

六祖壇經講話

The Platform Sutra of the Sixth Patriarch Teisho

Volume Two

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Editor's Preface

*This is Volume two of a multi-volume series of teisho on **The Dharma Jewel of the Platform Sutra of the Sixth Patriarch**. The teisho were given by Harada Shodo-roshi at Tahoma Monastery [Tahoma-san Sogen-ji], Whidbey Island, WA, U.S.A. The teisho in this volume were given at the Osesshin from February 2002 through September 2003. The teisho is translated by Daichi Zenni.*

*The English translation of the text, Chapters Three through Five in this volume, is from **The Sutra of Hui-neng**, translated by A. F. Price and Wong Mou-lam. A slightly different edition based on the same translation can be found online at:*

<http://www.sinc.sunysb.edu/Clubs/buddhism/huineng/content.html>



*Opening
up the Dharma
Treasure, the Sixth's Patriarch's
true marrow,
The One Drop of Sogen quenches ours and all
descendents' thirst.
From the origin, not one thing!
To realize this, throwing away our bodies completely!
To actualize this path, to clarify it ultimately,
We offer our most sincere mind in
gratitude for Buddha's grace.*

*Opening the Teisho
on
the Platform Sutra of the Sixth Patriarch
September 2000*

Chapter 3 Questions & Answers

OSESSHIN, 2002≈02, DAY ONE

Sutra: “I was told,” said Prefect Wei, “that at Bodhidharma’s first interview with Emperor Wu of Liang he was asked what merits the emperor would get for the work of his life in building temples, allowing new monks to be ordained, giving alms, and entertaining the order; his reply was that these would bring no merits at all. Now, I cannot understand why he gave such an answer. Will you please explain.”

“These would bring no merits,” replied the Patriarch. “Don’t doubt the words of the Sage. Emperor Wu’s mind was under an erroneous impression, and he did not know the orthodox teaching. Such deeds as building temples, allowing new monks to be ordained, giving alms, and entertaining the order will bring you only felicities, which should not be taken for merits. Merits are to be found within the Dharmakaya, and they have nothing to do with practices for attaining felicities.”

The Sixth Patriarch is saying “Daruma Daishi is not lying, don’t doubt Bodhidharma. You only doubt him because you are not clear yet. You have not yet realized the truth directly.” He had not yet encountered his True nature. He knew of the forms of sutras, temples and monks, but did not understand the essence. These are the forms of being a monk, of a temple or of a sutra, and this is not the point. The point is the True Source has to be known and experienced directly. Why did Emperor Wu build all of those temples, raise the monks, and work on the sutras? To build and offer temples and sutras were offerings made in order to receive good fortune. This is not the same as merits. This difference has to be seen clearly.

In our physical life, we are always dying. Even if we should live to be 100

years old, we are still going to die in our physical bodies. But are we awakened in those years or not? This is what is of prime importance. This is not about our physical form, but about that which no being can possibly be separated from. If we live from eighty to one hundred years but are not liberated, we are still caught on the form of a life; we have to be freed from that. It is not that we are superior because we are living for a longer time.

In fact it is actually the case that the more we try to be perfect and strict and the more we try to take on many ways of protecting ourselves, the more we can become more and more restricted. In our life tomorrow though we try to seek and seek and seek and be more complete, the more our Essence becomes diluted. It becomes empty inside. In the world everyone wants to be more successful, more efficient; for a person’s happiness to be sought after is so important. However, in the middle of this with all of the philosophies and studies progressing, maybe our life becomes more luxurious, but everyone is becoming more insecure, becoming unhappy, becoming uncertain about the future. Having worked their whole life, using their ability, giving everything to society, why did everyone become so melancholy? From everyone around us—even warm family members—we can’t fill in this deep emptiness.

This is not only true for Buddhism; we read in Christianity as well that our body is God’s temple. We can’t be an empty house; we have to manifest God in this vivid living way. Then even if we live like a beggar, our Mind shines bright and brilliant. Building temples, doing sutras, raising monks—these are felicities but they are not merits. For example, if we do zazen, even if we become settled, are rarely sick and have good fortune because of that, these are not merits, these are felicities.

Because this is so unclear, religions today have become so unclear. People are being cured and some think that has to do with

medical science. The head of one religion has even said he would have to study medicine to help heal people in his religion. This is not a bad thing to do, to study medicine, but it is not the point. Eventually, he left his temple completely and went to medical school. If we do not yet know the truth, or don't know our clear Mind yet, of what use will it be to go to medical or law school? Here we are sitting, right, smack in the middle of the seat of True nature already, yet saying we have to go to school in order to liberate others. This is completely upside down. We must not misunderstand this, because it is very confusing if we do.

People think that happiness has to do with making money, or that to be steady is about doctrine and morals. But these are not the main points. It is not about listening to this teaching for an abundant, happy home; this has become very fashionable in Japan, and it is a great problem.

If we misunderstand this point, then while working or clarifying our True nature, we easily become someone who is asked to advise on legal or economic problems. It can't be said that someone who has a harmonious home and a productive job is necessarily content and deep. These things, such as an abundant home and a productive job, never last forever. That deep vacuum inside comes through. What will you then do about that? How will you then fill that and become truly deep and taut? People think that if they do good things for others, that would work. But that is not the case; eventually, even with that, we become insecure and melancholy. We have to see through all of these to what is the True nature, which we must realize.

The thirty-fifth case of the Mumonkan is a koan of Goso Hōen Zenji. The case's name is "Secho and her Soul Separated." In this, Goso Hōen Zenji brings in a popular old story from China about how near the Yangtze River there is a country called Kōshu where there lived a very wealthy

man named Chohitsu who had lost his wife and lived with his very beautiful daughter, Secho. His cousin had a son of the same age, named Ōchu, who was a very handsome young man. When Secho and Ōchu would play together, it was if it was a very beautiful fairytale. Even father Chohitsu would say, jokingly, how lovely they looked and what a great couple they would someday become. As Secho got older, she became famous for her great beauty. As her father, Chohitsu only wanted for Secho's happiness. When a very wealthy man's son fell in love with her, while Ōchu had no particular skills nor education, the father thought for her welfare it would be better for her to marry the wealthy man's son. At this time in China, it was the case that the father was the one to decide about the daughter's marriage. There was no personal free will involved in it. The wedding day was planned, coming closer and closer. Both Secho and Ōchu challenged the father, but he stood firm. Finally, Ōchu could not stand it, and he left town. He decided to live alone with his deep heartbreak, and left and went onto a boat that was going upstream toward the country of Shoku. As he was on the boat in the twilight and as the boat was about to leave, he heard his name being called from afar. He wondered who it could be when no one knew him in that area, and it was Secho. When he saw her coming closer and recognized her, he said, "Did you run away and break your father's orders?" She said, "Yes, I can't stand to stay there without you, so I ran away. I thought you would be going to Shoku, so I searched for you on this boat." They went together, and lived together happily for four or five years, during which time they had a child. But she became very dark and depressed and it wouldn't lift. Ōchu said, "Isn't this about your father whom you left behind?" She said, "Yes," and he said, "I feel the same." And so they returned to visit the father.

Ōchu said that he should greet her father first himself. So, he went to her father's

home, and her father came out and said, "Aren't you Ōchu? I haven't seen you for four or five years; where have you been?"

Ōchu said "I came to apologize to you."

"Apologize? But, why?" said Chohitsu.

"It was I who took your daughter away, and now we have a child. But we thought of you so deeply, we wanted to come back and see you again," replied Ōchu.

"Haven't you mistakenly married someone else? My daughter Secho, she is sleeping in the back room. For the last four or five years she's been sick, since just about the time you left. She doesn't speak, and she doesn't drink; it's a kind of dehydration we think. Aren't you mistaking your wife for someone else? Since you were so much in love with her at the time, maybe you married someone else who looks like her?" asked Chohitsu.

"No. I can prove it to you," said Ōchu and he went back to the boat to get Secho. Ōchu brought Secho and the child to the father's home, and just as they came to the entranceway, the Secho who was in the back room, who hadn't gotten up for four or five years, for the first time stood up, smiling, and came to meet the other Secho; abruptly, the two became one.

This is a story from the T'ang Dynasty. Goso Hōen Zenji brought this story to become a koan called "Secho and Her Soul Have Become Separated." Which is the real one: Is it the one who is sick in the back room, or is the one who has lived a daily life and raised a child? Which is the real one?"

The Sixth Patriarch says merits are to be found within the Dharmakaya, and they have nothing to do with practices for attaining felicities. Here we have the Dharma body—the Dharmakaya—and the form body. These are not two separated things. We live with our external wishes and ways of being; this is our body of form. We are not yet awakened

to that inner body. Only this body of form will become melancholy; what is most important is to realize that which is within. Daruma Daishi says, No merit. He is talking about a place which is beyond dualism, beyond mental understanding.

In the words of Christ we are taught that people can't live by bread alone. If we don't eat and sleep, of course we can't stay alive, yet even if we have sufficient food and sleep, why do we get that deep feeling of emptiness and unfulfilledness? Here the Sixth Patriarch says it clearly. The Dharma body is not an explanation or a dualistic idea or a mental perception, but that actualizing of the truest, deepest Mind. But where is that true, deep, Mind born forth from? Today, we have such great scientific and technical knowledge and progress, it makes our life so abundant. And yet, we still have this deep melancholy, this deep sense of something missing. We are so directed to gather material things, to gather knowledge. We make efforts yet end up sad and empty. Why did the Buddha say that life is suffering? He said that life is suffering because we gather things, we accumulate things: material things, psychological things, spiritual things. We accumulate and accumulate, and that only increases our suffering. We can't see what can be seen ahead, so we worry that we can't know, and because of that worry, we feel insufficient and then we collect more things.

We have to throw it all away, every single last little bit of it, not a little bit here and a little there, but all of it, completely! This is what the Buddha has said to us: to get rid of all of it! We do good things for other people, but it is mostly for the satisfaction of our own, small-minded ego, and again we become melancholy. Even while we intend to deepen within, we aren't able to actually do it; we just get more confused. We have to see this clearly. We are unable to experience a deep, full, tautness continually. When we finally die, we still



hold onto this challenge, remembering so fondly those deep, full, taut times yet unable to be there.

It is not about dying or being born, nor is it about being in a physical body or not in a physical body. There is only to keep our focus directly on the life energy, sharply cutting, until we can realize that about which it can't be said that it is alive or is not alive. And in doing this, we can't be the least bit concerned about our general living or livelihood. If our religion is clear, then our life and our livelihood is clear. If we don't realize this, we become spiritually melancholy. If we put our livelihood central, we are putting felicities central. Rather, put it toward that which has nothing to do with making that central; there is nothing more but to realize this place of no merit and then to help others as well. If there is any bit of small self left in it, it's not what is being talked about here—that's only doing it because we want to be praised or recognized.

Here in this section of the Sixth Patriarch's teaching, especially, we are being taught how to live our daily life—and of course we can't live it without food and clothes. It doesn't mean not to offer to society, but that can also stick us into a lump of small self if it is not done in the right way. Rather, to not waste a single moment of our life, but throw ourselves into what we do, completely! There is no mistake in this. But in the doing of it, if there are any remnants of small self-consciousness about it, then we are still into it for our own good fortune, good wishes, and our own status, and we will eventually become melancholy no matter how hard we work. Continue your inner work and pierce through any kind of form, or the insecurity will

Steadfastly not practicing good

Gotsu gotsu fu shu zen

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last! We don't do zazen for ourselves or it becomes a kind of bargaining zazen, an idea of will we get rich, will we get realized; this is not how we do zazen. The Sixth Patriarch is not saying to not do good things, but he is saying when we do them, we have to be completely free of any self and other, or any idea that "I" am doing it. It is not for our own small self-satisfactions that we are doing zazen. We have to have the deepest determination! We have to return this matter to each person's actual practice and their responsibility in doing it completely!

OSESSHIN, 2002-02, DAY TWO

Sutra: "Merits are to be found within the Dharmakaya, and they have nothing to do with practices for attaining felicities."

The Sixth Patriarch here is teaching about merits, teaching about the Dharma body and the physical body. When Bodhidharma answered the Emperor he was not talking about felicities, which will decay as our bodies also do. This melancholy sense-perceived world in which we seek felicities, all of this will decay, and we don't need religion to seek in this way. Things which flourish today will without fail die tomorrow. We all know this, yet we stay insecure in the knowing of this and seek security in religion—maybe with a god to rely on who will give us what we want and need, we will feel better. In the Buddha Dharma we don't rely on anything in that way, but only realize our true Mind, deeply! That Mind that can make us happy or sad, this which can be followed back into the past endlessly, stretches forth into the future infinitely! Is this imagined, however, or is it truly experienced? If we are only trying to improve our own status, we won't see or know this clearly. The Mayor's doubt is sincere: Why did Daruma Daishi say that Emperor Wu would get no merits? To know that Mind which stretches through the three realms of time and all the ten periods and directions—that Mind which

embraces all people! To realize this directly, and not be caught on the melancholy gathering of felicities!

The Buddha, on February 15th, received entrance into Nirvana. From the age of thirty-five, when on December 8th at dawn he was deeply enlightened, he for forty-nine years gave life to this physical body. While he taught the Eightfold Path, the Four Noble Truths, he was not limited by this physical body. On the banks at Kushinagara, in the *sala* grove, he entered Nirvana. He gave a last teaching, the Yūkyōgyō—the Sutra on the Bequeathed Teachings—and at this time many of his disciples cried. He taught that while we have a body we also have desires; no matter how enlightened we are we have confusion when we have a physical body. That now this would be liberated: "Don't cry for me. I have taught the Dharma so all people could realize true Mind, and when that happens, that is my life continuing."

We are not this physical body; we are this continuing truth. Don't lapse in your efforts! It is this essence which Daruma Daishi was teaching about.

The Buddha was teaching of the fulfillment of the Dharma body. Daruma Daishi said it as Only emptiness, no holiness. Baso Zenji said it as, The mind as it is is the Buddha, and then there was Rinzai, who said, In this five foot lump of red flesh, there is a True person of no rank, always coming and going. This True person of no rank: in this 180-190 cm worth of physical body, this true Mind! In this world, the reason why all people are born is for the very reason of realizing this true Mind directly. As Kobo Daishi said, Every single person in the whole world existing, these are all my family, and as the Buddha said, All of the three realms are my home, and all of the beings in them are my children.

Seeing people, seeing our body, we have to see how it is all the same thing; we have to awaken the Eye that can see like

this. We can't do anything to crush this clearly seeing Eye. In this whole universe there is existing this tiny blue earth on which six billion people live. So then why can't people of different religions live there harmoniously? Claiming special privileges, fighting wars—with such modern technological progress we are still unable to molt that skin of hate, resentment, and not believing in each other, which is all going against Buddha nature.

That True person of no rank with which we are all born is not ego. It is our body's instinct to guard our physical body, but that instinct only is not what we are. We have to realize from experience that true Self, to awaken even one day sooner to the true Self! That Secho who is sleeping in the back room: How many insecure people like that there are in this world, who don't know what they're going to be doing! We have to clarify this with our own experience, doing zazen and letting go of all of the clouds in our heads, purifying our awareness, and not using our senses via the ego filter—to let go of that filter and not give attention to these *mozo* which are all coming in from the ancient past. Instead, to believe deeply in that clear, bright Mind. Koans are one way of doing this. Zazen is for letting go of everything which is not that.

In our heads we have gathered so many things and with our bodies we have so many habits; we have to let go of all of these. For this, we have to do zazen to help us let go of all of that extraneous thinking—letting go, letting go, letting go and letting go, digging into the *susokkan* with the breath, the koans, until we know this place where there is nothing to hold on to whatsoever! And then we will be able to know this place of not giving attention to that which moves our mind left and right and in every direction. With all of our clear, simple senses, we see the world exactly as it is. In this five-foot lump of red flesh, there is a True person of no rank,

who is always coming and going in and out of the five orifices.

In all of our five senses, it comes and goes. As our eyes it becomes seeing, as our ears it becomes hearing, as our mouth it becomes speaking, as our hands and feet it becomes holding and carrying us. Where is there anything missing? We become the sound of the bell, the river, the bird, the mountain; all of the 10,000 things, we become them completely. No need to name, “this is my friend, this is my enemy,” not to call people “good people” and “evil people.” Our true state of mind is this. We are all responsible for creating this world. Not to be caught in a dark hole but to know that our physical body can realize this well, this is our greatest responsibility. We all from the origin have this wisdom, but we stray into other ways. We have to know this deep determination! That is what in zazen is—to not be pulled around and fooled by our gathered ego clutter.

The Patriarch said:

Sutra: Realization of the Essence of Mind is *ku* or *kung* and equality is *teh* [good quality].

What this means is each person has to realize for themselves there is no such thing as a small self existing anywhere—to naturally realize this state of mind. And this is not some special supernatural state of mind, either. The Sixth Patriarch said it elsewhere, from the origin, there is only one Mu—to see this clearly and directly! That is for ourselves to realize. We then bring it to all beings, that they can have this same realization—but not by bragging about ourselves and how we've realized something special. If we do this, when we realize it clearly we see that we are all alike. And to see this are these words here: “*ku*” and “*te*”, these true merits.

When our zazen has ripened well, we see how there is nothing to hold on to. We see there is only this mind of God as

well—that Mind which holds onto nothing whatsoever. But it may only sound melancholy when we are grabbing at a small self. To think having nothing at all sounds sad and lonely is only because we stand up with a small self. To throw all of that away completely! If we can realize that, then how could one look down on someone else? There could be no such thing as a caste system or people we would call “good” and “evil.” All of that prejudice is only something that is imagined and has no relevance in this true place of holding onto nothing whatsoever. All that was claimed clearly by Daruma Daishi.

Sutra: When our mental activity works without any impediment, so that we are in a position to know constantly the true state and the mysterious functioning of our own mind, we are said to have acquired *kung teh* [merits].

If at every single mind moment, or *nen*, we can be clear, this does not mean to be holding onto some idea about clarity constantly! Zazen, as well, is to die completely in every single instant and breath. We exhale completely and then we cut sharply, because if we don’t, we keep pulling along everything. As Shidō Munan Zenji has said, When dying, die completely, and when we die completely, then everything we do is good. To breathe out completely until we can exhale no more—all the way to the end of the breath—then our mind brightens! But we don’t do it to that point, and that is why we hang on to ongoing clouds and murkiness. We can’t put down the breath—it’s something of great importance and value. These were the last words of Shidō Munan Zenji:

While still alive, to die and die completely, and then everything we do is good.

Our body is not what inhales: It is the universe inhaling through us! And for this we have to die completely, or else our state of mind does not become clear.

Sutra: When our mental activity works

without any impediment, so that we are in a position to know constantly the true state and the mysterious functioning of our own mind, we are said to have acquired merits.

To be able to, no matter what comes along, keep this going! No matter how many minutes we do it, we have to do it to the point where it is clear and completely done. And if we can do it completely, we will see how this works. In each and every single mind moment we die and are reborn again; when this can be continued it is what is called *shikantaza*. We can’t make little of *shikantaza*; it is a very strict, strong practice. But it has to be done clearly and sharply in order to realize that true state of mind. In each moment we become this, and then bring what is realized to everything else that we do—with nothing else being held in our attention whatsoever! Then all of this comes forth from the world of holding on to nothing at all.

Sutra: Within, to keep the mind in a humble mood is *kung* and without, to behave oneself according to propriety is *teh*.

In our mind we stand on the Buddha’s head, but in our behavior we are offering a prostration to the feet of a young child. This means to hold onto nothing at all in our heads, and then we can know this very humble state of mind. But if we are egoistic, looking down on people, this is not the case. It is not about saying how hard we’ve worked and how much we’ve done; that is the complete opposite of this expression.

Religions from now on will hold this clear state of mind central: It is not about a privilege or a special god, but for humans to prostrate to other humans’ clarity of mind—to be able to give love to all beings and not just because we are loved and given love. Not to make certain conditions on our loving and not to make only certain people special. This is humans’ highest quality and character: to be able to love

each other. Obaku Zenji would prostrate so much every single day that he had a big bump on his forehead; he was famous for this. Shukusō Kōtei in his younger years challenged him and said why was he prostrating like that when it was taught not to worship the Buddha, not worship the Dharma and not worship the sangha? Obaku replied that he was not prostrating to the Buddha, to the Dharma, or to the sangha, but prostrating for prostrating—prostrating to that Mind that all people are endowed with, and in deep gratitude and amazement for what has brought us to this place today. Without great joy it is not true zazen. As is written at the end of Hakuin's Zazen Wasan, we can know this joyful true Mind. Not to be sitting as a beggar or a thief but to extend in our zazen throughout all of the heavens and earth and to feel that gratitude to those who have left this Path for us—in this way, we find true merit.

Sutra: That all things are the manifestation of the Essence of Mind is *kung*, and that the quintessence of Mind is free from idle thoughts is *teh*.

As Rinzai says, In the eyes it is manifested as seeing, in the nose as smelling, in the mouth as speaking, in the ears as hearing. In our hand it is manifested as holding and our feet as walking. If we can receive this world in this very moment it is as if it's just been born, as if each and every moment is born fresh and new. It's not that we don't have any memory or experience that comes up of its own, it's about what is prior to all of that. We look at people and we live encrusted with preconceived notions. To let go of all of these and see clearly in this instant, not thinking this person is good and that person is bad, but to know the actual truth of being born in this very moment! It's not about how long we've sat up until now, but if we can be born fresh and new at this very moment. That is *teh*.

Sutra: That all things are the

manifestation of the Essence of Mind is *kung*, and that the quintessence of Mind is free from idle thoughts is *teh*.

This is to shave away all of that twistedness and not give it any attention, only attending to this very moment.

Sutra: ...and that the quintessence of Mind is free from idle thoughts is *teh*. Not to go astray from the Essence of Mind is *kung*, and not to pollute the mind in using it is *teh*.

And so, In all the boundless realm of space, in the separation between self and others not a single hair can be inserted. In the limitless past to the immediate present, we have never separated from this very moment. As Rinzai has said, In this five-foot lump of red flesh there is a True person of no rank, always coming and going in and out of the orifices, if we haven't seen it yet, see it now! See it now! And with that seeing we have to have this sharp focus—not a hazy and unclear focus but a sharp and clear focus with no space or seam between ourselves and another, but still to be as if we have just met this person for the first time—not with extra thoughts like “I have seen them this place,” or “saw them last at that place.” Also, to be meeting every single moment in this world as if for the first time, with the sharpest, clearest focus. This is the function of the Buddha nature. This meeting as if for the very first time, this is the essence of the Buddha nature.

OSESSHIN, 2002/02, DAY THREE

Sutra: Not to go astray from the Essence of Mind is *kung*, and not to pollute the mind in using it is *teh*.

