

Sharihotsu was a student of the Buddha, who also appears as Shariputra in the heart sutra. He was known to be the most wise student among the main ten disciples of the Buddha. He was a scholar with 250 pupils. Near Chikurinchoja in the town of Nalanda, he met a student of the Buddha. This student has a beautiful taint, and without being slow and without hurrying he walked through town. His clothing was well taken care of, and he quietly kept walking. Shariputra was drawn to him naturally and asked him: "what kind of training are you doing?" – "I am a student of the Buddha Shakyamuni." – "I have never heard this name – what does he teach?" – "He was a prince and last year he experienced enlightenment. Now he is living in the forest of Chiku. He teaches that we live in accordance to causes which produce an effect. And according to causes, these circumstances change and disappear again. I used these words as a koan and realized enlightenment." Shariputra was amazed since he had never heard about the law of cause and effect even though he had been a scholar. "What amazing teaching – I have never heard these words before." So he thought for a while and decided together with Mokuren to join the Buddha, each bringing their 250 pupils with them. Thus the Buddha's disciples increased by 500.

All religions preach that this world was created by their god, is being sustained by him as well. But from a Buddhist point of view, it is not believed that this world was created by a God and will be sustained by him as well; neither is it said that this world happens by chance. It was the Buddha who said for the first time: That everything comes into being due to a cause – the law of cause and effect. Similar to how modern science would describe it. If it were true that the world was created by a God, then there would not have been a world from the beginning. But now it can be seen that there is no beginning and no end to this universe.

Because if there is no end, there is no beginning. But this world doesn't have a beginning or an end. That is our reality. All depends on the cause which brings forth an effect. as an example, there is a grain of wheat and with the other right causes added like water and sun, this seed can sprout and turn into a full grown plant which again produces wheat grains. This is how things appear in the

world. Being born, being sustained for a while and dissolve again. Things come into existence for a while, take on a certain form and then dissolve again, returning into emptiness. All these take place according to karmic laws. There are appearances that stay for many thousands of years, but even these will dissolve eventually. This is the law of karmic associations.

The Buddha taught as most important INNEN. Today Innen is used a lot, innen is a Buddhist term. To know the working of the karmic laws – according to these the Buddha experienced enlightenment. That is how it is written in the sutras. That is why in Buddhism our existence is seen in six realms, like the spikes of a wheel, we move through them over and over again. All of these six realms are based on ignorance.

There is the hell realm, the realm of angry demons, of hungry ghosts. These three realms are seen as the difficult and dark ones. Then there are the realms of imagination, of humans and of heavenly beings. Humans have the ability to reflect and repent their behaviour and from that self reflection a Buddha can be born from.

Heavenly beings cannot reflect upon themselves. Their lives are filled only with pleasure. All of us are part of the karmic law and rotate through these six realms. We all are being born and die again, being reborn again but not necessarily as human beings. We can also become a dog, a cat, a horse, a cow. That is how it is being taught in Buddhism.

We might not know what our future will bring, but might have a feeling that we were a certain animal in the past. If you were a cat in your past life, it means that now you like cats and have a close feeling for their ways and needs.

In the same way you might understand the way of a dog, a plant, a dragonfly or a butterfly. We all have taking many forms and expressions.

Rebirth has been a way to look at life since over 3000 years ago in tribal India.

Evolution is the scientific way of looking at it, not the religious view.

Because the focus of true religion is on understanding oneself and working towards becoming a Buddha in the future.

The six paths are part of our past but also lead us through our future.

We have developed from microbes along a long evolutionary path. But we can

also find these six realms in how our future will unfold.

When we are angry and don't want to step back, then we are an angry demon.

Other times our chest burns because we feel so ashamed, then we are in the world of greedy demons.

At other times we are so full of desire, can't let go of the idea of what we want, we cannot even eat or sleep, totally filled with this idea, from morning until night filled with fear and worries – then we are in the realm of hell.

Then again there are those moments of joy and lightness, playing in the realm of the heavenly beings. we are in a human form right now and the speciality is to feel shame and be able to repent our deeds and our state of mind. Only from that state of mind can a Buddha come forth from. That is why it is most important to be born as a human being. The chance to be born as a human being is rare, but now we have this opportunity. If we thus think about it, the six realms can be found in our daily life as well.

