



THE LIGHT THAT
SHINES THROUGH INFINITY

Zen and the Energy of Life

DAININ
KATAGIRI



**STRENGTH TO LIVE
JOY TO BE ALLOWED
TO LIVE**

calligraphy by
Dainin Katagiri

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edited by Andrea Martin



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EDITOR'S PREFACE

DAININ KATAGIRI was good at figuring out how things work, so he might have become a scientist or engineer. But when he was eighteen, he left behind his work on diesel engines and became a Zen priest. Then, through Buddhist study and spiritual practice, he investigated how the universe works.

Something that works is using energy. From ancient times, people in the East have developed spiritual, medical, and martial art traditions based on the flow of universal energy as the life force called *chi*, *qi*, or *ki*. In medieval Japan, the great Zen master Eihei Dogen used the term “total dynamic working” (*zenki*). In recent times, Katagiri Roshi marveled at the “rhythm of life” and observed that understanding how it functions can help us to live in harmony with life.

Buddhism may be approached as philosophy, psychology, religion, spiritual path—any or all of these. Katagiri Roshi also saw it as something akin to a science of reality. He often said: “I am not talking about an idea; I am talking about something real.” The creative energy of life is working from moment to moment, and it includes us, so we can experience it, enjoy it, and use it as a beneficial force. That is Katagiri Roshi’s main message in this book.

Katagiri Roshi moved from Japan to the United States in the 1960s and then taught here until his death in 1990. Adapting to life in America, where he was no longer fully Eastern yet never fully Western, he developed a unique, lively, and often lyrical way of expressing himself that bridged two worlds and drew many

followers. His warm presence and dignified confidence in Zen practice inspired many people to study Buddhism with him.

But to study with Katagiri Roshi required a willingness to dive deep below the surface of Buddhism and into a bewildering world where things didn't always seem to make sense. While editing his talks for this book, I formulated two shortcuts for finding my way through difficult technical terms and philosophical discourses: Buddhism is a creation story, and Buddhism is a love story. These two principles gave me a place to rest my mind and heart when his teaching was complicated.

His teaching can be complicated, but Katagiri Roshi sometimes condenses it into memorable mottos. Three of my favorites in this book are: "Relax your frontal lobe!" "Let the flower of your life force bloom!" and "Walk together hand in hand!" These pithy exhortations cut right through my struggles with life. They cue me to stop fretting and take refuge in the energy at the heart of life. They also show me how to engage with emptiness, interdependent co-origination, and all sentient beings as three aspects of one cosmic energy system. When I put them together, I find the triple treasure of Buddhism: Buddha, dharma, and sangha.

Many of the talks that I chose for this book reflect Katagiri Roshi's love of reading and reflecting on Buddhist writings. He once said, "Sometimes I am alone in my study, just thinking, contemplating Buddha's teaching without doing anything—just sitting there. That is the thing that makes me relax and feel joyful."

The quotes and excerpts from Buddhist writings that Katagiri Roshi comments on here are variously his own translations, other published translations, or recollections from memory. When he didn't indicate the source, I did my best to identify any that were taken from published translations, and then I inserted the translators' names into the text. These mentions refer you to the bibliography at the end of this book, where you can find those publications along with some other resources that have been helpful to me.

The title of this book is inspired by something in Eihei Dogen's *Shobogenzo Kuge* (Flowers in the Sky). Dogen quotes a wonderful statement that a student of the Chinese Zen master Sekiso Keisho (Shishuang Qingzhu, 807–888) made when he awakened to reality. Here is Thomas Cleary's translation (1986): "Light shines silently throughout infinity." In science and in spiritual life, light is a way of transmitting energy through space. We constantly receive that energy. That's why spiritual teachers always tell us that we are already enlightened.

When we actually experience the energy that flows through everything, life makes sense and contentment appears. For this, Katagiri Roshi recommends zazen, seated Zen meditation, as an essential spiritual practice. So I'd like to say something about meditation before turning you over to Katagiri Roshi's teachings.

The human mind is a wonderful storyteller, constantly weaving narratives about ourselves and our lives from threads of thought, emotion, and sensation. This aspect of mind is useful, but it never tells us the whole story. Meditation lets us witness the stories we tell ourselves. We see how our busy mind works, how it limits and controls us, and then we calmly step aside from it. When you step aside and let go of your story, you create a space. The space between your story and your life is the place where you discover the deeper nature of human life.

In zazen, we sit up in a straight posture, let our thoughts pass by, and pay concentrated attention to our natural breathing. The English word *spirit* comes from the Latin *spirare*, "to breathe." In yoga practice the Sanskrit word *prana* represents the breath of life or the cosmic energy of the life force. That energy is already yours, so welcome it into your awareness. Tuning in to the universal life force lets you see yourself in a different way: you belong to the flow of life. That realization brings relief and joy. It also changes your way of thinking about your life and guides you to live in a beneficial way, giving wisdom and compassion to yourself and others.

As you study with this book, it's not necessary to understand perfectly everything that Katagiri Roshi is saying. If you find some of

it difficult to follow, please don't be discouraged. As he would say, "Don't make your head ache!" Just quietly accept his words with openness to receiving his life energy as smoothly as he transmits it to you through those words. Let his energy calm your mind and warm your heart. Then share your own life energy with others. This is practicing the Buddha way.

—*Andrea Martin*

Part One

LIFE FORCE & LIFE

THE ENERGY OF LIFE

ONE TIME WHEN I was walking on the street in Tokyo, I saw a bumper sticker on the back of a car. It said, “Respect life force and life.” I really wanted to see the driver’s face, but the car left. Then I started thinking: What do you mean by “life force and life”? What’s the difference between life force and life?

Well, life doesn’t come into existence without life force. Life force is given to you, so when you become conscious of your life, your life force is already there. It is your life right here, right now. You cannot build up your life force after your birth, but life is something you *can* build up. If you totally accept the energy of your life force, you can use it to embark on a new life from now on. How? This is the main point of Buddhist teaching.

The Purpose of Spiritual Practice

If you read Buddhist scriptures, they seem to say that the purpose of spiritual practice is to turn delusion into enlightenment, or guide ordinary people to become buddhas or holy beings. So maybe we think we can reach nirvana by removing delusion or attain wisdom and compassion by eliminating ego or become a buddha by sitting zazen, chanting, or whatever practice you do. But practically speaking it’s very difficult to remove human ego, desires, and

delusions. So we have to think carefully about Buddhist teachings and understand more deeply what they are saying.

Shakyamuni Buddha taught that a magnificent event is unfolding in every aspect of everyday life. Vivid, living energy is constantly at work, creating and supporting your life. It is just like a fire that is eternal and boundless. Whoever you are, your life is very precious because the original energy of life is working in your life.

Buddhism uses the technical term *dharma* to describe the functioning of this great original energy. But no matter how long we try to explain dharma, we always fail because it is completely beyond words. Still, even though you cannot explain dharma, it is alive in you, so you can use it to take care of your life. To take care of your life is to burn the flame of your life force in everything you do.

In the realm of science or business, literature, sports, the arts, or whatever you do, there is a way to touch eternity. That is spiritual practice. Doing something as spiritual practice is to invoke the life force energy deep in your own life and use it to grow your life. Growth gives you room to cultivate wisdom and compassion, love and generosity, enough to create a wonderful world for you and all beings.

We study and practice Buddhist teachings in order to go deep into our own life. There you discover your original place, the place where all beings live together in peace before we exist as individual beings. From that place you can join the flow of life, living in harmony with all beings and walking together hand in hand. This is the guideline for Buddhist study and practice.

But whatever practice you do—Buddhist practice, Christian practice, or nonreligious practice—when you become aware of the magnificent energy of being arising in your body and mind, you feel fully alive. You are boundless and broad, compassionate and kind. This is the guideline for living as a human being.

Make of Yourself a Light

Shakyamuni Buddha gave one of his most famous teachings just before he passed away. Speaking to his disciple Ananda, who was very confused about losing his teacher, Buddha said:

Make the dharma your light. Rely upon it. Do not depend on any other thing.

Make of yourself a light. Rely upon it. Do not depend on anyone else.

This teaching from the Mahaparanibbana sutta in the Pali Canon shows a characteristic of Buddhism that is different from many other religions. Generally speaking, people want to believe there is something beyond ordinary human life. So in the history of religion there is usually an almighty entity that people must believe in or a founder with special powers whose teachings people have to follow. But Buddha didn't say that after his death we should depend on a divine entity or holy teacher; he said you should depend on dharma and yourself. If so, then what is dharma? What is self?

In Buddhism, we understand the term *Buddha* as the original energy of life. The term *dharma* is understood as truth: the ultimate principle of existence. But this principle is not an abstract idea, it is something real. Dharma as real truth is the functioning of the Buddha way—the original energy of life constantly flows and unfolds as all the forms of everyday life. It means the form of your own life is identical with that original energy. In other words, truth is not *in* us, truth is not *on* us, truth is not *with* us—truth *is* us. Truth is *you*. Truth is your real self. Depending on that self is depending on the dharma.

Many people believe that a spiritual being is something different from an ordinary human life. If that were so, depending on the dharma would be depending on something mystical, created by our imagination, mythology, or some divinity. But dharma is not like that. We can depend on dharma because dharma is not something separate from human life.

So in Buddhism we practice a way of life based on the fact that truth is already alive in our own lives and we can depend on it. But watch out! Depending on yourself doesn't mean you reject other people and do things your own way. It means you touch the core of your life and discover a life worth living.

To reach the core of human life, we have to pay attention to the reality of our own existence and understand the meaning of life through our own lives. That is why Buddhism very naturally comes to be philosophical. But Buddhism is not a philosophy. The reality we study is not an idea created by philosophical, psychological, or mythological thought. It is something more than that. It is the natural state of your life before any thoughts or ideas arise.

Buddha's teachings reveal the depth of your life and offer you a practical way to return to the source of your being. There you discover dharma—real truth. Discovering dharma is the realization of reality; you directly experience pure energy as the core of your own being, and you realize that you can always depend on it.

If you depend on dharma, pure energy will arise and appear in your everyday life. It will illuminate your life because the original energy of Buddha is alive within you. That energy gives forth its own light, shining from your whole body, which others can see. So relax your frontal lobe, calm your mind, and practice dwelling peacefully in the dharma that is working deep in your own life.

When dharma as truth, or the ultimate principle of existence, is described in Buddhist history it becomes Buddhist teaching, which is also called dharma. So through the teaching you can hear the true dharma's message. Dharma teaching talks about wisdom and compassion based on impermanence and interdependence.

Buddhist teaching is complicated, and practicing it every day is hard, but a spiritual being is something you can find right now, right here, in you. This is the point of Shakyamuni Buddha's final teaching. Through the actual practice of being with the true dharma and burning the flame of your life force in whatever you do, you can realize what Shakyamuni Buddha was talking about.

Facing the Question: What Shall I Do?

In daily human life we are always encountering some problem, contradiction, or confusion. So very naturally we want to escape from problems and find a better way of living. Seeking a calm mind, we study philosophy, psychology, religion, even physics and mathematics, believing they can show us who we are and what the meaning of life is.

We study, we choose certain ideas, and then we try to depend on them to help us build up a peaceful life. Unfortunately, life is very difficult to understand only through ideas. No matter how long you study, there is still some problem that leaves you in confusion. There is always a question left behind: what shall I do?

If you try to answer this question through Western philosophy, you find it tends to be divided into two types: rationalism (understanding human life through intellectual thought) and empiricism (understanding life through sense experience). But depending on philosophical ideas to tell you how to live can drive your life toward doubt or pessimism.

For instance, if you try to live on the basis of empiricism, then your way of life is already based on rationalism—you are depending on an idea created by your intellectual process, which tells you this is the right way to live. When you realize how shaky this is, you have doubt about empiricism, philosophy, or any ideas, and you don't know what to depend on. You don't trust anything.

But there is one thing that you can trust in: right here is a man or a woman who is called by your name. Before you have doubt or pessimism, you are already here. You exist right in the middle of reality, which means your life is fully alive right now.

We are human beings—we cannot destroy our thinking process. So we should think. You can use science, philosophy, and psychology to understand your individual life in a certain way, but whatever you understand in that way is not something true that you can depend on. Something true you can depend on is something you have to do. To really understand the meaning of life, we have to go beyond

thinking and experience the vast scale of life directly, with our own body and mind.

To know who you really are, all you have to do is just be in reality as it really is. There you discover the natural state of your existence and realize the ultimate principle of existence called dharma. Then, under all circumstances, whatever happens in life, you can depend on your real self.

Usually we depend only on the small self we see from our egoistic telescope. We are constantly trying to build up our egoistic self according to our culture, customs, education, and knowledge. Your small self is always trying to get something or escape from something. It is always making a noise: I care or I don't care, I like myself very much or I am a bad boy. Some particular fact comes up and makes your thinking sway away to the right and then sway to the left, just like a pendulum. But whatever you think, still there is a question left behind: what shall I do? Day after day, that question is the final situation you have to face.

Shakyamuni Buddha taught us how to approach this question: instead of paying attention only to ideas, we also have to pay attention to the real state of our existence. We have to pay attention to the whole reality of human life. How? That is spiritual practice.

Zen teaches the simplest way of spiritual practice: just sit. But "just sit" doesn't mean to sit passively; it is sitting based on deepening both your intellectual and experiential understanding of your existence. So after you study, accept that your life is already present in the big scale of reality. Then let's pay attention to the reality of where you are. That is the meditation practice called *zazen*.

If you practice *zazen* in the *zendo* (meditation hall), many beings are there with you. Everything is coming up like spring water oozing from the ground, accommodating to circumstances that are constantly changing from moment to moment. You, the other practitioners, your cushions, the sounds of cars going by outside and birds singing—all are living together in peace and harmony at this one time and place. So all you have to do is just sit down on your

cushion and accept the natural state of your existence, including all the beings that coexist with you right now.

But if you experience pain when you are sitting zazen, what should you do? Should you just accept pain as it is, ignoring an intellectual understanding of where the pain comes from? No, it's not enough. You have to understand what the pain is and learn how to take care of your pain intellectually. Still, if you take care of your pain intellectually, will you be free from pain? No, pain is still there. So finally you ask: what should I do? Should I escape from pain or stay with it?

All you have to do is the actual practice of facing your pain and moving toward the pain. Be with it, be in it, and be on it. When you move toward the pain, your action simultaneously deepens your life. Deepening means you approach the lively energy of life at the core of your being.

When you manifest simplicity in life like this, you experience a sublime serenity and tranquility. Then, within this tranquility, with one step you realize a profound state of being that is completely beyond any kind of idea. It enables you to be present with calmness, humility, and stability. At that time, you can experience pain directly and take care of it intellectually, without attaching to either empiricism or rationalism. Whatever problem you are facing, if you have this attitude toward your situation, you can take care of it with a calm mind.

Trusting in Self

Zen Buddhism is not a philosophy like rationalism or empiricism; Zen is actual life. But when you study Zen, sometimes it may seem that Zen denies the value of intellectual understanding and depends only on direct experience.

For example, I'm always telling people how they can learn the meaning of zazen meditation, but they won't actually know what zazen is until they experience it. So after I talk, finally I have to say, "Please sit down and practice zazen." Or I can explain what water is,

but to understand water, you have to drink it. So I say, “Please drink a cup of water.” But then people immediately think Zen means: don’t think—just sit, just drink! That is not Zen. If you live like this, your life is hippie style.

In San Francisco in the 1960s there were many young people called hippies. One day I came across a hippie-style Zen student on a train and asked him where he was heading for. He said, “I don’t know; I just rely on my feet.” Well, that way of life seems to be freedom, but I don’t think it is freedom. It is confusion.

If you live in that way, maybe it’s because you think it’s not necessary to make any effort to deepen your life or build up your life for your future or for the sake of future generations. Maybe you say, “I don’t have to care about the future; all I have to do is just be present right here, right now.” But actually you cannot live like that. You cannot control your life according to ideas of caring or not caring. Life is completely beyond that.

During the Second World War, I was a high school boy sent to the southern part of Japan to be an airplane mechanic in the army. The situation there was terrible and always changing very rapidly. If you think about it, even a little bit, you realize there is a chance you will have to die. So I didn’t think about the past or the future; every day I just thought, “I don’t care.” In other words, I didn’t know where I was heading.

Then one day I heard an airplane drop a big bomb. Immediately I jumped into a hole and chanted the name of Amitabha Buddha, asking for help. In that very moment I did not actually live according to “I don’t care.” When the bomb came, I tried to save my life. So what is my life? My life is my life, but my life is also something more. It is something broad, something vast and alive beyond my narrow, egoistic ideas. This is the real reality of my existence. That’s really wonderful!

In San Francisco, when I asked the student I met on the train where he was heading, he said, “I don’t know. I just rely on my feet.” This is not a good answer. I often say: when the morning comes, just get up. But that “just get up” doesn’t mean you get up ignoring your

future, your hope, your destination. If you don't have a destination, you cannot just get up. Of course you can get up in the ordinary way, but if you want to go deep into your life and learn who you really are, you should have a destination. You should know where you are heading. If so, where you are heading?

Know where you are heading but don't attach to your destination. If you are riding on a train, just be intimate with the train, with yourself, the other passengers, and all the circumstances around you. Then the big scale of self appears. Big self is very quiet. But if I ask where you are heading, you can say, "I am going to the zendo." That's enough. Why do you get up in the morning? "I want to do zazen." Saying "I want to do zazen" is not an idea; it is vivid activity. You accept the feeling of sleepiness, you accept your emotions that are creating lots of complaints, and then you just get up. That's enough. This is Zen practice. It's a very simple practice.

Whoever you are, wherever you are, whatever you do, your life is already present in real reality. That is your real self, your true self. To realize this truth, all you have to do is take care of your small, noisy self with your big, quiet self. Then, at that time, your life is very calm, and you can get up in the morning with stability and imperturbability.

Your real self is always with you. You cannot escape it. Finally this real self is the only thing that you can trust in. If you want to learn what human life really is and know the truth of Buddha's teachings, there is no other way than starting to learn what that self is. This one thing that you can depend on is something you have to research; you have to understand what it is. So instead of seeing your life only through your narrow egoistic telescope, constantly keep your eyes open to seeing with a broader perspective, even if you don't understand it exactly.

To fully understand human life, you have to go deep into you and see human life more deeply. The depth of life is your destination, but don't attach to it. Just constantly try to deepen your life. This is spiritual life. Through spiritual practice you can deepen your life. You can really know what is at the bottom of human life. That is the

teaching of Shakyamuni Buddha and the emphasis of Zen Buddhism.
So let's learn who we are.

STUDYING THE SELF

ONE DAY, WHEN I was training in Japan, I was serving Eko Hashimoto Roshi and a group of senior monks at Eiheiiji monastery. They were talking about a big ceremony to be held on the seven hundredth anniversary of Eihei Dogen Zenji's death. They were discussing the meal: how many people to expect, how much food we should buy, how the kitchen should be managed—that sort of thing.

Hashimoto Roshi started talking about something, but it was off the mark because he was a very important roshi who spent all his time doing zazen, teaching, and guiding the monks. Another monk immediately told him, "You don't understand how the kitchen is managed, so you should just keep quiet!" Hashimoto Roshi didn't get angry at that monk; he just laughed, with a very deep voice. His laughter didn't disturb anybody; it created a very relaxed and harmonious feeling, and everyone else laughed too.

Hashimoto Roshi's laugh came from very deep practice on an everyday basis—a very simple, quiet practice, not something showy. To practice like this is to make the root of your life strong. An indescribable fragrance comes forth from every pore of a human being who manifests the deep root of life with the human body. An inconceivable smile comes forth. When you see Buddha represented in a statue, this is Buddha's smile.

Five Stages of Learning

In Zen Buddhism, there are five stages we go through to deepen our life and learn who we are. In the beginning, we see a shallow picture of human life. By living according to a shallow way of thinking, you can be very practical, smart, and reasonable. You can master philosophy, languages, or become a success in business. You understand everything with your common sense, so people respect you as a philosopher or businessman. But if you don't understand the real significance of human life, people don't respect you deeply, from the heart. There is no depth, no charm or fascinating quality to your personality, and no one is impressed by your life.

But then maybe something happens. You sense there is something more to your life. Having that awareness is a turning point, which is called arousing the way-seeking mind. This is the first stage. It leads you to go in a different direction because, once you have this awareness, you want something more. That is the second stage. The second stage is your way-seeking mind giving you an opportunity to practice. So you take one step inside the spiritual world, and that one step takes you somewhere deeper than what you have known before.

Once you take that one step, you feel you have to keep going. So you research, study, and continue to practice. The buddhas and ancestors have shown us the top of the mountain, so you never give up until you reach it. When you reach the top, this is the third stage.

But after reaching the top of the mountain, you have to come back down into human society, forget what you have attained, and share your life with others. That is the fourth stage. The fourth stage is very difficult because still you have selfish views. You realize how wonderful spiritual life is, and you want other people to believe in it. Consciously or unconsciously, you try to get people to pay attention to you.

The more you are serious about spiritual life, the more you attach to your intellectual understanding. Knowing something intellectually is wonderful, but the more you put gaining knowledge first, the more it is difficult to let go of your thoughts. The real truth of life is

completely beyond your intellectual understanding, so put your understanding aside sometimes and just live with your best effort. If you want to help others, give of your life first, before giving something that has advanced in your thoughts.

It's pretty hard to forget yourself and just help people. It takes time to learn this practice. But finally you touch the bottom of your life. This is the final stage. You forget yourself, and also you completely forget that you are sharing your life. You just stand back and support people without expecting anything, sometimes with silence, sometimes with words, sometimes with actions, sometimes with a laugh. That is peace—real peace. Real peace is to become Buddha.

Dogen's Forgetting the Self

Eihei Dogen, the thirteenth-century founder of Soto Zen Buddhism in Japan, made a famous statement about the self that is a key for understanding his thought and religion, and also Buddhist thought in general. Dogen Zenji says, very simply, about the essence of Buddhist practice:

To study the Buddha way is to study the self,
To study the self is to forget the self,
To forget the self is to be confirmed by all beings,
To be confirmed by all beings is to be free from your body and
mind and the body and mind of others.

This passage in *Shobogenzo Genjokoan (The Issue at Hand)* captures Dogen's basic thought in a very condensed way. It's a simple explanation but difficult to understand because it's very deep. If you want to know the essential point of Buddha's teaching, please keep this saying in mind.

Dogen says that studying the Buddha way is studying one's self. This is a common understanding, which is also found in Western philosophy. Socrates said you should know yourself. If you want to

understand the human world, you have to know you, because you and the world are not separate.

Then Dogen says that studying one's self is forgetting the self. This is characteristic of the Eastern way of thinking. If you want to know who you really are, you have to forget yourself. Many people misunderstand this point, thinking it is a pessimistic message that means you should ignore or destroy the experience of individual self. No, it's impossible to do that! Also, it doesn't mean forgetting yourself in order to do something just as you like. Dogen's meaning of forgetting the self is the teaching of right understanding: there is no particular substance called self for you to attach to.

Dogen's way of forgetting the self is to merge into the rhythm of life itself and experience the real meaning of existence. At that time you realize your true self. When you pass by your small, egoistic self and pay attention to the big scale of self, you find that your life is supported by the whole world. Then your life is very broad. It contains all beings and influences all circumstances, imparting wonderful fragrances everywhere.

Nagarjuna: What Is Individual Self?

The Indian philosopher Nagarjuna—who founded the Madhyamika, or Middle Way, School of Buddhism in the second century—particularly emphasized how important it is to learn what the self is. It's difficult to understand Nagarjuna because he always uses contradictory logic to make his point. He is contradictory because everything is constantly changing, so there's nothing you can pin down.

We always try to pin down what our self is, but according to Nagarjuna, there is nothing you can attach to as an individual self. Nagarjuna makes this argument in the *Madhyamika Shastra*, chapter 18, "An Analysis of the Individual Self." Here are the first four verses, translated by Frederick Streng:

If the individual self (*ātma*) were identical to the “groups” (*skandha*), then it would partake of origination and destruction. If [the individual self] were different from the “groups,” then it would be without the characteristics of the “groups.”

If the individual self does not exist, how then will there be something which is “my own”? There is lack of possessiveness and no ego on account of the cessation of self and that which is “my own.”

He who is without possessiveness and who has no ego—He also does not exist. Whoever sees “he who is without possessiveness” or “he who has no ego” [really] does not see.

When “I” and “mine” have stopped, then also there is not an outside nor an inner self. The “acquiring” [of karma] (*upadana*) is stopped; on account of that destruction, there is destruction of very existence.

Self-Consciousness

In the first verse, Nagarjuna represents individual self as *atma*. *Atma* or *atman* is a Sanskrit term that appears not only in Buddhism but also in Indian philosophy. In Nagarjuna’s time, the Indian Sankhya philosophers understood *atman* as a kind of a permanent entity, a soul or spirit that exists forever without change. But in Buddhism, *atman* is often translated as “the self” or “individual self.” In a sense, *atman* is ego, or the original nature of self-consciousness.

Consciously or unconsciously, there is always “I.” This is your sense of being an individual self. So the question in the first verse is: How do you understand this “I”? Where is it? Where does it come from? Does it come from some divine entity that exists forever without change, from some special place like heaven, which is apart from human life, or does it come from the human body and mind?

The “groups” are the five skandhas. According to early Buddhist teaching, the skandhas are understood as five factors that constitute your human body and mind: form (*rupa*), feeling (*vedana*), perception (*samja*), impulses (*samskara*), and consciousness (*vijnana*). Five skandhas is an analysis of the human world, and it represents the truth of the human world. We experience life through our five skandhas. We know what truth is through our five skandhas. There is no experiencing or knowing anything without the five skandhas.

The five skandhas are the total picture of impermanence: human life exists within a constant process of creation, destruction, and change. So if the individual self is identical to the functioning of those factors of body and mind, then it also is something that is impermanent. That’s why Nagarjuna argued that if atman is identical to the skandhas, then atman is also impermanent, and the concept of atman as a permanent entity doesn’t make sense.

On the other hand, if the original nature of the self is a soul or spirit that exists forever apart from the skandhas, then it must be something different from human life. If that is so, then it has no characteristic by which it can manifest itself in the human world. If it doesn’t manifest itself, how can we know it exists? No way! We cannot know because there is no way for us to experience or understand anything except through our five skandhas, so we cannot say it exists.

Self Disappears

The second verse says, “If the individual self does not exist, how then will there be something which is ‘my own’? There is lack of

possessiveness and no ego on account of the cessation of the self and that which is 'my own.'” Nagarjuna says, “If the individual self does not exist” because in the first verse he showed that even though we always emphasize “I,” actually there is nothing we can pin down about what the individual self is or where it comes from. Here he asks: if the individual self doesn't exist, then how can there be something attached to it as “my own”?

In common sense, there are two ways to understand something: as a subject and as an object. A subject exists first and makes it possible for an object to exist. “I” as my subject always comes first, and then I can recognize an object as mine or yours. We can prove what the object is by what the subject is because we have logic. But what makes it possible for the subject “I” to exist? We try to understand it logically, but there is no way. We don't know what the “I” is, so finally the “I” disappears. If the subject disappears, very naturally its object also disappears. Finally, silence—there's nothing to say.

The third verse says that for the person who is without possessiveness and has no ego, the “I” doesn't exist. Whatever you may do, by your physical activity and mental concentration you can become one with your object. For example, when you concentrate on the activity of breathing in zazen, you can become one with your concentration. When there is no zazen to be seen as your object and no subject called “I” to do the seeing, there is just the pure activity of zazen. This is called *shikantaza*.

At that time, if you don't start to think, “I am concentrating perfectly,” then your sense of individual self will completely drop off, leaving only your real self. But human beings always think, “I am,” because we want to get proof of our existence. This is a problem for us. If you have started to think, “I am concentrating perfectly,” then your concentration has already stopped, your individual self exists again, and you don't see your real self.

Oneness and Duality

In the fourth verse, Nagarjuna says that when ideas of subject and object completely stop, there is oneness. Does this oneness exist outside or inside of the self? You cannot say, because in oneness there is no sense of either an outer or inner self. If you really become one with concentration in zazen, who is concentrating? You cannot say, because when your thinking completely stops, there is no consciousness of being a person who is meditating; there is just the pure activity of zazen.

But then your dualistic human consciousness tries to catch that experience of oneness. We are human beings—our conscious minds always want to get something, to know something. That is called grasping. In the twelvefold chain of conditioned arising taught by Shakyamuni Buddha, grasping or attachment is upadana, the ninth link, which is the “acquiring of karma.” Then Nagarjuna’s “very existence” is being, the tenth link, which is called *bhava*. In other words, something comes into existence by the functioning of karma. That is birth, being present, or your life.

If grasping is stopped, then immediately there is also destruction of your very existence. But then grasping always appears again. It’s just like a flickering light. Something is always grabbing the attention of your conscious mind with pros and cons, good and bad, right and wrong. No matter how long you practice zazen, the inside of your mind still shows you that flickering light. The more you practice, the more you realize this.

I always tell you, when death comes, just be one with death. Just die. That’s a very simple practice, but it’s not so easy. You may say, “I am ready to die.” But are you sure? If you ask me, “Are you sure you will die peacefully?” Yes, I am. But on the other hand, no, I’m not. As a whole there’s nothing to say because, well, how do you know? We are always trying to pin things down by grasping. We want to hold on to something true that gives us security. But truth isn’t understood as something absolute that never changes. We cannot say what truth exactly is; truth is just change.

Provisional Self

In Buddhism we say all things are empty because they are impermanent. But in our daily living, we can see things that occupy a portion of time and space. So to explain this, we say there is a provisional state of being that exists temporarily. A provisional being is something that exists but not in a fixed place; it exists right in the middle of change. Within impermanence there is an individual self that exists right here, right now, something real that you can see and feel, but we don't accept that there is an individual self (atman) that exists forever.

Your individual self is a provisional being. It exists provisionally or temporarily because it exists for exactly one moment and then disappears. In the next moment a new self appears. Your individual self is always moving and changing based on the functioning of countless causes and conditions. So there is nothing permanent for you to attach to and no way to say whether it exists or does not exist. That's why Nagarjuna uses contradictory logic and says there is no individual self.

Even so, if you want to understand the self as it really is, you cannot ignore the provisional self. We have to understand what it is. How can we know? Reflect on yourself. Study and penetrate yourself, very deeply. Use your provisional self to practice no-self (*anatman*) and then see your provisional self with Buddha's eye.

TIME AND SPACE

SCIENTISTS ARE VERY interested in understanding black holes. You may say, “I don’t care about black holes.” But watch out! Sooner or later everything is sucked into a black hole. You cannot ignore this. In the Midwest we have tornadoes, cyclones that suck everything up into the sky. Where do they come from? A tornado is produced by countless conditions in the sky. When those conditions come together, they create energy and a huge whirl forms. Sooner or later that huge whirl touches down on the ground, sucks everything up, and scatters it into space. You cannot ignore this.

Black holes and tornadoes have huge power because they are nothing but the functioning of life energy. This energy is not a divinity or something almighty. It is real reality. Real reality is just activity, function, or movement—the lively energy of life itself. This universal energy is the point that Buddhism is always interested in.

The Intersection of Time and Space

In Buddhism, we say that everything is the lively energy of life. When that universal energy touches down at the intersection of time and space, it temporarily appears as form: the form of a human being, the form of a tree, a bird, or a pebble. So pebbles possess a strong power, trees are powerful, birds are powerful, and human beings are powerful. All beings are powerful because they are nothing but the lively energy of life.

If everything is the lively energy of life, what's the difference between birds and human beings? Their way of using energy in one moment of time and then scattering it back into space is different. You and I have the same lively energy of life, but Katagiri is completely different from you. This difference is nothing but the way we express the lively energy of life after touching down at the intersection of time and space.

Each one of us is a particular being who is located at the intersection of time and space. The intersection of time and space is the place where you really exist. All beings exist by being right here, right now. If you understand time and space, then you can understand real reality, the place where time and space are perfectly unified. So let's see the meaning of time and space.

Time is the aspect of your existence that is based on the time process. In the time process as a human being, first you see something with your conscious mind, and then you recognize that it exists. When you see a flower and say "flower," you are thinking; you are recognizing that the flower exists as an object separate from you. Everybody experiences their own life through this dualistic mental process. You cannot escape this function of your human consciousness. If you didn't have a conscious mind, you could not see, hear, touch, taste, feel, or think; you could not understand anything at all.

In the realm of time, everything exists separately from everything else. So, for example, I am an individual human being called Dainin

Katagiri. Katagiri is Katagiri; Katagiri is not you. If I don't mentally recognize this separation, I cannot realize that I exist as a person called Katagiri. But prior to the functioning of my consciousness, before I think and recognize my own individual existence, something already exists.

