought! I understand this clearly now. Anyway, mind is quite a mysterious spiritual entity, isn't it? I have long believed that the purpose of mind is to use concepts based on the intellect. Now I feel funny about myself to have such an idea. I have come to know the real “way” and the *dharma*, and I can clearly see what has been wrong with me. I am very grateful for it. So the main point is “now,” isn't it?
- A: That's right. You can't take hold of “now” because it is the absolute world without before and after. It is also the absolute time because it is beyond the reach of recognition.
- Q: I see.
- A: The absolute time is “now” without the separation of the past and the future. So there is “now” and yet there is not. Besides, “now” is eternal. That is, “now” has no time, and the real “now” does not even have “now.” In order to attain such “now” truly, you must be thoroughly one with “now” and completely forget “now.” Then you can truly attain “now.” To become one with “now” and forget self is the same as to

become one with zazen. This is the true practice of zazen.

- Q: Then, space within absolute time is also absolute space, isn't it?
- A: Right. Because it is the absolute space, there is "now" and yet there is not; there is not "now" and yet there is. It perpetuates and is always "now." That is, "now" is unmeasurable and limitless in terms of time and space. The moment you have attained this great truth of "now," you attain eternal life. It is the liberation from life and death. To be aware of this point is called Kensho, and enlightenment. You may regard it as the essence of zen and the life of the Buddha's teachings.
- Q: I wish to review one thing I noticed earlier. It is about a kind of a basic and fundamental dislocation of mind. I understand that when information comes in and the intellect analyzes it, the fact itself has already passed. It has turned into conceptual information like cake in a picture which nobody can bake or eat. Yet we believe it is the truth. This is a fundamental mistake and confusion. So I would like you to explain in more detail about this structure of mind and about the basic and fundamental dislocation.
- A: But, however far we may go on, the world of words is not the fact.
- Q: I understand.
- A: The cause of the dislocation, as I have been telling you repeatedly, is the "separation" of body and mind. The "separation" expands as your vocabulary increases and your thinking ability strengthens. In general, it is called the growth of intelligence. You can formulate concepts at your will. As concepts grow more detailed and expansive, the world of ideas becomes the main part of your mind. This means an imaginary and virtual phenomenon has become an ordinary state of mind for you, separated from the fact of "now," and the dislocation of body and mind has become decisive. This is how it becomes structural. We call it a habit of mind.
- Q: I see. It is a tremendous story. Then, is the Buddhist practice to correct this unconscious habit?
- A: That's right. Common sense says that the development of intelligence is good. However, when you believe that the world of ideas made by your intelligence is you yourself, such a habit is difficult to manage. Holding on to your ideas and perceptions is ego. It is attachment. This habit of mind fails to notice this, and that is why it is dangerous. If you release mind, it can become intellect and wisdom. But when you hold on to it, it becomes ego and selfishness. So horrifying is the "separation." You really need to be aware of this.
- Q: Yes! Ideas and thoughts that I automatically formulate will turn into habits of mind, because I hold on to them, right?

A: That's right.

47. Impermanence is the heart of the Buddha

Q: The essence of dislocation is whether one is caught by ideas and thoughts or whether one abandons or holds on to them. In other words, whether the self who is caught and holds on exists or not?

A: That's right. You don't know the real world. So you use intellect and various thoughts, and deepen the world of ideas through the workings of mind. That is how one gets caught in his own trap. After all, everything will be solved, if you know the real facts and the true "now."

The true "now" is a matter itself, the fact itself. It is the world of the moment. When you attain this point, you attain Kuu, the moment when everything has been solved. Do my words confuse you?

Q: Oh, how splendid it is! "Now" is originally impermanent. It appears, disappears, and constantly changes. This is the real world. In other words, nothing is fixed or stable, which is the only true absolute. That is why there is life and death, spring, summer, autumn and winter, right?

A: That's right. If there was no truth of impermanence, or Mujo, there wouldn't be the universe or any life.

Master Dogen says: "Life and death is the heart of the Buddha." In other words, Mujo is the heart of the Buddha and the heart of the universe. Whether one knows about it or not, all relations and existence are based on impermanence, without exception. All functions due to Mujo. Impermanence is no-self. It has no attachment or any thought. To attain this point by being one with facts is the crux of zen.

Q: I see. I understand it well. If "separation" is gone by being one with an object, nothing is stable or fixed. And the fact of "now" and "this" becomes clear. Is this what we originally are?

48. The absolute world

A: That's right. I am glad that you understand better. A baby grows up, studying makes you better, and treatment helps you recover from illness. These are completely natural, and are simply the universal truth of *cause* and *effect*. Everybody knows it and I don't need to

bother telling it to you. However, the point is whether you know it truly or not. If you know it truly, you must be firmly convinced that everything is impermanent, which means that everything is a function of *cause-and-effect*, is born and dies and is transformed constantly, that nothing is confused. Needless to say, you must clearly see that nothing exists that is called self, anxiety or conflict, and that “the three poisons” of greed, anger and stupidity are Kuu.

Q: Is that so? I see. Knowing this truly can only be attained by experience, and it is extremely difficult.

A: You must further see clearly that the free functioning of being born or dying is “the heart of the universe and the heart of the Buddha.” That way, you can feel greatly relieved. To live as it is, to die as it is. Life or death is no longer a matter to worry about. You will truly realize that “now” is it. It is like a great awareness in the scale of the universe.

Master Tozan said: “Practice it hard and secretly even if you look like a fool. Just keep practicing whole-heartedly is the most precious of all.” When you follow the practice of the great masters firmly, you may look foolish at first sight because it is so far away from ordinary daily life. But to keep practicing that way actually is of supreme importance. He means that such a person of no-self and no-doing is most precious.

Q: I see. I am very impressed at the state of mind of a person who has truly attained the Buddha *dharma*. I am gradually coming to understand its lofty truth.

A: The world is originally clear without imagination or illusion. You need to clearly see the principle that *causes* and *conditions* produce everything. You will be satisfied with a lively, genuine world of “now.” Without “separation,” everyone can attain such a state.

Q: Indeed, it is exactly as you say! Everyone is always “here and now.” As all is “now,” the problem is whether to really attain “now” or not.

49 “Now” is an absolute unity

A: Yes, that is essentially correct. When you attain Kensho, you are aware that your thought has dropped off, and even when the instinct to survive or other subconscious mind appears, you will not be captured by it. Or rather, the thought will disappear instantly. You know clearly that it is gone. That is, a matter substantially exists, but it doesn’t; and it doesn’t, but does exist. So it is called Kuu.

Enlightenment is so important because you will then clearly see the truth: that mind does not exist originally; that it just appears

temporarily according to *causes* and *conditions*; that mind is elusive. When you attain this *dharma*, you will no longer be confused and you will enjoy peace of mind. This is the Buddha-nature, Buddha-*dharma*, and the Buddha-Way. The question is whether you attain it or not.

Q: I see. It is a marvelous way and a wonderful world. And if so, everybody will surely hope to attain it and live such a stately life without any anxiety and confusion. People would naturally think so. Something constantly worries us, so we cannot be satisfied and peaceful, and we are somehow unstable.

A: It must certainly be so. Originally, body and mind, “now” and yourself, the other and yourself, the environment and mankind were not separated. Without separation, and having body and mind as one, no problem arises. But the instant you claim yourself, all things come into being as separate entities. Then you begin to worry.

Q: I am sorry for being repetitive, but I don't understand this very well; it is too profound.

A: Well, that is completely understandable. To put it simply, when you know it, it will appear.

Q: Eh! What do you mean?

A: For example, a baby has all sense organs. However, she does not have an idea of being or non-being. There is nothing, as it were. There is not even “nothing.” It is because nothing appears if the sense organs don't function. For the baby, there is no self, or other person.

However, when she develops her consciousness, all other sense organs begin to function, and everything begins to emerge. As she develops intelligence, she recognizes the other, and herself. This means that the moment the baby begins to use her will and thoughts, “now” and herself, the other and herself, the environment and mankind begin to emerge and exist.

Simply put, the world we usually see emerges in this way. We capture such a moment and give it a name, but the thing itself has nothing to do with its name. The things are just a result of *conditions*. This is the truth of the universe. In other words, this is the *dharma* of everything that emerges according to *causes* and *conditions*. As long as there is no self or ego, there will be no separation between body and mind, “now” and yourself, the other and yourself, mankind and the environment; even though they are different entities, therefore, they are one. Everything is as it is as sense organs sense.

Q: Does it mean everything is derived from the original one?

A: Yes. You only need to know this truly. We practice zen for that purpose.

Q: The self who causes contradictions certainly exists. It is also certain

that this self induces feelings of anxiety and uneasiness. Moreover, there is certainly the self who is aware of this fact. So, words are strongly connected with the problem of the self which causes contradictions. We get confused because we don't understand the meaning of words and logic that the other and myself, mankind and the environment are one.

Their relations of being one unity is "just" the world of *conditions* where there is no ego or self. Therefore, there is no intention and no action. Is this correct? I know I am repeating the same question.

A: You are correct. When you really reach this point, the source of problems is solved and the root of suffering also disappears. This is the moment when you know your true self and true mind. The source of sufferings is being caught by separating another person from yourself, mind from body, the nature or the environment. So, if the source of problems is gone, you will feel clear and free.

When you don't adhere to a name or an appearance, you won't be caught by an idea or a concept. On the contrary, the more you draw on your intellect or science, the deeper your confusion will be. Uneasiness is a state of your feeling that arises when "now" is obscure due to separation.

Q: In a nutshell, when I use my intellect and think about a matter, I get confused by words, the fact of "now" becomes unclear, and contradictions within myself arise. This is the cause of confusion and conflict. This is ego, isn't it? Because the root of ego and selfishness is "separation," we should become one with zazen, become one with breathing, and be one with "now," and in this way, we attain the awakening of the oneness of body and mind. This is the practice of the Way of the Buddha, isn't it?

A: Correct.

50. Using your intention

A: In the first place, the problem lies in your self who uses your intention, such as to try to know or understand. There is also the self who is aware that "I don't understand." Everything happens because there is the self who tries to know. The only way to solve this is to drop off your self by thoroughly concentrating on one thing. If there is no self who tries to know, there is no separation between you and the other. You and the other are one, Jita-fuji. A mankind and the environment "just" exist "now" as they are according to *conditions*. It is their state before

you argue whether they exist or not. As “now” is “just” “now,” that is the truth and the *dharma*.

Q: To sum up, as long as we don't use arguments and judgments, everything is there just as it is. It is before thinking that I recognize it or don't recognize it, that it exists or doesn't exist. So no contradiction can arise. And things exist according *conditions*, they are temporary without substance, but it is a real state of “now,” isn't it?

A: Well said. You are explaining better than I am.

Q: Please don't praise me in a funny way. It sounds as if you mean that I talk very well, but I don't understand in fact. Ha-ha-ha!

A: You are right, Ha-ha-ha! There is a saying that goes: “When mind stops seeking, it will be peaceful.” Mind has a bad habit of seeking something. Without such a habit, mind will be one with things, it will not be separated or wandering, and peace of mind will be attained.