To be not separated ever from Essence of Mind—holding on to nothing at all—this is *kung*. As Bodhidharma has said, To let go of all connections to everything external and to be free from all concerns of anything within. When our mind is like a tall, firm wall—at that moment we

are at one with the Path. Not to go astray from the Essence of Mind, to not be moved around by various external things—to hang onto nothing at all—this is zazen. As the Sixth Patriarch also said, To not add on thoughts and judgment to external things and to not be moved around by anything within, this is zazen. If we still have many thoughts always brewing, this means our zazen is not ripe yet. This does not mean to not see and hear and speak, but to not hold on to any of what we perceive, and not to pollute the mind in using it: When the clappers and bells sound, we feel them to the furthest edges of our whole body. We see the mountains, we hear the birds, and our body feels them exactly as they are, manifesting as they are. But we are not perceiving them as a separate this or that, not judging them or analyzing them. If we can let go of that, each and every world that we encounter is new.

Not to pollute the mind in using it. While it is said that God has formerly given birth to all creation, we are also giving birth to it in each instant, new and fresh. All things manifested, yet not stopped by any of them, this is true merit. This is how we do zazen, not to search for something good; that is not merit, but good fortune.

Sutra: If you seek for merits within the *Dharmakaya* and do what I have just said, what you acquire will be real merits.

The official has asked the Sixth Patriarch why Bodhidharma answered Emperor Wu with the words “No merit” when the Emperor asked what merit there would be for him since he had built many temples, raised many monks and translated many sutras. If we put our huge Mind aside and only stay concerned with material things of form, then no matter what we do as times change, we won’t be awakened to this huge Mind; we’ll become melancholy with our material projects alone, unable to see clearly. For us to work for what is needed is a matter of course, but this is

not a matter of special merit, nor should we mistake it for what is most important. While the Emperor was even called the Buddha Nature Emperor, in his later years he met great tragedy. Then people asked what merit was there in having done those things. The point is not in that, but to know that which **doesn’t** change, even with decay and birth and death—to not be caught on form and shape. Instead, look at this deepest Mind and awaken to this place where there is not one speck of any clutter! If you seek for merits in the *Dharmakaya*, what you acquire will be real merits.

As it says in the Bible, to not let the right hand know what the left hand is doing—to not be caught self-consciously on how we are doing such good. In ancient Buddhism it is said that the receiver, the giver, and that which is given, for all of these to be completely empty. When we think about how much we’ve done, it’s like staining this huge, great, big, blue sky. While we have the Buddha’s words to do good and to not do bad, we do good things and we feel so fine. But if we get self-consciously congratulatory when we finish, then we get clouded and darkened—even thinking that things will get better in the next life and wondering maybe if they don’t why should we be doing this anyway? Will God really stop right in front of my house if I pray really hard? We have to pray with complete absorption, or it’s not true prayer. And when we do good, it is the same. If we don’t throw ourselves into it so completely that we forget ourselves, we’re not doing good. If we don’t look for any praise, our mind stays huge and wide like the big sky.

If we seek for felicities, we may want to have something better than someone else and we lose our humility. True humility comes from loving all beings. In all the three worlds, this is all my home and all of the beings in the three worlds are my children. Because we love like this, we do these things naturally. Not bartering with

doing them, but doing them because we have to—and doing them for all beings, including animals and plants, all of it, as one great land which is the manifestation of the Buddha nature manifesting as insects, rivers, oceans. We are made of 60 billion cells, but they all originated from one cell. There are foot-bottom cells and brain cells, but these are all the Buddha's body, manifesting it without any inequality or prejudice. Maybe the cultures of various countries are different, but in the Buddha nature there is no difference—we are all varieties of gatherings of molecules, and each is a manifestation of Buddha nature. To see it like this is enlightenment. And if we see from our very clear, simple Mind, we will naturally appear in just this way.

Here, the Sixth Patriarch is not saying how we shouldn't think how we want to do good things—only not to think that doing something good is special. Rather, spontaneously and naturally we do it in accordance with what is most necessary—for our body as well; it is a borrowed item that we have to return. We all think we have to do something good to get into a heaven; it's not bad to do good things, but wrong only when we think we are doing something special. Rather, to see them as a matter of course, not as something special and worthy of merit. This is why Bodhidharma answered to Emperor Wu that in all the excellent things he had done, there was no merit.

While doing zazen, we are able to sit without lots of extra thinking and we can eat and do sutras and *samu*, receiving this life energy quietly, clearly and naturally. Then, we go back into society and it all seems to fade away, as if we had cultivated it in a greenhouse. We have to actualize our sesshin in our daily life as well, and we have a hard time doing that because we are still unripe. For example, people who were here at the September osseshin at the very time of September 11th were able

to stay centered while they were here, but they reported that when they returned to society they faced such a difficult time with so much fear, anger and insecurity. They couldn't imagine how to go through this with their centered mind. Of course, those criminal people have to be punished, but in doing that, everyone faces further fear and insecurity as well. Our sesshin's merits seem suddenly very far away.

Sutra: He who works for merits does not slight others; on all occasions he treats everybody with respect.

To not look down on others; when we can actually realize that our whole body is the universe, we can never feel there is anything about someone else to be looked down upon.

Sutra: To train our own mind is *kung* and to train our own body is *teh*.

During sesshin, we see clearly what is most important. When we are given this perception, we can see things from it. An earth-shaking event like 9/11, however we feel it so directly, yet we also have to see it as a passing phenomena—a severe, passing thunderstorm. No matter what others might say and how they might respond, when the time comes, our awakened Essence will become necessary for all people. No matter what comes along, to not lose our Essence, and live without mistake from that Essence. When the time is right, people will understand this as well.

Sutra: Learned audience, merits should be sought within the Essence of Mind; they cannot be acquired by almsgiving, entertaining the monks, and so on.

True merit is the seeing clearly of our true original Mind prior to the ego. Ego comes after twenty-three months, when we are conditioned. Originally, we are **zero**: that world of God which gives rain equally to the good and the bad; or Amida Buddha, who gives salvation equally to all people, whether they are rich or poor, educated or ignorant. It is that which unites and

connects all beings, which extends in all directions. Yet, at twenty-three months, when we are first self-consciously aware, we lose that world of One, that world of all beings being one existence.

This world of One is not something we can invent in our heads, but only by forgetting our body and forgetting all of our thoughts completely. And this does not mean to get hard and rigid in trying to do that, either. We have to let go of those tight places; Throw away, throw away and throw away everything! Throw away all of those places of what we think of as “I” and “me” and “mine” again and again until we can be free of all of that idea of any possessiveness! And our eye becomes the Eye of the whole universe; our mind becomes the Mind of the whole universe and our body is the Body of the whole universe. In this way it can be said, all the three worlds, they are all my home; and all the beings in the three worlds are my family. This is that huge Mind which is expressed in these words; we have to see this well! We are all this clear Mind from the origin, but this ego has become so familiar and natural-feeling to us it is very hard to let go of it. So we come to sesshin to let go of that ego. For that everyone has come here, and the time is now! Exhale it all out completely! Let it go again and again! Let go of all of our self-centered interpretation of everything! And then we can receive this deep understanding. The universe, the world around us, gives it to us.

When Emperor Wu first met Bodhidharma, he told him how much he had done and how many temples he had built; how many monks he had ordained and how many sutras he had translated. Daruma Daishi was saying, Aren’t you attached and possessive about having done all of these things? Because, if not, the emperor wouldn’t have said it and asked for recognition for it all. Because you want to be praised for it, Daruma Daishi is saying, You are making yourself

miserable with that. He’s not saying the emperor shouldn’t be doing those things at all or that the doing of them is making him miserable—only that if he would let go of that attachment of having done it all, how joyful he could be. With a mind full of thoughts and ideas which still are all self-referring, we cannot hear a great person’s words clearly.

Sutra: Learned Audience, merits should be sought within the Essence of Mind; they cannot be acquired by almsgiving, entertaining the monks, and so on.

To see this clearly is merit. In this way the Sixth Patriarch explained to the official why Daruma Daishi answered Emperor Wu by saying “No merit.”

The Emperor Wu knew this in his head but he didn’t know it from deep experience; he was bowled over by his own explanations. For realizing this directly, and not only with our head, we do sesshin. Even in this era, we can’t see this clearly. There are still so many on this planet without food and others still with so much. This brings hatred, resentment, criticisms. It was more than a thousand-plus years ago that Buddha, Socrates, Confucius taught us how we could not liberate civilization without learning to forget ourselves completely. To let go of ourselves completely! The Buddha threw away all of it: his precious family, his palace, his country, his beautiful wife and darling child. For us to receive this grace and not throw everything away, we will then be drowned by our own explanations. As it is said: to kill, and kill, and kill completely! Only then can we know the truest of all that is real. The Patriarchs use these words: to kill, kill completely, to crush, to cut. These are not easy and kind-sounding words. But if we don’t strongly let go of ourselves, we remain looking for our own felicities. The Sixth Patriarch says these are not the true merits.

Mumon Ekai teaches us: With all of our 360 smallest joints and 84,000 of our hair

pores, we have to raise this great question! Mumon Ekai says we can't throw ourselves away with a casual effort. To throw everything we are into it, or we will murder civilization instead. To throw everything away! Our eyes, our ears, our nose, our mouth, these are not senses with strings of ego attached; they are senses that are born freshly with each moment's encountering! And with these liberated senses we can perceive clearly, without any idea of gain and profit and felicities. Mumon Ekai is urging us to do this, and the Sixth Patriarch leads us through this great work that has to be done. To bring back life to Afghanistan is a very important thing to do. To get rid of terrorists is also a very important thing to do, and to feed all of those who have no food is a very important thing to do. But if no one cultivates this clear-seeing Eye that is able to see all people equally, then all of those things just mentioned will once more be repeated.

The Sixth Patriarch is pointing to this, saying, please don't mistake this and do not add a stain of self-appreciation to the training you're doing here.

OSESSHIN, 2002-02, DAY FOUR

In the last question, the answer of Bodhidharma of 'no merits' was discussed. The Prefect Wei had invited the Sixth Patriarch and told him in a time for questions and answers that he still was confused by the answer of Daruma Daishi to Emperor Wu. Emperor Wu had told Daruma Daishi that he had built so many temples, arranged for the ordination of so many monks, and had so many sutras translated, and he wondered what would the merit of all of that be, to which Daruma Daishi answered, No merit. People do good things; why was he then told there was no meaning in doing that by Daruma Daishi?

The Sixth Patriarch answered that people do things of material and physical form in response to necessity, and that is good to do, but that is not the most important

thing to be done. Those kinds of things will fade away and we will die. We have to work on what is most important and not end up melancholy. We have to realize the source of that mind that wants to do good; that clear, original Mind which unites all beings, which does good acts without end. To realize that deep, original Mind is the true merit. Anything which is done without awakening to that is like writing letters in the thin air. We have to not just look at the letters, but at the huge space that holds them.

Sutra: "Next, the Prefect Wei asked: I notice that it is a common practice for monks and laypeople to recite the name of Amitabha with the hope of being born in the Pure Land of the West. To clear up my doubts, will you please tell me whether it is possible for them to be born there or not?"

Next, he asked if it was true about being born in the Pure Land. At the time this takes place, there was commonly Amida worship—that then also became Kannon worship, with this number of thirty-three representing infinite vows to leave out no one at all but to deliver everyone and anyone to the Pure Land. The Buddha was the representative who had done this first. Everyone has this vow; to bring it to life and with that, to bring people to the Pure Land, never stopping until all are realized. For doing this it was taught that repeating "Namu Amida Butsu"—the Amida Buddha's name—in one straight line, could do that without going through a long time of practice.

Today this would not be popular, because if anyone mentioned that such a thing as a Pure Land existed, where everyone is peaceful and there is a big lake with everyone sitting around on big lotus leaves receiving some peaceful world, people would also say they aren't so interested in such a place—they can play downtown, or on the computer at home. The lotus petal's life doesn't sound so interesting. For

people in the old times, or even today where there is no food in countries and the air is full of drought, wars, plagues, with no hope, we will just want to die as soon as possible to be relieved from being alive. This was probably also the case with many at the time of the Buddha—people feeling like they would just prefer to do it in the next life, and die as soon as possible this time around. This is also true in the very impoverished and foodless areas of the Arab, African and Asian worlds. It is in these surroundings that terrorists are raised, and these people are born wanting also to be saved from life in this miserable world as soon as possible.

Is it true that people will be liberated by just single-mindedly chanting Amida Buddha's name?

Sutra: The Patriarch replied, I will explain, please listen carefully. According to the sutra spoken by the Bhagavat to Shravasti City for leading people to the Pure Land of the West, it is quite clear that the Pure Land is not far from here.

Although it is popularly said the Sixth Patriarch was an uneducated person, that is obviously nowhere near the truth. He was giving sophisticated and detailed knowledge of all the different sutras taught by the Buddha. The Buddha taught the Amida Sutra at Gyo Shoja near Shaijo, where he taught the Diamond Sutra. If anyone here has been at the Shaijo, they know it was a huge school, monastery and dojo, and even today there they are discovering monk cells and other ruins. The prince at the time was Prince Gida, and the most wealthy man in all of India was Shudotsa Chojia, and they built the second largest place for training, with many wells dug there near a river, and many trees. The Buddha stayed here the longest time of any place in India, and he also taught here. It was here that the Amida Sutra was taught.

It is taught that Hozo Bodhisattva gave twenty-eight great vows and they were

manifested. One of them was manifested as Amida Nyorai with the teaching that only reciting his name, Namu Amida Butsu, would bring liberation in the Pure Land. The Amida Sutra also taught in the Kamuryojukyo that it is quite clear the Pure Land is not far from here.

In Indian philosophy, they use an unbelievably huge number to make a construct of infinite numbers. First beginning with one Buddha land, within this Buddha land we then graduate down to a variety of sizes, to what would be a state, a prefecture, a city, a town or a road. In this one locale, the most small unit would be one world, which has a sun and a moon, and that is considered to be like one house—a very large house, with its own sun and moon, but it is called one small world. In the middle of this small world of one house with a sun and moon, is Mount Sumeru. It's a very tall, holy, mountain, like Mount Rainier, and it is divided then into four areas around that mountain. If there are a thousand of these worlds and in each a sun and moon and great mountain, if a thousand of those are gathered, that makes a middle world; if a thousand middle worlds are gathered, this makes a great world; and if a thousand great worlds are gathered, this makes one Buddha land, in which there is one Buddha. There are three thousand of these Buddha lands. The amount of distance it is from there to the Pure Land is altogether one trillion, and that's how far it is to go to the Pure Land. Even our satellites are like local trains and won't make it there.

Sutra: It is quite clear the Pure Land is not far from here, for the distance in mileage is 108,000, which really represents the ten evils and eight errors within us.

If it is one trillion away, it is being asked, how we can possibly get there then, with just a chanting of a single name of a Buddha? Why is he saying that it is not far from here? Because if we are without

delusion at all, it is only one mind moment away; if we are deluded, then it is one trillion away in form, in distance. Or it could be said it is one week of sesshin away. That is why it is put, It is quite clear that the Pure Land is not far from here, for the distance in mileage is 108,000, which really represents the ten evils and eight errors within us.

So then why is it in the West and not in the East? Because in India it becomes so hot that you can fry an egg on a car hood, people are always looking for shade all day long. Only when twilight arises does a cool breeze come from the banks of the Ganges. So the people seeing the sun set in the West would imagine that's where the Pure Land was, a place which was impossible to get to.

The Buddha, when he is bringing the Dharma to all sentient beings with his great wisdom, is not talking about an imagined world; what he is talking about is not some unheard-of thing. We can see clearly in the Diamond Sutra how this works. The truth of this world was spoken in a time when it would be likened to the sands as so many percent of the Ganges River. "In each of those grains of sand there is a Ganges River"—this is a metaphor which comes from the philosophy of India in those days where they are talking about the infinite in a way that the human mind can see what an immeasurable amount is. If it's measurable then we get dualistic and mental in our perception about it. This kind of counting is to pierce through our dualistic thinking and go beyond it.

If we have people struggling in the deepest pain of society there has to be a way of expressing the truth beyond mental ideas about it. If we are only saying this from our intellectual ideas it will not resolve their problem. This is what is being expressed in this immeasurable, nonlinear way, to help us see the place beyond where science is bringing in only measurable things to pro-

vide proof, or how can we experience the liberation of our clear Mind? This Truth is greater than that in this mind where we are always plagued by dualism.

To go there to the West, the question then comes up, what gets us there? That one single mind moment! As Shinran has said, even if his teacher Honen Shonin was lying and deceiving him and he would go to hell by believing him, he would still believe and chant the Buddha's name without pause, just as Honen Shonin had taught him. Whether it is a ticket to heaven or hell, it doesn't matter. Even if he'd been deceived by his teacher, he wouldn't regret doing it. It is this kind of deepest faith which has to be held in order to know that one single mind moment which liberates. To this degree we have to do the chanting of the Buddha's name to find this place beyond mental dualistic perception. Is there a Pure Land really there or not? It's not about, Is there or is there not a paradise like that?—nothing so dualistic.

We do sesshin together, counting our breaths or gathering it all into "*Mu*," aligning our breath, cutting away all of our extraneous thinking. Again and again we continue. The thoughts decrease, but we still wonder if we can really resolve it this time or not. This is what the Sixth Patriarch is saying here when he says, It is quite clear the Pure Land is not far from here, for the distance in mileage is 108,000 which really represents the ten evils and eight errors within us. To believe without a hitch that this sesshin we will realize it! It has to be a faith with no murkiness in it, or many ten thousands of years of doing it still won't work. We have to have this kind of deepest faith—and this is the truth whether it's relating to that sect of the Pure Land or the Zen sect.

The Sixth Patriarch would afterwards transmit it to Nangaku Ejo who transmitted it to Baso Doitsu Zenji. Nangaku Ejo opened the dojo on Mount Nangaku. Someone else had come there first

before he had come and was sitting zazen when he got there, saying it was a great place for zazen. Nangaku asked him, “What are you doing with that zazen?” and the monk said, “I will become a Buddha, of course.” Hearing this, Nangaku picked up a tile, and with a stone he began scraping it. The monk asked him what he was doing with that tile, and he responded, “I am making a mirror,” and the monk said he couldn’t make a mirror by scraping a tile with a rock. Nangaku answered, “Don’t you know, you can’t become a Buddha by just sitting zazen like that?”

The monk then asked Nangaku how he could become a Buddha, to which Nangaku answered: “If you have a cart and a horse and you want it to run, do you hit the cart or do you hit the horse?” At this, the monk fully realized it wasn’t his body’s posture and form that had to be worked on, but their Essence—all day long, to live without extraneous thinking! Thoughts do not suddenly disappear when we finally get our mind clear; we have to bring great energy to our whole being! It isn’t that the darkness disappears and then the light comes--by bringing forth the light, it dispels the darkness. We must put everything we are into each mind moment, or what meaning is there in this zazen in sesshin? Even if we can do it in the zendo, we have to continually and constantly know that awareness of asking what is it that sits? What is it that walks? What is it that stands?

Later, Baso Dōitsu taught his disciples from the words of the Kamuryōjukyo, The Mind, as it is, is Buddha. Whatever was asked: “What is the ultimate point of Buddhism?” The Mind, as it is the Buddha. “Why did Bodhidharma come to China?” This Mind as it is, the Buddha. “What is the final truth of Buddhism?” This Mind, as it is, the Buddha. Baso Dōitsu used this for everything that was brought to him. Once again, he brought these words of teaching Zen,

in this way, to life. In this very present moment, to become the Buddha!

This is not telling people that the Pure Land is some trillion miles away, but in this very moment! This very mind moment’s clarity: Whether it is transparent or not is what makes the difference. If our zazen gets a little clear, we can see plainly how our Mind is not limited to this physical body. The flowers bloom and the birds sing, and that is within our own bodies. Our zazen becomes this big when we are without any murkiness—or else, This very mind being the Buddha, are only words we carry around; we haven’t seen their true essence.

As Shonin has said, we know in zazen that our physical body is really a very inconvenient thing; we have to feed it rice and we have to give it rest and take it to the toilet, and when we get old it gets especially inconvenient. This world is always in flux; we don’t know when a bomb is going to fall right here or if we might receive some poison in the mail, or in the water we drink. As one of the Nembutsu sect would chant, “Namu Amida Butsu,” or the Nichiren sect would chant, “Namu Myō Ho Renge Kyo,” or the Zen sect would give a “Mu,” it can’t be a Mu full of thinking. Will it be a trillion miles away, this Pure Land? Or will it be this very place, a land of lotuses!

Those firemen who ran into the World Trade Center—in what state of mind did they do that? They had to save those people no matter what the cost was. For them, there was no hesitation. Here we can’t take our focus off this one focal point or move away from it. We are all ignorant beings; the more responsible we are, the more confused we are. If we say we have no confusion, it is that we don’t have any responsibility. Will it be a life running away from the main point of this one true moment? Will this zendo work or will it not? Will this zazen work or will it not? It is up to this one moment of mind and this

deep faith. Six years ago [in 1996], Tahoma was a place only for survivalists—this piece of land, it had nothing on it. It now has become a zendo, where last September [the September of the attacks on the World Trade Center] people came from the community at the end of the sesshin, saying how glad they are that this place is here. Such a difficult time it was, when people's hands couldn't stay away from the television switch, but coming here, there was a settled place and settled people, and relief from that anxiety and great fear. This is from the deep faith we have. But if we don't keep that deep faith, we stay high in our *ki* and easily moved around.

It is the same for This mind, as it is, is the Buddha: to believe beyond any doubt! Do it totally when we have the chance to! Rinzai said the real reason we don't break through is because we don't believe we can do it. This is the only one, the singular reason it doesn't happen. Not one hesitation can be allowed!

OSESSHIN, 2002-02, DAY FIVE

Sutra: Prefect Wei then asked the next question, "I noticed it is a common practice for monks and laypeople to recite the name of Amitabha, with the hope of being born in the Pure Land of the West. To clear up my doubts, will you please tell me whether it is possible for them to be born there or not."

"Listen to me carefully, sir," replied the Patriarch, "and I will explain. According to the sutra spoken by the Bhagavat in Shravasti City for leading people to the Pure Land of the West, it is quite clear that the Pure Land is not far from here, for the distance in mileage is 108,000, which really represents the ten evils and eight errors within us."

It is said that it is a trillion miles away. Can we really reach it in one mind moment? How is this possible? To which the Sixth

Patriarch answers in this way: The Pure Land is not far from here, but it is not about distance but about deepest faith and trust. Today, this idea of faith has been put to evil use. Today's wars are almost entirely religious wars. How is it possible that religion, which is for liberating people's suffering, can be the source of war and murdering, with people saying to have faith in their particular god, saying that if you have complete faith in their particular god without any doubt at all, you will be saved?

Of course, people think "complete faith, I must have complete faith" and then that faith is misused. How much confusion and pain this has caused! The Sixth Patriarch is not talking about faith in a something else—he is talking about faith in our deepest, clearest Mind. When it is not this, it is the cause of great confusion.

