

Letters from DaiE Teisho, 6-12th February 2012 Sogenji Japan

Day 1

We have come here to sit in this one straight line continually. Putting aside all extraneous matters all around us, not only this life time`s past, but our karmic past, our ancestor`s past - to break through all of it and to do it for all beings.

Our true nature is from the origin empty and clear – where could any clutter gather?

Here master Daie responds to Yoroyshu, who is the younger brother of Yokyojin, who was both a scholar and a statesman, and so was his younger brother. He writes him a letter of how he had heard about his older brother about how many times and how he every day would enter the Samadhi of koan and zazen. Not wasting a single moment. That was a given. His older brother had already 60 year of age and having fulfilled everything in life, yet he was truly ashamed to not know where he was going, not having found the answer to this great question.

As he had already let go of his position in the government and stepped back from the front row workings, he was no longer dragged down by all this work, yet his mind, peaceful and wide, not having found the answer, while also not knowing how much time he has left. At any moment, death can arise, without even knowing why we have been born. Flowers come forth to blossom, trees to spread their leaves widely. Each and everyone is born to become their most outstanding potential, giving life energy for those to come. These are not the main point – they are only part time jobs. The question is about the main reason for existence. And what if it is right now that your life finishes? How will you encounter the king Emma at the door to death, how will you answer him? Not knowing where they will take you after that?

An Osesshin is not for putting our body through some kind of endurance contest. Like the Sixth Patriarch has said: to attain Kensho is the main point. It is not about the development of Samadhi here, but it has to be for tzhe awakening to our deepest stae of mind or it is not zazen. To pierce through our concepts, to truly free our attached mind, otherwise it is only some endurance contest about having painful legs.

Zen is for experiencing the truth of human`s deepest quality. Yet we are the slaves of our ego. We have thoughts coming in our head all the time – and these are deciving us. Our eyes, ears, nose, tongue, ourbody, our feelings, all of them are being perceived by the inner thoughts in our head. We only see things exactly as they are, we only hear things exactly as they are. Yet we have all kinds of ideas: I like this, I don't like that, our opinions. We don't want to see our mistakes, we have so much tangeled past, so many concepts about this and that, confusing us. If we sit for one cm, then we are truly one cm of Buddha. To do that great cleaning in our mind, from night until morning and from morning until night. Sitting or standing or walking or lying down.

We exhale completely, always. To the point where there is nothing left in our head. We might think we are sitting, but often we are sitting with a concept about this. This will not work. We think we are getting closer and sitting so hard, this is no different from carrying around those thoughts in our daily activities. We believe so much the ego to be us, which is the source for all our delusions. It follows us everywhere, even doing the MU, we don't even notice it, but it is right there. Our concept of the Mu, our concept of the counting is following us. That is why we cannot let any gaps in, or else the ego deception can come in again.

We work harder and harder, but why do we not get any riper? Because the ego version is what we think we are. Our greatest mistake is that we identify with the ego. The great efforts the ancients made in order to move through this. We work so hard, yet the ego's shadow is appearing everywhere. We need to put our live on the line, put in everything, honestly working on this, doing it in all activities of our life. And if we touch that mind of no ego once, then without even knowing that, it happens. And when we reach the gates of Emma, each person can believe in heaven and hell, or not, but what is important is the question: Is this matter truly resolved. It is not about someone else, it is about you yourself. This is everything the ancient are teaching us.

(followed by Daihanny Nyusei Ceremony)

Day 2

Ryokyojin and Ryorochu are both statesmen as well as scholars. They have made themselves a name, and to them DaiE is speaking: SODAIKA - the heavens also know their names, but it can also mean that they are high on themselves, as if they know the answers to it all. Having gathered knowledge, one easily believe it to be one's own. Sodaika is a scholar reading the old papers left behind by the ancients. Reading this and that book, and being able to quote these, comparing opinions from here and there, nothing coming from their own understanding. And what Confucius said, and what Mencius said. Mencius was a great philosopher of the Sengoku era. Or Soji said this of the Shu era, and what the Iching says, using these words a little, comparing them, yet not coming from one's own experience. Yet all of these disputes seen from the Buddhist perspective seem irrelevant. But it was used to show other what they know. Or various analects of the various scholars from different eras in China. If you did not know them, you were looked upon as being an illiterate person and how embarrassing that would be.