Where has this path started? Where is the source of the delusion? In Christianity it is said that from the moment when Adam ate from the apple of awareness. It is looked at differently in Buddhism, where it is said that life itself is the base of unclarity.

The reason that we are being born in this very specific way is according to past karmic connections. we started off from a totally unaware state, in darkness, based on pure desires. New life is being received in the womb and there body and soul unite. The six sense organs are being developed: eyes, ears, nose, tongue, body, mind and through them we receive input and energy. We start to like and love certain things and from there the attachment rises, that we want what we like and avoid that which we don't like. In this way we develop into a grown human being, living our life, working and dying. Our truth is that we all will have to face sickness, old age and death.

The Buddha sat after his awakening under the Bodhi tree to understand these karmic laws.

Where does suffering of old age and death come from?

It comes from the awareness of being alive.

Where does the awareness of being alive come from?

It comes from attachment to our body and mind.

Where does the attachment come from?

It comes because we reach out and hold onto what we like.

Why do we reach out?

We reach out because we want it.

why do we want it?

Because we perceived it with our eyes and ears.

Why did we perceive it?

Because we have sense organs.

Why do we have sense organs?

Because we are being born in the six realms.

Why are we being born in the six realms?

Because we received life.

why did we receive life?

Because it is the desire of life to be perceived.

That is the root cause for our suffering, an unaware part of our existence.

Looking at this law over and over again, he realized the truth in these words. This unawareness is the base of the six realms, and unawareness brings forth new unawareness. To have to go over and over again through the six realms is the fate of those who have received life.

But is there no path to liberate oneself from the constant rebirth in the six realms?

There are ascetics that entered the mountains, ate only one grain of rice a day, threw away all feelings and attachments. And through this practice they were able to enter a state of mind of total freedom and clarity.

But does that mean that we all have to become ascetics if we want to realize the truth? Is there no path that we can be in society, have a family and liberate ourselves from these sufferings? Is there such a path of awakening from attachment?

Buddhism cannot just demand this specialized practice of the ascetics. The path that was thus created was the path of the Mahayana Buddhism. It is said that this path of the great vehicle came forth 500 years after the Buddha's death.

In one of his last teaching, the Hokkekyo, the Buddha threw away all his teaching devices and taught the pure Dharma, saying that even if we do not practice asceticism, we can open our mind's eye and realize the same wisdom as that of the Buddha. And then we can live from clarity and wisdom. That is the teaching of the Mahayana Buddhism, a path that can bring liberation to all.

If there is not attempt or wish to realize enlightenment, then it will also not occur. We are on this big vehicle, the Mahayana Buddhism, but we all have our own bicycles, our own pedals and handles. We can support each other in our wish to realize this truth. In the midst of being alive we face the question of life and death.

In the Hokkekyo it says that our daily life is the place where true religion is alive. As a lay person, a lay life, having a family and a job, we continue to clarify and simplify our mind.

In the Vimalakirti sutra it says: Without throwing away the lay person's path, to realize awakening within this life is true realization.

As a lay person practicing that is the path of a Bodhisattva. There is only one of the famous Bodhisattvas who is ordained, it is Jizo Bodhisattva. Jizo Bodhisattva is helping those beings who are in deep pain and suffering. He descended into the three difficult realms of hell, anger and hungry ghosts. This means that without the devotion of Jizo, these beings couldn't be helped. When these troubled souls see an ordained person who has given up everything for the liberation of others, then they feel inspired to also free themselves of their suffering.

But the only true path of liberation out of suffering for a lay person can be found in Samadhi. Letting go of all obstructions inside and of all attachment outside, we sit in Zazen and enter samadhi, deep concentration. The eye of seeing things as they truly are is born from that clarity experienced in deep meditation. Also all human cultural and artistic expression also comes from the same source, from that freedom of seeing things as they truly are.

All spiritual paths, all culture comes forth from there.

Samadhi is the realization that we are connected and giving ourselves to helping others. That is the path of a Bodhisattva in Mahayana Buddhism.

1. Generosity

There we come to the first wise aspect of following the path, which is generosity or giving alms and donations. These offerings can be of material value or of the Dharma teaching. The Bodhisattva devotes his life energy to the spiritual practice and shares these fruits with others, while those Bodhisattvas involved in life in society, support others through material offerings. The Buddha taught this aspect clearly already during his era, and since then it has been a basic, most important teaching of Buddhism. Not only giving to a few people around you, but to share with an open heart with all beings. The more we are ready to give the teaching, the more people around us are also ready to receive. Nowadays it has become difficult because people are so busy with protecting themselves. That is why this giving of alms is so important.