This absolute faith is something we think we understand, but with peoples' and countries' influences, our own various positions, complex impurities easily enter into this question of faith. Those who crashed into the World Trade Center were directed by faith. But there is also the question of poverty and greed in the world and how it had an effect on this situation. Their faith led them to be blinded, perhaps. In Buddhism as well, as many of you know, in the Second World War, supposedly Awakened roshis did not resist going to that war. It is not that they did not resist at all, but it was not complete. Were their eyes of faith truly seeing clearly as they did this? Some of you may have read about this. The people of the country who had also been blinded were seeing also with a murky point of view. It was also a problem of where they were located. Nevertheless, the Buddha has taught clearly that people should not kill, not take life. But even realizing this, the Buddhist teachers were not able to resist the com-

mand of political orders to go to war. They still didn't clear this one up. In the most true faith we cannot be obscured by people or country or nationality. There cannot be a single speck of anything making it murky whatsoever. That is pure, true faith. Is there murkiness there or not? This still has to be looked at carefully and always, and this is the faith the Sixth Patriarch is talking about. If it's not this faith, the whole question gets very vague.

The Sixth Patriarch then says:

Sutra: According to the sutra spoken by the Bhagavat in Shravasti City for leading people to the Pure Land of the West, it is quite clear that the Pure Land is not far from here, for the distance in mileage is 108,000, which really represents the ten evils and eight errors within us.

If we talk about the form of it in space and time, perhaps it is this number of miles, but in fact the 108,000 represent the Ten Precepts and the Eightfold Path, this together making 108,000. There are also so many small, detailed precepts, but these all come from the five main Precepts, which are expressions of Buddha nature in its spontaneous manifestation. These five Precepts put into greater detail, are what we find with the Ten Profound Precepts, and the eight mentioned here is the Eightfold Path which the Buddha taught, advising how to put those Precepts into daily life.

As for the Ten Profound Precepts, it would take extensive time to give them all in great detail, but basically they are the first five: Do not kill; Do not steal; Do not lie; Do not have unclear relations between men and women; Do not get intoxicated; then, going further, Do not speak badly about others; Do not praise yourself and put others down; Do not be greedy; Do not be angry; and Do not lose the ability to see things clearly.

These are many versions of saying don't put that distance of 108,000 miles between self and other. To know how they are one—all

of these things, including praising one's self and putting others down, speaking badly about others to make ourselves look good—all of these things: being angry, being greedy—all of them are ways of separating instead of bringing into unity.

The Eightfold Path is Right Speech; Right Action; Right Livelihood; Right Mind; Right Thinking; Right Effort; Right Meditation; and Right View. And the opposite of those—when we have mistaken speech, mistaken thoughts, mistaken ways of using our mind, mistaken ways of livelihood, mistaken actions, mistaken mind alignment and mistaken thinking—these are always the things that make distance between ourselves and other people. The Right Speech and Right Actions are things that make no distance between ourselves and other people, between ourselves and others. In this way, when we do those things which are not in alignment with the Buddhist teachings, 108,000 miles comes between ourselves and the something else that we feel that separation from.

The Pure Land is not far from here. This is true of one of superior state of mind, perhaps—one who knows the Essence on just hearing the words saying that if we in one slight moment set our mind on it, it becomes clear. One who can sit down and when told to do this can do it, is very close perhaps. One of these was a disciple of Hakuin—Heshiro, of Ehara, who lived not so far from Hakuin's temple. He was a very wealthy old householder, and when asked, paid for the village to set up a statue of Fudo-san—which he offered near the local waterfall. The day of the unveiling came, and Heshiro was invited to the celebration party. Without even intending to, he was watching the bubbles come down the waterfall, and saw how they all burst at different lengths from the falls. Some of them burst one meter down from the falls, some of them went somewhat farther and then they burst. And for some

reason they all appeared to him to be like people's lives coming down, and then at different lengths, bursting. With people even born at the very same time, some may die at three to five years old, some fifteen to twenty years, some fifty or sixty years old, some, when they reach the ripe age of eighty or ninety—yet we all die. Thinking about this so deeply, and seeing it so clearly, he became very uncomfortable. Thinking about how he had done nothing of value in his life, he became so uncomfortable that he couldn't drink the sake or eat the feast. He made an excuse and left. On the way home, he heard a voice chanting a sutra: For one with straightforward bravery, the deep Enlightenment is immediate and now; for one without this committed determination, it is eons away. He heard that and thought to himself, "So, what it takes is courage, straightforward bravery. This I can do! I'll do it!" He'd never sat zazen in his whole life, but he went home and he went into the bath reserved for guests and locked the door from the inside.

Heshiro was never taught by anyone else so he just thought that he had to sit as hard as he could and throw himself into it completely. His head became like a war zone—all kinds of thoughts came pouring into it, things he never noticed before his head became so full of so much thinking. All kinds of thoughts came forth, one after the next, and he met them with the entire *ki* of his whole being until he lost track of time and body, until he heard a bird chirping, and he heard this bird's chirping but he couldn't find his body. It was as if the bird was chirping inside of him. His eyes were as if sucked into the tatami mat. After awhile, his eyes returned to his eyes, and his body's feeling had returned. He had sat with full *ki* for a whole night, and so this happened. "How mysterious! No body, but I could hear! My eyes were

absorbed in the tatami! But I feel so great, I think I'll do this for another night!" And he did it for three whole nights straight. The following morning, he went to wash his face and looked out the window; he was suddenly astounded. "I've been living in this house for so long, but never have I seen the garden shining like this!" He went to a local priest to find out what he had just realized, but this priest told him he had never had such an experience. He had a book that talked about it, and they found the place in the book, but Heshiro felt just a description is not the point—"I have to have this confirmed." The priest told him he should go to see Hakuin. As he was riding in the palanquin carrying him across the ridge to Hakuin's, the scenery was glowing in such a way that he finally, for the first time understood what it meant, that all the trees and the grasses were Buddha as they are. Reaching Hakuin, he was given many koans by him; the basic koans and further, and he passed each and every one of them on the spot and was confirmed in his experience by Hakuin. He'd never trained before, nor even done zazen before, and yet he broke through completely. This is one of superior quality.

This experience of complete, deep, spiritual awakening, this was done without any teaching. He never had any training before this, yet this person with no training and no teacher with just a straightforward bravery had on the spot realized deep, complete, awakening. This is the essence of going forward with perseverance; no matter what doubts and questions, do not stop! Even if all kinds of doubts and insecurities arise to just continue going through, or else though we continue through many lives, we will never realize and resolve this. This is why it is written in that way. This is the teaching of the Buddha Dharma: If we go straightforward

then we will be able to realize this on the spot.

There are not two truths in Buddhism. There can only be one, but there is a big difference between clear and unclear mind. Unclear mind holds onto some thought, like some state of mind, one of which is in a fog, and one which is not in a fog.

Nevertheless, if we hear about Heshiro and think it's a clever story and nothing but that, and don't believe it could be about us, that is our own murkiness. People who may not seem to be so capable in the world often can dive into the practice completely. It can be said that the more knowledge we collect, the harder it can be to do that. There are those who dive into everything with deep determination and become clear from the doing of that. That is why there are some for whom the distance in miles is 108,000 and some for whom the Pure Land is not far from here. The famous words which are given here are, While ignorant people recite the name of Amitabha and pray to be born in the Pure Land, the enlightened purify their minds. For, as the Buddha said, 'When the mind is pure, the Buddha land is simultaneously pure.'

To not give attention to whatever comes up, no matter what! Unmon Ekai Zenji writes in his collection, Everyday Mind is the Path:

In the Spring, we have the hundred flowers,
In the Summer, the cool breeze;
In the Autumn the moon; in the
Winter the snow.
If our mind is clear, then all seasons
are perfect as they are.

But, if there is any obstacle in our mind whatsoever, we can't know this clear Mind. If the obstacles are gone, then we see clearly and are able to reflect the phenomena just as they are, as if in a great, bright mirror. And if not, then everything we perceive is confused.

Sutra: "Although you are a native of the East, if your mind is pure you are sinless. On the other hand, even if you were a native of the West, an impure mind could not free you from sin."

Even if you are very far from the Pure Land, in the East, you are close if there is no obstacle in your mind. For those in sesshin at the time of the 11th of September, 2001, even having been informed about it all, their minds were settled and clear in the midst of the fear and terror. When people came from outside they were very relieved to find this quiet, settled place in the middle of that time; when things were perceived as so difficult, here was a quiet and settled feeling. If our mind is quiet and unattached we can see clearly how that is, what our mind's true base is. But, no matter how close we are to where the Pure Land is, if we are confused by the input that comes into us, we become very far away.

Sutra: "When the people of the East commit a sin, they recite the name of Amitabha and pray to be born in the West; but in the case of sinners who are natives of the West, where should the pray to be born?"

This is all according to how we hold our mind.

Sutra: "Ordinary men and ignorant people understand neither the Essence of Mind nor the Pure Land within themselves, so they wish to be born in the East or the West. But to the enlightened everywhere is the same."

There is a violent, old, Chinese song about a plain, simple farmer who was plowing his fields when one day a rabbit came running out from the forest, hit his head on a stump and died. The farmer was very sorry for the rabbit's death, but when he took its fur and sold it in the market place, he was astonished at how he made more money with that one rabbit fur than he

made in many years of farming. And so he said, “If I can just get one more rabbit, then I won’t have to work for years,” and he put his outdoor tatami down and sat by the stump and waited for the next rabbit to come along.

In people’s minds, we all want to rely on a something; we want a something to happen. We do our zazen waiting for some special thing to happen to us from doing it. Our whole life we spend waiting for the next something, until our hair is totally white and it still hasn’t come. Maybe this is our human quality. But what is that? What is it that is sitting here? To know this directly!

The Pure Land is not over there someplace else. It is this very place, this very moment! On our zendo cushions right there, going straight into it with no gaps, not loosening our grip, we go into it straightforwardly. There can’t be any dualistic separation between it and what is doing it—with every single one of our 360 smallest joints and our 84,000 hair pores—right here and right now! This very instant becomes this very instant, until without realizing it, we are no longer tracking our body nor tracking our thinking and we are born in this very moment’s Essence. We are born as the sun, the mountains, the rain, the wind sounds, the bird’s singing; and that usually noisy interior, we see it has always been clear and bright. This is samadhi: this very place as it is, the land of lotuses! This very body, as it is, the body of the Buddha! We give birth to every world that exists. We directly perceive and give birth to each moment’s new and fresh world. So, of course we love everything in it. This state of mind, without fail, gives birth to all-embracing love. And we see that is how we are from birth. But because we fall into a dualistic view, we get confused. To be able to see this experience, and know this place directly!

Sutra: Now, I advise you, Learned Audience, first to do away with the Ten Evils; then we shall have traveled one hundred thousand miles. For the next step, do away with the Eight Errors, and this will mean another eight thousand miles traversed. If we can realize the Essence of Mind at all times, and behave in a straightforward manner on all occasions, in a twinkling of an eye we may reach the Pure Land and there see Amitabha.”

The Sixth Patriarch’s method of teaching here is to go beyond all thinking and cut it away in each and every mind moment, and then all of it will fall away, completely. This is the Ten Good Deeds and the Eightfold Path, to be lived spontaneously. It does not get bright because we get rid of the darkness. When we become the light, the darkness suddenly lifts. As Unmon Ekai Zenji has said as well: To keep it going from morning until night, night until morning! We continue letting go of all of our preconceived notions, our conditioning. With no stopping, to continue always and constantly! We can’t do it like this so easily in our lives away from here, so we have to do it wholeheartedly here, not wasting a moment. Like people of old who rub two stones together to make a spark to make a fire—this is the same as our continuing always. If we can realize the Essence of Mind at all times and behave in a straightforward manner on all occasions, in the twinkling of an eye we may reach the Pure Land and there see Amitabha.

We continue, consistently and without hesitation, and then all of our efforts become directly this one thing completely.

Sutra: “If you only put into practice the Ten Good Deeds, there would be no necessity for you to be born there. On the other hand, if you do not do away with the ten evils in your mind, which Buddha will take you there? If you understand the birthless doctrine

of the Sudden School, it takes you only a moment to see the West. If you do not understand, how can you reach there by reciting the name of Amitabha, as the distance is so far?"

We have to know the True nature! Without fail, to make that commitment to open our true Eye and not commit the same past misdeeds again! But if we close the gate of our faith, that is the greatest misdeed of all. To set up that faith's strength and pledge to never have there be another war! After our creative work inside the zendo, then we go outside of the zendo with it and use it to learn how to dig into society and with this deep Essence to become each and every person that we meet and transform right with them. Our zazen is not for holding onto our own personal world our own personal idea of heaven and only loving ourselves and leaving out society. The true seeing Eye of deep faith is what is necessary today more than anything else. For everyone to deepen this faith, and then the religious, the political, the national, and all people's misdeeds will be corrected—and only then. This is the only way we can truly, and deeply repay our great gratitude to the buddhas and patriarchs.

OSESSHIN, 2002-02, DAY SIX

Sutra: "Now, how would you like it if I were to shift the Pure Land to your presence this very moment, so that all of you might see it?"

The Sixth Patriarch is teaching how the Pure Land is in our mind. If we are deluded, it is a trillion miles away, and if we are clear it is very near and we can immediately realize it. He continues that there are not two Dharma truths, yet there are people who have more dualistic thinking and people who have less dualistic thinking. For those with much dualistic thinking, it is very far away; even if they

can imagine it or conceptualize it, it is difficult to realize it. But, to actualize it—to know this very place, right here, as the land of lotuses—we can then get rid of the insecurity in our daily life.

Sutra: The congregation made obeisance and replied, "If we might see the Pure Land here, there would be no necessity for us to desire to be born there. Will your Holiness kindly let us see it by having it removed here."

The congregation was very enthusiastic and said they would love to have it shown to them right there, to be able to see the Pure Land in that very place, to have their insecurity lifted on the spot; they all asked him to please show it to them right then and there.

Sutra: The Patriarch said, "Sirs, this physical body of ours is a city. Our eyes, ears, nose, and tongue are the gates. There are five external gates, while the internal one is ideation."

The Patriarch said he would show it to them, the world of Zen, sometimes called the Buddha Dharma, sometimes called Buddhism. As Buddha Dharma it is the Law, a law which never changes in any country, in any era. We cannot be individually interpretive; the Buddha Dharma is the eternal law, the law of the Mind. Or as Rinzai says it: The true Dharma has no form, and yet it extends in all directions. We do zazen to realize this true Mind. For this we let go of unnecessary concerns such as an attachment to a small, limited, egoistic self. If we do zazen with a small self as center, that is not in accordance with the great Law. Rather, to directly encounter that Self which unites all beings. If we don't see this, then that is not the Pure Land.

When Dogen Zenji returned from China to Japan, he built a dojo in the South of Kyoto, and there he gave the words, I went to China and did training, but if asked what I got there, I got nothing. People

think of splendid sutras, the Lotus Sutra, the different sutras to be brought back, but I brought back nothing. And what have I now understood? I've understood nothing at all. At Tendozan was Master Ryojo Zenji. With him I did training, and one day without thinking I realized that on either side of our nose, we have our eyes.

This is very important, how it happened without thinking. We all try so hard to get something, to understand something. We get so tense and tight in our body, we get so resistant because we're trying so hard to realize this something. We have to sit where we can forget all of that; to be able to realize that nose which has eyes on either side of it. I went empty-handed and I returned empty-handed: no Dharma, no Buddha Dharma at all. I was able to see that this is the real Dharma nature, how it manifests in everything and gives us the whole universe.

Because we add on various feelings, it seems different from that. The sun rises in the East, the moon goes down in the West. It goes down when it goes down. The rooster crows at dawn, and after every three years there is a Leap Year. Things are exactly as they are. We are so easily seduced by ideas and explanations. Nor is this a matter of being natural and just letting things be however they are—we can't carry this ego around just as it is because that's how things are. Only when we throw away everything can we realize this place where things are all a matter of course.

In this way we have to let go of our attachment to an idea of the existence of a small self or we can't truly connect, even with Great nature. We are always adding

There is no Bodhi tree

Bodai moto ju nashi

菩提本無樹



on ideas which separate us and make us seem between. Of course there are good and bad things. There are teachings of religion—morals. These are all manifested in different ways, in different parts of the world, at different times, and with various religious teachings. Still, there is no truth which is not in accordance with the great Law. To know this Law and Way, we do zazen to be able to perceive it and connect to it.

Sutra: The Patriarch said, “Sirs, this physical body of ours is a city. Our eyes, ears, nose and tongue are the gates.”

Maybe some have handicaps, but nevertheless, we are still here in physical bodies.

That poem we read earlier, by Jinshu Josa:

Our body is the Bodhi tree,
Our mind a mirror bright,
Carefully we wipe them hour by
hour

Let no dust alight.

To which the Patriarch responded:

There is no Bodhi tree
Nor stand of a mirror bright.
Since all is void,
Where can the dust alight?

Jinshu Josa had written that our body was like a tree for enlightenment, but the Sixth Patriarch says this is a source of confusion. We change; our body changes every single second, every instant. We should not be attached to it. Our Mind is more important. A mirror is only an example or a symbol, yet if we think we have to hold onto some precious clear thing like a mirror, then that becomes what is held most precious, and that is beside the point.

Where can any dust alight?

Izure no tokoro ni ka jinai wo hikan

何處惹塵埃



Jinshu Josa says we have to always sweep and keep it clean, but the Sixth Patriarch says, All is void, what is to be swept? It is not about putting our mind someplace far away. Our body will decay without fail; it is a very inconvenient object. When we do zazen, we feel so much pain. What Enō Zenji is asking is Will our body be a palace in heaven or a palace in hell? All depends upon our state of mind.

Sutra: There are five external gates, while the internal one is ideation.

Since he said our body is paradise, here he continues that we are also gates, gates of breath, for example, and that we also have the large gates of our eyes, ears, nose, mouth and tongue, and countless small gates. The eyes, ears, nose, mouth and tongue are the gates to the outside, but we perceive the outside with other gates as well, like that gate that feels hot and cold. First we perceive in this way. Our gates of eyes and gates of ears are also able to recognize what we perceive and in this way we know and can take in the outside world.

Sutra: The mind is the ground. The Essence of Mind is the king.

Our mind and our Essence are separated here. Our mind is our experience, our memory, even in lives past; they are all filed in our collective unconscious. Whether we are hot and cold, how we felt, we still hold all of our memory in this storehouse-like file.

In the sutras, for example in the Shinshikangyo, or that of the Ten Profound Precepts, it is said our mind and our attention, our awareness is something which has always been ongoing. We see a flower or a bud directly, but we then add various ideas on about them, and those capabilities of perception are something we've had since we were born; we all have received these equally. This is the ground of our Mind, and from there we see the mountains, the

rivers, and we name them "mountain," or "river." But at its source, it is all one.

Sutra: While the Essence of Mind is in, the king is in, and our body and mind exist. When the Essence of Mind is out, there is no king and our body and mind decay.

"The king is in"; that is Mind ground, our mind's true substance, and this regulates how our awareness works. If there is an independent activity, that means the king is in. If we are not able to see clearly, that means the king is out, and in that case it gets very confusing.

We are not here at sesshin because someone else told us to come. That is the king within that made that decision and knew that awareness. When that clear center is there, we don't lose our motivation; it is very clear and definite and we act in an awake and aware way. To be alive means the king is in, and we are able to independently direct what we are doing. For that not to be the case, to be weakened, we go more and more towards dying.

We are not being ruled by someone else. We do sesshin because we see them as good to do, or else it is like we are a robot. But still, it is the quality of this independence which is important.

To clear this up further, we have five gates which allow the inner and the outer to encounter each other. But what will we catch with these five gates? We have a collective unconscious, but between that level of collective unconscious there is another layer, like a gate keeper. This is called the seventh layer of awareness, whereas the collective unconscious is the eighth, and this is where our ego comes forth from.

People all have their preferences: people they prefer to be around, people they would rather not be around, who they would like to leave out and who they think less of. The seventh awareness-stratum of

consciousness is what does this: there is no king there. It is not clear—as in when we have heard something from someone else, we never know if we are hearing it from that person in the same way it was said to them or not. In this way, there is a possibility for lack of clarity to go back and forth. To be able to see and perceive clearly, we do our zazen. Why does the seventh level end up with this kind of cause of misunderstanding? It is because of our self-conscious awareness. We make great efforts, but we get caught on our own preferences, and if we don't correct this, as we grow every year older it becomes more and more strong and we get stuck on what we prefer. This seventh layer may be very individual, but it gets stuck on what we prefer, and what we don't like, and for that reason it is easy for it to make stuck places there and get caught on various things.

What the Sixth Patriarch is trying to say here is that we all know and are familiar with outside things—what they sell where for example, or what is anywhere in the exterior world. But when it comes to inside matters we know very little and have strong fear. In this way we have to see clearly our own actual inner nature at an objective level and review it. To see this world and how it works, these capabilities are necessary; this is how we stand independent. Then to see what is best for all beings. To be without prejudice. We should look inside and see how we hold our attitude that comes from inside. As it says, don't look outside for the Buddha, but to clarify inside and see clearly from within, this is Buddha.

For what do we do zazen, then? At twenty-three months we begin to have preferences, and from our seventh level of awareness that confuses things, because that is exactly what makes our horizons get more and more narrow. We get caught on the very small narrow view, with our small

self in the middle of it. We have to do zazen and see clearly and freely. When our ego preferences are put back in, then our ego puts itself in the center of everything. Instead, we need to look at what is necessary for all people. Both the Buddha and the Sixth Patriarch are saying how we have to look at ourselves clearly and directly, to know the caught, murky places and free them. Then, in all of the 360 degrees—in every direction—we will see clearly and we will know what is the most appropriate thing to do.

Our confused self-conscious awareness has to be returned to clarity—we have to see clearly. This is the true source of perception. We have to see clearly about our path as well, of course, but we don't have to analyze or do psychotherapy. We can do zazen and clarify it so that we can see from our original, clearly-seeing Mind. The Sixth Patriarch is saying that there is a wonderful Pure Land, but if we are perceiving from our ego, we are not able to see it.

Later, he speaks about the deep, dark places of the mind:

Sutra: A depraved mind is the ocean. Defilement is the billows and waves. Wickedness is the evil dragon. Falsehood is the devil. The wearisome sense objects are the aquatic animals. Greed and hatred are the hells. Ignorance and infatuation are the brutes.

First we have to see very clearly and objectively how our mind is. To see this world through all of our past lives and experience, this is called the eighth level of consciousness, or the collective unconscious. To see our mind as a mirror which can perceive things exactly as they are, this is called the Mind ground. We can't confuse these. Because of the seventh level of consciousness which is that which brings in the preferences in our egoistic centered

view, this is what has to be liberated—this egoistic centered view—so that we can see clearly. This is not so easy, and we have to make a firm commitment to doing this, to do our susokkan and our koan work. And with this we are able to reveal this clear Mind.