But how about the one who is quoting all of these words? The parts, the brain cells that are memorizing all of these are tools of our body which we can use in this life. But what is it that is using these tools and these parts of the body? If we do not know this, then we know nothing of our true nature and original

source. Just like a banker who is always counting someone else's money in the bank. All these quoting will express nothing of one's own deepest self. Only melancholic and superficial. Never knowing our own deep treasure. How pitiful is that?

Like Ikkyu said at his death: I have borrowed this body for one life time, and now I am returning it.

With no idea where we are going, whether to heaven or hell, cycling through the six realms, hell, the roots, the humans, the hungry ghosts, heavenly beings. Having gone through them over and over again, yet knowing nothing about what is actually moving through them. However well we might know the words of Confucius and Mencius, but knowing nothing of who we truly are. Daie Zenji is putting down the way of being called a teacher in this sense.

As master Tosotsu has said: For all of you who come to part the grasses, and weed their way through all of these weeds, is for one thing only and that is to realize Kensho directly. Everyone here who has crossed oceans to come here to Japan, and in the most freezing part of winter, to endure it, with the pain in the legs: what is it that is hearing these words? What is that true master who is listening? Is it ears, is it brain cells? Who is using the ears? Who is giving life to those brain cells? Who is using the brain cells to memorize and to judge? Because there is someone using them, there is a way to use them. To say there is no such thing, what is this body anyways? We use the senses all day long, thinking that what we are is our ego. Yet we were not born with this ego. While we might have some inherited tendency, yet what is the source prior to our ideas and physical body?

For what did the Buddha come forth? Giving clothes to those who don't have any, giving food to those who are in need – anybody can do this. It does not require awakening. So who is it that awakens?

To say that all person in the three realms is my child, every place in the world is my home – what gives thinking like this? It is said that the Buddha left 5049 sutras, fingers pointing to the moon, tiles knocking at the gate – so where is that moon, where is the true master? It has to be used clearly. We use the word Kensho, yet what is that?

Bodhidharma crossed to China and he said: Just see true mind directly and become a Buddha.

But what is that true mind? Of course it is not Ego. We have to ask these questions. We don't sit on the cushion because we have a lot of free time. We have to cut into the clear truth. What creates these thoughts? What creates this

body? What creates these thoughts? Where does this freezing cold come from? Where does the awareness of this freezing cold come from? Would you ask what it is that is struggling and suffering through these? Or to sit and be bored and therefore fall asleep. Or following extraneous thoughts because we are not asking these questions. This is because we don't make efforts to see what is most important.

The Buddha gave all these sutras to lead us to awakening. For that reason we all have gathered here. And if a person has encountered that true nature, please, stand up and manifest it right now. Where does that feeling of pain and chill come from? Make that source clear. That which has no form, no colour – we are asked to manifest it. What is becoming so cold? What is it that is becoming so happy and sad? If we do not experience that true source, then it is all transient.

We are what we think, having become what we thought. Like the wheel that follows the cart pulling ox, sorrow follows an evil thought. We are what we think, having become what we thought. Like the shadow that never leaves one, happiness follows a pure thought.

Frankie Parker reading these words felt, as if the Buddha had written them just for him. In that very moment, the scales fell off his eyes. He had committed a hideous crime, but if he had known these words, he never would have done that. He was finally able to see that the crime happened only in minutes, due to his deep ignorance and lack of responsibility, he finally was able to see this after reading the above words. What is that mind? He immediately knew the answer. This person, this life, it is all only a kimono. And he had not seen this before. When we have to take off the kimono, all will be gone. And he killed someone, mistaking the kimono for who he was, and killing just to justify that. He saw the whole picture in one sudden flash and simultaneously knew exactly what he needed to do. That deep joy and gratitude, beyond the physical body and gathered ideas. He saw it all as the phenomena that it is. And he knew that he should use the small time that he had left to share that joy and gratitude with as many people as possible. During the remaining 8 years, how many people were touched by him. On death row he borrowed a room, taught what he had realized, telling the other people, we have to cut it all completely. He would teach zazen, was ordained, given the Jusan, and received such deep gratitude from so many other people on death row and the guards as well. The all believed in him, while he was the one to be executed for murdering. The Dalai Lama, Thich Nhat Than, mother Teresa – all wrote letters to the governor asking for his pardon. Yet the governor being on the right side of the right wing, didn't give any pardon. Instead he let him be executed sooner than

it was planned. You can see in the photo taken the night before his execution that his look is like that of a baby, shining, bright and clear.

The Buddha is not deceiving us. It is not some other power that we need to come and save us. If we look deeply, the source of all is very clear. We were born to realize it in this life time.