There was an old couple living in a village. Their food storage had become empty, so they sold some of their firewood and received 4 cups of rice. Then Chikuren Chojia came by on alms round and the grandmother gave him one cup of rice. Soon behind him were Mokuren and Sharihotsu, to whom she gave one cup each. She was sure that one cup of rice would be enough for her and her husband for a few days. When she saw the Buddha coming along the road gathering alms. She gave him the last cup of rice, watching him walk away again, she realized that that had been her last cup of rice. When her husband returned, she apologized and said that she had done a big mistake. But her husband praised her for giving these offerings. He again checked the storehouse and to their surprise was it filled with all kind of treasures and food. This story is not a miracle, but can be explained that they found spiritual wealth in the storehouse. even if there is no material wealth, spiritual wealth can still be perceived. The old couple were deeply satisfied in their minds.

Wisdom and happiness are closely connected. Like it is said, if you have realized complete wisdom, you will not miss anything on the material level. This means if humans realize their inherent wisdom, then all they need on a material level will be provided for. It can be said that people turn poor on a spiritual level, because they are too attached to their material possessions. If we all were ready to share then there would be no material poverty necessary on this planet.

The Buddha taught that there are seven ways to give to others on a non material way: with a cool, clear eye to see other people and thus to give that clarity to others. Speaking kind words is the second aspect. Saying thank you and giving each other encouragement, feeling for the other person. That is a true gift.

An open and kind face touches other people with joy when they see it. A warm heart is the best gift to create a warm society. Giving the body, like the Buddha did in his past life, giving his body as food to a hungry tigress who had to feed her cubs- We do not have to go that far, but we can give ourselves by working for others.

The sixth aspect is to give a place to a traveller to sleep for one night and giving away your seat to someone to rest on. In a bus or train, this giving away your seat to an old person or someone in need, has become a matter of course nowadays. These are the seven ways of how to give without needing any money or materials to do so. these are called the seven immaterial ways of giving.

In the 28th generation after the Buddha, Bodhidharuma was the first Patriarch in China. 1500 years ago he left India, travelled for three years over the Sea of Bengal and crossed over to China. At that time, China was divided into north and south, Ryo in the south and Ki in the north. The emperor in the southern country of Ryo deeply believed in Buddhism. He supported many monks and nuns, many monasteries. He also was a great scholar himself. When he heard that a great saint was coming from India, he quickly went to greet him. "Osho, which thankful sutras did you bring along? Will you teach me?" Bodhidharuma answered: "Only I came, bringing no sutra." The emperor was surprised. "I build temples, translate sutras, support monks and nun, make Buddhist statues. What is my virtue? The people call me the Buddha Mine Emperor. Have I gathered any virtue?" - "No virtue." A strict greeting moment. The emperor got lost in the hugeness of mind of Bodhidharuma. They were on different levels and he cooled down a bit. "No thankfulness for translating sutras, building monasteries - so what are you thankful for in the Buddhist teaching?" The emperor had cooled down quite a bit. Bodhidharuma answered with a cold face: "Nothing to be thankful for. Things as they are - no need to be thankful." The emperor got more and more pulled into a world which he didn't know anything about. "If there is

nothing to be thankful for, are you to be thankful for?" - "I don't know." That was the beautiful end of their conversation. Bodhidharuma went on a small boat, entered the mountains of Suzan, sat nine years facing the wall and raised his disciple Niso Eka Daishi. From there Bodhidharuma's famous words came.

Outside let go of all involvement, inside be immovable, when your mind is like a wall, then you are on the path.

Letting go of the outside means, to not get involved in praise or blame, in win or loss. Don't be involved in how the outside situation is. Inside joy, sorrow, thought of what I should be doing next - don't tie yourself down with your emotions.