Doing sesshin, it is now the sixth day. We were able to hold onto more and more ideas of how things should be like this or that, but by doing sesshin we become less and less fixed in our preferences. We return to this original Mind by shaving away at the awareness by sitting and not running away. If we continue and keep going, we don't have to hold onto any of these. Then the ego we hold onto so tightly and use in general, which uses our senses, is liberated, and the murky seventh level of awareness is clarified and we can see directly. We become able to work and even forget we are working; eating and sitting we forget we are eating and sitting. We know work samadhi, eating samadhi, zazen samadhi, where we become one with each thing we are doing. Then the five senses become our true ability which we have always had, but which have been blocked by the ego perception. We don't only perceive what we like, but we perceive everything and with no hesitation. We return to this capability and are able to see clearly universal, natural, wisdom. This is the place of being able to suddenly see clearly, and in all directions; all things are revealed completely.

In the ancient times, the great masters told us to kill it, kill it, kill it completely, to slash right into that eighth level of consciousness with the sword of the Buddha nature! Into that confused awareness we slash with our strong determination, cutting into the awareness! That which is confused, is it this, is it that? We cut it all away, again and again and again, continuing and going into it with no gaps until the ego layer is slashed

through completely with our sharp sword! We don't lose our individual quality from this, but rather are more clear than ever. To not be lost in that darkness and confusion of ego, but to realize this clear, aware place, beyond the ego confusion! This is what we have to do. We only do it for ourselves, but we let society sleep, and when we wake up, we wake it up as well.

OSESSHIN, 2002-02, DAY SEVEN

Sutra: We should work for Buddhahood within the Essence of Mind, and we should not look for it apart from ourselves. He who is kept in ignorance of his Essence of Mind is an ordinary being. He who is enlightened in his Essence of Mind is a Buddha.

Yesterday, the Sixth Patriarch taught that in our body there is heaven and there is hell. The five senses and their functions, our body's feelings of hot and cold, these are entrances to heaven; but if even these body's gates to the external are gone beyond, then we can realize the palace within. The gate to this palace is the sixth level of consciousness. With this open, we can then meet the royal room of the king: the eighth level of consciousness, the collective unconscious. This is where all of our experience of the past and our memories are filed: the Mind ground which gives birth to all things, refurbishes them with fresh energy, clearly seeing and aligning with a strong, masterful view. In this way we have both heaven and hell within us. The Sixth Patriarch explains our Essence in this way, philosophically expressing it.

So why do we get so confused and emotional? This is because that layer or level which goes between the sixth and eighth—the seventh level—when it is not working in its best way, it gets very stuck on its own preferences. When it needs to be treating things equally, it is possessive. It gets anx-

ious and insecure about what it possesses and when it doesn't get what it wants, when we can't hold onto anything anyway ultimately. Nevertheless, the seventh layer of consciousness has attachments that get in the way. However, if it acts correctly, it fills its responsibility well.

Sutra: He who is kept in ignorance of his Essence of Mind is an ordinary being. He who is enlightened in his Essence of Mind is a Buddha

Those gates of the senses and the awareness which rules them, if they operate smoothly and correctly our True clear nature can then follow our motivation to keep the whole world in good order and alignment, even if we have sometimes clouds and can't see clearly what's around us. When clouded in, that is delusion and that is hell. But if those clouds lift we can see clearly, and that is heaven and we can fulfill our responsibilities. If we get caught on our small self, that is ignorance. If we don't get caught, that is Buddha. If our state of mind is like this, then it becomes bright and revealed.

Even in the old sutras it is written that if our mind is involved in doing too many things, our focus gets confused and scattered and we can't center and do one thing correctly. Also, for being able to do things correctly, Buddha left us *zazen*. We sit *zazen* to know the source point from where the Buddha's wisdom came forth, but if we bring in so many thoughts and ideas, we aren't able to focus clearly and see this.

What is sitting meditation? In our School, to sit means to be without obstruction anywhere, to arouse no thoughts of good or bad at any outer situation, and to realize inwardly the immutability of the original nature. This is later written clearly in a section on *zazen*. It is not that we shouldn't hear or see—if that's the case, we shut down those gates of heaven—but

that we free all of those gates. But because that which is being the messenger gets it confused, uses the perceptions for its own uses, then things get even more complex and stirred up. So we do *zazen* and forget our body and thoughts in order to be without obstruction anywhere and to arouse no thoughts of good or bad. We have to practice what we are already endowed with, and not do it in an attached or confused way.

Buddha taught people to sit in this way to help them use their mind in the correct way. One of his disciples, Churi Handoku, was a disciple of the Buddha who could just not get it, no matter how many times he was told and tried. So Buddha gave him, finally, for his last attempt, a broom and a rag, and he had him all day long do the sweeping and wiping, and learn the words "sweep dirt, wipe floors"; this was all he had to do. Churi Handoku's best point was that he was a very honest monk. He did this practice for three years. Everyone was so happy to have him doing it, because their places were becoming so clean. And he could clarify his mind and purify outside as well. To do our practice honestly, without any extra thoughts is what works best. Then the Essence comes spontaneously, and it will always happen in this way if we continue. They were doing this in China too, and from this kind of practice the koans were born.

A monk asked Master Joshu, "Does a dog have Buddha nature?" Master Joshu answered, "Mu!" From morning until night, from night until morning, we continue without ceasing. Then we can come to know this very same state of mind as the Buddha, of Bodhidharma, of Joshu. We can realize this not by thinking about it—by thinking about it, it is impossible to realize—but merely by always repeating it, always, always, always! We see how Buddha and Joshu were not teaching about

something that can be put into words; this is not possible to put into words. This simple way brings subjective and objective into one and shows us clearly the direct experience of the Truth.

Muso Daishi [Kanzan Egen], founder of Myoshin-ji, was a disciple of Daito Kokushi. He disappeared at the end of his formal training and went to the countryside. He became a helper for everyone in the village; this was his next training. Anything he was asked to do, he agreed to, cheerfully. Could he please come and help with the harvest? He would be happy to. If they left to get lunch or were busy that day, okay. Later, Daito Kokushi became sick and they needed Egen to come back to take care of his teacher. But the teacher didn't have a clue where he was—he was very impulsive and could be anywhere. They finally found him in the back woods and they persuaded him to return to his sick teacher in Kyoto. The people of the village were so amazed when they learned who he was, and how they had used him to serve them, and they wished, if they had known who he was, they could have had a teaching from him. They asked for a teaching before he left. He said that would be easy. He called over to the old man and woman to whom he'd been closest, who always took care of him, and they thought they were going to have a great teaching, so they came right over. He sat them down, and then he banged their heads together. They started screeching in pain. He said, "There! That's the teaching. This is the Truth!"

Egen said to them, "You thought you were going to get some great teaching, not to get hit on the head! But, who taught you to say 'ouch'? Who told you to exclaim like that? Nobody! That, just coming out from nowhere at all, with no expectation, no thought about doing it—that is the point. That is your True nature!

Instead, you clouded that over. But when your foreheads were hit, you exclaimed spontaneously, with no hesitation. You haven't learned that from your mother and father or in books. When it's not like that, it's only a cloud. The True nature—from where that comes cannot be increased or decreased. It just surges forth and comes out constantly, and this is the Truth."

Our zazen is to continue consistently to let go of thoughts until we can see clearly, naturally. Our mind is always so busy with things around us, with our ego like a wild dog wandering around looking for what it likes. This is why we can't close our eyes during zazen, or we get caught deep in our own thoughts and get hazy and unfocused, stuck in the fox's cave. All paintings of Bodhidharma have his eyes wide open, not closed in any way. We have to always have all of our gates open. And it's not about doing things only for your own profit, but to use these senses for all beings.

It's not a problem when we sleep; we sleep when we sleep. To be awake completely when we are awake is the point, and it is our true master, our true king who can then align if we are awake. There is not any chance of Awakening if the king is always asleep. It is a big mistake to think we can be more secure if we close our eyes. Our goal is not to just sit, but to let go of that fence between self and other—the subjective and the objective—so we have to become one with that which is right in front of our eyes. To see that without a seam is our true Essence. The more mental perception we have, the less amazement and wonder we have.

Our state of mind of holding onto nothing at all is our true substance. Holding onto nothing at all is not saying that we don't have any past experience—our past experience and memory—but we don't get confused by it. We have memory, we have

a past, we can bring it forth on the spot. But if we mix everything up together, what is in front of us—what is real in front of us—with our past history and memories, then we bring in preconceived notions. When we have preconceived notions we think we see, we think we hear, but our preconceived notions are inserted in there, our emotions are inserted in there, so we cannot receive things precisely as they are. When we do *zazen*, our past history and our experiences don't go anywhere else, they just come forth when we need them. We are alive right here right now; we are not living in the past or in the future. We are living in this actuality, in this reality.

In all the boundless realm of space, and in this separation between self and others, not a single hair can be inserted. The sound which resonates in our mind becomes one with it; in this way, we do not allow other mental noise to enter. But because we have so many preconceived notions instead, it is not true perception—it is confused perception. Up until now we have always mixed in our previous experience and preconceived notions, so we no longer let that come in. In this way we do our *zazen*. And to that which we are encountering right here, right this minute, we then also bring in what we need from our experience and put it to use. From there we also, of course, make our future plans. But we are alive in this moment this moment—this moment right here! Right here! Right here! To be just like a mirror reflecting perfectly this moment, without anything of that past mixed in—this is our true state of mind, our true way of encountering our true activity of clear Mind. And from here human beings' particular way of being in functioning and acting comes forth. If we get these basics confused, our memories and experiences come in first and get our actuality confused; if we get these mixed in first, we can't see the actuality clearly and exactly as it is. Right now, right here,

right smack in front of your face, what is it that is hearing? We have to be able to see and hear the thing itself, not mixing in emotions. We can't have those external things mixed in. As we go down further in time, with things that happened a certain amount of time ago we mix in our own emotions, and we are not perceiving clearly. It is very different from direct, intuitive perceiving. We have to be able to perceive the exact actuality, and because we are not well aligned inside this gets confused. It cannot be "me" or someone else, it has to be the thing itself; otherwise you're not perceiving it correctly.

We cannot add on the activity of a "me" or an "I", or we cannot see and hear what others are seeing and hearing; that is how we become unable to believe other human beings. If we are perceiving correctly, then we perceive like everyone else is perceiving. If we add-on our personal opinions, then we cannot function in a way that is seeing as everyone sees, hearing is everyone hears, and then we are not believable. This way of seeing things has to be understood clearly and correctly.

If we can receive the world without dualistic perception, when we are physically thirsty we can then drink water and we have also the grace of grains and other food. And with this energy we learn to see clearly and know the truth directly. When we see like this, then our perception can feel the gifts of the heaven and the earth, and see and receive them. If we understand this we can see that all beings are one, whole, being, and feel that gratitude with this spontaneously. This is also the essence of *zazen*.

The Sixth Patriarch says we have Buddha within us, and we have Kannon, who is the expression of compassion, and also those capacities of compassion—the one who wants to take away pain, the one who wants to give pleasure and happiness. We

have to see that pain of all beings, and then we will have a natural feeling in our heart to take that away; this is the expression through us of Kannon—that we want to give people the food, clothes and education which they need and are without. That is our own, natural sense of how we see things, this expression of Kannon.

Next is to make another's joy our own joy.

Sutra: To be merciful is Avalokiteshvara, one of the two principal bodhisattvas of the Pure Land. To take pleasure in almsgiving is Mahasthama (the other bodhisattva of the Pure Land.)

To throw everything away and offer everything that we have, this is Mahasthama Bodhisattva: the actualization of love. This naturally works if there is no obstruction by ego-awareness, and then our body is an implement of giving and with that it extends limitlessly. We have both of these capabilities from birth, quite naturally.

Sutra: Competence for a pure life is Shakyamuni.

We naturally have the capability to work to align and keep things in good order. This also pleases others. That is our inner Buddha. Not only to align our own mind with the mind of all people; this which is inside of us naturally is Buddha.

Sutra: Equality and straightforwardness is Amitabha.

We have these naturally within, but they get confused and we get selfish and caught by our egoistic way of seeing. All of these bodhisattvas are within us, not outside. The Buddha aligns all of these. That one who is bringing compassion is Avalokiteshvara Bodhisattva, taking pleasure in almsgiving is Mahasthama, the competence of the Buddha is what is aligning all of these, and the equality and straightforwardness is Amitabha. The Sixth Patriarch again says how all of these are liberating in the world through us, not

by thinking about it, but by extending our huge, clear Mind. If we are aligned within, we see the clarity of Mind, we see from the clarity of Mind. But if not, it all becomes the hell of our ego.

Sutra: The idea of a self or that of a being is Mount Meru. A depraved mind is the ocean. The defilement is the billows and waves. Wickedness is the evil dragon. Falsehood is the devil. The wearisome sense objects are the aquatic animals. Greed and hatred are the hells. Ignorance and infatuation are the brutes.

And that ego hell makes waves and affects people in a negative way, like devils and evil dragons—carving ourselves out with the sense objects, then with the 84,000 desires, to anger and greed and ignorant brutes of hell. In this way, we can be in the clarity of Mind, or fall into deep hells.

Sutra: Learned Audience, if you constantly perform the ten good deeds, paradise will appear to you at once. When you get rid of the idea of a self and that of a being, Mount Meru will topple.

We all have this clear Mind within, but because you don't break down those desires and other destructive attachments, you can't know it yet.

Sutra: When the mind is no longer depraved, the ocean of existence will be dried up. When you are free from klesha, billows and waves of the ocean of existence will calm down. When wickedness is alien to you, fish and evil dragons will die out.

If you let go of those deluded states of mind, the waves, devils and dragons will disappear.

Sutra: Within the domain of our mind, there is a Tathagata of enlightenment who sends forth a powerful light which illumines externally the six gates of sensation and purifies them. This light is strong enough to pierce

through the six kama heavens (heavens of desire), and when it is turned inwardly it eliminates at once the three poisonous elements, purges away our sins which might lead us to the hells or other realms, and enlightens us thoroughly within and without, so that we are no different from those born in the Pure Land of the West.

In our mind, if we let go all of those evils and devils, if all of it is free, then we can slash through into that eighth level of consciousness and free all of those dragons and desires. Then in our mind we can live in that clarity and bright light which will shine through all of our senses and become that Great Perfect Mirror Wisdom, the Universal Nature Wisdom, the Mysterious Observing Wisdom, the Perfecting of Action Wisdom. These four wisdoms that are written about in Hakuin's Song of Zazen, with these we can bring light to everything that we encounter. When that light shines through us, then it becomes our True Source. This is the value, the worth of this great light.

Shidō Munan Zenji, who was the teacher of the teacher of Hakuin, wrote: If we see through a possessive ego, that is a being of hell. If we live without that small self view, then we are Buddha. To not think about our own self satisfaction and pleasure, but to always keep that of others in mind, is what it means to live without that small self-centered view.

Sutra: Now, if we do not train ourselves up to this standard, how can we reach the Pure Land?

The Sixth Patriarch then said that if you think you can see this without training, that is a big mistake. To be able to purify our mind to where we can see this directly, and then it appears instantly. Then the audience all responded how they understood clearly what he was saying, how he made it very obvious.

Sutra: Having heard what the Patriarch said, the congregation knew their Essence of Mind very clearly. They made obeisance and exclaimed in one voice, "Well done!" They also chanted, "May all the sentient beings of this Universe who have heard this sermon at once understand it intuitively."

The Patriarch added, "Learned Audience, those who wish to train themselves spiritually may do so at home.

The Patriarch told them all not to forget their daily training, and he prayed for the enlightenment of each and every one of them.

Sutra: It is quite unnecessary for them to stay in monasteries. Those who train themselves at home may be likened unto a native of the East who is kind-hearted, while those who stay in monasteries but neglect their work differ not from a native of the West who is evil in heart. So far as the mind is pure, it is the western Pure Land of one's own Essence of Mind.

Don't think that you have to go to a temple to be able to realize this. But if you try to do it without training, that won't work. We'll be going in the wrong direction.

Sutra: Prefect Wei asked, "How should we train ourselves at home? Will you please teach us."

I will give you a 'formless' stanza. If you put its teaching into the practice you will be in the same position as those who live with me permanently. On the other hand, if you do not practice it, what progress can you make in the spiritual path, even though you cut your hair and leave home for good?

We all have so much work, said the Prefect. We can't do our practice because we're so busy with our jobs and doing all the various things we have to do. We want to train, but we can't. The Sixth Patriarch said he had a poem for them and explained if

they all trained in that way, he would be right there with them, not far away at some monastery. "If you train in this way, I am there training along with you."

On the other hand, if you do not practice it, what progress can you make in the spiritual path, even though you cut your hair and leave home for good? Training is not a matter of going to a temple, but the mind has to be quiet, abundant, and not an irritation. Because the mind is confused, we have to have precepts. If we are always forgetting ourselves completely, and living for others, we wouldn't need even precepts. You only have to do zazen because you are in delusion. Our original Mind is clear and not deluded. In that state, we don't need to do zazen.

Sutra: For straightforward behavior, practice in dhyana may be dispensed with.

If our behavior and mind is clear and we are always at home within ourselves, we always do the right and best thing. If we would always think of others instead of ourselves, this would come forth naturally.

Sutra: On the principle of gratefulness, we support our parents and serve them filially.

Our life energy is aligned when we are honest and clear. When we feel terrible, we feel terrible, and we receive it exactly as it is. When we have something we have to do, we do it with every bit of ourselves, doing it completely and becoming it totally.

Sutra: On the principle of righteousness, the superior and the inferior stand for each other in time of need. On the principle of mutual desire to please, the senior and the junior are on affectionate terms. On the principle of forbearance, we do not quarrel even in the midst of a hostile crowd.

If we can persevere till fire

can be obtained through rubbing a piece of wood,

Then the red lotus (the Buddha-nature) will shoot out from the black mire (the unenlightened state).

That which is of bitter taste is bound to be good medicine.

That which sounds unpleasant to the ear is certainly frank advice.

By amending our mistakes, we get wisdom.

By defending our faults, we betray an unsound mind.

When we don't want to hear what we are told by someone above us, we get upset. If we are clear, we hear it and we take it and change in whatever way we possibly can, just thinking about what we can do for society rather than about our small self.

Sutra: In our daily life we should always practice altruism,

But Buddhahood is not to be attained by giving away money as charity.

To give society material gifts and offerings is excellent, but to offer our Mind! The bodhisattvas enter this realm in order to reveal the Dharma, to live the Dharma, and teach us by example to enlighten us and then give life to that enlightenment. To offer this Mind to doing this way of life is the highest of virtues.

Sutra: *Bodhi* [enlightenment] is to be found in our own mind, and there is no necessity to look for mysticism from without. Hearers of this stanza who put its teaching into actual practice will find paradise in their very presence.

To realize enlightenment is not something external. To look within and see clearly is how this is possible.

Sutra: Hearers of this stanza who put its teaching into actual practice will find paradise in their very presence. The Patriarch added, "Learned Audience, all

of you should put into practice what is taught in this stanza, so that you can realize the Essence of Mind and attain Buddhahood directly. The Dharma waits for no one. I am going back to Ts'ao-ch'i, so the assembly may now break up. If you have any questions, you may come there to put them."

The Sixth Patriarch said to each person there to use this and live their training, and then to be able to realize that true Mind. It is hard to hear this true Dharma, so we can't be so casual, and say "I'll listen next time" or that "I'll do training when I have time, some other time." We have to first live correctly in our daily lives. Please continue in your various places of residence; I return to Ts'ao-ch'i, but call on me if you have any questions.

During this sesshin, everyone has had deep Essence and could see that the more thoughts are held onto, the more confused the Essence became. To see that clearly, and then to know what to do to not be confused by what is around us, but to keep the reverberation of this sesshin's Essence right within us! To know that that which confuses us is only phenomena, not the clear Mind. To join together here again and sharpen our swords when they get dull. This is a reality. Although we can truly practice in society and in the world, it is not so simple. We need to polish at times. So, please, everyone continue in this practice.

Chapter 4 Samadhi & Prajna

OSESSHIN, 2003-09, DAY ONE

Sutra: The Patriarch on another occasion preached to the assembly as follows:

Learned Audience, in my system Samadhi and Prajna are fundamental. But do not be under the wrong impression that these two are independent of each other, for they are inseparably united and are not two entities. Samadhi is the quintessence of Prajna, while Prajna is the activity of Samadhi. At the very moment that we attain Prajna, Samadhi is therewith; and vice versa. If you understand this principle, you understand the equilibrium of Samadhi and Prajna. A disciple should not think that there is a distinction between 'Samadhi begets Prajna' and 'Prajna begets Samadhi'. To hold such an opinion would imply that there are two characteristics in the Dharma.

Here samadhi and wisdom are brought up. Our state of mind is seen here from the inside, and this is what is called samadhi. Prajna is its function externally, and they are not two separate things. People who think so much are obstructed and confused by constant thinking—this is said clearly in the first two chapters of the Dhammapada:

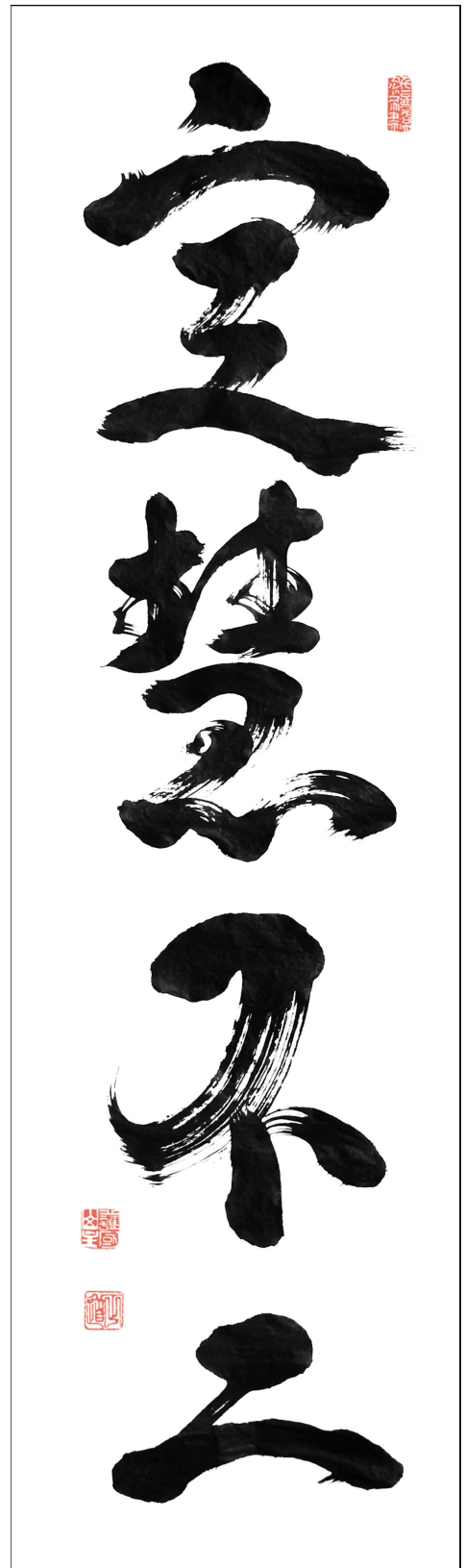
We are what we think, having
become what we thought.
Like the wheel that follows the cart
pulling the ox,
Sorrow follows an evil thought.
We are what we think, having
become what we thought.
Like the shadow that never leaves
one,
Happiness follows a pure thought.