Day 3

ShiTaiku is the name of one who would be in the middle of a political scene and being trustworthy to work in the government. Master DaiE was teacher of many disciples who were of the Shitaiku rank. And while master Daie often was to be send off into exile, he was the teacher of them, so they could turn that around. However, when the political change finally came they were no longer in favour of him and he was exiled. This is during the Sung Dynasty. In the northern Sung as opposed to the southern Sung dynasty it was more stable, yet during the southern Sung dynasty even the emperor was abducted while political conflicts were ongoing. We have the example of the poet Sotoba and other people of culture who were all influenced by this as well.

People were insecure, never knowing what would happen in the political situation. This was not a time of quietly sitting zazen since things were really life on the line. The great master Uanshin Shogaku Zenji who was slightly older than master DaiE was very close to him and they shared deep words often. And even though master DaiE was younger than him, they treated each other as equals. To the degree where master Uanshin Shogaku Zenji even requested master DaiE to take care of his funeral service and his last words. Even though they were never in conflict, the disciples didn't agree. The disciples of Uanshin Shogaku Zenji were running away into a quiet zendo to find a place of quietness during these troubled times. Entering a practice of quiet sitting as opposed to awakening in activity. And saying that division was Zen. Master DaiE was constantly teaching about the poison of Zen which was nothing more than sitting quietly, it being only quietude, not real Zen. You were supposed to be unmoved in no matter what circumstance, not needing to go off to sit to find that quiet mind again, because you were tired from the business around. There is no regeneration of life in doing this. Nevertheless the Shitaiku disciples wanted to soothe their troubled minds in the zendo, and DaiE liberated each and everyone with very careful teachings. Ryorochi was one of them who wanted to sit quietly, also reading books on zen. DaiE called those the spreaders of ignorance. Of course, it cannot be said that by reading books you enter ignorance, but to not fool around with an already pulled around mind is the point. A mind full of judgement and discursive thinking. But learning how to not insert or invent a good-bad dichotomy, it having meaning or not having

meaning. Things that are involved in creation are not involved in gain and loss. But humans divide creation in that version because of mental perceptions and judgements only. Confusing things by doing that for everyone. Neither does not reading books mean that one is free from being moved around. Through certain books we can also cultivate our deepening awareness. Yet not to chase after further ignorance and ideas. It has to be done with an awareness as to what is valuable to be read.

From the olden days in the Dojo it was suggested to read the ancients records. The Mumonkan, the Blue Cliff Records – these are read and studied thoroughly. Until they become our blood and bones. Reading them not like a philosopher who does not absorb the teachings, yet evaluates and judges it, strengthening his intellectual mind that makes him feel superior.

A monk asked master Joshu: Does a dog have Buddha Nature? Master Joshu answered: Mu. It is not about interpreting these words. Like master Mumon said, to not be caught on nihilism nor on an interpretation of what these words mean. And this is what he is saying here, rather to read it and absorb it and deepen with it, yet not to interpret it...

We have to not seek benefits and profits for ourselves. Even if we are insecure, we can't do it for our own personal gain. We don't do our zazen for our own insecurity – we have been giving this precious time, this precious opportunity. So many in the world are deeply suffering and cannot do this. What is it that is unifying all of us? We have to encounter this truth correctly. And not for our own self-satisfaction only. We need to realize this for all beings. Not being crushed by our sleepiness, by being so cold, by our pain, by our discomfort. There is something much bigger that we have to do. How few there are who are fortunate, and even there the fortune doesn't last. People are struggling immeasurably with grief and pain inside. Everyone has their suffering and pain. Not to be moved around by the superficial layers but to set our feet firmly right on the ground. From where are we born? What is it that is miserable? What is it that is tired? That which sees – what is it? That which hears – what is it? That which smells – what is it? That which feels – what is it? To thoroughly cut into that awareness. In that way master DaiE is teaching clearly.

Day 4

In this world there is great attachment to knowledge and fame, to possessions. That is why we are only concerned with what is external and enslave ourselves for our entire lives. And we are not born for this. We are like the morning

glories. A morning glory seed becomes a morning glory. A daikon seed becomes a daikon. Humans were born to become humans in their best possible way, fulfilling their highest potential. Relying instead on knowledge, money and fame. They feel miserable when criticized, while only each of us can fulfill this highest potential themselves.

