

*A STAFF  
for the  
MIND*

*Kokoro no TSU*

*by Shodo Harada*

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*A single flower blooms  
and throughout the  
world it's spring*

*Hana wa hiraku,  
bankoku no haru*

花開萬國春

The connection between flowers and people is not something that can be cut and separated. Having flowers nearby brings peace to our hearts. Flowers always bring to us a feeling of abundant spaciousness. We cannot imagine living in a place that is so dreary it lacks even one flower. A single bloom can bring peace to our hearts; with just one flower, our life feels abundant, and we feel relieved.

The botanists tell us that the first flowers to bloom in spring are the white ones. The yellow flowers come next, and as the weather gets warmer, the colors of the flowers in bloom become more and more vivid. In the blazing heat of summer, the flowers bloom in bright strong colors to go with the sun's bright light. Then, in the autumn all the flowers fall until only one is left, the wild mountain camellia. In the midst of so many dark green leaves, the deep red bloom of that one flower is truly impressive.

Of course, our sense of the progression of colors in the blooming of the flowers will differ according to our location and the time of the year. But over the course of a full year, the botanists tell us, the flowers show these types of changes. During a year many different flowers decorate and affect our lives with their colors and their beauty. Yet in Japan, if one mentions the word *flower*, it always evokes the image of the cherry blossom.

A Single Flower Blooms  
And Throughout the World It's  
Spring



*Flower* here means any flower that blooms in the spring, but more specifically the reference is to the cherry blossom. In Zen, such uses of the word *flower* always refer to Buddha. When the Buddha was on Vulture Peak, for eight years he continually taught the *Lotus Sutra*, the greatest sutras among all sutras. Given when the Buddha was most mature, this sutra teaches the truth of the Buddha Dharma.

Once, while the Buddha was teaching this sutra, DaiBon Ten reverently offered a komparage flower and requested a teaching of the Dharma. What kind of flower is this, the komparage? It is not clear exactly what kind of flower it was, but the literal meaning of the name is "golden wave." It was probably a pumpkin flower or some other kind of yellow flower. We can imagine that the bloom was a brilliant yellow or a shining gold color. When the Buddha went up on the high platform that day, everyone assumed he would begin the teaching as usual. But the Buddha did not speak a single word. Silently, he held the flower up in front of everyone. Because no one had a clue about what he was doing, everyone was silent. Only the elderly Kasho Sonja smiled slightly. At this time the Buddha said, "I have the True Dharma Eye, the Marvelous Mind of Nirvana, the True Form of the Formless and the Subtle Dharma Gate, independent of words and transmitted beyond doctrine. This I have entrusted to Mahakashyapa."

The Buddha's deep understanding of the truth was reflected by Makakasho Sonja at that time, and Kasho Sonja's deep awakening was confirmed. It is taught that here the transmission of the Dharma began. That which has no form is the true essence of our Mind; in accordance with our awakening to that true mind, we can bring peace to all people. This is an awakening to the huge all-embracing mind, a warm huge mind; to awaken to this mind is to awaken to the Dharma. In this way the Buddha's Enlightenment is likened to a flower.

The Buddha is said to have been born on the eighth of April. At the time of the year when the flowers of spring are just bursting forth, in Lumbini under the tree as it was blossoming he is said to have been

born. At that time he spoke and said, "In all the heavens and on earth, only One is holy." In this way he spoke of humans' highest dignity as a treasure.

The Buddha was enlightened on the eighth of December under the bodhi tree near the Nirinzengawa, near Gaya. The Buddha saw the morning star and was deeply awakened; it is said that at this time he said, "How wondrous! How wondrous! All beings are endowed with this same great, all-embracing mind to which I have just been awakened." For forty-nine years the Buddha taught this truth, the truth he had directly realized, of humans' magnificent, deep, clear mind. All over the country he spread this teaching that each and every person has the possibility of awakening in the same way and that to do so is what this life is for—that this opportunity to awaken is the deepest value of this life. A flower blooms and the truth is awakened to: this is what he taught.

All of the Buddha's 5,048 teachings were of this essence. When he held out that flower and Makakasho smiled, the transmission of his teaching to so many people began. In accordance with the Buddha's truth, people's great joy was shown to be of the greatest value.

Finally, at the age of eighty, on the fifteenth of February, under the sala tree's shade, he said, "I taught everyone I could and am finished now, and for those that we can understand the true meaning of our life. To realize this awakening is to give life to the flowering of our existence.

Born under flowers, enlightened under flowers, and passing away under flowers, until the very final peaceful breath, the Great Buddha made Great Nature his mind, and his all-embracing life energy was at one with Great Nature. Breathing as one with this Great Nature, the Buddha was the root source of Great Nature as well.

Each person's awakening gives birth to all people's joy. Each person making the vow to experience this is what gives birth to numberless people's great good fortune and joy. May this be truly realized by every person.

*When the flowers  
bloom the butterfly  
naturally comes*

*Hana hiraite  
cho onozukara kitaru*

華開蝶自來

In a poem Ryokan wrote:

The flower invites the butterfly  
with no-mind;  
The butterfly visits the flower with  
no-mind.  
The flower opens, the butterfly  
comes;  
The butterfly comes, the flower  
opens.  
I don't know others,  
Others don't know me.  
By not-knowing we follow  
nature's course.

The flowers that bloom in the warmth of spring are not blooming for the butterflies. Yet when the time is right, the flowers, without any thought about it, blossom. Nor was the butterfly born because of the flower. But naturally, around the time the flower is blooming, according to necessity, the butterfly moves from flower to flower, taking the pollen from one to another.

The flower opens, the butterfly  
comes;  
The butterfly comes, the flower  
opens.

The flower blooms just as the butterfly is seeking the nourishment it needs. The butterfly arrives to suck the nectar just as the flower is ready to pollinate. Because of the butterfly, the flowers are able to continue and to spread.



In the same way,  
I don't know others,  
Others don't know me.

We wonder why we have an encounter with this person, or why we have become friends with that person. There are so many people and places in the world, why do we live right here and know these specific people? We wonder about people's relationships and see how mysterious these things are. It is not some mission of God, nor have we invented our life according to some calculation. Yet we take each other's hands and help each other out, and in that harmony is born. We wonder: is this some message from that god who creates everything?

Of course the Buddha Dharma does not teach of destiny. What is natural is not a small destiny but a huge, all-embracing spontaneous encountering. Ryokan uses the phrase "nature's course" here. Buddhism does not hold to the law of a God who creates all, a god who makes the heavens and the earth. This is Ryokan's excellent way of saying it roundaboutly and subtly. In Buddhism we also say: "In accordance to the laws of cause and effect."

Our encounters as humans are the same as those of the butterfly and the flower and of everything in nature. They are not ruled by God. Yet we encounter people for a reason. There is a thread of invisible karmic affiliation that ties us together, and we can know the effect of this karmic affiliation when for the first time "By not-knowing we follow nature's course." These are the words of Ryokan, his way of saying it. There is a mystery in this meeting and encountering, but we cannot stop with just realizing the mystery in these connections. We must hold that karmic affiliation precious--cultivating it, giving life to it, and bringing it to its fruition. This is the meaning of this poem.

Okakura Tenshin said that the state of mind of tea ceremony is "to find a simple fragrance in something twisted, in something broken, to find the beauty of completeness." This does not mean to search

purposely for something twisted and broken, but to give life and bring fulfillment to all of the things with which we have karmic affiliation, without wasting anything or needlessly throwing it away. There is nothing that can no longer be used or that is so poor it cannot be given life in some way. In all things there is a truth and a life. The wisdom to know how to use each thing is the Buddha Dharma.

In the lineage of tea ceremony masters there is one master named Sotan. Sotan had a good friend who was a priest, and this priest sent Sotan a very unusual white camellia. The priest gave this particular flower, which was so perfectly blooming, to a young monk and told him to take it to Sotan. Of course that young monk was still so young that he had no heart of flowers or heart of tea, and as he went about his errand he played, causing the flower to fall off its branch. Since he was an honest young monk, he took the fallen flower and its branch to Sotan and apologized.

When Sotan was given that flower, how did he receive it? He said there is no use for a flower without a branch, and there is no meaning in a fallen flower. If you throw it away it is useless, and you can't reattach it either. He sent an invitation to the priest to come for tea. As the priest entered the tea room, he saw in the main alcove a branch with no flower, and just below it was a white flower, fallen, yet placed beautifully and naturally.

Camellias fall easily from their branches, and the flowers on the narrow mountain path have a profound feeling. Making use of that branch with no flower, of that fallen flower, of that young monk's mission to bring the flower, and of the great honor of that priest's sending of the flower, Sotan gave life to all of these. In the way he did that, he expressed the true way of a Master of the Path. He knew the Mind of Buddhism and gave it life.

The meeting of the butterfly and the flower, the meeting of one person with another: in these is our karmic affiliation. We must give it life, and the doing of this needs our wisdom.

*In the spring colors  
there's neither high nor  
low*

*Shun shoku koge naku*

春色無高下

In the springtime, as March begins, the ice melts and the severe winter chill loosens its grip. In the warm sunlight, plum blossoms bloom, peach blossoms bloom, and apricot blossoms bloom. In all directions signs of spring become evident, one after another. The insects start to fly, seeking the sweetness of the flowers, and the birds sing. Everything that has endured the hard winter all at once expresses the great joy of this time.

In the poem of a person of old it is written,

Without sound  
Without fragrance  
The rain, the earth,  
Without stopping,  
Continuing today, as always ...



*Flowering branches,  
some long, some short*

*Kashi onozukara tancho*

花枝自短長

... This is the way of Great Nature, the sutra that embraces all. In this sutra of Great Nature we find the truth, and there we can receive it directly. As the flowers of spring and the songs of the birds and the warm wind embrace us, we experience that this truly is heaven.

Yet each of us has experiences and memories, dualistic perceptions and strivings. All of these become a part of our

outward perception, so that our view of Nature is always limited by our narrow awareness. We can describe and attempt to explain this Great Nature, but receiving it directly and without hindrances is very difficult for us.

The Buddha Dharma is the letting go of those experiences and knowledge. That mind with no stain of mental understanding and dualism, that which sees the thing simply, just as it is: that mind is precious. When we let go of that stain of mental understanding, when we let go of those extraneous thoughts and see the thing exactly as is, then everything we see is true and new and beautiful. This is a matter of course.

When someone has deeply understood the Buddha Dharma, whatever they encounter is the Buddha, just as it is. No matter what is encountered, there is nothing that is not the Truth.

When we see something and do not recognize it as the truth, that is not the fault of the thing we are looking at. It is because the eyes of the one looking are not true, with too many explanations and discursive thoughts obscuring our vision.

Doing zazen, we open our mind and let go of all preconceived thoughts and extra thinking, and then we can see with a simple, direct awareness. When we see in this way, there is no longer any separation between what is seeing and what is being seen. No explanation or ideas about what is being seen can be added there. Exactly what we are seeing is our own life energy. Not holding on to any subjective preconceived idea, we match perfectly with what we see, and there the truth and world are brought forth spontaneously. If we have no subjective opinions and preconceived notions, then we have no stance of a personal view, no small-minded "I." The objective and the external world are perceived and received exactly as they are, at one and with no separation. This mind of nothing at all and no extra mental associations meets with the objective world, and there is only that oneness. What we see and what we hear is all truth. One blade of grass or a single flower, whatever we see, is the truth. There is nothing that is not the Buddha.

From the origin we have a mind like a clear mirror. To know this directly and completely is satori. That empty mirror gives rise to many associations as it encounters the outside world. When we become that emptiness completely, the world is born forth, clear and empty. Then, whatever we encounter, we become it completely and directly. This is important for us. It is the subtle flavor of zazen and is the mind of Buddha and of God. When we see things from this mind, we see that the southern branch of the tree is long and the northern branch is shorter, although the same warmth of spring touches both.

In the Spring color's there's  
neither high nor low  
Flowering branches, some long,  
some short

This is the truth. Long is not absolute, and short is not missing something. We need to see everything in society that way as well. When we are with an elderly person we become that elderly person and can say, "Yes, it must be so lonely, so hard." When a child comes, we are able naturally to sing and play with the child in the child's way. When we are with a sick person we can say, "How painful it must be! This is so difficult! Can I rub your back? How about this medicine?" If there is a poor person we ask: "It is so cold. Can I give you some clothes or food or a little bit of money?" We become that state of mind naturally when we know that mind of the mirror, the mind of Buddha or God.

We see a pine and become a pine; we see a flower and become a flower. It is the same with a mountain or a river--we become them when we see them. This is our simple, plain, natural mind. What we see and that which is seeing it are one and the same. We have to express that truly, and from there poems are born as well as various crafts and arts. From there we have the energy of making things. From there we have the purest way of seeing, and this is where the Buddha Dharma lives.

## *A fragrant breeze comes from the South*

### *Kunpu minami yori kitaru*

熏風自南來

The wind that blows from the green woods is fresh and cool. In the heat of summertime, the wind that comes to us across a shaded glade is called a fragrant wind. A fragrant wind could also be a soft drifting wind from the south—a wind that is fragrant of the south. The wind from the north is a strong robust wind, and the wind from the west is also powerful. The breeze from the south is soft and gentle and liling.