Compassion and Wisdom are not

two

Jo e fu ni

定慧不二



This is the essence of zazen. In our everyday life there are people who have many thoughts and those who don't have so many thoughts—a completely different matter which affects deeply our way of living and our point of view. If we hold on neither to thought nor to anything at all within, this is most healthy. In this way, we perceive correctly with the eyes, the ears, the nose, the mouth and the feelings. Because we can become one completely with whatever we encounter, it is the healthiest state of mind. Whatever we think about and hold on to, however, affects whatever we perceive. And that holding on to nothing—when we are in that state of mind—that functions as wisdom. Yet these are not two separate things; we don't do zazen and then become able to function. To sit and to move are both clarified when we let go of obstructive thinking, and in this way are able to become clear. If not, we are confused.

Our correct wisdom comes forth only from our clear, quiet Mind, and our daily life cannot be lived correctly without that. To hold on to nothing at all and leave behind not any remnant, this is the mysterious nature of samadhi and wisdom. Then we can see how to live our everyday life in the mind of practice of one-pointed samadhi, for everything we do is that samadhi. Everything we do is that Mu in each moment—eating, sleeping, standing, walking. But if we hold onto the practice of doing that and get attached and caught on that and think about that, then we again get trapped. Rather, to leave no remnant of thought behind, all day long! Even if we can do it in the zendo, if we are not able to keep it alive in our daily life, that is not having done true zazen. It

One straight line of Samadhi

Ichi gyo zanmai

一行三昧



can't be only of some form, but has to be continually cutting away every extraneous mind moment. We cut as we see, we cut as we hear, we cut as we taste, we cut as we smell, we cut as we think, as we feel, and because we do this we become able not to be pulled around by all that we see and hear and smell and taste and touch and feel. But this does not mean that we don't respond to things—we respond even more sharply than ever, and more appropriately. And because our zazen is extremely interesting we continue. If we are falling asleep, vague and fuzzy, we are not doing zazen correctly. It is a question of whether we are truly cutting and doing the practice thoroughly.

Sutra: Learned Audience, to practice the 'Samadhi of Specific Mode' is to make it a rule to be straightforward on all occasions -- no matter whether we are walking, standing, sitting or reclining. The Vimalakirti Nirdeśa Sutra says, "Straightforwardness is the holy place, the Pure Land." Don't let your mind be crooked and practice straightforwardness with your lips only. We should practice straightforwardness and should not attach ourselves to anything. People under delusion believe obstinately in Dharmalakṣaṇa (things and form) and so they are stubborn in having their own way of interpreting the 'Samadhi of Specific Mode', which they define as 'sitting quietly and continuously without letting any idea arise in the mind'. Such an interpretation would rank us with inanimate objects, and is a stumbling block to the right Path which must be kept open. Should we free our

*Abiding no where, awakened mind
arises*

O mu sho ju ni sho go shin

応無所住而生其心



mind from attachment to all 'things', the Path becomes clear; otherwise, we put ourselves under restraint.

This is the actuality of continuous clear mind moments, very easy to talk about but not so easy to realize. To be unmoved around in every situation, not just saying it but to actually be it, that is also easy to say and not so easy to do. Many come and say they are doing a shikantaza practice, but this is a very hard to realize, advanced practice, difficult to do correctly. If we do shikantaza practice—actually realizing it as we do it—then our Mind, exactly as it is, is the Buddha. This is not just a technique: an actual realization of this state of mind is what it has to be. A technique, like a circus tightrope walker, is not the point; this is not zazen. It has to be that which is zazen in motion and zazen in stillness—everything we do, every activity is zazen! If what we realize in the zendo is useless outside of the zendo, even if we have strength in our zendo sitting we will be useless for guiding others; rather, to guide, never noticing we are guiding anyone. This is not about having an electric shortage in our brain either. We have to use our brain fully, but we cannot be moved around by things in any way whatsoever.

This entire tract is talking about the actual essence of the continuing clear mind moments' guide of shikantaza. In our school we have that place of emptiness of thoughts: no mind moments to be polluted by; emptiness of form: no form to be caught on; emptiness of abiding: always flowing and never located or stagnant anywhere.

Sutra: (On another occasion) the Patriarch addressed the assembly as follows: In orthodox Buddhism the distinction between the Sudden School and the Gradual School does not really exist. The only difference is that by nature some people are quick-witted while others are dull in understanding. Those who are

enlightened realize the truth suddenly, while those who are under delusion have to train themselves gradually. But such a difference will disappear when we know our own Mind and realize our own nature. Therefore, these terms "gradual" and "sudden" are more apparent than real.

There is only one Path of the Buddha Dharma, although we talk about Sudden Awakening or Gradual Awakening. There are those of the past who more easily realized, and these are called those of the Sudden Awakening Path. Those for whom it takes a longer time, this is called Gradual Awakening. These are not qualities of the Dharma, but of those who are walking the Path of the Dharma. Those who hear the same Dharma and realize it, some realize it quickly and some take a longer time. There are those who understand it right away, like the Sixth Patriarch, who was one such person, awakening on merely hearing the words, "Residing in no place, awakened Mind arises." In that instant all of his burdens fell away. But there are not so many like this. This is a very unusual example.

But if we continue to be diligent, the more we realize, the deeper we go, until residing in no place awakened Mind arises. While originally there is nothing even to hold on to, the Truth manifests exactly as it is. And just hearing these words, the Sixth Patriarch understood. We may hear it and we may get it, yet in our daily life we are still soaked through with our continual habitualization. And so we do zazen to cut all of this habitualization away. If we don't cut, we end up carrying more and more burdens around, even with our koan or our susokkan practice. We can't be used by them; we have to use them as a sharp sword for this cutting, cutting away everything! If we don't actualize this, then understanding the words Residing in no place awakened Mind arises becomes only mental and will not help others awaken either. Even if it takes twenty years, the

awakened Essence is one and the same. In fact, those who take longer, in accordance with history and the examples there, are often the more healthily realized people.

Sutra: But such a difference will disappear when we know our own Mind and realize our own nature. Therefore, these terms gradual and sudden are more apparent than real.

These are the Sixth Patriarch's teachings to his students. So the southern teaching of the Sixth Patriarch became then called the Sudden Enlightenment School, and in reference to that the teachings of Jinshu Josha (Shen-hsiu) in the Northern Chinese School were called that of the Gradual Enlightenment. This is referring also to the poems written at the request of the Fifth Patriarch. In the poem written by Jinshu Josha it says

Our body is the Bodhi tree,
our mind a mirror bright,
carefully wipe them hour by hour
and let no dust alight,

whereas the poem of the Sixth Patriarch written in response to this was

There is no Bodhi tree,
nor stand of the mirror bright,
Since all is void,
Where can the dust alight?

These were written about practice, the first one by the top monk Jinshu Josha. We are always thinking and confused, so Jinshu Josha said we should dutifully clear and sweep our mind always, but the Sixth Patriarch responded by saying that even thinking there is such a thing as a body and a mind, then that is already extra—there is nothing from the origin, anyway, so why should we be scared of dust alighting on it? In this way of realizing it and completing it and living it there are not so many who can do this. These names “sudden” or “gradual,” are about our ability or someone's perseverance, but in our Buddha nature there is no such naming or differentiation such as earlier or later, first or after, sudden or gradual—we can't hold

onto anything to completely open that Mind!

Sutra: The Patriarch on another occasion said, Learned audience, it has been a tradition of our school to make idealessness as our object, non-objectivity as our basis, and non-attachment as our fundamental principle. Idealessness means not to be carried away by any particular idea in the exercise of the mental faculty. Non-objectivity means not to be absorbed by objects when in contact with objects. Non-attachment is the characteristic of our Essence of Mind.

Here we have the Sixth Patriarch's very individual way of putting this. These words are the most central philosophy of the Sixth Patriarch. No matter where we look at in all of the sutras we could not find anything as to the point as this point. The deep Awakening of the Buddha has never been expressed as well as this, even throughout all the Patriarchs; he gives you the whole list.

In all of these there was never one moment when anything was held onto. With all of these Patriarchs it was continued in this way, holding onto nothing in their minds whatsoever. With nothing at all being held onto, there is no way to leave anything behind in your mind. This is a state of mind of the Awakened state of all Patriarchs.

We may believe men are good people or bad people, sick people or healthy people, but if we get caught on our form or on others' form, we will be pulled around by this. In our True nature there is no difference; there is no form in our True mind's nature. This is our fundamental point: this place of not abiding anywhere. Abiding nowhere Clear Mind, Awakened Mind arises.

Non-attachment is the characteristic of our Essence of Mind—where mountains are simply mountains, flowers are flowers, the sound of wind, the sound of the wind. We



hear it, we see it, we leave it as we hear or see it, and we add on nothing at all to it. There is nothing else beside this. Everything but that is just dualistic thinking. To just hear as we hear, feel as we feel, just leaving it at that and to not leave anything behind whatsoever. Changing every single moment, our state of mind manifests our Clear Nature. This is non-attachment, the characteristic of our Essence of Mind, and also that of Residing in no place, awakened Mind arises. In this way the sixth patriarch taught us.

Sutra: Non-objectivity means not to be absorbed by objects when in contact with objects. Non-attachment is the characteristic of our Essence of Mind.

This is not saying to believe in some words of Buddha or some words of Daruma Daishi, but to not hold onto anything, not to any form. To hear anything of any person will always come out at this point, but if at first we believe in or hold onto it, we then let go. We always come to this realization.

We have a physical body born 'x' many years ago, but our body, that is only a kimono and we will eventually have to take this kimono off. Our body is not just moving around aimlessly with its arms and legs, or is it moving around by itself. Something is moving through it, something is wearing this body like a kimono, but everyone takes the kimono for what they are. All kinds of crime are committed in this state of mind; we are constantly caught on this delusion. But our true Essence is not restricted by this kimono. We have the words of Master Hakuin: "Realizing the

Body and mind are not separate things

Shin jin mu beppo

心身無別法

form of no form as form, whether going or returning we cannot be any place else, realizing the thought of no thought as thought, whether singing or dancing we are the voice of the Dharma.”

We go to the zendo or to samu, but we have to see what is actually happening there and what is not happening there. We will get confused, and this is why the Sixth Patriarch is saying this—how idea-lessness is our object, non-objectivity is our basis, and non-attachment is our fundamental principle. We have to not divide our body and mind, but to be clear how these are not there from the origin. And so we sit and we move, continuously carrying our koan or our susokkan while working, sitting, eating, with no sense of doing any of these activities. We continually move always, but not holding on to a concept of Mu. With that Mu as a sharp sword, while we eat, work and sit, we are not moved around by the doing of that activity—it is our full, taut state of mind pouring through us, manifesting as the activity. Not fuzzy and foggy, or we cannot do that, but sharp and taut, we become the zendo. We do kinhin, we become the floor of the porch, with our whole body. With our whole being we do samu, we eat meals, and in this way we become that place of non-objectivity—not to be absorbed by objects when in contact with objects. While doing it, not being pulled around by the doing of it. We are not doing this to waste our time; we are deeply, mutually, doing this practice, becoming one with whatever we do, and becoming ever more transparent.

In our daily life, in our everyday practice, we are always carrying around self-consciousness awareness. When we come to sit here, we are still carrying that around. Being so familiar with that state of mind, some people are often caught on it and have to cut it away constantly and gather everything together into oneness. The more varieties of contact we have with the outside, the more we have to

cut away. In fact, in this way in the words of Jinshu Josha when he is saying in the first two lines of his poem, “Our body is the Bodhi tree and our mind is a mirror bright,” it has relevance. And in the Sixth Patriarch’s first two lines: “There is no Bodhi tree, nor stand of a mirror bright.” We cannot just conceptualize that and feel that we have truly understood it either. We have to do it with our whole body; our practice has to be done with everything we are. As Mumon Ekai Zenji has said: With every single one of the 360 smallest joints, the 84,000 air pores, with every single bit of our body and being from the top of our heads to the bottom of our feet, we have to throw ourselves into this practice totally. To put our whole body into it! While we are continually stuck in our head, our Buddha nature will not be able to be revealed. We feel our physical body and heaviness while on the cushion, but that is not yet true zazen. If we are sleeping on the cushion and fuzzy, of course that is not true zazen. Rather, from the top of our heads to the bottoms of our feet, to be doing it in one straight line, one whole unified oneness! If we are totally involved in it, then we know how important it is to align our anal sphincter muscles, to tuck in our chin, to have our backbones straight, and to feel the top of our head opening, our eyes open and focused on one point. These are things to be done with the physical body, and by doing these, by aligning in this way, then our body can be let go of. When we really work, we will know how easy it is to have no sense of your physical body at all. But that is not yet complete enough, because we still have interior problems and caught places which have to be worked with. We still differentiate into “girl” and “boy,” “sick” and “well,” “high status,” “low status.” But we then realize the actuality of each movement and we can let go of all of that differentiation and our breath then naturally aligns. We come to know this place of “Realizing the form of no form as form, whether going

or returning, we cannot be any place else.” Hakuin has also said that Zazen in action is worth 100,000 times as much as zazen in sitting. For this reason, whether it is in seated zazen or moving zazen, every single one of our actions has to be totally absorbed and thoroughly in samadhi.

In sitting on the *tambuton*, if we are not clear and sharp or if our legs hurt, it is because our posture is not yet correct. Each person has to work on this for themselves. Of course, full lotus is most preferable, and after that half lotus, and then sitting on one’s knees. The best for sitting for long and aligning is full lotus, but also sitting on one’s knees for a short time is also a good alignment position. The *tanden* is what is most central for this alignment, and our feet can’t be twisted, or the pain comes fast. That twisting comes from the lower back, which has become sagging out. If we are sitting with our backs straight and our head pulled to the sky, and our chins tucked in, even if we have weight, we don’t feel weight. We feel the energy surging through us as we become gathered into oneness, with our posture being aligned in that way. This is a goal for our sitting; if we sit like this, then we can do zazen with Essence. Of course, we do have bodies and legs, and we can change legs every period, for example, to help this. The creativity of how we sit is up to each person. We can sit on a chair, we can stand; to be with that form, but to let go of that form is what the Sixth Patriarch is teaching. We enter from that form because we have a body, and if we don’t use that body for doing this, then we can easily fall into being conceptual about our zazen; but then we let go of the form. If we observe these points about our zazen, then we can know an energetic sesshin with good Essence. This is the way to sit in our sesshin.

Every single day of zazen, every single period of zazen is very important. Our posture is central for doing this, and if we can do this, then we can use it in our daily

life, because it has become second nature in our body. We feel the energy always in the bottoms of our feet. And in this way, we can give life to this energy in all of our activities all day long. This can only be known, however, from experience. This is what the Sixth Patriarch is teaching, as well. We have to use it, and it must not become conceptual. We must each awaken to this ourselves.

OSESSHIN, 2003-09, DAY TWO

Sutra: Learned audience, it has been the tradition of our school to take idea-lessness as our object, non-objectivity as our basis, and non-attachment as our fundamental principle. Idea-lessness means not to be carried away by any particular idea in the exercise of the mental faculty. Non-objectivity means not to be absorbed by objects when in contact with objects. Non-attachment is the characteristic of our Essence of Mind.

From the time of the beginning of our line—the Sixth Patriarch’s line—he is saying it has been like this. It is with idea-lessness as our object, non-objectivity as our basis, and non-attachment as our fundamental principle. Here, he clarifies the mind of the Buddha.

In what way do we realize and awaken to the Buddha’s mind? He is telling that here, and continues by saying “Idea-lessness means not to be carried away by any particular idea in the exercise of the mental faculty. Non-objectivity is to not be absorbed by objects when in contact with objects. Non-attachment is the characteristic of our Essence of Mind.” We have a body, all the things in nature, all of the 10,000 things, and yet a rock doesn’t call itself a rock, or a flower call itself a flower. Only humans are stuck on how they think they are or should be. Our most healthy way of being, while being a man or a woman, is to not need to explain that, but for it to be manifested naturally. The

explanation is what makes us get stuck. We express many forms, but do we say when we are working “Now I am working”? We don’t need such an explanation stuck on. While having a body, we don’t get caught on the fact that we have a body. This is the essence of *zazen*: in each and everything to become what we are doing completely and totally with everything we have. We live completely, and then we die completely. We don’t leave our living aside because of a fear of death, but to live with every bit of our being totally and wholeheartedly. A dead person doesn’t say “Now, I am dead.”

Sutra: Idea-lessness means not to be carried away by any particular way in the exercise of the mental faculty. Non-objectivity means not to be absorbed by objects when in contact with objects. Non-attachment is a characteristic of our Essence of Mind.

In the way of Zen we work constantly on becoming completely whatever we do, not needing any explanation, only to do it. This is a superfluous definition, but as Hakuin Zenji has said about ice and water, if our mind is hardened like ice, then we don’t fit, like water does, into whatever vessel we encounter. Water can fit into a plate, or a cup, but ice is hard and thick. We have to melt our fixed, caught, mind so that we can become water instead of ice, and so we practice. Whatever we do we work on becoming it completely and totally, throwing ourselves into each action.

The founder of Myoshin-ji, Muso Daishi, received a building from the Emperor Hanazono, which sounds like a splendid thing to receive, but in fact it was a dilapidated hut. There, Muso Daishi raised his disciples. They had nothing to use for fuel for keeping themselves warm, so they burned the porch boards of the hut for heat. When it rained, of course it leaked and he called for some vessel to catch the water; quickly a disciple brought a sieve. He said “That’s great!” A few minutes later one brought a pail, and he said “We don’t

need that.” Of course, a sieve leaks, but that spontaneous wisdom that brought the sieve is what is most important—becoming that act completely and just moving from that wisdom. If a ball is suddenly thrown to us, we just receive it without even thinking to protect our face and body from being hit by the ball: this kind of spontaneous, natural act, becoming it completely.

Idea-lessness means not to be carried away by any particular idea in the exercise of the mental faculty. But it is not about thinking about not thinking, either. We are humans, so of course we think; that’s what humans do or become vegetables. It has even been said that humans are legs that think, and if Zen makes people who don’t think, that is against the way of the world. But to think when we need to think only, and not to think stupid, unnecessary things but to see what is most necessary right now. It has to be this, or *zazen* loses its interest, we get bored. If we are going to do *zazen*, then to realize it, to understand it and become it completely and totally! Idea-lessness means not to be carried away by any particular idea in the exercise of the mental faculty. If we cook rice as *tenzo*, we have to think about how to do it, how much to cook and how to do it the best way. If we are chopping wood, we have to think about the best way to chop, or if we grow vegetables, we have to think about the best way to cultivate them. These things have to be thought about. But people are always thinking instead about how they look, if they look good enough, about how they’re appearing to others: Do we look good to people who are looking at us? When it is cold, put on clothes; when hungry just to eat; to have thoughts but not add on extra things we don’t need to think about. No extra decorations, no extra branches and leaves are needed to add to these thoughts. To live completely in becoming the moment totally! To become sick completely when we are sick, this is having the correct mind. To meet a crisis completely, not grumbling and saying

“Why did this have to happen to me?” but just becoming that crisis completely, being with it without separating from it and complaining. Don’t think about extra things, but live totally embracing just what comes to you, not having a lot of extra thoughts about the past and wondering what’s going to be coming. We can’t bring things back when they’ve already happened and we can’t know the future either. Idea-lessness means not to be carried away by any particular idea in the exercise of the mental faculty.

Maybe we want unnecessary things, but we can’t think in this way. If we only think what is necessary, then we will always forget it immediately and we will not have second and third associations coming to it; we won’t be carrying it around, thinking “I should have done that,” “Oh, if I’d only done it this way.” We miss out on our moment in the present when we carry around these kinds of thoughts with us. To live this moment fully in the most appropriate way! If we only perceive ourselves and only have mind moments pertaining to ourselves and don’t think of others, that is not correct mind moments either. If others are sad, we become sad. So let go of what is unnecessary, for it is merely blind thinking.

Hakuin Zenji wrote to Ieyagu Munenori, in his letters to him, that idea-lessness is not about an idea of not thinking of anything, nor is it standing still and hesitating. But while moving in every direction, to have full tautness in all the eight directions so that if a person nearby us moves to our left or to our right or behind us, we can precisely perceive it, and that person’s intention as well in their movement can be felt clearly. This is the unmoved Mind. But if we have the slightest hesitation or trace of thinking we will be cut by that person’s sword. Unmoved Mind is not about being cut into like a daikon, nor is zazen to be shutting down our eyes and ears and not perceiving and using our senses. Zazen

is to polish the full, taut, openness, to fill the zendo, fill the whole universe with the energy which surges through us!

Non-attachment is the characteristic of our Essence of Mind. With non-attachment we have no time to get caught on things; we are always flowing. And if we stop we are like that water that gets stagnant and rotten when it stops, or like water that freezes into ice when it gets fixed. Like electricity, when it stops flowing it is no longer usable. Flowing always because we do zazen and are sitting still, we don’t get caught on extraneous thinking, and if we do, it is not dangerous. But if we are driving a car and get lost in our extraneous thinking, it is dangerous. Zazen is not just for being in the zendo. Whether we are sitting, moving, working, silent, or speaking, all of it is zazen. Being unmoved and cultivating this is zazen. Then we can become the flower, become the moon, become the stars—we become them all completely and totally, absorbed into them—that is our correct state of mind. If we add on extraneous unnecessary thinking to that, that is not zazen. Zazen is to only become this state of mind, and clearly.

Rinzai Zenji says in his Four Stances that times come when we are completely the master, and there are other times we are completely the guest, and that is the practice in zazen. There are times when there are both master and guest present, and times when they have both been taken away. When we meet our zazen we become completely the doing of zazen. When we encounter the sutras we become completely the doing of the sutras. When we are doing samu we are completely the doing of the samu. And this is to not carry around thoughts about what we’ve just done, either.