The Buddha was a prince, he had palaces for all four seasons. He could satisfy all of his wishes, having a lovely wife and an adorable child Rahula, yet he left all of this for the path. Because he saw that everyone's delusion and confusion is caused by an attachment to an external world and that is why we suffer. He eventually saw this clearly. The Buddha's mind was so tender, and they tried to prevent him from leaving the capital, yet he wandered out these gates and he saw something he has never seen before. He saw a person coughing blood. He asked his attendant what that was who replied, that it was a dying person. And for the first time the Buddha saw how transient life is. One day he went out the south gate and he saw a person wobbling on a crutch, and when asking what that was he was told about sickness. And he saw how transient this life actually is. Going out the west gate he saw an aging person, fragile and unable to carry his own body's weight. And the Buddha saw even though he was sturdy now, he would also become old one day. Going out the North gate he saw a person seeking the truth, and he knew then, that this was to be his path. The Buddha saw clearly that it was not about relying on externals.

And for us who are disciples of this Buddha, how easily we depend on external things. We have to see what is our world within? What is it that seeks this world within and that makes us seek within? The ancients' efforts were made to guide us to see what it is to really be alive. The past is finished, the future is not here yet, so what is it that gets so insecure? Still wondering this we die. And even knowing this truth, still we die. The Buddha died, Confucius died, Socrates died – all dead. So where did they all go? Even knowing the truth, where do all of them go?

Seeing that Mu all day long, look closely under your own feet. Like the Buddha said in the Dhammapada: how rare it is to receive a human birth and we have been able to receive one. How rare it is to be alive in this realm of birth and death, and we are alive in it. How rare it is to hear the words of the teaching of the Dharma, and we are now able to hear them. How rare it is to be able to meet a true teacher, and we are now training with one. A huge number of existences that are not human have immeasurably preceded us. During 7 billion years, all those that are swimming in the waters, all the birds that are flying in the sky, all the insects, but we have received this human body, which will also be gone. Some say that we should therefore enjoy this short life, but that ends with that. But those six realms we cycle through, among them only

the human realms knows shame, and because of this we are able to evolve. Heavenly beings know enjoyment, but they know no deepening. Only humans who know this great discomfort, know this deepening. We have to see this clearly or we will end in melancholy. Open your eyes wide and see this chance of a life without wasting it. We are receiving the teaching and yet are looking away.

We have no time to waste; we have to see what we actually are. If we do not know where we are going, how can we find this life's true value? There are many ways to do this. We can become the president of a company, or a great scientist, but without knowing the truth, we easily believe that these are most excellent. But they are not realizing their own truth – their time is merely sliding away. Even if we look for pleasure, this eventually fades and becomes melancholic.

The Buddha, when he realized his true nature, exclaimed: how wondrous, how wondrous, all beings are from the origin endowed with the same pure nature, to which I have just awakened.

But we are so moved around by this kimono of emotions, thoughts and body which we believe to be true. This pure mind is not created through ascetic training, but if we can see that we are not our ego, then we can see it in all beings, in the grasses, in others, because they are all a manifestation of it. If we give rise to this deepest vow to realize, then we are simultaneously awakened. If we are on a plane to New York city, if we do not get off, we will for sure arrive in New York City. But who put us on this plane? It is that vow to awaken all beings, that let's our human nature shine and it is the most firmest base of our human existence.

Like it says in the song of Zazen by Hakuin: the gate of cause and effect is thereby opened, and not two not three, straight ahead runs the way. We are here because we have made this vow. From here we will no longer be involved in confusion of our mind. If we go straight we will realize this deepest vow. This is the Mahayana – don't take away from the awareness of this very moment, dig into it right here and now. This is the same state of mind of the Buddha and the patriarchs. This is where all of them dug in, none of them were special. But we look away from it, that is why our focus gets blurry and we get dark. We are right here, right now. Where else is there any place where we could be?

The person this letter was written to was working on the koan of Unmon's dried shit stick. Sometimes master DaiE uses the Mu koan as well, but stressing that they are not mental undertakings. They are the deepest consciousness's source which will then cut through our consciousness to its

greatest depth. Koans are for helping to sharpen the cutting edge. And thankfully there are 1700 koans in Zen, while in Nichiren you have only one: Namuamidabutsu, or Myohorengekyo. The 1700 are coming from any angle possible. But we are not getting stuck on form – did you really see MU? Look at the oak tree in the garden, look at the KAN the gate, we cut from any direction.