The next one goes: “If one realizes there is nothing to seek, he is a noble man.” A noble man is a respectable person who has no confusion. You should be just “now” a noble man. “Now” is mind. Now is self. Now it the other, the Buddha, and the universe. An ordinary mind is the way (Heijoshin Kore Do). You just need to be one with it.

Q: When I am concentrating on one thing, there is no self who recognizes. This is the meaning of “When mind stops seeking, it will be peaceful,” isn't it? So, I should only do zazen whole-heartedly, breathe whole-heartedly, walk whole-heartedly, and eat whole-heartedly. Just solely focus on one thing without using thoughts, then I can be one with it, can't I?

A: Yes. You are right. You should “just” do it “now” without thought, according to *conditions*. When you are whole-heartedly eating, there is no self. When you really hear, your whole body is your ear and you don't say your ears are hearing. As the whole body is the sound, self is the sound. Self cannot be separated from it. This is the real state of nature and the *dharma*. Because there is no way of separating them, you have only to be as you are, according to *conditions*. This is called oneness. To practice being oneness is called Nyoho, “according to the *dharma*.” That is, to “just” do.

Q: The point is to do a thing “now” without thinking anything. That is Nyoho. To do it without self, isn't it?

A: Exactly! When you see a mountain or a river, you cannot separate it from yourself, saying that my world is up to here and beyond it is the mountain or river. When you meet a person and talk to him, the person is in your eyes and his voice in your ears. Neither eyes nor ears can separate the world and say that that side is my world and this

side is mine. He is in your eyes and in your ears, but he cannot be separated from you. You and him are one. You should know this real state by experiencing the fact that there is nothing else to know except for this, directly and instantly.

Q: I see. Though it sounds unscientific that self and the other are one, and a mankind and the environment are one, I can clearly see that it is true, if I can be aware of the truth directly and instantly before using logic. Then I can attain the *dharma* of every existence according to *causes* and *conditions*, can't I?

A: Yes, you can.

Q: When I drop off my self which uses intention to recognize, will I transcend both knowing it and not knowing? Does this mean to use no intention and to be "just"?

A: That's right. You understand it very well. So you should notice first that no existence is a logical existence. Words, meanings and concepts are all explanations and information given after the fact. Even if you have gained them, they are simply functions of mind after they are gone. It is ridiculous to be confused by arguing whether they exist or not, whether they are right or wrong.

When you are clear about the world before using intelligence, you are freed from the slavery of words and can see the truth of the *dharma*. Then you can practice real "now" without any doubt or confusion.

Q: I would like to attain it sooner.

A: Most of us have developed the habit of putting up the other, and it has become the structure our minds. Such a separation of body and mind is extremely troublesome.

Q: I am in the middle of such trouble, and I really want to get out of it as soon as possible. I tend to recognize every matter and use logic unconsciously to understand it. I am often caught by the words of others, and spend sleepless nights when past matters bother me. I know it is foolish and ridiculous, but I cannot help it. I wish I could be free from such myself as soon as possible. I am beginning to understand the profound way and I feel I can resolve many problems that have bothered me before. But the self that is anxious firmly stays here, and I wish to do away with it.

Thanks to your help, I feel very calm at present, but...

A: That is quite understandable. Confusion and conflict are very painful. To remove this habit is not an easy task. You really must practice zazen whole-heartedly, and become one with each breath.

The true *dharma* is not something you can understand by principles or imagination. You must stop being caught as soon as possible. The real

dharma is simply in everyday life and just “now.” It is just in getting up and lying down, drinking and eating. It is “now,” and “now.” You do this simple but precious “now” earnestly and sincerely. Such efforts will help you remove the “separation.” There is only “now.” So you shouldn’t miss “now” and “just” do everything without thinking of anything else.

51. The three elements of the mind’s function

Q: I am deeply thankful that I feel like I can understand the *dharma* much better and I am even more interested in it. As an issue outside zazen, how does our mind function? For example, when I can’t control oneself, what is the state of my mind?

A: I understand your problem. In fact, to argue about the function of mind is a secondary issue. But it is a rather interesting issue, so I will take it up for a while.

The function of mind can be classified broadly into three elements. The first is intelligence which is the greatest characteristic of mankind. The other two are emotion and will. Making a good or bad action is the function of mind, but intelligence does not have any sense of ethics, moral, or responsibility. It doesn’t have trust, or respect either. It can make judgement and recognition, but intelligence has nothing to do with morality or conscience. That is why intelligence of an ill-minded person is abused for the wrong purposes. He tries to come up with a means or device to satisfy his desires even to the point of murder. The so-called intelligence is a kind of a mechanical function; it is a mere computer.

It is emotion that makes mind humane. Emotion is a function generally called feelings. We owe such human feelings as trust, respect, compassion and love to this feeling. A man becomes human because of such feelings. However, emotion is troublesome because it has another face.

Q: I bet I can guess, but what is it?

A: You must be aware of it even vaguely as an issue in yourself. When you fall in love, or when you get angry, bitter or regretful, or sense of being lost about an unexpected matter, these feelings are combined with instincts and your humanity deteriorates. Then you become brutal, disorderly like an animal, and the narrow-minded separation violently disturbs you and causes suffering.

Q: I understand it very well.

A: However excellent one's intelligence is, once a feeling bursts out, intelligence, will or reason can never cope with its energy and speed. And as a result, a man becomes unable to control himself due to confusion and conflict.

This is because the feeling is linked directly with a physical body. This makes vitality a source of emotional energy, and produces tremendous power. The feeling may sometimes bring about such dangerous actions as suicide bombing, murder, or torture. While the function of feeling can cause a beautiful, superhuman devotion, it may also produce the most dangerous, brutal conduct as well.

Q: I understand it very well. I begin to visualize how unconsciously I act as an animal creature. I knew of it, but didn't know which part of my mind functions that way.

A: Anyway, everything is a function of your self, including hateful or horrifying parts. We should be aware of this and work to keep our selves as wholesome as possible and make the most of our selves.

Will is the function of making necessary adjustment. Once you have set up an aim or promise, you try to control and utilize the energy of emotion so as to do your best until you produce the intended results.

Needless to say, these three elements, intelligence, emotion and will, are mind and yourself. It is certainly a moment of "now" that they are set in motion and function. Mind appears at the moment of "now" according to *conditions*, and instantly disappears, leaving nothing behind. This is the real state of mind. Even if you seek mind, you can never find it. If you only are "just" "now," you will find this truly. Then you will no longer be swayed by those three elements.

Q: How are the three elements related to each other?

A: Each function is independent, and they occasionally cooperate or antagonize each other. When you think you must study but you are not in the mood or is captivated by some pastime, it is very difficult to follow intelligence.

When you feel tiresome, troublesome, or disinterested, you easily surrender to the idle mind because intelligence doesn't have any energy. You may worry about not being able to practice, and you are stressed. I am sure you have had such an experience.

Q: Indeed, so that is the mechanism!

A: Isn't it interesting? Will forces you into it, controls other aspects of mind and makes it follow the better judgment of intelligence to achieve its purposes.

You will often get into trouble when the emotion to resist is strong against your better judgment. Your mind does not follow your will,

gives up its ideals and aims, and begins to go against the “way” and the *dharma*. The wider the separation between the intelligence and feelings is, the more you will suffer because your mind will swing back and forth between them. This leads to confusion and conflict.

Q: I see. I understand that very well.

A: If such a state continues, you will lose your own confidence completely and begin to suffer from great uneasiness, because you can't tell which is your true self. You may feel uneasy even going out of the house, and end up lying in the bed covering up yourself. Thus you may eventually lose human contact and sociability, and the pc will be your only friend. Even if you still have a will, it will no longer be of any help. This is how a man becomes weak.

Q: Thank you. I have come to understand many aspects of mind. Is that all there is about the relationships among the three elements?

A: Actually, this brings us to the core of the problem. It would be much easier if I explained it by drawing. But, ideally, intelligence, emotion and will are unified. The bigger the division is, the greater the uncertainty and instability. Then, the three elements confront, stimulate and repel each other.

Even if you know this logically, when you can no longer withstand it and your will can't control it, your emotions go into overdrive. This is the state of mind when a person has lost all patience and commits a tragic crime. To avoid it, you need to listen to Buddha's teachings well and practice well regularly, keeping your mind clear and calm when dealing with various matters.

Q: I understand you very well. Indeed, it is true. So what is a calm state of mind with regard to the three elements?

A: Drawing three circles, when the central part of each of the three elements is within the area of unity, your mind is in an ideal state, calm and self-composed. The larger the overlapping space of the three circles of intelligence, emotion and will, the more stable your mind. If the three elements are sufficiently unified, each element functions harmoniously. When intelligence tells you that you must study, you instantly feel motivated and you can study pleasantly. This is the most desirable state of mind for a human being. As there is no internal contradiction and conflict, your mind is always harmonious and peaceful. You can say this is the state of oneness of body and mind, and a stable mental structure.

Q: I see. Your explanation is so plain and easy to understand that I can see my own mental state. Then, what is the state of mind of a person of noble character, in terms of the three elements?

A: A noble person does good and does no wrong. She is not two-faced or a double-dealer. She is obedient to morality and does not act in any unnatural way personally or socially. And she is always rational.

For instance, a person of noble character surely cooperates when he should without hesitation, and acts firmly with confidence. To sum up, he has a mind which functions naturally, holistically and at a higher order. This is a person of noble character. He can act honestly according to good judgment. This cannot be done unless the unified area of the three elements are significantly large. Namely, the essential characteristic of a person of noble character is not especially the best judgment, but is a lack of no internal contradiction, where one's intention and action are always in harmony.

Moreover, a man of noble character leads a plain and clear life, and does things smoothly. This is happiness; this is important. As I have said, a person with a large overlap of the three elements of mind is a man of noble character. He is a man of oneness of body and mind. This is the essential element for humanity.

Q: I see. I understand. Then, what is the opposite of such a character?

A: If the overlap of the three elements is small and their division is large, a man will gradually become more unsettled and insecure. At the same time, his feelings of anxiety and discontent will increase. Then without noticing it, the three poisons of greed, anger and stupidity, and various other cravings will negatively stimulate him. His humanity and character will decline. Finally, his feelings will move beyond the reach of his intelligence and will begin to run wild. A person commits a serious crime such murder, because he has lost the unity of the intelligence, emotion and will to such an extent that his self-control becomes totally malfunctional. However, no function has a fixed substance. To attain Kensho is to realize the fact that such a function does not have before or after. You come to realize that everything has been fully enlightened, and you feel truly relieved. When one attains the unity of the three elements, he instantly becomes rational. Therefore, you should not judge a person's character easily. The aspiration for enlightenment or a desire to improve oneself may arise at any time to anybody. Anybody can be relieved by having the right aspirations.

52. The three elements of a superior person

Q: I am deeply impressed. I feel a bit more confident of myself as a

human being thanks to your *dharma* talk.