We have to be able to change gears. When we are doing one thing, we are completely that, and then we quickly are doing something else and we become completely that without carrying along what we have

just finished doing—not thinking about if our breath is going well or our breath is not going well. Our mind likes to hesitate and judge. We have to work to cut that, or while we are cutting we will be dragging along old remnants. Each and every breath we have to become completely that exhalation, and with that cut completely everything that remains, each breath down to its very last, final end. Then this makes our head become like a vacuum, completely empty. If we totally exhale, it is not we who inhale. As Shidō Munan Zenji said, “While being still alive, to die, and die completely!” We have to cut in this total way, in every second, or we are wasting our time here. Having paid the money for sesshin and not giving it everything we have, not resolving this and not realizing it in every sitting period, is just a waste.

Sutra: All things good or bad, beautiful or ugly, should be treated as void. Even in times of disputes and quarrels, we should treat our intimates and our enemies alike, and never think of retaliation. In the exercise of our thinking faculty, let the past be dead.

We are always concerned with good or bad, resentment, intimacy, all kinds of things are filling our mind. If we hold onto those things and linger with those thoughts, then we get stuck and caught and trapped in them. In our Buddha nature we also see what is good and what is bad, but we don't get caught by those. As Rinzai Zenji said, do not add on any second or third associating thoughts, to not continue extraneous thinking. We go to a museum and look at the paintings, and we experience a painting and think that we feel that it is good or bad. This is how culture has evolved, but Zen is not concerned with this judgment of something as good or bad. No matter how beautiful a flower is, if we think of it as good, we steal its value. Rather than to offer it to someone with gratitude for its beauty.

Resentment and intimacy! Today's world—

this world of terrorism—it is so much guided by resentment and revenge. The source of the human mind's confusion—although, of course, humans are not so simple—this has developed over years and years. We also can't leave it as it is just because it has taken so long to get here. This is not correct and true use of mind. In the Dhammapada it is written, “Do not repay hate with hate, repay hate with love, this is the eternal truth.” But this takes courage, and for those who have had all of their ancestors and relatives slaughtered, this is not so easy to say to them, or easy to do either. Yet, it has to start somewhere; it has to become resolved.

This is hard to see or to say clearly, but all things good or bad, beautiful or ugly, should be treated as void. Even in times of disputes and quarrels we should treat our intimates and our enemies alike, and never think of retaliation. It can't be left at just words and bargaining, deceiving and deceived and confusing people. These problems have stayed unresolved in every era. We have to see how no one has been born into the world free from any fault whatsoever. We've all lived in lives which are based on the survival of the fittest and we have to take responsibility to see from our deepest wisdom what to do, so that we can live, truly, from that wisdom.

Sutra: If we allow our thoughts, past, present and future, to link up in a series, we put ourselves under restraint. On the other hand, if we never let our mind attach to anything, we shall gain emancipation. For this reason, we take 'Non-attachment' as our fundamental principle.

We can't live in resentment and darkness, we have to help and support each other. If we allow our thoughts, past, present and future, to link up in a series, we put ourselves under restraint. But this is something that feels as if it cannot be resolved in the human mind. We have to constantly and consistently cut these fragments of

thoughts that always are coming up and resist being plucked.

We are born bright and clear and with an abundant feeling, yet, we end up miserable and making others miserable. So we each have to work diligently on going beyond that way of being to our continuing clear mind moments. The source of this is our counting of our breath. It is not so simple to cut it all away. Still, the counting of our breath is our source point for doing that. If we actually exhale completely, it is not “me” who is inhaling; I am inhaled through. We feel that it is not “me” inhaling, that one who is beyond “me” is inhaling and living through me.

Eugen Herrigal came to Japan and was learning about archery. He went to an archery master to ask to learn, and he was taught from the very beginning “Don’t aim” and “Don’t think it is you shooting.” He thought that was ridiculous. This is Japanese kyūdō, not archery. “How dumb,” he thought, “Here I am shooting. I have to aim, what else could be doing it?” Here, the problem arises, if we are always going “I am shooting” “I have to aim” “I have to be doing it this way, not that way,” then if we lose, we always feel bad. I am who wins, I am who loses.

Eugen Herrigal practiced kyūdō for five years. He was shooting tens to hundreds of arrows every day until he understood in some small way that he was not doing the shooting. He would pull the arrow, and the master would say, “Stop aiming; don’t aim! Don’t try to hit in some direction!” Eugen would say it was impossible, there was no other way. His kyūdō master got angry. Finally he got hard and he said, “If you don’t let go of that ego, you won’t be able to do it, ever.”

Eugen Herrigal continued to practice for many years to get rid of himself completely, and he finally gave up and said “I just can’t do it, I quit.” Having said this, his master responded to him by saying “You

can quit. I never asked you to come here in the first place, but tonight just come once.” Eugen Herrigal did come that night, and the master asked him to put a stick of incense in front of the mat, the target. The master then took an arrow and he shot it, and it could be heard as it hit the mat, the plunk as it went in. Then he put in another arrow, and shot again, and you could again hear the plunk as it hit the mat, and he said to Eugen Herrigal to go get the arrows. When he did, what he found was the first arrow had gone in, and right into the back of that arrow, the second arrow had gone into the first arrow, and he said “If I go according to your ideas, perhaps I could have fired the first arrow the way I did by looking at the incense burning there and aiming. But if that was the case, I could not have hit the second arrow into the first arrow. How about that?”

Eugen Herrigal had no explanation, but he finally understood and he continued and he went home with a fifth dan in kyūdō. He understood how we cannot do everything with our own small, self-conscious awareness, we have to go beyond that to the Truth of the universe which mental thinking cannot reach—going beyond birth and death, not offering to an external god, instead using our whole mind and being and going beyond these. Otherwise we will stay stuck in the world of good and bad. In the Eye of heaven there is no such thing as a good or bad. We have to go to that place beyond those thoughts of good and bad, where it is not one’s small self that is doing it.

Sutra: To free ourselves from absorption in external objects is called ‘Non-objectivity’. When we are in a position to do so, the nature of Dharma will be pure. For this reason, we take ‘Non-objectivity’ as our basis.

On the other hand, if we never let our mind attach to anything, we shall gain emancipation. For this reason, we take non-attachment as our fundamental prin-

ciple. But if we think to not think anything at all is zazen, that is not the point. Rather, to not be caught on any mind moment but to cut away all of the ideas and thoughts so we can then perceive clearly and have no stickiness in our perceptions and we can receive every new world in each encounter. If we get stuck and stagnant we cannot transform freely with each new moment that arrives. This is zazen—not to get stuck in some dark hole covering our head over. Zazen is bright and open wide. As it says in the Heart Sutra, “no eyes, no ears, no nose, no tongue, no body, no mind.” These are going to include the eighteen elements, which are the six roots of the senses, the six windows of the perceptions, the six encounters where our senses and the objects meet. Our memory is also included here. While having these, we continue to transform that which we perceive with our eyes, ears, nose and mouth, and all of our feelings and all of our thoughts. It all has to be transformed and let go of. We have to be free in each moment or else it is not living Zen! With every single one of our 360 smallest joints, our 84,000 hair pores, from the top of our heads to the bottoms of our feet, we burn in this great doubt completely. With every bit of our body and being, we totally dive into it, bringing ourselves into absorption into this. Without that complete absorption it is not liberating. We have to let go of everything, or else it is not letting go, it is gathering in. And the world which we see, we can’t close down on that either. It’s not about covering over our senses and stopping the input. It is easy to cut by just closing our eyes, but this is not what zazen is about, and we can’t do it in such a deceptive way. In all the boundless realm of space and in the separation between self and others, not a single hair can be inserted. It is the zazen of our mind the Sixth Patriarch is talking about. And it is this he is teaching here.

OSESSHIN, 2003-09, DAY THREE

Sutra: Learned audience, to keep our

mind free from defilement under all circumstances is called idealessness. Our mind should stand aloof from circumstances, and on no account should we allow them to influence the function of our mind.

Daruma Daishi has said, Letting go of all connections to things that are external, being free from all concerns within, when our mind is like a firm, tall wall, then we are at one with the Path. And the Sixth Patriarch as well has in another place defined zazen as to externally be free from any thoughts around what we perceive, and within to be unmoved by anything at all. This first line of Daruma Daishi’s definition of zazen is to let go of all connections to anything external. We take our name to be who we are and our thought to be what we are. Most people believe that completely and don’t believe in anything beyond our thoughts. Well, maybe there is something. We make money to have food and drink to supply our needs, and only believe in things which can be confirmed with our eyes, confirmed with our ears, confirmed with our nose, confirmed with our mouth. Only things which are provable are those to be believed in; we don’t believe in anything else since it can’t be confirmed.

Of course, we do have a self which thinks, but that will at some time be gone, and maybe this time is not so far away. In a world like today in which everyone is so insecure, everyone is shaky, not knowing what is beyond death or what to believe in. People of the past perhaps had a God or a Buddha to believe in, but if a God or a Buddha is only held within our heads and our mental functioning, who could believe in that?

Rinzai Zenji has put it this way: “In this five foot lump of red flesh, there is a true person of no rank who is always coming in and out of the orifices.”—in this living physical body, there is a True person of no rank or status. Through its truest base,

from our eyes and our ears and our nose and our mouth, our body and awareness, it is born and it extends everywhere. We hear this and we imagine there is some strange thing that is coming in and out of us. But that is because we try to understand it mentally, or think there is some thing we can imagine, some kind of soul that is going to go from one body to the next when we get reborn. That is not what Rinzai Zenji is talking about at all. We have six senses, and with them there are six roots. These all use our body and awareness and sensory organs as windows. From nothing at all, as the flower comes, the flower is reflected exactly as it is, the mountain is reflected exactly like it is. All the 10,000 things are reflected exactly as they are. But because we perceive that through our ego filter as my seeing, it get's confused. My seeing—it has an extra ego feeling to it. This is why the Sixth Patriarch said, "From the origin, not one single thing." Because we always confuse our ego as our true base we go on living in a world caught on ideas of good and bad and dualistic reception. Where does this ego with its preferences come forth from? We can't only figure this out with our head; we have to directly experience that source! That source of Mind that reflects those, it has to be experienced!

Where shall we find true refuge? When Rinzai said In this five-foot lump of flesh there is a True person of no rank which is always coming in and out of the orifices, this was not about something that comes and goes and moves around. What it is, is that we are open completely, totally, with no ego clinging at all, reflecting the whole universe! This is the base of what is referred to here as idea-lessness. It is not something which can be defined as a man, a woman, an old person, a young person, something blue, something red, something round, something square. It cannot be described. With no gap it becomes mountains when mountains come forth, it becomes rivers when rivers come forth.

It becomes the bird's song when the birds come forth. When the wind sounds, the wind comes forth. It becomes that which is all the 10,000 things! It doesn't come out as it is, though, because the ego gets between. People who have lots of thinking don't reflect clearly. We have to realize this True Source—there are not two separate worlds inside and outside! This place of no thing at all whatsoever: With no gap we become birds, we become mountains, we become the world of phenomena. We don't do zazen to divide these into separated worlds.

Hakuin put this very clearly when he said all sentient beings are from the origin, Buddhas. Yet this is still explanation, not the thing itself, not the experience of itself. We have to realize the place where what is seen and what is seeing is one and the same.

Sutra: But it is a great mistake to suppress our mind from all thinking, for even if we succeed in getting rid of all thoughts and die immediately thereafter, still we should be reincarnated elsewhere. Mark this, treaders of the Path.

We are living beings who should think. We are supposed to think, but to think in accordance with what is actually happening, with what is actually there. We get caught because we think of things that are not really there and not really happening. That mountain in front of our face, seeing that, this is the truth! But because that has been divided into two separate worlds, we get confused. We do zazen to restore this Essence, so we match perfectly and reflect perfectly. We sit to be able to do this, and then when we leave the zendo we see and hear exactly how things are; we don't have our minds full of blind thinking. From all of our senses we experience the actuality directly, and that is kensho or satori, which is not some kind of supernatural, weird experience.

If we are always thinking of an "I" or a "me," that we are good or that we are bad,

we're confused. If we divide things into good and bad, we have to put all of that aside and look carefully at what is seeing like that? What is it that is hearing? What is it that is smelling? What is it that is tasting? What is the true base of what is happening? What is the true base of that which is sad? What is the true base of that which is miserable? To do that, we have to let go of all of it and dig into the source of all of it until we can see that originally there is not one single thing. This, Rinzai has said, This true body of the Buddha is the clean, pure, light in a moment of your mind! How is it before anything is reflected? We can't just say "I don't know"; we are talking about our own Mind! Zazen is to dig into the place from where we have been born. Susokkan, counting of the breath, and koan are all for this digging. From within, we dig; we dig into this deepest source and cut. It can't be done in a compromised way, either—in susokkan we have to exhale completely, and in our Mu we have to do it totally. The meaning is not in the Mu, but in the doing of it completely! To do this carefully, diligently—not just for a lot of times, again and again, but to do it carefully with a good, sharp, cutting edge. As we continue, the cutting edge gets better and we can feel this Mu becoming more and more transparent. But here we are all still very indulgent at doing this. Holding this sharp sword, we don't even use it! Having a fast horse like the famous ancient horse named the Blue Dragon, we have it and we don't even ride it! We say we have been doing this for so long, that it doesn't work. That is because we don't do it totally enough; we don't throw ourselves into it completely enough and cut. We don't have any awareness of how much time we're going to have left to do this! We can't waste our time!

The Buddha asked his disciples the meaning of the Buddha Dharma. One disciple said "One day is all we have, just this day, and that's all." Then the Buddha said, "You have understood the skin of the

Buddha Dharma." A second disciple said, "Eating a meal, having food and being together cheerfully at a meal." We have a world full of crisis, catastrophes; we never know what is coming next, so that one disciple said, "For just the period of time when we are sitting and eating and being together in that meal." To him, the Buddha said, "You have understood the flesh of the Buddha Dharma." Finally, a third disciple said, "This is one breath. If we exhale, we are never able to be sure if we are able to inhale again." To this, the Buddha said, "You have understood the marrow of the Buddha Dharma." We have to see it and do it this clearly. If we have a sharp cutting edge, we can see this—and with our own experience, not with our ideas about it. Only to experience it, this is what is most important! To see there is nothing at all whatsoever, and to be this clean, pure light in a moment of the mind.

We cut and cut and cut to realize this place where all is extinguished. At the beginning, we think there is a "me" counting the breathing in susokkan, or that Mu is something over there, far away. We can sometimes work hard, but we somehow can't continue, and so we are always in the midst of great ups and downs. When we really become it completely and cut more and more deeply, then walking, sitting, standing, are all the susokkan, the gaps disappear and it becomes all one whole. Osesshin is the best opportunity for being able to dive into the doing of this. Everyone usually has to set up a life, making food, getting a livelihood, taking care of things, but here for osesshin the tenzo feeds us, and if we become so deeply absorbed we forget to stand up, we are told to do so. We don't have to think about anything. Our awareness could not separate from what we are doing, and that is why we can know this place of not discriminating between a man and a woman, good and bad, standing and sitting. There is no more discrimination between these opposites, and finally we come out here

where there is no more division between inside and outside. We realize that place where it is all gone. From there, a newborn awareness spontaneously manifests. We are so full of joy as that brand new fresh awareness is born! This is what Zen is, and zazen is for realizing this.

Next, the Sixth Patriarch continues, saying we have to experience this and then we will see that a God or something else is only something we have invented ourselves externally. To see that clear, true Mind and fall deeply in love with it, and only long to get closer and closer to it always, as the words of Ikkyu put it! But it cannot be something which is outside and not inside; we have to awaken to this ourselves. There is nothing that is greater externally that we should be wanting, everything there are all shadows. We each know what is most important, and no matter who brings what else in, there is nothing to be more grateful for than this: that we realize within and that we all have this.

Sutra: But it is a great mistake to suppress our mind from all thinking, for even if we succeed in getting rid of all thoughts and die immediately thereafter, still we should be reincarnated elsewhere.

But some mistakenly believe that this is about thinking about not thinking about anything at all, that that is what we are supposed to do and have to do—that this is what zazen is. People who have been doing this for a long time even think that we just have to have continuous alpha waves from quietly not thinking anything. But this is only a technique, like someone who is raising the bar and then hurdle jumping; you raise a bar and go above that, then raise a bar and go above that, and so what? Where is there any Awakening in that? If we have not realized that truth directly and our True Source is not revealed clearly, we are just covering over our perceptions, putting a lid on our eyes and ears, not hearing, not seeing. If we sit that way for our whole life,

we will never clarify our truest Source. It would be like taking sleeping medicine. Sitting like this with our senses covered over is the greatest mistake and we must look at this carefully.

Sutra: Mark this, treaders of the Path. It is bad enough for a man to commit blunders from not knowing the meaning of the Law, but how much worse it would be to encourage others to follow suit? Being deluded, he sees not. In addition, he blasphemes the Buddhist Canon; therefore we take idea-lessness as our object.

If we don't know about this and are confused, that is one thing, but if we teach others that that is actual zazen—to be trying not to have any thinking at all—you are betraying the Buddhist's teaching. The Sixth Patriarch says this and criticizes it very definitely. It is bad enough for a man to commit blunders from not knowing the meaning of the law, but how much worse would it be to encourage others to follow suit?

So while having thoughts, do not get caught on them. You have to see this and sit! It is not about not seeing and not hearing and putting a lid on it all. But with every single one of the smallest 360 joints, the 84,000 hair pores, we throw ourselves into it completely and totally, as Master Mumon Ekai has said. We gather our whole body and mind into oneness and head into the direction from which it is all born. We cut to this Source, as this is the True Source of Mu; that awareness is our tool. For those with koans, the koan is that cutting tool. We go in the direction of the source of our awareness, and we cut and cut and cut continually! You can't retreat a single step, or else you'll end up starting over again and again. Each sesshin must be the very last sesshin we will ever do in our whole life, or the true Essence cannot come forth. With the firm determination that we have to die completely, we continue no matter what! Without that there can be

no resolution; we will stay a ghost, a legless apparition, and that will never be useful. To do this completely and resolve it is what osesshin is for. Doing kinhin is also zazen, doing samu is also zazen.

It is not that we shouldn't hear and see, but to not be moved around by what we hear and see, and not add any extra thoughts onto it. Digging in straight to our Source root, both zazen and work have to be done with full tautness. If we don't sit this way in the zendo and purify our awareness we will not be able to live this way outside of the zendo. Only to do it, only to know that we have to do it! There is only this whether we are standing or working, sitting in zazen; all things are about this! If we experience this, then we can see it clearly. We are not lotuses practicing swimming on the tatami. When we go back to work this has to be useful in everything we do, even in work. In this way, the Sixth Patriarch is saying it very clearly.

This is now the third day of the sesshin. Our bodies are familiar with this sitting and people here are all well-seasoned sitters, not beginners who get confused by little, small details. We ask only that with this opportunity, everyone will resolve it clearly and completely.

OSESSHIN 2003-09, DAY FOUR

Sutra: Learned audience, let me explain more fully why we take idea-lessness as our object. It is because there is a type of person under the delusion who boasts of the realization of the Essence of Mind, but, being carried away by circumstances, ideas arise in his mind followed by erroneous views which are the source of all sorts of false notions and defilements. In the Essence of Mind, there is intrinsically nothing to be attained.

The Sixth Patriarch has already said earlier that in our school we take idea-lessness as our object, non-objectivity as our basis, and non-attachment as our fundamental principle. From the time of the Buddha

and Bodhidharma, this has been the refuge given in the teaching, the true base and root of Mind. Here, he continues to explain this.

Sutra: It is because there is a type of person under delusion who boasts of the realization of the Essence of Mind, but being carried away by circumstances, ideas arise in his mind, followed by erroneous views....

We say that we have realized the Mind of nothing at all, but being caught by that and still not having become ripened and one with all of the 10,000 things, we get caught and stuck on being empty. We can no longer relate to things and are moved around by them. Because our Essence is not yet ripened, we follow after everything we see and our zazen loses all of its meaning. The nature of our Mind is freedom from even one single thing, actually holding onto nothing at all. But if that is not clearcut and real, we still get moved around. We sit to be able to realize this, but because our determination is indulgent, we still get moved around. In spite of our decisive commitment, we get moved around by what appears. To be clear and sure there is nothing whatsoever—to experience that actuality! All religions are based on this deep commitment.

Sutra: In the Essence of Mind, which is the embodiment of void, there is intrinsically nothing to be attained. To say that there is attainment, and to talk thoughtlessly on merits or demerits are erroneous views and defilements. For this reason we take 'Idea-lessness' as the object of our School.

Here he continues to say that to realize idea-lessness is to not hold on to anything, no ideas like living and dying, happy, sad, beautiful, ugly. A mirror reflects only what comes precisely in front of it without adding on any feelings or opinions or thoughts about what is reflected there. But humans are always adding on feelings and empathy, and with these we get moved

around. If it is a sick person, it is a sick person reflected just exactly as it is, a pain, a pain, just exactly as it is. A sadness, a sadness, just exactly as it is. But, like the sun and its warmth and its light, we go beyond our personal small opinions and mind to feel the greater Self in ways such as a deeper compassion. These are not emotions we get stuck into with a personal self at the center that is concerned with winning and losing. With no personal feelings added on, we become the thing itself—totally!

Sutra: Learned Audience, (in 'Idea-lessness') what should we get rid of and what should we fix our mind on? We should get rid of the 'pairs of opposites' and all defiling conceptions. We should fix our mind on the true nature of Tathata (Suchness), for Tathata is the quintessence of idea, and idea is the result of the activity of Tathata.

Idea-lessness is like a mirror that precisely reflects only what comes in front of it, with no opinions or feelings about that which it reflects. There is no decoration or planning here. It just is as it is, and residing nowhere at all, holding onto nothing at all, it does not add on relative ideas about things or discriminative thinking about things. Nor does it hold onto mental understanding of something, but becomes the thing itself. Not thinking about not becoming anything, but being that. Until now, we have always added in unnecessary thinking, and so we do zazen and susokkan and let go of all that. Zazen is not for only sitting inside the zendo, but to keep this going outside the zendo as well—to not add on our own personal feelings to everything that we

*The not two, as it is, is the Buddha
Dharma*

Fu ni soku buppo

不二即仏法



encounter.

Sutra: It is the positive essence of Tathata—not the sense organs which gives rise to “idea.” Tathata bears its own attribute and therefore it can give rise to “idea.” Without Tathata the sense organs and the sense objects would perish immediately. Learned Audience, because it is the attribute of Tathata which gives rise to “idea,” our sense organs—in spite of their functioning in seeing, hearing, touching, knowing and so on—need not be tainted or defiled in all circumstances....

Our past experience and memories are present, but we aren't caught on them and confused by them. We don't add them in and mix them up into everything we see and hear. Do not add in feelings and preconceived notions! Our zazen does not erase our past and various feelings, but allows us to see the present totally and clearly. In all the boundless realm of space, and in this separation between self and others, not a single hair can be inserted. The Mind that hears and the sound heard are one and the same. That is zazen—nothing is added. Only to be experiencing this moment perfectly and not involved in ideas! We have to be able to perceive the exact actuality, but because we are not well aligned inside this gets confused.