Since I would not be able to think about myself if my life didn't already exist, the fact that I am thinking is proof of my existence. That is why Descartes said: I am thinking, therefore I exist. I am sure that Katagiri exists because Katagiri is thinking. But this individual self that I recognize is not my real existence; it is only something temporarily running through my conscious mind in the realm of time. The original, pure nature of my existence is the realm of space.

In the realm of space, things are *not* separate and independent; all beings are interconnected. We are interrelating and interpenetrating with each other from moment to moment at superspeed. That's why we don't know exactly how we exist. This spatial aspect of life is the original, pure nature of existence. Technically we call it buddha-nature. In Buddhist philosophy it is called emptiness. Zen is particularly interested in this aspect of life.

In the *Blue Cliff Record* case 46, when the Zen master hears raindrops, he asks a monk, "What is the sound outside?" The monk says, "It is the sound of raindrops." So the Zen master says, "I wonder if most people make a mistake understanding the raindrop." Because if you say it's the sound of a raindrop, it's not the pure nature of sound; it's something running through your noisy conscious mind.

Then the monk asks, "How about you?" In other words, how do you understand the raindrop sound? The Zen master said, "I almost make a mistake." If you try to say what the pure nature of a sound is, you always make a mistake because pure nature is not something you recognize with your conscious mind. The Zen master almost made a mistake, but he didn't, so there was no mistake. "Almost" means that the pure nature of a raindrop's sound and the Zen master's own pure nature are not separated; their pure natures are interconnected. This case shows the two aspects to your existence.

In space you cannot say who you are, but in time your senses function and you can recognize yourself. If you want to understand your life, you have to understand both: the practical, impermanent realm of the time process and the interconnected, eternal realm of space. Then you can understand the place where those two aspects of life are unified. That is the intersection of time and space.

At the intersection of time and space, everything exists separately and everything exists interconnected. That is the pivotal point where the incipient moment is functioning. This very moment is the place where you are fully alive as you really are: you are individual you in time *and* your existence is interrelated with all beings in space. So you are you, and simultaneously you are *not* you. This is reality. It seems to be contradictory, but we live in that reality. You are connected with the whole universe—you cannot escape. That's why, as clear as we can, we have to understand the reality we are present in.

Taking Care of Everyday Life

Your life possesses a very strong power because it is the lively energy of life. That energy is always present in your life. You can depend on it, but that doesn't mean you can use it to build up your ego. How to express your energy in your daily life is always a question. We have to be careful. Whatever we may do, we have to find the best way to live in the human world by expressing the energy of life in a concrete way. How? Take care of yourself and simultaneously don't attach to yourself too much.

You cannot ignore your existence in the realm of time. You have to live as an individual person and take care of your life in a practical way. The problem is that we are always looking at our life only in terms of the time process. We're attached to being separate from others and having our own ideas and opinions. This is a problem because you do not live only by your own effort. Without the effort of myriad other beings supporting your life, you would die. So you also cannot ignore your existence in the realm of space.

In the realm of space, your life is nothing but the lively energy of life, interconnecting with everything. So you are not you; you are all sentient beings—all that exists, animate and inanimate. Even though you are one small being, this one being is produced by many things. That is the big scale of your being. You can trust in the big scale of your life, but you cannot always live there. If you try to stay in space, your individual life is completely up in the air. You are a being who is also present in the time process. So come down to the earth and express this energy in your daily life.

In daily life, there is no reason why you have to attach to yourself or your ideas too much. You are you in time, but simultaneously in space you are not you because you exist with all sentient beings. Even though you are exactly you, still, wherever you go you are interconnected with others. So let go of your strong attachment to your individual self enough to see how your own life is supported by others' lives.

Letting go doesn't mean to ignore your human life. No, you have to take good care of your life. But, as much as possible, let go of your attachment to self-centered ideas and just pass them by. Passing by means to keep the big scale of your life warm in your heart and polish it. Polishing it means opening your life to everybody. Open your understanding, your opinions, your emotions, and let's live with all sentient beings.

For example, when you cook a meal, a vegetable is separate from you. You are you and vegetable is vegetable. But on the other hand, all sentient beings are supported by the lively energy of life. The great energy that supports your life also supports the vegetable's life, so the vegetable and you are interconnected. If you open yourself to the vegetable, you can get into the vegetable's life, and the vegetable can come into your life. Then you and the vegetable can communicate.

When you see the vegetable as an expression of the universal energy inhering in everything, there is a kind of inspiration that goes in and out between you and the universe. That spiritual communion is called *kanno-doko*. *Kan* means "receive" or "feel," *no* is "respond," *do* is "path" or "way," *ko* is "crossing." You cannot explain it, but you

feel good. Immediately you feel what you really are. Then, when you look at a vegetable, you see many beings in the realm of the vegetable's life. That is the real life of the vegetable—Buddha's life, we say.

But if you recognize that communication dualistically, immediately you attach to it. In terms of time maybe you think: "I did it! I had very good communication with the vegetable. I did something good!" Or, in terms of space, you try to create beauty, so you start talking to vegetables: "Hi, vegetables. How are you? I am taking care of you with the compassion of a buddha." Well, that's beautiful, but in actual practice, there's not enough time to have a conversation like this. So forget your thinking. Calm down and keep your mouth shut.

In the realm of time, you cannot see the energy inhering in a vegetable directly, but still you can take care of it in a concrete way. How? Very simple: deal with a vegetable with warm-heartedness, expressing the lively energy of your life and respecting the lively energy the vegetable also possesses. Accept that a vegetable is Buddha; then open yourself and extend your life toward the vegetable's life. Just walk with it. Very naturally you handle the vegetable with compassionate attention. This is very simple Zen practice.

If you think of this practice with the frontal lobe of human knowledge, you don't believe it, because human knowledge cannot see the panorama picture of one life working with the universal life of all sentient beings. So relax your frontal lobe, and just take care of your daily living.

Even if you don't understand Zen teaching intellectually, still you can pay kind, compassionate attention to the things around you. Pay attention to others, not just yourself. This is the practice of egolessness. It is a practical way to live every day. Sooner or later you will taste the lively energy of life.

Being Present

Human beings always expect to get a result from our effort. So when you start to practice Zen, you may think that experiencing enlightenment in zazen is your objective, something for you to achieve. If you see zazen in that way, you are seeing it only with your discriminating consciousness. In real zazen there is no expectation; you are simply alive. You return to the original, fundamental activity of life; your zazen communicates with everything, and you feel good, you feel peaceful, you feel satisfied.

I always say, “Just be present!” Your life is supported by all living beings, so just be there. Just sit right in the middle of zazen that is expressing aliveness: the original energy inhering in you, raindrops, trees, birds, and all beings. Then you are a person who is humble and very gentle, soft, open-minded, magnanimous, and compassionate.

The intersection of time and space is the unique place for you to be present and alive as you really are. But it’s pretty hard to be there. We don’t really know how to deal with the huge energies arising there. Still, if you seek a calm mind, the important point to learn is the exact, precise point where you manifest your own life and simultaneously the life of the whole universe. That is why we practice zazen. In zazen, as simple as we can, we try to just be present at the intersection where this very moment is functioning.

At that time, in that place, there is no way to analyze zazen as something separate from you. All you can do is just be one with zazen as the rhythm of life and communicate directly with zazen using your whole body and mind. Then, through your skin, muscle, and bone, zazen teaches you the pure nature of human activity. Sitting right in the middle of the original, lively quality of human life is called shikantaza. Zazen as shikantaza is nothing but dynamic function and movement. That’s all! There is nothing else.

When you see your life in terms of the human world and simultaneously in terms of real reality, many possibilities come up. Each moment is a unique opportunity for you to create your life anew. The time and space of whatever you do—saying “good morning,” having a meal together, or sitting zazen—is the precise point where you digest the life of all sentient beings and create new

life. This is our practice every day. It is also the practice of the whole universe.

LIGHT OF THE SELF

BUDDHA'S TEACHING constantly tells us how sublime human life is and how great our human capacity is. In Buddhism, this great capacity is called light. Each and every one of us has this light. When you look at your life and see how selfish and egoistic human beings are, you don't believe you have a great sublime capacity. But you don't discover your great capacity by evaluating and judging your human value. If you are thinking in that way, you have already shut yourself off from that light.

Don't judge yourself as selfish or egoistic only. You are something more. So whatever you think about your life, first accept yourself as a person who has a great capacity. Then, in whatever situation you may be, calm your mind and take care of your life positively. If you get angry, try to calm your mind, even if you are just pretending. You may say that pretending to be calm is not realistic, but try to calm down anyway. That is not so easy for us, particularly under difficult circumstances. But still, whatever happens, you can stop, open yourself, and try to see the whole situation. Then you can learn a lot.

The Whole World in the Ten Directions

You have a sublime capacity to understand your life. That capacity is called light, but it is completely beyond any intellectual understanding of what your human capacity is. Beyond your human

speculation, you are already great because whatever you may do, wherever you may be, light is working with you. This is called the light of the self.

In *Shobogenzo Jippo* (The Ten Directions) Dogen mentions a saying by Chinese Zen master Chosa Keishin (Changsha Jingcen, 788–868). He says, “The whole world in the ten directions is the light of the self. The whole world in the ten directions is within the light of the self.” This saying seems to present two different ideas, but actually it is one picture seen from two angles.

The Buddhist term “ten directions” represents the entire universe—eight compass directions, above, and below—but it implies something more than the ordinary concept of the universe. The ordinary idea is that when you were born, the universe was already here. You are born into this world, and then you try to understand it.

But if you try to understand the meaning of “the whole world in the ten directions” in the ordinary way, you will never understand it because you were not born into a world that was already here: you and the whole world were born together. You were born simultaneously with mountains, rivers, and the whole universe. That is the Buddhist teaching of interdependent co-origination.

A mountain appears to be very stable, but actually a mountain is moving. Mountains are alive because mountains are constantly in the process of birth. If you understand a mountain in that way, you understand that your life is simultaneously there.

Day by day, from moment to moment, your life exactly coexists with mountains and rivers; you cannot be separated. This is your everyday life. We think we know pretty well what everyday life is. But in the deeper sense, “everyday life” is the great source of the flow of life energy, digesting everything and producing new life.

In *Shobogenzo Shinjin-gakudo* (Body and Mind Study of the Way) Dogen says:

Everyday mind is always every day, throughout this world and the other world. Yesterday left from that, today comes from that place. When you go, the whole world goes. When you come, the

whole earth comes. The gate of this everydayness is opening and closing at the moment, the gates of myriad, myriad beings are opening and closing at the moment.

If you read this statement in Japanese, it's very beautiful. When I translate it into English, maybe it's not so beautiful. But, behind the words, please try to understand that everydayness is something existing with all sentient beings; it is present with the vast cosmic universe.

Dogen Zenji is difficult to understand because he uses words to express the oneness of the whole universe. Still, even if you don't understand exactly, when you read this statement, something appears through the words, and you are really captured by Dogen's beautiful statement.

Every day, from moment to moment, the whole world arises like images in bas-relief sculpture. If you calm the functioning of your consciousness, you can actually see images coming up from the background of space. It's like watching a dance—something is constantly moving. In *The Tao of Physics*, Fritjof Capra recognizes that activity as Shiva's dance, the cosmic dance of creation and destruction. In Buddhism we say it is the continuous stream of life energy, and it is called continuous practice.

In the realm of continuous practice there is a great opportunity—you can see the universe coming up as one whole. It's just like a television. Push the button, and the myriad beings existing in the vast expanse of the universe immediately come into one screen. That one screen is called the self.

What is this self? Is it your small, egoistic self? Can you say yes or no? The self is a picture of the whole world coming up, but it's completely free. Sometimes it appears as your individual self. Sometimes it appears as trees, birds, or pebbles. Sometimes it appears as vast space. This is the true picture of the great self you already have.

Your true self is not something separated from others; it is interconnected and constantly working with others. Where? Not in

your own small territory, it's working in the huge universe! In Japanese, that working is called *komyo*—light. The functioning energy of the whole world is the light of the self. Because light is working from moment to moment, the whole world constantly manifests itself as the human world. At that time, the whole world is *within* the light of the self.

Light of the self is something you can know because that energy is always moving and acting in your own life. Usually you are not aware of it, but it's true—you can taste this. You can actually realize the dynamic functioning of your own life. When you sit down on your cushion, the whole vast universe comes into you as your body, your mind, the contents of your life, and you can taste the depth of human life. Then you can stand up there and take care of everyday life as it really is. So please accept your life as the whole world, and take good care of your life.

Dogen's Eyeball and Nose

Dogen says something very interesting about the light of the self. I don't know if my translation is right or wrong, but in *Shobogenzo Jippo* he says, "It is a single sheet with the eye and its cornea." That's pretty interesting but not so easy to understand. In your eyeball, the cornea covers the lens. It's transparent so you don't see it. When I say that the cornea covers the lens, I have already separated the cornea from the lens. But is there any space between the cornea and the lens? No, there is no gap. When your eyeball is functioning in the proper way, those two things are working together as one. If you have some space there, that's trouble for you. Please see a doctor.

When Dogen Zenji says light of the self means no gap between eye and cornea, he means there is no gap between you as your subject, "I," and your object, whatever it is. Words always create a gap between things, but subject and object are not actually separate: they are interconnected. Your life and the whole world are always working together as one dynamic functioning. So self and the whole world are

not separated; they are the same. Whatever you do, you always do it with the whole world.

Dogen also says, “The whole world is one’s nostrils prior to the parents’ birth.” This is very strange, so what does it mean? The world prior to our parents’ birth is unknown for us, so this saying implies the whole world throughout the past, present, and future. We don’t know what that huge world is exactly because it’s too vast, too eternal to know. But even though you don’t know, here are your nostrils! In other words, right now, right here, that huge world is your nose. This is the real existence of your nose.

When my nose appears, it is the whole universe. How? I don’t know. But if I accept that the whole universe is constantly in the process of birth, then my nose is also coming up from moment to moment. My nose appears as a particular being because the whole world is functioning as one being. So through my nose I can understand the universe that sometimes appears as time and sometimes as space. Through your nose you can learn a lot; you can know many beings because each and every being is exactly the whole world. In Buddhism, we accept every aspect of human life like this.

Total Dynamic Activity

Why are you alive? What makes your life continue? Is it by your own effort? Well, of course you can say so, because you cannot ignore making an effort to live every day. But there is something more than that. You survive because something real is working every day. Your life is moving with the whole universe. That movement has no colors, no flavors, nothing, but it appears to you under certain circumstances. For example, when you dance wholeheartedly, you can feel that energy coming up.

When you see this energy in terms of your own life, it is called individual effort. Before that, it has no name; it is just dynamism. If we give a name to it, this movement of life is called great effort or universal effort. Universal effort is there first, and then it appears in various aspects of your life as your individual effort.

We use the terms *universal effort* and *individual effort*, but actually there is no gap between them. You take care of universal effort by your individual effort. It's a little difficult to do this because we are always critical toward our own effort. We attach to getting a certain result from our effort. Then we judge it in terms of ideas and emotions connected with our heredity, education, consciousness, and memories coming from the past, so it's very complicated. Universal effort is very simple. That's why we try to understand our lives in terms of the universal perspective. How?

When you wash your face, accept washing as universal effort first, and *then* make your own individual effort. Deal with everything—your face, the water, your posture of standing in front of the basin—as universal activity. Through the actions of washing your face, you can go beyond your usual understanding and experience the pure nature of washing your face. This is the realm of total dynamic action. Right in the middle of taking good care of your individual effort as universal effort, the whole world comes into one screen. That one screen is the big picture of your life. When you see that living screen, you can learn who you really are.

What makes it possible for the whole world to come into one screen? It is by your own acting. When you act with sincerity and a warm heart, there is a great opportunity, a very subtle opportunity, to invite the whole world into your life. That is wonderful, but if you misunderstand acting, it is very dangerous.

The usual meaning of human action is dangerous because when we act only on the basis of individual desires, customs, lifestyles, or heredity, we are always creating problems. That's why people are afraid to act, why people want to withdraw from the world and be quiet. Still, wherever you may go, whatever you do, even when you are asleep, you never stop acting. Nothing stops your acting, so your activity must be refined.

In refined human activity, your whole body is in dynamism, but your mind is quiet and calm. At that time, no words are interposed between you and the universe, so your idea of a separate self disappears. If your idea of self disappears, is there no-self? Yes, that

is true. You are walking in the vast expanse of the universe—with people, animals, mountains, the sky, the four seasons, space—and there is no gap anywhere. At that time you realize the big picture of your life and your great sublime capacity.

Moving from Doubt to Wisdom and Compassion

In Buddhism, we try to be straightforward toward our great capacity, live wholeheartedly with sincerity, and display our light in everyday life as best as we can. But maybe you are skeptical of this capacity, so your mind doesn't accept it. Maybe you understand it intellectually, but your body doesn't accept it. That skepticism is called doubt.

For example, when I answer some question, you say, "Yes, Katagiri, I understand what you said," then you say "but" and want to talk about it some more. Where does that "but" come from? It comes from a gap between you and your object. We are always talking about this gap and how to fill it up. That's all right; talking is the nature of human beings. Discussion is interesting for us. But if you are always talking, you never know real reality. Finally you become exhausted.

Before you ask a question, you are already here; you are already alive. So how do you live right now? Buddhism teaches us how to straightforwardly accept how sublime human life is. That is the activity of Buddhist practice.

When you touch your real self, you experience deep communication between you and the object of your practice, whatever it is. Then you can accept something totally and deal with it straightforwardly without creating any gap. So keep your mouth shut, calm your mind, and just be present in the continuous stream of life energy.

The Buddhist understanding of the self or the whole world seems to be abstract, but it is not abstract. You can really see and touch the self. You can learn that the whole world in the ten directions is the light of the self. How? Action! Try to remember this. In the dynamic

activity of your practice, something happens that you have never expected. You can learn something great. That is called wisdom.

Wisdom is a deep understanding of yourself and the whole world around you, not only what's on the surface of life. With wisdom, you understand that your own life is simultaneously the whole world in the ten directions. Then compassion comes up, and you accept others with magnanimous openheartedness. Compassion makes you generous, and through this generosity you can live with people; you can take a breath with people.

True compassionate action is based on wisdom, so when you express compassion, it should be based on deep understanding. If you use the world just for your own life, it becomes stinky and people don't like you; they keep away from you. But if you act with the whole world, light appears in your everyday life. Then, very naturally, your compassion is transmitted to somebody else. People feel this. People understand. You cannot perceive it, but people immediately receive this warm communication. It's just like lightning.

EVERYONE HAS A LIGHT

THE BLUE CLIFF RECORD is a collection of old Zen teaching stories from China, compiled in the twelfth century. When you study a teaching such as the *Blue Cliff Record*, what is the point you have to learn? Is it to get knowledge? Yes, it is, but also it is not, because the original nature of your life is not something you can fully understand by ideas.

If you try to fill your life just from the top, by gaining knowledge, then your head is very big. But the knowledge you gain is hard to carry because it's pretty heavy. It makes your head spin, and it's easy to lose your balance. Knowledge of Buddhism is always bothering you because the container is bottomless, so you can never get enough. Finally everything turns into suffering, and there is nothing to encourage you.

Does that mean you should stop thinking and studying? No way! You are a human being; you have to think. Thinking is pretty good for us. But don't be bogged down with thinking. Don't make your head ache. If your head begins to ache, stop thinking and take care of yourself. Sooner or later you will have to think again. At that time, please think with kindness, with friendliness.

In Zen, we study and try to understand Buddha's teaching intellectually; we also practice and try to understand in a deeper way. In this way, instead of thinking and creating delusions, you can use thinking to calm down and touch something deep in your life. When

you touch it, your life is filled from the bottom up, and you become mature.

The Blue Cliff Record, Case 86

The title of case 86 in the *Blue Cliff Record* is “Yun Men’s Kitchen Pantry and Main Gate.” This case is about your great, sublime capacity called light. Dogen was very interested in this case and mentioned it in *Shobogenzo Komyo* (Light). Here is the main story, translated by Thomas Cleary and J. C. Cleary:

Yun Men imparted some words saying, “Everyone has a light; when you look at it, you don’t see it and it’s dark and dim. What is everybody’s light?” He himself answered on their behalf, “The kitchen pantry and the main gate.” He also said, “A good thing isn’t as good as nothing.”

Wen Yen of Yun Men was an important teacher who died in 949 in southern China. In this story, Yun Men asks the monks, “What is everybody’s light?” And then he answers his own question. According to his answer, light is the kitchen pantry and the main gate of the temple. But it could be your nose, your body, your house, your job, or your everyday routine because light manifests in every aspect of your life.

That is wonderful, but on the other hand Yun Men also says, “A good thing isn’t as good as nothing.” He says so because if you think that every aspect of your life is already manifesting light, you can easily get stuck in everyday life. Then you ask: if my everyday life is already great light, why do I have to practice zazen? The moment you ask, you are already stuck. Even when something is good, if you get stuck in your idea of good, you are choked by good. Finally you don’t know what good is. Then good turns into some human problem.

For instance, if you work hard and create a beautiful life, you may attach to your life. You believe you are wonderful: no one else could do what I did! Then you become critical toward others. We are

always measuring, comparing, and evaluating ourselves and others like this. But if you are thinking in that way, you are already stuck in a concept of your great capacity, and you cannot move an inch.

It's the same with spiritual practice. If you see something wonderful through your practice, you may attach to what you have seen because it was a valuable experience for you. But when you are caught by the idea of what you experienced, it becomes a problem for you. That's why Yun Men says, "A good thing isn't as good as nothing."

Light is the original nature of your life. Everyone has that light. It is the core of your personality that Buddhism is always talking about. But it's very difficult to know what it is because light is nothing but energy, motion, or dynamic functioning; your conscious mind can never pick up anything in particular. If you try to conceptualize it, your original nature is dark and dim for you because you can't see it in that way.

Still, even though it cannot be conceptualized, it can be displayed because light is always functioning in your life. You can give play to it in every aspect of your life. So if you see something wonderful, don't get stuck! Accept it, experience it, and then keep your mouth shut. Your experience will never disappear. It stays with your life and penetrates your life. It's not necessary to attach to it. Let it go!

Light and Dark: The Commentary of Blue Cliff Record, Case 86

The commentary section of "Yun Men's Kitchen Pantry and Main Gate" is very interesting. Let's start with the third paragraph in the Thomas Cleary and J. C. Cleary translation and study the commentary line by line. It says:

As soon as they hear you mention "light," people these days put a glare in their eyes and say, "Where is the kitchen pantry? Where is the main gate?" But this has nothing to do with it. Thus it is said, "Perceive the meaning on the hook; don't abide by the

zero point of the scale.” This matter is not in the eye or in the environment. To begin to understand you must cut off knowing and seeing, forget gain and loss, and become purified, naked, and perfectly at ease; each and every one must investigate on his own.

Buddhism always tries to explain the dynamic structure that interconnects your life with all beings from moment to moment. We do this so you will know that by wholeheartedly using your body, your consciousness, your personality, and your education, you can return to the origin of the self and see the total picture of your life. Zen practice is to just constantly return to zero. But when I tell you that by practicing with wholeheartedness you can become zero, you are immediately hooked by the idea of zero. Then you want to know: What is zero? If I become zero, who am I?

If you are measuring and evaluating your life, there is always some word that can become a hook. Your consciousness, your body, and your understanding can also become hooks. Instead of enjoying the great capacity you already have, you are looking for something outside yourself. So to understand your life as a whole, train yourself to cut off your usual way of knowing and seeing, and just be the functioning of life right now, right here. This is a hard practice, but if you do this, the total dynamic activity of your life lets you be zero.

If everything becomes zero, does that mean there is nothing? No, light of the self sometimes appears in the realm of space and sometimes in the realm of time. Self is functioning every day in the realm of time, so there are many beings. That self is the whole universe: winter, little boys and girls, a kitchen pantry, or the main gate of a temple. That’s why the kitchen pantry is light.

Even toilet paper is light of the self. Through using toilet paper with a warm heart, you can return to zero and learn who you really are. But if you become zero and then get hooked by zero, zero is no longer zero. So, whatever idea you have attached to, let it go and return to zero again and again. This is our practice.

The next three lines of the commentary are another saying from Yun Men:

Yun Men said, “You come and go by daylight; you distinguish people by daylight.”

In daylight, the world of phenomena is visible, and you can distinguish everything very clearly. In darkness, you cannot make any distinctions. So in Zen Buddhism, darkness often represents truth, or the ultimate principle of existence. Sometimes we say “equality,” because when you cannot distinguish things, everything becomes equal. Daylight and darkness seem to be completely separate, but we cannot separate them because they are dynamically interconnected.

According to the teaching of impermanence, the world of light, phenomena, and distinction constantly flows into the world of darkness, truth, and equality; darkness, truth, and equality constantly flow into light, distinction, and phenomena. So finally you have to go beyond ideas of distinction and equality and see their interconnection. Then equality can be seen in distinction, and distinction can be seen in equality. Seeing in that way is seeing from the universal perspective. “Daylight” means seeing the human world from the universal perspective. When you touch truth working deep in your own life, the whole world becomes bright, and you see people as they truly are.

It’s very difficult for us to see people that way because we enjoy playing in the world of conceptualization so much that we get stuck there. For example, according to your conceptual understanding, a table is a table. But when you think in that way, you are already stuck because a table is something more than your concept of a table. If you break a table up and put it in the fireplace, it is wood fuel. If you sit on it, it’s a chair. We cannot say what it is exactly because the table is constantly changing according to circumstances. The table can change because it is within the spiritual source, which is working

dynamically. To express this, we say the table is a table as it truly is, or the table is thusness.

If you see a table as something more than your conceptual understanding and accept the table straightforwardly, the table is shining light. The table is very clear and bright because your ability to distinguish things as they truly are is functioning, not stuck. When you perceive the table as it truly is, you communicate with the table in the realm where the table and you are interconnected. Then wisdom lets you take best care of the table with your consciousness, with your body, and with your words. It's the same with seeing people. So if we want to see people as they really are and understand each other, let's see people by daylight.

“Suddenly it's midnight, and there's no sun, moon, or lamplight.”

In this line there is no light shining in the darkness of midnight, so you cannot see the truth. That means you are stuck. Maybe you have understood your life from the universal perspective, so you think now you are free to distinguish people of different races and cultural backgrounds in daylight. But watch out! The moment you start thinking in that way, you cut yourself off from your light by egoistic thinking. Your light starts to flicker, and truth is no longer bright for you. Then you don't see people as they really are; you see a flashing light called prejudice.

I always see my own prejudice like a little flashing light. I am a person who conveys Buddhist teaching based on peace and equality. So I always tell myself: Don't distinguish between people based on prejudice. Don't be critical toward people of different cultural backgrounds. Since I came to the United States, this has been my constant practice. Well, after twenty-five years, I am still practicing this.

When I see an American, I immediately see the flashing light that says, “Oh, you are American; you don't understand Buddhism.” I confess. I cannot work out this flashing light. It's the same with my

students. Even though they tell me, “Katagiri, you are a great teacher!” I don’t believe them because still they say, “Oh, you are Japanese; I don’t like Japanese.”

If you see this subtle flashing light, you are stuck in conceptualization. But don’t be afraid of the flashing light. You are a human being. As long as you have human consciousness, you see this flashing light. Without the consciousness that sees this flashing light, you cannot be a human being. So finally all I can do is accept myself as a human being. Then, right in the middle of seeing the flashing light of prejudice, I cannot stay stuck; I have to go beyond my prejudice and see people as they really are.

The more you attain enlightenment, the more you see yourself in the realm of that flashing light. The more you see it, the more you suffer. That’s why the bodhisattva suffers. That’s how bodhisattvas can understand human beings very deeply. So open your heart and accept that flashing light. Then walk side by side with all beings. Work hard every day to communicate with warmth and compassion. Very naturally your great capacity will manifest itself, and by its light you can see how the depth of your personality is cultivated.

“If it’s someplace you’ve been to, then of course it’s possible; in a place you have never been, can you even manage to get hold of something?”

Spiritual life is kind of like a realm, a place, a world. If you have been in that realm, even slightly, then it is possible for you to accept that such a place exists. But what about a place where you have never been? That place is also your life. So I think you should accept two places: a place where you have been and a place where you have never been. When you accept that there is a place where you have never been, your mind becomes open, magnanimous, and straightforward.

(Shih T’ou’s) *Merging of Difference and Sameness* says,

Right within light there's darkness,
But don't see it as darkness:
Right within darkness there's light,
But don't meet it as light.

The *Merging of Difference and Unity (Sandokai)* is a poem composed in China by Zen master Sekito Kisen (Shitou Xiqian, 700–790). These four lines of the poem say that in the daylight world of distinction, you can understand that the world of equality is also there, but still you have to deal with everyday life wholeheartedly. That's pretty good for us. If you see the midnight world of equality, light is also there, so there is something more you have to do. Saying "don't meet it as light" means don't distinguish anything; go beyond any discriminating thought and just deal with light as it truly is.

Within light there is darkness, and within darkness there is light, so darkness and light are always together. That is oneness. That is a very important lesson, particularly in Zen Buddhism. Dogen Zenji said, "When one side appears, the other is in darkness." It's like a sheet of paper: when you use one side of the paper, the other side is simultaneously there. As a practical matter, it's not necessary to point out the other side. All you have to do is use this side and the other is already with you.

If you cut off light and darkness, tell me what is it? Thus it is said, "The mind flower emits light, shining on all the lands in the ten directions."

Going beyond any thought of light and dark, you can return to zero and just be alive. Maybe you are afraid to return to zero, but if you want to make your life deep, you have to practice this. To be a master mountain climber, a master football player, or a master painter, you have to do this. Whatever it is, if you don't return to zero and just do it, you cannot become a master of anything.

For example, if I say, "Just be kind to others without expecting anything," and you do it, but while you are doing it, you are

constantly thinking, “I must just be kind without expecting anything,” then a thought is still coming up. The real meaning of “just be kind” is that finally even this thought doesn’t appear. That is no-thought, we say. There is nothing to say, just silence. This is the realm of spiritual life.

If you have never been in the realm of spiritual life, it is pretty mysterious for you. But when your spiritual life actually appears, there is no mystery. It is very clear because the mind flower is blooming. When a spiritual flower blooms, it emits light. This flower is your life; this light is the great capacity you already have. When your mind flower blooms, there is light shining on the whole world.

P’an Shan said, “Light isn’t shining on objects, nor do the objects exist. Light and objects both forgotten, then what is this?”

When you see kindness as an object for you to attain, you have to tell yourself: just be kind. But if you go beyond even the thought of being kind, there is no object. If you don’t see an object, very naturally there is no subject—your sense of individual self drops off. What’s left? Just the state of being completely kind; your life is just the pure activity of kindness itself.

Also it was said,

This very seeing and hearing is not seeing and hearing—
But there’s no other sound and form that can be offered to
you.

Here, if you can understand that there’s nothing at all,
You are free to separate, or not, essence and action.

“This very seeing and hearing” is not your usual way of seeing and hearing; it is you and your object working together as one. “Essence” means the total, universal picture of your life. “Action” means the essence of your life is acting day to day. That is real acting. When you are really acting, you cannot say you are acting, and you cannot say you are not acting; the activity of the universe and the activity of your

life just become one action. Now the last paragraph of the commentary begins:

Just understand Yun Men's final statement thoroughly, then you can go back to the former one to roam at play. But ultimately, you do not make a living there. The ancient Vimalakirti said, "All things are established on a non-abiding basis."

In real action there is no opportunity for you to conceptualize anything. This is not pessimistic; it is full aliveness. That's why we have to train ourselves to go beyond thinking and deal with our great capacity as it truly is. From moment to moment, the lively energy of life is making your life alive—right now, right here! This time and place where your life exists is constantly changing. That is why Vimalakirti said that all things are established on a non-abiding basis. Even so, this is the time and place where you create a peaceful life.

You mustn't go here to play with lights and shadows and give play to your spirit. Nor will it do to make up an understanding in terms of nothingness.

When you feel something broad and magnanimous, the big world where our warm hearts communicate with each other, you could easily stop and play with your ideas about what you have experienced. But don't stop and play with those ideas: pass them by. If you get stuck in enlightenment, you separate your life from others' lives, and people won't accept you. Playing with spiritual life makes you a ghost; your life is up in the air. So whatever you experience, don't get stuck there. If you see the flashing lights of egoist thoughts, plant your foot on the ground and just keep going. Don't stay with anything; just go ahead. That is the Buddhist spirit. Then your life constantly deepens.

An Ancient said, "Better you should give rise to a view of existence as big as Mt. Sumeru, than that you produce a view of

nothingness as small as a mustard seed.”