A: Hmmm, I am glad to hear that. That is because your mind has become pure, which in turn means you have dropped off much of your secular mind. As you can see by this teaching, what you need to do to make your mind pure is to unify the three elements. Then the secular mind filled with making a profit, or ego and selfishness will weaken, and you can feel more and more at ease.

Anyone can make his reason function fully, if he stays truly calm and composed. You should see how important right aspirations are for us as mankind.

Q: I think it is quite true. I have realized for the first time that it is so plain and simple when you explain our mental structure and character by means of the three elements.

Now I wish you to explain another matter. It is that there are three kinds of Buddhist practitioners with superior, common and inferior capacity according to their *conditions* with the *dharma*, their aspirations for enlightenment and their opportunities. Would you teach me about it as plainly as possible, putting aside an issue of human rights? I want to know to which group I belong.

A: Of course we cannot classify human beings into superior, common or inferior. But in terms of the character of a practitioner, a person of inferior capacity might be said to forget his aims and to suffer mental separation easily, fail to control his mind, and be susceptible to various stimuli and temptations. As a result, he ends up seeking the worldly desires of greed, anger and stupidity. Such a person is said to have an inferior capacity because he doesn't have a strong enough aspiration for enlightenment to prevent separation of the three elements.

When they are separated to an extreme, his emotions explode and begin to function unreasonably before he recognizes his situation accurately, and he begins to act violently or use dirty words. If this happens repeatedly, the person will surely be treated as a mental patient with a functional disorder.

Q: On the other hand, a person of superior capacity will pursue his aims even when he is enraged by converting that energy into aspirations for enlightenment. He has the power to practice upwardly by turning the negative emotions, such as anger and regret, into positive ones. Isn't he called a person of superior capacity?

A: You are only partially correct, but fundamentally wrong.

Q: Why? What is wrong in what way?

A: A person of superior character is also called a superior person. He

never gets angry in the first place. That is the quality and dignity of a superior person.

Q: What is that quality like?

A: Everyone knows this quality. A superior person who doesn't get angry even when getting angry is natural can accomplish anything.

To take some examples:

Bodhidharma, the great patriarch, sat in zazen for nine years facing a wall. He was targeted by assassins several times and was repeatedly given poison. At the sixth attempt he felt his *conditions* had depleted and drank the poison calmly and died.

Eno, the six patriarch in China, abandoned his mother, aspiring to follow the Buddhist Way. He ground rice for eight months in Master Konin's monastery.

Master Nangaku polished the roof tiles behind monks sitting in zazen."

Master Tenryu broke the finger of a monk.

Master Nansen cut off the head of a cat.

Master Joshu walked out and put his sandals on his head.

Master Obaku hit Master Rinzai three times.

Master Rinzai made a zen shout "Katsu!"

Master Tokusan hit his disciples by a rod.

Master Dogen traveled to China in search of the true *dharma*. He wrote 95 chapters of Shobogenzo, "The treasury of the eye of the true *dharma*."

There are endless cases of superior persons. Not getting angry and aspiring for enlightenment is certainly a part of the requirement to be a superior person, but it is far from sufficient.

53. Keep "Four Universal Vows" in mind

Q: I see. Does that mean the three elements of a superior person are perfectly united?

A: That's right. The most ideal state of a mankind is when those three elements are in the shape of a complete round ball. If they only overlap perfectly with each other, they will get separated when faced with larger *conditions*. Even if one has attained Kuu, he will still be caught by Kuu if he carries that Kuu. The ball should be perfectly round, and the three elements are melted in integration. There is not even Kuu in the real Kuu. In the state of "oneness with *conditions*," Kuu meets Kuu, and self and the other are one as they are. As there is

no boundary between them, there is no motivation to cause self-contradiction. There is no opponent to get angry at, and there is no self who gets angry. Even if a man gets angry, the fury vanishes instantly like a snowflake fallen on a red-hot stove.

No attachment, no self. This is enlightenment and emancipation. Such a mind is most sacred, and such a man is called a Buddha.

Q: I understand the fundamental and structural difference between enlightenment and confusion. I have also realized that there is no other way but to truly attain it myself in order to acquire the truth. When one has reached such a liberated state of mind, how does the mind function?

A: It cannot be expressed in a word. Because everybody is different and has his own natural inborn talent. One thing I can say is that a person who has dropped “separation” does not have a vicious mind. He thinks of the *dharma* first, and has mind to pray for the peace and welfare of all people.

In zen, we have a chanting “Four Universal Vows.” This is mind who really pursues the “way.” You should always keep the vows in mind and become a man who respects the “way.”

Q: I see. I really want to become such a man. Then what is mind of “Four Universal Vows”?

A: It goes as follows:

Living beings are innumerable, I vow to liberate them all.

My confusions are inexhaustible; I vow to extinguish them all.

Dharma Teachings are immeasurable; I vow to master them all.

The Buddha's Way is unsurpassable; I vow to attain it.

These are very important phrases that you must know. You establish vows that you wish to remove ego and selfish views from everyone to make them feel peaceful. For that, you must remove your own “separation” between body and mind first and then solve the root causes of your confusions and worldly desires. At the same time, though there are limitless confusions, there are equally a large number of Buddhist teachings to remove them. So, we must practice seriously. Nothing is more valuable than to resolve your self truly. That is the Buddhist Way, and therefore, we should accomplish the *dharma*. This is the meaning of the vows.

Q: I believe these are the basics for those who aspire to practice zen. They must be the fundamental convictions of a devoted practitioner.

A: It's just as you say.

Q: Can you show me some concrete examples?

A: All right. Let's suppose there are a hundred people and they have only one loaf of bread among them. In such a case, they can share it, or give it to the youngest to save his life, or give it to the feeblest one.

Truly awakened people can respond to the matter in whatever way is best, and that will not cause any problem. They can do so because they have the *dharma* but no self. Each of them practices hard to achieve the ideal.

The vast energy formerly spent on worldly desires and confusions is transformed to function as vows of the Bodhisattva, the moment when one has attained oneness of body and mind. This is the meaning of “confusions are enlightenment as they are.” When you are caught by some matter, confusion arises. When “separation” drops off, *bodhi*, an enlightenment takes place. They are substantially the same. That is why we say “sentient beings are the Buddha.”

54. Absolute requirements for enlightenment

Q: I have understood that the original state of a thing is the world of the Buddha, that that is the world nearest to me and farthest from me at the same time. I also understand the truth that “now” as it is is the original state. I have realized that people are already in their original state and that the Buddha nature “just” functions perfectly according to *conditions*. This is the state of saving all living beings, isn't it?

But when I take the position of being conscious of the other, self arises, and this becomes “separation” and I will get caught. Am I right?

A: You are right. That is, all *conditions* are the truth. For us human beings, this means that the functions of the six sense organs—eyes, ears, nose, tongue, body and mind are the real nature and truth as they are. The point is to realize that just being as we are is the “way” and the *dharma*. A person who has been awakened to this supreme “way” is called an awakened one, and the state of being aware of this fact is called enlightenment.

Q: What are the absolute requirements for attaining it?

A: The first is to arouse Bodai-shin, the right aspiration for enlightenment. The second is to seek a good master and learn well the correct methods of good practice. The third is to actually practice hard devoting oneself to every moment. This is the royal road to the practice of zazen.

Q: I understand well. When I am told to do zazen whole-heartedly, I must “just” do zazen it without thinking anything. When instructed to

concentrate on breathing, I should “just” breathe out and in devotedly, without thinking of time or of myself. If I continue to practice whole-heartedly, the three elements of intelligence, emotion and will become one of their own accord, and the habit of diversion will be removed. That is, as the “separation” drops off bit by bit, body and mind become one and the *dharma* comes into me by itself. Is this how it is?

A: That's right. Your logic is correct, but what matters is what happens next: when you have attained a crucial awareness, you must have it verified whether it is the right *dharma* or not. This is the so-called inspection and certification. Only when it is certified to be right can you take over the whole substance from your master. This is how the truly transmitted Buddha-*dharma* has been passed on for nearly two thousand and six hundred years. Therefore, what is important as prepositions are: whether it is the right *dharma* or not; whether he is a right master or not. They will decide whether your practice is a right one or not. They are most important.

Q: Whether one has dropped off the self which is caught or not depends on whether he is in the state of true “just,” doesn't it? This is the point his master needs to verify.

55. To die while being alive

A: That's right. If you meet such a master, you have only to believe him completely and practice as you are told just according to his guidance. If you believe him thoroughly, your thoughts and beliefs will drop off and only the *dharma* will remain. Many people regrettably misunderstand this point. To give up one's self, one should believe the *dharma* completely.

A monk once asked the great Master Rinzai: “Why can't I attain the Way?” Rinzai answered: “Because your belief is not strong enough.” And he added, “You can't be pure because you have thoughts of your own somewhere inside.” You can practice purely only if you trust the *dharma* without following any other person and his words.

A person who has truly attained the truth knows about confusions, how to solve them, and what steps to take to solve them. That is why he can give guidance.

Master Dogen said:

The Buddha stated that if you are to meet a master who preaches the supreme *dharma*, never be concerned about his social class or

family name, never judge by his appearance, never find his faults or judge his conducts. Just respect Hannya, the supreme wisdom, worship it day and night every day, and never to let a confusion arise in your mind.

Master Dogen means we should follow the master who has truly attained “now” and believe only the *dharma*.

Q: When I have removed the barriers of intelligence and thought, I should listen to the *dharma* of my master deeply so I can realize that I am originally free from confusions. I should not argue about habits or behaviors of the master. Rather, I should be grateful for meeting such the *dharma*, always respect it and worship it many times a day. I should not have an insolent or mean mind. I should believe only the *dharma* thoroughly without judging the master.

A: Very well said. Believe the *dharma* thoroughly and let no mind of evil *karma* and sufferings of the past arise. For that you must abandon everything from your past. The past can't exist now. But in reality, past experiences and information appear in the form of ideas or notions through your memories. They are all habits and “separation,” illusions and evil thoughts.

If you become one with the real “now” without before and after, you can no longer carry the ghosts of the past. For that reason, you must kill this body and mind once and for all. This needs the sword of the *dharma*, that is, to believe the *dharma* thoroughly. This is called “the most powerful sword of the *dharma*.” It cuts and kills everyone and everything, and lets you concentrate on one thing. This is to forget oneself completely.

To be thoroughly “now” is to die while being alive. To have no self is to have no thoughts. You are sure to understand that this is not easy to do.

Q: That is why I need to have *bodhi*-mind and fulfill it whole-heartedly. If the *bodhi*-mind is strong enough, the whole mind is filled with “now.” As there is no other matter, I can concentrate with all my energy and be one with the truth.

A: You are right. I have said, to be one with “now” is to die while being alive. It is to totally empty body and mind. No-self is to become a person of pure “now” after you have died once and have been restored to life.

Q: To thoroughly concentrate is to kill the past, kill the captivated self, kill the “separation,” and to transcend time and space, isn't it?

A: That's right. This is the emancipation, the aim of zazen and the supreme ideal.