A fragrant breeze comes from the south  
In the palace pavilion a refreshing coolness stirs

The breeze that blows through the shade is expansive and wide-open. It has a clean and refreshing fragrance that is truly reviving and settling and liberating for our body and mind. These words, written by a poet of the Tang Dynasty, Ryu Ko Ken, are about nature and its way of being. They are about the true nature and the season, but the Zen mind can be found in them as well.

Kumpu minami yori kitaru  
Denkaku biryo o shozu

A fragrant breeze comes from the south.  
In the palace pavilion a refreshing coolness stirs.

The Emperor Buso Kotei wrote a poem in which he said:

Everyone suffers in the severe heat,  
I love the long sunlit days.

In summer it can be intensely hot, and although today we have air-conditioners, those have not been available for so very long. The heat doesn't become a problem in the northern countries where summer temperatures remain pleasant, but in the southern countries there is only nonstop heat along with unbearable humidity. Many cultures have developed ways not only of surviving the severe winter cold but also of dealing with the intense summer heat. In the olden times houses were built with enormous windows through which the sun could shine for warmth in the winter, but that warmth was not wanted in the summer. For the summer, houses were built with a wall to the south and positioned so that they would not gather heat from the ground. But Buso Kotei said that while everyone dislikes summer, he loves it, that it is a wonderful time. The days are long because the sun comes up early and goes down late. Isn't it wonderful how much work you can get done during one long day? In response to all of the people who

disliked the summer so much, Buso Kotei said that in fact he truly loved the summer. This is how he put it in his poem. It was in response to this poem of Buso Kotei that Ryu Ko Ken wrote:

A fragrant breeze comes from the south.  
In the palace pavilion a refreshing coolness stirs.

The luxurious big castle and its gardens are surrounded by green woods. In the shining summer sun, that green comes to life and from its shade a cool breeze blows through the palace, reaching from corner to corner. How refreshing! It is an excellent season for reading a book, without any sense of being hot at all! In this way Ryu Ko ken wrote in response to the poem of Buso Kotei. But in fact there is an additional piece. Sotoba, a person of Zen who was deeply awakened, read these lines of Buso Kotei and Ryu Ko Ken and added to them another poem, addressing the words of the emperor's poem:

Reflecting once again on the trials that made this day possible,  
Please don't just say how wonderful and long these hot days are,  
Rather, make this offering of coolness possible for all the people.

Our essence of mind is constantly changing in response to the environment. For Buso Kotei and Ryu Ko Ken and for those who live in a palace with big rooms and space for a refreshing cool wind to blow through, the summers may be cool and the days may allow time for lots of work to be done and for one to become absorbed in one's reading. The summer's excellence that is sung of here can truly be a reality. But the possibility of living in a huge and expansive palace is not available for most people. How many people can actually taste this state of mind? In this world most of us are sweating and working, and we rarely have time to spend enjoying the breeze. For those who work in severe conditions and live in narrow rabbit hutches of homes, poor and small, without a green forest surrounding them, for those who are working outside and sweating or are unable to sleep because of the deep heat that



hides in the houses at night, in that terrible heat of summer everyone begs for autumn's coolness to come even one day sooner.

The world does not provide everyone with an environment that can be enjoyed. Sotoba in his poem asks the emperor not to be satisfied with his own pleasure but suggests that it is more appropriate for the emperor to vow to bring that pleasure and comfort to all of the people. To vow to provide comfort for all the people--isn't that the work of the emperor? Will the emperor who loves the long days of summer from the cool of his own palace, in that wind that blows from the forest through his large rooms, please share that pleasure with all of his people as well? In this way Sotoba poetizes.

Hearing Sotoba's words, we can see what a high-class luxurious world of elitism the emperor's lines can represent! Sotoba was a people's poet and always in his writings expressed the common person's state of mind. The emperor, from the emperor's own point of view, was writing of his own joy and experience. Their poems reflect a difference of position. In this way we are always viewing the world in terms of differences in class and position and dividing people into those with money and those without, those who live in luxury and those who don't, those who are intelligent and those who aren't, those who are rich and those who are poor, those who are old and those who are young. In this world people are always living within difference and prejudice. It is the problem of the politicians to resolve the challenges of prejudice in our day-to-day lives, but how does this work in terms of the Buddha Dharma? To see this is very important.

It is the aim of politics to take care of the external problems that arise from these prejudices. But when did these prejudices come forth? In Buddhism we are always looking directly at this very moment. Right here, how is it? This is the central point. The world of prejudice and differentiation cannot be ignored. The Buddha was challenged by how to end the suffering of people within the pain of that world.

The heat of summer is not the only

heat. Even in the autumn when the weather is cool, if we have a pain in our heart we are hot and uncomfortable. We then need to let go of any attachment to good and bad and let the cool breeze blow in our mind. This is not something that can be done all at once; it is not so easy to become the state of mind of Buso Kotei all of a sudden. Yet even in a small apartment we can become empty minded, and then right near the open window we sit and enjoy the breeze that comes by, letting it into our heart. When in the coolness of evening we can enjoy that breeze free from any painful state of mind, our mind will be the same as that of Buso Kotei in his huge palatial cool rooms. In fact, our mind will be even more easy and comfortable if we can keep from being caught by the grasses of good and bad, but sit right down on them and enjoy the cool of evening. Letting go of being caught by thoughts of good or bad, pretty or ugly, sad or glad--letting go of those thoughts that we fight with and become so hot about--doesn't change the reality of the heat, but we will no longer be pulled and pushed around by these thoughts, or become confused and suffer pain because of them. No matter how far we take it, if we cannot let go of those thoughts we will be miserable and hot inside and suffer.

Ryo to tomo ni zadan shite  
Hachimen seifu o okosu

When you have cut off both  
heads,  
From every direction the pure  
wind rises.

Within our minds there is a place beyond dualistic perception. Even if we have problems in our daily life, if we can cut away all thoughts of good and bad--putting them right under us as if we are arresting them--and enjoy the evening cool, then no matter where we are is a spacious palatial room. And this is the state of mind of the Buddha. To put it another way, this situation, this position we hold on to and pull along behind us, is what creates a world in which we cannot stand to be. But if we have the spaciousness to swallow it all down and take it all in, then any time, any place, the fragrant breeze is blowing.

*Bamboo*  
*For you the clear wind*  
*rises*

*Take kimi ga tame ni*  
*yoyo seifu o okosu*

竹為君葉々起清風

Bamboo has from olden times been a symbol of purity and simplicity, and it is even said that it has the atmosphere of the sage. In bamboo there is a joint that separates the lower and the higher. Because of these joints, bamboo is flexible enough to bend over and then stand up again. And because it is empty inside, bamboo is pure and can contain no dishonesty. In the ancient Chinese teaching bamboo was held in high esteem as an example of these many



qualities, and its presence taught us to be flexible yet strong.

As we watch the wind that blows across the bamboo grove, causing the bamboo to sway, we feel cooled. The words of this calligraphy, "For you the clear wind rises," are those of Priest Kido Chigu Zenji, who lived in China in the thirteenth century and was teacher of the Japanese Master Daio Kokushi, Nampo Jomyo Zenji. Kido Chigu Zenji left behind the Kido records of the Patriarchs with his poems expressing his wisdom on the case. There we find this poem:

Who can know it?  
On the way to visit the desolated  
ruins,  
The Temple of Kanzan, Jitoku,  
After visiting our good friend,  
He accompanies us warmly to  
the gate.  
The nearby clump of bamboo  
sways  
Sending us off with the clear  
wind.

This poem by Priest Kido is full of the deep profundity of the sage and expresses our deepest human feeling.

From far away good friends have come to visit. Since they are stopping on the way to another destination, the visit cannot be for long, but as the visitors and their host talk for the first time in a long while, they stay up all night, without even noticing it. As the dawn breaks it is necessary for the visitors to depart. As they say good-bye at the main gate, the wind is blowing and the bamboo in the grove is swaying, and it is so hard to part. It is such a profound moment, not knowing if they will meet again in this lifetime. Our encounters are always moments of "one time, one opportunity."

In the Buddhism we also have the words:

All things that are born will die  
All things that meet will separate

Where there is birth there will be  
death  
Where there is meeting there will  
be separation

To meet is the beginning of parting; meeting must always be accompanied by separation. Even if we meet again, our encounter of this moment will never be duplicated. Even when we have only a small amount of time, to be together is something to be deeply thankful for, a very mysterious karmic connecting. Meeting with people is always a matter of karmic connection. Thinking about it like this, the parting becomes so poignant. It is the truth of our life, and each time we meet with someone, every moment must be held precious.

In Rodenburg, Germany, on a main entrance gate it is written in Latin:

to give people traveling a place to  
rest  
to give people who pass a smile  
to those who leave, to wish good  
fortune

Our parting and meeting should always be just like this. From our deepest mind we offer our best wishes that as we travel we will find safe water and healthy food and that the journey will go well. In life we are always and continuously traveling. Within that journey, we are thankful for all of the many people we encounter, and we wish them all the freshness of that clear wind.



*Walking, I reach the  
water's source*

*Yuite wa itaru  
mizu no kiwamaru tokoro*

行到水窮處

In his definition of zazen, the Sixth Patriarch says that "Za" is to not add any thoughts or concepts such as good or bad to that which arises externally. The external world is divided into objective and subjective, and everything in it is relative. All things are transient in this world; everything changes constantly, and we see people as good and bad, stupid and smart, sick and healthy, old and young, male and female.

...



*Sitting, I watch the  
clouds arise*

*Zashite wa miru  
kumo no okoru toki*

坐着雲起時

... These are all emotional expressions full of insults and praise. "Za" is the place where each thing is only reflected. Not disliking what we encounter or pushing it away, but being completely open, we can receive everything, just like a mirror. When we receive this world exactly as it is, with no associations being given birth to, we reflect each thing exactly as it comes to us. When we are not attached to any experience or opinion of our own, we can reflect everything exactly as it actually is.



When we receive each thing just as it is, just as it comes, we are not caught in any way by a small self. Zen is to know our mind's essence from within, with nothing lingering there at all. We need to establish that essence firmly and not be moved around by external things, receiving everything as it is and not leaving anything behind to be held on to, not even a speck. To see within and not be moved around by anything that comes along: this is zen. The Sixth Patriarch defined "za" and "zen" in this way.

Za means to not move our mind. We do this not by struggling, but by drinking down everything that comes along without imposing any judgments on it, going beyond all dualistic and relative ideas and simply reflecting whatever comes to us. Swallowing it all down, we don't feel small or narrow. This endless expanding mind, this huge limitless essence of mind, is Za.

Takuan Zenji wrote to Yagyu no Tajima no Kami, the kendo master, a letter that is found in *The Unfettered Mind*, a collection of the kendo master's records. When we have a serious challenge, the kendo master said, it is important not to move our ideas and thoughts around, not to move our mind around. What does it mean to not have our mind be moved around? It is usually interpreted as meaning that we should be like a tree or a rock, just standing there. But if we stood like that when being attacked by a swordsman, we would be slashed through immediately. The unmoved mind is not one that stands still. Rather, Takuan teaches us that it is one that is not caught by any thing or any thought. If our mind gets caught, right there a gap appears. The instant we are caught on the opponent's condition or stance or power or the sword's position, our movements become unskillful. Nor should we become caught on the position of our own sword or our own stance or position; the instant we do, there are gaps and cracks in our attention. For our mind to not be moved around doesn't mean to be dull and unfeeling but rather that we are full and taut in all the ten directions. This is where we find the subtle flavor of zazen.

The unfettered mind is one that is stopped nowhere; it moves in all ten directions and does not become stagnant. If the opponent has a gap, we naturally can push if the opponent pulls and pull if the opponent pushes. We naturally match perfectly with the movements of the opponent, and if there is a weak moment we can then strike. So often we think in terms of another's weaknesses and strengths, good or bad qualities. We look at others with judgment and criticism and in doing that feel our own existence more deeply, it seems. Looking at a person's good points and weak points and not judging them does not mean that we negate those qualities but rather that we are not pulled around by them.

We become like a mirror that simply reflects what it sees. If a man comes in front of it, the mirror reflects a man; if a woman comes in front of it, it reflects a woman. It reflects an old person as an old person, a young person as a young person, a sick person as a sick person. It reflects each thing exactly as it is. If it doesn't reflect everything it is not a mirror. Still, as a mirror is reflecting, it does not judge--this is unmoved mind. This is Takuan's unfettered mind. Our mind is capable of seeing everyone's good and bad places, and seeing them clearly. But if we judge another we are raising ourselves up and praising ourselves as we do that. To raise ourselves up and praise ourselves means we have attachment to our position, and if we hold on to our position of course we become caught and moved around. We cannot hold two points at the same time, so of course our mind moves around.

If our mind does not move to criticize and judge, then our mind is not being moved around and we reflect things exactly as they are. This is zazen. We can then work freely, and our mind's essence is stable. This is the subtle flavor of zazen, and as we ripen we are able to realize the continuous clear mind moments. In each and every moment's encounter we know the truth; we reflect what is before us and leave behind no remnants or stains, and the essence of these continuing clear mind moments is zazen. This is our daily state of mind when we know a correct way of be-

ing in mind. In the world of the butoh dance this way of being is to just put our mind in front of us, not concerned in the slightest way with how we look or how the audience is receiving us. It is the same with our work. Zen is to see everything around us broadly, but the point is also to be doing the work. With continuing clear mind moments, not being pulled and confused by small-minded emotions, our zazen is alive in our daily living.