You have understood the universal perspective. You have big ideas, and your heart is as big as Mount Sumeru. That's fine. When you understand nothingness, nothingness gives you great spiritual encouragement to keep going. But if you attach to the wonderful aliveness in your life, that attachment is like a mustard seed. Your understanding may be huge, but a subtle attachment is still there. That tiny seed is dangerous for you because it doesn't let you be free. If you don't notice it, you are always creating problems in the human world. So take care of this subtle attachment very carefully, and try to be free from it. Then that tiny seed also becomes a great encouragement to keep going.

People of the (lesser) two vehicles often fall onesidedly into this view.

You have a big head that wants to understand Buddha's teaching, so we have to talk about it. Then little by little you build up a kind of theoretical buddhology in your head. Maybe you think nirvana is the goal, something you can reach by obeying Buddha's teaching. But if you attach to such a goal, you are stuck in your concept of nirvana and you cannot move an inch. You cannot find a peaceful life that way because the peaceful life that you are seeking is not a concept. So your real goal is to be free from your goal. Whether you attain enlightenment or not doesn't matter. What matters is that you keep going. That's all we can do.

You create your world, your life. If you seek a peaceful life, you must be peaceful. Don't be critical. Don't judge yourself. Don't judge others. Just keep going. Finally you reach your real goal: the place where your life is fully alive. Maybe you have never experienced the full aliveness of life, but if you feel something from this teaching, just move toward it. That is our effort.

Instead of taking care of our life according to our own ideas, we are learning to take care of all beings from a universal perspective. We

pay attention to the real reality we live in and try to be present there. Having your own ideas is fine, but please open yourself; listen to your heart, others' hearts; and live together in peace. That is the point of Yun Men's teaching in the *Blue Cliff Record*.

Part Two

PRACTICE & ENLIGHTENMENT

AWARENESS OF ENLIGHTENMENT

JUST BEFORE HE died, Shakyamuni Buddha preached on eight awarenesses of enlightenment. That teaching was recorded in the *Nirvana Sutra*, a collection of the Buddha's final teachings. When Eihei Dogen was dying, he wrote *Hachidainingaku* (Eight Awarenesses of the Enlightened Person). This is Dogen Zenji's commentary on Buddha's final teaching and the last chapter of the *Shobogenzo*.

The eight great awarenesses taught by Buddha and Dogen are having few desires, knowing how to be satisfied, enjoying serenity and tranquility, exerting precise effort, not forgetting mindfulness, practicing *samadhi*, practicing wisdom, and avoiding idle talk. There are eight, but each one contains all the others, so by practicing any one of them, we can learn the meaning of effort, mindfulness, oneness, and silence as aspects of enlightenment.

Exerting Precise Effort

When I was in high school, schoolboys in Japan were taught how to fly airplanes by learning a glider. That glider was very simple but very hard to handle. In order to fly, the pilot has to choose a destination and tell everyone where he is headed for. When it's my

turn, I say, “That pine tree over there is my mark.” Then the other students pull a big rubber rope. Ten or twenty people take more than thirty steps to completely stretch that rope. Then the teacher says, “Let loose of it!” and the glider starts to move.

Before the glider moved, I understood everything: how to hold the handle in the proper way, when to lean to the left and right, everything. But the moment when the glider started to move, something happened. Boom! The cockpit didn’t have any protection for the pilot, so immediately the air pressure hit me—hard! Wow! I was very surprised. And when the glider lifts up, the pilot sees only sky and loses sight of his mark. *Oh-oh!* Where is my destination?

Even though my intellectual understanding was pretty good, right in the middle of actually flying the glider, when circumstances changed and I lost my mark, I didn’t know what to do—there was no room to think. So the glider crashed. Then my teacher scolded me: Why did you do it that way? Well, I don’t know why. Next time you should do it such and such a way. Yes, I will do! But the next day, the same thing happened—again and again. My teacher scolded me: You did it again! I’m sorry.

To fly a glider you must learn the technique, but you cannot fly only by mastering technique. When I lost sight of the mark, I didn’t know what to do, but actually you can know. How? Intuitively! If you know the glider and all the circumstances around the glider (including the weather, your physical and mental feelings) and start to fly, your body and mind can catch the life of the glider.

When you catch the glider’s life, then the glider is not something separate from you; glider is you and you are glider. There is no gap between the glider and you because your whole body and mind is exactly the glider itself. Everything is very clear, and intuitively you start to move the handle to the right, to the left, in the proper way. This is called exerting precise effort.

It’s the same in dance, sports, or whatever you do. There are fundamental forms you have to learn. You practice doing them again and again, analyzing and synthesizing each form, and mastering them one by one. But when you dance, there is no chance to think.

All you can do is dance. So you forget those forms and just tune in to the rhythm of dance. Then your body and mind are dancing itself, and dance is exactly comporting itself.

When you practice precise effort like this, you are not aiming at something outside yourself; you are aiming at a mark inside yourself. At that time you can have few desires, experience a sense of satisfaction, and enjoy serenity and tranquility. But when I tried to learn the glider, I didn't have a mark inside myself, so the glider crashed. With a calm mind, I could have moved the handle of the glider in the proper way and flown in the right direction.

So if I want to be a mature pilot, why don't I adjust and regulate my body and mind first? Then a peaceful, harmonious rhythm comes up. Very naturally I tune in to the glider's life, the glider tunes into my life, and the glider and I are communicating in oneness. That vivid and refreshing activity is true practice.

Dogen Zenji emphasizes that practice in preciseness is very clear, but it's difficult to explain what precise effort is. It is something you are doing, but it is not defiled by self-consciousness, so there is no trace of mental discrimination. You are not thinking about whether you will hit or miss your mark; you just hit the bull's-eye exactly, with one stroke. This is exerting precise effort.

Through practicing the arts or sports, you can come close to realizing the meaning of life. But in Zen we practice catching the rhythm of life itself. How do you catch that rhythm? Well, we don't know exactly because Zen practice is not something you can analyze; it is just something vividly alive. Still, if you practice according to certain rules, you can do it. You can catch the harmonious rhythm of the practice you have done for many years.

When you practice zazen, sit down on your cushion and just tune in to the rhythm of the universe, which includes your life: your knowledge, your emotions, your consciousness, and all the circumstances around you. Then face your life directly and hit the mark inside yourself.

Not Forgetting Mindfulness

If you want to travel, there must be a destination toward which to go. If you want to practice precise effort, there must be a target for you to aim at. That is mindfulness. Not forgetting mindfulness is the fifth one of Buddha's eight great awarenesses. By making every possible effort to deal with daily life on the basis of having few desires, knowing how to be satisfied, enjoying serenity and tranquility, and exerting precise effort, very naturally you reach the level of not forgetting mindfulness. Mindfulness is characterized by three points: peace, harmony, and preservation.

The peace of mindfulness is the state of settling the small self in the big self. You can aim at this target every day, in whatever you do. For example, the moment when you open a door is your time and opportunity to tune in to the rhythm of the life of the door. So when you encounter a door that you must pass through, don't see the door with your limited understanding and open the door carelessly. Open yourself to the door first; then open the door, pass through, and close the door, but not with a bang; close the door with careful attention. Don't be in a rush. This is the practice of having few desires.

By opening yourself to a door, you can realize the true quality of practicing few desires because satisfaction appears and you enjoy serenity and tranquility. Tranquility enables you to handle the door very quietly, and by this quiet action you create a harmonious mood between the door and you.

When you deal with a door like this, you hit the bull's-eye of the door with one stroke and become you as you really are. This "you" is not the self you understand egoistically. This "you" is *not-you*. Not-you is you who has merged with the door. At that time you experience peaceful spiritual communion with the door. You are there, but you are not only you; you are also the door. So you are you and also not-you, because you are you *and* the door.

Your body and mind is not only yours, but also the body and mind of others. So before you open a door, forget your small self. Don't grumble. Settle yourself in the big self, face the door, and just see it;

see the door as Buddha. When you forget yourself and just open the door, at that time your life is really confirmed and supported by the door, your circumstances, the people around you, and all beings. Then your life is broad, universal life, because it contains not only the door but also all sentient beings.

That is why, in *Shobogenzo Genjokoan*, Dogen says, “To be confirmed by all beings is to be free from your body and mind and the body and mind of others.” In other words, the body and mind that creates dualistic ideas of self and other has disappeared and only one true self remains. This oneness is the peace of mindfulness.

The harmony of mindfulness is allegiance and submission to the truth of constant change, the rhythm of the universe, which is called dharma. This aspect of mindfulness is closely related to two practices of the eightfold noble path taught by Shakyamuni Buddha: right understanding and right thinking. We submit to dharma using right understanding and right thinking.

We don’t understand what dharma is exactly, but we can see that everything in the human world is changing constantly, so there is no reason to stay attached to the fixed idea of self created by our individual consciousnesses. Also, there is no reason to stay stuck in the objects of our thought.

When you accept and submit to this truth, you can stand up straight in the realm of constant change. You can think deeply, paying careful attention to the world around you, and figure out how to put right understanding and right thinking into practice. When right understanding and right thinking are working in your daily life, this is the perfect harmony of mindfulness.

Preservation of mindfulness is to continue the practice of mindfulness under all circumstances. It’s being like a mother bird, sitting on her egg and never stopping until it hatches. In human life, there are always difficulties that exhaust your physical and mental energies—you want to give up. But if you give up, you do not become free; you become nervous. So we just keep going and continually submit ourselves to dharma. If you are successful in your business, you are not infatuated with success; you just take care of business

with a calm mind. If you do something wrong, you are not obsessed with your mistake; you just aim at the bull's-eye of mindfulness and continue to breathe.

Shakyamuni Buddha gave us three practices for preservation of mindfulness. In the *Nirvana Sutra*, he said, "If you seek both a good teacher and good protection and support, nothing is better than not forgetting mindfulness." So first, seek a good teacher. Good teachers constantly give teaching to all beings, not only to human beings and not only with the mouth. Even without saying anything, he or she can always teach with his body, with her mind.

Second, think deeply about the meaning of the teaching you see and hear because it is good protection for you. Be mindful of the truth: everything is moving together in a stream of harmonious rhythm, which is constantly supporting your life.

Third, put mindfulness into practice in your daily living. In spiritual life, we try to live mindfully every day, tuning in and being present in the harmonious rhythm of life. We have to learn how to tune in because what we do influences ourselves and others. When you get up in the morning, you don't get up by yourself. Your getting up is activity that connects all beings, influencing all beings, so it must be activity that is confirmed by all beings and helping all beings. When your activity is peaceful and your life is harmonious, it is called right mindfulness, or not forgetting mindfulness.

Practicing mindfulness as an awareness of enlightenment is unifying your mind. Zen practice retreats are called *sesshin*. In Japanese, *ses* is "to collect" or "put together," and *shin* is "the mind." So the meaning of *sesshin* is to unify the mind: that mind is the one mind of the universe, which is now your mind. Your unified mind is lots of minds, collected as one. This is called *mind–full–ness*. This mindfulness is your destination, your great target to aim at.

So settle your small self in the big self, submit yourself to the rhythm of the universe, and continue doing this under all circumstances. Very naturally you will open your eyes and hit the bull's-eye. Immediately you realize your life in peace and harmony, and dwell in the dharma. Dwelling in the dharma means there is

transparency between the universe and you, a door and you, or breathing and you. This is called samadhi, or one-pointedness. This sublime state of being is what we are seeking for.

Practicing Samadhi

By practicing mindfulness and unifying your mind, very naturally you experience samadhi, the sixth awareness of enlightenment. Samadhi is sort of a huge dike that protects the water of wisdom inhering in all of us. The ground of your life is unfathomable, but fresh water is always there. If you want it, adjust your body and mind—water immediately comes up from the ground. That is right practice.

Zazen is a very simple manifestation of samadhi. This is why we do zazen. Dogen Zenji mentions in *Gakudo Yojin-shu* (Points to Watch in Buddhist Training), translated by Yuho Yokoi, “The Buddha Shakyamuni said, ‘Turning the sound-perceiving stream of the mind inward, forsake knowing and being known.’ Herein lies the meaning of the above. The two qualities of movement and non-movement have not appeared at all; this is true harmony.”

The sound-perceiving stream of mind is our human consciousness. We can turn that stream away from dualistic thought and toward its proper destination: one-pointedness. That is why, in *Fukanzazengi* (Rules for Zazen), translated by Norman Waddell and Masao Abe (2002), Dogen says, “You should therefore cease from practice based on intellectual understanding, pursing words and following after speech, and learn the backward step that turns your light inwardly to illuminate yourself. Body and mind of themselves will drop away, and your original face will be manifest.” That is true.

So keep turning the stream of mind away from your dualistic thoughts and inward to the energy of your life. That is our zazen practice. Learn the technique of zazen and then practice it again and again until technique is not technique. Follow it until it penetrates your skin, muscle, bone, and there is no subject that knows or object that is known.

When you breathe in zazen, turn your mind into breathing. How? Sit down, take a breath, and tune in to that breath. There is no particular pattern for how to breathe in zazen. If you try to control your breath, you create a gap between “I” and “my breath.” So just pay careful attention to the reality of breathing itself. Just continually breathe. If you see a long breath, turn the stream of your mind into the long breath. Be present with the long breath for a while. If your mind deviates from that breath, just come back and pay attention to the next breath. Concentrate on each breath. Strike and hit each breath exactly with one stroke. Very naturally your mind and your breath become one.

Oneness between you and breathing enables you to feel that your life is worth living. This is perfection of concentration: your mind is unified, and there is no gap between breath and you. There is just breathing—the rhythm of life. This is samadhi. When you practice zazen as samadhi, your zazen is not just you; it’s the rhythm of the whole universe.

All aspects of daily living are great opportunities through which you can experience samadhi, because every moment is a place where you can become one with an event. Instead of always using the energy of your life to create subject and object, sometimes use it to unify your body and mind in samadhi. Then your self-centered consciousness completely drops off, and you can see the immensity of your life.

Real Silence

When you connect your individual body and mind with the universal body and mind, you see the total panoramic picture of the human world. That is practicing wisdom, the seventh awareness of enlightenment. At that time there are no words; there is nothing to hear, nothing to say—silence. Very naturally you avoid idle talk. That is the eighth awareness.

The opportunity to go deep into your life and practice real silence is always open to everyone. But people are always chattering and

making noise. Noise is constantly spreading in the horizontal, like the rings made by drops of water. If one person chatters, very naturally the next person says, “Yeah, that’s right,” or “I don’t agree.”

I always say, “Keep your mouth shut!” But even if you stop talking and stay silent, it’s not real silence; it’s silence conceptualized by you. Talking is still there because your silence is just the other side of talking. The real practice of silence is not just keeping your mouth shut; it is directly participating in oneness and seeing silence in terms of the whole universe. That is silence seen from Buddha’s eye.

In real silence there is communion. For example, if you suddenly encounter a deer in nature, you are shocked; you are speechless. There is energy moving between you and the deer—the deer and you are communicating—but you can’t say anything at all because there is no word. That “no word” is the world of true actual silence. It means you have touched the true nature of the deer’s life. At that time, you and the deer are one. That is what I mean by practicing silence.

How do you do this? Well, train yourself; train your consciousness, your body, your five skandhas. Every aspect of your life is an opportunity given to you to practice silence. But it’s not so easy.

I have been talking about Buddha’s teaching for many years. I always try to touch something silent behind my words, to say something more than noise. I try, but I don’t know—it’s still noise. My talks are nothing but noise and chatter: “Blah, blah, blah.” I have never felt satisfied from my talks. After my talks I always feel disappointed—just like a painter. A painter is always trying to paint a masterpiece, but he or she is never satisfied. The more you are serious about your practice, the more you realize this.

Sometimes I want to stop talking and be quiet. But wherever I may go, people constantly ask me to talk. I am a teacher, so I cannot escape this suffering. That’s pretty hard, but this is a very good lesson for me. What is the lesson? Whatever happens, there is always an opportunity to return to real silence.

The opportunity to experience real silence is like a huge pole driven straight into the ground. What I have to do is stop, exactly

right in front of that pole, go deep, and forget myself. Then I can build up my life on the foundation of oneness. Again and again I have to try to return to the silence behind the “blah, blah, blah” and just be there, seeing silence in terms of Buddha’s eye. Then I can let my words come up from silence. I can simply take one step and start to talk.

If you hear my simple words coming up from silence, maybe you will get a big shock. Just like seeing a deer—something touches your heart and you are very surprised; you cannot move an inch. Suddenly we are communicating with each other very deeply. Then, very naturally, we can walk and talk together in silence, in peace, with joy.

LET THE
FLOWER OF
YOUR LIFE
FORCE BLOOM

PLUM TREES in Japan bloom right in midwinter, in a world of complete whiteness. It's very beautiful. Everything is covered with snow when all of a sudden the scarlet flowers bloom. Can you see this situation? When the plum tree blossoms, the whole world blooms—the whole world is embraced by blooming flowers. Even though the world is covered with snow, it is nothing but flowers. That is spring. Which comes first, spring or blooming flowers? That question is just human speculation. Reality is that blooming flowers and spring appear simultaneously.

Dogen Zenji always presents the panorama picture of one thing working with the whole universe. In *Shobogenzo Baika* (Plum Blossoms), translated by Kazuaki Tanahashi and Mel Weitsman, Dogen says,

When the old plum tree suddenly opens, the world of blossoming flowers arises. At the moment when the world of blossoming flowers arises, spring arrives. There is a single blossom that opens five blossoms. At this moment of a single

blossom, there are three, four, and five blossoms, hundreds, thousands, myriads, billions of blossoms—countless blossoms.

Dogen expresses the oneness of plum flowers and all sentient beings. It's difficult to receive and accept that oneness because human speculation doesn't catch it. But when you read his works, it's really amazing because he represents oneness as something alive. Immediately it is right in front of you. You are very surprised, amazed, startled.

Oneness is not something you can grasp as an idea; that's why you don't believe it. But whether you believe it or not, Dogen constantly expresses this. Using words he awakens us to the truth: when one flower blooms, the whole world comes into being. If you see one plum flower blooming, you can see the whole world working together with the life of this one flower.

The Dharma World of Oneness

When Shakyamuni Buddha attained enlightenment under the Bodhi tree he said, "I and all sentient beings attain enlightenment simultaneously." At that time, there was no gap between all sentient beings and Shakyamuni. That is nondualism—complete oneness.

The most important point in Buddha's teaching is seeing yourself and others in terms of oneness. Oneness is your original nature. It is the original state of a plum flower's life, a tree's life, a pebble's life, a mountain's life, and your life. But oneness is a difficult teaching to understand. You can't get that experience overnight. That's why we practice for the long run.

By listening to Buddha's teaching and studying yourself, gradually you realize how egotistical and selfish the human world is. People who have deeply tasted of it realize they cannot depend on the shaky human world. So they seek for something better: a pure and beautiful spiritual world they can believe in. In a sense that is good, but on the other hand, if you experience something deep in your life, you may become attached to the spiritual world. Perhaps you create

an ism: Buddhism, Christian-ism, or any religion. There are many kinds of isms. If you don't like religion, morality, or ethics and want complete freedom, this is also an ism. If you don't care, that is an ism.

Whatever it is you believe in, you may form an intellectual or emotional attachment to your ideas. We create attachments of all sorts, pleasant or unpleasant, connected with our memories, heredity, and education, and our world gets very complicated. Then we are always moving toward or away from other people according to our ideas. This creates problems. So we have to know the aspect of life that goes completely beyond both the human world and the spiritual world. That is the dharma world. The dharma world is a very simple world. It is the world of unified life, which is called oneness.

The dharma world is an all-embracing world where the human world and the spiritual world are intimately interacting to produce a greater world. That is called dependent origination. What causes this mutually interdependent world to function? Dharma! When I was studying with Reirin Yamada Roshi, he talked about a child's top painted with many colors. Those colors are the individual worlds of all living beings. When the top spins, the colors forget themselves and merge into one color. That movement is the pure nature of dharma.

The dharma world is activity, motion; it is the momentum energy of one moment of time. That one moment is not something to count. It has no length, no width—nothing. It is not a fixed idea; it is an event. Dogen says it is being-time.

One moment of time is the life of all sentient beings. You cannot escape from time because you are alive within time. The aliveness of your life exists within one moment of time. This one moment of aliveness is called everyday life. So day after day, century after century, all we have to do is live in this moment. This is our Zen practice.

In Zen practice we try to handle the activity of each moment with a clear and open mind. Finally you can experience a total calmness

that is brightening your life and filling it with aliveness. Your life is calm and simultaneously alive in a dynamic way. That is peace and harmony, repose and bliss. In Japanese we call this *anjin*, peaceful mind.

Peaceful mind understands the content of a moment: your own life is interrelating with the life of all beings in the universe. And because this moment is unified, all living beings become the permanent furniture of your mind. At that time you realize your true self.

Dogen's Flowers in the Sky

“Flowers in the sky” is a traditional Buddhist expression for delusion, something produced by dualistic human consciousness, like an eye with cataracts seeing an illusion as something real. But Dogen Zenji saw the traditional understanding of “flowers in the sky” as a misunderstanding of Buddha’s teaching because it works just on the surface. So in *Shobogenzo Kuge* (Flowers in the Sky), Dogen Zenji examines this expression more deeply. Instead of seeing “flowers in the sky” dualistically, Dogen sees it as an expression of one total reality.

In Japanese, the character for sky has two meanings. Sky is the vastness of space and also, according to Buddhist philosophy, it is emptiness: the original nature of being, the lively energy of life itself. The lives of all beings, animate and inanimate, are supported by that magnificent energy of being, which is called Buddha.

Dogen tries to teach us that all forms, everything you can experience in your six senses, are nothing but the original energy of life—Buddha. So first, everything that exists in the human world—delusion, enlightenment, hell, or hungry ghosts—whatever it is, must be seen and accepted as Buddha. Then we can understand the teaching of Buddhism. Without this understanding, we cannot see how precious and sublime human life is and Buddha’s teaching doesn’t make sense.

Oneness and Multiplicity

Dogen's "Flowers in the Sky," translated by Thomas Cleary (1986), begins with lines of a poem by the Zen ancestor Bodhidharma: "The founder of Zen said, 'One flower opens with five petals, forming a fruit, which ripens of its own accord.'" Bodhidharma seems to be talking about a common, natural event, but in terms of Buddha's eye, his poem has a very profound meaning. So to touch the heart and spirit of how one flower is blooming and maturing into fruit, let's see "one flower opens with five petals" as an expression of unity or oneness.

One flower means one Buddha. The whole world is one single Buddha. That is real Buddha, the pure energy at the depth of existence. When that energy functions, the human world blooms. Then, within this one Buddha, particular beings appear as five petals or billions of petals. Each thing that exists in the human world, and every situation in everyday life, is a petal. But those petals are not different from the flower; they are exactly the one flower—Buddha! Buddha is omnipresent because everything is the manifestation of real Buddha.

Dogen says: "One should study the time of this flower's blooming, as well as its light and color. The multiplicity of one flower is five petals; the opening of five petals is one flower." If you deeply research the character of time, you find that time is just life in motion. From moment to moment the universe is working together as one whole, constantly creating something new.

In each and every moment, the whole world arises as one being and manifests itself in the multiplicity of the human world. One flower appears and seems to be separate from everything else. But going deeper we can see that flower as the whole universe. Dogen Zenji tries to train us to do that, because the life of one flower is exactly the same as your life.

Life is always arising. Blooming as five petals is the arising of a flower's pure life energy as one moment of time. When five petals open, that energy appears in the form of a flower. So we can see the

blooming of a flower as the movement of the whole universe, which is manifesting itself as the human world of form.

Each moment of time is the unified functioning of the whole world, and blooming is its light. What is that light? Dogen said light is the unity of an eyeball and its cornea working as one. When an eyeball functions, simultaneously the whole world arises, colors appear, and a flower blooms. So I think the time of a flower blooming is exactly the light and color of a flower blooming.

The light and color of your life is your being alive in the human world as the manifestation of Buddha. Aliveness means that wherever you may be, whatever you may do, Buddha is present there. That is your buddha-nature. Even when you are asleep, your heart keeps on beating, and your lungs keep on breathing because your life is manifesting the unity of the whole universe. This is real reality—Life with a capital L. Life is alive. The life of all beings is just like this.

Dogen teaches us that in every aspect of everyday life there is a magnificent event. Your everyday life is the blooming of the whole world, and all your activities are five petals. Day by day, flowers are blooming: flowers of *gassho* (bowing), flowers of *zazen*, and flowers of having a meal. Then, very naturally, the flower is ripened of its own accord, and it makes your life mature. That is called forming a fruit. Forming a fruit is the great time and the great opportunity where a flower, a *gassho*, or *zazen* opens and forms its own result, which is called *bodhi*-mind, enlightenment, nirvana, or practice.

Whatever activity you do, you can open your life and fit into the rhythm of this very moment. When you fit into the rhythm of the great energy of being, you feel relief. You realize that you are allowed to live; you are permitted to exist in this world, because the whole world is blooming within your human body. At that time you become you as you really are, and your existence very naturally becomes just what is. Sometimes we say as-it-isness or thusness. You are exactly there, alone, just what is. This is the true human being.

A Teacher of Dharma

Dogen Zenji returns to Bodhidharma's poem, saying: "Where the principle of one flower comes across is 'I originally came to this land to communicate the teaching and save deluded sentient beings.'" This land is the human world. It is Buddha's life, and it is your life because your life is Buddha's life. So what is Bodhidharma's "I"?

If you think about your life, immediately you have an idea of yourself as "I." But your real self is a kind of energy. It is the original energy, which is constantly arising at the very incipient moment. At the very incipient moment, there is no "I." There is nothing to call "I" because there is no perception of "I." There is no "who." There is nothing to call "who" because you realize there is no existence to attach to as your own. At that time you are simultaneously this very moment itself, extending into every inch of the universe. So self becomes the whole universe. This is oneness. When you practice based on oneness, self is no longer just you; self is you and also others.

Oneness is our base, the basic place where we stand up as a descendent of Buddha, the foundation upon which we build up our life. Then, whatever happens, eternal life is in your heart, and you share your life without creating any arrogance. This is the time of communicating the teaching to save deluded sentient beings. You become a Zen teacher. You can teach how sublime human beings are, and simultaneously people feel relief. That is to save all sentient beings.

In the *Saddharma Pundarika Sutra (Lotus Sutra)* [chapter 10](#), "A Teacher of the Law," translated by Bunnō Katō, Shakyamuni Buddha explained how good sons and daughters who want to preach on that sutra after his death should preach it. He said that before you teach, you have to enter the room of the Buddha, wear the robe of Buddha, and sit on the seat of Buddha. Buddha said, "The abode of the *Tathagata* is the great compassionate heart within all living beings; the robe of the *Tathagata* is the gentle and forbearing heart; the throne of the *Tathagata* is the voidness of all laws." When you cultivate these three practices, very naturally you can just sit down and start to preach.

Buddha's abode is not a room in a structure; it is the room of human existence, the great energy of life. When you see the depths of human existence and touch the original life of all beings, very naturally you open your heart to all beings. Buddha's robe is the symbol of patience. If you want to teach, you have to be right in the middle of human life. To wear the robe is to be in peace, to practice conciliation and tolerance, and to continue under all circumstances. The seat of Buddha is not some fancy platform; it is emptiness, the original nature of being. There is nothing particular you can cling to, you can think, or you can imagine. You just have to just be there. Then you can teach.

At one of my talks a man criticized my English. He said, "Hey, teacher! With your English, do you believe you can communicate with Americans?" I said, "No, I don't"; I said, "Yes, I do." I took both answers, so I had to explain. I asked him, "How much can you communicate with people in your own language? The more it is easy to use your mother language, the more you make mistakes. I am not proud of my English. I am not proud of my Japanese either. Whatever language you use, it's pretty difficult to communicate with people. I don't believe I can completely communicate with people using words, but I have to talk anyway. I have to be here, just be together with people wholeheartedly, and start talking. That's it! That's all I can do with a different language." So the man kept quiet.

The more we use language, the more we create a gap. But before we talk, already there is communication. In the story of Shakyamuni Buddha's life, wherever he went, people felt completely peaceful, and very naturally they bowed to him, even before he began to teach. That is entering the room, wearing the robe, and sitting on the seat. It is to save all sentient beings. If you want to preach Buddha's teaching, I think you must be this kind of person. Then you can teach. Even if there are some aspects you cannot explain, still you can demonstrate eternal life from your heart.

Meditative Study

Dogen Zenji says, “Where the light and color are sought must be this meditative study.” Light and color is the manifestation of Buddha in the human world. Meditation is seeking for the truth. Seeking for the truth is not a temporary desire to get something. It is not researching a particular concept or idea. To seek the truth is to continually watch human life, searching, exploring forever, life after life. We research the light of a tree, the light of a bird, the light of a human being, the light of suffering. That is to study or to learn the self.

Your time and opportunity to study and learn the self is your human life right here, right now. Human life is very precious for us. Your life is very precious, something more than you understand. Even if you do not like yourself, you are alive because your life is not only your life; your life is also others’ lives. So please take best care of your human life. Day by day, deal with yourself as one being who is expressing the oneness of all being, in other words, as Buddha.

Zen practice is to manifest a single Buddha within your human body by doing something with wholeheartedness. When you bow wholeheartedly, bowing is the functioning of Buddha and bowing blooms with the whole world. Doing zazen with wholeheartedness is practicing shikantaza. When you do zazen like this, you are not distinguishing particular aspects of the human world; there is only the spirit of zazen manifesting one Buddha within your body.

That same spirit is alive throughout the human world, so you can practice it in every aspect of life: walking on the street, talking with people, reading a book. Five petals are opening right now. The skin and muscle of Buddha are manifesting right here. So let the flower of your life force bloom as your activity, whatever it is, and just do it as Buddha.

When you think of this practice with the frontal lobe of human knowledge, you don’t believe it, because human knowledge cannot see the panorama picture of your life working with all sentient beings. If you cannot see it, be quiet and patient, practice zazen day by day, and try to learn it. Study the time and light of your breathing, the time of the light of your existence, because your existence is exactly the same and one with the whole universe.

Through spiritual practice you can go beyond human knowledge to directly touch the life of nature, the life of the sun, and the real life of human beings. You get into nature's life, nature comes into your life, and there is communion. At that time you discover your true self.

Cause and Effect in Zen Practice

We think that cause and effect are separate because, in the realm of the time process, a flower blooms and a fruit comes later. But according to Buddhist philosophy, cause and effect exist not only in the realm of time; they exist also in the realm of space. In the realm of space, the provisional names "cause" and "effect" are loosened, and cause and effect are the same. How can we understand this? We have to see cause and effect not in terms of a dualistic view, but in terms of the universal realm.

Well, if you practice zazen, start to ask yourself: who makes me sit? It may be you. You want to know something deep, so you make an effort to sit. Or it may be something more than you, something you don't know. That something more is a kind of energy, which is there before you put a name on it. When we put a name on that energy, it is called Buddha, buddha-nature, or real self. We use different terms, but each one means the same original energy of the whole world, the boundless and compassionate energy of being, which is constantly coming up from deep in the ground like spring water.

Original energy is always here, but it's very difficult to see it or touch it. Still, when you sit in zazen as shikantaza, you can touch the "something" that makes your life alive, because the source of zazen is nothing but that original energy. This energy is also the source of your life, so you and zazen have this same cause. That's why, when the energy of the whole world appears in your zazen practice, you can accept it. Energy appears and is called zazen, but zazen is just a temporary name given to that activity. So what is zazen practice? It is just energies coming up. That energy is called Buddha. Buddha means original energy of life. So let's sit down and practice zazen as Buddha.

To practice zazen as Buddha, all you have to do is accept the energy of the whole world in the realm of your zazen practice and abide firmly in zazen. Then fruit appears in the whole world as the effect. That is enlightenment, which is also called Buddha. In Zen we sometimes say things like “only Buddha and Buddha” or “Buddha appears and Buddha forms his own life.” We say so because we practice Buddha as the cause of our zazen and Buddha appears as the effect of zazen.

In “Flowers in the Sky,” Dogen says, “It is ‘the forming of the fruit is up to your forming of the fruit’—this is called ‘ripening of its own accord.’ ‘Ripening of its own accord’ means cultivating the cause and experiencing the result.” So if we want to make our life mature fruit, what do we have to cultivate?

Before doing something, human beings always want to know what to expect as a result. Then the actual result is sometimes a great encouragement for us, and sometimes it’s a disappointment. So we try to do more, or we give up. We’re always going up and down like this. But when you sit down on your cushion, there is no space to poke your head into thinking what merit you can gain from zazen. If you always do zazen in terms of getting a result, you will miss the most important point. First you have to participate in zazen; then you can see the result.