56. To settle the diffusion of the mind

Q: I am beginning to see the splendid and ideal world of zazen. I have also understood that I must stake my life and make serious efforts. Since it is myself who does zazen, I should be able to practice anytime anywhere, as long as I know the right way of zazen. You have explained a concrete and accurate method. If I may, would you tell me once again a method by which anybody can reach the goal in the shortest possible distance?

A: You are incredibly persistent. I have told you about it again and again. Though anybody is likely to be persistent, when he is earnest. Ha-ha! I myself was, and my master also appeared to be. That is good for the sake of the *dharma*.

Q: I am still really a beginner. Strangely enough, I don't have the feeling that I have understood the point. I don't think being a beginner or not matters to attain "now," but I would be grateful if you could teach me as a beginner.

A: You have much changed. Your arrogance and rudeness have entirely disappeared. I believe you are, in fact, a gentle man.

Q: Eh! Have I been so arrogant and rude? I beg your pardon!

A: Ha-ha! That is the point I like about you. You are so outspoken and don't care. Whatever you do, "just" do it simply without being concerned about the other. Concentrate on it "now" and "now," forgetting yourself completely. When you do zazen, devote yourself to it intently without thinking. Do it in a quiet place, give up yourself entirely and remain empty without using body or mind.

Don't bother too much about the posture. Even a chair will do. The important point is the following: when the "separation" is strong and mind is unstable, it is always restless. What should you do then?

There are two ways to deal with that. One is to completely ignore the whole mind that moves viciously, and "just" do zazen single-mindedly. This is the royal way of zazen which is called *Shikan-taza*, just to sit in zazen. But it is quite difficult to practice it unless you have gotten to a certain point. Clinging to it not being able to do it well is a waste of time. So, the other method is to focus on something whole-heartedly. In our training hall at *Shorinkutsu*, trainees concentrate on each breath with the whole body and mind. You become one with just breathing in and just breathing out. You don't have to think it is too difficult. When you become one with it, the diffusion of mind calms

down and “separation” is removed. Thus, body and mind naturally become united. It is essential to focus on one thing whole-heartedly at any rate.

Still the other way is Koan-Zen⁶. There are Kosoku-Koan and Genjo-Koan. The key of both zen practices is to concentrate “now” on one thing. “Just” walk and “just” eat. This Genjo-Koan is the foundation of zen practitioners.

Q: I know that I should concentrate on “now” to calm down a diffused mind. I have also understood at least by logic how to drop off worldly thoughts and confusions thanks to your repeated teaching. To become one with it, and to do it whole-heartedly.

However, it is extremely difficult to get away from thoughts that keep appearing endlessly. I can’t even think of such a state before a thought arises. What should I do to get over this difficult problem?

A: Everyone goes through the same process in the early stages of practice. You don’t have to get discouraged. But to practice blindly is not good. You need to clarify “now” to make your practice easy.

“Now” is Genjo-Koan itself and manifests itself clearly and concretely. Get hold of one such “now” in a concrete way. Breathing is ideal for the purpose. You can breathe only “now” and it never stops for a moment. Therefore, it is easy to be conscious of and get hold of. Thoroughly be one breath. Never lose the “now” of one breath. Carefully, quietly, solely and minutely.

Q: In short, “just” breathe out and just breathe in. Concentrate on it whole-heartedly.

A: Exactly. The point is to keep doing this simple thing simply and repeatedly again and again, from morning till night, for a week, a year or even ten years. Totally devote yourself to it, and concentrate on breathing. If you keep on being one with it, you can calm down the diffused mind and the path will be opened.

Q: How can one be enlightened just by devoting oneself to such a simple thing?

A: Why are you asking this again?

Q: Because I want to believe it completely and to concentrate on breathing whole-heartedly.

A: You understand the logic so well, but still you can’t believe it. That is one aspect of mind. That is the reason you can’t believe it.

Q: I know there is a reason and I want to know what it is.

A: It is because there is self who calculates. Most people who rely on

⁶ A way of zen practice by working on a zen question.

intellect are likely to have it. To be frank, because you tend to introduce self that questions, judges, and argues, your belief is interfered with and your practicing mind is discouraged. Intelligence functions faster than belief and it strongly clings to you making you think of logic. You are in a state of mind that cannot understand simply and respond simply. That is the mental structure of an argumenter. If you hold on to such self, you won't ever be able to solve your diffused mind. Whatever thought may arise, ignore it and focus whole-heartedly on "just" breathing out and "just" breathing in. This is called Shikan-breathing. Don't try to understand it but just resolve to practice it.

57. Use no logic but practice it

Q: I see. I think there is no other way. My mind is very quiet at present, and I feel unusually fulfilled. But something is still clinging to my mind and is causing hesitation. What should I do?

A: You should just believe and do just as you are told. If you practice it faithfully without using logic, diffusion will calm down by itself, and your mind will be quiet and transparent of its own accord. If you doubt it, you never be liberated. You are far from zazen, bound by yourself. It would be far better to leave here and pull the weeds in the garden instead of continuing to argue. If you are not serious, it's a waste of time.

Q: I have no longer any doubt about this *dharma* because I have known it is a great world. But it is only that I cannot become one with zazen. On the contrary, when I practice zazen, more thoughts and confusions come up. And I don't know what to do.

A: It is a difficult and sad moment when you cannot find a clue. The only way to get out of it is to practice. Bring up your courage and practice "now," sparing no time. To do a simple matter is to do one thing. "Just" practice zazen whole-heartedly, or "just" breathe in and breathe out. In the body that does zazen, mind becomes stable, and breathing gets intimate with breathing. You will be able to sit zazen and breathe with your body and mind as one. That is if you keep practicing hard. However, if you are carrying "just," it is not true "just." You can't get results because you relax your concentration and get distracted along the way. It is because you haven't practiced enough.

Q: I have no excuses. I have only to continue simple breathing earnestly. Then, will I be able to breathe naturally as it should be one day?

A: I have told you so many times. When you are aware of mind without attachment, a mind without mind, you can distinguish breathing from thought. You will see it clearly because it is about yourself. That is the moment you are in the state before thoughts arise. From that moment on, you will feel your body and mind much lighter. At the same time, you will be confident of your practice and feel at ease. However, thoughts will continue to come up. As soon as you lose your focus, you will be easily captured by confusions. So be mindful.

Habits of mind are unconscious acts of mind. You should keep practicing until whole work of the habits are destroyed. That is the practice of the Buddha Way.

Q: Yes, I see.

A: The purpose of zazen is to solve the habits of formless mind. It is precisely to remove the “separation” of body and mind. From a practical point of view, it is to stay in the state before thought and notions arise. It is the state before your mind begins to work. To acquire this one point, you must be aware of the moment thoughts arise and the moment they disappear.

“Now” after “now,” the moment after the moment, one breath after one breath, keep concentration without introducing thought. Everybody can do this. This is how you deepen Shikan.

Q: Yes. I have been listening to your sermon simply without using any thought. Is this how to “just” listen? I have been listening without any feeling. The same words I have listened to many times are different now. I feel relaxed, and suddenly feel my mind lighter. I thank you very much.

58. A clear and sharpened mind

A: Well, well, that is very good. I see you have become a little frank and simple. Your way of talking has also become real and genuine. Anyway, if you keep practicing hard and don't neglect your efforts, you will experience that zazen does zazen and breathing breathes. This is the real state of “as it is.”

You will feel greatly satisfied by realizing that any confusions and worldly thoughts will instantly vanish if you leave them unattended. That is for sure because you can slash and get rid of such confusions and worldly desires that have kept you annoyed all the time.

Sitting in zazen that formerly brought you pain will suddenly become enjoyable. You will feel more confident. Master Dogen says: “The true

dharma emerges of itself, and drowsiness and confusion drop off.” Do you understand it?

Q: Yes. I understand it very well. I am very grateful.

A: Before long, your consciousness of time will gradually fade away, two or three hours pass away as if in an instant and a day will go by. Confusions and other worldly desires will no longer bother you, and you can stay entirely natural. You will be able to simply accept the famous saying by Great Master Eno that goes “Living in no place, mind stays naturally.”⁷ You feel sincerely grateful for realizing that your practice has been a true one.

59. To practice seriously and diligently

Q: I would be most grateful if I could reach such a state soon.

A: It is not yet time for you to be grateful. If you really want to attain it, you must not take it too lightly. Do you see?

Q: Yes, I do!

A: Anyway, unless you practice seriously and diligently, you won't be able to attain the Way. Keep this in mind firmly first of all. Do you get it?

Q: Yes! I would appreciate your continued guidance.

A: In time you will no longer be conscious of doing zazen and drop off the self that is doing zazen. This means that the “separation” has gone, and the oneness of body and mind is taking root. But you must be cautious, as this is not yet enlightenment. It only means that your mind has become a little clearer. So, if you are off guard, you will go right back to the starting point. Because the habitual self is taking a nap within you. You need to keep on practicing.

And as every conscious act gradually disappears, you will be able to “just” do zazen and “just” breathe naturally. You don't need to do anything. Nothing to gain, nothing to lose, you will not need to practice zazen in particular. Interestingly, as you go deeper, you will surely realize this firmly.

An important point is to keep what is empty empty. Because practice without practicing is a true practice. Putting it simply, do nothing. Do simply “just” and “now.” Spend time in emptiness. This is true *dhyana*, true *Shikan*. One must work out this “just doing” through and through.

It is extremely difficult to arrive at this point. Do it devoutly and

⁷ Omushoju-Nishogoshin (応無所住而生其心).

persistently. Everyone can attain this “way” and the *dharma* with earnest practice. You can also do it if you practice earnestly.

Q: You remind me! There is only “now”! If I do it diligently “now,” I can certainly be one with “now,” can't I?

60. The most important thing in life

A: That's right. Don't look back or look forward, but do it whole-heartedly. “Now” is “now” from the beginning. If you “just” do everything, you will realize “now” in time. When you truly attain it and let yourself die, the “separation” drops off and you are united with the earth and the universe. This thorough attainment is very important. There is something you will realize when you drop your self and are awakened by outside *conditions*. This is the most important thing in life, to attain enlightenment by *conditions*, as I said earlier.

Q: Yes. This great awareness is the life of zen. Making a clear distinction depends on this awareness, doesn't it?

A: That is right. It is the moment when the oneness of body and mind has emerged as its original status. It is proof that both before and after have dropped off and the distinctions between fact and illusions have become clear. It is a decisive moment when you are freed from the influence of thoughts. For the first time at this stage you are awakened to the original, true world as it is. It is important to have a master examine it and ascertain the truth of your enlightenment. When a master certifies that it is true awakening, you will be a patriarch in this world. After that, you will devote yourself to keeping the true *dharma* and pass it on, guiding the next generation whole-heartedly, because you have realized the great importance of this great *dharma*.

It is a blood bondage with the Buddha and patriarchs not to let the *dharma* go extinct. It is for saving all living beings. To begin with, go and drop off yourself completely!

Q: Yes, I will! I will sit throughout in zazen.