When your mind is quiet like a wall, then you are on the path to enlightenment. Building monasteries, supporting monks and nuns, translating sutras and making Buddhist statues - counting all the things one has done - we have to let go of this outside involvement. To think one's name might remain after life - if we think like this, we will never understand Zen or even live an honest life. That is why Bodhidharuma said: No virtue. When doing something for others, to right away forget about these deeds, that is important. To keep talking about it is like having taken a good step and one more step backwards into confusion and attachment. That is no true virtue. By letting go of these attachments, we can arrive at the other shore of the awakened mind.

2. Precepts

The second wise aspect of following the path is Virtue or the precepts.

There are certain rules and precepts given for the Bodhisattva path. The ten precepts, 42 rules, 250 rules for monks, 500 for nuns, all were written down in detail. But most important are the first five precepts.

1. to not kill
2. to not steal
3. to not have unclear relations between a man and a woman
4. to not lie
5. to not delude the true self

Whether you are a lay or an ordained person, as long as you follow the Buddhist path, you need to live according to these precepts. The first precept, **to not take life**, is most important.

The Buddha when he died lied down on his right side, his head towards the north, his face facing the west. There is a drawing about this scene, where all his disciples are gathered around him, all of them are crying. Also all the main disciples were around him, crying. Ananda Sonja, who had been the attendant for over 20 years, was only able to cry at this time. All the other animals, elephant, lion, tiger, dog, horse, crane, snake, turtle and worms – all these and more animals had gathered and were crying in sadness. Showing in the painting that the Buddha had a deeply connecting mind to all beings – this was being well expressed by the person who first drew this scene. And because all living beings were sad upon the passing of the Buddha, it shows that the Buddha's compassion had reached them all.

The Buddha always had a cloth with him, when he was travelling, and he would filter the water before drinking it, to save even the tiniest living being in that water. When he was walking, he had a staff making a sound so that all animals on the road could flee and wouldn't be stepped upon. In this way was the Buddha paying detailed attention to even the tiniest creature, to not harm or kill them. The Buddha was teaching in this same way, that each person's life was very precious. It was not allowed to take the life of someone else, but also to not treasure one's own life was not permitted. Because all were filled with Buddha Nature, and taking any life was taking their Buddha Nature.

One day the Buddha and Ananda were walking along a road. The Buddha took a tiny bit of earth on his finger nail and asked Ananda: Ananda, which one is more, the earth on my finger or the earth of this whole world? – Ananda replied, Honourable One, the earth of this world is a lot more than the earth on your finger nail. – The Buddha replied: Exactly, the amount of earth on this planet is how many lives are being born, but to be born as a human being is only the amount of grains of earth on my finger nail. Treasure this chance to be born as a human being. There are so many fish in the ocean that they can colour the ocean with their multitude, sometimes birds can fill the sky that they almost completely

cover it. And reflecting in this way, it becomes obvious that the number of human beings is a lot less. Looking at the history of evolution, the time that human beings have been on this planet, is also not that long. It took a long road for human beings to develop. And science cannot even count the billions of stars that exist, but how many are there that have life on them? When we think like this, the number of people born on this planet, are really just as many as grain of sands on the finger nail. How then can we waste a life that is so precious?

Almost every day you can read some news about murders and killings, which gives us a dark, heavy feeling. How is it possible that humans nowadays do not treasure the life energy? Why do they lose all hope and love for each other? Where can the words of the Buddha fit there? Did the modern people never hear the words of the Buddha? Or have we forgotten to share this knowledge of the Buddha with all of society? We do all of us have to deeply reflect.

Jihad and other warlike involvements proclaim that killing others is a good deed. Have we sold our soul to the evil? Then there is this thesis that we need an army to protect our people, but it does not match the teaching of the Buddha to not kill. To have lost these basic values in life is the sadness of people today. We do need to tell everyone that killing is not an option. We have to proclaim and speak against war. All Buddhist people should hold each other's hands and bring light to this teaching of the Buddha – giving peace to the world.

The second of the precept is **to not steal**.