“Cultivating the cause” means throw away your thinking and become calm and pure. Then you can accept the energy of the whole universe as cause and see that energy in the whole universe as effect. At that time, in the realm of zazen as cause, effect is simultaneously there. That is living beyond suffering, which is the fruit of zazen. This is the maturing of your total personality, which is “ripening of its own accord.” So from beginning to end, just sit down. Accept zazen as a source of energy, and just sit down. Day by day, all we have to do is live like this. Then your life becomes mature.

How you develop and mature your life is very simple. Whatever kind of occupation or talent you have, if you want to develop properly, you have to practice it every day. Then practice will arise in everyday life and brighten your life. When I was young, I couldn’t

believe this. Even though my teacher always told me that Buddha's teaching is not something exciting, it's simple practice in everyday life, I didn't believe that my boring temple life was a vivid passage to make my life mature. But now I know that this is really true.

Everyday life is pretty busy. But if you calm down, you can touch the core of your activity, whatever it is. So for a moment anyway, forget your thoughts. Just stand up in that energy and open yourself. Very naturally the fruit of bodhi mind is formed. This cause and effect is called *inen kaman*. *In* means "cause," *en* is "round" or "perfect," *ka* is "result" or "effect," and *man* is "fullness, perfection, or completion," just like a full moon. So cause is perfect and effect is perfect. This is the practice of Buddhism.

Buddhist practice is calm, stable, and not showy. It is to make the root of your life strong. Continually, under all circumstances, we stand up in oneness and deal with ourselves and others from that place. So take wholehearted care of the life of your work, the life of seeing a friend, the life of standing in the field, the life of feeling the morning. From beginning to end, whatever happens, this is our practice. This is the true way of life for a Buddhist.

This is the essence of Buddha's teaching and the point that Dogen Zenji emphasizes strongly in "Flowers in the Sky." If you quietly read this chapter again and again, I think you can feel how compassionately Dogen tries to teach us. Any chapter of the *Shobogenzo* is really filled with Dogen's compassion, kindness, and charitable heart. You will appreciate Dogen's way, because this is Shakyamuni Buddha's real heart, real teaching.

Untangling Knots

Human life is kind of like a bunch of tangled thread. The pure energy of life arises as the incipient moment, but in the second moment something happens. All of a sudden that energy is twisted. Lots of threads are tangled into knots and many problems come up: pain, suffering, emotions, and difficulties with human relations. We

cannot escape this human situation; we have to handle these knots. How? It's not so simple.

A knot is created by many conditions: your life, others' lives, nature, cause and effect. It's very complicated. You cannot understand your life only in terms of your own ideas, emotions, feelings, and the narrow telescope of human knowledge. If you handle your life only in terms of duality, irritation always follows and you create more problems. So be careful. Be patient. Don't deal with a problem quickly, with a short temper. Hold it gently and think carefully what to do.

Before you see a problem, your life is already working in the big scale of the self, the dharma world where all sentient beings are living together in peace and harmony. Everything in our dualistic human world is nothing but a single Buddha. So we have to take care of all beings as Buddha. The grass in the field is Buddha, your thoughts and emotions are Buddha, and *you* are Buddha. So when you face a problem, first accept your life as Buddha, and take best care of your knotted life as Buddha. How?

Accepting and taking care of your knotted life as Buddha means you accept full responsibility for your life—no excuses! This is the point we have to constantly surrender ourselves to. When you see a knot, before you start to analyze it, surrender yourself to the whole world, and vow to use your life for the sake of others. Then open yourself, and accept that knot with warm-heartedness. Handling a knot like this, you take best care of a knot and work on it in the realm of the whole world. Finally the knot comes into your life, and you come into the knot's life without any gap. When knots are not separate from you, knots turn into Buddha.

By the practice of accepting a problem and cultivating it as a flower in the sky, in other words as Buddha, very naturally your mind is soft and kind; your heart is patient, gentle, and forbearing. Without this basic attitude toward human beings and the human world, you cannot deal with the ugly and miserable aspects of human life. So accept all kinds of knots with compassion; deal with everyday life with compassion. Then you can be patient and wait for meaning.

Try to always be mindful of your great original buddha-nature. In other words, try to maintain the pure energy arising in the incipient moment and try not to forget it. Then you can work on a problem in the small scale of the human world. But if you recognize that you are stuck in the second moment, the third moment, or the millionth moment, just go back to cultivating your pure energy. This is called mindfulness practice.

When you take care of knots with the spirit and heart of your existence, very naturally, one by one, each knot is loosened. Sometimes, if you get to one thread, then two, three, or four threads follow, and all of a sudden they are untangled. Where? Not in the dualistic world, but in the unified same-and-one ground of the whole universe. This unknotted life is called freedom, liberation.

So as simply as you can, accept knots softly, gently, with kindness and generosity, and then take care of them patiently. Patience is working on the knots one by one, with a calm mind, stability, relaxation, and assurance in your existence. Through handling all aspects of your human life with kindness and forbearance, you can touch the core of your life where you experience deep communion with others. By touching the core of the life of all beings, you can communicate Buddha's teaching to others and save all sentient beings. This is the bodhisattva's attitude toward human life.

THE SPIRITUAL MIRROR

THE ORIGINAL NATURE of existence is always present in your life, but when your pure nature is tainted with some intellectual understanding, you don't really know how to live in peace. You don't know because between the pure nature of your existence and the objects running through your consciousness, there is a kind of veil or curtain.

It's pretty hard to recognize that this curtain exists, but emotionally you sense it is there. You don't exactly know what it is, but something always bothers you. No matter what you do, there is always a feeling of uneasiness or restlessness. You aren't satisfied. So you need a way to lift that veil and see your own pure nature. How?

In the *Madhyanta-vibhaga*, an early Yogachara Buddhist scripture written in India by Maitreya, with commentary by Vasubandhu, it says, "Buddha takes away the curtain between object and mirror." When you attain enlightenment, the veil of your human consciousness drops off, and you look in that mirror. What do you see? Your own pure nature is reflected there, but you see nothing but movement—constant change. That movement is the pure nature of your existence. Pure energy is arising from moment to moment in the form of your own human life.

Dogen's Ancient Mirror

The spiritual mirror is very important for us. Why? You can experience your pure nature through living with compassion and kind attention, but you cannot see your own purity objectively. It's the same with your eyes. Your eye cannot see itself; it can see itself only when it is reflected in a mirror. That is why, to deeply understand our human life, we need the spiritual mirror that reflects the essential nature of life.

What is the spiritual mirror? It's pretty hard to explain in words the life of all sentient beings. That dynamic existence is unexplainable. So sometimes we just say "the whole universe." But plainly speaking, it is the truth. So asking "What is the spiritual mirror?" means you are asking "What is the truth?"

How does the mirror reflect the essence of human life? In *Shobogenzo Kokyo* (The Ancient Mirror), Eihei Dogen makes three points: the mirror is the place where all sentient beings coexist in peace and harmony, the mirror is transparent, and the mirror liberates all beings so life can create itself anew. This is a very important teaching. When we understand the mirror, we can try our best to approach that mirror and work with that energy.

The Coexistent Place

The ancient mirror is the place where all sentient beings experience the same things and become the same as buddhas and ancestors. Dogen Zenji says: "The ancient mirror is what buddhas and patriarchs have received, preserved, and transmitted personally."

Enlightenment is personal, but it's really for everyone. When you realize how sublime human life is, you cannot hold it for yourself; very naturally you want to say something about it to your sons, to your daughters, to your friends. Every single buddha and ancestor has personally received the ancient mirror and tried to hand it down to the next generation. So it's personal. But from generation to generation they all received, preserved, and transmitted the same mirror, so it's public.

Then Dogen says, “They are all the same and one with view, face, shape, mold, practice, and enlightenment.” When your life is reflected in the ancient mirror, your view is exactly the same view that buddhas and ancestors experienced. Your face is also the same face. Everyone’s face is different, of course, but everyone whose life is reflected in that huge mirror has the same look. If you seek for the spiritual life, your mind becomes soft, kind, and compassionate, and your look becomes the same as buddhas and ancestors. Yes, it is true—other people can see the same feeling there.

Your shape also becomes the same. Even though you don’t face me when you do zazen, I can see that shape from your back. And also, your life is molded in the same pattern of morality and ethics. From that one pattern, myriad different types of life come up because that one pattern is freely changeable in every circumstance. But even though your circumstances are constantly changing, your heart and your lifestyle are in the same pattern. That is faith and stability. To reach that same view, face, shape, and mold, we practice. Then, through that practice, you can walk hand in hand with people, whoever they are.

If you see your life reflected in the spiritual mirror, very naturally you are walking the same path that buddhas and ancestors walked. Anyone who walks on that path can have the same result: straightforwardness, honesty, magnanimity, and wisdom. For example, pay attention to Christian ministers. Just look at them. You can see it. There is the same look, the same compassionate mind, and the same way of walking. They are walking one path, which is called practice.

The spiritual mirror implies a vast expanse of space where all sentient beings coexist simultaneously in peace, in silence. It is the place where all beings walk together in harmony, beyond race, social position, personality, thoughts, or cultural forms. Japanese monkeys walk with elephants in India. Birds and butterflies talk together.

Everything is reflected in that mirror. So when you stand up there and see your life reflected, you see that your life is working with all sentient beings. Dogen Zenji says: “When the barbarian comes, he is

reflected in that mirror, eight thousand or ten thousand. Also when the Chinese comes, he is reflected in it, containing one moment or ten thousand years. Also when the past, present, or the buddhas and ancestors come, they are reflected.” When you see your life like this, you can live with all sentient beings in peace and harmony, no complaints.

The Christian monk Saint Francis of Assisi was known as a holy person who could talk with birds. I think the birds and Saint Francis stood up together in the vast coexistent space and talked together in peace and harmony. When a person and a bird are reflected in that ancient mirror, it is not the karmic form of their lives that walks and talks together; it is the essence of their lives. That’s why Saint Francis could talk with the birds.

Saint Francis was a person who really had a missionary spirit. If you want to be a priest, you must have this kind of spirit. You must be present with people of different races, cultures, and personalities and communicate in that same way, because originally all human beings are the same.

Clear Transparent Functioning

When I was fourteen, my mother died. It made me very sad. Every night I cried and cried. The more I longed to be with my mother, the more I realized that my mother was far away from me. Then all of a sudden, very smoothly, my mother came into my heart. It was like spring water coming up from deep in the ground. I felt deep appreciation for my mother, and I stopped crying. I didn’t know why, but I felt my mother alive in my heart. What happened? When my mother came into my heart, she was reflected in the same mirror where I see my own reflection, and her face and my face became one.

In “The Ancient Mirror,” Dogen mentions that mirror in this way: “Saying ‘not dim either inside or outside’ means that inside is not against outside, and vice versa. It is not front or back; both of them are visible as one whole.”

This point is a little difficult to understand because an ordinary mirror has a front that is clear and a back that is dim. But the spiritual mirror has no front or back, so it is completely clear. Also, it doesn't have an inside as opposed to an outside. In other words, it has no limitation: inside is simultaneously outside, and outside is simultaneously inside. The ancient mirror is completely transparent. But it is still a mirror. When your life is reflected in that mirror, you also become transparent.

It is very difficult to imagine a mirror like that, so temporarily let's say it has a front and a back. If so, then what is the relation between front and back? Dogen says it is like mind and eyes. He says,

The words "mind" and "eye," resembling each other, mean that a man sees a man, and that mind is his eye, both inside and outside the mirror, both of them being visible as one whole. The present self and the world are both the inside and outside of the mirror. There is no difference such as self and other, both of them being visible as one whole. Others are self. Self is others.

You can understand what you see with your eyes because mind and eyes work together as one whole. Temporarily you can distinguish between your mind and eyes, but actually they are not separate; they are interconnected. What about the picture you see with your eyes? Can you say whether it is inside your mind and eyes or outside? What's more, all sentient beings have minds and eyes. So whatever picture you see, it also has mind and eyes.

There is a Zen story about this. A donkey poked his head into a well and saw his face reflected in the water. At the same time, the well looked at the donkey and saw itself reflected in the donkey's eyes. So in the well there is a donkey, and in the donkey there is a well. So who is seeing whom? Nothing to say! There is just a donkey looking at a donkey, a well looking at a well. In other words, you see yourself.

You are you, and Katagiri is Katagiri. You and I have different faces, different forms, and different lifestyles. When we stand up

together in front of the ancient mirror and look at the mirror very calmly, we can see that we are different. But if you continue to look at my face in the mirror, and I look at your face, something happens.

When we look in that mirror, our minds and eyes see the same essential nature of existence, and our individual forms disappear. You become transparent, and my look penetrates into your heart; I become transparent, and your look penetrates into my heart. In other words, my reflection and your reflection become transparent simultaneously. We are like two Caspers. Do you know Casper the Ghost, the cartoon on television? Two Caspers see each other, walk together in harmony, and disappear. Our different faces can come together and become one because originally, in the vast coexistent space, we are not separate.

When your life is working with the whole universe, there is no subject and object. At that time, mind and eye, inside and outside, self and other are not separate things. If there is no form of inside as opposed to outside and no sense of self and other, you experience your life as something completely transparent and clear. That is the functioning of the spiritual mirror.

In every person's reflection we can see a manifestation of human life, the human mind, and the human heart. That is why we have to make every possible effort to see and understand cultures and personalities different from our own. So let's live together in peace. You stand up in that mirror with a calm mind, other people stand up there, and finally those different faces become the one face of the essential nature of human existence.

Liberation and Creation

When you and all sentient beings are reflected together in the spiritual mirror, all are transparent and liberated by that transparency. Then, immediately, in the next moment, your individual face comes up again, very clearly. That is called creation. You are constantly re-creating your life anew.

Dogen Zenji tells this story: Gensha came forward saying, “What will become of them when the clear mirror appears suddenly?” Seppo said, “Both of them will appear.” “I don’t agree.” “What then?” “Ask me again please.” “What will become of them when the clear mirror appears suddenly?” “It will disintegrate.”

Seppo and Gensha are discussing what happens when a clear mirror sees another clear mirror. When you see the clear mirror, you are also the clear mirror, so Gensha is asking his student about this. Seppo says both are clear mirrors, which means they both disappear. But Gensha is not satisfied with this answer. So Seppo asks his teacher: How about you? What do you say? Gensha says both mirrors disintegrate. They are shattered, broken into pieces—hundreds, myriads of tiny, broken shards. Dogen comments on this story and finally he says, “What then is the shape of the broken pieces? It is eternally deep water and the moon in the sky.”

Through our experience, our study, and our practice, we try to see the mirror where all life is reflected. We try to understand what truth is. So you practice and then, when you look in this mirror, what happens? All of a sudden the mirror shatters. It breaks into pieces and there is no reflection. The reflection of you, me, trees, birds, American culture, and all sentient beings disintegrates, and there is nothing there; there is just the vast openness of the sky.

The vast openness of the sky is called *akasha* in Sanskrit. It is very difficult to translate *akasha*. Sometimes we say “sky” or “space,” but it means something more than ordinary space. Before there is a clear mirror, before there are any reflections in the mirror, there is just a vast transparent openness where all sentient beings coexist in peace, in harmony.

When the mirror shatters, the form of your life breaks into pieces. Your consciousness cannot make any discrimination, so nothing at all is separate from you. If you see a tree, you have no concept of “tree” because nothing separates you from the tree. Then, in the next moment, according to the functioning of causes and conditions, energy shoots up from the ground and re-forms the frame of a tree. There is a tree, but it is not the tree you usually see. The new tree is

like a snake after shedding its skin. It has a new form and that form is shining.

That shining tree is a clear mirror for you because it is you. You see your own life in the tree's life. You can see your own life there because a tree is not something created separately from a human being. So your life is also like a new snake. A new human being appears in the form of your five skandhas, and your life is shining, like the moon. You are reflecting pure energy, the essential nature of life. At that time you really appreciate your life.

If you see a tree, you really appreciate it because the tree is you and you are the tree, so very naturally there is communication; you and the tree can talk together. When you talk with a tree that is changing color in autumn, maybe you write a poem. That poem is something more than its words; a kind of sentimental, huge, deep, and completely inconceivable world is there. Your poem is a clear mirror reflecting the essential nature of human life.

So according to Dogen's story, what happens when your clear mirror meets a clear mirror? Both mirrors shatter into pieces, and there is just a great vast openness. That is liberation. You are free. Then, next, what should you do? We must not forget re-creation. So come back and pay careful attention to every single aspect of your daily life: getting up in the morning, washing your face, having breakfast, and walking on the street. That is called creating your life. This is very important. Otherwise you cannot take care of your life freely, and you cannot build up a peaceful world.

It's hard to understand what the point of Zen teaching is exactly. Maybe you think it is to find the solution to a koan, a Zen puzzle. I don't think this is the real purpose. Maybe you think that the main purpose of Zen is to attain enlightenment. I don't think this is Zen. It is a part of Zen, but not the whole.

Zen Buddhism emphasizes the best way to live in terms of Dogen's third point: from moment to moment the five skandhas of your body and mind are liberated and then re-form to create a new life. This process is the maturing of life. It's working in the life of all sentient beings.

If you want to mature your life, you have to consider all three points: coexistence, transparency, and creation. Otherwise your life is up in the air, and you can become crazy by spiritual life. For example, if you see your life reflected in the ancient mirror and experience how wonderful life is, you feel excited, fantastic. But maybe you start to think that all things are the same: right or wrong, good or bad—all are Buddha. This is confusion! If you are lucky, you become a mysterious person, putting on a performance to gain people's respect. If you are unlucky, you are in jail or in a mental hospital. So finally you have to reach the third point and come back to re-creation.

You are already in the ancient mirror, so try to find a way to calm down and reflect your life. Again and again, stand up in the coexistent place, see the clear mirror, experience it breaking into pieces, and come back to everyday life. Create a new human life with wisdom based on what you have seen. Then your life is really rooted on earth. You can live in peace, and through your everyday life, you show a peaceful way of life to others.

The Maturing of Human Life

I think the maturing of human life is like a persimmon ripening. When the persimmon fruit becomes red, it is still hard, but it tastes good. If you leave the fruit on the tree, it becomes soft and perfectly sweet. But the ripe persimmon doesn't stay on the branch. It drops on the ground, and all its guts come out. That persimmon is never going back to the branch. It is free, liberated. That is total, perfect maturity—Buddha.

If you see your life reflected in the spiritual mirror, your life shatters into pieces, and you experience something deep. You are liberated. Your life is still there, but it is completely liberated. Then your life turns a new leaf. From myriad broken pieces on the ground, your life re-forms. Your five skandhas shoot up again, and from your new body and mind a kind of light appears that others can see.

When you have experienced your life reflected in the spiritual mirror, you can take care of your concrete, daily life based on that mirror. Your five skandhas seem to be the same as before, but you can deal with your five skandhas in a different way, paying attention to living with maturity and an open heart. That transformation is the final goal we are seeking.

Maturity is not a concept. It is a way to demonstrate your life every day based on the spiritual mirror. When you demonstrate your life, your five skandhas are reflected in that mirror beyond the understanding of your human consciousness. That's why Zen teachers always tell you to deal with everyday life as Buddha. When you deal with your eating bowl as Buddha, that bowl is not merely a bowl; it is nothing but Buddha's face. That is why you have to take best care of your eating bowl. We don't understand this, but please do it anyway.

Well, look at your life before you started Zen practice. How often did you take care of things carelessly? But after sitting zazen and studying Buddha's teaching, which is always telling you to take care of your life, very naturally a different way of life comes up. You take good care of your boots and toilet paper. You cover your book with a wrapping cloth and hold it with a sincere heart. You don't know why, but something has penetrated your life. You can feel that. That is maturity. Maturity lets you live together with all sentient beings in peace and harmony.

Dogen Zenji says that to study Buddhism is to study the self. We have to see our life and learn what human life is. We have to learn our bodies, our minds, and the whole panorama picture of life. Your body and mind is your mirror. Your thinking is your mirror. Your occupation is also your mirror. If you are a mountaineer, through being a mountaineer, you can learn the life of the trees, the life of birds, life of frogs, life of Americans, and life of Japanese. You can learn.

We have to start to learn. But it's very difficult because we have lots of prejudices—just like an octopus. Do you know about the octopus? There's a very simple way for a fisherman to catch an

octopus. Just tie a rope to any kind of pot and let it sink to the bottom of the ocean. An octopus will get into the pot and feel relief. Then the fisherman pulls up on the rope, and the pot starts to move. When the pot moves, the octopus clings to it: “This is *my* territory.” Finally the fisherman catches the octopus.

There are many pots that human beings occupy and depend on to feel relief: Buddhism, Christianity, or national culture. When our pot moves, for example by the functioning of American culture, we cling to our pot. What happens? By egoism, by prejudice, the octopus dies—it commits suicide. So one by one we have to take off our prejudices.

To practice zazen is to take off each prejudice. How? Just sit down. This is the simple practice we do. When you practice zazen as shikantaza, zazen becomes a huge mirror reflecting the life of all sentient beings. You can see the original nature of your own life there. So sit down and reflect your body and mind in that mirror. When you look in that mirror, the usual frame of your life immediately disappears. Then your five skandhas re-form, creating a new frame of body and mind, and your life takes one step toward the future.

Part Three

BODY & MIND

BUDDHA'S BODY

IN MAHAYANA BUDDHIST philosophy, Buddha's body is understood in three ways: *dharmakaya*, *nirmanakaya*, and *sambhogakaya*. This is Buddha's total personality, we say.

Dharmakaya is Buddha's true body. *Dharma* is "truth" and *kaya* means "body." Dharmakaya is the same as the ultimate principle of existence. The subtle nature of dharmakaya is the original source of being, which is nothing but energy. That is the seed of buddha-nature. Everyone has the seed of buddha-nature and deserves to let it grow, blossom, and bear fruit. Where can that seed grow? That is *nirmanakaya*, Buddha's transformation body. *Nirmanakaya* is the phenomenal world: your human body, your mind, your circumstances, and everything around you.

But in order for your seed to grow, you have to put it in an appropriate place. That is *sambhogakaya*, Buddha's joy body. *Sambhogakaya* is the place where there is harmony between truth and the phenomenal world, and the seed of your buddha-nature becomes the mature fruit of your life. That fruit has its own peculiar, incredible flavor according to the conditions of the particular place in which it grew. Rain, soil, the warmth of the sun—everything works together, and the seed matures into wonderful, ripe fruit with a flavor you cannot put into words.

When you describe Buddha's three bodies, it's kind of a buddhology that makes you confused. But you can actually practice this. How? Whoever you are, you can manifest the true body with

your human body. Even Shakyamuni Buddha had a human body. But Buddha's human body is something more because you can see truth actualized there. So first accept your human body, and then use it to manifest something more than what you understand—something deep.

Bodhi Tree: Two Poems on Buddha's Body

According to the history of Zen Buddhism in China, there were two famous disciples of Hung-jen, the fifth patriarch. They were Shen-hsiu, who became the founder of the Northern School (called "gradual Zen"), and Hui-neng, who became the sixth patriarch and the founder of the Southern School (called "sudden Zen"). In the *Sutra of Hui-neng (Platform Sutra)*, Hui-neng says that one day, Hung-jen invited all monks to write poems showing their understanding of enlightenment. So Shen-hsiu wrote:

This body is the *bodhi* tree.
The mind is like a mirror bright;
Take heed to keep it always clean
And let not dust collect upon it.

Saying "This body is the *bodhi* tree" means Shen-hsiu understands his body as dharmakaya—the completely pure absolute body. In Buddhism we cannot separate the body from the mind. So if you have a pure body like the *bodhi* tree, then your mind is like a pure, bright mirror. That mirror is always working, accepting and reflecting everything without discrimination, without attaching to anything. But in the human world, that pure mirror is covered up by a kind of curtain or by the dust of dualistic consciousness, so we don't know our pure mind is there. If we clean off the dust, we can discover our original nature.

Shen-hsiu attained enlightenment after many years of practice, so his poem says that to attain enlightenment, you must practice and purify your body and mind gradually. According to Shen-hsiu, purity

and impurity are something that you can get or avoid, through practicing or not practicing. If you practice, your body becomes pure. If you don't, your body is impure. So Shen-hsiu expends great energy to keep his body and mind pure through his practice.

When Hui-neng read this poem, he recognized that Shen-hsiu's idea of purity came from a dualistic sense of purity as something opposed to impurity. So he wrote his own poem:

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

According to Hui-neng, whether you think your body is pure or not pure, it doesn't matter. You are already perfectly pure because you are already Buddha. So at any time you can suddenly realize your *bodhi* tree body, which is completely beyond your perception of purity and impurity. Having that realization is what he means by "no *bodhi* tree." This is real, supreme purity.

"Since all is Void" means real purity is beyond any perception of purity or impurity: there is no form, no color, no smell, nothing to grasp. Saying "no form" means something is constantly working dynamically. If so, there is nothing solid for dust to cover up. The truth of no solid form is why supreme purity is called nothingness or emptiness. Emptiness is just constant motion. If you try to grasp emptiness or the ultimate nature of being through your consciousness, you have already fallen into a dualistic view.

Nothing from the outside can be brought into the purity of emptiness. If you bring even the slightest thing into it, that thing is something defiled, a concept fabricated by your consciousness. Hui-neng said, "There is no *bodhi* tree / Nor stand of mirror bright," because he has passed through the net of seeking to attain enlightenment and gone beyond the concept of enlightenment. Forgetting that stage of enlightenment that deals with purity and

impurity, Hui-neng just goes on working his human life as pure being, as Buddha.

Dogen's Not-Pure Body

Human beings pretty easily get attached to our property, our position, and our clever statements, and also our bodies. So to keep his disciples from attachment to their human bodies, Shakyamuni Buddha taught the mindfulness practice of observing the body as impure. This practice also occurs in Christian monasteries, where they look at human skeletons.

We should try to understand the deep meaning of this teaching, because if you try to copy the mindfulness practice of observing the body as impure in a traditional way, based on ideas of good and bad, it becomes nothing but a moral problem. I don't mean that the traditional instruction is wrong; it's pretty good. But real purity is beyond dualistic ideas of purity and impurity. If you practice mindfulness based on a dualistic understanding, you will never have a peaceful mind.

Practically speaking, your body is one being. But when you think about your body as being either pure or impure, you have already split your one body into two: a pure body and an impure body. So which one is right? Is your body pure or impure? Whichever answer you give, it doesn't hit the mark. It doesn't hit the mark because the idea of purity is a human value.

You believe you can achieve purity by doing something good or avoiding something bad. That's all right, but it's hard to pin down exactly what to do because the human world is constantly changing. Sometimes something we think is good turns into something bad, and something bad becomes something good. So we have to digest our sense of morality by polishing it until it becomes religious life. In religious life we have to polish religion through and through, again and again, going beyond practice based on a moral sense to consider what real religious practice really is.

When religion is thoroughly digested in your life, it becomes no-religion. The negative term “no” or “not” implies transcendence of conceptual thinking coming from your human mind; you become religion itself. That is real religion. Real religion is perfect peace.

Dogen understood the practice of “observing the body as impure” very deeply, completely beyond the traditional understanding. He expresses his understanding in the opening of *Shobogenzo Sanjushichi-bon-bodai-bunpo* (Thirty-Seven Conditions Contributing to Bodhisattva Practice). This passage begins, “Observing the body as not-pure means that one skin bag of the present observing body is the entire universe of the ten directions.”

The ordinary idea of “observing” is to see something in the distance. This is dualistic. Real observation is to merge, or become one with, the dynamic process of observation itself. How can we understand this? According to grammatical structure, a sentence is made up of subject, object, and verb. But when you, as subject, exactly participate in your object, then your object is not something separate from you. You are exactly the same and one—so there is no object. If there is no object, very naturally there can be no subject. What’s left? The verb! Activity itself! That is called pure functioning.

For example, when you are sleeping like a log, there is no sleep for you to observe because you can’t see your own sleep. You don’t perceive what’s going on, but your body and mind are exactly participating in sleep, so they are sleep itself. At that time sleep is not an idea running through your head, so we say it is no-sleep. No-sleep means you are exactly one with the pure functioning of sleep.

It’s very difficult to say anything about this pure functioning. Provisionally we use the word “pure,” but within that purity there is no trace of any concept, so we can also say it is “not-pure.” When the original pure functioning of life itself appears in your human activity and you realize the pure functioning of your life, it is “not-purity” that appears. Original purity manifests as not-purity—this is real purity. So real purity and not-purity are not different; they are the same.

Dogen Zenji's "not-pure" takes your human body far beyond any dualistic ideas of purity or impurity to the place where you cannot put any names on the skin bag of your human body. It is absolutely beyond ideas or concepts, so we say it is empty. If you experience your human body as emptiness, at that time your body is the entire universe in the ten directions, the whole world, one total reality, or Buddha. So next Dogen says,

Since this is the true body, it is observing the body as not-pure, which is vividly hopping along. If there is no body, practice is unattained, teaching is unattained, observation is unattained. No hopping along means that observation is unattained. Already the attainment of observation is completely manifest. You should realize that hopping along is already attained.

In Buddhism, purity is not something you try to attain *by* doing something; it is what you find *within* doing something. When you are right in the middle of activity itself, your activity is very clear, yet you simply can't perceive what that activity is. You are there, but there is no trace of you or the object of your activity. This is called observing the body as not-pure, or observing the body as emptiness. In Sanskrit we say *vipassana*, which means "wisdom," "insight," or "discernment."

Vipassana practice is to see the source of your existence, very clearly. That is right observation. What do you observe? Activity itself! There is nothing but movement; life is just hopping along. Activity itself is called *shikan*, the flow of activity that is not defiled by the perception of your discriminating consciousness.

Zazen as shikantaza is nothing but the experience of touching the flowing source of the human world before you are conscious of your own existence. Even though you are aware of breathing, you don't know what breathing is. You don't know what your human body is; it is just something vividly alive, hopping along, working with the universe—activity itself.

When you do zazen exactly, there is no-zazen. If there is no-zazen, there is no-body and no-attainment of observation. Since there is nothing to be attained by zazen practice, practice is unattained. All you can do is just be there. Just be activity itself. When you cannot separate your skin bag and the universe, there is transcendence—you observe your human body as Buddha. Then your zazen is called shikantaza, and your body is the entire universe in the ten directions.

If you do zazen exactly, you experience tranquility. There is nothing to be attained, so all you have to do is just be there, just enjoy observing your body as emptiness. That is called *samatha*. We say that samatha practice is tranquility, stillness, samadhi, or one-pointedness. But actually you don't really know what the real, pure sense of tranquility is; you just calmly and firmly abide in zazen, which is vividly hopping along.

The true state of hopping along is activity passing through activity to freedom. When your body and mind are perfectly tranquil in zazen, your life touches the source of the human world with your whole body and mind. At that time you experience your life as nothing but flowing process, flowing practice, flowing activity, energy that is gushing out like spring water, constantly gushing up from the ground. Then Dogen says,

The so-called attainment of observation is the daily activities of sweeping the grounds and washing the floors. Because of sweeping the grounds with “which moon is this?” or sweeping the grounds and washing the floor with “the second moon,” there is suchness of the entire great earth.

Here Dogen is talking about case 21 of the *Book of Equanimity* (*Shoyoroku*). In that story, Ungan was sweeping the temple grounds when his dharma brother Dogo passed by and said, “You are working very hard, aren't you?” So Ungan said, “There is another person who doesn't know how hard he is working.” Then Dogo said, “If so, there is a second moon?” Ungan lifted his broom, saying, “Which moon is this?”

In common sense we can say one person works hard and another person doesn't work hard. Here, Dogo makes this distinction, so it implies the dualistic world. But in the pure sense of flowing activity, can we say there is hard work or not hard work? No, you cannot pin down what the pure activity of work is. When your sweeping is working together with the whole universe, there is one moon. But if you observe it dualistically, there is a second moon in your mind.

For example, zazen itself is pure activity, but in many ways zazen isn't pure because many kinds of zazen happen. If you yawn, there is yawning zazen. If you feel bored, there is boring zazen. That is a second moon: yawning zazen, boring zazen. There are many moons. So which moon is real zazen? Is it enlightenment zazen? No. Is it dualistic zazen? No. That is why Ungan holds up the broom and says, "Which moon is this?" In other words, there's nothing to say! So forget all those moons, and just do zazen as pure activity. Then, Dogen says, "There is suchness of the entire great earth."

Pure zazen is exactly this suchness. It is not the suchness of your tiny human world; it is the vastness of the whole world. This is the total picture of the reality you live in. You always do zazen with that vastness. Sitting in zazen you are exactly manifesting the vastness of the whole world. You don't know this, because at that time there is no observation and no body, but still the pure action of zazen is very clear.