In our daily life, by living freely and not being moved around we give life to this state of mind. In this way of functioning we are zero in mind, like a mirror which is zero to begin with. Yet it is not about being void. We are full and taut in very part. To be full and taut within and without, completely: this is our truth. Continuous clear mind moments bring us to where in and out are one, and without losing our essence we know deep samadhi.

In his writings Yoka Gengaku also teaches of how all beings are equal. In the Song of Enlightenment it is written:

Have you not seen the idle man  
of Tao who has nothing to learn  
and nothing to do,  
Who neither discards wandering  
thoughts nor seeks the truth?  
The real nature of ignorance is  
Buddha-nature;  
The illusory empty body is the  
Dharma body.

After realizing the Dharma body,  
there is not a thing;  
Original self nature is the innate  
Buddha.  
The five skandas--the empty  
comings and goings of floating  
clouds;  
The three poisons--the vacant  
appearing and disappearing of  
water bubbles.

When the real is experienced,  
there is neither person nor  
dharma.  
In an instant the avici karma is  
destroyed.  
If I lie to deceive sentient beings,  
May my tongue be ripped out for

kalpas uncountable as dust and  
sand.

With sudden enlightenment to  
Tathagata Ch'an,  
The six paramitas and myriad  
means are complete within that  
essence.

In dreams there are clearly six  
paths of sentient beings;  
Upon awakening the great  
chilicocosm is completely empty.

There is no sin or merit, no loss or  
gain.  
Don't look for anything in this  
Nirvanic nature.

The Sixth Patriarch says, "Cut off all  
ideas of good and bad concerning the out-  
side world. Then without giving rise to any  
ideas of what rises and falls, we sit." This  
is the world of "Sitting, I watch the clouds  
arise. Walking, I reach the water's source."

*Scoop up the water and  
the moon is in your  
hands*

*Mizu kikasureba  
tsuki te ni ari*

掬水月在手

This is also one of a pair of lines from a poem:

Scoop up water and the moon is  
in your hands,  
Toy with flowers and their fra-  
grance scents your garments.

These two lines are found in the records of Master Kido. Of course, these lines were taken by Master Kido from a longer poem elsewhere.



To not do bad, to do good; to clarify our original mind: this is the basis of all Buddhism. To do no harm, to give life to all good, to clarify our mind--there is nothing more essential than this in the teaching of the Buddha.

Human's true mind is from the origin like a mirror. All things can be accepted by this mirror; its abundance, its width, is the most basic quality of human beings. A mirrorlike mind is a mind where there is no separation between a self and an other. It is a warm, receptive mind. Like a mirror, it has no sense of a small self. When our mind is like a mirror, we can express ourselves with clarity and simplicity. Then, when we scoop some water into our hands as if we were washing our own face, the brightly shining moon up in the sky is reflected back to us, just as it shines in the sky. This is a very mysterious state of mind. And not just the moon, but also a child, an elderly person, a sick person, a bird, a flower, a man, a woman--everything that is reflected--can settle there. It all settles right into our own hands.

This pure clear mind is the Buddha's wisdom. This is the warm mind that can receive another's joy as our own joy, and another's suffering as our own suffering. We are not only our physical bodies. We have feelings as well, and we can become perfectly matched with another's state of mind. With this mind and deep wisdom we can know another's deepest joy and wisdom as our very own. This function of the mind is called the compassion of the Buddha.

While we have this original nature from the beginning, we are not able to live in this way because we mix many impure things into our mind. For this reason the teaching of the Buddha says that first we must purify our mind. To purify our mind, quiet is of the utmost importance. If our mind is quiet it becomes pure of its own, and the extraneous noise naturally settles down.

Scoop up water and the moon is  
in your hands

That moon shining in the sky and  
the moon in our hands become one and

the same moon, matched perfectly. This is the meaning of this poem and the very important teaching of the Buddha. Mind and Body are one being. This is the functioning of the mysterious not-two.

## *Manifest completely the Golden Wind*

*Tairo kinpu*

脛露金風

These words are found in the 27th case of the *Blue Cliff Record*. They are the words of Unmon Bunne, the master who was so well known in the Tang Dynasty. The wind of the house of the Unmon line was known to be golden like this. Unmon used words like "kan," or gate; "ro," or revealed; and "liii," or nonsense. Short yet fully manifesting the truth, those brief words offered a succinct and deep expression of the truth.



脛  
露  
金  
風

They had an immeasurably deep profundity, a mysterious truth, while at the same time expressing a very high quality state of mind. It was probably in the later part of Unmon Bunne Zenji's life that a monk came to him and asked, "How is it when the tree withers and the leaves fall?" The monk was asking: When all of the small storms and large storms are over and all of the leaves have fallen and the branches are bare, what is this like?

The question is not only about nature but also about humans' state of mind when we have finished suffering from the desires and attachments of life, when the ignorant and greedy and angry mind has become quiet and we are no longer thinking about this and that, when the problems of life and death and nirvana are no longer a consideration. When no explanation is necessary, when there is no longer any distinction between an ignorant person and a Buddha, when every difference has been swept away, that state of mind a finger can't touch--how is that? This is the question the monk was asking. With this statement alone he showed that he had the essence to be able to ask such a question. He was saying, "I have no more need for desires and attachments, for becoming a Buddha or being concerned with birth or death." He was asking how a person like himself with no more desires or confusion or delusion--how someone with a state of mind where all of that has been extinguished--could become liberated.

Thus he asked, "How is it when the tree withers and the leaves fall?" The monk had experienced that place where all the leaves and flowers have fallen, like the Buddha in Nirvana, and was asking how to deepen further. Of course we have to experience and pass through this state of mind as well, or we will stay deluded and be thrown around by every little thing that comes along. When every thought blows us around, no human trust is possible. If we cannot experience thoroughly this state of mind of the monk, we cannot call it the Buddha Dharma or say we have realized Zen.

But there is a dangerous trap here. This monk who has come forth with this state of mind is carrying it around with him,

pointing it out and sitting firmly right on top of it. This is his joy and his satisfaction, but if he stays there, satisfied, how will he work with those people who are suffering in society? How will he resolve that responsibility? He could remain stuck in this great trap. This serene and clear state of mind is the source point for liberating those in society who are burning up and suffering deeply, but if we sit down and remain on that source point, how will we be able to bring liberation to those people?

"How is it when the tree withers and the leaves fall?"

This state of mind is the ultimate point of zazen. Doing zazen we think about this and we think about that; we have all kinds of problems. But as we continue with our zazen we forget our body and align our breathing, and little by little as the thoughts rise and fall, rise and fall, and we continue aligning, finally our body and our breathing become settled. Within our mind the waves and winds settle. This serenity with nothing to think about--without any extraneous thoughts--is the ultimate point of zazen.

Yet while this is the ultimate point of zazen, if we think this is absolute that is a great big trap, and there is no freedom there. Only interested in our own good fortune, we become narrow and rigid. Our zazen is not for our own personal happiness; there can be no such narrow conditions on it or we are turning our back on society and only searching for our own personal pleasure. We fall into idealism then. Even when we know this ultimate point of zazen, its essence is still insufficient.

As Takuan Zenji taught, when our mind is unmoved, not stopped on anything, this is the state of mind of truth. While reflecting everything that comes along, the unmoved mind does not linger anywhere. In just this way Takuan Zenji describes also the essence of zazen. For our zazen to become ripened does not mean that we hold on to an idea of nothing at all. Rather, we become truly full and taut, like a balloon that is ready to explode at the slightest touch. With this state of mind of being full and taut, stretched completely full, we can face all of the problems and

challenges and heavy sufferings of society without being pushed and pulled. We can traverse the heavens and traverse the earth. With this state of mind, while being in the middle of all of those challenges, we drink them all down. To be in this state of mind is living zazen.

Unmon Daishi answered this monk without hesitation, "Manifest completely the golden wind!" With every part of our body and being--in every pore--let ourselves be poured through by that golden wind. The golden wind is the autumn wind, the wind that crosses the skies during the rich, full harvest. As all of the crops--the rice and the wheat--ripen and bear fruit, those full and abundant ripened plants form a golden sea under the great blue sky, vividly alive and stretching as far as the eye can reach. That refreshing wind that blows across that golden sea under the blue sky, that autumn wind, the harvest wind, blows everywhere. This ripened, abundant state of mind is what Unmon responded with. The monk came to Unmon Daishi with a withered winter state of mind, where all living things have passed away, where nothing remains alive, and to this monk Unmon Daishi replied, going beyond that, "Manifest completely the golden wind." Expand throughout the heavens and throughout the whole earth!

From this state of mind Unmon Daishi in a few words went beyond all human delusions and problems and sufferings, even the question of life and death. As the priest Ryokan also said,

When we are to meet a calamity  
The best way to avoid calamity is  
just to confront it.  
When the time to die has come,  
The best way is to meet death.

Instead of becoming overwhelmed by what comes along, this state of mind of Ryokan drinks all of it down, and then sees how to live through it, how to give it life. This state of mind is not chilly and reserved, but drinks all of that down as well. When the challenges we face are so overwhelming they take our breath away, at that very time, how can we give life to our deepest wisdom? Instead of being crushed by a difficulty, how can we make use of it, how

can we give it life? All of humanity's wisdom for resolving these questions is included in this fullness of the golden wind.

Ryokan's words are not about running away or escaping life's reality. When our zazen has ripened and ripened and ripened, we forget our body and forget our thinking, and with our interior essence we extend throughout the heavens and the earth. Without this full tautness, when we find ourselves in severe and challenging circumstances we will not be able to see clearly how to resolve them. Our zazen is not about depending on a world where "the tree withers and the leaves fall." The ultimate point of zazen is to do it from the very top of our head to the very bottoms of our feet, with every cell and pore completely and totally. When our state of mind is so full and taut it reaches every corner of our being, with this body we know the fullness of the universe. Fresh and new, we again and again create a new world and give life to all things. This state of mind is our truth. If there is any delusion or confusion mixed in there, or if thoughts about something else arise, then this essence becomes diluted and fades. If we have any self-conscious awareness or awareness of being like the tree that withers and the leaves that fall, our zazen does not expand in this way.

For our zazen to ripen and our mind to open, we have to realize that absolute possibility and freedom and love of all people, to become a true master in this way. We must awaken to this state of mind. Where is there happiness or good fortune other than this in life? Unmon Daishi is speaking from the state of mind of a master of the world of zen as he answers this monk's question. This place which hadn't been reached yet was completed with his answer.

*Opening the door,  
the Autumn leaves are  
piled high*

*Mon o hirakeba  
rakuyo oushi*

開門落葉多

This is one of a pair of lines:

Listening to the rain, I end the  
cold night.  
Opening the door, the autumn  
leaves are piled high.

A footnote in Toyo Eicho Zenji's Zenrin Kushu tells us that these lines are by the poet Buko Shonin. They describe listening all night long to the lonely sound of the rain falling and then finding, upon opening the front door in the morning, that the ground is covered with newly fallen leaves.

This is the meaning of the poem. That sound I heard last night and thought was rain was in fact the leaves falling and hitting the edge of the eaves.

The priest Ryokan, born in Japan, wrote,

The wind has brought enough  
fallen leaves to make a fire



This was the state of mind of Ryokan when he lived in the hermitage named Gogo-an, in Echigo, in Niigata prefecture. Today, in these modern times, we find ourselves far from the path of Ryokan. When Ryokan was living in Gogo-an, he would put the falling leaves to use in his daily life, using them to oil his rice or as a fuel. At that time he truly lived in oneness with nature.

Around us now we have every possible tool. We are overflowing and flooded with possibilities. In contrast to that, this very simple and plain way of life of Ryokan is no longer common: being alive each day, receiving that living state of mind that we have been blessed with by the heavens, knowing this quiet and peace.

As we welcome the twenty-first century, the most basic rule, to know what is sufficient, has once more to be looked at carefully. Humankind's great insecurity comes from having forgotten what is sufficient. We live without any satisfaction, always wanting more and more and bigger and bigger. We are drowning in dissatisfaction. Only by knowing what is sufficient will we be able to rescue ourselves from this plight of overconsumption, of absorption with amount rather than quality. This does not mean to get rid of all of our desires, but rather to awaken to something of a greater essence. We must rebalance this planet's limited natural resources and recharge it with our mind, or this world will decay beyond any hope of recovery.

In the world of things as well, rather than wanting so much, we need the wisdom to use what we have and to make things of essence. Rather than always acquiring new things, we need to be able to make do with what we already have. We must have the wisdom to know how can we use what we already have. Today the garbage we produce is making us suffer and bringing destruction. This is true in terms of our mind as well: we think so many things, holding on to so much in our mind, that our mind has no space left in it. Instead of thinking so many things and wanting so many things, we need to cultivate the mind's quiet spaciousness. I must make this commitment or I myself will be destroyed. When we see it in this way, we

know that state of mind of Ryokan.