Albert Schweitzer was a German person working in Africa. Most people know about him. When he was a child, he was playing with others and pushed his friend to the ground. When his friend got off the ground he said: I am not like you, eating meat twice a week. If I would, I would not be weaker than you. These very words stayed with Albert Schweitzer his whole life. It was not me who had won the fight, but because I had eaten well and thus had more strength. He entered university, became a priest, and then trained on to become a doctor. He lived his life not looking at his possession like his own. It was all borrowed by society. His own wisdom was not his own realization, but had been given to him by society. He did not study himself, but society had given him the chance to study. And all of these received things, he wanted to return and share with

society. He thought he could not exclude anyone in society. Thus he travelled to Africa, relieving people from the physical pain in his position as a doctor, relieving them from their mental pain by teaching the path of God, giving them a path to believe in. He lived and gave himself completely to all people in need. This way of looking at one's own life seems almost more Buddhist than Christian. We do not live by our own small strength, but are being carried by the whole universe. It is not we who live, but we are being given this life. It is the Buddhist way of looking at life based on karmic connections. From there the feelings of thankfulness come forth.

There is nothing in this world that is our own, there is nothing than we can steal from others.

This is my house, this is my car, this is my wife, this is my child, this is my body – from this attachment the division between self and other comes forth. Of course, the law says to not take what belongs to others, but looking at it from a deeper level, there is nothing that can possibly be taken. In nature, in society and even our body is part of a huger picture and is in constant change. We cannot hold on to any of these. Like it is said from olden times, these things are like dewdrops that disappear with the sun rays coming out. Whatever we try to hold on to, they can disappear and vanish in an instant. All existing things are like a dream, a lightening in a summer cloud, like a shadow, like a dewdrops – the words of the Diamond Sutra.

Like the poet Ikkyu wrote in his death poem: that which I have borrow, now on this day I simply return. Even my body, even my mind have been lent to me. All of these have to completely be returned when we die. To realize that not even a grain of dust is ours in this life, that is understanding the precept of not to steal. Like the Buddha only had three robes, a bowl and a staff – these are the only things he had with him. A beautiful appearance of not holding onto anything personal, but of giving all to society. From that state of mind you can see for the first time, how all is your life energy, how all is the same life energy. And a huge world of connectedness opens from there. There is nothing we have to be attached to or to search for. All of these move according to the karmic law. and a hugeness in our lives is being born. That brings forth a state of mind that is ready

anytime to move for all of society. To not see anything as one's own and live from an openness of sharing with all around us, that is understanding the precept of not to steal. Even our own life is something that we cannot be attached to – that is being given to us for as long as the karmic connections thus allow. Like flowing water – all being in constant change.

To not be unclear in relations between men and women

There is a koan in the Kattoshu where there was a grandmother who really liked Zen monks. From when she was young, she had been practicing herself and even more so felt the Zen monks very dear. A Zen monk wears many years training in a solitary hut, and she brought him three times a day food. Many years she gave him offerings in this way. She had her granddaughter help her with all the shores at home. One day she said to her granddaughter that after she took the empty eating bowls from the monk and giving him a tight hug, she was supposed to ask the monk: how is it at this time? doing so the Zen monk replied: Like a dried up pine growing on a rock. As if nothing had happened. When the granddaughter tells her grandmother the answer of the monk, she was expecting the grandmother to be full of joy, but the grandmother got so angry saying: for over 20 years I have been giving offerings to a useless monk. I did a huge mistake. So she threw out the monk and even burned down the hut. What should the monk have replied that the grandmother would not have thrown him out or burned his hut? That is how the koan goes. But to be able to answer after a hug of the grandmother, that he were feeling like a dried up pine on a bare rock – that is not an easy answer. It must have been a monk who had done quite strict training. But why did the grandmother throw him out and burn his hut? Like the desire for food, also the sexual desire cannot be taken care of that easily for human beings. It does need quite some efforts to transcend these desires. We have to burn our flesh and break our bones, and then for the first time can we answer like this monk.

That is where the goal of Hinayana, the small vehicle Buddhism can be found. But making such huge efforts, what kind of life comes forth from there? This monk was totally busy and filled with taking care of his own feelings. And he even wasn't able to pass on the teaching to the granddaughter. Mahayana

Buddhism, the great vehicle, sees it differently. To not try to extinguish the desires, but to leave desires as they are desires, but first realize Buddha Nature. And from that experience of Buddha Nature, of the huge all embracing mind, naturally the desires become less and extinguished. And from there we would be able to face the granddaughter with kind words.

In the Kannon Sutra there is a passage that goes: Kanzeon Bodhisattva is Buddha Nature, and if we constantly repeat the name of Kanzeon, however huge our desires might be, naturally we can take a more distanced stance from them. this doesn't mean to simply cut the desires, but while we have desires, to be free from them. Like the beautiful lotus flower comes forth from the mud, not even a bit of mud stays on the flower. That is how the flower of Buddha Nature starts to blossom from the mud of desires, not being dirtied by the mud.