This is Dogen's explanation of the significance of the mindfulness practice of observing the body as not-pure. If you read Dogen Zenji's explanation in Japanese, it's like repeating a magic spell. If you understand it well, you will touch the deep source of Buddha's teaching, which penetrates into your life and the life of all sentient beings.

Your human body is a bag of skin, and simultaneously it is something beyond a bag of skin—it is spiritual. So accept your human body as Buddha. What is meant by Buddha? There is something beyond the idea of purity or impurity, something working together with all sentient beings. This is the total picture of your human body. You cannot pin down exactly what it is, but temporarily

we say Buddha. Everyone is this Buddha. So please take care of your human body as Buddha. Constantly have a fresh eye to see, to observe, your human body as Buddha.

When you do this, the Buddha body blooms, and you go over the barrier of what you think of as your body. All your bonds drop away, and you are not affected by distinctions such as the thought of “my body.” That is sambhogakaya, truth manifested within your human body. Next moment, a thought arises and you are back in your ordinary body. Then, if you keep quiet, the Buddha body arises again. The important point is you can do something with your human body because it is more than just your body. You can do it because pure energy is always with you. It’s too close for you to know what it is intellectually, but you can *be* it. This is our practice.

AN INVITATION TO BUDDHA

THE ORIGINAL NATURE of your life is just like a water vein, underground. It's deep and going endlessly. When you touch it, it comes up just like a spring. But it's pretty hard to touch your original nature directly, so maybe you haven't experienced this yet.

Instead of going deep, human beings are always busy just on the surface of life: limiting ourselves, evaluating our capability, and judging our personal nature. If you want to touch the depth of your life, let go of measuring and accept the great openness of your personality. How? Open yourself and invite Buddha. The main purpose of Buddhist practice is to invite the original nature of your existence—Buddha—into your everyday life and experience freedom from human life.

The “Verse of Offering Incense”

The simple practice of offering incense is a great opportunity to invite Buddha into you. When Ikko Narasaki Roshi came from Japan and practiced here, he stood quietly at the altar and offered incense respectfully, with a calm mind. We were very impressed. He didn't explain, but very naturally we tasted what it means to offer incense. Through his behavior I could really feel that he invited Buddha into him, into now.

Some people grumble about offering incense. They say it is just a ritual, and incense is just useless specks of wood dust. Yes, it is a ritual, but ritual really depends on your attitude and behavior. If you think of that ritual as an opportunity to see the original nature of your existence, you can give a great quality to the life of the wood dust, and that wood dust can help you so much.

Buddha said that incense is a messenger to Buddha. People sometimes think this saying in the *Sutra on Sumagadha* means that by offering incense they will have good luck. But if you offer incense thinking Buddha will give you something in return, then incense is really something defiled in the worldly sense.

In the *Discourse on Insight of the Mind*, compiled by Shen-hsiu, it says, “Burning incense doesn’t mean the worldly sense of incense but means the incense of the unconditioned right dharma, because you have to invite the buddhas.” In other words, invite the ultimate nature of your life into your everyday life. This is the point of Buddhist practice. So as simply as you can, offer incense at the altar and bow.

When you offer incense, you can keep in mind the “Verse of Offering Incense.” Here is my translation:

Sila, samadhi, vimoksa incense
Radiant light of the buddhas emits throughout the dharma
world
Homage to the countless buddhas in the ten directions
Permeates into seeing and hearing and manifests nirvana.

This verse has been chanted in Zen monasteries for many years. We don’t know who wrote it, but it is found in the *Shokyo yoshu* (*Chuching yao-chi*), a collection of quotations from Mahayana sutras compiled by Tao-shih, who lived in China during the Tang dynasty. That collection deals with issues related to sudden enlightenment, or seeing original nature and becoming Buddha. Even if you don’t understand this verse exactly, remembering it helps you to open

yourself and invite Buddha. Then you can move toward understanding the significance of offering incense.

Becoming the Body of Buddha

The first line of the “Verse of Offering Incense” says, “Sila, samadhi, vimoksa incense.” This line expresses dharmakaya—Buddha’s true body. There are five kinds of dharmakaya. In Japanese we call this *gobun-hosshin*, the fivefold merit of those who have attained enlightenment. These five are *silā* (precept), *samadhi* (total concentration), *prajna* (wisdom), *moksa* (liberation), and *vimoksa* (wisdom of liberation). The first line of this verse names just three, but actually all five are present there.

Sila, or precept, body means the principle of the original nature of existence and how it functions. As a whole, your life is a huge machine digesting everything. It’s like a big clothes dryer with a glass door. If you watch, you can see many things appear: your shirt comes up, your pants and socks, sometimes napkins come up. It’s very difficult to see the functioning of sila with your human consciousness, but you have another kind of consciousness: intuition.

Your intuition has the great capacity to know everything at a time. So if you introspect yourself very closely, you can notice how your life is functioning. When you take care of sila in the proper way, your life becomes peaceful; if you don’t, your life becomes restless and uneasy. This understanding of precept is quite different from the usual idea that precepts are rules of behavior.

Samadhi body is total concentration or meditation, steadfastly settling down in the oneness of you and your object. Settling down means to trust in the big vehicle called Mahayana. You and everything in the universe, without exception, are traveling together. We are all passengers in one big boat—the universal boat. This is the original state of everyone’s existence. That’s why we have to walk together, hand in hand, and make an effort to live together in peace and harmony.

Prajna, or wisdom, body means to see the bottom of human existence. The bottom of your life is exactly the same as the original nature of existence. If you study the body and mind of the self and introspect constantly, you will reach the dead end of your life. That dead end is like the terminal station of the railroad. The terminal station is the end of the line, but from there you can go anyplace. So when you reach the dead end of your life, immediately your life is free, liberated, and a new life starts. With the wisdom body you can see this.

Moksa is emancipation, or liberation, body. In the *Shokyo yoshu*, Tao-shih says liberation means to “dispel all hindrances fabricated by ignorance.” The original nature of ignorance is exactly the same as the original nature of existence, which is pure. You cannot say ignorance is bad because it is the same as something pure. It’s hard to explain this, but if you ignore the functioning of ignorance, you are always going off course and finding it difficult to live. We have to see how we go astray, so constantly investigate your ignorance. Ask yourself: what is the cause of my going astray? This is researching the self.

Vimoksa is wisdom of liberation body. It is to experience liberation and then be free from your experience. If you taste liberation, you can easily be hooked by liberation. People are very quick to attach to liberation, beauty, or some deep experience we have had through hard work. If you believe in something divine, you attach to that divinity and then you feel comfortable; otherwise you are uneasy. That is not real freedom. So if you experience freedom, next you have to be free from freedom. That is your project.

The fivefold gobun-hosshin is the supreme quality of incense because it guides you to taste the ultimate nature of your life. How? The functioning of sila is the cause of inviting the buddhas. Then sila as cause brings samadhi and prajna into being as result. Samadhi is your practice and prajna is wisdom. The other two, moksa and vimoksa, liberation and wisdom of liberation, are considered the effect. These five kinds of dharmakaya are the merit of those who

have attained enlightenment, but why do they correspond to incense?

Tao-shih says that incense as the unconditioned right dharma “extinguishes all defilements, ignorance, and karmic evil by virtue of its perfuming them.” He says, “The reason the five kinds of dharmakaya is named incense is that the Buddha has three kinds of wondrous incense. There are sila incense, listening incense, and giving incense.”

Everywhere, at all times, sila incense is working in the most subtle way. Whatever appears—good or bad, right or wrong—all are digested by the original nature of existence. Listening incense means you open yourself to hear all kinds of voices: voiceless voice, scream. So whatever you hear, please open your heart and listen; then you can do something. Giving incense means that when you deal with something, you give yourself to it with a sincere heart.

The ritual of offering incense as dharmakaya is the simple practice of giving a quality to your behavior without expecting some reward in the worldly sense. You just do the simple practice of opening yourself, inviting Buddha, and seeing the ultimate nature of existence. When the five kinds of dharmakaya unfold, they are called sila, samadhi, wisdom, liberation, and wisdom of liberation. But practically speaking, it is just one practice. The practice of offering incense is just like a light. I don’t know what it is exactly, but you can experience this. Through this ritual you can open yourself, go very deep, and see your original nature. This makes your life stable and you can live in peace.

Radiant Light of the Buddhas

The second line of the “Verse of Offering Incense” says, “Radiant light of the buddhas emits throughout the dharma world.” Many statues of Buddha show a halo behind his head. We say Buddha is watching over all sentient beings because he is very compassionate. It’s the same in Christianity. When you see Jesus in a stained glass window, there is always a halo behind his head. That is radiant light.

Light is the quality of the original nature of existence. Your original nature is not dark, not fixed like stagnant water, not melancholy, not confused by mistaken understanding; your original nature is clear, dynamic, free, liberated. The original nature of life is going endlessly, like a spring flowing from the ground. We don't know what that energy is exactly, but it's something true. So we put a name on it: radiant light. To explain radiant light in Buddhism, it is divided into two: light of the body and light of the mind.

Light of the body is compassion. To explain light of the body, it is divided into two: eternal and light-emitting. Eternal light of the body is dharma, the endless functioning of the original nature of existence. That stream of basic energy constantly penetrates every inch of your life, helping you and supporting you. Anytime, anywhere, you can open your heart and listen to its voice.

Light-emitting light of the body is light that arouses you into enlightenment. That light is always emitting more or less from everyone. Modern cameras can take a picture of that light. If you encounter this light, something touches your heart and you feel relief.

For instance, when you see someone like the Buddhist teacher Thich Nhat Hanh, something gives forth from his total personality. You immediately taste it and you are shocked. You don't know what it is, but that shock comes from a person who manifests his total personality. Then the whole situation becomes comfortable and peaceful. You feel good just being present by him, near her, not needing to do something, not needing to talk.

Light of the mind is wisdom. Your own life is constantly illuminated by the dynamic functioning of the original nature of existence. Whoever you are, you are already illuminated because you exist right now, right here. So you can use that light to see the true nature of your own existence. To explain light of the mind, it is also divided into two: dharma-illuminating and opportunity-illuminating.

In the *Shokyo yoshu*, Tao-shih says dharma-illuminating means "to illuminate both truth and worldliness." In Buddhist philosophy, truth is classified two ways: real truth and worldly truth. Worldly

truth you can understand conceptually; real truth cannot be understood conceptually. For example, according to worldly truth, a table is a table. According to real truth, a table is something more than a table. That something more is called Buddha. We use the word “Buddha” to express the table’s original nature, the aspect of a table that is beyond our conceptual understanding.

Illumination is the functioning of original nature. Everything—your pants, your hair, your boots, your body—is illuminated in many ways by dharma. Through taking care of everything in the human world as Buddha, you have an opportunity to go beyond your usual existence and experience your great existence. That opportunity is also illuminated. So you can see that opportunity and use it to take care of yourself and your object, whatever it is, with a sincere heart.

Tao-shih also says, “Insight and illumination, everlasting light, thoroughgoing penetration, no hindrance.” Insight is the original nature of existence when it is digesting everything and producing new life from moment to moment. Insight is also your own experience when you encounter that original nature directly. So “insight and illumination” means both the wisdom of original nature itself and the wisdom of seeing it as your own life.

“Everlasting light” is constantly illuminating your life, but the stubborn human consciousness cannot believe it. So first we have to open ourselves to accept that light. Everyone always forgets this first practice. We are always irritated, nervous, confused, trying to escape and destroy problems. You never find solutions that way. So if you have a problem, remember that Buddha’s compassion is always supporting you and helping you. Then try to relax and accept your problem. Open yourself totally and magnanimously to all kinds of problems, whatever they are. Then you can see what to do.

“Thoroughgoing penetration” is the realization that your own life is the same and one with radiant light. If you realize this, it’s like turning on a light in a dark room. You turn the switch, and immediately everything in the room comes up. When you realize something important, the whole world becomes bright and you really appreciate it.

For “no hindrance,” Dogen Zenji says, very simply, “The whole world in the ten directions is the light of the self; the whole world in the ten directions is within the light of the self.” Yes, it’s true. So you are you, and you are something more than you. You are the whole world; there is no separation, no hindrance anywhere. Is the whole world an abstract idea? No! It’s something working. That is radiant light.

Paying Homage and Taking Refuge

The third and fourth lines of the “Verse of Offering Incense” say: “Homage to the countless buddhas in the ten directions permeates into seeing and hearing and manifests nirvana.” Through offering incense with a clear and calm mind, opening yourself and inviting Buddha, you can experience oneness. At that time, your physical life manifests dharma in everyday life, your total personality gives forth light, and you are called Buddha—an awakened one.

If you become an awakened one, you deeply appreciate Shakyamuni Buddha’s life, and very naturally you want to pay homage. So you say, “I take refuge in the Buddha,” or in Japanese you say, “*Namu kie butsu*,” and then you bow. That bow is *namu* or *namo*. In Sanskrit, it is *namaste*. In India, people always say *namaste* when they meet. *Namas* is “to lower your head”; *te* is “to you.” So *namaste* is not only exchanging a greeting; it is to bow. Japanese people are always bowing; that is *namaste*.

When you greet someone, bow and make an effort to open yourself to the stream of basic energy. Invite that energy into your life. Then your life returns to dharma, and you become Buddha. This is your everyday practice: you practice dharma, the dharma comes into you, and you become Buddha. Simultaneously you are a human being belonging to sangha. That is the triple treasure of Buddhism: Buddha, dharma, and sangha.

In Buddhism we take refuge in the triple treasure. Taking refuge is not going someplace to escape from the human world; it is opening yourself to the original place where everyone has to go. If you take

the train of life, sooner or later you reach the dead end where you see the depth of human existence. It is the end, but it is also the beginning. From there you can go anywhere.

According to the triple treasure, the source of your being alive in the human world is nothing but energy. The perpetual flow of your energy to live has no form, no color; it is just constant movement. This life force is the original nature of your life, which is called Buddha, emptiness, or freedom. That pure energy is always moving, without taking any form.

But if the source of being is energy, then there must be a way by which being may be manifested. So the source of being doesn't exist alone; it exists within a universal process, which is called dharma, truth, or the ultimate principle of existence. If there is a process, something must be produced. So when the source of being functions, it creates form, which is called sangha, the whole world, or all sentient beings.

Formative energies are always springing up from the source of being according to causes and conditions functioning in a moment. When they do, something happens; there is an event. Life! Life is just an event. From moment to moment, particles, atoms, and molecules arise from the vast openness of space all at once, come together, and form the world of phenomena: trees, birds, flowers, planets, and your human body.

Particles cannot appear and become matter by themselves. In order for them to come together and take a particular form of being that you can perceive, certain energies must be there. If energy is not there, all the particles will separate and return to emptiness because they do not have their own power to stay together. So if we make a scientific explanation, we may say matter and energy are the same. In Buddhism we say all are Buddha.

“The ten directions” is the entire universe: eight compass directions, above, and below. It is the spatial direction and also the dimension in time. Your real life is the same as the life of trees, birds, sky, and the whole universe. Your body is vast because it is interconnected with all sentient beings existing in space and time.

That universal body is called your Buddha body, or technically we say dharmakaya.

“Seeing and hearing” represents the six senses of your nirmanakaya human body and their sense objects: eye and form, ear and sound, nose and smell, tongue and taste, body and touch, mind and thought. When you open yourself and invite Buddha using your human body, dharma comes into you, and you become one with it. At that time you are sambhogakaya. Sambhogakaya is dharmakaya manifested in your everyday life.

Sambhogakaya is not necessarily a manifestation of the real truth of your original nature and not necessarily a manifestation of the worldly truth of your human body. It is both, coming together and working together *within* your human body. You cannot explain what it is, but something sublime is alive in your everyday life.

I think sambhogakaya, in a plain word, is your total personality. You have your own messy karmic life, but on the other hand you are a great being beyond human speculation or judgment. That is your total personality. Everyone has that total personality, but we have to train or educate our individual body to realize the universal body. This is the practice we do day by day. This is spiritual life.

Your body is a human body, and it is something more than a human body. That’s why we can’t pin down exactly what your body is. When you offer incense as a way of paying homage to Buddha, pure activity permeates into your body and manifests nirvana, total peace. At that time you discover *real* Buddha, the original nature of your life. Other people can see this, and they are really moved by the light shining from a human being.

THE HUMAN MIND

A SAMURAI ASKED a Zen master, “Do you believe in hell and paradise?” The Zen master said, “Yes, I believe.” Then the samurai asked, “Where are they?” The Zen master said, “You are a coward, samurai. Samurai must be brave, strong.” Immediately the samurai got angry and tried to attack him with a sword. The Zen master said, “Oh, oh! Here is hell.” At that moment, the samurai attained enlightenment; he realized, “Oh, that’s right!” So he put his sword back into its scabbard. The Zen master said, “Here is paradise.” This story shows the moving and changing nature of the human mind.

When you see the term *human mind*, immediately you ask what it is. What compels you to ask? It is your own human mind. Your human mind wants to possess something as a concept, which becomes human knowledge. For this, Western psychology is a very useful science by which we study human life and the individual self from a particular angle. But no matter how hard you try to understand human life by mastering concepts, still it’s very difficult to pin down the total picture of human life.

In Buddhism we also study human life and the individual self, so there is a kind of Buddhist psychology. We analyze the human mind, trying to learn what consciousness is and how our minds are working, so it is psychology. But on the other hand, our final goal is not to understand the human mind; it is to be free from the human mind, so simultaneously it is not psychology.

History of Buddhist Psychology

People often use words such as “mind,” “spirit,” or “soul” to represent something opposite to a material state of being. But we don’t really know what those words mean exactly. For many, many years, centuries, Buddhists have tried to know the meaning of “mind.” It is a very big problem for us.

Ancient Buddhist scriptures, such as the *Lotus Sutra*, the *Vimalakirti Sutra*, or the *Prajna Paramita Sutra*, all emphasize the existence of mind, but the term *mind* isn’t always used in the same way. Sometimes “mind” represents the conscious human mind, and sometimes it represents all that exists in the world of phenomena, including the human mind. What’s the difference? They don’t explain. If you study ancient scriptures, you always have to figure out what the term *mind* means. This was a big problem. So as Buddhism developed, people gradually began to study what is the difference between the human mind and phenomenal existence.

In the second century, the philosopher Nagarjuna realized that there is phenomenal existence, which includes the conscious human mind, and there is the original functioning of Truth by which the human mind and all phenomenal existence are produced. So human consciousness and phenomenal existence have the same original nature.

But there was still trouble because that didn’t explain the difference between the original nature of the mind and phenomenal existence, which includes the conscious human mind. Philosophers just said that without the functioning of mind, it’s impossible to recognize phenomenal existence, and without phenomenal existence, it’s impossible to recognize the functioning of Truth.

Buddhism always emphasizes that phenomenal existence can’t exist alone; it must exist with Truth. And on the other hand, Truth can’t exist alone; it must exist with phenomena. We say so because if you hold on to a one-sided idea of Truth as the original nature of mind, then you completely forget the other side: without the mind of phenomenal existence you cannot understand the Truth. But early

philosophers didn't explain logically; they just offered the totality of existence.

It was like putting lots of delicious dishes on one big plate: American pizza, Japanese sushi, Chinese ramen. They didn't explain how sushi and pizza are different; they just emphasized that sushi can't exist alone. Sushi must exist with pizza; pizza must exist with sushi. In other words, all sentient beings are interconnected. So they put all kinds of food on one plate for you to accept without discrimination, and then they just offer it to you: here it is; this is your food. Please eat! So Buddhists in ancient times suffered because our human intelligence wants to know what the difference is, but philosophers didn't have a satisfactory explanation.

Finally, to satisfy our big balloon human head, in the fourth and fifth centuries, the Yogachara School tried to understand the difference and created Buddhist psychology. This is very nice for us. Yogachara made a logical explanation of the difference between the human mind and phenomenal existence: what knows and what is known, what sees and what is seen—in other words, subject and object.

The human mind is very sticky. It is always looking for something to attach to. For instance, if you are eating pizza, there is an object for your mind—pizza. Your mind looks at pizza and tells you, “This is your food.” But the human mind doesn't only look outwardly; it also looks inwardly. So the object of your mind is not only pizza; it is also your own mind. You are eating pizza, and you are also looking at yourself. That is why you can say, “I am eating pizza.”

When you recognize that you are eating pizza, you have confidence in your life: I am here and I am eating pizza. There is a kind of security in your existence. That's why the Western philosopher Descartes said: I am thinking, therefore I exist. Descartes was a great philosopher because he realized that point. But there is something that your mind cannot recognize objectively. What is it? That is consciousness itself.

You hear the term *consciousness*, and immediately you want to know what it is. But before you think about it, consciousness is

already present in your life. Here it is! So consciousness exists, but not as something fixed that you can stick a label on. You cannot attach a label to it because it is completely beyond the limitation of concept. It's simply a dynamic state of being where your mind is simultaneously your own mind and also the mind of all sentient beings—in other words, all phenomenal existence. When you experience that true state of being directly and accept that dynamism as your own life, then you know the real meaning of mind.

Karmic Energy and Human Consciousness

In Buddhist psychology, the human mind is called *vijnana*, a Sanskrit word that is translated as “consciousness.” In terms of the five skandhas that constitute human existence, *vijnana* is the fifth one, which is called “mind.” The other four skandhas are form (*rupa*), feeling (*vedana*), perception (*samjna*), and impulses (*samskara*).

Two Characteristics of *Vijnana*

To understand our human consciousness called *vijnana*, we have to learn its two important characteristics. First, *vijnana* possesses within itself potential energy by which it can carry itself on from moment to moment. Second, this potential energy creates the phenomenal world, which includes human consciousness. This teaching is a little difficult to understand, but I will try to explain.

According to the first characteristic of *vijnana*, within a moment of time there is potential energy. Consciousness uses that energy to carry itself on. To “carry on” means to nurture something from an immature state to a mature state. For example, when a baby is born, that baby is an immature being. Then, moment by moment, the time process nurtures the baby to become an adult. The same applies to the potential energy that has nurtured human consciousness from the beginningless past.

But babies are nurtured by their mothers, food, and lots of things. So how can the potential energy of consciousness nurture itself? This

is very interesting. The cause is phenomenal existence itself. In other words, the day-to-day reality of all sentient beings, which potential energy creates, is the direct cause of nurturing the potential energy by which consciousness can carry itself on from moment to moment. This is called karma.

Understanding karma as the direct cause of nurturing potential energy is not the common meaning of karma. People often put a certain label on karma, and then it is called “bad karma.” You don’t really know what it is, but you believe that something accumulated in your past life controls your present life. If you think in that way, then your life is based on the principle of fatalism. But karma doesn’t behave in that way. Karma doesn’t have any particular labels; it’s really free.

Of course, we cannot ignore karma coming from the beginningless past. But the direct cause of nurturing the potential energy by which our life is carried on to the next moment is the reality we create by our way of living right now. Anytime, anywhere, you can do something good for the future. So there is always a possibility to live toward your own future or for future generations. This is very important for us because we can have hope.

We can have hope because of the second characteristic of vijnana: the potential energy that vijnana possesses creates the phenomenal world. How? Within the world of unity, all at once life subtly begins to move toward difference. Then, according to a chain of causation, our life in the human world arises. That subtle original movement of life from oneness to multiplicity is the incipient moment.

In the twelvefold chain of causation (*pratitya-samutpada*), the first link is *avidya*, the very subtle vibration of mind that is called ignorance. Link two is *samskara*, the formative forces of karma; vijnana, human consciousness, is link three. *Samskara* accepts the movement of ignorance, nurtures it, and then human consciousness arises based on the creative forces of karmic energy. The functioning of *samskara* means that before your human consciousness appears, the energy that supports your life is already there.

Once human consciousness appears, it is always looking for an object. So name and form appear as the fourth link, followed by the six sense realms, and then contact, sensation, craving, grasping, and being. In Sanskrit, grasping is called upadana, the acquiring of karma, and the tenth link, being, is called bhava, your very existence.

The eleventh link is birth, the appearance of your present life, which exists for exactly one moment. Then, by your activity of living in that moment as a human being, you produce seeds of karmic energy that will mature in the future.

Finally, in the twelfth link, one moment of life in the phenomenal world is passing away, and immediately a new moment of life is arising. That new life appears based on the potential energy produced by causes and conditions created in the past. This is how vijnana can nurture itself and carry itself on from moment to moment.

Alayavijnana

We produce seeds of karmic energy by our daily living. If so, then where are they stored? That is the deepest level of human consciousness, which is called *alayavijnana*, or the storehouse consciousness.

Yogachara psychology explains that there are eight human consciousnesses. The first five are the eye, ear, nose, tongue, and skin consciousnesses, which recognize sight, sound, smell, taste, and touch. The sixth one is mind consciousness, which recognizes concepts or ideas. The last two consciousnesses are considered unconscious. Those are *manas*, consciousness of individual self, and *alaya*, the most basic level of human consciousness.

Alayavijnana is understood as the original source of human life. It is because of alayavijnana that human consciousness has the potential energy to carry itself on and create phenomenal existence.

But if we speculate about an original source of life in an intellectual sense, we may think it must be an absolute from which everything originates. Then that source becomes a concept of

something, which is separate from human life and is called the root of the existence. But alayavijnana is not a concept. Alayavijnana is the real root of human existence because it accepts karmic energy from samskara and uses it to create the seven other human consciousnesses. Then the phenomenal world appears, and activity there produces new potential energy. This is how human consciousness constantly nurtures itself and creates the human world.

Human consciousness has its own potential energy to constantly carry on to the future, but what it carries on is not a particular form. The human mind doesn't have its own particular form; it is a state of being that appears only when you do something. That temporary state of being is based on interdependence with all sentient beings, so it is constantly moving and changing. That's why any psychological explanation is very complicated.

If you see that movement and change in terms of phenomenal existence, it is provisionally called consciousness, but human consciousness itself is nothing but the functioning of impermanence and interdependent co-origination. It is just transiency and interconnection, movement and change itself. You cannot pin it down as something fixed, so philosophically speaking, we say it is empty. This is the human mind according to Buddhist psychology.

Consciousness exists only within your living activity. So if you want to understand your human consciousness, you have to do something. That is Zen practice. You practice letting your body and mind go deeper and deeper, back down the twelve links in the chain of causation, just passing them by one by one, until finally, at the bottom of the third link, you reach alayavijnana and directly experience the flowing energy of universal life, the constant movement of life itself. Then you can understand what human consciousness really is.

Reaching alaya consciousness enables you to go deeper and observe real reality, which is called *tathagatagarbha*. At that time you transcend your concept of human mind and experience freedom from your human mind. To reach this stage, we have to understand

what's going on. That is why we study Buddhist philosophy and psychology.

Consciousness of Self

Consciousness of your individual self is understood in Yogachara psychology as *manas*. In terms of the eight human consciousnesses, *manas* is the seventh one—ego consciousness. *Manas* itself doesn't create ego, but within *manas* there is a function called *satkaya-drishti*, which is the congenital or inborn concept of "I." Before you are born, the moment you are in your mother's womb, you already have this function or faculty. It is the very basic state of ego consciousness, the source of human selfishness, which is present in the depths of your unconscious.

Ego consciousness is very strong, very deep! It is your great energy to live. You experience this energy in your everyday life: If you feel happy, that is energy to live. If you struggle and cry, that is also energy to live. Under all circumstances, you make an effort to live. That is *manas* consciousness.

Manas is not the usual idea of self. The usual idea of self comes from the six sense consciousnesses, which fabricate a dichotomy between self and others so that we can say "you and I" or "yours and mine." We trust in that self because we perceive it as something permanent. But actually dualistic self is constantly changing. For instance, "You are right, I am wrong" is a dichotomy. In the next moment conditions may change. Then maybe, "You are wrong, I am right." Your six sense consciousnesses are always fabricating a new idea of self according to your circumstances. The more you try to understand your dualistic self, the more you feel confused and dissatisfied because there's nothing to pin down.

Your ego consciousness is quite different from your changeable self because it is not dualistic. *Manas* never changes; it is always the same because it perceives only the "I." Ego always wants to get something it can use to build up your human life—materialistically,

psychologically, or spiritually—so it is the source of greed, anger, and self-delusion. This is the functioning of manas.

Before manas starts to work, the basic energy that supports your life—alayavijnana—is already there. So when you move toward the depth of your life, you can see the top of that flowing energy. There the self operates in an extremely subtle way—desire and purity are moving together. Manas picks up something from alayavijnana, grasps it, and holds on to it. Then you think, “I got it!” You want to know what it is, so the discriminating mind of your sixth consciousness appears.

When you are thinking like that, you have seen only the surface of alaya. The goal of Buddhist practice is not to get something from alayavijnana; it is to become one with alaya itself. So don't stop there! Keep going deeper, through and through, until you touch something deep about you. Going deeper, you realize that the human world of subtle movement is at the same time the spiritual world of stillness. That is realization of the unified dharma world.

The Dead End of Your Life

If you feel something about manas as your inborn self-consciousness, even if you only understand it intellectually, then, through study and spiritual practice, you can start to go deep. At the top of manas, you are still in the world of concepts. But if you go very deep, you touch the bottom of manas and come to the dead end of your life. That dead end is the abyss of human life, darkness, because there is no space for you to do something good by your effort. But at the bottom of manas, you can see something vast and eternal: alayavijnana, the energy of your life.

Between the dead end of your life and eternity, there is something like a very soft, thin curtain. If you practice, you can touch this curtain. If you touch it, it moves. This side of the curtain is the transient human world. The other side is the eternal world. Actually there is no curtain there. But I have to say there is a curtain to

explain that there is a way you can transmute your life into something vast.

The curtain is kind of a very thin crack between transiency and eternity. There is no room for you to poke your big head into that crack. But on the foundation of no space to poke your head into the truth, you have to seek for it. To seek for it, you have to give up! Let go of your dualistic thinking because when you touch eternity, there is nothing for your mind to hold on to. It's really "I don't know."

You don't know how vast the human world is. Even if you touch it, you don't know. Human consciousness always tries to know, but fortunately or unfortunately there's nothing to know. Unfortunately means, the more you try to know it conceptually, the more you cannot know it. Fortunately means, you can train your six consciousnesses to calm down, let go of the concepts in your head, and experience it.

Alayavijnana is the source of your life energy and the place where your strength grows. Originally your life is already there, but to realize this you have to study it and practice it. In other words, use your discriminating mind to arouse the universal mind. For this we have to understand manas, and simultaneously we have to be free from manas.

Descartes said: I am thinking, therefore I exist. That is fine, but finally you must be free from this idea and make eternity alive in your life because all sentient beings exist with this "I." That is why zazen practice is important. The practice of zazen as shikantaza is to throw away your thoughts and just sit down. You are very calm, your posture is straight, and your eyes are open to see what's going on there.

Practice letting go of your thoughts again and again until you taste very deeply what ego consciousness is. When your manas consciousness touches alayavijnana, immediately you participate in something vast and eternal. Finally, very naturally, the depth of the self is exactly the same as the depth of the world, and you are present in the vast state of existence. This unified world is the arrival point, the most intimate instant where there is no sense of a separate self

discriminated in your brain. That experience is called enlightenment, or profound understanding of the self.

Then, when manas starts to function again, the foundation of your life is completely different. At that time you turn over a new life, and manas becomes a starting point. It's like arriving at the terminal station of a train: from there you can go anyplace. You are free. So manas is the dead end of your life, and at the same time it is the origin, the starting point for creating a new human life. When your new life arises, it is based not on greed, anger, and self-delusion; it is based on generosity, compassion, and wisdom.

Even though you don't see this now, don't struggle for it. And don't act quickly based on your selfish self. Build your house on the foundation of nothing to be gained. Zazen is useless; but on the foundation of uselessness, you can practice zazen as useful. So sit down and go deeply into what you already are. That's all you can do. If you practice on a daily basis, your original energy penetrates unconsciously into your everyday life, and you can use that energy to develop your life, your total personality, in the big scale with all sentient beings.

BEING ONE MIND

BUDDHIST PSYCHOLOGY is different from the science of psychology. In Buddhism we study the mind, we analyze the human mind, but after we analyze we have to transcend or go beyond our idea of mind. To transcend doesn't mean to go to a paradise apart from the human world; to go beyond doesn't mean to destroy human knowledge. It means pay attention to real reality! That real reality is called Tao or the Buddha way.

When you pay attention to real reality, you see that human knowledge exists right in the middle of change—there is nothing to get a hold of. So finally, human knowledge is empty. But that emptiness is not merely empty; something is moving there. That something moving is mind itself. Mind itself doesn't have any form of its own; it's just dynamic functioning. Mind itself is the perfect network of the Buddha way, extending in all directions: to you and all sentient beings.