A: Good! It looks like your aspiration for enlightenment has grown. Then let me tell you a little more. Once you have attained the Way and become a master in the future, you must, above all, protect those who are practicing for the Way. Keep away from those who are only interested in knowledge and theory. Because they obstruct true practitioners and deprive you of time and energy in vain. Otherwise, you won't be able to maintain the true aspiration, and you won't be

able to pass down the true Way to posterity. It is so difficult to pass on this Way.

Q: Yes! I can see that. If I become such a person, I will surely do as you say.

61. Zazen and its posture

Q: What is the best posture in zazen?

A: The aim of zazen is to become enlightened. So the essence lies in becoming one with matter and completely forgetting your self. Don't get it wrong. Posture is important, but it will not enlighten you, however with perfect posture you may be able to sit for a long time. The zazen posture is useful for making body and mind become one easily, and is a most energy-saving posture. That is why patriarchs have recommended it. However, you should not force yourself to stick to it.

Q: It means while it is important to learn to practice in the established zazen posture, I should not stick to it but instead find a less stressful posture so I can deepen my practice, doesn't it?

A: Yes. Therefore, it is rather better to move the body moderately so as to reduce or not to give stress. You may rearrange your legs or reset your posture. The point is to straighten your back naturally, keep your eyes half-open, and release unnecessary strength. In the early stage of practice, it is helpful to do Kinhin, walking meditation, in between your zazen practice. It is to "just" walk one step at a time, quietly without thinking anything. When a thought comes up, you should keep to each step so as not to be caught by the thought. This is called "Shikan walking." Kinhin is a very important Genjo-Koan.

Q: What should I do with my hands?

A: The traditional positioning of hands is called Hokkai-join, as you often see in a picture. But you don't have to be bound by it, feel free to hold your hands in a suitable way. In our daily lives, we are constantly moving, doing something. So, when you stay in one fixed posture of zazen and keep focusing your vision at one point, tension is produced between your body and mind. As a result, various abnormal feelings may arise, particularly with your eyes.

This often happens when your practice has progressed somewhat and your mind has calmed down. From olden times this is called Makyo, a demon's space where mystical experiences happen. But you should flatly ignore them because it is simply a phenomenon coming from the

imbalance of body and the autonomic nerves. Practice zazen so as not to fall victim to such unnatural feelings. That is why it is better to move the body moderately until you become fully used to zazen.

Q: Such abnormal perceptions are beyond my imagination.

62. Twist the waist

A: You will realize it when you practice zazen actually. Human beings as well as animals achieve their aims by processing information gained through seeing, hearing, perceiving and conceiving. What is different from plants is that our life is mainly based on action. Staying motionless for hours and for days is not normal until we get accustomed to it. Moderate movement is indispensable to keep a wholesome state of body and mind for a long time. Therefore, you should practice certain movements that are good for zazen.

In our training hall, we recommend twisting the upper body slowly to the right and then to the left. This relaxes the extra fatigue and tension, and while keeping a natural posture it helps maintain good circulation. It is a splendid method to cut off instantly those annoying confusions and worldly thoughts in the early stages of practice. Let's say this is the first merit of doing it.

Moreover, it is highly effective for doing away with drowsiness. If you don't do this twisting, in a few days your waist, shoulders, legs and neck will get stiff. Your energy to practice will rapidly deteriorate, confusions and worldly thoughts will overwhelm you, and you won't be able to do "now" and "just." You may even lose your will to practice zazen. Then, zazen becomes meaningless, just to bear pain, spending your time in vain. You will not make any progress, and remain far from attaining the oneness of body and mind. Remember to twist the waist well.

Q: I have long thought that I should not move at all during zazen. Twisting the waist is a reasonable and innovative method for removing the habit of being captured.

A: Exactly so. Of course, as you get used to zazen, you will realize that a traditional posture is fairly good. But be careful, a hard and painful posture is not appropriate at that time. When sitting with many others, you may have to follow a traditional posture, but when sitting alone, it is best to sit with the proper posture and twist the waist well.

Q: What is the best timing and frequency to twist the waist?

A: As a reminder, do it to the extent you feel comfortable. Slowly and

mindfully and as if falling down. Never be forceful.

Q: Just like breathing?

A: Yes, that's right. In addition, breathe rather deeply. Do it carefully and mindfully. Twisting itself is a practice in motion. Do it at any time and frequently when confusion arises strongly. It is desirable to do it in each breath, because it will contract the confusions sooner. Loosen the tension as if falling down, and try changing the angle. You will then feel much comfortable as the body softens. Because it is a comfortable twist, it never causes any problem with the body and mind. "Just" do it without reasoning. Separation will go as you continue to "just" do it whole-heartedly. Zazen in our training hall is a practice both in inaction and in motion at the same time. Efficiency in attainment may be due to this method. Do it seriously, practice without reasoning, and continue it timelessly.

63. The state of mind and the posture

Q: This is the first time I have heard of the importance of twisting the waist in zazen. I feel I can get rid of many thoughts, and am keener to practice. Is there anything else I should take care in terms of posture?

A: Posture is one of important elements of your character. When you are focused and serious, your nerves, intelligence and passion are all full of vigor from head to toe. As intelligence, emotion and will are firmly united, all energy can function without waste. You can be one with it "now" feeling sharp and refreshed. So, when you walk or just stand still, your posture is beautiful. Your "now" will be a pleasant and fulfilling one. Any posture is a posture, but a loose and sloppy one is a lazy one. As posture is the basis of a motion, it will represent yourself. Be careful.

An old saying goes: "A being that has eyes is afraid of another being that has eyes." A superior man has a deeper insight. A person who values himself takes good care of his every movement, every word and even his shadow, not to mention how a real practitioner should be.

Q: I see. Then how should I take care?

A: Many high school students nowadays tend to walk loosely and draggily. If you have hopes and dreams, and your mind is filled with passion, you will walk lively, naturally and smartly. Posture is the basis of controlling yourself. If your waist is loose, your beauty and sense of fashion are latent. So even if you put on wonderful clothes, you won't be becoming. An elegant posture goes with will, intelligence

and culture.

Q: I see. That is quite understandable.

A: When sitting in a Seiza posture, sitting upright with your legs folded under you, a moderate tension enables you to concentrate. It controls unnecessary thoughts and feelings, and you can be naturally calm. This is because the Seiza posture places the center of gravity at the waist and Tanden, the part of the body below the naval. Tension at the upper part of body will be relaxed and you will save energy. It is the most desirable posture to sit silently on a solemn occasion. You feel most at ease when you don't let your mind work.

Q: I see.

A: However, it may also cause an anesthetic function, and drowsiness can often creep in. So you need to be careful not to nod off on important occasions. In Japan, at a meeting which many distinguished persons attend, people have to keep sitting upright. Naturally, intellectual activities are restricted and controlled. Then the mental concentration will have the opposite effect. Brilliant ideas will not come up and people tend to become easy followers. Leaders should be careful.

Q: I see. Your theory is interesting.

A: Is that so? Lively discussions and investigations are necessary for an important topic. One's posture in such cases should enable the whole body to be activated. That will require an atmosphere where people can move their legs, waist and body naturally and freely. Moving one's body, scratching one's head, or frequently jiggling one's fingers is an evidence one's brain is working actively. Mental energy that sprouts spontaneously from there can sometimes cause one to be aggressive. But, by stimulating each other, one's ability or sense of culture can be raised, and building on it, sound development is made possible.

Relative to Europeans, Japanese people still try to keep face and honor authority. People of higher status seem to silently demand others to sit in a posture that shows respect. In effect, however, such strong ego will bind the leader and make him smaller and uncomfortable. He is too concerned about who is senior or superior. Don't become such a boss. Many bosses in Japan are of this type and they are quite awkward and disgraceful.

Q: I am curious about your teaching. A good posture promotes integration, controlling mental activity yet keeping it easy with moderate tension. This logic is interesting to me. The zazen posture takes this into account, and values achieving its aims. So a posture with less stress is better. And a posture with freedom and self-responsibility is best. Is that right?

A: Yes. As long as one behaves as a grown-up and gentleman, you should respect and trust him. Such bad habits of being bound by one's position or a meaningless posture should be abandoned. For some topics, a stand-up meeting could be most efficient. Because that way, the imagination and personality of individuals will stay natural and activated. It is important to respect the personal character of people you work with to create a conducive atmosphere suitable for the purpose and occasion. Posture controls mind and influences character.

64. To promote lively feelings

Q: A zen master has a character of his own and always keeps a stylish posture. So I thought you would emphasize an established and formal posture. Instead, what you explain is quite realistic and scientific. It is so persuasive that I am much impressed. It is very helpful. Speaking of posture, what else do you have to say about why young people today don't appear to be lively or to have the dreams and energy of youth?

A: Those coreless individuals who walk draggingly can only have a feeble character, morality, sense of responsibility and culture. I think it is because the conditions they grew up in that promote lively feelings have decreased greatly these days, including the natural environment which supports animal life. A sound body can possess a healthy function as an animal. That needs the natural environment. Children should play freely in the hills, fields, a river and the sea. In such environments, they can be absorbed in competition or other innocent play without being conscious of time. This is how they should grow up by developing their basic faculties as a living being.

A wild feeling and speed may sometimes make them rude and violent. But in time as their sound self-consciousness is established, their behavior will naturally be adjusted. Unfortunately, many of their parents don't have sound character and their lifestyle is miserable. They can't be a role model for their children. For instance, a mother pulls a car into a "No Parking" zone and comes out with her child. A wholesome human character can't develop in such a family.

A parent who knows what is right is sure to have teachings and principles that convey naturally. But nowadays, most people are so calculating and always counting money, they talk of evil nonsense. A sound soul of children can't be fostered in such circumstances. Parents are absolute for their children. If they have a solid creed of life, children will grow up naturally.

When such a parent is near her son, she would directly praise him and make him brighten up. If she lives away, she would cheer her son over the telephone. Mutual understanding will grow spontaneously. Sound youth are naturally full of lively feelings. Unsoundness is so common these days, and that is why so many horrible incidents happen one after another. Humans should foster humanity and right belief. Parents should be more responsible. Otherwise, the “way” and the *dharma* won’t be passed on.

If the Buddhist Way should decay, our minds will be confused, and both the country and our society will be devastated. What a pity it would be!

Q: Yes. There is no doubt about it. Would you talk a bit more about children?

A: Children react sharply to anything that is new and curious. They are moved, surprised and thrilled just by seeing new things. They are at times overwhelmed, excited and scream. They keep turning to matters of interest. They look for a dream tomorrow, forgetting the good or bad that has happened. They keep seeking for new excitement and deep emotion. This is how feelings and senses of wholesome children show themselves.

A child is full of interest and lively feelings, and this is his natural state. It should be so. Therefore, if a child is not lively every day, he cannot be wholesome. A natural child has an interest in something, concentrates on it, forgets about time, hunger, cold air, and even his parents. At such a time when a child forgets himself and everything, he is most lively and stable.

Q: It is a state of oneness of body and mind, isn't it?