Lets go to a place which is above the clouds. from there we can see the shining moon. If we keep looking at the moon from underneath the clouds, we can never see it in its bright radiance. If we feel squashed by the desires, we are confused by them. If we go above the desires, however strong they might seem, they do not obstruct us. And if we are able to go above our own desires, then we can actually see them as an interesting part of ourselves. Like it says in the heart sutra, there are delusion and no need to free ourselves from delusions. Desires can exist – that is fine. They do not have to exist – that is also fine. The mind that is fine with either situation that is the mind of wisdom.

The moon doesn't mind to be reflected in the water, the water doesn't know it is reflecting the moon.

While being in the midst of desires, that state of mind that doesn't get moved around by them, that is our true, clear mind. To not be attached to desires, that is the third precept of clear relations between men and women.

To not lie

There is nothing we can believe in this changing world. So we first of all have to realize our own wish and commitment. In the morning a young man, at night a cold corpse. we cannot believe in other human beings, neither in our body, even not in our own mind. that is how this life is – in constant change. We might be sleeping in our bed, and a sudden earthquake breaks down the house and all

walls and we might die in our sleep. Even this could happen.

The Buddha taught: our mind is like a gang, like a poisonous snake – there is this dangerous place in our mind. We can call ourselves lucky that we have not committed any crime, that we were not in any circumstance where we had to commit a crime. The only thing I can hold onto in my mind is repeating the name of the Buddha. The believing mind is the only true mind. While we know that our life will pass and we will die, while we are aware of this we can realize the state of mind of belief in zazen. We can enter a state of mind that has no thoughts left whatsoever and there we can find the truth of humans. It is as if we are realizing the timeless Buddha right in our mind. There is this poem: the one who can believe in this deep mind, right there has found Buddha Nature. Zazen is the truth, the truth is Buddha Nature, Buddha Nature is freedom from suffering. The words Buddha Nature can also be changed with saying Self-realization. At that place we are neither man nor woman, neither rich nor poor, neither studied or stupid, neither beautiful nor ugly, neither young nor old, neither good nor bad, neither Buddha nor in delusion, neither big nor small, neither red nor white, neither round nor square, neither alive nor dead. No words can reach this place – that is absolute, that is the source.

There are no words that can express the truth that can reach the truth. That is the true state of mind, that is satori, that cannot be expressed in words. This is the precept of not lying – and only living from this true experience of zazen.

To not delude the true self

Our true state of mind is pure and bright, clear and doesn't get stopped by anything. But we as human beings have desire that bring forth thoughts in a single instant. While our true mind is pure, we do get pulled into the confusion of thoughts and feelings. Since our path in life is to realize this purity of mind and to return to it, if we depend on anything else but on this clarity, we might feel satisfied and relaxed, relieved in that one instant, but should not be attached to these other means since they keep us in unclarity.

There are also the rules made by the Buddha which say: it is not allowed to produce and to sell alcohol. The alcohol itself is not bad, but drinking it we cover up our true nature. There are always people who like alcohol and who drinking

it, do not get drunk. And even those who do get drunk a lot but do great work for society. Artists, politicians and even religious people alike. So drinking alcohol is not bad, but if drinking the alcohol, our mind becomes unclear and confused, that is not good. We should not lose our true mind to the alcohol. That could mean that we create problems in our lives, in our families and lose our feeling for responsibility. That is what the Buddha was pointing out here. Like Bankei Zenji said: Someone who does not drink alcohol, does not need this fifth precept. It is yet also not only about alcohol, but also to not get drunk down by anything else. There is that place in us where we easily get drunk down by other things as well. There are aspects which an outsider can notice, when we get blind and not understanding to an issue. You can get drunk on art, on study, on work, on sports, on science and even on God, losing oneself totally. From there we lose our ability to see clearly and reflect correctly. In Mahayana Buddhism, all the examples also fit under this precept of not deluding the true self. Even getting attached and stuck on God or the Buddha is not following this precept. However thankful you might be for something, to not get high on that is what matters. To experience this free flowing mind that doesn't get stuck on anything, this is what is called not getting drunk on alcohol. That is the pure true mind of humans.