But even for Ryokan this world of knowing what is sufficient was not readily apparent. Ryokan himself was unable to cure his own heart's deep problems, and so going against his father's wishes, he became ordained. But the world of ordination could not satisfy his artistic mind. A craving for fame and other desires were still following him around, and he knew that as a human he had to clear out that murkiness of mind. He left training and returned to Echigo, where he made his home in the hermitage in the mountains. He went on alms rounds begging food for his lunch and at night did zazen in the hermitage. Sometimes he would teach the children of the small village, and wherever he went he was an example of spaciousness of mind. Just through his presence he offered a lesson in that way of being.

The state of mind of that priest Ryokan was one that had let go of desires and attachments, let go of ideas of a world of enlightenment or of essence. These ideas and explanations of things had all been dropped, and he was deeply absorbed in a state of mind free of these. Of course, he had not let go of the vow to liberate those who suffered. While keeping this vow strongly, he knew human spaciousness and held that precious.

Hearing the rain,  
quiet,  
and then the moon again.

As we listen to the rain's quiet sound,  
the quiet of our mind deepens.

Ryokan had thrown away every bit of human's self-indulgence. We are always depending on something, always wanting to rely on someone or something. Every bit of this indulgence was given up by Ryokan. One who has thrown away all of that can immediately smile and be in that place of abundance and quiet, no matter what might come along. This is the meaning of "Opening the door, the autumn leaves are piled high." It is that place where a person has thrown away every single last bit of indulgence and reliance on something external. These are words that come forth from abundance.

*Afternoon sun  
embraces  
the winter woods*

*Kanrin sekiyo o obiru*

寒林帶夕陽

In spring we have the flowers, in  
summer the nightingale,  
in autumn the moon, and in  
winter the cool snow.

Dogen Zenji sings of our original face  
in this way. In the green mountains of the  
Japanese springtime we find blooming dog-  
woods and wild magnolias. Many white  
patches appear in the mountains while the  
air is still chill on our cheeks. Eventually all

the mountains are blessed with purple aza-  
leas, and within them, here and there, we  
find pale pink mountain cherry blossoms.  
This is the Japanese spring.

As the flowers begin to fall, the  
young green leaves are starting to deepen  
in color. As the leaves darken, the wisteria  
flowers can be seen marvelously draping  
down from the highest branches. As the  
plums and the peaches and the cherries are  
blooming, the voice of the meadowlark can  
be heard telling the mountains to be  
"mine." As the middle of May arrives, the  
meadowlarks are singing loudly. Then, in  
the strong sunlight of summer, the cica-  
das, holding precious their very brief  
lifespan of only a few days, can be heard  
everywhere, in the shade of the green trees,  
living their dream.

In the very hot summer the west  
wind blows, and then the colors begin to  
change. In the morning as the mist is ris-  
ing from the lake, the frogs continue their  
song, and the leaves begin to tint into a  
gorgeous brocade. The yearlong variety of  
ever-changing mountain scenery brings the  
bright mountains of the moonlit night, the  
fresh mountains of dawn, the severe moun-  
tains of the wind-blown rain, and so many  
more, but the deepest essence that can be  
felt, I think, is that of the winter woods.  
The colored leaves have fallen to the  
ground, leaving the woods pure with na-  
ked branches. The pale light that crosses  
the forest bathes the far mountains in its  
dimness.

At this time, the scenery is most  
peaceful. The tea master of the master Rikyu  
was Take no Jo. For expressing the essence  
of the mind of tea ceremony he borrowed  
a poem by Fujiwara Teika.

Wherever one looks there are no  
more colored maple leaves or  
flowers,  
Only the small hut in the autumn  
twilight

This is the serene state of mind of nir-  
vana. Here desires and extraneous think-  
ing have all been cut away completely. The  
way of nirvana is quiet and clear. When we  
actually taste this state of mind, for the first  
time we know from our own experience

that "this very place is the land of lotuses  
and this very body is the body of the Bud-  
dha."





*Every snowflake falls in  
its place*

*Yuki bessho ni ochizu*

雪不落別處

This poem can be found in the 42nd case of the *Blue Cliff Record* and also in the records of Layman Pang. Like the words of the householder Vimilakirti, which became famous all over China, these words from the records of Layman Pang became well known as well. Layman Pang and his wife and son and daughter all understood Zen deeply and lived an enviable family life of advanced dharma exchanges. The very high quality of Layman Pang's deep understanding was what enabled him to lead his family in this way.

雪不落別處

Layman Pang did sanzen first with Sekito Kisen Zenji (700-790) and then with Baso Doitsu Zenji (709-788), and he received transmission in the line of Baso Doitsu Zenji. Yakusan Gigen Zenji (745-828) was the successor to the line of Sekito Kisen Zenji, and Pang lived at the temple of Yakusan for seventeen or eighteen years, practicing there as a layperson. When Pang left that way of training, Master Yakusan sent ten monks, including the most senior monk, to see him off. Their temple was probably deep in the mountains, far from the mountain gate, and it was most likely snowing that day. But after training with Pang for seventeen or eighteen years, the monks were not going to let him leave without any gestures of farewell.

Layman Pang also had to make a farewell offering of some kind. He pointed his finger and said, "Every snowflake falls in its place." He was saying, "This snowy scenery is marvelous! If that snowflake was the only one, it still wouldn't fall in a different place." This is what he offered to the monks.

Then a monk named Zensan asked, on behalf of all the monks, "You say it wouldn't fall in a different place, so where would it fall?" Before this sentence was out of the monk's mouth, Layman Pang said in a loud voice: "Can't you see that it is falling right here?" And he slapped the monk Zensan across the face.

Zensan hurriedly responded, "Layman! What are you doing? Don't be so rough!"

To this Layman Pang said, "If you think that is the behavior of a well-developed monk, when your life ends and you are standing in front of King Enma, the King of Death, and having your life judged, a monk like you will receive a bill for all the meals you have eaten during your training!" In this way Layman Pang tested the monk Zen Zenkaku.

Zensan then said, "Layman, if you put it like that, then what would *you* say?" He challenged Pang, as if to say, if you can put me down for that, what would you yourself say?

And Layman Pang slapped him on the face again, and said, "What are you talking in your sleep about—you're not worth wasting any actions on!"

Layman Pang had offered them a great feast, and no one could partake of it. Then Layman Pang left briskly.

All of those countless snowflakes that fall from the sky—where do they fall? We watch them, without knowing where they will fall. That snow falls without stopping, and its pure whiteness stretches in every direction.

Hakuin Zenji wrote a poem at the age of twenty-nine when he lived at Inryoji Temple in the town of Shinoda. He had been doing yaza for an entire night, and now the dawn was awakening and the snow and the morning sky were one single color. It was completely and deeply silent; there was not a single sound anywhere. For Hakuin, who had been doing yaza all night long, there was not a single thought left in his mind. Not a single speck of a thought. Everything that he saw and the emptiness inside were one and the same as the snow that fluttered down. "This sound—who can hear it?"

But even if it can be heard it still does not surpass the functioning of Layman Pang. From this state of mind the body and the mind both fall away completely. We lose any sense of a small self; the shell falls away and we are free and liberated. We are only coming into being in accordance with what is necessary. Without borders or limits we then know the functioning of Layman Pang for the first time. We live in that world always. But if we still hang on to existing in the world of the third person, we will not be close to even dreaming about this world of samadhi written about by Layman Pang and Hakuin.

*The pine tree is green  
for a thousand years*

*Shoju sennen no midori*

松樹千年翠

This poem, whose origin is unknown, is often used to convey congratulations or to celebrate the arrival of the new year. It is put up on the wall as a wish that good things might continue for a long time.

Originally, in Zen, temples meant pine trees, and pine trees meant a Zen temple. One doesn't usually plant many flowering trees in Zen temples. To make the temple grounds green, it is much more common to plant pines.



One day when Rinzai Zenji was still at the temple of his teacher, Obaku, he was planting pine trees all by himself. Obaku Zenji appeared and asked Rinzai why he was planting pines when the temple was already deep in the forest. "Why do you need to do that?" he asked. This was of course Obaku's kindness, and he was testing Rinzai's state of mind.

Rinzai answered by saying, "First, to improve the appearance of the temple grounds. Second, to mark the road for people who come after." Then he tapped the ground twice with the head of his hoe. This is referred to as Rinzai's first deep karmic affiliation, and it is a very famous episode.

"First, to improve the appearance of the temple grounds. Second, to mark the road for people who come after." Rinzai was saying: I am planting these pine trees to preserve the deep greenness of these mountains, to protect their freshness and their quiet, and for it to become a place of training--for this to be continually cultivated I am planting these trees. I am also planting them because a widely awakened monk named Rinzai practiced here, so that those who come later will see these pines and burn in their training and complete it fully. With this vow I plant them.

From that time on the planting of pines has been a symbol of the Dharma becoming deeply established and abundant. When we look up at the sky and see those pines we think about Rinzai. He said it all like this and hit the ground with his hoe, Bang Bang. What was he saying? "I spoke unnecessarily--I can't be found there!"

Rinzai's deep state of mind is expressed here. Maybe he needed to answer something, but there is no need to leave a mental explanation behind. This was his state of mind. The Buddha Dharma does not belong to a single person. From the olden times we have the words "great efforts with no results." While making great efforts, while applying ourselves completely and diligently, we must not expect any results whatsoever. We must not be caught on any possible outcome, calculating what

might happen; we need to let go of all of that.

Whether it is a gain or a loss, it has to be done. We practice wholeheartedly with this state of mind. Zazen is not just sitting down on our cushion. For our entire life, all day long, every day, we get rid of extraneous actions and keep that state of mind clearly. This is the way of life in the dojo. Every day we clean the floors. Every day we sweep the gardens.

We wash the floor even though we know it will get dirty again soon. It gets dirty, and it gets dirty again, and yet as each day comes we clean again, and again we rake smooth the garden. This is the place of truth of the dojo. It may appear as if we waste so much effort and energy, yet people always moving their bodies and actually working and manifesting activity is the way of zazen. Within that we must always be imaginative and creative, but that does not mean being trivial, calculated, or manipulative. Within our mind we have a deep vow. We cultivate the garden, we even may walk a path that seems impossible, but we do it without being in a hurry and with firm certainty, and within that there is the deep cultivation of the Dharma.

*Every day is a good day*

*Nichi nichi kore kojitsu*

日々是好日

These words were spoken by the founder of the Unmon line, Unmon Bunne Zenji, who lived from 864 to 949. Unmon Daishi once said to an assemblage of his students, "I won't ask you about the days before the fifteenth of the month, but give me a phrase about the days after."

In the Zen dojo on the fifteenth day of August there is a ceremony called the "urabon." According to the Buddhist teach-

ings this is about Mokuren Sonja's mother having fallen into the hell of hungry ghosts and suffering terribly. Seeing her there, Mokuren was astonished, and with his supernatural powers he went to save her, bearing all kinds of food.

"Mother! You are so skinny and starving and suffering—please eat these things I have brought for you! I brought this food for you, so that you will be able to eat." Saying this, he laid the food in front of his mother.

His starving, skinny mother, who was so thankful and happy, said, "Mokuren, thank you so much! I haven't been able to eat for days and days and I am ravenously hungry. Thank you so much!" Having said this, his mother turned to eat the food. But as she began to put the food into her mouth, it immediately turned into flames, and she couldn't eat it. Even with his powers, there was nothing Mokuren could do to change this.

Next he said to his mother, "Well then, how about something to drink?" I brought drinks too. Please drink these!" As he said this, he handed a drink to his mother. But at the very instant that she started to put it into her mouth, it too changed into flames. She couldn't eat and she couldn't drink. Even when the food and drink were right in front of her mouth, no matter how hungry and thirsty she was, she couldn't eat or drink. He saw the suffering of his mother and was so disappointed at the inability of his own powers to cure the situation that he went to the Buddha to ask him for help.

The Buddha said that even the most advanced person may think that his or her own child is more adorable than another person's child, may think that his or her own family is more lovable than anyone else's family. This kind of belief may easily find a home in any person's mind. Yet this belief is what brings pain and suffering in the world. The Buddha told Mokuren that most people in society live with this very belief, and his mother had fallen into that hell as their representative. The Buddha also told him that this offered a way to liberate society.

Then the Buddha told him to do

training for ninety days with this deep vow. The *dojo*, or place of training, had one continuous training period from April 15 to July 15, during which time the people in training there could not go anywhere. The Buddha said that, if an offering was given on the last day of that training period for everyone who had repented and spent those ninety days purifying their minds and becoming clear, then for the first time with that pure mind his mother could be liberated. This is what the Buddha told Mokuren.

On the fifteenth of July, when the three-month training period is formally finished, there is a traditional reviewing of one's behavior during that time. Even today this practice is continued just as it was started during the time of the Buddha. It was on this very day of the fifteenth of July that Master Unmon said to the gathered assembly, "Without asking you to say anything about yesterday, what do you say about the days after the fifteenth?" He was saying, I am not asking you about the past. How is it right now, right this very minute? Each of you—answer this now.

This kind of challenge is the way of Zen. Without any concern with what was of yesterday, how is it in this moment, right here, right now? The living energy of this moment at hand—this present instant—this is the alive place of Zen.

What has already passed will never return. This does not mean that we should not look at our past actions and review our behavior. There is nothing so important as that. But the best way to purify our past unskillful behavior is to be totally attentive to our footsteps of this present moment. And if we worry too much about things that have not yet come, fretting about the future and how it will be, we will only narrow our mind of this present moment. We cannot let go of the actuality we are encountering in this very moment; we cannot let this very precious opportunity escape. To live in this very moment with all of our innate wisdom and full, taut energy is the Buddha Dharma.