A: Yes. It is an ideal state of mind in which intelligence, emotion and will are perfectly united. There are failures and regrets in it, but there is a sense of accomplishment and deep emotion from doing his best. There are lots of experiences and learning. As a child makes decisions for himself with his own intellect, feeling and will, he must accept the results by himself. If he is raised in a wholesome family, successes and failures will all be lessons of life. True sociability and self-reliance will be nurtured in such an environment.

Q: A place where children can freely play around as much as they want, which inspires them with faithfulness and morality. That is an appropriate environment for a child to grow.

A: That’s right. Once children leave their family, they compete with one another, put together their knowledge and play lively in nature everyday. This is an ideal way for them to grow with a healthy body

and mind.

When the physical functions grow and solidify, both body and mind become strong against stresses. This directly influences spontaneity, patience and endurance. The confidence that one can do what others can do is a reliable and precious mental power for his life.

Q: Do you mean that children today have grown up without it?

A: Yes, I do. They have not been reared in such an appropriate living environment, and they have not experienced the aspiration to challenges which arise from inside. Children cannot be confident because they are not prepared to challenge themselves, whether they win or lose, succeed or fail. They have no room for exciting dreams or ideals. They are always unstable and worried.

However, they do have minds and they can understand morality with reason and can use it against others. But sad to say, they do not have firm beliefs because they have no self-confidence. Therefore, they can't react even when they see weak ones are being bullied. Such underdeveloped minds explain why they behave as if they see no evil and pretend indifference. Having no courage and anxiety changes into fear in their daily lives. They do not get angry against evil because they lack faith and morality.

Q: There is a saying: "As the boy, so the man." I think it means how one is raised and how he has lived from his beliefs.

A: That's correct. Without a positive growth process, wholesome self-respect and will never develop. As a result, children will not learn to dream or have hope. So children are afraid of being behind fashion and they feel miserable. Naturally, they lack so much confidence that they must maintain pride by having brand-name products. There are more and more parents of such poor quality.

Q: Children today hardly enjoy nature. So much meaningless information flows into their brains that they can't select what is meaningful. This is truly pitiful.

A: That's very true. If children have parents and teachers with sound minds, are close to nature, and are raised with culture and civilization, their youth will naturally make them lively. In reality, they aren't.

Q: They certainly aren't. I understand that it is impossible to cultivate the inborn natural purity of children. I also understand that sound autonomy does not come about unless body and mind are sound and the various functions of a living being have sufficiently developed. I feel a mind without confidence is likely to be distorted.

A: You are right. A distorted mind cannot take independent action, but will criticize or ignore the opinions of others. Such people will be

selfish and lack common sense. Naturally, creativity and originality will not well up, and their minds will become weak, unable to hold a constructive dream. A firm core of mind as a human being has not been developed, so dreadful results may happen. It is already happening, and it can happen any time and any place. This is not solely the responsibility of such young people alone. But I hope they hold a firm core as a human being, because it is surely their own life. Everything happens according to *conditions*. I hope they have a strong mind to survive whatever happens in life with their own responsibility. If they develop a sound demand for self-realization with such a mind and keep working hard, they will always have lively feelings and contentment. That is the foundation of life.

Practicing zazen is not enough. We must educate and raise young people so they can do well at everything.

65. True education

Q: Chaos is making rapid progress today and changes in education are urgently needed around the world. What is the core of true education from the viewpoint of the Buddha's Way?

A: I like this kind of question very much. There are many ways of looking at a human being, but a human being is a creature that has one body and a mysterious mind. At the heart of it is mind. At the heart of mind is faith and sincerity. If there is no sincerity in a person, what should one believe in him to approve of one another?

Society is a community. It is formed by the national laws, contracts and rules. It must function with shared duties and responsibilities equally. So naturally, a man of good faith should respect the law. What is more, in most cases we have to make decisions individually and live with self-responsibility. Therefore, we must respect, trust and cooperate with each other. And it is absolutely necessary not to intrude into others in any case. If everyone lives faithfully and sincerely, society will surely be bright and cheerful both publicly and privately. This is the true education to develop people's healthy and sound minds.

Q: I agree with you. Time and place may be different, but I believe hearts and minds are the fundamental core of human beings and should not change. As you say, the central point of a society or a country must be good faith, sincerity and fairness. I am sorry to be persistent, but what are good faith or sincerity? Is there anything that is effective in

preventing a lack of good faith?

A: I knew you would ask this question. The answer is simple. It is a mind of “just” without any attachment. It is pure good faith with no impurities. It is absolutely certain sincerity because the whole of a person is the “way” and the *dharma*. So we cannot help trusting him. Today, not only do we not trust a person of good faith but we also criticize his small faults and let him down. When the world is so deeply confused, a saint or sage will be of no use, light cannot get through the darkness. Darkness gets deeper day by day, and the black clouds become thicker. Even the sunlight seems to be blocked. Very sad to say.

Q: I see. I feel fearful about the future. In such a time of difficulty, what countermeasures can we take, if any?

A: I am afraid there are no decisive measures with an immediate effect. As I said earlier, it is too late. First and foremost, we need a capable leader. But results will not follow unless what he says is accepted by everyone as the *dharma*. If people ignore the *dharma*, the way it should be, situations will not improve.

In our age, even if a person says the right thing, he is defied and his words are rejected. Justice is determined by the number more than being right; the views of a person with a big voice or more money will get through. So a wise man will hide himself in a quiet place.

Q: I am afraid you are right. Can't we do something about it? I feel blue about it. Aren't there any good ways to change the family environment that works at the grassroots?

66. Right education is fundamental

A: After all, what matters is mind. Mind always appears “now.” Things will be simple if we get mind right. From the viewpoint of the *cause* and *effect* of mind, as long as parents behave as parents, leading a sound and sincere life, the whole family will respect and trust each other. Their children will follow them. That itself is a great contribution to society. Such parents are great figures.

Q: I was worried for a moment, but the point is fundamentally simple. Everything begins from the family.

A: That is very true. I am grateful that such parents do exist. But the public pays no attention to them, so they can't be a model of society. The rest depends on how many people foster a wholesome family personally. If a person takes care of his posture, outfits, words and

actions, and develops dignity by respecting himself, he will never become dishonest or insincere. This alone will make society a clean, lively and safe place to live.

Right education is fundamental. If we wish the nation-wide improvement more easily, we could refer to the Imperial Rescript on Education we used to recite. A person with a biased view says that all the misfortunes of the past are due to the Imperial Rescript, but we should not be baffled by such a narrow view. Such a bias is attachment. As its text emphasizes, we need an environment in the family and for education that nurtures sincere minds. People will not grow if society does not bear dreams and hope. A person working sincerely should be rewarded. Society and the nation should support it. Enough adults are necessary who can guide others along these lines so that people will develop continuously and a sound society will be sustained.

67. Liveliness of a zen monk

Q: I see. I well understand that mind can only be reared by mind.

A: As we say, education is the foundation of a hundred-year national plan. Such is the importance of education, it remains as the foremost important issue for human beings. I will discuss education in detail on another occasion, so it suffices to mention its importance here.

Q: All right, then I will change my question. Those who practice the Buddha's Way always have an admirable posture and confidence in themselves. They will have a fresh countenance and serene eyes. I have learned that mind and one's posture are united at their core. What makes the Buddhist practitioner so full of liveliness?

A: Those who truly practice the Way can foster both modesty and sincerity by the *bodhi*-mind. It directly forms their confidence. It is a force that naturally keeps them away from everything that is against the Way. Observing the Way is observing sincerity. Practicing the Way rightly, one will naturally acquire confidence.

This is reflected in one's posture. If a person drops off self and lives for the Way, his posture represents a lively person himself, his belief and dignity. By being true to "now," everyone is lively. This is how a zen monk lives, and to overstate it a bit, it is his liveliness. There is nothing more to say about it.

Q: A person with a resolute attitude doesn't talk much, but his meaning is deep. Just being beside such a person with high voltage, one's

consciousness, ways of talking and posture become finely polished. I understand that posture embodies one's character and character forms his posture.

A: That's right. What a person appears to be is who he is. That is everything about him. So if you observe a person as he is, you can understand everything about him. You shouldn't forget that someone else is also watching you. This is why a being that has eyes is afraid of another being that has eyes. So a person of a character knows shame and fear, because he respects morality and humanity in his way of life. But that does not mean he is enlightened.

68. Conditions for enlightenment

Q: What type of a person is most likely to attain enlightenment?

A: A person who values the *dharma* most and has no self; who can critically reflect on himself and make confession; whose mind is not confused; who respects the three jewels of the Buddha, the *Dharma* and the *Sangha* and keeps a pure mind; a person who is sincere, honest and earnest in everything he does; who takes good care of others and of objects, is not wasteful; who doesn't use his mind to worry about external matters; who works doing simple things honestly; who isn't bothered by food, clothing and shelter, or by living or dying. Such a person is the Way itself and is sure to attain enlightenment.

69. Conditions to fail to attain enlightenment

Q: Who can never attain enlightenment?

A: A person who doesn't have right aspiration for enlightenment; who values himself and lives for his ego and selfish views; who is good at criticizing others and disregards honesty; who is absent-minded and lost in meaningless joys; who doesn't have intelligence to distinguish truth from false; who practices with ego and selfish views; who indulges himself indifferently in pleasures, knowing the suffering of others; who acts dishonestly or maliciously; who ignores the principle of cause and effect; who doesn't reflect on himself or make confession; who is not thankful and does not repay favors. Such a person does not have the truth and is farthest away from the Buddhahood, and cannot accept the *dharma*. Therefore, he will never attain liberation in his

life.

70. Poverty is the Way

Q: Making efforts is obviously essential, but what about one's character?

A: One should not be overly concerned about worldly matters; should be honest, earnest and whole-hearted; should spare no efforts for the sake of a future long ahead; should be bold and sensitive. These are useful for sustaining effort and make one resistant to temptation, and are advantageous for pursuing the Way. Being indifferent but capricious, one is liable to be confused. That is why having Bodai-shin, a strong aspiration for enlightenment, is of foremost importance. But even if one has Bodai-shin, *conditions* that interfere the Way are always there. Therefore, you should learn and hold the determination to give up everything just like the Buddha. One patriarch said: "Poverty is the Way." Do practice for the Way but not for yourself.

71. When you study, just study

Q: Allow me to ask you one more time. What is zen after all?

A: How many times you need to ask the same question! Ha, Ha, Ha. Just keep your focus on it. That is, oneness of body and mind, having no separation. Focus on "now" and nothing else. That is zen. This is the meaning of no self. When doing zazen, do just zazen. When you work, just work. When you walk, just walk. When you die, just die and don't worry about anything else. Stay in "now" and use no thought. You are totally focused on one thing so there is only "now" and here. When you study, just study. Be one with it. Zen is the status you are already one with it. "Just" be according to *conditions*.

72. "Above heaven and below heaven, I alone am the Honored One"

Q: If there is only "now" and I am one with it, there is nothing else. Is it what the Buddha meant by "Above heaven and below heaven, I alone am the honored one"?