This big mind is called Buddha's mind, bodhi mind, or buddha-nature. A tree, bush, rock, and river—all are Buddha's mind. It is the whole world, the universe. Anyone can use this mind because it is continuously open to everybody. It is beyond human consciousness, but it exists in everyday life. When you eat a meal, walk on the street, whatever you do, it's there. But it's not something you create; it is freedom.

Buddhism studies not only human life but also the whole picture of life. So Buddhist psychology is individual and also not individual, because when you study your own mind, you are also studying the mind of others. Both come together in Buddhist psychology. You study your own life, and simultaneously your life becomes universal life. Finally your individual mind becomes the one mind of all sentient beings.

Practicing Way Mind

The main purpose of Buddhist practice is to taste ego consciousness and deeply touch who you are. But it's not good enough. Next you have to taste universal consciousness and directly participate in real reality, which is called the Buddha way.

The Buddha way is the universal path. All sentient beings are constantly going along that path. It exists forever, so it is always there, always supporting your life. This universal path is provisionally called Mind. When you experience the path and directly participate in real reality, it is called way mind (*tao-shin*).

Mind as the universal path is peaceful and simultaneously dynamic. How can something be both peaceful and dynamic? When I was at Komazawa University, Professor Shoson Miyamoto used the example of a ball to explain. A ball can roll anywhere, but its center is always calm. So when a ball starts to roll, there is stillness within the movement of its leading edge and movement of the stillness at its center.

I mentioned this ball at a kendo martial arts center, and people were very interested because in kendo practice the standing posture is very calm. When consciousness of standing becomes refined, standing is genuinely calm. No one knows what makes that calmness appear; it just naturally becomes so. When the body is calm, it is ready to move. It is ready to immediately accept any situation and act.

Spiritually speaking, this tranquil and dynamic activity is called Mind, the way, or the path. It is the calm center of your life, and at

the same time it is leading your life. Psychologically speaking, it is called alayavijnana, or universal consciousness. What is that? It is the perfectly tranquil peace and the harmonious activity of real reality. Your life already exists there, so you can experience this peace and harmony directly. When you experience it, this is called samadhi and you appear as Buddha. Intellectually it's impossible to become a buddha, but spiritually you can do it. That is what Buddhism always tries to present to you.

How can you be present right in the middle of alayavijnana with serenity and tranquility? In *Gakudo Yojin-shu* (Points to Watch in Buddhist Training), translated by Yuho Yokoi, Dogen quoted Nagarjuna's saying, "The mind that sees into the flux of arising and decaying, and recognizes the transient nature of the world, is also known as the Bodhi-mind."

The transient nature of the world is the teaching of impermanence. According to that teaching, the whole world is unified in peace, and then life begins to move in harmony. All at once, individual beings arise and form the human world according to the causes and conditions functioning in each moment. Where does that functioning arise from? It originates from alayavijnana, the unified dharma.

Bodhi mind is a different term from way mind, but it means exactly the same thing: enlightenment. With bodhi mind you see the truth: everything is constantly changing; there's nothing fixed that you can pin down as "I." Dogen Zenji says, "When the transient nature of the world is recognized, the ordinary, selfish mind does not arise."

When you awaken way mind, you feel relief. You feel grateful. You feel satisfied. But your ego consciousness doesn't feel that this is satisfactory, because without wanting something it's very difficult for manas to function. So when the bottom of manas touches the flowing energy of alayavijnana, manas also starts to move. Your human consciousness doesn't catch that very subtle movement, so that first movement is called ignorance. That is why, at the start of the twelfold chain of dependent origination, ignorance suddenly appears.

Manas grasps something—"I"—from universal consciousness, and your original oneness is immediately separated into two. Separation into two is neither good nor bad, but when dualistic ideas are subtly moving in human consciousness, like and dislike arise. Then our big balloon heads are filled with all kinds of analyses, and there is no peace. Human beings are always forgetting the dharma world of oneness and heading toward the dualistic world of interesting ideas. To practice is to let go of those ideas and return to the Buddha way.

Whoever travels along the Buddha way can penetrate through manas and arrive at the place where humans deeply observe what it means to be human. The way of arriving is to shift from the five body consciousnesses to the sixth one: mind consciousness. By calming your six sense consciousnesses, you arrive at the unconscious layers of mind. Unless the six sense consciousnesses are quiet, the subtle function of manas can't be known. When you reach the bottom of manas and directly experience alayavijnana, it is called enlightenment.

Manas constantly tries to move your mind toward ignorance. That means the delusion of "I" will appear again. So to reach your true self, you have to constantly pass by your grasping mind and go deeper. This is spiritual life. We learn to calm down and touch way mind directly. To learn is to become one with the universal path with full awareness and turn it into reality through our own lives.

In Buddhist psychology, the grasping nature of manas is considered the big scale of delusion. Buddha is the person who realizes what that delusion is. So let's see into the flux of arising and decaying and recognize the impermanent nature of the world. Then, when the serenity and tranquility of way mind appears, whatever happens you can take refuge there and become Buddha.

The One Mind of All Beings

In the story of Shakyamuni Buddha's life, twenty-five hundred years ago he left his father's house as Prince Siddhartha Gautama and entered religious life under the guidance of an ascetic teacher. His

father was very concerned about this, so he sent three cousins and two servants to see what was going on. But those five stayed and became monks along with him. Then, after six years of hard practice, Shakyamuni broke the ascetic precepts and accepted food from a young girl in a village. His five friends were very disappointed by this, and they left him. So Shakyamuni continued to meditate alone, sitting under the Bodhi tree. On December 8 he attained enlightenment and became the Buddha.

After quietly enjoying the depth of his life, Buddha decided to tell others about what he had discovered. So he found his friends and preached on the ocean seal samadhi, explaining the dynamic reality we are living in, and his realization that his own life exists within that reality. Unfortunately this teaching was at too high a level, and the five friends didn't understand it. So after that he decided to teach in a different way. That is the four noble truths and the eightfold noble path.

But an explanation of the world in terms of Buddha's ocean seal samadhi is given later, in the *Avatamsaka Sutra* (*Flower Ornament Sutra*), a Mahayana text that is used by the Hua-yen School. "Ocean" refers to truth: the image of everything in the human world is entirely reflected in Buddha's world, so all phenomena are already truth. "Seal" is proof: Shakyamuni stamped truth by proving it through his own experience. "Samadhi" is direct experience of the continuous activity of akasha, the vast openness of existence, which is constantly interpenetrating the world of phenomena. That is the ocean seal samadhi.

The *Avatamsaka Sutra* explains that truth does not exist by itself, separate from phenomena, and phenomena do not exist separate from the truth. Truth and phenomena work together as one. If so, we have to think carefully and look deeply at the reality we live in. As a practical matter, we have to deal with a reality where space and time, unity and multiplicity, equality and discrimination, are interwoven. How can you deal with it? Where can you deal with it? We have to learn this. That is why Buddha taught the ocean seal samadhi.

The *Avatamsaka Sutra* says that “the triple world is one mind only.” This one mind is not the ordinary mind of human consciousness. “One mind” is just energy. It is the energy that is inherent in universal life, constantly helping and supporting all sentient beings. “The triple world” is the human world of past, present, and future. So it means that the whole world, the universe, is based on or produced by only one mind.

One mind is constantly moving. There is no fixed form you can hold on to, so we call that energy emptiness. But actually something is working. This functioning is what we mean when we say the myriad dharmas are exactly one mind. Here the term *dharma* represents something, anything, everything, animate or inanimate, which may arise in the human world of phenomena. Everything that exists is within the universal mind; mind is at work in everything. That is *shujo shin*, the one mind of all sentient beings. All sentient beings are “sentient beings” because they are one mind.

Before you think, you already exist in the one mind. The psychological teaching of Buddhism has developed very much according to this point. Psychologically speaking one mind is called *alayavijnana*, or universal consciousness. According to Dogen’s *Fukanzazengi*, this mind is called the nonthinking world. According to the *Prajna Paramita Sutra*, it is just called mind, huge mind. From the universal perspective, we say all are Buddha.

According to the *Avatamsaka Sutra*, there is only one mind but it is open to all beings. So if we say we have Mind, it is the one mind that is the universal path, the Buddha way. Whether you are conscious of it or not, something is always happening. The Buddha way, the universal path of one mind, is constantly opening to all sentient beings. What is it? It is nothing but movement, the perpetual flow of energy to live, to be present. You can experience the Buddha way because your life is always right on it.

The movement of Mind becomes the source of energy for your life. Life is constantly springing up. It’s just like spring water coming out of the ground. You receive that energy before your human consciousness appears. That’s why Zen teaching talks about the

world prior to the germination of any subtle ideas. In Zen practice we try to receive that energy with full awareness, appreciate it, and work with it.

If you don't work with it—if you don't have your own spirit, diligence, or effort to act and move toward one mind—when you see that universal energy directly it will look like a black hole to you. Intellectually you can't see what's going on there, so you feel threatened and really scared. It's like suddenly being thrown over the boat into the huge ocean. There's nothing there! Your head spins very quickly: What is this? Where am I? What can I do? But whatever you think, it doesn't make sense. It just seems that everything is going to be sucked into a deep hole.

This is particularly so when you are confronted with a crisis, some situation where you cannot move an inch. Most people hesitate when they are confronted with a spiritual crisis. Then it scares them more and more, and finally they don't know what to do. But whatever happens, still you are present in the ocean of truth. The original great energy of life is supporting your life. So in that situation what you have to do is take the initiative and work with the ocean. There's nothing to think, nothing to say; all you can do is just be there and offer your body and mind to the ocean. Then your original energy causes you to act in a certain way and you can do something. Swim!

Even though you don't understand what one mind is, it's there in your life, so you can use the energy of one mind to make your life alive. It's like driving a car: even if you don't know everything about how a car works, still you can start it and operate it. So every day, just make every possible effort to let that energy rise up and make your life vividly alive. Then you can turn your life spiritually; you can transform your human life and become Buddha.

Two Gates of One Mind

How does shujo shin, the one mind of all sentient beings, extend to the universe, expressing itself as individual beings in the human world? *The Awakening of Faith* is an important Mahayana Buddhist

text that tries to explain. In particular it explains that the one mind appears by two gates: the gate of truth (nirvana) and the gate of phenomena (samsara).

To teach the gate of truth, this book explains two kinds of truth: the truth beyond words and the truth explainable in words. The truth beyond words is real truth. You cannot touch real truth intellectually because it is exactly the same as the one mind of all sentient beings. There is no gap between you and the one mind, no room for you to create a concept. But on the other hand, truth must be explainable; otherwise, you would not be able to say “one mind.”

It's kind of contradictory to say that you can explain truth but you cannot touch it intellectually. But actually this is really true. For instance, silence. Originally, in the true sense, life is very quiet. But in the human world, everyone is always chattering and making noise. If I want people to be quiet, I have to say, “Be quiet.” But when I say, “Be quiet,” it is not quiet because I am making noise. Still, I have to do this so that everyone quiets themselves down and has an opportunity to experience real quiet. It's the same with truth.

When the one mind appears in the human world, it is real truth. When you explain truth in words, it is not exactly truth because you have created concepts, so it is called worldly truth. The two truths are very close, so you have to be very careful to understand “truth.” We cannot ignore truth that is explainable in a word. Buddhism spends lots of time trying to explain what truth is instead of telling you: just believe! Why do we explain? We have to explain in order to help people know the real truth for themselves.

If we say that the one mind of all sentient beings appears by two gates—truth and samsara—then what is samsara? The gate of samsara is the gate of origination and extinction, birth and death. Briefly speaking it is the transient human world of phenomena, which is called the samsaric world. According to the twelvefold chain of conditioned arising, in the first link, the mind of the samsaric world covers up the mind of truth with the veil of ignorance. So even though truth is veiled in ignorance, the mind of truth is still there.

This teaching puts a provisional name on the mind of truth when it is veiled in delusion: tathagatagarbha. *Tathagata* is “Buddha,” and *garbha* is “a mother’s womb.” Tathagatagarbha is like a seed or embryo in the mother’s womb. It means that we are babies; anytime you are ready, you can come out because the world of transient phenomena is grounded on truth as a fundamental aspect of human life.

According to this teaching, the mind of samsara is provisionally called alayavijnana, or universal consciousness. That is the very basic consciousness at the bottom of the human world. If you deeply research what samsara is—how the human world is coming and going from moment to moment based on impermanence, and how its arising is structured by interdependent co-origination—you can see the total picture of samsara. This is called perfect awareness of alayavijnana. What does “perfect” mean?

In the *Heart Sutra (Maha Prajna Paramita Hridaya)*, the human world is always expressed in a negative way: no eyes, no ears, no nose, no tongue, no body, no mind. But this is not negative. “No nose” means perfect awareness of your nose. So if you realize your nose exactly, you have no concept of your nose, but your nose is exactly with you in peace and harmony. If you totally realize alayavijnana, there is no alayavijnana because alayavijnana is exactly with you. The concept of alayavijnana disappears because you are exactly truth itself. At that time perfect awareness of alayavijnana is called tathagatagarbha.

The very basic conscious world and the womb of Buddha are very close—touching. The bottom of the human world is the bottom of alayavijnana, and simultaneously it is tathagatagarbha. That’s why we say that alayavijnana and tathagatagarbha are exactly the same thing. When alayavijnana touches tathagatagarbha, you forget yourself, and it is called *mu*, emptiness, the unconditioned, suchness, or wisdom. In Zen Buddhism we say enlightenment. In general Buddhism, it is dharmakaya—you become Buddha.

Many kinds of phenomena arise as the contents of the human world, but everything that exists in the human world is based on all

sentient beings as one mind. As a human being, your mind of truth is like a very rough diamond. When the diamond is rough, you don't see the real diamond. But if you polish it, you find there is a diamond inside. That is your buddha-nature. Anytime, anywhere, you can experience your own life as Buddha: something is going dynamically, just being movement and nothing else. That is the experience of freedom.

Intellectually it's pretty hard to understand this one. But there is a unique way to experience this—zazen. When you sit down in zazen, you can go either way: toward the dualistic mind of delusion or deeper, toward the one mind of freedom. If you go deeper, with one step you can touch the very bottom, the ground of samsara, where alayavijnana turns into tathagatagarbha and you experience nirvana.

Part Four

WISDOM & COMPASSION

THE WISDOM OF EMPTINESS

ORIGINALLY WE ARE completely vastness. In the vastness of the universe, there is no dichotomy, no discrimination; there is perfect peace and harmony. Philosophically speaking, this is called emptiness. Sometimes vastness is personalized, and it's called Buddha. If you experience that emptiness, it is called buddha-nature. Plainly speaking, it is universal consciousness. Before you start to think, your life is already present there. So if you want to realize the truth of life, all you have to do, as best as you can, is stand up straight and start to walk.

In *Shobogenzo Sansuikyo* (Mountains and Rivers Sutra), Dogen Zenji said that if you think walking just means walking around on two feet, you do not fully understand walking. Real walking is wholehearted participation in coming and going, origination and cessation, moment after moment. Walking in that way is proceeding through the realm of truth.

Tozan's Reflection

There is a famous story about the Chinese Zen master Tozan Ryokai (Dongshan Liangjie, 807–869). When Tozan was about to go on pilgrimage, he asked his teacher Ungan Donjo, “After you have passed away, how can I answer someone who asks me what you were like?” Ungan replied, “Say to him: Just this is.” Then he added, “You

must now be very careful, as you are carrying this great thing. Consider it again and again.”

Tozan was always thinking about Ungan’s statement “Just this is.” Then one day he was crossing a river and saw himself reflected in the water. When Tozan saw his reflection, he realized it was not his real self because in order for a reflection to appear, the thing reflected must already exist. Suddenly he understood his teacher’s meaning and composed this gatha:

You shouldn’t search for it outwardly.
If you do, the truth will become more remote from you.
But when alone I proceed through myself,
Wherever I go I meet him.
Now he is not other than myself, yet I am not he.
Only if you understand this will you unite with the Tathagata.

Before your individual thoughts, feelings, or perceptions arise and you reflect on yourself, wondering who or what you are, something is already there. Something is already alive. What is it? We call it big self, real self, or true self, but actually it is the vastness of existence. In Buddhist philosophy we say emptiness. When you hear the word “emptiness,” it seems to be something fascinating, kind of a puzzle. But emptiness is not a puzzle; it is something true. Something is happening there.

When you see your reflection, it is coming from emptiness; but immediately it is going, returning to emptiness. In the next moment, a new reflection comes. Your reflection is impermanent; it is always coming and going. The only thing that stays is the vastness of existence. This vastness is your true self.

When you see your reflection, if you believe that reflection is your true self, this is a misunderstanding. But it doesn’t mean you can ignore the reflection. A reflection must be there, or there is nothing for you to see. Without my reflection I cannot see that I exist; I cannot understand who I am. True self and its reflection are not the

same, but they are not separate. Your reflection is not the real truth, but without that reflection you cannot see the truth.

If you search for true self outwardly, with your ordinary, dualistic human consciousness, you will never find it. But on the other hand, true self doesn't float around like some kind of spirit or ghost. It is life itself—real Life. Real life is more than life in the biological sense. It is the impulse that makes something come into existence right in the middle of emptiness. Without that impulse, nothing can be created.

Proceeding alone through yourself means through this body right now, right here. Why through this body? Your individual human life is just you, so you have to proceed alone. There is no other choice. It is very hard to be with aloneness, but there is no other way. No one can really help you. No matter what happens you have to walk by yourself. This is not egoistic; it's just that there is no one who can substitute for you. When it comes time for you to die, who could substitute for you? No matter what you say or do—scream, laugh, or cry—you must proceed alone.

If you proceed alone in the realm of truth, your mind is quiet and peaceful. In Japanese we say *hokyo*, “the jewel mirror.” The mirror is a metaphor for wisdom. Wisdom is a mind mirror that shows you the ultimate principle of human life. Having mirror wisdom means knowing what the ultimate source is and how it works, but it is not a matter of philosophical discussion; it is something you experience personally.

Mirror wisdom is attained by reaching *alayavijnana*, the eighth level of human consciousness. When self-centered thoughts cease, you touch what aloneness really is, what selfishness, pain, and sorrow really are, and your experience becomes wisdom, a very deep understanding of the human world. Right in the midst of your life, you are alone, but that aloneness is interconnected, interpenetrated, with all sentient beings.

Even though you exist as one human being, your one life contains all beings. This unified life is your true self. Tozan says, “Only if you understand this will you unite with the Tathagata.” The word “this”

means your true self. The term *Tathagata* is a name of Buddha, which comes from two words: *tatha* and *gata*. The word *tatha* represents “going,” and *gata* represents “coming.” Life is constantly going and coming. Everything is coming and going. This is the truth of impermanence.

When you realize the truth of impermanence, you are not carried away by constant change; you are completely without attachment to anything. You just stand alone, calm and unmoved in the vastness of existence. Then, when the one unified life of all beings begins to move toward the human world of separation and discrimination, true self starts to walk, and wherever it goes it meets a reflection of itself. This is Tozan’s proceeding alone. When you proceed like this, this proceeding is called wisdom.

It’s very hard to practice this way, but without actual practice, wisdom doesn’t make sense. When wisdom becomes actualized in practice, it is called samadhi—one-pointedness. *Samadhi* means “right acceptance.” It is to accept something, but not by discriminating from a dualistic point of view. It is to accept your life as a whole and keep walking. Whatever happens, you proceed straightforwardly and just go on with your life. So whatever you think, whatever opinion you have, let it go and let your true self proceed through itself. This is the real practice of spiritual life.

Three Aspects of Wisdom

Buddhism always emphasizes experiencing the energy of life itself directly, through your skin, muscle, and bone. That is called wisdom. It is the wisdom of emptiness emphasized so much in the *Prajna Paramita Sutra*. There are three aspects to the wisdom of emptiness: emptiness of the conditioned, emptiness of the unconditioned, and ultimate emptiness.

The first one is emptiness of the conditioned. It is the realization that the human world has no substance of its own. The human world is the world of phenomena: what you can see, hear, smell, taste, touch, and think. That world is produced by many causes and

conditions, existing from moment to moment and constantly changing. There is nothing that you can pin down as an independent entity because life is impermanent.

If you feel pensive or sad from the impermanence of life, you are looking at life as a kind of object that you want to hold on to. The feelings and thoughts you experience as a human being are important, but they arise from emptiness, the dynamic functioning of your life. So experience emptiness first; then you can think and create ideas based on wisdom. Usually we do the opposite; then we get dragged around by our thoughts and feelings based on ignorance. Don't get dragged around! All you have to do is just be alive!

You are the aliveness of life. When you see your life exactly as it is, there is no way to feel sad because you see that your life is constantly emerging. So just take care of your life. No matter what happens in your life, just deal with it and let it go. Move forward. That is practicing wisdom of the emptiness of the conditioned.

Next is the emptiness of the unconditioned. If you practice zazen, sooner or later you will taste something of the truth, which is called the unconditioned. That is wonderful, but if you attach to your experiences, they give birth to self-centered thoughts. For example, during zazen you may think, "Oh, my thoughts have stopped now!" It is very easy for us to attach to the unconditioned world because it is mysterious; we are always curious about mysteries. But grasping for it turns the unconditioned into the conditioned, so it becomes delusion.

Whatever you see during zazen, even spiritual ecstasy or enlightenment, it's just emptiness. But if you say "emptiness," you have already created a concept, an element of the conditioned world. Whatever you say—wisdom, truth, or big self—if you try to grasp it as an idea, it becomes a mist. If you try to hold on to your experience of the unconditioned, you can become crazed by enlightenment. So you have to let it go. Let it be. That is practicing wisdom of the unconditioned.

Finally there is the wisdom of ultimate emptiness. It is wisdom that lets you see the deep core of your life, and simultaneously it

guides you in your practice. It is very hard to let wisdom guide your activity. Very hard! But this practice is the way you experience ultimate emptiness.

In ultimate emptiness there are no ideas, no concepts, not even of emptiness. Before anything you can think of as an experience arises in your consciousness, you just go on your way, directly experiencing what is real. That is practicing the wisdom of ultimate emptiness.

Patience in Ignorance

Eternal life is vast and deep. In the eye of a buddha, that vastness is very clear, and life is very simple: just go ahead in the realm of emptiness. But when vastness appears in the territory of human intellect, it becomes blurred. You don't know exactly where you are or what's going on there. So you say, "I don't understand." You don't understand, and you don't see how your understanding is going astray. That is called ignorance.

Ignorance means you are standing in the middle of a world so vast and deep that your intellect cannot grasp it. When your intellect cannot stand up in the vastness of life, you become confused and carried away by your ignorance. In Buddhist terms, that is called *dukkha*, or suffering. Suffering creates arrogance, and arrogance creates criticism and hatred. Then human life becomes very messy.

It isn't good enough to see life only through your human intellect because you cannot know everything. There are always things you do not know. There is no end to learning about human life. If you want to understand the human world, you have to be patient.

The human world is sometimes called the *saha* world. *Saha* is a Sanskrit word meaning "patience." Even though life in the human world is messy, we always have an opportunity to practice patience there. That is why we have to live in the human world. But practicing patience is hard because our human eyes cannot see the truth clearly. If you can't see clearly, it's very difficult to stand up in the whole universe and live calmly.

It's hard to be patient with your ignorance, so you need lots of practice. The important thing is not to be in a hurry. If you don't understand something, be humble, be modest. Just walk calmly, step by step. Most people don't live that way. Usually they want to rush. But when you rush, you become irritated and angry. You are mad at yourself, other people, and the whole world. That is arrogance, and you should be careful to avoid it, especially when you don't know something.

Giving talks is very interesting for me. It is one of the ways I hope to avoid ignorance, by poking into every nook and cranny, just like a cat. But sometimes I have felt that teaching Buddhism in the United States is like planting pumpkin seeds in pebbles and expecting them to grow. Human beings are arrogant and self-centered in all aspects of life: personal, business, even in religion.

It seems useless to teach that we shouldn't be arrogant, because no matter how long you talk, most people don't realize how arrogant they are. But if teachers stop talking, you know what will happen. That is why, for century after century, buddhas and ancestors have been talking. So regardless of whether or not anyone understands my talks or changes their life, regardless of whether or not I like giving talks or my English is poor, I have to stand up straight, face the situation, and just continue to talk. That is to practice patience.

To practice patience in the saha world doesn't mean to suppress some feeling; it means to accept the whole universe. We practice patience in the human world because human life exists simultaneously with eternal life; human patience exists simultaneously with real patience. Real patience is the great patience of the whole universe. How can you realize that great patience?

To live in the human world is to walk in the mist of eternal life. Even though your human eyes cannot see everything clearly, you can be quiet, accept the whole universe, and throw yourself into the place where all sentient beings coexist in peace and harmony. Stand up there, deal with a situation straightforwardly, as best you can, and then let it go. Just keep going ahead. Having an experience and letting it go allows you to grow in the domain of great patience.

Every day, every moment, your human experience is different. So very naturally there are many opportunities to practice patience. Someday, right in the middle of your messy human life, in spite of your ignorance, you will touch something deep—the core of human life. You don't know what it is intellectually, but you realize the peaceful patience found deep in the life of the whole universe. At that time you experience the vastness of your existence, and your life really blooms.

When I look at myself, sometimes I feel good and sometimes not so good, because everything in human life is up and down. There is no way to escape this up-and-down life. So I think the real practice of patience is to do small things every day with great hope—putting a seed in the desert, regardless of whether or not it will grow. That's all I can do. Then I can take care of my up-and-down life.

Standing Up Straight

The midst of reality is very simple and very soft. Even hatred is simple if you don't fight it. If you try to fight hatred, it becomes a monster. But if you deal with your hatred straightforwardly, you can use hatred as an opportunity to deepen your life, or to express the depth of your life. So if you feel hatred, what should you do?

The first thing you have to do is to stand up straight, right in the middle of your life. This is not so easy. It's not easy because it's too simple. There's nothing to want, nothing to gain, nothing to achieve as a result. Still, without standing up you cannot do anything.

So if you feel hatred, stand up straight and face your hatred. Accept it, deal with it as simply as you can, and then let it go. Let your hatred and you return to emptiness together. That's all you can do. In the next moment that form of hatred is gone, and something new is arising. Whatever it is, accept it, face it, and be free from it. Just keep walking step by step.

Standing up straight under all conditions is called right acceptance. It is to accept your whole life and refresh yourself with the lively energy that is constantly arising from deep in your life. You

can depend on that energy and use it in whatever situation you encounter. Using it lets you accept your thoughts and feelings and deal with them straightforwardly, compassionately; then relax your mind and let them go.

Another aspect of right acceptance is to accept yourself as you really are, without comparing yourself with others. If you are a violet, be patient and wait for the violet's life force to bloom. But if you work for a company, the company may want you to bloom in a particular way. Maybe they will tell you to bloom not as a violet but as a rose. They will do things like put up lists of who is the best salesman. In a sense that's pretty nice; it seems to be encouragement. But encouragement is not always good for you. Sometimes it makes you nervous, because it causes you to see the world dualistically.

When you look around, you see many people who are nervous. Even if they have money and high social status, they are unhappy because they are violets who are trying to bloom as roses. If you ask yourself, "Which will I be, a violet or a rose?" then you are making comparisons. But before you compare yourself with somebody else, you are already you. So just be you. Stand up straight, right in the vastness of your original existence, and let the flower of your life force bloom as you really are.

Nothing to Depend On

Sometimes people who do zazen say the whole world is shining. From an objective point of view, we don't understand how trees and birds can shine. But if you do zazen, maybe you will tell me the world is shining. What do you mean? Why are the trees completely different than before? It is because you have touched the eternal heart of human existence—emptiness—which is called "nothing to depend on." So what does it mean to say "nothing to depend on"?

When you see the words "no eyes, no ears, no nose, no tongue, no body, no mind" in the *Heart Sutra* (*Maha Prajna Paramita Hrdaya Sutra*), it's really strange, don't you think so? This is emptiness—nothing to depend on. It's a very strange idea for us to understand.

But if you practice zazen with a sincere mind, exploring your life and others' lives, then someday, somewhere, you will touch nothing to depend on. At that time you are scared.

You are scared because you see and touch the bottom of human existence, which is based on emptiness, but simultaneously your human consciousness understands that nothingness objectively. The objectivity of your conscious mind sees your life as separate from that nothing, and it makes you scared. Maybe nothingness looks like an abyss, or a black hole that will suck you in. You are in despair; you feel everything is in vain. But in that moment there is a great opportunity, because you are in the very incipient stage of tasting emptiness directly through your experience. So keep going!

When you really get in touch with nothing to depend on and become one with emptiness, a different and new life comes up. It is a life that you have never expected. You are right on the flow of life energy, just going on a nice walk, not expecting anything at all. If you see a tree, the energy of your life and the energy of the tree's life are moving along together in peace and harmony. Then you can take care of the tree as it really is because the tree is exactly the same as your life. This way of taking care of life is called true practice. True practice is the pure sense of human action; it is activity that is undefiled by the delusion of separation.

Every day, all you have to do is stand up in emptiness, open your heart, and accept the lively energy of your life. Then you are ready to act based on wisdom. You don't understand what emptiness is exactly, but your life is already there, so stand up straight and start to walk. Even if you are scared, just go ahead. Proceed with stability and let wisdom guide the way. Just go on with your life.

BASKING IN BUDDHA'S COMPASSION

WHEN YOU REACH the bottom of your life and see the ultimate nature of being, you realize there is nothing there. Well, there is only one thing there: motion. That movement is the basic nature of being: the rhythm of life itself. The movement of nothingness gives you a certain kind of energy. It shoots up from the basic nature of being, and you receive it as the energy of your own life. That is enlightenment, we say, but strictly speaking it is Buddha's compassion. It is the great compassion you already possess.

Buddha's compassion is very deep in your life. It is the form of your own life. Your body and mind are produced by compassion. Your life, the life of all beings, everything you see, and everything you hear are nothing but the total manifestation of Buddha's warm, compassionate heart. So whatever you may feel, whatever you may think, whatever you may do, Buddha's compassion is there. You cannot see it, but your life—everyone's life—is constantly supported by Buddha's compassion. When you trust in Buddha's compassion, this is called faith.

Buddhist Faith

Buddhist faith is the activity of constantly seeking and basking in Buddha's compassion. For the English word *faith*, Buddhism uses the word *bodhichitta* (bodhi mind). Faith as *bodhichitta* is not the usual idea of faith. *Bodhichitta* is the state of mind in which you realize that you are one being, interpenetrated by all beings. So Buddhist faith is not only to believe in something, it is to actually realize the vastness of Buddha's world. You depend on the vastness of the world that embraces and supports your life, and you just bask in it.

Bodhichitta is like a big tree. In an earthquake, you can be saved by being under a tree with deep roots. This is really true! The tree of *bodhichitta* is huge, vast. If you depend on that tree, you grow smoothly as a human being. It's just like the relationship of mother and child. Like a baby, seeking and basking in mother's compassion, you grow as a child of Buddha.

Is basking in Buddha's compassion the same as Christian faith that God loves you? Maybe so, I don't know. According to my opinion, I think so, but I don't really know. From a Buddhist point of view, God's love is the real reality that you are constantly basking in—the vastness of being.

The vastness of being is hard to understand. That's why many religions say God is completely beyond verbal explanation so we should just believe. Christian people are usually very surprised that Buddhism explains the vastness of being. Of course, Buddhism accepts the aspect of being that is completely beyond human speculation. We trust in the vastness of being. But on the other hand we are human beings. We have a big brain in our head, so we can't ignore the aspect of the human world that is created by emotional, spiritual, and psychological things.

That's why in Buddhism we study and try to understand the structure of human life. That is the teaching of the four noble truths, the twelvefold chain of causation, and in Mahayana Buddhism it is the teaching of impermanence and conditioned origination. We try to understand human life, but at the same time we trust in the great fact that everything is embraced by Buddha's wonderful compassion.

So Buddhism understands it two ways. One way is we just believe in the great reality and depend on the huge tree that is always supporting us. Whether we understand it or not, we are always basking in Buddha's compassion. But also we use our heads and try to understand it intellectually. For this we have to think. So think, and after you think, as best as you can, move toward the core of your existence and bask in Buddha's compassion.

Basking in Buddha's compassion, very naturally spiritual awareness is there. When you experience spiritual awareness, there is salvation—you are saved by your awareness and you find a wonderful life. If you see even a dim image of the vastness of reality, you are saved because you realize that you can depend on that vastness.

Based on living with awareness, someday something touches your heart, and you jump in and experience that vastness directly. That is called enlightenment. Enlightenment penetrates your skin, muscle, bone, and marrow, becoming exactly one with your life, and you find that life is worth living.