As has been said from ancient times, "If you want to see the past karmic affiliation, look at the face of the present moment. If you don't know what the face



of the future will be, look at the karmic affiliations of the present moment.” This is how it is seen. All of the results of the past are manifested in this very moment. And the future? If we look at the present thoroughly and clearly we can see how the future will be as well.

If we can see the present clearly and correctly we will not make mistakes in the future. Yet this one moment of the present is gone in a flash, so it cannot be held on to in our consciousness. In every single moment, our life energy is born anew; in every instant it is freshly born. When we are not attached to the past or the present or the future, we flow along in each instant—not attached to anything that we experience, just flowing along like a gurgling river. To experience this is satori.

On the fifteenth of July, Unmon said, “I won’t ask you about the days before the fifteenth of the month, but give me a phrase about the days after.” Since nobody could respond to his excellent state of mind, Unmon answered for them, “Every day is a good day.” Not one single person could come up with an answer, so he had to answer for them.

These words of Unmon are truly excellent words of peace. We use them often, but what is important is whether or not we can truly and consistently be in this state of mind. In what way was Unmon Daishi saying these words, “Every day is a good day”? Was he just saying today is fine, today is fine, like some yes-man? If so, there is no need for Unmon Daishi to appear here to say this to us. For Unmon to come forth there must be some actual quality and essence manifested.

Yet people of training, even during the ninety days of a prescribed training period, don’t have such a great effect on their environment. This world is full of contradictions. Things don’t go as we want them to—this is the way the world is. A mountain crumbles because of a typhoon. While sound asleep each person in a whole family is pushed to death by a train. In one instant of a great earthquake people are trapped under collapsed houses. Whole families are destroyed. Or, from an unexpected accident, a person is suddenly unable to work for the rest of his or her life.

Even though it is said that the world is about how we carry our mind, with just the decisions of our mind we cannot stop our pain or our death. When Unmon Zenji said, “I won’t ask you about the days before the fifteenth of the month, but give me a phrase about the days after,” this essence was about cutting away all traces of any previous conditioning or previous experience, about not holding on to any history or any past happiness, about cutting all of those away and actualizing true wisdom and then living single-mindedly in accordance with it. The actualized essence of this is very necessary.

The priest Setcho Juken, who lived from 980 to 1052, wrote poems on the one hundred cases of the *Blue Cliff Record*. On this case of Unmon he wrote,

OMOMURO NI YUITE  
TODAN SU RUSUI NO KOE  
HOSHIMAMA NI MITE  
UTSUSHIDASU HIKIN NO ATO

Walking along I step to the  
sounds of the running water,  
My gaze, wandering at will, lights  
on the wake of birds on wing. ...

*Walking along I step to  
the sounds of the  
running water*

*Omomuro ni yuite  
todan su ryusui no koe*

徐行踏断流水声



*My gaze, wandering at  
will  
Lights on the wake of  
birds on the wing*

*Hoshimama ni mite  
Utsushidasu hikin no ato*

縦観寫出飛禽跡

Unmon's "Every day is a good day" is manifested in Setcho Juken's poem. As I begin walking along the roaring river, I can hear the loud sound of the water, but as I walk along, without knowing it, I no longer hear the sound nor am I even aware of it. The sound and I have become one; there is no longer a someone listening to it.

This poem illustrating the words of Unmon is not only about a strongly flowing river but also about our daily lives. As we take the rake in our hands and sweep the garden, we forget the great width of the garden and we forget our own physical body. We even forget that we are cleaning, and that is when we are actually clean-

ing the most efficiently.

Walking along I step to the  
sounds of the running water,  
My gaze, wandering at will, lights  
on the wake of birds on wing.

People of old also gave us the poem,

When playing the shamisen  
Don't play it with your fingers,  
Play it with your Mind.  
Play it without playing,  
With a quiet mind.

We forget ourselves, we forget the shamisen we are playing, and our mind becomes transparent and clear, like the fine notes that are played.

When we are at one with the work we are doing, this is the state of mind with no division between inner and outer. This is the ultimate point of full tautness. This is also called the unmoved mind, but it is not an isolated mental understanding of an unmoved mind. This is an actual experience that gives birth to a direct perception of "every day is a good day" and is also the actuality of that unmoved mind.

Walking along I step to the  
sounds of the running water,  
My gaze, wandering at will, lights  
on the wake of birds on wing.

Going beyond our self-conscious awareness and dualistic perception we realize this full, taut state of mind which is always flowing in perfect accord with circumstances. It is not a mind that stays in one place and becomes stagnant. Holding on to nothing at all, it manifests in all the ten directions, in accordance with circumstances, always functioning freely. This is called the true master and this is called wisdom.

No matter what is encountered we are not moved around by it in any way whatsoever. When we are full and taut in our inner essence, then,

Walking along I step to the  
sounds of the running water,  
My gaze, wandering at will, lights  
on the wake of birds on wing.

This full, taut state of mind, functioning freely, manifests as wisdom, and that is the meaning of this poem. When this state of mind is viewed from the inner side, it is deep samadhi; when it is viewed from the outer side as functioning, it becomes deep wisdom. It becomes the mountains, the rivers, the stars; it becomes the moon; it becomes the birds flying by with no trace—each and every one of the ten thousand things is perceived completely and then, when finished with, is let go of completely.

In every life we have days that are sunny and days that are rainy. We have days when we gain and days when we lose. We have struggles and we have good fortune. Having all varieties of states of mind is what our life is. That mind which experiences all of these yet clings to none of them is our healthy state of mind.

Unmon said, "Every day is a good day" to express this healthy state of mind. To this Setcho Zenji then naturally added,

Walking along I step to the  
sounds of the running water,  
My gaze, wandering at will, lights  
on the wake of birds on wing.

This state of mind of deep samadhi where nothing can obstruct or disrupt us, no matter what may come along, and this essence are expressed by these words of Setcho.

The freshness of each day's encounters is realized when in each moment and in each situation we become one with it completely, leaving nothing behind. This is the functioning of true wisdom. This actuality is "Every day is a good day." In our daily life we are able to realize this truth, and if we see this clearly we can see that "Every day is a good day" is the way of mind of the Buddha Mind, of our clearest mind, and to this we are moved to deeply prostrate.



*A mountain of  
happiness  
ten thousand  
leagues high*

*Jusan banjo takashi*

壽山萬丈高

These are words of celebration. They are usually put on display for New Year's or sent for someone's birthday. For all people, to be able to live a long life is a greatly desired ideal. Maybe there are some who say they want to live a short life, but that is an eccentric view. To live a long life if at all possible is our great hope. Especially in China, where the elderly are shown great respect for their years of experience, to live a long time and manifest that merit is a



natural preference.

For expressing this we have the words "A mountain of happiness ten thousand leagues high." To live a long time is to be like a soaring mountain. To realize the wish of a long life is to be respected by many, like a soaring mountain is looked up to. We all want to live that kind of a respectable and fulfilling long life.

Money can buy most things, but our lifespan cannot be increased by paying money. Today with the progress of medical research it has become possible to affect the ending of our life, but there is still not a way to extend the lifespan of a person. Each person has a particular length of life, and seeing it like this we see how living a long life is preferable. As in China, many people everywhere respect and appreciate a person who has lived a long life, and that way of seeing is an expression of a healthy mind and also creates a secure and stable society.

Yet while wanting to live a long life, we have to look carefully at the nature of that life. We attempt to live in an aligned and balanced way, although sometimes we push too hard or overdo, trying something beyond our ability and potential. But if we look at our life carefully, we won't do things that are not in keeping with its best way. This does not mean to become hard and fixed with ideas about how we should live. When we hold today's life precious, we know from a place of essence how to live today in the best possible way, not pushing and forcing or going against the Way. If we live in alignment, our everyday life will remain balanced. We won't be working too many hours or getting too little sleep. We will live carefully and not try to push things in a way that makes others suffer and that makes us suffer as well. When we live in the way that is most appropriate for our own capabilities, we can bring comfort and security to others' minds as well. We become a person who has a feeling of abundance rather than a trivial and bothered feeling of smallness. Those who live from a feeling of abundance do not push and force themselves, nor do they push and force others. They don't abruptly start running around or suddenly express themselves in a confused and meaningless way. They see things thoroughly and clearly

and carefully and move in a way that brings harmony and peace to everyone around them.

When we can be like this, we are trusted by others, and when we are trusted by others, we can fulfill our truest potential, and then we live in accordance with the words that those who are trusted by others live a long life. Without our even knowing it, little by little, our life's length increases. This doesn't happen just from some idea or wish to have a long life. Our abundant mind is expressed in every aspect of our daily life, and it is expressed as well in every aspect of the lives of everyone around us, and of all the living things around us.

It is said that at the time of the Buddha people usually lived for thirty or forty years, and that he lived to the age of eighty. In his own life, the Buddha exemplified this way of living. As he walked he would carry a staff that made noise so that any insects along the path would know he was coming and be able to avoid being stepped on. Even the larger animals were protected by and would protect the Buddha. To avoid any risk of falling into the river and drowning, he was very careful with every footstep, and when he drank water he always filtered it with a piece of cloth so he would not carelessly drink down a small insect. In this way he lived his everyday life giving great care to all living beings. In every direction he took care that he wouldn't unnecessarily kill any living being, meticulously seeing through it all. He was not just teaching a doctrine to be understood by intellectuals. He actualized what he taught in the way he lived.

This is clearly the way of "A mountain of happiness ten thousand leagues high." It is a very balanced teaching, offering not just intellectual content but also a way of living what is being taught. In this way the Buddha kept his sight on so many, many lives. This is a very important thing to do.

*Good fortune and long  
life,  
Beyond measure from  
the vast sea*

*Fukuju kai mu*

福寿海無量

The Buddha was also referred to by the name of Chifuku Ryosokuson. These words as well, “Good fortune and long life, beyond measure from the vast sea,” are used in China and in the Orient for celebrative occasions. Within the blessings, *ju* and *fuku* are both included. *Ju*, as written here, is “long life,” and Bodhidharma *fuku* is “good fortune.” These are humans’ most simple and common wishes—to live for a long time and to have a life that is sufficiently



supplied. This is not about being hardened with greed for something.

It is written here that these blessings come without measure from the sea because in the olden days so many gifts were abundantly brought from the sea. In addition to the many fish used for food, other products from the oceans, such as seaweed, coral, and pearls, were especially treasured. Today we have the problems of pollution, with the dirtying of the water of the oceans, yet we still continue to receive countless bounties from those waters.

Just as in the story of Rip Van Winkle, it is said that only a year passes in the ocean for each one hundred years passed on land. Thus, from the ocean comes long life. This is how people used to believe and what these words are expressing.

As the Buddha’s other name indicates, he taught the correct way to live in accordance with the truth of the Dharma. To awaken to that truth was to realize satori. To give rise to our Bodhisattva vow and to live for the sake of all in society, to vow this for our entire life, is to realize the eternal truth. This is humans’ correct way of living, the true path. We become the guiding light for people in society and one whom people can trust and can believe in. This is to be blessed for one’s entire life and to be lacking in nothing.

To apply this sense of the fortunes in the sea, and the long life of the world of the sea, to all of society is to give our life for everyone in society. One who vows to do that can let go of small-minded attachments and give everything for society. To let go of our attachments and offer everything to society: this is the truth of the Buddha Dharma. Then, the truth becomes the correct way for a society to live, and we can become a guide for many people and bring them joy. As a matter of course, this way of living is respected by people in society, and that is why those who follow it won’t ever be lacking in food, clothing, or a place to live. We only see society with our two eyes, but as we give everything to

society its members see us with many, many eyes. This does not mean that we are depending on their thankfulness; rather, when we become the way of society and give everything for society, people will not ignore our needs in return.

Please, see these words in this way and see how it is that when we offer everything to people in society, then society becomes the source of limitless blessings.

## *Sitting alone on Daiyuhō Peak*

### *Dokuza daiyuhō*

獨坐大雄峯

This phrase was given to us by Ekai Zenji (720-814), who lived on Hyakujo Mountain. Hyakujo Ekai Zenji left the work *Hyakujo Shingi*, which contains all the rules and instructions for our way of life in the zendo and the monastery today.

Chinese Zen had finally fully arrived in China at this time, in accordance with the records of the Sixth Patriarch. Instead of engaging in a solitary practice, most

people practiced together at temples. Under the guidance of those who followed the Sixth Patriarch, Nangaku Ejo Zenji and Seigen Gyoshi Zenji, and those who followed them, Baso Doitsu Zenji and Sekito Kisen Zenji, Zen flourished from North to South.

When people of training, those who are “like clouds, like water,” began to gather together in larger groups, it became necessary to establish a more formal system. Some of those who came to the monasteries were not suited for training, so there needed to be appropriate rules for being able to do training.

It was at this time that the best arrangement for the temple buildings—the geomantically correct outline of the monastery—was prescribed. The ceremonies for each day and each year were decided, along with the rules of daily behavior, the forms for the various ceremonies, the divisions of the sutras, and also the way of doing zazen. Our way of guiding inner practice, the sangha’s way of being together and moving together, drinking tea together, taking offerings from people, and the very way we move in the zendo today were all decided by Hyakujo Zenji and can be found in the *Hyakujo Shingi*.