We can experience this moment clearly, right now. Right here, that which is listening, is how Rinzai puts it out. If there is an “I” involved in that hearing or listening, we are not listening and hearing clearly. Fifty-two people here are hearing the same thing, but not if there are personal ideas involved and mixed in. Humans cannot believe those different places in each other. Rather, to realize that which unites us all, and we can then believe. We don't believe in others because we are not able to believe in ourselves. But in this way with all of our seeing, our hearing, all of our senses, we are able to perceive clearly.

This is the way in which the Sixth Patriarch expresses how things work—but just that won't clarify the whole picture. For example, in sesshin in the first three days, we are still affected by our usual lives before we come here. After about the third day, we become able to simplify, and to only sit, only walk, only stand. Some may think that is turning our back on people or on society. But in fact, people who live confused by ego, it is they who are influencing others in a more detrimental way. We clarify within that which confuses us, and which therefore confuses others. We become more and more able to stop wandering around in our heads, and cleaning up our awareness is possible. Our body is what is sitting, so, of course, our breathing becomes more aligned. The full tautness of the alignment of the *ki* energy of the heavens and the earth is realized, and the energy of the full tautness is realized as well. Like the warmth of the sun, we can know that deep samadhi.

The Sixth Patriarch teaches very carefully that we do not cultivate samadhi and then turn that into kensho, but rather we realize our True nature. Nevertheless we sit and realize that clarity and wisdom, and we see that susokkan and kensho are not two separate things after all; we spontaneously realize the great wisdom with which we are endowed. While we are still being moved around by what others say, our awareness is still crowded. When we are able to see where someone is actually coming from, behind their words and actions, we can also see that we are no longer moved around. We have realized the actuality of that clarity. If not, it is not true zazen. In true zazen, we become one with each and every thing, but we are not moved around by anything. This is balanced and steady; the Sixth Patriarch says this from the bottom up in his clarification.

We do susokkan but we are not pulled around by it. We have to be balanced and clear in this, and then the Essence

is revealed. If we do zazen and do not become clear, it is because we are moved around by circumstances. Susokkan is what guides us. People often ask why we need numbers and counting, and can't just follow the breath. The numbers in the counting are a guide. We can tell we are not focused because our counting becomes unclear and unfocused—it is an important functioning of the susokkan practice to focus and clarify.

Our breathing leads our awareness, or else our awareness becomes too top-heavy, and with this we will not become centered. Our awareness cannot be too controlled; we center to where we can focus to the whole, entire other side of the planet. You can't have just full tautness without this kind of transparency as well. We have this potential, and if we don't realize it, our zazen gets heavy and we are not able to hear, see and smell clearly. We perceive things exactly as they are, or we cannot liken our perception to being like a mirror. We have to know this inner tautness intimately or we will become lacking in motivation—then we will have only tautness, but no Essence. To see the way these functions are working clearly in our zazen is very important.

Sutra: Learned audience, because it is the attribute of Tathata that gives rise to "idea," our sense organs, in spite of their functioning in seeing, hearing, touching, knowing and so on, need not be tainted nor defiled in all circumstances, and our True nature may be self-manifested all the time.

Then, if our zazen and state of mind are well aligned, the past, present and future will not be confusing. Then our emotions and ideas will not be a problem. If well aligned, we can see clearly that that which we see, that which we hear, that which we feel, that which we perceive is in accordance with how we perceive with our function of Mind, and we will hear correctly with our ears, see correctly with

our eyes, and feel correctly. Like water that flows by, when things are finished they go by and are done. Because we are one with things and not hanging onto them, we are always right here, right now. When our Mind's functioning is fully realized this is not nihilistic, because the whole world that appears is me. But if we are moved around by circumstances, it cannot work like this. We will be moved around then by what we see, hear and feel, because we are still habitually affected by our emotions. Our body, mind and awareness have to blend into oneness and function, or it is not true zazen. And if we do zazen, this will also apply to our daily life. The function of our awareness is born and transforms with every single new breath, but there is no sense of any moving going on there. Each and every moment's actuality is well-ripened, with no division between inside and outside—and this is correct perception.

Sutra: Therefore, the sutra says, "He who is an adept in the discrimination of various things and phenomena will be immovably installed in the first principle, the blissful abiding place of the holy."

The Vimalakirti Sutra is being referred to here. As Dogen Zenji has said, If we go after the many things, that is delusion; if they come to us and we receive them correctly, that is enlightenment. Or, as Hakuin Zenji has said, Realizing the form of no form as form, whether going or returning, we cannot be any place else. Realizing the thought of no thought as thought, whether singing or dancing, we are the voice of the Dharma. We realize our full tautness. If we align our mind, we will always be in this place.

We thought before that we had always moved, going to the zendo, going to the jikido, but we realize that it wasn't like that at all. In fact it is all moving toward us, it is all coming to us. Our job, our workplace, comes to us, not us to it; in accordance to what is necessary, it all comes right to

us. But if we get caught on it and moved around by it we lose our center and get pulled off. This can not be understood conceptually. It is not about wishing it could be like this or like that, but because we are holding on to nothing at all it is as it is. It has to become like this or we are not ripening in our zazen. If it is not clear in either direction, our zazen has not yet ripened. To see well, to hear well, but to not be pulled off center by what we see and hear—we can do this because we are doing correct zazen, and living correct daily lives within this state of mind. We aren't all dark in our heads, but wide open in all the four directions, not used by the move, but using the move. If we are used by the move, we can easily get dark inside. We have to align our minds correctly, or it is not true zazen. Zazen is not intoxication; the more we sit, the clearer we become, the quieter we become, and no matter what comes to us, we are not moved around by it. To deepen to this point is correct zazen. Please don't confuse this. The Sixth Patriarch finishes this Chapter on Samadhi and Prajna on these words. If we do this, we can see that in zazen there is nothing about darkness and unclarity.

Samadhi, as it is, is Kensho

Zenjo soku kensho

禪定即見性



Chapter 5 Dhyana

OSESSEN, 2003-09, DAY FIVE

Sutra: The Patriarch one day preached to the assembly as follows: In our system of meditation, we neither dwell upon the mind in contradistinction to the Essence of Mind, nor upon purity.

This is the chapter on dhyana, or zazen—Chapter Five. As the Sixth Patriarch has taught, we are teaching about kensho, not about samadhi liberation. We are learning about zazen in this context. Our system here, means the Sixth Patriarch's version of Zen, where we are externally not bringing forth any thoughts to what we perceive, and internally being unmoved by anything that we are touched by within. This is how he defines zazen. Daruma Daishi defines it as Cutting away all connections to anything external, we let go of any concerns within. When our mind is like a tall, firm, wall, at this time we are at one with the Way. It was Daruma Daishi who first gave us this definition, and since it could be misunderstood, the Sixth Patriarch continues with his elucidation and definition.

It is important to not be caught on words, though. Both words given from an enlightened person with experience and from an unenlightened person are still called words, so we have to see this carefully. The Sixth Patriarch also says Zen is the naming of Mind, Mind is the body of Zen, and Mind cannot be named. We call zazen dhyana in India, and in China that becomes the word “Zen” from a phonetic similarity to the word dhyana—“to see quietly with our mind.” Not to get caught and stagnate in your mind, but to be with things exactly as they are, not trying to grab something which makes you more comfortable. The word for mind in Japanese is *shin* and also called *kokoro*. The word *koro* is the onomatopoeia for “rolling along.” Something that rolls like a ball is *koro koro koro*. So the mind, which is

called *kokoro*, is something which is always rolling around and changing; it is always flowing and never stopped. And this is what is called Zen. There is no thing or form that we can call a mind. It is always changing, and though we are always looking for something to rely on, we cannot find it in something called a mind.

The Buddha, in the Diamond Sutra, talked about that mind of the past, the mind of the present and the mind of the future, and how our mind is always changing. Our past mind is made up of knowledge and experience, and it does not exist in the present, but we use from it to have information for what we do in the present. If we have preconceived notions about things because of that mind of the past, that is not real. So we do have a mind of the past but that is not the present reality. That is also true with the mind of the future. With the mind of the future, we all have plans and directions and measures, but this is not an actuality. The mind of the future is a measure, and in that way it exists, but it is not the actuality of the present. So, then, is the mind of the present actual and real? We have to also see this clearly and in detail. If we name it a “now” it is already gone by the time we have named it, so we cannot be aware of a present moment. Once we notice it, it is already a past moment. If we mix this up, we can't see clearly and precisely. A very kind and detailed teaching, this is the careful teaching of the Buddha in the Diamond Sutra.

The Buddha also taught in his final sutra, called the *Yukyōgyō*, that the disciples should clarify and align their minds. We all have senses—called the six windows: the five roots of the five physical senses and then awareness, which has no particular window. We have to clarify our senses. If we just see, hear and feel whatever we feel like whenever we feel like it, we get confused. These senses have to be aligned, and so we have the Precepts—like the rules for the zendo, for example. Why do

we need them? Because if we just let our senses think and indulge in whatever way we wish to, we get more confused, dark and complex. If we study, then to not use our mind for other things during the time we are studying. We don't talk in the zendo for this reason. We use the instruments in the zendo so that even without words we learn to respond in a precise way at the appropriate time. The same is true with fragrances and flavors. We can't use strong fragrances or eat food with strong flavors or move our bodies around any old which way, or people will get confused. We have to be able to do things in such a way that we can keep things simple and appropriate.

So next, the Sixth Patriarch says we should align the mind. Any psychologist would understand and agree with this, but of course, we can't say to our ears, "Hear this sound and don't hear that sound." And in our bodies we also have eyes, nose and mouth which perceive. So what is it we can do that aligns the senses? We have to be able to do things that are not going to confuse the mind. As it said, the mind can be like a poisonous snake, like a great thief, like a wild animal—full of attached love, full of attachment to hate, full of greed, anger and ignorance. This confuses our senses and our judgment, so to align our senses we have to align our mind. But this does not mean to negate anything; the Sixth Patriarch is very clear about this.

To align our mind is the most difficult. It is easy to say, "Don't see, don't hear, don't smell, don't speak, don't feel." All of us sitting will easily and frequently have different ideas of what this means to align the mind. The waves and wind of the mind that are always blowing within us—we can't try to make them be suddenly fixed and stopped. That is not the point. In the way that the Buddha spoke about the minds of the past, present and future, you can see in further detail. As it says in the sutras, our mind is sometimes like a crazy elephant that got into someone's

garden. To align it, we have to not let it indulge in whatever it wants to, but bring it all into focus—into Oneness—on one thing. People of old could see an arrow, and by just looking at that arrow carefully, they could know how it would fly. People who would use wood from a tree, could see that tree and understand right away what kind of wood it could produce and in what way if it were to be made into a building, it would twist and warp. We have to see the nature and quality of the mind in the same way. This is why the Sixth Patriarch says not to give attention to this always changingness of the mind and not to be moved around by it. It has so many varieties and forms, yet it is not about not seeing nor hearing nor smelling—or how limited our zendo life would be!

If we negate the mind we would stop responding, and that is not the point, either: to not be moved around by what is not real but also to not move blindly. So what does alignment mean? That which will not be over when we leave the zendo. That which will not divide into two ways of being: in the zendo and when we leave the zendo.

Sutra: In our system of meditation, we neither dwell upon the mind in contradistinction to the Essence of Mind, nor upon purity. Nor do we approve of non-activity.

As we sit and become more serene we will easily fall in love with that serenity in our mind. We can't get stopped there, either. In the serene mind, to not get caught or stuck on that serenity and confused. The Sixth Patriarch says we neither dwell upon the mind, nor upon purity. The mind is always transforming; to stop it is unnatural.

Sutra: As to dwelling upon the mind, the mind is primarily delusive, and when we realize that it is only a phantasm, there is no need to dwell on it. As to dwelling upon purity, our nature is intrinsically pure.

Our mind is always in flux, and if we try to stop that flux to align it, it is a big mistake. Dogen Zenji's words are often misunderstood: To study the way is to study the self, to study the self is to forget the self, to forget the self is to be enlightened by all things. To be enlightened by all things is to remove the barrier between self and other. We have to see this clearly, and see that it is not about a mistaken interpretation of these words, where we are trying to look at a something, or seek for a something. If we design an idea of love of humankind, or try to force something we conceptualize, such as human compassion, this won't work. We have all kinds of good and evil qualities within us, but there is no thing we can call a mind, because it is alive and always changing.

As it says in the Diamond Sutra, our mind is like a star at dawn, a bubble in a stream, a flash of lightening in a summer cloud, a flickering lamp, a phantom, and a dream. It is the nature of mind that it cannot be fixed—and to realize this directly is satori. As Baso Dōitsu Zenji has said, The mind as it is, is Buddha. What kind of mind is this? Some kind of absolute purity? If that is always what we think of as how a pure mind should be, as something far away removed and pure, up on some deep altar far in the back of some holy place, then our pure Mind is irrelevant. But that is only an imagined idea of a pure mind. If we try to become some pure mind, we will soon give up zazen completely and throw in the towel. We have to realize this great Mind that embraces all of it, not try to imagine some absolute. We instead realize the whole, not the part—the whole universe and how to be in it in the most appropriate way, accordingly. People get confused by only seeing a part of this, and when we realize that it is only a phantasm, there is no need to dwell on it.

Sutra: As to dwelling upon purity, our nature is intrinsically pure. Insofar as we get rid of all delusive ideas, there will be nothing but purity in our nature.

To see everything exactly as it is, to see that this is how we think of the fleeting world: a star at dawn, a bubble in a stream, a flash of lightening in a summer cloud, a flickering lamp, a phantom and a dream. Does that mean that we can do anything we want to, anytime, since it is all a phantom anyway? It's not that. We have to see the entire picture and how everything is included within it.

Sutra: As to dwelling upon purity, our nature is intrinsically pure and so far as we get rid of all delusive idea, there will be nothing but purity in our nature, for it the delusive idea that obscures Suchness.

There is no pure place to abide in. We have so many thoughts, but only some idea of mind as a shadow. As Shotoku Daishi said in the 5th Century—he is the one who is said to have made the world's first constitution, although it is considered to be one of mind and not necessarily a first real political constitution—Where I say 'good', someone else says 'bad'. When I say 'bad' then the other person says 'good.' We are both ignorant. I am not a saint, he is not a stupid person, but when we have thoughts, both of us have thoughts, and it's six of one and half a dozen of another. All the same, we see that no matter what a good thing we may do, it is only a phantasm. So all we can do is continuously chant the Buddha's name.

Nowadays, which Buddha's name you chant is kind of local. But to do it continually and completely! To do it to the point where we become it, where we think nothing at all. To do it to become the place of thinking nothing at all is very different from conceptually thinking about a mind which holds onto nothing at all.

Sutra: So far as we get rid of all delusive ideas there will be nothing but purity, for it is the delusive idea that obscures Tathata [Suchness].

No matter what idea of purity we hold

onto, it is pointless—just making more thoughts come up and getting caught on a shadow we invent ourselves. There will be nothing but purity in our nature. There is no such thing as an originally poisonous or evil person or child. In the Bible it says we have to become a child's mind to enter heaven, but this is not about trying to become some pure ideal. It is to sit with a huge, abundant Mind. To sit, we need perseverance—we have to sit this way, continuing becoming it. Yet saying these things, that's not always so easy to do; we all get confused about how to do this. And so we have *susokkan* and *koan* practice. But then we still think that by doing *susokkan* and *koans* we are going to be able to become something very special. Our nature is from the origin, pure. But we have trouble believing that, and get confused.

Sutra: For it is the delusive idea that obscures Suchness. If we direct our mind to dwell upon purity we are only creating another delusion, the delusion of purity.

As Dogen Zenji has said,

To study the Way is to study the self, to study the self is to forget the self. To forget the self is to be enlightened by all things.

We cannot take these as words of negation, so we have the refuge of *susokkan* and *koans*. Yet we still stick on so many ideas! To simply use our senses, and not stick on the ideas we are so familiar with putting in with them—they get us all tight and tense and rigid. We have to peel off layer after layer after layer of self-conscious awareness—not trying to become something which we perceive as over there, outside. We see it, and when we don't divide it into seeing and seer any longer but go to the root of the Oneness—not rigidly, but not loosening our focus, either, then it becomes One. We thought we were separate, but it all comes into Oneness. The five senses are not separated; in

fact, they are all one total perception. We become that flower completely—more and more so as we gather our senses into this Oneness. We gather this and then the flower and the one who sees the flower are naturally one. We are blooming. Hearing the insect, I become the insect.

And as Daito Kokushi has said,

When we hear with the eyes and see with the ears—
beyond any bit of doubt:
the raindrops falling from the eaves.

Dogen Zenji also writes a similar poem:

The raindrops falling from the eaves,
drip, drip, drip [*potari, potari* - the Japanese expression]
It comes to be realized as falling right within our own Mind.

And this is what Baso Dōitsu Zenji is saying when he says, The mind, as it is, is the Buddha. We come to experience how it is all right within us. It is all within us in our eyes, our ears, and our nose, in our senses. As Rinzai Zenji has put it, In this five-foot lump of red flesh, there is a True person of no rank which is always coming and going in and out of the orifices. We become the raindrop, we become the flower, and we know the state of mind where the entire world is right within us. We can see each thing there perfectly, and we realize that so far as we get rid of all delusive ideas we have nothing but purity in our nature, for it is the delusive idea that obscures Suchness.

But to realize this we have to let go of all of our productions and inventions. To get to this place we use the tools we have of *susokkan* or *koans*. When we realize this place, our tools have meaning. We can't let go of this all at once. We have to do this as it comes, little by little—as it will do—and then we will understand this place where it is all right within us.

Sutra: If we direct our mind to dwell upon purity we are only creating another delusion, the delusion of purity.

When we work on purity, that is only producing further mistakes, greater delusion. Even attachment to a Buddha or attachment to a truth is a delusion. Truth is prior to any attachment to such things.

Sutra: Since delusion has no abiding place, it is delusive to dwell upon it. Purity has neither shape nor form, but some people go so far as to invent the form of purity and treat it as a problem, looking for a solution.

Our original mind is purity. If we try to make ourselves that way we only go further from it. As we try to let go of it we get more and more bound by an idea of purity, and confused by the doing of that. So what do we get from zazen? We let go of all of these ideas and things to rely on, and become more and more abundant as our thinking decreases. But this does not mean to become foggy and fuzzy and intoxicated, or we'll be useless in functioning and working, and unclear. We will be negating our own sharp usefulness.

To align our breath is the most intimate thing we can possibly do. Everything we have been thinking about, we let go of it, and our five senses are naturally aligned. For doing that, the koan of Mu is the best for beginners because it is impossible to philosophize about. Chewing it and chewing it, it is completely flavorless, and because of this it cleans up the complexity of our mind. All of our senses, our body, our mind, inside the zendo, the outside surroundings, it all becomes involved and we continue aligning until finally we cannot think, and are totally being. All of the senses are gathered into this one point, yet our full tautness fills the entire zendo and beyond, and we are not in any darkness whatsoever, but extending in every single direction, brightly! It could not be impulsive, reactionary behavior. Because we have become able to

see this whole thing as it is on the palm of our hand, how thankful we are! Nonetheless, even if we realize a big, huge state of mind, if we try to hurry it we'll get more confused again. With an experience to see what is this clear Essence, we'll eventually begin to see through all those thoughts and realize they were only shadows. And then we are able to see what is right in front of us, clearly and precisely, because we have opened and widened our function of awareness. In a big state of mind, zazen has this Essence.

OSESSHIN 2003-09, DAY SIX

Sutra: Learned Audience, those who train themselves in "imperturbability" should, in their contact with all types of men, ignore the faults of others.

Yesterday it was written about purity, and how we are already pure if we don't add any thoughts of being pure and impure onto our already clear nature. We have no need to think about this at all. If a mountain manifests, become the mountain. If a flower comes forth, become the flower. Or a bird, become the bird, or a river, the river. Our nature is, from the origin, infinite in direction, and there is no reason to add on ideas of impurity or purity or calling it this or that. Just to receive exactly whatever comes, we have natural purity, let alone "pure" or "impure." There is nothing to produce or invent about this.

First, the Sixth Patriarch talked about that. Still, we get moved around by things. We always add on our opinions. Because of those opinions and our ideas about things we are never settled, confused by ideas about "good" and "bad," conceited when we get praised for something, depressed when we get criticized for something. Because that becomes difficult and trying and challenging we do zazen to cultivate a mind that does not become perturbed.

The Sixth Patriarch says that imperturb-

ability is to not be moved around no matter what comes. Even though we do zazen, we talk about others all the time—about how they did this and they said that. Humans have a subconscious bad habit of enjoying putting down each other. If there are 6.2 billion humans on the planet, there are 6.2 billion critics. The Sixth Patriarch was clear about not judging others. We are not policemen and we are not lawyers. Before that, we have to look at ourselves, closely, or we will never see our True nature.

Sutra: Learned Audience, those who train themselves in “imperturbability” should, in their contact with all types of men, ignore the faults of others.

When we see people we don’t see this way. We don’t try to see all of their bad things, but we also don’t see their clear nature. Our minds are like mirrors, and mirrors don’t judge and criticize; they just reflect exactly, without any judgment. While humans are not mirrors, we have that same capability, yet without realizing it we confuse ourselves. To not confuse ourselves is zazen.

We are an absolute center when we are reflecting exactly as things come. Whether it is a god or a beggar, there is no difference in how a mirror reflects it. But the human mind is different. We reflect someone, and if we don’t like them, that judgment is added on. As soon as that happens, we become stagnant and moved around. We are all like drivers. If we were to have an opinion of everything we see as we drive along, then we’d immediately have an accident. Our true, clear Mind, like driving a car, is pure—but not if we are busy with so many opinions. We have to stop having the opinions; correct driving is not caught up in thoughts. Policemen say from experiments that those who are going to have accidents will always have accidents; it’s a matter of personality and character, and there is even data for this. If our mind is always moved around, we’re using it incor-

rectly. We always have to see clearly what is going on; that is our True and Original nature. We have made it murky. But with just the form of doing zazen we’ll have no way of correcting this.

Sutra: Learned Audience, a man unenlightened may be unperturbed physically, but as soon as he opens his mouth he criticizes others and talks about their merits or demerits, ability or weakness, good or evil; thus he deviates from the right course.

Further, the Sixth Patriarch says this: Most people in the world, doing zazen, intend to let go thinking and ideas. We may experience some samadhi, but as soon as we stand up we’re talking about other people—their faults, their actions. That is “being moved around.” We do training and work to sustain zazen mind: This is to not be the slightest bit involved in judging others. Our original Mind is not involved in this. If we do correct zazen we have to arrive here.