A: That's right. It is obvious because all existence is only one.

Q: Truly and solely focusing on one thing, that's why that one thing is most precious. Including a fragment of a brick? It is not only about

Lord Buddha, isn't it?

A: That's right. Anything that exists is pure, transcending confusion or enlightenment, being ordinary or sacred, right and wrong. Therefore, this is called the *dharma*. It is the most beautiful world because it is beyond beauty or ugliness. We ourselves are the same as well. We are unified with the universe because there is no separation between us. A great zen master said: "Heaven and earth have the same roots as mine; All existences come from the same essences."

There is no need of argument as the world is originally one. As we are all perfect and peaceful, we don't need to seek it particularly. After all, if we are whole-heartedly focusing on now, we will be peaceful and merciful at once. This is our true original state. The patriarchs have passed on this great *dharma* to us through *zazen*. Everything will be settled if you attain one mind and are awakened to "just." Because people do not know this, they are captured by ego and selfish views, and kill each other inflicted by the evil *karma*.

Q: So, you mean "zen" offers the most appropriate means of justice in the present reality?

A: That's right. Simply if we do away with judging whether it is appropriate or not, right or wrong, everything is matter itself, hence most appropriate as it is. This is the true, natural state and the reality. The practice of zen is to work to attain it. It is the shortest and best way to realize world peace. That is our dearest wish.

Q: No "separation," there is no argument. No ego, everything is perfectly peaceful. This is the meaning of "Above heaven and below heaven, I alone am the Honored One," isn't it?

A: Exactly. It's so plain that you must be disappointed. There isn't really such a special reason or principle that has to be conveyed by "Above heaven and below heaven, I alone am the Honored One." When "separation," attachment and ego drop off and you achieve the true "now" and the true "just," you will become aware that everything has no taint, confusion or attachment. Then you will realize the dignity of the entire universe.

Looking from the viewpoint of the original mind, "Above heaven and below heaven, I alone am the Honored One," can be applied to everything. The point is whether you really know it or not.

73. True enlightenment

Q: Can I be an honored one if I drop off "separation"? I feel greatly moved

- to hear your wonderful teachings. In order to renew my original aspiration, please explain what true enlightenment is.
- A: Again! You are really stubborn. True enlightenment is to attain the “way” and the *dharma*.
- Q: Just as I thought. That is the so-called original state?
- A: Yes.
- Q: That is why it is said that “An ordinary mind is the Way,” and “Every day is a good day.”
- A: You are right.
- Q: Ultimately, it to realize that “as it is” is already sufficient by fully becoming one with the fact of “now”. One can naturally realize this very fact, if one becomes just one with “now,” can't one?
- A: Yes. Everyone can.
- Q: Then, what is true happiness?
- A: It is the state where there is no self-contradiction. That is, no “separation,” you are always peaceful and free from attachment. With no thought, you become one with anything. Questions are already solved, so there is no discontent, complaint or anxiety. There are no others, hence no comparison. There is nothing to be envious or jealous about. You are whole-heartedly focusing on what you should be doing. So you are always fulfilled and satisfied. What else could be happier?
- Q: Nothing else! That is exactly the “way” and the *dharma*.
- A: True. Did you think that happiness is somewhere else?
- Q: Of course not. If one is truly settled, everything is sufficient by itself, isn't it?
- A: Exactly. What really exists is only “now.” If you are not settled and content “now,” when do you get happiness?
- Q: That is, the highest happiness is to attain the mind which is not caught by any external *conditions* such as money or materials, isn't it?
- A: Exactly. But if I add one thing, it is much simpler. “Just” be as “now.” It is completed in “now.” You may feel there is no room for development or freedom, but that is utterly wrong. Only a person who has attained it enjoys this state of dignity and privilege. To transcend gaining or losing is to drop off self and acquire everything. It is a state of being free, complete, and having nothing. This is a true relief. The satisfaction from fulfilling your desires is much to be pitied. You are constantly in want of something and never satisfied. When you lose something, you suffer and get confused. Such a person, when facing his final moments in life, will only have sorrow and fear.
- Q: I agree. The world of money and material things is filled with greedy desires and vanity. Ordinary peace of mind is the supreme happiness.

There is no other way to it than to be awakened by the truth, to drop off “separation,” and to attain a state without self-contradiction.

74. True faith

A: Very true, very true.

Q: Then, what is true faith?

A: It is to believe in the “way” and the *dharma* and practice day after day in search of them. If you do so without being idle, you will attain the true “way” and the *dharma*. Thus a free state of mind will open where there is nothing to worry about and no self-contradiction arises. Master Dogen said: “Attainment will come of itself, and one will use it at his will.” That is the true teaching of the Buddha and the “way.” That is why the Buddha and patriarchs are to be respected. The truth is so pure and real. You cannot help believing and respecting it.

Q: Human beings have fought and waged wars in the name of God and religious belief. Even today battles and slaughter are common. Is it because the teachings of God are wrong, or human beings who believe in God are wrong?

A: I trust everybody has genuine faith. But if God and a human are separated, self-contradiction arises. It is because we have given God a notion of the absolute status of unparalleled existence. Human beings are inevitably subordinate to the absolute. As long as there exists the absolute one in the world of concepts within our mind, we must obey. Even more, we are helpless because we have egos with “three poisons.” Once a person drops off “separation,” he can instantly return to oneness. He is always a matter itself, so there is no way he can be separated. This is the Buddha, the “way,” God, and the truth. As he no longer has attachment, he becomes one with God. This is the true world of the “way” and the *dharma*.

How can one go wrong? Because there is no confident method of solving the self who has faith, one is unable to locate the roots of complaint or discontent, much less settle the ego and self. Having faith of self with body and mind separated, individuals will make judgement at their own discretion what is right or what is true. Accordingly, faith based on self will end up being attached and caught. One may think it is the right faith, but if one neglects the true facts of where God dwells, it cannot be the right way. Therefore, even if one earnestly practices self-based faith, one can never solve the source of ego, nor can one be freed from the suffering of life and death,

- confusion and conflict.
- Q: Is this a fundamental difference between the world of the practice of the Buddha Way and other faiths?
- A: Yes. The Buddhist faith hinges on whether or not a person is working to remove his habits and to realize his true self, and whether he has the aspiration for enlightenment. True faith is your whole-hearted devotion to “now is self.”
- Q: What about other faiths?
- A: Leave them to people who believe in them. Their belief calms their minds and solves their troubles in their own ways. We should not criticize them. Neither should we argue about which faith is superior because faith is the first step. When one believes in it thoroughly and attains the state of no other thought, he will attain peace of mind. However, a faith that is against the principles of nature and *cause* and *effect* is unnatural in its aspiration. So, its result is also unnatural and incomplete. When it goes to extremes, it becomes a superstition and a person may be possessed by impossible delusion and live a futile life. Shouldn't it be criticized and denied, by people with reason and intelligence?

75. Japanese Buddhism and its tradition

- Q: What do you think of a seasonal practice of faith? Such as New Year's prayers at a Shinto shrine?
- A: It should be cherished, not denied because it makes people serene and lightens up the gods of earth and heaven. But it will not allow you to attain the “way” and the *dharma*. If you really want to be settled, you should seek the right master and practice in the right way. This is the state of true faith, the aspiration for enlightenment, and a person of truth.
- Q: I understand that I should cherish it but not to be devoted to it. Then I would like to ask you one more question. Japan is said to be a Buddhist country. And each family temple belongs to a certain religious sect. Is it all right to become a devout follower of the temple or master of the other sect to settle oneself?
- A: That often happens. Freedom of religion is one of the human rights. You should not be bound by your ancestors, the past or your surroundings. You should freely choose the way that you believe in, and enrich your mind, leading a pure and serene life.
- Q: What about the relations with the family temple?

- A: Basically, you don't need to worry, but it is very important to be courteous and respectful.
- Q: That is, the worship of one's ancestors as a continuation of life is different from solving the "separation" of mind.
- A: That's right. In this case, a problem will arise between your faith and the family temple housing your whole ancestors. You should be very careful not to impose your faith on others or give trouble to the entire family, however important it may be for you. You had better not to think of changing your family temple. Be polite and respectful to the family temple
- Q: This should be a point. One values one's faith so much that it undermines personal relations or causes trouble. A sound faith has to be natural and entirely consistent with the principles of nature, and we shouldn't go too far.
- A: Correct. Everything you do with your self and with separating from the other is about confusion and attachment. You should first examine whether it is a wholesome teaching or not, before you take in the faith. Be careful not to lose all your wealth against your will.
- Q: Right aspiration matters.
- A: Yes. If you pursue the true "way" and the *dharma* and keep practicing, the Buddha, patriarchs and various heavenly gods will surely protect you. Trust in it and practice intently. A true seeker is devoted seriously to anything and yet is not bound by it.
- Q: If we spare no effort and practice hard, we can all be saved, can't we? The way to it is Shikan-taza, "just" practicing zazen, and "just" doing a thing, isn't it?
- A: You are right.

76. Everyone has wisdom and the noble face of a Buddha

- Q: I am so grateful that there is such a trustworthy way.
- A: You should thank the patriarchs. Where there are sentient beings, a Buddha is sure to appear. But even if one is born in this world, if he is not brought up as a Buddha, his life will get rotten without manifesting himself as a Buddha. If one cannot meet the true *dharma*, one cannot know the Way of the Buddha and will end up as an ordinary person. A dog is raised as a dog, a human being is raised as a human, and a Buddha is raised as a Buddha—this is the Buddha's Way.
- Q: Well, then, is there a Buddha somewhere in the world at any time? If

it is true, that's splendid.

A: To say the least, everyone is equally endowed with elements of a Buddha.

Q: What does it mean?

A: Because everyone has a noble face of Nyorai and the wisdom of the Buddha.

Q: I do not really understand that.

A: All human beings have the six sense-organs of eyes, ears, nose, tongue, body and mind. Each of them functions as the six corresponding objects: color and shape, sound, odor, taste, tangible objects, and objects of mind. Thanks to this very "mind," you can have a good sense of judgment and know the way, good and evil, *cause* and *effect*, and the truth.

Therefore, you can hold great ideals and know you need to practice hard. In this way, you gradually turn the inconveniences into conveniences and solve sufferings of many people. And you respect the sages and wise men, learn the "way" and the *dharmā*, value loyalty and courtesy, and love others. All parents raise their children unconditionally, but they never claim credit for it. So "mind" is just "*dharmā*." They are all functions of Nyorai and the wisdom of the Buddha.

We ourselves originally have such a superb nature. Nobody likes evil, because we all have the inborn ability and virtue of a Buddha. "Everyone originally has a Buddha nature. Everything is a reflection of the Buddha" (Honrai-Honhossho, Tennen-Jishoshin). However, if you don't recognize a treasure as a treasure, it is of no use.

Master Dogen said: "Each person is abundantly endowed with it, but it will not become manifest without practice, and it would not be gained without attaining it." And the Buddha himself has proven that "Mind as it is is the Buddha" and "Mind is the Buddha." Who on earth should doubt this?