Taiko Hideyoshi was born as a normal child in a small village, yet how did he become such a great leader? To this Hideyoshi answered: I never wanted to become a great leader. I was born in a small village, we had hardly any food, adopted by a Samurai and I worked as hard as I could. And the samurai prepared me to die anywhere. And from there I learned to keep going wholeheartedly, no matter what I was doing. And this is where I ended up. I never cared where I would die, only putting everything into what I was doing.

Knowing Mu doesn't mean that we know the oak tree in the garden, we have to throw ourselves into each and everyone of these koans. And then it opens, right within us. Our stuck places loosen, which is the functioning of the koan. Mental understanding only binds us to our ego. We have to see this clearly.

A monk asked master Unmon: what is the Buddha? – a dried shit stick. This is not about some mental understanding, but a sword to cut through all illusions and ideas. No matter what – don't retreat. Or else we get turned around by our own self created obstructions. No matter what – don't retreat, and from there it opens up.

Day 5

To cut in our deep true nature – it can be a mantra, it can be a koan, it can be the sussokan. These are all tools because there is a challenge here that cannot be settled with mental efforts. Dealing with life and death, the koans pointing to this question. Or when we lose our path of being alive – these are living koans. Or having an incurable sickness – that is a koan. What is it? To keep our focus on it, to never look away from it. If we are really touching the question of life and death, any moment can be a life koan. But it is not about our difficult love affairs, our hardship in making money, or how to be successful. Or else anyone in love would be a person of training, anyone struggling would be a person of training, and that would be idiotic. Will we live or will we die? This is the fulcrum. Some might say these problems are serious too, yet we are talking about this day's life energy. Or the question when a monk asked master Joshu: does a dog have Buddha nature? And master Joshu answered Mu. If it does not touch our deepest being, then it is only a superficial question. He was diving into the question with his 360 smallest bones, the 84000 hair pores, he has been giving it ever bit of his energy. Bringing that doubt of Mu into every single pore. Standing is MU, sitting is MU. When we are seeing – what is it –MU. It is

not about any interpretation of the words of the koan. It is a tool for directly experiencing our true nature. That seeing is Mu, that hearing is Mu. In the end you don't know any more what is what. We have to take it that far, that it is not a question of nihilism nor existing any more. As if we have a red hot burning iron ball in our mouth, we cannot swallow it or spit it out. In every moment we are ready to let go of our attachments, conditioning, our extraneous thoughts. Until it is surging through all our cells and we don't know what is alive here anymore. This is a rare state of mind that can be achieved, yet who would be able to do this while working in society. And for this dojos are so important. We can lose confidence, and then we look across and see someone sitting immovable. And that is why people who are murky and sleepy and moving around all the time are not allowed to sit in the zendo. Everyone has to be right on the line. This is the responsibility of the teacher and the jokei to take care of the zendo. It cannot be done right if it is just about being friendly, we have to see which is alive right here and now, and for that we have to pierce beyond mental understanding, where there is no self-conscious awareness left, or it does not work. If we don't realize it to this point, we are simply playing around with it mentally. We have to reach that place where we can't even reach it mentally anymore. When we don't know anymore, and someone next to us pokes us and says: hey, its kinhin. Stand up, move. That is why the support of others in the zendo is so necessary.

A monk was asking Rinzai, what is the ultimate truth? Rinzai jumps off the high seat, poking the monk he says: Speak, speak! And the monk doesn't know what is going on, and the moment when he is encountering the very small Rinzai, he doesn't know what to do, and people around him say: prostrate, prostrate to him. And following their directions, he was able to do that, and in that moment, he broke through completely. Because Rinzai was poking him, that possibility opened. But if we say: oh, that poor person is having such a hard time, what can we do to support them? Then it is only their emotional moment getting indulged in by someone else's emotional moment, and it can't work this way. Suddenly the deepest answer comes forth from an unexpected place and we see it perfectly clear and total.

But when we start thinking about this dried shit stick, when we try to analyze it, we lose it completely. It might work mentally, yet it is only a dark foxes cave, stuck in a place where we think that we mustn't hear, mustn't see, mustn't taste. Only caught on our mental interpretation of how we should be doing this. We have to pierce through the self-conscious awareness completely, not concerned with what this means and what that doesn't mean. And what is good and what is bad. What is understood and what isn't understood, but to go beyond all of that, and this is what we have zazen for. To pierce through that self-conscious awareness, through the delusions that are always coming and going. As Chosha