There are many aspects to the way we practice Buddhism that were not found in the way it was practiced in India. One example is the custom of everyone working together on one particular job, today’s *samu*. In India labor and working were not a part of practice in order to avoid any chance of accidentally killing insects while hoeing a field or making a garden. Because such work goes against the precept of not taking life, the monks in India would do *takuhatsu*—go on begging rounds—each day, and they depended on what they received for their livelihood. In this way they practiced. But in China, when two hundred or five hundred or a thousand people would gather to practice together, it was not possible to feed everyone through begging. It became necessary for those living in a temple to raise food and become self-sufficient. From the time of Hyakujo Zenji, doing *samu* became a necessity and an important part of practice.

Hyakujo Zenji carefully planned

and decided all of these rules. We consider Daruma Daishi, also known to us as Bodhidharma, and the Sixth Patriarch to be the Patriarchs of Zen, but for the Zen sect itself one would have to say that it is Hyakujo Zenji who is the founder. Hyakujo Zenji not only decided the basic rules, but at the age of ninety-five he was still living them. We often hear the words “A day without work is a day without food.” These words came forth from the true way of living of Hyakujo Zenji’s humble and practical mind and from his deep integrity.

In his later years, when he was well ripened, a monk asked him, “What is the most fortunate thing in this whole world? What is the thing in this world for which we should be most thankful?”

People often think that in a religious context there is some greater power to be thankful for, that there is some mysterious power in religion that goes beyond scientific understanding. We each have to look very carefully and meticulously, for ourselves, at what it is in our own life for which we should be the most thankful.

“What is the most fortunate thing in the whole world?” Usually in a religious context one would say God or Buddha. Yet if the way that God or Buddha is perceived is dependent on one’s belief, one’s culture, one’s education, and one’s experience, how can God or Buddha be that which is equal for each person? As Shotoku Daishi wrote in his “Constitution,” it must be “that which is the same center for all people and all countries and is equal in all beings.” There has to be a place all beings come to, a place where we are established and settled that is the same for each and every person. If we are not realizing this place, then we cannot liberate all beings. If we get to this point, then there is no longer any way to add there a name of God or Buddha. Then there is not even a word *fortunate* that can be used to describe that which all beings experience in great wonder and feel with amazement. If we don’t dig to this point, then we don’t realize the thing that is most true, the thing that is most important, the thing to be most thankful for.

This monk was not simply using this question to enter the gate. This was a truly unusual question for that time. This



monk already had a glimpse of experience, something he had seen, a view that he lived by, something that he had sufficiently realized. Yet while having realized that, he also was looking at how he was answered, and if he had been answered in a formal, automatic way he would have completely swept the response out from under him. He had a very sharp essence, and he dug into Hyakujo with that sharpness. If he had been answered with Buddha or Dharma, he would not have been satisfied at all.

To this question Hyakujo answered, "Sitting alone on Great Hero Peak."

This was beyond the monk's expectation of an answer. If we taste thoroughly the meaning of "Sitting alone on Great Hero Peak," we can see how not a single word or even half a word can get near it with mental understanding or rational explanation. These words have that much of an actuality to them.

Probably the monk who had come forth with this question could not respond with a single word. There was no way to get near this answer by Hyakujo.

Hyakujo Zenji said, "Sitting alone on Great Hero Peak." Great Hero Peak was the name of the mountain where his teacher lived, and as a place of practice it was known for the strictness of both Hyakujo and his teacher. Hyakujo mountain had so many peaks and depths it was impossible to know them all intimately. Probably Master Hyakujo had places in himself that were also like this.

Religions originate with a true deep experience. We wouldn't call something a religion that lacked this great deep experience. To know this experience we have to walk alone, to know that we are alone, to be alone. Religious experience is a question of each individual's true being and each individual's own deep clarity. We don't receive this from others. We cannot become truly clear and secure from something we receive or share with someone else.

"Sitting alone on Great Hero Peak." Here we have the Great Peak and Hyakujo—or is it Hyakujo, the Great Peak? The actual true essence of Hyakujo is pouring through these words, and we can see his state of

mind here. This great state of mind is not chasing after anything; in his footsteps he is not holding on to his body even the slightest bit. There are no desires to hate and no enlightenment to seek after, no hells to be afraid of and no heavens to make requests to, no deluded people to look down on and no Buddhas to look up to. That joy and pain of the world are all right under Hyakujo's sitting cushion. This is the most fortunate place.

What is the ultimate place? My sitting right here. The words are simple and direct. We walk the ground with our own two feet. Not depending on Gods and Buddhas, with our own experience we know this place. There is nothing truer or more real than this. Here is eternal time and space—now, on this very one point. Without knowing its deep actuality, what is there? This life's energy—for it the sun shines and the air embraces us and the water soothes our thirst, the birds sing and the flowers bloom, all the people of society communicate and work and hope that we will all continue without difficult incidents in our daily lives. Among all people, there is not one who is without this splendor, or why would they have been born?

"Sitting alone on Great Hero Peak." This is truly obvious, and with this we can see the amazing central point of all religion and culture.

## *Sogen's one drop of water*

### *Sogen no ittekisui*

曹源一滴水

When the monk who would become the National Teacher Fukusho joined the monastery of the founder of the Hogen Line, Hogen Buneki Zenji (885-958), he had already been with Master Sozan for many years. Because he thought he had already realized enlightenment, Fukusho just lived at the monastery, without even doing sanzen.

One day a monk asked Master



Hogen, "What is the one drop of water of Sogen?" The monk was asking: the great Dharma, the truth, the Zen that was transmitted from the Sixth Patriarch, what is it? He was asking about the essence of the teaching of the Dharma that flowed from the temple, Sogen, of the Sixth Patriarch. "The one drop of water of Sogen" was how he was referring to this great truth.

When he asked, "What is the one drop of water of Sogen," Hogen answered without a pause, "THIS is the one drop of water of Sogen." This is how Hogen answered, saying, "That which is asking is that one drop of water of Sogen!" But the monk who had begun this koan exchange did not understand the meaning of the answer he received. He prostrated and left.

When Fukusho, who was standing behind the monk, heard that exchange he was suddenly deeply enlightened. Although he had thought he was already enlightened at the monastery of Sozan Roshi, he now knew that there had been still further for him to realize. He had not yet fully understood. But now his state of mind was thoroughly ripened, and at that one expression by Hogen he was completely and totally awakened.

The words "Sogen's one drop of water" are about the flow of one drop of water—of the essence of the dharma—from the mountain of Sokeizan, the mountain where the Sixth Patriarch's temple stood. This is the ultimate point of Zen where words and phrases cannot reach. It is the truest place of Zen, the Sixth Patriarch's pulse of truth.

In Okayama there was a master named Gisan Zenrai Zenji who made excellent use of these words. A monk training with him at Sogenji was deeply enlightened upon hearing these same words and even took the name of Tekisui Zenji, or One Drop of Water Zenji. This episode is passed along at Sogenji.

In the year 1837, when his teacher Taigen Shigen Zenji died, Gisan Zenrai Zenji became the abbot of Sogenji and raised disciples there. Many monks gathered at Sogenji to train, often more than one hundred at a time. Among them was one named Giboku Zenji. One day Giboku

Zenji's job was to prepare the bath for Master Gisan; he was nineteen, old enough to believe he understood how to do things well. Giboku Zenji had first gone to Kyoto to train, but he could not find a good teacher there and had come to Okayama when he heard that Master Gisan was an excellent teacher. In those days there was no spending money for a poor monk, and while he had a great huge vow, he came to Okayama impoverished and walking in broken sandals. He did sanzen with the Roshi, but instead of being able to offer a gift of incense to the Roshi for the incense used in sanzen, he made do with a brush holder that someone had bought for him.

Giboku had been at Sogenji for only a short time when it became his turn to make the bath for the Roshi. The bathwater was a little too hot, so he brought buckets of water from the well and cooled the bath down. When it was sufficiently cool he set down the last bucket, in which a few drops of unused water remained. Then, before going to bring more water, he dumped those last few drops out onto the ground. Since he was going to get more water, he probably thought those last few drops weren't necessary.

Gisan Zenrai Zenji saw that and said to him, "What did you just do?"

"I went to draw some water."

"Before you drew the water, what did you do?"

"I threw away some old water," Giboku answered simply.

"If you do training with a mind like that, no matter how much training you do or how long you train, you will not awaken. That bit of remaining water, if you dump it out there—how can it be used? If you take it outside and put it on some plants, then the plants will be given life, and the water will also be given life. If you give it to the cucumbers in the garden, the cucumbers will be helped and the water will be satisfied too!"

It is the work of one who is ordained to give life to everything, but that cannot be done with such a lack of mindfulness. Giboku was reprimanded in that way. Since he was nineteen he had thought he understood already. When he was reprimanded he realized how little he actually

understood and that something as simple as one drop of water, a single drop of water, had taught him that he had to start over again in his training. This he did, later becoming a great Zen Master.

Of course, today water is generally available, although there are still times and places where it is scarce. We often carelessly and thoughtlessly use water unnecessarily. As the raindrops fall from the sky, one after the next, they land on the leaves of the tree, or the trunk of the tree, or the stone wall, and only when all these drops come together can a small stream be born on the earth. These small streams meet and join, and with this gathering a river is born. When the waters of many rivers all join together, an ocean becomes possible. To put it another way, the source of the ocean is the drop of rain that falls from the sky. One drop of water. Each and every one of these drops has its own functioning. A small amount of water has its functioning, and a large amount of water has its functioning. To be able to use the potential of any amount of water, be it large or small—this is our deep wisdom. To be able to make the best use of the potential of the amount of water we have is humans' wisdom. Zen is the cultivation of the clear and deeply seeing eye that can know and appropriately act in each and every situation that comes along.

This is not a wisdom having to do with trivial and minute bits of information but instead one that can see all the way through to the essence of things. It allows us to make use of each thing, no matter what it might be, and give it life. This depth of Mind is Zen. In this way Gisan Zenrai Zenji was constantly enlightening his disciples. Tekisui Giboku Zenji, who received his teaching, used that wisdom and gave it further life.

Just before his death, Tekisui Zenji said,

The one drop of water of Sogen,  
For seventy-four years  
It was used, never exhausted,  
Throughout the heavens and the  
earth.

Saying these words he died. For seventy-four years Tekisui used the splendid teaching he had received at Sogenji about the preciousness of water. He used it and thoroughly gave it life, but it was impossible to use it up.

If we use money, it gets used up. If we use things for a long time, they get worn out, but when teaching is used it becomes more and more radiant. For his entire life Tekisui gave this teaching the functioning that extended through the heavens and the earth. Thanks to this teaching that functioning was possible. Using water as a metaphor, he taught about Buddha Nature. This truth, this awakening of the true eye, is what he was teaching about.

In fact, from the line of Gisan Zenrai Zenji also came the head abbot of Engakuji in Kamakura, Imakita Kosen. Imakita Kosen's Dharma line was carried on by Shaku Soen, who, at the World Congress of Religions more than one hundred years ago, gave the first Buddhist teaching in America. Shaku Soen's disciple was D. T. Suzuki, who is one of today's foremost translators of Buddhist teachings into English. That one drop of water, one drop of teaching, that Dharma, is being given life all over the world today.

In Kyoto, Myoshinji monastery was opened by Gisan Zenrai's disciple Ekkei Shuken, and the monastery of Tenryuji was opened under Tekisui Zenji. In Osaka, in Sakae, Nanshuji monastery was opened. Gisan Zenrai also raised Shokokuji's Daisetsu Joen and Ogino Dokuen. When we look closely at this, we can see that more than one hundred years ago, that main stream of Zen came forth from the overflowing wisdom of that drop from Sogenji, and from Japan it has flowed into countries all over the world.

The Sixth Patriarch's teaching, with water as the metaphor for Buddha Nature, was given great respect by Gisan Zenji. He actualized it in his teaching of disciples. From that time and continuing through today as well, that teaching is being given great life.

*The straight mind is the  
path*

*Jikishin kore dojo*

直心是道場

These phrases all come from the words of Vimalakirti. The Buddha, knowing that the layman Vimalakirti was resting due to illness, asked his disciples to go and visit him. But since all of his main disciples and the Bodhisattvas had had difficult experiences with Vimalakirti in the past, they each in turn refused, saying they couldn't go.

Koun Doji was one of those who was asked to go and visit and who said that he could not. ...



*Every footstep is the  
place of practise*

*Ho ho kore dojo*

歩々是道場

... He explained that one day, after he had been walking around in Vaisali, as he was about to leave the city he met Vimalakirti, who was just returning. He spontaneously asked Vimalakirti where he had been, and Vimalakirti replied that he was coming back from the dojo. Since of course there was no dojo outside of the Buddha's dojo in the castle of Vaisali, Koun thought this was very mysterious. So he asked Vimalakirti to explain.

Vimalakirti then answered, ...