Based on knowing the core of your being, you live with confidence in your existence. Then enlightenment directs the activity of your life, and you cannot help but share your life, living with all beings in peace and harmony, helping, serving, teaching, and developing life in the human world. That is Buddhist altruism. These three—salvation, enlightenment, and altruism—are called bodhichitta, bodhi mind, or way mind. This is Buddhist faith.

Depending on Love

Many people think, "I will believe I am basking in Buddha's compassion only after I understand why I should believe." They want to understand intellectually before they have faith. But if you wait until you understand Buddhism completely, it will be too late. The span of your life is not long enough to completely understand Buddhism.

Still, studying is important. Studying encourages us. So, one by one, study the four noble truths, the twelve links of causation, Buddhist philosophy and psychology. But it doesn't really matter how much you understand intellectually because right in the process of studying those teachings, there is a practical way to reach realization of Buddha's world. How? Take care of your life according to *amaeru*.

Amaeru is a Japanese term meaning "to express emotional dependence," such as between a mother and child, a wife and husband, or a student and teacher. It's an informal, conversational term. The formal term is "to love." Expressing emotional dependence doesn't mean having emotional dependency. You express emotional dependence, but still you take good care of your own life and keep it healthy.

Written in Japanese, the *amaeru* character consists of two parts. One part represents your mind in the vertical; the other is your mind in the horizontal. For example, if you fall in love with someone, immediately your mind stands up straight and you forget yourself. There is no idea of something called "I" because your mind is completely occupied by love. That's pretty nice, but this kind of love is really based on selfishness. It's very greedy.

We think romantic love is something wonderful, so we always expect to get something beautiful as a result of falling in love. But when you actually love someone, love becomes complicated. You are surprised, and you don't know how to take care of the reality of love. Then your mind stumbles, it tumbles over, and all of a sudden selfishness appears, spreading out in the horizontal. Finally love turns into hatred.

But in the second part of the *amaeru* character, there is a term of negation above horizontal mind. That means no-mind. "No-mind" means going beyond ideas of love and hatred and touching the original core of love. That is the beauty of love. Love based on no-mind is to love not just a certain person—it is to love all beings. That's beautiful! It's very important, but it's not so easy.

The two aspects of love—selfish love and the beauty of love—are always working together as one, sometimes showing selfish love, sometimes the beauty of love. That is real love. You can use selfish love, but love can't always be selfish because real love is based on both aspects. So forget selfish love sometimes, and practice love based on no-mind. The practice of real love is to attach to neither selfish love nor the beauty of love. That is how you can experience real love.

So if you fall in love with somebody, what should you do? Express your love, but don't be obsessed with love. Being obsessed makes you greedy. That is selfishness. I don't mean you should completely deny selfishness. Selfishness is important. Without selfishness you cannot love anybody. The question is, how much should you use selfishness? I don't know. There is no particular pattern. Look at your life, your circumstances, the situation around you, society, and the human history of habits and customs, rules and regulations. Maybe those things can give you a certain pattern for how much you should use your selfish love.

Selfish love sometimes moves toward hatred, but real love is not love opposed to hatred; real love is complete freedom. If so, then what does it mean to say you can realize Buddha's world by expressing emotional dependence? If you really share your life with someone, you will touch the core of love and discover the real meaning of love. You are exactly one with another person, and there is warm communication. That's why expressing emotional dependence as amaeru is important.

The practice of amaeru is to trust in someone, whoever it is, and help that person as best you can. Usually we don't trust in others. Maybe you had a bitter life in the past caused by some person, or people from a particular country or religion, so you don't trust certain people or teachings now. But if you don't have trust in anything and your life is expressed in that manner, it influences all the beings around you. That's pretty hard. So how can we learn to trust in something? It's very simple.

A baby basks in its mother's compassion and grows very naturally. The same applies to all of us. You are a child of Buddha. If you want to grow physically, psychologically, or spiritually, you can bask in Buddha's compassion. That is to depend on the huge tree of Buddha's world and trust in the beings around you, whoever they are. This practice is based on the truth that all beings are Buddha. It lets you share your life with others and help all beings with true heart and sincerity.

The more you practice like this, the more it is difficult to see yourself as separate from other people. Someday, right in the process of sharing your life, you will completely forget yourself and jump into Buddha's world of oneness. You are free! That is to realize bodhichitta (bodhi mind). You just bask in the vastness of Buddha's compassion and appreciate your life.

Living as a Bodhisattva

In the beginning of the *Diamond Sutra*, Shakyamuni Buddha's disciple Subhuti is very surprised by the wonderful experience of basking in Buddha's compassion. But Subhuti knows that he shouldn't be dumbfounded by knowing real reality and realizing that he is one being coproduced by the interpenetration of all beings. Once he has Buddhist faith, having faith is not good enough. He needs to know how to live in the human world based on faith.

So after expressing admiration and appreciation to the Buddha for his great help and support, Subhuti immediately asks him a question: "How should the bodhisattva stand who has set out in the vehicle of a bodhisattva?" Setting out in the bodhisattva vehicle means bodhichitta—Buddhist faith. Faith is realizing that you are alive in the universal path and your life is supported by all beings. So Subhuti is asking: now that I have faith, how should I act? What attitude should I take mentally, physically, and psychologically? In other words, what should I do?

How do we stand up straight and abide in daily living as bodhisattvas? The bodhisattva way is just to help all beings with

compassionate attention, so Buddha answered Subhuti's question in this way:

Subhuti, someone who has set out in the vehicle of a Bodhisattva should produce a thought in this manner: "As many beings as there are in the universe of beings, comprehended under the term 'beings'—egg-born, born from a womb, moisture-born, or miraculously born; with or without form; with perception, without perception, and with neither perception nor nonperception, as far as any conceivable form of beings is conceived: all of this I must lead to Nirvana, into that Realm of Nirvana which leaves nothing behind. And yet, although innumerable have thus been led to Nirvana, no being at all has been led to Nirvana." And why? If, in a Bodhisattva the notion of a "being" should take place, he could not be called a "Bodhi-being." "And why? He is not to be called a Bodhi-being, in whom the notion of a self or of a being should take place, or the notion of a living soul or of a person."

In this translation by Edward Conze, Shakyamuni describes all beings as egg born, born from womb, moisture born, or miraculously born, and also as beings without any form. We don't know what those beings are exactly. Still, Buddha says that anything you can conceive of is a being you can help. So take care of not only your friends, not only your family, not only Americans, not only Japanese, but everything: trees, birds, and all beings, whatever they are.

In the history of Buddhist teaching, there are three categories of bodhisattva: *sravaka* buddha, *pratika* buddha, and real bodhisattva. In Shakyamuni's time, many monks attained enlightenment by listening to his teaching. Those monks were called *sravaka*. A *sravaka* analyzes the structure of human life as a philosophy or psychology based on Buddha's teaching of the four noble truths: suffering, the cause of suffering, freedom from suffering, and the path to nirvana. Today we are also very interested in understanding human life in this way, so I think all of us are, more or less, *sravaka* buddhas.

A pratika buddha is sort of the opposite of sravaka. If you understand the structure of human life based on the four noble truths, what basic principle can you discover? That is interdependence and conditioned co-origination. A pratika buddha attains enlightenment through personally realizing the interpenetration of all beings. That realization implies a deeper understanding of the human world. It is an understanding of Buddhist philosophy that comes alive in one's daily living.

The last one, a real bodhisattva, is a person whose way of life is based on emancipation. There are three gates of emancipation: emptiness, no form, and no desire. Emptiness is the pure texture of being. You are pure and free; there is nothing to be contaminated by anything.

No form means oneness: no form of subject and no form of object. The Buddha said that when bodhisattvas help, they leave no trace of helping. So when you help, don't have any notion of being someone who is helping others or any notion of there being another person who is receiving your help. At that time you can be exactly one with the other person. This perfect harmony of self and other is called oneness.

It means, for example, that as a teacher I cannot take care of myself only as a separate form of being called Katagiri. For the good of my students, I also have to take care of my interconnected life. So I have to take care of Katagiri as Katagiri and also as no-Katagiri. When I am no-Katagiri, there is no sense of "I am a teacher; I am helping you" or "You are my student; you are helping me."

No desire means nothing is outside oneness, so there is nothing separate to be desired. When the time comes to help, you just help from the pure state of oneness, with no desire to give benefit or gain a reward. At that time a person appears who is called a real bodhisattva.

Generally speaking, a way of life based on emancipation means that if you understand something, you don't stay with your own idea. If you want to cry, cry. If you suffer from your life, suffer. There is no way to escape from suffering. But don't be obsessed with crying and

suffering. You can take advantage of the suffering you have experienced and use it for the good of others. In other words, helping others who are crying and suffering can be backed with your own crying and suffering.

If you want to enjoy, enjoy. But don't be obsessed with having pleasure. Not to be obsessed means not to linger. Whatever it is—crying, suffering, or pleasure—don't linger over anything. If you experience what you are, don't stay with what you are. What you are is what you will be in the next moment. In a moment, what you are is no longer what you were, so you cannot stay stuck in the past. If you stay with what you were, that is ego. The bodhisattva way is to just constantly stand up in the vastness of existence, let go of ego, and help all beings as best you can.

There are three categories of bodhisattva, but there is no rank or hierarchy among them because each one contains the other two; the three are interconnected as just one. As bodhisattvas we can depend on the fact that we are always basking in the great help of Buddha. So trust in the huge tree of Buddha's compassion. This way of life very naturally extends into realization of the vastness of Buddha's world—bodhichitta. That is Buddhist faith.

DIRECTING YOUR BOAT

“LIFE IS LIKE a man riding in a boat. Aboard the boat, he uses a sail, he takes the tiller, he poles the boat along. Yet the boat carries him, and without the boat he is not there. By riding in the boat, he makes it a boat.” This is Dogen Zenji’s statement in *Shobogenzo Zenki* (*Total Dynamic Working*), translated by Norman Waddell and Masao Abe (1972).

Dogen’s boat is the great vehicle of Mahayana, the Buddha way. The Buddha way is the place where you already are. You are on that boat. You are one with this boat, the water, the sky, this shore, and the other shore. All sentient beings coexist with you on the boat. All are embraced by Buddha’s compassion, which is constantly supporting and carrying you. The lively energy of life carries you and lets you be free, but still you have to do something. Life requires you to act.

We must constantly live by taking the initiative to make the vastness of existence come alive in our own lives. This is not so easy. If you believe that your life on the boat can be completely controlled by your own individual effort, you may become arrogant or egotistical, always rushing and feeling irritated. Or if you face failure, you may fall into despair and want to give up. So don’t forget the original place where you are.

When you remember the place you already are, then you are free to burn the flame of your life force in whatever you do. You can use

your energy to build up your life for the benefit of yourself and others. That is to direct the boat in the proper way. It's not so easy, but this is the bodhisattva way of life.

Moving in the Right Direction

There is a Zen koan about a water buffalo. Master Guishan Lingyou said, "When I die, I will be reborn as a cow in the village. In a hundred years you will find the cow with the name Guishan written under its left arm. How do you call this cow? Is this just a cow? If you say so, it's wrong. But on the other hand, if after discovering my name on the cow, you say this is not a cow, this is Guishan, this answer is also wrong. So, how do you call this cow?"

Dogen Zenji commented on this koan, saying, "Please allow this cow to be in the big pasture, and guide this cow to move toward the right direction." Dogen's pasture is the vast place where all sentient beings—grass, air, moisture, all things visible and invisible—exist simultaneously, in peace and harmony. We are living in that huge pasture, so we shouldn't try to understand human life in a narrow way.

Like Guishan's cow, we have two different ways of living. Our ordinary lives are always filled with problems, desires, and delusions. If we see only ordinary life, we may think it is natural for human beings to live just according to trying to satisfy our desires because this is our instinct.

But that way of living doesn't really satisfy us because we also think that life shouldn't be so miserable. So we seek to be free from ordinary life and live in a better way. This is our bodhisattva life. But when problems come up, we forget that better way and go back to our ordinary way. We are always zigzagging, always attaching to one side or the other.

You are an ordinary human being, covered with messy karmic life, but there is always an opportunity to be something more than that. There is always an opportunity to do something good for you, for others, for all sentient beings. That's why we study and try to

understand human life. The problem is our understanding is very undependable because everything is always changing. So the important question is, how do we give life to our undependable understanding?

Bodhisattvas just constantly aim in a certain direction. Even though their understanding is undependable, they try to use their human lives not only for the sake of their own life, but also for the sake of others' lives, making every possible effort to give birth to the buddha-dharma.

Bodhisattvas don't know exactly what they are giving birth to, so there is some anxiety, some uneasy feeling there. Still, all they can do is aim their life at the target of giving birth to eternal life using their karmic life, and then move in that direction. This is difficult, but this is a bodhisattva's life. This is their suffering. However, right in the middle of suffering, the flame of their life begins to burn, and they find their life worth living. It is like parents who suffer because of their children but feel their lives worth living right in the process of being with their children.

A life worth living doesn't come from a conceptual understanding. It is not found by molding your life according to getting a reward from a particular activity. To move in the bodhisattva direction is to allow your life to proceed toward a great image of life without having any expectation from it. If you expect something, even slightly, you cannot move; you cannot direct your life toward your great target.

Your great image of life is just an image; the perfect direction is a direction you can never reach. Even so, having an image to aim at is important. It gives you a great suggestion of how to live every day. So try to make that image come alive day to day. How? Direct your boat! Whatever you understand about your human life, just direct your life toward your target every day, constantly thinking how to actualize the bodhisattva vow to live in peace and harmony with all sentient beings.

You have both an ordinary life and a bodhisattva life. They work together in a compound state of living, like a single piece of paper. You cannot take just one side and throw the other one away; you

have to accept both. But after accepting both, you can make a determination to go in a certain direction. If you can see even a dim vision of the original nature of your life, then that image is your great target to aim at. Using your body and mind you can deepen your life. Finally you can express your bodhisattva life in the realm of your ordinary life.

Even if your cow is going zigzag, please gently guide this cow toward the right direction. How? It really depends upon your refined action, right now, right here. Just proceed under all circumstances, without expecting anything to happen as a particular result of your effort.

When you move toward your great image of life without expecting anything, very naturally you can open your heart and share your life with all sentient beings. Then, right in the process of sharing your life, you find that your life is worth living.

Wisdom and Compassion Is Love

Simply speaking, Buddha's teaching consists of two points: wisdom and compassion. Wisdom is a deep understanding of impermanence: life is coming and going from moment to moment. Compassion is a deep understanding of interdependent co-origination: all lives are interconnected. Broadly speaking, according to the teaching of compassion, your life is forgiven. But even so, according to the teaching of wisdom, your life can never be forgiven.

When I was a young monk, living in a small temple in Japan with my teacher Daicho Hayashi Roshi, I made lots of mistakes, and many things happened. When I went down to the village, people often criticized me or barked at me, so my everyday life was pretty entangled, pretty confused. When you are very confused, even some small criticism really bothers you. My life was a little bit of a mess, so hatred and many other emotions were always coming up. But the moment I went back to the temple, I felt relief because Hayashi Roshi always embraced me under all circumstances. Whatever

happened in my life, he was always going very smoothly with me, like a stream of water. His presence of heart was very wonderful for me.

My teacher didn't try to explain compassion to me, but through his everyday life I could taste how compassionate his mind was. Compassion shows us the eternal realm of life, where your life and others' lives are totally accepted. In terms of compassion, you can accept your life and take care of your life as totally forgiven. But in terms of wisdom, life is going from moment to moment without stopping. That is the very serious realm of life. This moment will never come again; your actions now will stay with human life forever. There are no excuses. My teacher also showed me this.

When I didn't get up in the morning, he said, very gently, "When the morning comes, you should get up. When people have breakfast, you should have breakfast. After that, if you don't feel good, go to bed." This was a very good suggestion for me. Get up! No excuses! Your human life should fit into the rhythm of life. When morning comes, make morning alive as morning and get up. That's it! Accept full responsibility for this very moment, and take best care of your life right now.

When you practice wisdom and compassion like this, dharma comes into your life very naturally, and your life manifests itself as dharma. That is the manifestation of your total personality. Your life penetrates into the entire world, includes all beings, and your personality becomes whole. You can do this! My teacher did it. My teacher always showed me this. But I was young. I didn't have eyes to see it or ears to listen to it. So I always felt confused and I always complained. But on the other hand, I felt relief when I came back to temple. I could take a deep breath from my teacher's total personality.

So what can you say about your life? Are you forgiven or not forgiven? You cannot say only one way. You have to practice dharma from day to day and get a taste of it. In other words, your understanding must go very deep to see the bottom of human life. That is wisdom. Then, from seeing the depth of human life, wisdom

brings forth compassion for all sentient beings. That is to love all beings.

In Buddhism, *wisdom and compassion* is a term for love. But that love is not the usual sense of love. By wisdom and compassion you can communicate with others, you can accept others, or you can forgive others. That is love. Love is the very serious and also the very soft basis of human existence from which you can take a deep breath, breathing like the wind blows, breathing naturally on grass in the field.

The Sadness in Compassion

In ancient India they used the term *buddha* meaning “awakened one.” The term appears in Jainism, Brahmanism, and in myths and poems such as the Rig Veda and the Baghavad Gita. But the concept of buddha created by Buddhism was a little different from other Indian schools and philosophies.

According to early Buddhist teaching, a buddha is an awakened one whose human life has particular characteristics. There are eighteen marks of a buddha’s life: ten powers, fourfold fearlessness, threefold dwelling in mindfulness, and compassion.

The ten powers describe a buddha’s total personality. He or she has great eyes to see and great ears to hear the voice of the past, present, future. This power penetrates not only into all time but also into every inch of space, so a buddha’s life is expanding everywhere. It is not mysterious. Everyone can have this. Such eyes and ears are nurtured very naturally by your practice and study.

Fearlessness is feeling relief. When I lived with my teacher, I learned about fearlessness because I felt relief. Feeling relief allows you to completely open yourself. If you practice mindfulness of dharma in everyday life, very naturally you feel relief. You experience a peaceful life, free from human suffering and confusion, wherever you may be.

Dwelling in mindfulness is focusing on the dharma realm, where there is no discrimination. A buddha is never tossed away by like or

dislike, famous or not famous, happiness or suffering, because he or she is always standing in the unified dharma realm where there are no categories. That is the basic place where trust and distrust, man and woman, teacher and disciple, all races, all beings, and all categories are loosened into space.

The final mark of a buddha is compassion. Compassion consists of two terms: *karuna* and *maitri*. *Maitri* is “friendliness” or “kindness.” *Karuna* means “sadness” or “moaning.” Ever since I became a monk, I wanted to know why there is sadness in compassion instead of just kindness. I didn’t understand it. Finally I learned that to understand it, you have to taste that sadness.

Karuna is not the sadness, pain, or suffering produced by your human consciousness or physical senses. It is a deeper sense of pain or pensiveness, a very deep and limitless moan that is beyond words. It is always in our hearts, but nobody can express it. That moan comes from a disconsolate irritation in the bottom of your life. It comes from wanting to get something, wanting to know something.

Everyone has this irritation because we want to know something more than our intellectual understanding of human life. That is why we practice. Being a practitioner means wanting to know something more, but you don’t know what it is. Why do you practice zazen? You don’t know actually. Why am I a Buddhist monk, practicing this way of life? I don’t know, but I cannot stop.

I think everyone wants to be a practitioner in life. This is a human desire. Your desire really encourages you to make an effort to exist in this world, seeking for something deep. That’s why we try to know what dharma is. But it’s very difficult to know what the real dharma is. Through practice and study of Buddha’s teaching, you can come very close. You can have a glimpse of dharma. Then, in the next moment, dharma disappears. So you have to practice and study it again and again. Finally you come to the bottom of human life.

Between the bottom of human life and eternity, there is a kind of partition. When you reach this partition, you find it's very soft, like a curtain. Touch it and—*whoosh*—you enter eternity; you experience the oneness of you and all sentient beings. Then you realize how minutely your consciousness is vibrating, constantly creating a gap between you and eternity, constantly separating you from others, and a deep moan of sadness arises from the depth of your life. I think we can understand karuna as that moaning.

Avalokiteshvara is the bodhisattva of compassion because she understands that deep human cry. We say that Avalokiteshvara hears the cry of the world. She has a great ear to listen to your deep moan; then the presence of Avalokiteshvara gives you complete relief. That is why she is the symbol of fearlessness. When I was with my teacher, I felt that relief. I didn't know what it was, but when I went back to the temple, I felt peaceful because of my teacher's great compassion.

If you know the deep moaning of your own life and pay attention to others' lives, someday you recognize that the deep moan is present in everyone's life, and your cry turns into great compassion. Then, very naturally, you can share your life with others in a kind way. Even though you cannot explain it, understanding the deep moan in your own life spreads into others' lives and gives them relief. This compassion is the final mark of a buddha.

Beautiful and Not Beautiful Aspects of Life

Some people think it is nonsense to practice zazen, just sitting quietly without expecting anything while there are people who are starving to death. So they criticize Zen, and they ask me, "Why don't you save people from their suffering right now instead of sitting uselessly in zazen?" That's a beautiful thought, but I don't think it *is* beautiful. Beautiful thinking sometimes makes problems because it is *too* beautiful.

Real life consists of both the beautiful aspect and the not beautiful aspect. There are many aspects of human life. If you think only of the people who are starving, you may say, "We should save them!" Then

you try to mold your life into this idealistic way of thinking. Watch out! It is beautiful to want to save people, but pay attention to reality. Look at your own life. Human life is very shaky. How much can you save *you*?

Everyday life is really undependable. This is the reality we live in. You have to save yourself first, but not to satisfy your ordinary karmic life—to open yourself. Then you can share your life with all sentient beings every day, taking good care of yourself and others. It's not so easy, but to learn how to do this, you can use Buddha's precepts as a practical guide.

In the Buddhist initiation ceremony, you receive Buddha's three pure and ten prohibitory precepts. Then we ask you: "Do you observe this precept?" You say, "Yes I do!" But even though you say so, sometimes it's really, "No, I don't!" Intellectually your mind is complicated. One moment you think: Yes, I can. Next moment: No, I can't. So what should you do? How do you observe the precepts in your everyday life? How can you live without hurting others? Reflecting on that question is very important.

For example, when we look at Buddha's prohibitory precepts, we think we should keep the precepts perfectly. That's a beautiful idea, but if you want to eat, how do you observe the precept of no killing? We kill in many ways. Even if you don't kill any animals, you kill insects, vegetables, grasses. If you keep the precept of no killing perfectly, your life can no longer exist; you will die of starvation. So how can we depend on the precepts to show us the right way of life? We cannot say how exactly, but don't understand your life in a narrow way. Your understanding must be deepened, and your action must be refined.

To deepen your understanding, first you have to reflect on yourself. Then you can make a determination to live in a certain way. Your determination comes from understanding yourself, your ideas, your thinking, your life, and your world. By introspecting your life, analyzing your understanding based on your education, your circumstances, your karma, your emotions, your past, present, and future, a determination appears.

Whatever determination you make, your determination is very shaky. This is not something wrong; it's the world we live in. It's like snow on the Rocky Mountains—you cannot depend on it. Nevertheless, if you are a mountain climber, that undependable snow is an important place for you to build up your life. In everyday life, the undependable human world of samsara is your important place where you can live for the sake of all beings. So how do you make your determination sure and stable? Make a determination to live in a certain way, and move your life in that direction.

Strictly speaking, the bodhisattva way is to keep our own life healthy and peaceful and share our life with all beings, living together day to day in peace and harmony. But can you do it? If you love someone, you don't love that person totally. The more you love, the more you can see another side of that person that you don't like. If you see someone you don't like, can you open yourself and share your life with that person? You can try, but in a corner of your consciousness there is always hatred.

In my own case, if I face some person I don't like, immediately I hesitate. I cannot open myself. My mind says, "Let's open." So I try. But I'm really just pretending. Still, there's no other way. So I'm constantly pretending to open myself and trying to approach Buddha's way. The more I try, the more I see the clear image of pretending. Finally I cry. Crying, crying, crying, and then finally I totally open my life. Relief!

I don't know how much we should cry. There are thousands, millions of cries. And then you open. Hitting the target of totally opening yourself once is due to having missed a hundred thousand. Not a hundred thousand—millions and millions of misses. So in the shaky realm of human life, just keep trying to share your life with people around you, and extend your warm heart into all beings in the world. That's it! That is proceeding in the bodhisattva direction.

It's pretty hard to proceed in the bodhisattva direction every day. It's not a matter of idealistic discussion or conceptual understanding. It's not thinking of a beautiful world separate from you. It really depends on your attitude and what kind of action you take. So sit

down in zazen, and throw your egotistical thoughts away. Only through this practice can you gradually learn what you are.

You have to really see yourself first, and then you can direct your body and mind. When you understand what you are, you can enter into the feelings of others—not only another human being’s feelings, the feelings of all beings: tables, trees, vegetables. At the time when you learn what you are, it is the time when you can save others.

The Deep Meaning of Precept

The Zen master Kyogo, who was one of Dogen Zenji’s disciples, made a very simple but very profound statement about the meaning of precept. In your whole life, through study and practice, through meditation, please try to understand his way of expressing the meaning of precept. Kyogo said:

Precept refers to restraint and extermination. In attaining enlightenment under the Bodhi tree, Shakyamuni Buddha fruited the precepts. This is named restraint. It means to adjust and come to a stop in the truth that “I and all beings on the great earth both simultaneously attain enlightenment together.” That is precept, which my teacher has never taught nor has ever the Buddha taught.

This statement is found in the *Bonmokyō Ryakushō*, Kyogo’s commentary on the *Brahmajāla Sūtra (Brahma’s Net Sūtra)*, which contains an early statement of the precepts for bodhisattvas. Kyogo says that the term *precept* refers to restraint and extermination, but this is quite different from restraint and extermination of a certain behavior.

Kyogo also says that when Shakyamuni sat under the Bodhi tree and became the Buddha, he “fruited” the precepts. Fruit matures naturally, so the precepts are the mature fruit of Buddha’s life. Shakyamuni realized the depth of the human world and the precepts

appeared very naturally as the contents of his life. The precepts are Buddha's life; Buddha's life is the precepts. There is no difference.

In the big scale of life, precept is the activity of the whole universe, which naturally ripens a tree's life, a person's life, and the life of all sentient beings. This is the most important meaning of precept. Please remember this one. You can use Buddha's precepts as a practical guide for how to take care of human life in the small scale, but first accept the precepts as the manifestation of the whole universe. Accept the precepts as the life of mountains, sky, and all sentient beings, and make them alive as your own life.

Restraint is like drawing a horse to a stop. It means to bring the small scale of your life to a stop. Where? In the truth that all sentient beings are Buddha! Your human consciousness is always creating some sticky strength between you and your object. As long as you have consciousness, you never get away from having an opponent. When you see yourself only through your human consciousness, your world is very small. In your small world you're always discussing things, playing with muddy water instead of coming back to the pure manifestation of life. You are already alive as a human being, so you have to see yourself individually. But your life is also alive in the same and one ground with all sentient beings, so you also have to take care of your life in the big scale.

Extermination is, simply speaking, to sever the root of delusion and return to the big scale of your life, which exists before subject and object are separated into two by your human consciousness. Zen practice is to sever the root of that sticky dualistic consciousness and return to the very pure incipient stage of seeing and hearing, where there is no difference between subject and object. Severing the root of delusion, all sense of self and other is melted away, and perfect freedom is there. That is great maturity, which is beyond human speculation or evaluation. This great maturity is already in your life because you are Buddha. That's why you can adjust and come to a stop in the realm of maturity.

When you stop in the realm of maturity, you are ready to accept the whole universe as your life. All are Buddha; this is the truth. So

Kyogo includes the great statement of truth that Shakyamuni made when he attained enlightenment under the Bodhi tree: “I and all beings on the great earth both simultaneously attain enlightenment together.” This is called the same and one ground, or simply the truth.

Saying “all are Buddha” means there is nothing that you can throw away. Suffering, pain, unhappiness, deep moan, whatever it is, you cannot throw it away. The more you try to throw it away, the more it becomes a ghost chasing after you. So whatever happens, accept it and deal with it as Buddha.

Finally Kyogo says, “That is precept, which my teacher has never taught nor has ever the Buddha taught.” Your understanding of precept is not a matter of intellectual teaching; it is a matter of direct experience. The universe is going in a certain system and rhythm. It’s not random. When that rhythm is alive in human life, it is called the precepts. All you have to do is stand up there and make it alive as your own life. How? Adjust and come to a stop in the truth, where you, your life, and your emotions are already Buddha.

Receiving the Precepts

Zen master Yakusan Igen (Yaoshan Weiyan, 745–828) was asked by a monk, “Master, you know that Bodhidharma went to China to teach the buddha-dharma. I wonder, was dharma there before he went to China to teach the dharma?” Yakusan said, “Yes, there was dharma before Bodhidharma went to China.” Then the monk asked, “Why did he have to go to China to teach the buddha-dharma, if it was already there?” Yakusan answered, “He went there because of its presence.”

In Bodhidharma’s time, Buddhism was only understood intellectually in China. So Bodhidharma went there to make Buddha’s teaching alive in the human world of China through its presence in his own life. This is called receiving the precepts.

If we are already Buddha, why do we have to receive Buddha’s precepts? You could ask: “Why do we climb mountains?” Before you

climb a mountain, is the mountain there? Yes, it is. So why do you climb it? Finally you say: “I climb because the mountain is there.” Or, “Katagiri, why do you practice zazen—such a stupid way?” Well, I don’t know why exactly. I just practice because that stupid way is already here. This is my responsibility. I have to make Zen practice alive in my own life, so I just climb the mountain. Otherwise, practice is always something separate from me. Finally, the mountain and I communicate, and there is a big world there. That’s why I try to climb Buddha’s mountain.

So if we are already Buddha, why do we have to receive Buddha’s precepts? Because we are Buddha! To receive means to transmit, and to transmit means to make something. When you receive Buddha’s precepts, your body is made by Buddha, and you become Buddha. In other words, your human life becomes Buddha’s life. Your life is Buddha, and Buddha occupies every inch of your life. At that time you become Buddha. Is this possible?

If you ask if it’s possible, your Zen teacher will scold you and say you are a coward, because you are ignoring the fact that you are already great mature fruit. So before you ask, you have to stand up straight, keep yourself in check, and come to a stop in this truth of the great mature life that everyone has.

Day by day all you have to do is push the button of maturity, like turning on a television and seeing the whole world come into one screen. Constantly pushing a button is really boring for us—it seems ridiculous. But we have to do this simple practice, stand up right there, and practice wholeheartedly. This is our responsibility. That is to observe the precepts.

Practicing Buddha’s Precepts

The precepts are very important for Buddhist practitioners, but most people are confused by the precepts. That’s a problem because if you misuse the precepts, you will always be frightened or feel guilty. Even if you obey the precepts completely, still you are afraid. It’s just like running a business. If you are successful in your business, you feel

happy, but in the bottom of your life, there is uneasiness because you are afraid of failing. So you make more and more effort until finally you are exhausted.

How can you use the precepts and keep your energy in balance? Being in balance doesn't mean just having a comfortable way of life. It means knowing that sometimes you use your energy strongly, with full concentrated effort, and sometimes you use your energy in a little more relaxed way. I don't know how to explain this. It's not something that someone teaches you. It's something you learn through your own practice.

If you want to practice Buddha's precepts, first contemplate what it means to say that all beings in the human world are Buddha; then base your practice on the truth that Buddha's world and the human world are not different. A tree is a being that is blooming in the Buddha's world. The same applies to pebbles, insects, and all sentient beings. This is our basic attitude toward the human world and human beings.

Enlightenment, delusion, hell, or hungry ghosts—whoever they are, all beings in the human world must be seen and accepted as Buddha. Then you can practice the precepts a little bit in your everyday life. So see and accept everything as Buddha first. Then you can stand up in this truth and practice right in the middle of thoughts coming up, delusions coming up, or enlightenment coming up, because they are nothing but activity in the Buddha's world.

Still, I think we should recognize how difficult it is to obey even one precept. How much *can* we practice Buddha's teaching day to day? Standing up in Buddha's world is not so simple. Even if we understand intellectually, we don't understand emotionally. Often we are at a loss over how to deal with the concrete aspect of human life.

For example, everyone knows how much anger hurts people, so we should stay calm and not be angry. But when we face anger, we are completely at a loss over what to do. Finally we fight. That is why again and again—forever—we have to listen to the truth and think

deeply how to keep the precepts in everyday life. Constantly explore the meaning of the precepts through your practice.

If you continue to practice, finally you can see the realm of real reality, where life is going like the flow of a stream and all beings are walking together, hand in hand, in peace and harmony. You feel your own human warmth and compassion, and you can deal with everyday life kindly, softly, and gently. Yes, it is possible!