no Keishin has said: we all think these delusions are who we are. And to use them productively is what we do in society. To analyze them to think clearly, yet this is the source of more delusions. It has to be this place where we don't even know what we are doing. It is not about trying to get into heaven – we throw away all of it, heaven and hell. People always only want the good parts, but that is only one aspect of our lives. But for us there is no heaven and hell, no good nor bad, no understanding and no not understanding. It does not occur to us anymore, there is no more dualism. There is no Buddhas to be thankful for, no Dharma to be thankful to. How could they come forth at this point? Do not retreat, keep pushing with that Mu. Only then can we move through that fear of death which every person has. What is that truth? Yet finally those question do not come forth anymore, no dualism appears at all. Master DaiE is teaching us very kindly, saying don't be afraid here. Just keep going and you will break through it all and none of it will be left, and for the first time we will know that clear bright mind springing forth. But everyone gets unstable and shaky and falters. Don't give in to that. Move straight through this to the place where joy and amazement truly are. Don't weaken and keep going.

Day 6

Working creatively on koans and zazen can only be done if we throw every one of our 360 smallest bones and 84000 hair pores right into it. Continually doing it with our strong intention. As if we have a red hot iron ball in our mouth, we cant spit it out neither swallow it down. We continue during the 24 hours of the day, letting go of our past, conditioning, associations, extraneous thinking – getting rid of every last bit of it, until there is no difference between inside or outside. Master Mumon Ekai is teaching us kindly, to make clear how to go about doing this. People of training should read his words at the beginning of the Mumonkan again and again. Even memorizing them. It says so clearly how exactly to practice from his own experience. ...

We are not choosing to get caught or to not get caught on things, but because we do not have this full strong energy, things get stuck to us.

In the Vimalakirti sutra it is written: the heavenly beings threw down flower petals on all of the main disciples, and then all fell to the ground. Only one of them, Sharihotsu, had these flower petals stuck to him. And he didn't like having the flower petals stuck to him, and would try to pull them off. And the heavenly beings were saying: why are you sticking flower petals to yourself? – it is not like this, they are sticking to me. – But why? – They only get stuck to me, yet they don't look good on a person of training. – that is not the fault of

the flower petals. You are so caught on the idea of how you should not have any flower petals stuck to you, that you get caught on it more and more. Cause it is the idea of not having them stick, that makes them stick to you.

If we get stuck on each and every thought, then it gets confusing. We have to be like a mirror, reflecting the things as they come and go. If you are aware of nothing, then that nothing will get stuck to you.

Just like Master Rinzai has said: add on no thoughts whatsoever to what you perceive, and neither to this, do not add any thoughts. That which manifests, just as it is – perceive it. As if it is in a mirror. And then you will be able to see that there is no idea about being old or young, male or female, good or bad – just exactly as things are.

We see the snowy landscape in a picture and we say how cold that makes us feel and we might even catch a cold. Adding on more and more thoughts to one's own perception. We add on so much that we do not know anymore what is the original perception. Dragging these around and getting worked up about our future. There is a very big difference between planning and being concerned about our future, and being anxious and overly worried about it. Two very different things. To clean up the house and figure out to whom we will give all of these things. That is plenty. If we are full with energy from within, it will not happen that we get too involved in outer things. Things will not be able to stick to us, and zazen makes it that our eyes and face shine, that our skin gets taught. We worry, and we get saggy.

If there are tangled and twisted things we hold on to, we can clean them up and let go of them. However that is not breaking through yet. We need great belief, great doubt and great vitality, as master Hakuin has taught us. Or our true path does not open up from within. What is our truth really? This is the question of the great doubt. It works because we believe it can. It is not the scholars way's of looking at it in an intellectual way, rather we throw everything into this interrogation until we realize the deep source directly. We may be serene and clear already, but our deepest master is still waiting to be realized beyond any doubt. If not, then the true invigoration will not take place. We have to clarify that invigoration beyond ego, and this is where the koans deep value is.

Master DaiE is bringing in here the ten ox herding pictures – we use every encounter in our lives to cultivate and keep deepening our state of mind. No matter what is going on, it has to be this Mu. No matter what is going on inside of us, outside of us, whatever it is, we always stay with that mu. Master Hakuin calls this: zazen in activity. And all kinds of challenges keep coming up, yet we continue. We keep working on it. If not like that we get weak and flaccid. Alone

in a corner somewhere by ourselves. And if we have any understanding of the 1700 koans, then we can see how useful they are in encountering all the different situations.