*Clear wind arises with  
every footstep*

*Ho ho seifu o okosu*

歩々起清風

... “The straight mind is the dojo! If you think that a dojo is a place or a building, that is a problem! If you think of it as some building that you can come into and go out of, or separate from, then the essence of your mind will be always changing. The Buddha said, ‘If you continually actualize this Dharma wherever you are, then the Dharma Body will be ever realized, and that is without death.’ When the Buddha was saying this, was he talking



about a dojo of form and location? The straight mind is the place of practice, the dojo. Dojo is the mind which is straight, simple, and clear. It is an honest mind that does not deceive one’s true self—this is what a dojo is. A dojo, as it is, is Shakyamuni Buddha. And this is why the Buddha said to Ananda, ‘Go to your Self for the guiding light, take refuge in your Self. Go to the Dharma for your guiding light, go to the Dharma for your refuge. Do not go to others for your refuge.’”

In another place Buddha also said, “Those who see the Dharma, see me. Those who see me, see the Dharma.” The times may change, there may be no temples or buildings for worship nearby, yet whether we are working in the forest or walking in the city, wherever we are, that is the dojo.

In India today there are many sacred sites, but where is the living Buddha? Because our body is born we have death: this is the delusion of birth and death. To be freed from that delusion is called “liberation.” The Buddha also said that if death seems sad, then we have to quickly free ourselves from that delusion of birth and death. To do that we do not hold on to any thoughts of anything in our minds. There is the pain of living and dying, or there is that world of no pain. And where is that world of no pain? It is right in our own mind, the Buddha taught. If we know that Mind, then the panic in our heart is resolved immediately. “This very place is the land of lotuses and this very body is the body of the Buddha.”

If our mind is liberated, then everywhere we go, each and every place, the clear wind rises. If we can understand the Dharma taught by the Buddha in our deepest mind, then every day we can live together with him. This is true if we live as part of the forest sangha, but it is also true no matter where we are. In any of the farthest corners of the earth, we are never separated from it. Every footstep is the place of practice.

*Only one bar of iron for  
ten thousand miles*

*Banri ichijo no tetsu*

萬里一條鐵

The great and well-known Master Joshu (778-897) lived a truly long life, dying at the age of 120. When his state of mind was deeply cultivated and he was at a ripe old age, a monk asked him, "I am yet unable to awaken to the Truth. I have knocked on this door and tried at the next, reading this book and that, like a roaming wild dog, full of desires and attachments. In someone so ignorant as I am, where could there be anything like a Buddha Nature?"

The monk was humble, straightforward, and sincere, with that actual question and confusion that monks must face. Elderly Master Joshu replied, "MU."

Since the time of Joshu, people of training have used his words for shaving our flesh and crying tears of blood. Putting our life on the line and scraping away our life energy we become tools of attack. Now, even one thousand years later, he is a monster we can't touch. With this word "Mu," Joshu was not negating the Buddha's teaching of the truth of our quality of Buddha Nature.

One sharp layperson who saw through this clearly has said that delusion or confusion is a division in awareness. Shortly after we are born we begin gathering all kinds of information, experiences, and ideas. We cannot live without being in dualism, yet this is a source of delusion, the actual substance of our suffering. With this Mu, Joshu cut through all of that awareness completely.

Joshu's Mu was made widely popular by the person who compiled the collection known as the *Mumonkan*, Mumon Ekai (1183-1260). He himself worked on this koan of Mu in sanzen, struggling with it for six years. When he heard the drum in the hondo, he broke through completely.

Master Mumon Ekai had abundant experience and struggling, and he wrote of this Mu koan subtly and profoundly. Those who are putting their lives on the line with this koan can see how kindly and from what actual experience he was writing. Mumon Ekai Zenji wrote that to experience this state of mind of Mu one must become completely one with this Mu. With our whole body and with our whole mind, we concentrate everything into this one word of "Mu" and melt completely into that Mu. We become that Mu completely, all day long, from morning until night and from night until morning, becoming totally that breath which is Mu, making our awareness into a sword of Mu and with it cutting everything that we encounter. We cut everything that comes into our awareness through our eyes, our ears, our nose, our mouth. If for one week, one month, one year we cut away everything that sways our awareness, continually deepening, we will

naturally enter into the samadhi of Mu. He teaches kindly in this way. He knows exactly what he is talking about because he has experienced it directly.

We then become at one with the heavens and the earth. Any space between the subjective that sees and the objective that is seen disappears completely. We are settled smack into the full tautness of Mu. Only right here can we know that truth prior to our separation. We return to this, and for the first time we know the very source of our pain.

The people of old called this the state of mind of no division between outside and inside the place of only one bar of iron for ten thousand miles. This is also called the great death. Without this experience we cannot talk about the Buddha Dharma.

This transparent, full, and taut state of mind of Mu is very serene, but it does not yet have any creative functioning. After six years of mediation and training the Buddha entered right into this deep samadhi, and at the sight of the morning star on the morning of the eighth of December, he suddenly was deeply awakened and experienced a whole new life energy.

All of the Buddha Dharma is based on this deep awakening of the Buddha. The base of the ego, all of life energy, all of existence, the true master of all was realized here, and with this experience everything was transformed and the true awakening occurred. To awaken, to realize satori, is to understand the deepest meaning and value of all living things. It is not just to praise the God in the heavens, or to think of things conceptually and as a matter of destiny, or to naturally throw everything away. It is to realize that the bright source of all things is our awareness. We must see this clearly.

Is this very mind moment a moment of purity or a moment of attachment? On this depends the meaning and value of all existence in the world. This is truly that one solid bar of iron that reaches for ten thousand miles. With this state of mind the entire world is purified, and from here comes all of world peace as well.



*Originally not a single  
thing exists*

*Honrai muichimotsu*

本来無一物

These words, like Unmon's "Every day is a good day," are frequently heard. They are the words of the Sixth Patriarch, Rokuso Eno Zenji. The Sixth Patriarch was the sixth person in the line of transmission from the First Patriarch, Daruma Daishi. Daruma Daishi's Zen was still imbued with the flavor of his homeland of India when it reached the Sixth Patriarch, and it was with the Sixth Patriarch that Zen could for the first time come to life in a Chinese atmosphere. The state of mind of China was



brought to life and into action with the Buddha Dharma as expressed by the Sixth Patriarch, a source still flowing in today's Zen.

From the Sixth Patriarch, Zen was later given life through the five petals of the Zen lines in China, with seven different sects. With these lines Zen spread all through China and then came flowing over to Japan. But the source of that flow was the Sixth Patriarch. Our zazen state of mind was especially influenced by this very same Sixth Patriarch. He taught the basics of what we still teach today and is a very important person for all of us.

When he wrote these words the Sixth Patriarch was on Yellow Plum Mountain training under Goso Gunin Zenji, the Fifth Patriarch. The representative of the Fifth Patriarch had been Jinshu Joza, who had offered this poem:

Our body is a bodhi tree,  
Our mind a mirror bright.  
Carefully wipe them all the time  
And let no dust alight.

It would take many words to explain this episode thoroughly, but to put it briefly, Jinshu Joza was the top monk of the Yellow Plum Monastery and was to be the next in line, the first successor of the Fifth Patriarch, Goso Gunin Zenji. This most senior monk, Jinshu Joza, in the poem he offered said that the body is a tree for enlightenment, an important resource for enlightenment. The mind is like a bright mirror that gets dust on it, and because of that cluttering dust we get deluded. This is why we have to diligently wipe away this dust and wipe off the stains. Then we won't become confused and deluded and will always be able to stay in the enlightened mind of the Buddha. This is how Jinshu Joza wrote.

When the Sixth Patriarch to be, Eno Zenji, heard this poem he said that it had been written by a person still outside the gate trying to speak about being inside the gate. This was his observation of Jinshu Joza's poem. He himself then wrote another poem, in response to the poem of Jinshu Joza:

There is no bodhi tree,  
Nor stand of a mirror bright.  
Originally not a single thing  
exists,  
Where can dust alight?

In this way the Sixth Patriarch expressed it.

There is no such thing as an enlightenment tree. This physical body is the source of our delusion. We become free from that delusion by not giving it all of our attention. Our mind may be likened to a mirror, but that metaphor itself is already a concept. If there is any idea that there is such a thing as a mirror, that is already a mistake. From the origin there is not a single thing; our mind is from the origin empty. To not have a single mind moment is our original state of mind. To become enlightened to that is satori. Even if there were clutter, there is no place for it to land.

In another place the Sixth Patriarch has also stated, "Good students, in this, our sect of the Dharma, from the origin there has never been a single mind moment. This is our sect. Our substance is that there is no form. Our source is that there is no place to abide."

From the time of the Buddha and with the Patriarchs as well, the central teaching has been that of not holding on to any thought whatsoever. To not hold on to even one mind moment is our fundamental stance. When we say that, however, it is very easy to fall into nihilism. For this reason the Sixth Patriarch continues by saying that the absence of any mind moments means to have no moments in which our mind is attached. Humans need to think about certain things—that is what it is to be human. But when we are thinking about things that it is not necessary to think about, we become attached to those thoughts. When the things we are thinking about are necessary, we won't become attached to them. To forget immediately—that is what it means to say that while having mind moments we should let go of them immediately. While speaking we have no idea of ourselves speaking. While working we have no sense that we are working. When going we have no idea of ourselves going, and when sitting we have no idea



of ourselves sitting. This is the truly healthy state of human beings. While having mind moments, to let them go as they arise is the meaning of "Originally not a single thing exists." This is not nihilism.

Further, the Sixth Patriarch continues, the absence of form means to not be attached to form, to separate from form. This emptiness of form is the body of our true mind. Of course our mind is without form. But that which is manifesting that mind is a body with form and substance. With this body which exists we manifest mind, but that which is manifested is without form or substance. Each person has individual characteristics; we each live a different life with a different face. Yet we are all without form as well, and this is where we all are equal. This is the essence of being empty of form. Doing cleaning, doing laundry, from morning until night we continue our work without sitting down, and yet we do so without any self-conscious awareness of having moved or cleaned. We don't leave behind any dregs of self-conscious awareness at all. We become the flower, we become the bird, we become the mountain, we become the ocean, we become anything and everything that we see or hear. "Originally not a single thing exists" is in no way a statement of nihilism.

"Our source is that there is no place to abide." To abide nowhere means that our mind is not stopped anywhere. Whatever we do or encounter we let go of it immediately, like flowing water or flowing electricity. Water that does not flow becomes solid ice; electricity that does not flow cannot provide light and energy.

As long as we are humans we need to see clearly what is good and what is bad. To see the difference between these is the function of our Buddha Nature, but if we become caught on the good our mind also becomes rotten and stagnant. We lose our flexibility. And all the more so, when we become caught on bad things we commit crimes, one after the other. Our true mind lets even the good things go flowing on by.

If we are caught on evil we become stuck, hardened, and fixed; we become stagnant. To see beautiful things as beautiful and ugly things as ugly is one of the

functions of our clear mind. This is common sense. Yet while we see the difference between them, we don't get caught, we don't get stuck on them. That mind which does not get stuck and attached is our true original Buddha Nature. To get stuck and stopped is only ego. When we are resentful about something we refuse to let go of that, and if we like something we do anything we can to get it. This is our mind's sickness. In each and every mind moment, if we do not have a new and fresh awareness we will lose track of the truth. For that fresh awareness to not be caught on anything whatsoever is living zazen.

This is what the Sixth Patriarch is expressing when he says, "Originally not a single thing exists."

There is no bodhi tree,  
Nor stand of a mirror bright.  
Originally not a single thing  
exists,  
Where can dust alight?

As he has said it here, this is our true, living state of mind.

## *Clear Mind is the true master*

### *Kyoshin kore waga shi*

虛心是我師

The Sixth Patriarch said in his definition of zazen, “To give no rise to any attention to external ideas of good or bad, this is called *za*. To look within and not be moved around by anything at all, this is called *zen*.” In this way he defined zazen.

“To give no rise to any attention to external ideas of good or bad, this is called *za*.” The external world is a world of dualism and relativity, and so it is all about good and bad: there are good people and bad people, clever people and foolish people, healthy people and wise people, people being born and people dying, men and women. *Za* is to not engage in this state of mind that has any sense of duality but rather, like a mirror, to merely reflect. While facing the external world and receiving it wholly, we add on no association, we attach no thought to it or about it. The mind that does not get caught on what it sees or hears: this is *za*.

Following that we have, “To look within and not be moved around by anything at all, this is called *zen*.” In this way the definition continues. People of old said that “Zen is the flow of the Mind, the Mind is the body of Zen.” This is how they spoke

of it. Our original mind, our essence, is from the origin without a single thing. When we realize this pure mind and see it clearly, without moving in Mind, this is zazen.

Our body sits and our mind becomes empty, without any decided form or any attached thinking. If we are not careful, we can mistakenly think this is what zazen is. This is not what it is. It is not bad to sit down in zazen, but our bodies are made to move and act. If we say that to do zazen is to not move and to not think, then we can no longer do our daily work. The challenge is the essence of our state of mind. When we see our true essence directly, there we can discover our eternal unmoved state of mind. This is where the truth of Zen can be found.

Goso Hoen Zenji, who died in 1104, one day addressed his sangha saying, “Shaka and Miroku are slaves of an other; who is this other?” This great absolute one whom the Buddha and Miroku Bodhisattva and all beings honor always, even Buddha and Miroku are used as servants by this. Who is this? Of course Goso Gunin Zenji said this looking intensely at the assembled sangha, using this question to interrogate into the depth of their understanding. “This highest quality of being is right within each and every one of you here! Realize this directly—right here and right now!”