Q: I never doubt it.

77. An attained Buddha and a Buddha to be

A: A person who is born not to worry about honor, wealth, status, praise and blame, and who searches for a true way of life is undoubtedly a future Buddha. A Buddha in the present and the past is called an attained Buddha, and a Buddha in the future is called "a Buddha to be" who is going to appear hereafter. If one makes serious efforts

moment to moment to be one with “now,” the time is sure to come when the true way will appear.

Q: Listening respectfully to the *dharma* talk, I have truly felt the worthiness of my body. But how come children of the Buddha commit evil with malice, and cruel and merciless deeds such as murder?

A: Everything is the *dharma* of *causes* and *conditions* depending on their strength or weakness. Unfortunately, one can become totally lazy before realizing his original aspiration, if he gets plunged by worldly *conditions*, or the three poisons of greed, anger and stupidity.

If you don't hold up ideals or aspirations, one's mind can get caught up in strong *conditions* at any time. Then the bud of the Buddha never grows. Everyone is originally a child of a Buddha. But if you stay far away from the Buddha's teachings, and have no aspirations for enlightenment, you will certainly succumb to greed, anger and stupidity, or strong instincts. That is why wars never end and peace never comes. Therefore, we should not neglect the practice. Do you understand?

Q: Yes, I understand very well. By having a strong aspiration, we can get closer to and deepen the Buddha's teachings, and with practice, we can overcome *conditions of karma*.

A: Exactly! It all depends on your aspiration for the Way. Without aspiration and practice, no one has ever been enlightened.

One patriarch said: “A diligent man will attain the way with only one aspiration. An idle man will spend timeless eternity to attain Buddhahood.” The aspiration for enlightenment wakes up your Buddhahood, and you meet your own Buddha. All this is an example of a noble face of Nyorai and the wisdom of the Buddha. *Namo bodhi*-mind. Don't kill a Buddha to be.

78. What will you do?!

Q: I am much obliged. It is so precious. I don't know what to say. Knowing this *dharma*, I am even more grateful to the patriarchs. I have also realized I have long made light of myself. I deeply apologize to myself for having wasted so much time and energy.

A: Isn't it a proof that your mind is originally a Buddha? Now that you have understood it and convinced of it, what will you do?!

Q: I will practice with sincere aspiration for enlightenment. I will only live once.

A: Very well, very well. Time waits for no man. “In which life will you

emancipate your life?”⁸

Q: Finally, will you teach me the definition of the Buddha?

A: What now? You fool!

Q: I know. It's only for confirmation.

A: That is important. The Buddha and patriarchs would be pleased with your honesty and sincerity. I would be scolded if I didn't answer.

As you know by now, a Buddha is the one who has attained the “way” and the *dharma*. Thus, he is called an enlightened one, a person without separation. When you have truly attained that, there is no second mind about “now,” you will see everything is the “way” and the *dharma*. It is the pure in the pure, the core of the core. It is the world of “just” and its life does not change. It is just as you see, hear, perceive and conceive. It is a state of no trace of attainment, a person who has attained a fundamental truth. “A cypress tree in the yard,” “three pounds of flax.” It is just to sit here now. It began from Shakyamuni Buddha and includes those patriarchs who have handed over and lived through the seal of *bodhi*-mind. Their minds, eyes and ears are all those of the Buddha. Everything that they sensed is the Buddha. It is not limited to themselves.

Not only the enlightened man but also all around him are the Buddhas. “Beings with mind and beings without mind are altogether enlightened. Mountains and rivers, grasses and trees are all emancipated” (Ujo-Hijo Doji-Jodo, San-Sen-So-Moku Sikkai-Jobutu.). They are all the Buddhas, therefore, there is no Buddha or the *dharma* above them. Just keep practicing “now” with the *bodhi*-mind, and be a person with a perfect freedom. When you have attained a state of pure and easy mind, you will be totally convinced. This is surely your long-cherished wish. You must be clear about the foremost question why the patriarch travelled all the way from India to China in order to attain the most important point of life. Practicing this way and attaining this point, you will be a patriarch of our days. How precious! Practice, practice, and practice.

Q: Those words are way too much to me! First of all, I must solve the foremost question! This is so tough. But, originally it is “now” and is already enlightened. All I need is to become one with it. I will surely attain it. Because “Everyone originally has a Buddha nature. Everything is a reflection of the Buddha.”

⁸ A phrase from The Three Vows.

79. *Namo bodhi* -mind!

- A: Very well said. There is no doubt about it because all the Buddhas and the patriarchs in the past have proven it. They never lie. All of them guarantee that anyone who practices hard will surely attain it. So believe it and never doubt it.
- Q: I do not doubt!
- A: Well, well, your words and your aspiration are precious. The flow of the patriarchs is here. It only depends on the strength of our *bodhi*-mind. Make every day, every moment an aspiration for enlightenment. How can you be idle anymore? Life is short, a moment of a dream. Nobody can escape death.
- Q: All I need to do is to work hard. With a solid *bodhi*-mind, I must practice earnestly. I am determined I shall practice hard, so I beg you, please guide me harshly. I shall drop off everything in mind, and practice well whole-heartedly for attainment!
- A: Do it as you aspire. "Life and death are matters of importance. Life is short. Spare no time. Time waits for no one (Shoji-Jidai, Mujo-Jinsoku, Koin-Oshimubeshi, Toki-Hitowo-Matazu)." For whom do you practice? The work of the others is not yours. Lastly, I ask you. How do you ultimately practice zazen?
- Q: Don't make fun of me, please.
- A: Just to be sure.
- Q: It is just the *bodhi*-mind! Shikan-taza. Shikan-action. To just breathe. Drop off worldly thoughts and do everything whole-heartedly "just" "now."
- A: Good. Do "now"! Lest you may overlook a point, I ask you one more question. When you enter the zazen hall, what do you do?
- Q: "Just" be with one breath. Just breathe in and just breathe out. No myself, no time, no breathing.
- A: Results come only after practice. Don't put up any aim or results, don't seek for it, either. While there remains "just," it is not a real "just." While there remains "now," it is not real "now." Search for and attain the state beyond reasoning. Do you get it?
- Q: I do. I truly thank you for your teachings. I will repay it by mastering the Way.
- A: *Namo bodhi* -mind! *Bodhi*-mind! Take good care of your holy *dharma*-body.

The Postscript

There is a way to read a zen book. It is to raise your aspiration for enlightenment and to gain points to focus on. If you attain it by reading a page or only a line, your purpose of reading the book is achieved. Then you should stop reading and put it into practice. There is nothing to give up or to pick up because “Everyone originally has a Buddha nature. Everything is a reflection of the Buddha.” If you devote yourself fully to it without thinking of yourself, you will find the Way.

It is difficult to work hard in search of “nothing to search for.” It is because we have a habit of putting up something outside us and of searching for it. Practice is for removing the habits. It is important not to put up anything outside you. In short, practice to “just” be. Devote yourself whole-heartedly to one thing “now” without using any other thought. This is the point of the practice. A true practice is to abandon all thoughts completely and to become one with things.

The key is to raise your aspirations for enlightenment and to gain the point of focus. So please read this book to cultivate it further. To be “now” and “just” is the state where you have thoroughly abandoned whatever you read and understood in the book. It is a true “just” when even this “just” has completely vanished. This is the focus of the practice.

We continue to practice earnestly until we have nothing to search for. Just practice earnestly. That’s all there is to it. *Bodhi*-mind, *Bodhi*-mind. Now practice!

Index of Buddhist Terms

Japanese	English	Sanskrit
[Buddhist terms]		
Bodai-shin (菩提心)	<i>bodhi</i> -mind	
Buppo (仏法)		
Bussho (仏性)		
En (縁)	<i>conditions</i>	<i>pratyaya</i>
Gedatsu (解脱)	emancipation	
Genjokoan (現成公案)		
Go (業)		<i>karma</i>
Hannya (般若)		<i>prajñā</i>
Heijoshin Kore Do (平常心是道)	An ordinary mind is the way	
Hibi Kore Konichi, (日々是好日)	Every day is a good day	
Higan (彼岸)	the Pure Land	<i>param</i>
Hishin-Hibutsu (非心非仏)		
Hokkai-join (法界定印)		
Honrai-Honhossho, Tennen-Jishoshin (本来本法性、天然自性身)		
Honrai-no-Menmoku (本来の面目)		
In (因)	<i>causes</i>	<i>hetu</i>
Innen-Shosho (因縁所生)		
Issai-Kaikuu (一切皆空)		
Jita-fuji (自他不二)		
Ka (果)	<i>effects</i>	<i>phala</i>
Kensho (見性)		
Kinhin(経行)		
Koan-zen (公案禅)		
Kosoku-Koan (古則公案)		
Kuu (空)	emptiness	<i>śūnyatā</i>
Makyo (魔境)		
Masangin (麻三斤)	three pounds of flax	
Muga (無我)	selflessness	<i>anattā</i>
Mujo (無常)	impermanence	<i>anitya</i>
Mumyo (無明)		<i>avidya</i>
Nehan (涅槃)		<i>nirvana</i>
Nyorai (如来)		<i>tathagata</i>
Sanmaji (三摩地)		<i>samadhi</i>
San-Sen-So-Moku Sikkai-Jobutu (山川草木悉皆成仏)		

Satori (悟り)	emancipation, enlightenment	
Seiza (正坐)		
Sekishin-Jobutsu (赤心成仏)		
Shikan-taza (只管打坐)		
Shiki (色)	color and shape, form	<i>rūpa</i>
Shinjin-Ichinyo (身心一如)		
Shodoka (証道歌)		
Shohossin (初発心)		
Shoji-Jidai, Mujo-Jinsoku, Koin-Oshimubeshi, Toki-Hitowo-Matazu (生死事大 無常迅速 光陰可惜 時不待人)		
Shorinkutsu (少林窟)		
Sokushin-Sokubutsu (即心即仏)		
Sokushin-Zebutsu (即心是仏)		
Tanden (丹田)		
Teizen-no-Hakujushi (庭前の柏樹 子)	A cyprus tree in the yard	
Ujo-Hijo Doji-Jodo (有情非情同時成道)		
Zenjo (禪定)		<i>dhyāna</i>
[Patriarchs and Masters]		
Baso (馬祖道一)		
Bodaidaruma (菩提達磨)		Bodhidharma
Dogen (道元)		
Eno (慧能)		
Gei (羿)		
Hakuin (白隠)		
Hiei (飛衛)		
Joshu (趙州)		
Keizan (瑩山)		
Kisho (紀昌)		
Konin (弘忍)		
Makakasho (摩訶迦葉)		Mahākāśyapa
Mumon Ekai (無門慧開)		
Nangaku (南嶽)		
Nanzen (南泉)		
Nyojo (如浄)		

Obaku (黃檗)
Rinzai (臨濟)
Sekito (石頭希遷)
Tenryu (天龍)
Tokusan (徳山)
Tozan (洞山)

Toin (欽隱)

Tosotsu (兜率)
Yoka (永嘉)