At the age of 17 or 18, master Joshu broke through completely, and then he continued doing koans for 40 years with Master Nansen. Koans are not only for seeing into your true nature, but during the 40 years of koan practice he was cultivating the wisdom of Master Nansen. For this reason it is said, that we need to understand 4, 8 and 9 up to 20, and what 20 represents is all of the various differences in the world. If we know oneness, we also need to know all the 20 differences, and to be able to deal with them from that clear mind cannot be done in some kind of a vacuum. In zen we are cultivated by all kinds of challenges and problems, and that is why we deepen in a very firm and sturdy way.

On a flat piece of land a man build a house, with no experience of house building. While alive, to not really be alive, and when dying to just die. Having your whole life just eaten and done nothing besides that, it is as if we have lived for no reason whatsoever. Even if we have great intelligence, and just wonder around, don't you see the utility of this?

To think there is no meaning in a certain koan, so we need a new one to go deeper into our experience, or to think how we should see things in a different way – there all kinds of way of living a life, yet to keep wondering where we will go when we die, while not using the koans that were there for digging in. this is not meant to be a mental exercise. We need to truly dig in, into that which is alive, no mental understanding about it, and when we dig into the source, all of the questions become clear. Not looking away from it, then each doubt you have, lean into it, see what it is to be alive. And if then still you cannot break through, don't blame it on the lack of essence in a koan. We have to see this clearly.

Day 7

In this letter telling younger brother Ryorochu, no matter how many times he has told this to his older brother, the same thing over and over again. So this time the younger brother is being spoken to on both of their behalf. There is actually only one question in this whole world Master Daie said. From there many mental questions can arise but only one question is the most important to resolve

What is the Buddha? Master Unmon said : "Dried shit stick". It is not about the words, but about cutting the root from where all words come forth. A whole life is not enough to resolve all of those mental questions. The koan is for throwing

ourselves into this one question with everything that we are. If we are only doing it mentally, then we are crushing ourselves the chance for resolution. This is why Master Mumon Ekai has said with every single one of our 360 smallest bones and 84000 hair pores, throwing ourselves completely to this great doubt, we give everything we are to this resolution. Without any concerns of nihilism or whether this is true or not, we burn and we become it in all the 24 hours of the day letting go of every past information, conditioning, gathering information. As if we have a red hot burning iron ball in our mouth, we cannot swallow it or spit it out. That place that cannot possibly be understood. We throw ourselves without any mental ideas. Just become that Mu completely with everything we are: sitting is Mu, standing is Mu, walking is Mu... Until we have lost track of where we even are and thoughts can no longer arise anymore. Hold to that deepest root and go to where those thoughts cannot possibly arise. To where we cannot tell anymore if we should go this way or that way. We get caught and we get stuck, we get to a place where our judgment is useless. We can no longer think about how to perceive, it is not possible, that thinking won't work. We can only throw ourselves totally and whole heartedly, with our whole being, into becoming this MU completely. We lose track of the zendo, we lose track of the surroundings, we can't even tell if we still have a body or not. No outside division is left. Only this Mu is left and finally that is all there is and it comes forth spontaneously, one after the next. And finally there is nothing there at all. Only when we can realize it to this point we know this place directly. Where there is no division between an inside or outside, not a single place for anything dualistic: "Not a single thing in all the heavens and earth". That Great Death where nothing is left. As Shido Munan Zenji says: "While being still alive to die and die completely". There are only dead bodies rolling around everywhere and this is our great perfect mirror wisdom. Only reflecting. It is not possible we could judge at this point. Zazen is not about going over our thoughts again and again. It is not about being unable to tell if we are sitting, awake or sleeping. Being fully aware, but without judging anything present anywhere. A flaccid state of mind cannot become like this, we have to become full and taut to realize this state of mind without judging, without any mental ideas left at all. This is the great death but not yet, the necessary rebirth to new consciousness. All the dualistic thoughts are gone but that deep rebirth is pulled out of our consciousness by that which we encounter: The morning star for the Buddha, the sound of the morning bell for master Hakuin, the sound of the bamboo and tile for Master Kyogen, what will it be, but unless we can become this place of no thoughts, of no judgment remaining this is not possible.

We can be taught how to do it to this degree but then to still be undecided, for example to still think: Is this the best koan I could be working on? How do we

do it when we are trying to eat or sleep, in all our day activities? Or isn't there something else I should be doing? Or will all these thoughts disappear? Or pulling out more debatable words from analects to argue instead of doing it. Demanding to be told and further explaining to. You are not a child, what are you doing reading the sutras and records of the ancients? You are only learning explanations but they are not becoming who you are. Second nature to you, again and again you re open the thinking version. Thoughts and more thoughts in all directions. This poisonous habit you keep returning to, reentering again and again. I you would just dive in and do it, I wouldn't need to be writing letters like this anymore, but if I don't answer in this way, you will think there is no truth or experience here to share and so I write to you. And for you, without fail, to show this letter to your brother.