3. Patience

When we burn up all our desires, our eye becomes clearer. We have to completely burn up the feeling of hate and dislike or some feeling towards others will remain and we affect others with our unclear state of mind. Thus we produce more confusion in society. That state of mind, where everything has been burned up, where the fire has burned down, and only the ash remains. It is like in autumn, all trees are casting off their leaves and returning to the root with their energy.

The Asian state of mind, the state of mind of Zen is there where all the dust particles in the air have settled, a quiet state of mind, that is the state of mind of zazen. Only from this source can true peace be brought forth from. The realization that all life has the same source. It is not based on dualism but can take in the whole world. In this society, parent and child are one, teacher and student are one, the boss and the employees are one, the outside and myself are one, nature and humans are one, society and self are one, Buddhas and sentient beings are one - only from this hugeness of mind can the unity be experienced. The more there is dualistic division, the more there is the need for becoming one. Sportsmen work on competition and on becoming the better one - that is what their world is based on. But even in this world of competition, it is important to not lose sight of the fact that we are all connected human beings. Nowadays this feeling of being connected has really changed in our families. The world of the aged and the world of the youngsters does not easily match any more. The parents have a place in their heart where they trust their children completely. But over the years through many experiences, this becomes more and more divided. And the more the child grows up, the stronger the own ideas come forth and thus also the division. At this point the wisdom of God, the wisdom of the Buddha is needed who says: the rain falls on the good and the bad people equally. With an empty mind, accepting all that comes, like the big earth - this is what is called Patience. It is not about enduring with a tight, small state of mind, but with a huge mind, to accept and be open to whatever comes along. This is the third aspect of the Buddha's wisdom.

In the sutras it is told about Furuna Sonja, a disciple of the Buddha who was

asked by the Buddha, since he lived in the land of Ikkoku where not many people were understanding about the Buddhist path, and thus spoke badly about Furuna Sonja – are you aware of this?" Furuna Sonja replied: "Honourable One, I am thankful that the people of Ikkoku do not throw tiles or stones at me." – " But what would you do, if they were to throw stones at you?" – "Honourable One, these people have a compassionate heart, and even if they were to throw stones, they would not kill me with their swords. For that I am thankful." – "Furuna, how about if they were to kill you with their swords, what would you do then?" – "Honourable One, I will think thus, these people have compassion and are freeing me from the body filled with desires and confusion. I am thankful for that. " – "Furuna, with exactly this state of mind can you liberate and teach the people of Ikkoku." Thus the Buddha praised Furuna and send him to the country of Ikoku. In order to establish a Buddha land, we have to take on many hardships. This is the wisdom of patience.

4. Diligence, effort

In the sutras the Buddha is carefully teaching about right efforts. In the Yuikyogyo, the last teachings, he spoke very kindly, on the 15th of February at full moon before he entered Nirvana, like a mother giving the last careful instructions to her child going on a trip. In ancient times, fire was made by rubbing a stick into a piece of wood until it caught fire, and later on two stones were struck against each other to create a spark with which some branched were light. If you rub this stick into a piece of wood, if you even stop for a moment, you would need to start all over again with the same efforts. Like when taking a kettle of water off the fire before it starts to boil, you will have to do it over again if you want to water to come to a boil. The same is true for the practice of Zazen. If you practice for many years and do not realize enlightenment, that doesn't mean that Zazen is bad. But it means that we do not take it to the final point. We have to sit until we loose all awareness of our body and thought, even the awareness of being alive, and once we have to cut the root of our life energy. Like it says in the Mumonkan. take all the 360 small bones, the 47000 small hair pores and fill them with this Mu. Become this Mu with your whole being. We put our mind on this Mu until we have melted into it, until we have become this Mu and do not know what is mu and what is us. Like an iron hot ball, that you have in your throat, you can't swallow it nor can you spit it out. Take this Mu to the place where you have totally melted away, then you will feel like a dumb person who cannot speak about their dream. Filled with joy and happiness yet not being able to express it towards others. To take the training of zazen this far, that is what is called the wisdom of true effort. It means that we cannot be too soft – only from this strict practice can our path open.

5. Samadhi

This is our very basic nature. Outside letting go of all distractions and inside to let go of all obstructions, that is the practice of Zazen.