Usually if we speak of an absolute or an absolute power, one thinks immediately of a God or a Buddha or some thing that we humans think of as absolute. But this is only one kind of concept. What is the original base that reflects that idea of a God or a Buddha? No matter how thankful we are to some God, what is the mirror that reflects that which we think of as a God? What is that which reflects everything in existence but is moved around by none of it? Every single thing that exists is reflected in the mirror of our true clear mind. In the mirror of our Mind it all settles. The entire huge universe settles right there in our mind. We awaken to this all-embracing, huge, and all-inclusive Mind. Then no matter what crisis occurs, even if our body meets death, it is only one phenomenon within this huge, all-embracing mind. To know this mind directly is to know Zen.

We have the words of Eisai Zenji:

Oh Great All Embracing Mind!  
The height of heavens cannot be measured  
Yet our Mind is above the heavens.

The sun and the moon and this huge, enormous, infinite universe are all within our Mind. Because this Great Mind cannot be measured we cannot know its physical extent, and through time it reaches infinitely from the endless past to the immeasurable future. All of time and space are included and embraced in this Mind. This may sound like empty bragging and exaggeration, but our mind’s mental understanding is not able to grasp everything. The mind with which we are born is not limited to the narrow views of our dualistic perception of what we have learned and gathered as information and mental concepts. This Great Mind cannot be reached through small self-consciousness, and dualistic perception cannot extend there. To awaken to that which can drink down all that is gathered and looked at and perceived, that huge state of mind, is Zen. To not give rise to extraneous thinking, as the Sixth Patriarch says, means to accept and receive whatever world comes to us, exactly as it is. To realize this dimension and know that it is within us is to discover our true Mind. This is Zen.

Our awareness is infinite. Our awareness is beyond space and time and can reflect everything in existence. Everything in the external world is transient and in flux always, moving according to karma, yet our mind, while reflecting everything that comes to it, remains zero. Zero is beyond phenomena, beyond time. In all of us there is a mind which is beyond moving or not moving, and to awaken to that is Zen.

Zazen is to know that all-embracing, all-inclusive Mind that is within all of us. Just as Rinzai Zenji says, “The true Dharma has no form and yet extends in all directions.” While holding on to nothing it changes into everything in the whole universe. To realize this state of mind is to know our truth. Clear mind is the true master. To realize this clear mind within us is to know the truth of zazen.



## *Serene, unmovable*

### *Jakunen fudo*

寂然不動

Daruma Daishi gave this definition of zazen:

Cutting off all karmic connections  
externally  
Letting go of all concerns within,  
When the mind is like a firm tall  
wall  
Then we are on the Path

This is a famous definition of zazen.

The kendo master Takuan Zenji defined “the unmoved mind” as that mind of no mind moment, no form. This is not to be



mistaken for a mind that does not move. If we think that this means that no matter what comes along our mind doesn't move, that is a great misunderstanding. While there are many people who think of it this way, if Zen is seen as holding this kind of mind important, then even if the people in the world are suffering terribly and enduring horrible miseries, their pain will be irrelevant to us. It is as if we just turn our back on people in the world and only pray for our own happiness and satisfaction. This type of mind would be especially useless in the case of kendo. If we tried to preserve an idea of some state of mind of no form and no mind moments, we would be cut through by our opponent's sword immediately. That is not unmoved mind. Unmoved mind is the mind that is not stopped by anything, not caught on anything. As soon as we become caught on something, there is a gap.

Where the gap appears our mind's delusion is born. Takuan Zenji is teaching this. Daruma Daishi says, "Cutting off all karmic connections externally," but that does not mean to close our eyes and cover our ears and ignore the actual world around us. No matter what comes along, our mind is not stopped there. In all of the four directions and the eight quarters the unmoved mind is free, full, and taut, but not stopped by anything. This is the actualization of our zazen in action.

It is just like the functioning of a mirror. A mirror reflects each and every thing that comes before it without making any judgments whatsoever about what it reflects. This is the unmoved mind. In our mind we are always able to know the good and bad about society, and that is the function of Buddha Nature. But while it is that way for all of us, even while we are sitting still doing zazen with our bodies, we keep our minds busy criticizing others and gossiping mentally about what other people are doing. There are people who get satisfaction from doing just that. Buddha Nature is then reborn as ego filter.

It is not about criticizing and judging someone else; rather we merely reflect them. When we are functioning in that state of mind that is completely objective and clear to the final degree, that is the unmoved mind. If we judge, we are moved

around by that which we reflect. Because we get moved around, ideas of profit and loss are born. According to circumstances people may become blue or red-hot, and that is because of being moved around. The difference between a mirror and a human mind is that a mirror can merely reflect, while a human can perceive the situation of another and with an unmoved, serene mind act in an appropriate way from a place of deep, natural wisdom. This has to be a functioning that goes beyond profit and loss, or it is not the unmoved mind.

The next line of the definition is "Letting go of all concerns within." In the *Diamond Sutra* it says that we should not be caught or attached to any idea of a past, present, or future. Neither should we be caught on an idea of not thinking anything at all or on ideas of no form. The mind moves naturally, and to say that we shouldn't think that it moves or should try to stop it so that it can't move is unnatural. The mind from the origin is without existence. It is like a computer screen, which reflects the content given to it and then begins to move and work. Our mind is something that moves, but if we think we will find Zen in this moving mind we will be very confused and deluded. Our mind is like a shadow, like a phantom, and has no fixed substance. Because our mind has no originally fixed substance, it is pure and clear. But it doesn't even need to be called pure, or we will be caught again on an idea of it being pure. To be letting go of all concerns within means that we don't get caught on anything or any idea at all. From the origin our mind is serene and pure, and there is no need to get caught on any idea of how it is originally pure and serene either. If we try to make efforts to stay pure and serene, that is no longer being pure and serene. Rather, it makes us more noisy and cluttered.

To make the mind "like a firm tall wall" means to not be caught on anything external, to not intentionally make up problems, to be in that state of mind where there is no separation between inner and outer, that full and taut state of mind where we extend throughout the heavens and the earth. If we enter this state of mind we naturally realize that from the origin we are pure and serene already. This is the state of mind of "Serene, unmovable."

## *Sitting in the moon-water dojo*

### *Suigetsu dojo ni zasu*

坐水月道場

Am I the moon, or is the moon  
me,  
Sitting until I know,  
Peacefully becoming the autumn  
moon.

In this world there is usually a separation between what is “me” and what is not “me.” We see these as two: the objective and the subjective, the person and the surroundings. To realize that these are not two,

that in fact there is only one, is zazen. Rinzai says of this place, “In this five-foot lump of red flesh there is a true person of no rank always coming in and going out of the orifices. If you have not seen it yet—see it now! See it now!”

How about it? Have you seen the true Self? Even hearing this do you not yet understand? See it! SEE IT!!!! Rinzai is pursuing us in this way. That which we perceive as the world does not exist apart from who we are. It is only the external existence of the true person that is who we are. All of it is the true person that exists within us. The heavens and earth together are one layer of this true person. Passing through our eyes, ears, nose, mouth, body, it goes in and out. When it goes out it becomes the objective, the surroundings of our environment; when it comes in it becomes the subjective, the person. From the origin these are not two separate things. They cannot be anything but this true person of no rank.

The subjective is nothing but the objective, and the objective is nothing other than the subjective. It is always one and the same layer, coming and going as one, in and out, our pure life energy and actual existence. To awaken to this pure self is to know our true self.

Am I the moon, or is the moon  
me,  
Sitting until I know,  
Peacefully becoming the autumn  
moon.

To know this place where the subjective and the objective have become one, have become the same, is to know our true original self.

For a short while won't you experience this ultimate point of zazen, where our pure and true self is tasted in its mysterious flavor? The heavens and I are one; I am at one with all of Great Nature. Is there a me because there is a moon to see? Is there a moon because there is a me to see it? Is there an objective because there is a subjective? There is no such comparison existing anywhere. Know the place where the subjective and the objective become totally one, perfectly matching and radi-

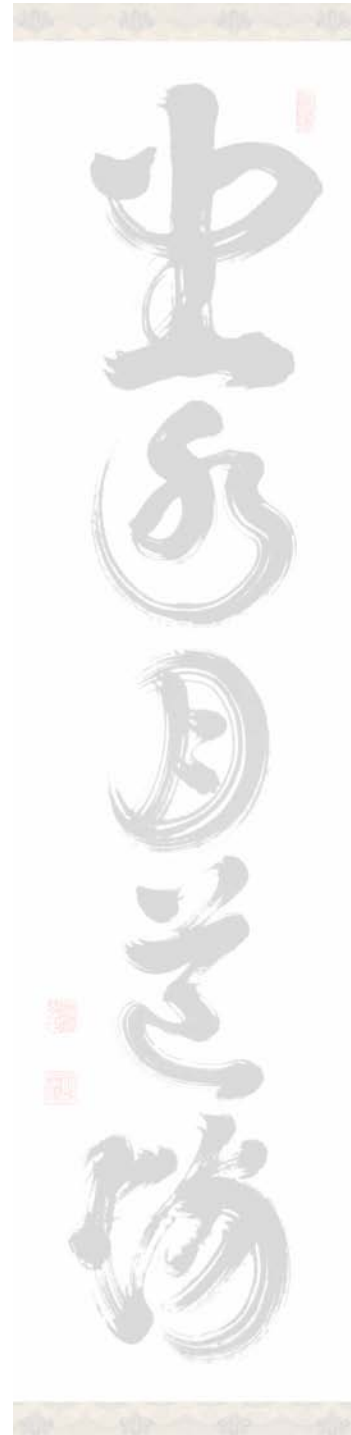
antly shining. There is no form of a me other than that which is the shining of the moon's radiant beams. It is all settled in the mutual subjectivity, manifesting as one. The moon enters as my subjectivity, and I melt into the moon's shining. As I enter it, it enters me. The moon and I become one, the heavens and the earth and I become one. This truly serene state of mind where it is all one has to be tasted, or we cannot say we understand Zen.

If we understand this state of mind well, we know that we are the heavens and the earth, that we are all the ten directions and we are seeing it all from the same eye. I am the sun as it shines; I am the moon as it radiates. With this state of mind I go into society, and all people's suffering is my suffering, all people's great joy is my great joy. To see God and see Buddha is this state of mind; to know one's true Mind is also this state of mind.

The water has no awareness of  
reflecting  
The moon has no awareness of  
being reflected  
The lake of Shirosawa.

To be able to realize this place with no separation between self and other: this is Zen.

No matter how we analyze the contents of water, we will not be able to locate the moon there. Yet without any knowledge of the contents of water, as soon as the water is clear we can see the moon reflected there. This is true whether the water is a small puddle, a lake, or a great ocean. It can be muddy water or water in a bowl, water in a bucket or water in a well, it can be the dew on a wildflower or the piss of a carp in the pond; there is no need to analyze the contents of that water or to assess its value. If that water is clear and still, without fail the moon will find its way there. No matter how dirty the water is, if it settles and becomes still, the moon will be reflected there without fail. No matter how we search throughout our body, even if we do an autopsy, we won't be able to find a mirror anywhere, but if we do zazen and our mind settles and becomes clear, the mirror-like functioning of the mind spontaneously comes forth. ...



*Empty flowers, myriad  
manifestations*

*Kuge mangyo o shusu*

修空華萬行

... In the *Lotus Sutra* it says,

The Bodhisattva's shining moon  
comes forth in the sky  
If the sentient being's mind is  
clear, the moon is received within

Our essence is just like this. No matter  
how many evil acts a person commits, no  
matter how ignorant or stupid someone  
might seem, no matter how uneducated,



these measures of this person's value are irrelevant. In the world those sorts of values are important, but when it comes to the true body of Mind, these measurements are irrelevant. If our mind becomes clear, if we can enter samadhi, the moon will shine there without fail. That quiet mind, as it is, is the Buddha Nature received within.

If we are given the experience of this place of me being completely one with the world in serenity, we can know that true experience of our original nature and that the Buddha Nature is there from the beginning.

The meaning of "sitting in the moon-water dojo" is to realize this place where the moon and the heavens and the earth are all me, to know that we have never, not even once, been born or died. We realize this state of mind directly for ourselves. This huge world of the Buddha's enlightenment can be realized by anyone who throws himself away completely; then, when the mind becomes quiet, what is experienced there is this state of mind. This is not a produced state of mind; everyone is endowed with it. Being overwhelmed by extraneous thoughts and attachments, we merely lose track of our Buddha Nature.

"Empty flowers, myriad manifestations." These empty flowers are like the small, shiny appearances we see in the chill air of a winter morning. In the countryside of mountainous areas, we see this often. What is shining is the condensed air; there is in fact nothing there that is of substance. There is nothing there, there is shining.

A person of old said, "Seeing the Buddha Nature we name it that which is without anything cluttering at all." Our true nature is without any clutter, empty without a single thing. If we truly have realized that state of Mind of Mu, we know that there is no Mu there at all, no ignorant person to be deluded and no Buddha to be prostrated to. There is not even a place for that to remain.

Another person of old has said, "There is nothing above our heads and nothing holding us up under our feet." That place where there is nothing in the heavens and the earth to obstruct us whatsoever, and nothing below us to support us