Next Torin says you wrote this to me, this year I'm 60 years old but in fact that deepest truth is not yet clear to me. Asking how to do daily life and practices. But to work on a koan, the dry shit stick, and while eating food and putting on clothes and saying you don't know how to do it, you are one who is still holding on to something that still wants to know where should you put your foot, how to put on your kimono. You need to be told how to do these things? This is not the point. What is it that you want to find out? What are you trying to resolve? This is the question I want you to say from now on. Or when you are received in the gates of hell and you give an answer like this, you will be told to not take your eyes off from it. Or you will not make this clear. You must experience the true source of all of this. You have to see and experience the true source of what feels, of what sees. If that is not clear to you, then, you will be wondering all the time is there death or is there no death? Where do you go after you die? And there will be no end to this. But who is making these questions? That true source needs to be realized. Whose anger is it? What is making these flames flare up? This has to be cut at its root. If you break through the koan then, the source of your life is clear and obvious, like putting a piece of ice into the fire, suddenly everything is as it has to be.

He says to him be clear. "Say it", do we die or do we not die? What you are saying is like the words of the heretics thinking about the world after death. This is not the Buddha Dharma. That which you are studying, the reading of all those books available, and increasing your information. But what for? Isn't it all of no use whatsoever? Not even knowing your true source directly. This is like spreading poison around, spreading dualistic ideas. You may agree with what you yourself are saying from what is said in the koans and in the sutras, you want proof to you in advance.

In the Buddhist era many had questions but Buddha did not answer once. One time a young person was hit with a poisonous arrow, and he was suffering; someone wanted to take it out, and another person said no! Don't take it out before you know where did it come from, what type of poison is that, and what amount is in the arrow... A person with poison running through the body will die at any moment, it can't wait for all of this. The world after we die is just like this. Who shot this arrow? First we have to pull it out and do it before the poison goes further and then tend to our life firmly and clearly. Maybe there is a kind of life after death but we have to return to life to make use of this fully. There are 2 main ideas: One is that people die and they return to nothingness, second is that people die and we go someplace else. Buddha was against both of these. Because if we die and there is nothing after death, then why should we make efforts? We might as well live something interesting and fun now. But if we die, then we are eternally reborn in a different form. Then there is no need to hurry and get anything resolved because there is that kind of infinite space in which to do so many things, as if there is no need to make any efforts. To throw away our chances to awaken in either one of these two versions is what the Buddha taught. It is the Mahayana path that supports that each activity is where we are alive: What is this? What is doing this? This is where we can find the essence to this question. When we are really able to awaken to what is right now then why are we worried about the other parts of it? Buddha is asking what is this. We are born, we have a body, we have sadness we have happiness. Like a disciple who ask the Buddha right before he died: "Buddha, when you are gone, how shall we find this great wisdom? How will we have access to it? And the Buddha said: „Do not look outside of yourselves. Look to yourself to find this truth. Take refuge in yourselves. Look to the Dharma to find this truth, take refuge in the Dharma."

Our true mind is one and the same with the 7 billion people. This is before and after as well, it is that huge, we are not isolated or separated. We are right here now with simultaneously the whole universe. What sees this and can understand this. We can all see this from our deepest wisdom. And you can see it for example with a candle which must light another candle before its fire goes out. But if that wisdom continues, if that light continues, it touches people whom are all endowed with that same wisdom. And that brings it to continuous life. This is not related to a certain era it includes all eras. And this is the wisdom which the Buddha Dharma says we must awaken to. As we live, our life cannot be based on our concepts of what it is to be alive, and on our concepts of the truth. The question is how can we liberate others? And we need this deep wisdom. And further we sit zazen not for our own good fortune or for a better life after death, but for the descendants that will come after, for that

truth to be kept alive. For this we have to awaken even one day sooner, and leave it for them as well. This is the important point of the Buddha Dharma.

To give this deep wisdom to all human kind. To share this truth with everyone in society this has to be done. To awaken one day sooner is the central point. Bring these deep states of mind to all the others and clarify those twisted aspects of our mind so we can bring this liberation to all in society.