Earlier, the person who drives was mentioned. We all have various experiences and perceptions so that we don’t have accidents. We stop at the proper signs, stop at the proper lights, stopping, following the rules. There are some who don’t have accidents because they follow the rules—for this reason they don’t have them—and some who just wouldn’t have an accident. India is very different. It’s very different to live in. The cars, because there are lines but no rules, come at you from every single direction. There’s no such thing as a one-way street or a rule that you have to go on the right or the left. The cars come at you from straight on, and it is a matter of who backs off, who lives. When the roshi was driving from Ricipur to Nagpur he was in a car for thirty-five hours straight, so he got to know very well how the driving in India is. And the worse part, he said, is at nighttime; nighttime is horrifying. There are huge potholes, cows come out of nowhere, and you don’t know

when the cars are going to go in which direction. So brilliant drivers are born in India. To not have an accident requires a certain kind of person. Because it takes such concentration to do the job, it's an excellent place for practice.

Sutra: Learned Audience, a man unenlightened may be unperturbed physically, but as soon as he opens his mouth he criticizes others and talks about their merits or demerits, ability or weakness, good or evil; thus he deviates from the right course.

We have to do the zazen of mind, not only of body.

Sutra: On the other hand, to dwell upon our own mind or upon purity is also a stumbling-block in the Path.

We get caught on the thoughts that keep arising. Our mind is always in flux as we perceive and feel, and so there is no such thing, from the origin, as a "mind." It is always changing; there is something which is always changing. We can't get caught on an idea of "good" or "bad," and get pushed and pulled around, getting confused.

We start with a very firm, committed, determination to realize enlightenment no matter what—and in thirty minutes, maybe less than thirty minutes, our legs are already killing us. Our back feels like it's going to break, and where has our devoted commitment gone? We try to keep our mind quiet and nothing works; whether we try to quiet it or don't try to quiet it, nothing works. We can sit a little, but the moment we go back to our life we are completely off again. It's not so frequent that people do correct, good, zazen.

Sutra: The Patriarch on another occasion preached to the assembly as follows: Learned Audience, what is sitting for meditation?

In fact, he is teaching us to not do "correct" zazen, but zazen that leads to that place where we can see our clear nature directly

and become Buddha.

Sutra: In our School, to sit means to gain absolute freedom and to be mentally unperturbed in all outward circumstances, be they good or otherwise. To meditate means to realize inwardly the imperturbability of the Essence of Mind.

This School is that of realizing our True nature directly—our true Mind with which we are endowed from birth, prior to gathering all kinds of education and ideas and knowledge which are added on. These are what obstruct us. This True nature, uninterrupted, is kensho. With no producing or inventing, we align our body and our breath. That alignment is not forcing something to happen, it is about harmony. To realize that True nature there is no obstruction and nothing to make happen. Nor is it to be produced by using our ego-ways of doing whatever we feel like or whenever we want. Because we have invented and are living in a way of ego, we have to let go of that ego.

The roshi has already said these things and is now putting them simply: There are "good" thoughts because there are "bad" thoughts. Because there is something "good" there is "bad." If there are smart people we say, "This person is so intelligent," and that brings up ignorant people who are not so intelligent. To say some are "healthy" means that we know from "unhealthy." We say we are sorry someone is so sick; that is already labeling them as a "sick person," and discriminating. We want to help, but most of the time that helping is not what is needed or what is wanted. We think of people as both "young" and "old," but elderly people especially don't like to be treated as old and separated into that department. That makes them feel as if they are being discriminated against or being made a fool of.

We first have to let go of our discrimination and our discriminative sense of things to realize that True nature directly. And

then we can see clearly. Otherwise when we say we don't see people in terms of differences, we do. We do zazen to realize this clearly and directly. We have to see their true, human character, whether it's a male, a female, a sick person, a healthy person, an old person, a young person, a rich person, a poor person—to not see them in terms of those relative definitions. And to see another's clear nature we have to see our own clear nature.

Sutra: In our School, to sit means to gain absolute freedom and to be mentally unperturbed in all outward circumstances, be they good or otherwise. To meditate means to realize inwardly the imperturbability of the Essence of Mind.

While this divides, still, into “inside” and “outside,” in fact there is no such division like this. It is not judgment; we have to let go of all of that.

It says in the earlier lines that our mind is like a mirror. We are in that state of mind until we are about twenty-three months old and the ego becomes solidified. Prior to that we see directly. It is said that God gives rain equally to good and evil people; that is the mind prior to twenty-three months old. Today we are so concerned with our own ideas and opinions, when the True source of our mind is pure beyond any of those. We see clearly “good” and “bad” but we don't judge them. Whatever pain we have, pain; whatever misery we have, misery; if we have joy, we have joy, but we don't get confused by these. Like a mirror giving no judgment, we experience what comes. That which comes, comes, and that which goes, goes. If it should come, it comes; if it should go, it goes. To work on realizing this is our zazen.

So it is not about closing over our senses and saying not to see, not to hear, but because our mind is twisted and unaligned we have to align it, and so we sit. This is not about sitting in dark murkiness, either. To meditate means to realize

inwardly the imperturbability of the Essence of Mind. Because we follow our thoughts around we are given susokkan and koan practice. But if we use these to sit to get even more confused, that has to be corrected. We do susokkan and koan to be able to align, but if we just sit our physical body down we will not realize this clarity of mind. To align this unripe mind, this is the most important aspect of zazen.

Sutra: To meditate means to realize inwardly the imperturbability of the Essence of Mind. To be mentally unperturbed in all outward circumstances, be they good or otherwise. To meditate means to realize inwardly the imperturbability of the Essence of Mind.

This is clarifying what is within our mind, while there is no such thing as an inside or an outside. The Sixth Patriarch was with Goso Gunin Zenji for eight months when the teacher, Goso Gunin, said that he was now ready to pass along his responsibility as a teacher. And he said his disciples should write a poem and that he would choose from there who would succeed him. The first poem was given by Jinshu Joza, one of his senior students, who wrote the poem on the wall,

Our body is the bodhi tree
And our mind, a mirror bright.
Carefully we wipe them hour by
hour
And let no dust alight.

The teacher said that it was an excellent poem. But it was the Sixth Patriarch who commented how the first poem was one of describing that true Essence, not being it, and that it was not written from a truly awakened Mind. And so he wrote a second poem:

There is no bodhi tree
Nor stand of a mirror bright.

Since all is void,
Where can the dust alight?

Here we have a poem of the essence of the truth of one who has returned to their true Essence.

We have the rule for meditation here:
To be mentally unperturbed in all outward circumstances, be they good or otherwise. To meditate means to realize inwardly the imperturbability of the Essence of Mind. This is the very center, where there is nothing whatsoever. Here we have to come, with no becoming lax or wandering around. We have to return here. There is no doubt left here; we could easily recognize our Face Before Our Parents Were Born no matter where we saw it, without fail. Even if we are in a busy downtown we don't mistake it if we see our own original, clear Mind. If we go home after being so restricted in a sesshin here, we get home and relax and we're so glad it's over. Because it is our home we can settle in like that. Because we can settle so clearly within, we cannot be moved around by anything.

There was a hippie era where people were doing whatever they wanted to do. We have to be able to pierce through that and find the freedom that is found by going beyond that. To meditate means to realize inwardly the imperturbability of the Essence of Mind.

The Original True Face

Honrai no shin menmoku

本来真面目



Sutra: To sit means to gain absolute freedom, and be mentally unperturbed in all outward circumstances, be they good or otherwise. To meditate means to realize inwardly the imperturbability of the Essence of Mind.

In this way, the Sixth Patriarch defines zazen, dividing it into an inside and outside aspect. That division still places it in a relative dualistic framework. Later, Rinzai Zenji says, 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. In this, the True person of no rank is the central point—always coming and going in and out of the orifices. In this way, if it manifests externally, what is its Essence internally? What is it that comes and goes? While we may have to start out with a mental understanding and a definition, that will not fulfill us and bring us to its true realization. And so, we do zazen. We have a body, but our sense of it has to be lost track of, as well as any idea of anything whatsoever. This is living zazen.

In our sitting, at the beginning we feel our body, our sense, our limbs. And as our zazen ripens, If we see with our ears and hear with our eyes, it is beyond doubt the raindrop falling from the eaves. At first we see and hear this with our physical body, but as we continue, the raindrop continues falling and we no longer feel it outside of ourselves, but falling right inside of us. Our awareness of our body is gone. Only the potari sound of the rain dropping: potari, potari, potari. But here if there is still someone listening, that is not yet true samadhi. We have to actualize the place of no body awareness, to purify to that place. We cannot still have lots of noisy thoughts and perceptions, but to become that place of no inside and outside, no division between these—or else it is not true zazen. While we have heaviness of thought and heaviness of body, it is still

burdensome.

While we are engrossed in working, we don't think to ourselves that now we are working so hard. In our work it is so, and even more so in our state of mind of zazen. Becoming one total whole is our zazen, letting go of our body and of our mind, of an inside or an outside—and only then can we taste this deep flavor. Hakuin says severely that zazen only in the zendo is useless. The Sixth Patriarch speaks in agreement with that, saying, to sit is to gain absolute freedom, and to be mentally unperturbed in all outward circumstances. No tiny speck of an "I" or a small self in there whatsoever!

When Rinzai says, In this five-foot lump of red flesh, there is a True person of no rank coming and going, always, in and out of the orifices, we imagine there is some special thing that comes and goes. But it is not like that. We let go of all of our attachments and caught places; we dive into our work and become it completely. This is the True person of no rank. We become the car in front of us, the red light, the person in front of us. We work in the garden, we do the cleaning, but we don't stop there—we become the pot, we become the knife, we become the cutting board, become the rice, become the floor, become the wall, and everything there is we become it. Our truth is here, and we actualize it. This is what the Sixth Patriarch means when he says to sit means to gain absolute freedom, and to be mentally unperturbed in all outward circumstances, be they good or otherwise. To meditate means to realize inwardly the imperturbability of the Essence of Mind. There is nothing within us at all that we are holding onto, and so we can do this. No ideas of gain or loss, just everything exactly as it is. With that, we go to the zendo, not trying to produce some pure world that we carry around, but with our whole being to do each thing we encounter with everything we are.

When Rinzai Zenji spoke about the person

of no rank, he said See it now, see it now! Everyone was trembling at his sharp intensity. One monk was tugged by his words, and came forth and asked, “What is that true person?” Rinzai grabbed his lapels, and shook him, saying “Speak, speak!” This monk was speaking from mental understanding only. Rinzai kicked him hard and said, “Here you have the clear nature and you use it like a dried shit stick!” Then Rinzai returned to his chambers. Our whole being: Here is living Zen—not being stuck in a quiet place, or we will have an accident when we are driving down the street. If we do zazen thinking about how we are nothing at all, we will get very confused, and these words will seem to be deceiving us. How does that True person of no rank manifest? Doing sanzen is to manifest this, not to be looking so dull that we don’t even know if a person is dead or alive!

Sutra: Learned audience, what are dhyana and samadhi? Dhyana means to be free from attachment to all outer objects, and samadhi means to attain inner peace.

What is zazen? What is samadhi? At another place, the Sixth Patriarch has said, Only put forth kensho, not liberation through samadhi. This has to be seen clearly, though. Zazen is not for practicing something, but to manifest something completely and seamlessly. In the Diamond Sutra, it says we have to be free from all ego entities, beings, personality, and separated individuality. We can’t stay stuck on these or our limited ego, or while it says that all sentient beings are essentially Buddhas, we will think that only applies to us when we are good. It is not about lying to ourselves about loving all human beings and being always compassionate. We have to let go of that kind of ego, that ego which is destroying this whole environment and which twists everything and misinterprets it. There is no such mistaken thing that we should be able to be doing as misusing

and destroying this environment. This is what we are doing because of our egoistic attachment. For our own benefit, we have to let go of that—or we call ourselves animals and say that because we are animals, we can excuse any behavior. That point of view has to be let go of as well: putting our own pleasures over what is most necessary for everyone.

The Buddha is teaching us to make diligent efforts for peace for all beings. We are told to let go of the ego-entity, the being, the personality, and the separated individuality. But even though we are told that, we don’t make the efforts to do so. People say, “I am not holding onto anything,” even though there is no food for hundreds of thousands of people tonight, while other people are paying hundreds of dollars for a single meal for themselves. It’s about letting go of oneself and putting it aside. If we do heavy labor and carry things and do other challenging physical work, then we need lots of good food. Otherwise, less is better, for our health as well. Better to not eat at all when we are not hungry. Because people eat when they are not hungry, they have to search for something that costs hundreds of dollars that might taste good.

Sutra: If we are attached to outer objects, our inner mind will be perturbed. When we are free from attachment to all outer objects, the mind will be in peace.

We are glad when we are praised, unhappy when we are criticized, and moved around by the reactions to us if they are not favorable. Do not care about any of that whatsoever, but only be completely open. There are in this world some who praise others, and some who put down others. If we are moved around by that, we will not have one minute of peace. The Buddha said in Dhammapada verse 227,

This is an old saying, O Atula, this is not only of to-day: ‘They blame him who sits silent, they blame him who speaks much, they also blame him

who says little; there is no one on earth who is not blamed.'

Let them praise, let them put down. Better, to use our energy seeing what is best for all people. As it says, For ten people, there are ten colors—and these colors also change. [This is a Japanese saying meaning "many people, many characteristics."] Probably the Buddha was very criticized in his time, when there were ninety-six other Paths that existed. People criticize and judge you if you talk too much; then they criticize and judge you if you don't talk enough, or if you don't talk at all. We can always be criticized in one way or the other. In any case, people are always wanting to label someone. The Buddha was not a saint and he was not a sinner; he had no such front or back. He was someone who made great efforts and suffered greatly. The Buddha was not a philosopher; he is one who left a comfortable life for a difficult one.

There is no one who is never criticized, nor is there any person who is so deeply terrible that there is no one who does not find him terrible. Even the Buddha said that in this world, this is how the world is. If we are pulled around by what is said all the time, we cannot live in this world. The craziest people who insult us, let them insult us. Everybody has a different way of looking at things, a way of feeling. And as time passes we will all feel and see things differently too, so their way of speaking and appearing changes. There were people who were speaking in negative ways in the time of the Buddha, and the Buddha himself and his era as well were criticized and spoken badly of and betrayed.

In this world someone may look terrible from the outside but actually from the inside they are an excellent person. Or from the outside they look very, very fine, but from the inside they are someone hard to put up with and be around. There is no one who is only worth praising. But as the Buddha also said, to see peoples'

place where there is nothing missing and everything is perfect. There is no person in existence now who is exactly like what we think they are all the time. If we are happy if we're praised or upset if we're insulted, that is not the way of Zen. In Zen, it is to let go of all outside connections, to be unattached to anything within. The Sixth Patriarch also said to not add on ideas of good and bad to the external and to have no concerns that we are holding onto within: to not feel happy when we're praised and not to be feeling put down by being criticized. We get attached to being praised, we get attached to being criticized. If we fail, we get upset, if we succeed we become glad. We become attached to winning, and then attached to being upset by losing, and that is why we are so easily perturbed within. More important than that is that we look at our way of living and see that it is not for our own small-minded purpose. In this world, what can we do for each and every person? What can we do for all people? We are all leaving this out of the picture.

Sutra: When we are free from attachment to all outer objects, the mind will be in peace. Our Essence of Mind is intrinsically pure, and the reason why we are perturbed is because we allow ourselves to be carried away by the circumstances we are in. He who is able to keep his mind unperturbed, irrespective of circumstances, has attained Samadhi.

Sometimes we think we won't sit, but we do sit. But if we can't sit, we blame ourselves and lose our goal and standard and throw it all away. We should be free from all outer objects and attain inner peace. In the world of sports and arts, it is the same. To create one great piece or do one great activity in sport, how many efforts are hidden and never seen by anyone else? There are some who work far into the night and the morning. Some work for a single mind moment, and some go further, and when we reach that Source,

it is realizing how we don't need to be moved around by anything. It is about our Truth. If we are attached to outer objects, our inner mind will be perturbed. We want to go in a right direction, but how easily it can be that in one mind moment we are moved in a different direction. To see within and be unperturbed, we have to cut in deeply.

We have a poem by the poet Nishida Kitarō:

In our mind there is a depth so
profound
That waves of grief and joy cannot
reach there.

No one can damage us in this place. Our place of birth is there, and if we don't believe it, we have to make a deep, determined commitment to realize it. We are doing this to realize that place, not to just think about it. That is the problem with so many religions today—they only go into the area of thinking about it and so people lose track of their true Essence. This Essence has to be seen clearly and directly!

The reason why we are perturbed is because we allow ourselves to be carried away by the circumstances we are in. We are perturbed because we are moved around by our circumstances. We are all the same as the Buddha within, but the Ancestors and the Buddha made a deep, determined commitment to be able to realize this place. He who is able to keep his mind unperturbed irrespective of circumstances, attains samadhi.

Hakuin Zenji called this “to break through the bottom,” and said this requires straightforward, unwavering bravery. It is not about imagining that to do zazen is to be cheerful and easy, or that zazen is hard because people around us distract us. A spiritually bourgeois person is one who says they want to go into the mountains and leave it all behind, but we are always receiving everything from all people: water, food, supplies, support. These are

things from everyone everywhere. If we didn't put that to use for all beings, we are like being robbers. Daito Kokushi wrote that we should do zazen as if we are sitting under the busiest bridge—as if to sit in downtown Seattle at the busiest time, with none of the noises of people or of cars or of anything becoming any kind of interruption. This is true samadhi. If not like that, it is not breaking through the bottom. And that is why we have to be extreme and intense in our zazen, or it is useless and we will not be able to save ourselves, let alone someone else.

This world is moving quickly and terrifyingly, and we never know what is going to happen next. We live in this kind of a time, and have to be able to swallow all of it down and not be moved around by people praising us or criticizing us. People who win get resented, people who lose are resentful—they can't even sleep at night. So how should we then escape to a world of where there is no such thing as winning and losing? We have to work on our state of mind to where it makes no difference to us if we even win or lose—we are not moved around by either. The Sixth Patriarch was seeing through to the people of the future as well with these words.

Sutra: To be free from attachment to all outer objects is Dhyana, and to attain inner peace is Samadhi. When we are in a position to deal with Dhyana and to keep our inner mind in samadhi, then we are said to have attained Dhyana and Samadhi.

The Sixth Patriarch continues to emphasize this and say it over and over again: To realize kensho and not stand on liberation of samadhi. We are all extremely confused by the world situation today. Individuals are being discarded and people are only interested in inventing what is new. It is in a world like that that we have no place to put ourselves safely, and so we have to do zazen. But it can't be escaping to zazen; rather, in each and every breath, to dig in

meticulously. As the roshi often instructs, to do our breath like the blowing of a balloon—carefully, not stopping, continuing with every single one of our 360 smallest joints, our 84,000 hair pores, from the top of our head to the bottoms of our feet—not with power and force but with concentration and intensity. If we look around here and there and get scattered, we then have to once again gather it all together and breathe straight into our *tanden*—every single breath exhaled completely, with no spaces or gaps in between breaths, until it becomes full and taut inside physically, psychologically. Then we could not sleep even if we try, and our whole being becomes full and taut. There is no Buddha statue with closed eyes, and the guardian statues at the temple gates, they are always with great, wide open eyes. Those Buddha guardians are not there to keep out evil people, they are there because all people coming into the temple should come in with this full and taut state of mind, to actualize this state of mind. The Sixth Patriarch is not teaching concepts, but an actuality. One who is full and taut cannot speak in explanations, yet they have the main point well focused upon. We have to experience this for ourselves; it is not written in koans and sutras. We have to awaken to it through the experience, or else it is not Zen. Everyone, anyone who has this kind of honesty and purity within can do it—but to do so we have to throw ourselves into it totally and completely.

Sutra: The Bodhisattva Sila Sutra says our Essence of Mind is intrinsically pure. Learned audience, let us realize this for ourselves at all times. Let us train ourselves, practice it and attain buddhahood by our own effort.

Finally, he says that he is not just saying this: the Buddha has said it in this sutra. This is not a purity relative to an impurity, but to hold on to nothing at all. To do this, we do every single breath wholeheartedly, one drop into a cup after the next. At the beginning we are thinking

about if we are ripe enough yet. But if we keep putting the drops in until the cup is full, then finally, it spills over. The balloon breaks at a single touch, and then the balloon's inside air and outside air become one. They are united, and there is no place for an ego entity, a being, a personality, and a separate individuality there or anywhere. People say, but if this happens, who will take the responsibility? The Buddha said we cannot be caught in an ego entity, being, personality or separated individuality. It's because that person who is free of an ego entity, being, personality or separated individuality will liberate all people and see with deepest wisdom what has to be done. This is not written in sutras, but has to become realized or it cannot become the true, active, Wisdom.

Sutra: Learned audience, let us realize this for ourselves at times. Let us train ourselves, practice it by ourselves, and attain buddhahood by our own effort.

Finally, he finishes up like this: we all have this Essence. It is only up to each of us whether we will realize it and experience it or not. We are all already pure. If we realize it, we can confirm it for ourselves. If not, we will not be able to bring back life to this world. For us to live clearly in each mind moment and to not be moved around, no matter what comes forth, is Truth. We become unperturbed, yet respond to everything that comes to us without being caught and stuck and attached. This Wisdom then comes forth freely.

There is not one among you who doesn't have this value. It is only about whether you manifest and live in it. Everyone, see your pure Mind! Those who have experience, but also those of no experience, all of you have a pure, clear Mind. To live that is our value of being human. It is not about teaching peace and thinking about peace conceptually; it is our way of being human to live that way, or elsewhere will not be reinvigorated at all. For all of us to hold this reinvigoration important is each of our

purpose. For this, in each and every mind moment hold this mind clear! The more confused we are the more confused our mind becomes and the more we are moved around. This is what the Sixth Patriarch is saying.

Within each of us, everything we hold onto came afterwards—it was stuck on later. Our True original nature holds onto nothing; there is nothing there whatsoever—nothing there, yet it responds to everything and we can move accordingly. Again and again it moves and transforms with the movement of society, infinitely moving in accordance. And here what is most important is that continuous, ongoing, mind moments are kept clear—to live in a state of mind which is unperturbed and clear in every mind moment. As we see it, to just see it! As we hear it to just hear it! We always add some extra association or connection to that moment, though; that is the way humans usually are. Rather, in each moment that arises, not to add on one more association. This not adding on any associations at all is what is most important—to leave that state of mind to become it exactly as it is: Letting the moment become the flower, letting it become a person's suffering, letting it not put in thoughts about “I don't want to lose something,” “I don't want to have no benefit,” “I want what's good for me.” We don't have any “me” or any “I” in it whatsoever. We live only in this one moment completely. This is our most important Essence. This is zazen. This is becoming Buddha.

*There is only the Dharma of the
One Vehicle*

Tada uichi jo ho
唯有一乘法





Rokuso Eno

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