Zazen is only about becoming One. We align our body, we align our breathing and we align our mind. In this way we align ourselves and the world around us. We place ourselves in the right position, straighten our spine in an expansive way, placing the neck and head on top. Like a tower, raising up high towards the sky. This position is most supportive that the state of mind becomes more quiet as well as that it is healthy. We breathe in a quiet and rhythmic way, not making any sounds. This kind of breathing is most supportive for a quiet state of mind. Next we align our mind. Like the Buddha said: we are all endowed with this pure Buddha Nature, but due to confusion and delusion, we do not realize our quiet state of mind. If our mind becomes quiet, then naturally the inherent wisdom can come forth. When something comes up in our mind, to not stop there, but to let it flow like running water. Shido Munan Zenji said: not to think is arriving at the Buddha Nature. If our mind becomes quiet, then Buddha Nature shines through it. From there it can touch all around us, it can touch our family and daily life and can bring peace to what we encounter. And constantly we double check where we are standing and repent our behaviour so that we do not move from an unsettled place. These are the basic values of how human beings can live. If we lose sight of these, then quarrels and misunderstandings happen right away. Then we feel like we are being pulled here and there. Constantly returning to our feet, where they are touching the ground. From there we can work on bringing forth a balanced future. When the feet are standing firmly on the ground, then for the first time we can take a right step, moving our foot forward freely. This is the meaning of meditation.

6. Wisdom

The tradition of Bodhidharma says: to take no thought as the master. In Zen no thought is wisdom. Shonenzoku – the following of clear mind instances, that is our guide. The essence of a mirror is no thought. What that means is to see things, reflect things without adding anything to it. That is the working of wisdom. Bankei Zenji said that our Buddha Nature is like a mirror. When something comes in front of the mirror, we perceive it, but when it is gone, nothing remains. If something dirty comes in front of the mirror, just by reflecting it, the mirror doesn't become dirty. If something beautiful comes in front of the mirror. Just by reflecting something beautiful, the mirror doesn't become beautiful. Because something is being reflected by the mirror, it doesn't make the mirror to become something more beautiful. In this way Bankei Zenji taught, that our true wisdom cannot be gathered from outside, but can only be found in our own mind. That is our original mind, our true nature. We can experience for ourselves that there is nothing being added and nothing being taken away – there our true nature can be found.

We perceive things, we see and hear them, but as soon as they have passed along, no trace is left whatsoever. Like a puppet moving its arms and legs, but there is no self there at all. If we are being asked to show the one who is doing the moving, we cannot find anybody there. But from this place that is not stuck to anything, from there we react to the outside impressions from an empty state of mind. That is the action of wisdom. If we hold onto the images we see and hear, it is not possible to move from clarity and wisdom. For there to be nothing in our mind, that is the truth. From there we can move in a natural way – if we are hungry, we eat. If we are tired, we sleep. That purity of action is the Buddha's wisdom. When we talk about the Buddha's wisdom, we easily think of it as something special. That is a big mistake. True wisdom is the place where nothing is held onto and everything that comes to you can thus be embraced.

Like Shido Munan Zenji said: "While being alive, to die and to die completely. And from there anything you do is good." From there true freedom comes forth. All delusions and confusions thrown away, from there we can move in accordance with this reality's truth. From this inner freedom, the wisdom is being

expressed through us.

Our Buddha Nature does not get touched by however many good things, neither by however many bad things. That is how the Buddha lived, moving his arms and legs, seeing the green willow as green and the red flower as red. And the Buddha also hear the song of the crow or the sparrow in the same way as we can hear it. This is how the Buddha and Bodhidharuma practised, emptying their minds and opening them to this pure experience. If we also realize that our mind is Mu, that it is empty, then our Mu is the same as that of the Buddha, as that of Bodhidharuma. it is this wisdom which every human being is endowed with from the origin, and which can reach to every corner of this universe. Vertically it passed through all three time and horizontally it stretches out through all ten directions. In all ten directions means, if the dog barks we hear it as wow. When we are sad, we cry, when happy we laugh. We can move freely. That is our wisdom, our freedom of mind. All sentient beings were endowed with this wisdom from the origin. Only due to attachments and delusion, searching for something special, we ignore our own wisdom. This wisdom goes above good and bad. To realize this kind of wisdom is understanding the path of the six wisdoms.