So when you are ready, jump in and join that flow of life as a buddha. You will find a very simple life where you can make an art of the flow of life. That's why, when we ask if you will observe the precepts, you have to say, "Yes, I will do." You have to say this constantly: I will do, I will do, I will do. How long does it take? I don't know. It doesn't matter.

Human Weakness and the Bodhisattva Vow

Japan has really beautiful train transportation, just like airplanes in the United States. But sometimes the trains are jammed with people. One time I took a train from Kyushu to Tokyo. I was riding in an area of the train where they allow people who don't have a reservation to stand up in the aisle. I noticed there was a vacant seat, but even though no one was sitting there, I couldn't sit down because it was reserved.

Then the conductor told us, "If you want to sit in that vacant seat, please pay this amount of money. But I cannot give you any guarantee, because the person who reserved this seat might arrive." So no one paid the money. Fortunately, I had a train pass for foreigners. For one week I could go anywhere for free. And a reserved seat is also free. So I showed this pass to the conductor and he said, "Please sit down."

At the same time I saw an old woman who was standing up. But I didn't give my seat to her. I just quietly sat down. Then I thought, "Who am I? Do I always lead a bodhisattva life? Can I always share

my life with all sentient beings and know how to live in peace and harmony? I can't do it right now. I always try to protect my life. I don't want to share."

According to the Buddhist precepts, we shouldn't hurt others; we shouldn't push anyone away; we should always accept others and live together in peace and harmony. But at that time I realized how egoistic I am and how much I hurt others, how much I push people away from me in order to keep my life peaceful. Then, very naturally, I have to repent: Buddha, please help me! Please help me go in the right direction.

Well, I don't know how much I should pray to Buddha for help. I don't know how much Buddha can help me, because there is no guarantee that I can be free from egoism. But all I have to do is just repent. That's it! Repenting is a unique opportunity to open myself and move toward the Buddha way.

Usually we think of repentance as making an apology—to a person or divinity—for our mistakes. Making a mistake makes us uncomfortable, so we want to throw away our mistakes and get something else. Repentance in Buddhism is not like that. Instead of throwing our mistakes away, we face our mistakes and use our karmic life to move in the bodhisattva direction. This is hard, because the more you look at your life, the more you become aware of your human weakness and the more you see your life preventing you from reaching Buddha's way.

The more you try to move toward a great image of human life, the more you find it difficult to keep your life straight. The closer you come to the bodhisattva way of life, the more you encounter obstacles and difficulties created inwardly or outwardly by your life, by others' lives, and by circumstances. You see how egoistic human beings are, how we hurt ourselves and others.

Finally you discover the great moan of pain in the deepest level of human life—a great moan of disconsolate pain, irritation, or uneasiness in the bottom of your life. But then, from that pain, appears a sense of prayer or vow: I am weak, but I will try again to proceed in the bodhisattva direction. The practice of aiming at that

target is called repentance. Repentance is a way to accept your ordinary life and then use that life to go beyond it.

In Buddhism there are three kinds of repentance: repentance in thusness, undefiled repentance, and repentance in the presence of Buddha. Thusness is the original state of unity between you and the universe. So repentance in thusness means that your body and mind stand up straight in the whole universe. How can you do this? Use your human consciousness. Even though the egoistic human consciousness always creates a sense of separation between you and the universe, through using your consciousness you can make a determination to act.

But when you act, don't act blindly. Be watchful and alert, truthful and sincere. Use your thinking; then let go of it; stand up in the realm of the whole universe, and look around there. This is our practice. We practice letting go of egoistic understanding, opening ourselves, and then accepting and digesting our whole life. Repenting in this way makes your life alive, like the flow of pure water coming up from the deep ground without stopping.

Second is undefiled repentance. If you repent just to satisfy your desire to escape from mistakes, your repentance is defiled because your purpose is to satisfy your own desire. Don't confine your life by the smallness of your own desire! Using your human consciousness, put aside your small desire and open yourself. Opening yourself allows you to come back to the original state of total unity. How? Take care of your ordinary actions as refined action. Then you can jump into undefiled action where any idea of acting is melted away. That is called total action. This undefiled activity is the functioning of a deep understanding of human life, from which repentance originates.

Third is repentance in the presence of Buddha. For this, first you must accept the great moan of human pain in the bottom of human life. You are important! So you must be a person who can accept that great moan, believe it, and stand up straightly there. At that time you are ready to accept the whole universe. That is repentance in great

karuna (sadness). If you understand the deep moan in the depth of human life, that moan turns into compassion.

In English, “compassion” is one word, but in Japanese it consists of two characters: *ji* and *hi*. *Ji* is “the desire to give happiness to all beings”; *hi* is “sadness.” With the mind of compassion you understand that everyone has pain in the bottom of their lives, so very naturally you are considerate to all beings and give deep sympathy to everyone. You can express compassion not only to human beings, but also to trees, birds, and all sentient beings. If you are a person who practices repentance like this, your repentance is Buddha’s compassion.

Practicing repentance is exactly the same as taking refuge. So just bow and say, “I take refuge in the Buddha, I take refuge in the dharma, I take refuge in the sangha.” At that time, your refined human action *is* repentance in the presence of Buddha. Your action puts you right in the middle of the universal flow of energy. You are pure, refined, and free. Alive! This is the true meaning of repentance. By doing this you can use that universal life force to build up your own life and benefit other lives. This is a bodhisattva’s vow.

The more you try to move in the right direction, the more you discover lots of difficulties. The more you try to reach Buddha’s way, the more you hear the deep crying at the bottom of your life. But no matter how many storms you encounter, just adjust your boat and continue to go in the right direction. Again and again you have to stand up in the realm of the whole universe and adjust the movement of your boat. That is really difficult. You cannot do it only by your own effort. You need lots of help. So pray to Buddha: “Please help me stand up and move in that direction.” Then take one step in the bodhisattva direction. That’s all you have to do.

You Can Explain Only 70 Percent

One time I accompanied Eko Hashimoto Roshi on a trip from Eiheiiji monastery to Nagoya, where he was to teach on the *Shobogenzo*. My job as his attendant was to follow him wherever he went and buy

train tickets if he needed them. So on this day he gave me his purse and told me to buy a ticket. But when I opened the purse, I realized there was not enough money. So I told him there was not enough. Hashimoto immediately replied, “If I had enough money, I would not ask you to buy a ticket!”

It’s very difficult to understand this. Hashimoto did not explain 100 percent of what I should do; he explained 70 percent by giving me his purse. The other 30 percent I had to understand by myself. When your intellect goes to work, it tells you that it is impossible to buy the ticket. So to understand this situation you have to be stupid, not smart. Stupidity lies in living your life just like a leaping fish. If you don’t have the money, do something else—life requires you to act right now, right here.

Zen teaching is very unreasonable and contrary to your common sense. I don’t know how often you will have tears on your face, but it will be many, many times because in Zen, one plus one is sometimes two, sometimes it is one, and sometimes it is two thousand. It’s very illogical. But the important point is to become one with a situation, like the situation given to me by Hashimoto Roshi. In order to know what to do, I had to fit in there.

We have to fit into situations and become exactly one with them without desiring to achieve satisfaction. That is called oneness. Oneness means going beyond any idea of what is reasonable or unreasonable—you have to become Buddha. Then you can do something. So when Hashimoto gave me his purse, as his attendant all I had to do was become Buddha, receive the purse, and buy a ticket. In other words, use my own money to make enough for his ticket.

Using words someone can explain maybe 70 percent of how to become Buddha. If you always deal with your life only in terms of logic, then you have only 70 percent of Buddha. But to become Buddha, you have to be Buddha 100 percent. So you should know the illogical aspect of Buddha’s life, too. But no one can explain the other 30 percent. Beyond logical or illogical, you have to just be Buddha.

Zen practice is to deal with everything as Buddha. Your mind is simple, and you return to the very incipient stage of human life. At that stage there is a great opportunity—you can meet the Buddha. But it depends on your attitude. That means you have to do it right now! What should you do? There is no time or space to discuss what to do. Just direct your boat toward the proper destination and go. Reasonably or unreasonably, we have to try.

The more you try to direct your boat, the more you encounter big waves and storms. So deal with your boat kindly, compassionately, patiently, and with great zeal. You can do it. This is our practice. Just keep going. Finally, when you reach the bottom of your life and see the original pure energy of life, you can accept that energy and use it to benefit yourself and others. This is the bodhisattva way of life.

Part Five

PEACE & HARMONY

WHERE DO YOU COME FROM?

THE VIMALAKIRTI SUTRA is an early Mahayana scripture that gives Buddha's teaching from the point of view of his follower Vimalakirti. Vimalakirti was a rich layman who practiced spiritual life right in the midst of worldly life. His practice was based on a very deep understanding of Buddha's teaching.

In chapter 4, Shakyamuni Buddha asks the bodhisattva Glorious Light to visit Vimalakirti and inquire about his health. But the bodhisattva feels he is not qualified to call on Vimalakirti, on account of having met him before. At that time, Glorious Light had asked Vimalakirti, "Where do you come from?" meaning, where have you traveled from? Vimalakirti said, "I come from a *bodhimandala* (a holy site)." Glorious Light feels ashamed now because he thought Vimalakirti was talking about a particular place.

The answer that Vimalakirti gave is just like the answer given by Jesus Christ in the Bible (John 8:12). Jesus spoke to the Pharisees, saying, "I am the light of the world. He who follows me will not walk in darkness but will have the light of life." The Pharisees said, "You are bearing witness to yourself. Your testimony is not true." So Jesus answered, "Even if I do bear witness to myself, my testimony is true, for I know where I have come from and where I am going." The Pharisees asked, "Where do you come from?" Jesus answered, "I come from the father." Then they asked, "Where is your father?" Jesus said, "If you knew me you would know my father also."

Jesus Christ doesn't explain who his father is, what God is, what paradise is. Actually it's not necessary to explain. No matter how long you try to explain, your explanation is still only an idea, so it doesn't hit the mark. The point is you should understand Jesus Christ who is in front of you right here, right now. This is a very good teaching. Jesus Christ knows where he comes from. Whatever religion you study, this is the first important point you have to seek.

Vimalakirti's Four Holy Minds

According to a Zen story, the sixth patriarch Hui-neng arrived at the temple of the fifth patriarch, Hung-jen, who asked him, "Where do you come from?" Hui-neng said, "I come from the southern part of China." Later, when Nan-yueh arrived to become Hui-neng's disciple, Hui-neng asked him, "Where do you come from?" Nan-yueh answered with the name of another monastery.

This was not the answer Hui-neng was looking for, so he asked Nan-yueh, "What is it that thus comes?" In other words, who comes? Who are you? Who is present right now, right here? If you understand this person as he really is, well, where does this man come from?

Zen always emphasizes that all beings arise from real reality, which is completely beyond explanation. That is why finally Nan-yueh didn't answer this question. But in the *Vimalakirti Sutra*, translated by Charles Luk, when the bodhisattva Glorious Light asked Vimalakirti, "Where do you come from?" Vimalakirti *did* give an answer. He said, "I come from a bodhimandala (a holy place)." When Glorious Light misunderstood his answer and asked where that holy place is, Vimalakirti began to explain the holiness that he comes from.

Vimalakirti said, "The straightforward mind is the bodhimandala, for it is free from falsehood. The initiated mind is the bodhimandala, for it can keep discipline. The profound mind is the bodhimandala, for it accumulates merits. The enlightened mind is the bodhimandala for it is infallible." So let's see Vimalakirti's four holy minds.

Straightforward Mind

Straightforward mind is Vimalakirti's bodhimandala because it is free from falsehood. In Sanskrit, straightforward mind is called *asaya*. It means a resting place of safety, asylum, or refuge. This place where there is no sense of falsehood is called alayavijnana, the eighth consciousness, which is immense and infinite. This is the original place in which you exist, so it implies the original nature of being. Sometimes it is called pure mind or no-mind.

How can you put straightforward mind into practice? Vimalakirti tells us to practice the six paramitas, which are fundamental principles of human life. This is a very important teaching in Mahayana Buddhism. If you want to understand straightforwardness, practice these six: charity, discipline, patience, zeal, serenity, and wisdom.

Vimalakirti says, "Charity (*dana*) is the bodhimandala, for it does not expect reward. Discipline (*sila*) is the bodhimandala, for it fulfills all vows. Patience (*ksanti*) is the bodhimandala for it has access to the minds of all living beings. Zeal (*virya*) is the bodhimandala, for it is free from being remiss. Serenity (*dhyana*) is the bodhimandala, because of its harmonious mind. Wisdom (*prajna*) is the bodhimandala, for it discerns all things."

To practice charity is to be open-minded. You are compassionate to all sentient beings and try to do something for others, even if it's just a little bit. To follow this compassionate way of life, you put your daily life in order according to a certain discipline, such as practicing under the guidance of a teacher and listening to the Buddha's teaching. Patience is forbearance, the capability of waiting for the opportunity to be ripe. If you cannot see anything to do for others today, don't worry about it too much. Don't be nervous, don't be confused; be soft, gentle, and kind. Open your heart and wait for tomorrow to come. Maybe tomorrow you can find something to do for others.

Zeal is making every possible effort to build up your life by doing something day by day, moving one step forward from the top of the

one-hundred-foot-high pole. In other words, no excuses! At that time, you experience a sense of serenity and tranquility, calmly watching everything carefully with universal vision. The last one, wisdom, is the nature of your great capability to see the deep source of human life. These six paramitas are the actual practices of the pure, straightforward mind of alayavijnana.

Pure mind can be found in any human activity because the activities of day-to-day life are nothing but the living functioning of universal energy—there is no difference between the two. When the original nature of being manifests itself in the realm of phenomena, it is called human culture. Drinking a cup of tea, washing your face, going to school—all are activities emerging from the original nature of being.

So when you drink a cup of tea, you can make effort to accept the original energy of tea with kindness and become one with it. Pay full attention! If you think you are paying full attention, this is not full attention, because when you become completely one with drinking tea, there is no sense of paying attention—you just drink a cup of tea! By paying full attention, you transcend your sense of paying attention and realize no-mind. That purity is the real meaning of full attention. At that time you are you as you really are.

Initiated Mind

Initiated mind is Vimalakirti's bodhimandala because it can keep discipline. In Yogachara philosophy, within the infinite dimension of alayavijnana, there are countless seeds of habit energy (*bija*), the fruits of previous workings that have accumulated from the beginningless past. Daily life constantly produces seeds. Those habit energies lie stored up in the bottom of your mind as mental deposits until they ripen in your present life. So we should think carefully about all our activities.

Vimalakirti said, "The thirty-seven contributory stages to enlightenment are the bodhimandala, for they keep from all worldly activities." The thirty-seven stages are all the forms of what's going

on in the human world. To the initiated mind that can keep discipline, all that the world holds are holy places where you can practice discipline. So good or bad, right or wrong, suffering or pleasure—whatever it is, all are introductory stages to enlightenment for the initiated mind. Desires, instincts, emotions, all phenomena, every aspect of human life gives you a great opportunity to go beyond dualistic mind and practice pure mind based on oneness.

Your present life is like a drop of water falling into a serene ocean, the vast expanse of being in which all sentient beings exist together without discrimination. You are alive because you are interrelated with everything in the huge expanse of that ocean. The ocean is your original nature. That pure water is freedom.

Your activity in everyday life is like pouring drops of colorful ink into the pure water of your life. If you pour a drop of red ink into your life, seeds in the bottom of your mind ripen and come up to help make your water red. Whatever color of ink you want to pour into your life is up to you because basically your life is completely free. If you want to listen to Buddhist teaching, you can go to the zendo and pour the ink called Buddha's teaching. After leaving the zendo, if you want to be a Christian, you can be Christian because you are free.

But whatever you do, you have to take good care of your doings because the pure water of your life is open not just to you; it is open to all beings. When your drop of water touches the serene ocean, it creates a wave, a moving water ring that is your individual life right now. You exist! Then the ring gets bigger and bigger, extending to every inch of the ocean. If your drop of water is red, the ocean becomes red not just for you but for everyone. So pay attention to what you do. Don't interrupt yourself and others with ink from the selfish dimension.

To keep discipline is to take good care of your life, accepting full responsibility to keep the water pure for all beings. That's why in human culture there are rules. For example, in the tea ceremony, there are rules for how to hold a teacup and how to drink the tea. If you practice tea ceremony, you must act smoothly, without thinking. Then the clear water of no-mind appears. In zazen practice there are

also lots of rules. By following those rules, you can reach the final stage of no-mind, where you are fully alive from moment to moment.

Profound Mind

Vimalakirti says that profound mind is the bodhimandala because it accumulates merits. Whatever kinds of seeds or mental deposits have accumulated in the life of human beings—desires, emotions, judgment, instinct—whatever they are, they are very important for us because we can learn lots of things from them. There is always a great opportunity to learn how to accumulate seeds of merit and build up your life toward the future.

How can you put the profound mind into practice? That is by the four boundless minds: kindness, compassion, great joy, and indifference. Vimalakirti said, “Kindness (*maitri*) is the bodhimandala, for it treats all living beings on an equal footing. Compassion (*karuna*) is the bodhimandala, because of its great forbearance. Joy (*mudita*) is the bodhimandala, for it is pleasant. Indifference (*upeksa*) is the bodhimandala, for it wipes out both love and hate.”

If you see the human world deeply, you see that all beings are constantly changing. So don't judge immediately; don't put a certain label on a person. Stop, see life in the long range, and take care of all beings in a kind way, with compassion, joy, and indifference. Indifference is a state of having patience with strong emotions like love and hate, and not using them to create like and dislike. With the practice of indifference, you see emotions arise, but you also see that they dissipate. So instead of attaching to your emotions, you can use their energy to return to standing in Buddha's world and building up your life there.

There was a famous writer in Australia named Alan Marshall. As a child he contracted infant paralysis (polio) and suffered a lot because he couldn't do everything exactly the same as other children. But he tried anyway, and also he listened to everybody, very carefully. Finally he became a great writer.

Alan Marshall said, whoever you meet—wise man, poor man, rich man—whoever he is, he has something wonderful, something excellent, that you don't find in yourself. So you can learn wonderful things from anyone. You can learn many things from everybody. Even if you encounter someone who makes you bored, you can learn something from him—learn why he makes you bored. That is a strong point he has, so you should learn it.

According to Buddha's teaching, everyone is a great being because everyone has Buddha nature. Even though someone is crippled, even though someone is not a smart man, it doesn't matter. Beyond human judgment, everybody is a great person. When you totally accept the energy inhering in everyone, you can understand human life very deeply and find the ideal image of human life. Then you can start to build up your life. Your ideal image of human life is very important because your life is not just your life. So when you build up your own life, you are also building up the life of all beings.

Enlightened Mind

Vimalakirti says that enlightened mind is a bodhimandala because it is infallible. Infallible means that within your living activity, there is always a great opportunity to open your eyes and see in universal vision. That is to think. This meaning of "to think" is not the same as thinking something dualistically with your big balloon head; it is to become the one mind of all sentient beings. That is enlightened mind, which is also called bodhichitta or bodhi mind.

Vimalakirti says, "The four winning actions of a Bodhisattva are the bodhimandala, for they benefit all living beings." So the practices of enlightened mind are the four persuasive activities: charity, affectionate speech, conduct profitable to others, and cooperation with and adaptation of oneself to others. This is the actual practice of bodhi mind in daily living.

To practice enlightened mind, open yourself and be compassionate to all beings, take good care of yourself and others with affectionate speech, and do something good for others. When you become one

with the mind of all sentient beings, great compassion oozes from the ground, from the earth, helping all beings. Then, very naturally, you cannot fail to do something beneficial for others. Just by living in this world, you can do it, even a little bit. Adapting oneself to others means that if others express their pain, you become one with that pain. Then instead of criticizing and grumbling at others, you take good care of yourself and others.

In *Siddhartha*, written by Hermann Hesse, a businessman asked Siddhartha, “What kind of capability do you have?” Siddhartha said, “I can think. I can wait. I can fast.” This is very nice, don’t you think so? To think is to live in peace with the one mind of all sentient beings, benefitting others with the great compassion of enlightened mind. But if you find the opportunity to help is not ripe, then you should wait. To wait is to live with straightforward mind, constantly paying attention to the truth and how real reality is functioning from moment to moment. To fast is to keep your life in order with the discipline of initiated mind, letting go of self-centered desires. Then profound mind stores the merit of your practice for the benefit of all beings in the future.

So, finally, where do you come from? There are two directions in spiritual life. There is the direction to study and deepen your life from the shallow plane, and there is the direction to observe human nature from the deep level. Bodhisattvas move from shallow to deep; buddhas come from deep to shallow. Buddhas live in the world of emptiness, giving compassion to the human world; bodhisattvas live in the human world, making compassion come alive in the world of ignorance.

When you live straightforwardly every day, exerting effort to merge the energy of your life with the universal energy of life itself, you can go deep. You can learn the original place where you exist—real reality—and take refuge there. In that holy place, your life is interconnected with everything; you already share your life with all beings. From that holy place, life is expanding in all directions: to the past, to the present, to the future.

By your effort to live every day in the messy human world based on the practice of constantly returning to your peaceful, interconnected life, you can learn to take care of human life with wisdom. Wisdom lets you be free to live in harmony with all beings, expressing kindness to yourself and others, and helping all beings in the past, present, and future.

WHERE ARE YOU HEADING?

WHEN I MOVED to the United States it was the hippie age. Hippies were disliked by many people, but when they arrived at our temple in San Francisco, wanting to practice Zen Buddhism, we could not turn them away. Accepting them wholeheartedly was very difficult for me. But I tried. Then, through their open attitude toward life, I glimpsed a harmonious world beyond races, customs, education, and position. My heart felt at home in such a world, and I experienced a kind of warmth that seemed to me to be the real meaning of dharma.

Dharma is the original flow of life energy that everyone has. It is beyond any individual distinction such as race, culture, and personality. Due to the functioning of dharma, we can have hope for the future, and we can build up a harmonious world.

In the twenty-first century our world will become closer in many ways. For human life to develop in peace and mature toward the future in harmony, let's learn how to live out of a sense of togetherness, not out of our own individual desires. This is the aspiration of bodhisattvas: to live with a universal attitude, illuminate the dharma, and share it with all sentient beings through our own lives. To live like this is the bodhisattva vow.

Building a Harmonious World

Shakyamuni Buddha demonstrated dharma and showed us the way to approach it. He said there is this shore where we are now—the human world—and there is the other shore that we are heading for. The fact that the other shore is there means we are always moving toward the future—everyone has a destination. So Buddha said there is the other shore, and then he taught the philosophical and psychological structure of the human world, and also the way to reach our destination. That is the four noble truths and the eightfold noble path.

This is what Buddha taught. What we have to do is take one step and practice it. Even if you don't understand what practice is exactly, try to be mindful of the truth: from moment to moment everything is moving together in a stream of harmonious rhythm. We have to learn this rhythm and tune in to that stream of creative energy because, whether we are aware of it or not, we are living in the dharma. Living in the dharma means your life is not just your life. You constantly share your life with all sentient beings, so what you do influences both yourself and others.

According to Buddhist philosophy, your present life is one single creature, expanding in all directions and to all times. So when you get up in the morning, you don't get up by yourself. Your way of getting up shows something to others. It influences all sentient beings because whatever you do, your activity is connected with all beings in the past, present, and future. In order to get up in the morning in the best way, you have to understand that past, present, and future.

It's pretty hard to understand the past, present, and future because they are not fixed objects; they are changing constantly. You can think about the past, but don't get stuck there! If you get stuck in the past, it's very difficult to deal with human life right now. Of course you have to take responsibility for what you have done in the past, but don't be obsessed with it. Don't see your life only from a narrow point of view.

You exist in human time, but you also exist in eternal time, so you always have a great opportunity to develop, to enrich, and to take

care of your daily living toward the future. If you stand up and take responsibility for the past, you create a great opportunity to be something better in the future. This is to have right thinking about the past, present, and future.

Generally speaking, human civilization tries to nurture a wise person. But life is not so simple and there is always uneasiness. When we are afraid to see our own uneasiness, we have no humility, and without humility we cannot forgive. Then we become critical of others, always finding fault with someone, without recognizing that person's pain or strong points. If you always criticize, the core of your human feeling withers from lack of warm openheartedness, and you become a fighting spirit, immune to another person's pain.

Having a fighting spirit can lead to impulsive judgment, even to violent behavior, so we have to train ourselves to be free from that fighting spirit. By seeing all aspects of your personality from a wide view and feeling the inner picture of your life, you can be free from your fighting spirit and live skillfully: transcending the desire for self-satisfaction and taking full responsibility for your life. For this we practice tranquility, compassion, and magnanimity.

Tranquility is the spirit of Zen meditation. Calm down, touch the depth of your life, and see the subtlety of human nature. We need to practice calming down because everyone, without exception, is going where? Where are you heading? The terminal station! The terminal station is the dead end of your life, but simultaneously it is exactly the beginning of your new life. How can you understand the end of life as the beginning of life? We don't know. We don't believe it. But this is the simplest way of life.

Compassion is to see your own life and others' lives simultaneously. Don't take a narrow view. Having a narrow view is too simple, too easy, and can be characterized by brutality. But compassion by itself is not enough for a peaceful life. We must also do our very best to treat our lives seriously: living mindfully every day and endlessly deepening our experience of life. How do you do this? Aim at tuning in and being present in the rhythm of life, and then move toward your destination! Continually, we just go.

Magnanimity is to recognize that life is a long journey. If you want to build up a peaceful world, you cannot be a short runner. You must be a long runner. For this you need a magnanimous mind. A magnanimous mind is stable and impartial like the mountains and tolerant like the ocean, viewing everything from the broadest perspective. Magnanimous mind lets you deepen your life without getting stuck. Finally you can taste what human beings really are, and the human life you have tasted shows you what dharma is.

If you have some beautiful hope for the future—a harmonious world where all sentient beings live together in peace—your hope is already alive because you are thinking of it. So take your hope, think carefully, and find a way to practice it. Follow the three practices—tranquility, compassion, magnanimity—and your mind becomes flexible; your body relaxes and fits into the rhythm of nature. Then you can hear the voice of all creatures, and you listen to others with a warm and openhearted spirit.

When our view is wide, we have warm relations with others, walking hand in hand with all sentient beings in peace and harmony. You transcend your beautiful hope for the future by making your hope something that is alive right now. This is how you can build up a harmonious world.

Harmony in the Sangha

To figure out how to develop the world in unity and walk with all sentient beings in peace and harmony, we study and experience religion in our individual life. We also study and investigate it from the point of view of our group, our society, and our world. That's why we have a sangha, where we practice a peaceful way of life together with people of different backgrounds and personalities.

Originally sangha is a peaceful place where we demonstrate to human society a way of living in harmony with others. But when sangha becomes part of society, sangha life can create lots of problems because human beings have a certain custom of comparison and conflict. We may understand Buddha's teaching

intellectually, but when problems come up, we are emotionally at a loss to deal with the concrete aspects of sangha life in a peaceful way.

An egoistic way of life is more conspicuous in the spiritual world because you expect something beautiful from a religious group. For instance, one student told me he was feeling very confused about Buddhist teaching. In the beginning he was devoted to the triple treasure, but now he had some doubt. He sees people who say they believe, but they are always creating problems. So he felt duped.

Well, whatever it is you depend on, if you understand it in a narrow way, you can become confused. When bad things happen in the sangha, it can leave you in bewilderment. You have doubts about Buddhism, and maybe you quit practicing devotion to dharma. Quit or continue—that's fine; it depends on you. But if you always quit, you never know something deeply. That's why the real practice of devotion to dharma is to go deeply from the beginning to the end, under all circumstances.

Still, life is constantly arising according to circumstances, and we see differences in people. Then conflict appears. For example, when you listen to a dharma talk, many people are sitting there with you. Everyone is different, yet everyone sits together in peace and harmony, manifesting complete devotion to hearing Buddha's teaching. But if you poke your head into other peoples' personality and behavior, evaluating how much they understand and practice Buddha's teaching, you become critical of others.

Broadly speaking, there is no sense of discrimination or comparison in the dharma world of oneness. So in terms of the dharma world, we shouldn't be critical of others. But in everyday life, we don't know whether we should criticize someone or not. On one hand, if you don't deal with problems that arise in a sangha, you cannot carry on sangha into the future, for century after century. On the other hand, if you're very involved with problems, you also cannot carry on the sangha for the long run, because there's no tranquility, sympathy, or benevolence. So we have to find the best way to deal with problems. How? That is by the practice of egolessness.

If you see something lacking from someone in the sangha and find it is necessary to give a correction, don't bark at them. Instead of giving harsh words, give your hand. Just walk with that person, sharing your good aspects, not expressing criticism. Instead of saying, "Your work is careless," offer your hand as if they were stumbling on a rock.

In order to walk hand in hand with people, more or less you need a peaceful way of life. So first we have to stand up in the dharma world and see what human beings really are, beyond our individual personalities. When you see the depths of human existence and touch the universal life of all sentient beings, then very naturally you can open your heart and know how to deal with human problems.

People criticize American sanghas sometimes. They say there are too many troubles with human relationships. Well, people criticize because they expect the sangha to be something pure. Sure, it is pure, but the purity they are expecting is nothing but their idea of purity. Real purity is something that must be alive in an individual life. That means it is your responsibility to take best care of everyday life and make sangha alive as something pure.

It's not so easy to practice together as a sangha. That is why lots of complaints come up. But this is very important for us. A person may seem very stinky to you, but as a whole, everyone is beautiful beyond human speculation. Something beautiful is called Buddha. Of course you cannot ignore differences, but don't be confused. Don't be in a hurry. Don't judge others quickly. If you judge quickly, you can never live in peace with different kinds of people, different cultures, different races, myriad beings.

And when there are problems, you should realize that dissatisfaction is human. If you open your heart, how many complaints do you find there? Myriads! How much satisfaction is there? Just a little bit. This is not just the problem of a particular person; this is a human problem. But don't be confused. Carefully, with a tranquil mind, taste dissatisfaction deeply and realize where it comes from. Then, next focus on the original meaning of sangha: demonstrating a peaceful way of life based on belief in the dharma.

When you follow this way of life, your life allows all beings to trust in the beauty of life and grow naturally in the dharma world.

So when you encounter problems, calm down—settle yourself in the dharma. Then conflict is not an abstract idea; it is something real that you can deal with right now by walking with others step by step. Living in this way, you can handle many problems, one by one, and carry on the sangha for the long run. Please, I pray for it.

Turning Clockwise

“Why do we always turn clockwise in the zendo?” Some students who came to Minneapolis to learn about Zen Buddhism asked me that question. I told them, “Just turn clockwise; I will explain tomorrow.” That is very nice, don’t you think so? I didn’t ignore their question; I said I would answer it tomorrow. It seems not to be an answer, but it’s really an answer.

Saying that I will give the answer tomorrow gives people a chance to not think about something, to calm their mind and see the total picture of their life. Zen teaching doesn’t always give you an answer, but the next day I gave an answer, though probably it didn’t make sense for them. Here is my explanation.

In Buddhism, the left side is a symbol of auspiciousness and supreme happiness; the right side is a symbol of dynamic, creative life. On the left, the opportunity of auspiciousness is always open to everybody. You are lucky. Your life is protected by others’ lives and all sentient beings. On the right, you accept any aspect of human life, stand up, and live in a positive way.

When you sit in the full lotus position, your left leg is up and your right leg is down because that posture represents the total picture of human life. That is why we do zazen like this. The way we shape our hands in zazen makes the mudra of the universe. Your right hand supports your left hand, your thumbs touch, and both hands create a space. You use your two hands to represent the whole reality of your life. Your life is right in the middle of the universe. Without the universe you cannot live. If so, why don’t you show where you are?

This is how I explain the mudra, but immediately you ask, “Oh, what’s that?” And then you want to discuss it, but there is no solution to your confusion. Finally I have to say, “Please keep your mouth shut, and just do this simple practice. If you are interested in this mudra, you can study it later. You can find it explained in a big book.” Still, no matter how long you study the mudra intellectually, it is nothing but a symbol. But actually that symbol is not merely a symbol. Through your practice you can really know the meaning of this mudra.

When you stand up from zazen, which is calm and peaceful, you make the mudra of *shashu*, forming a fist with your left hand and covering it with your right hand. Your auspiciousness is very quiet; there is nothing to say, nothing to show off, so you cover it up. But still it’s there.

Standing up is the dynamic aspect of human life. You are ready to take care of everyday life, building up human life in a positive way. Forming *shashu* when you stand up demonstrates that behind the dynamic aspect of your life, there is the tranquil aspect that you can depend on. Then you turn clockwise, to the right, take a step, and start to walk.

In Buddhism we try to move toward the future in a positive way, but at the same time we also try to see the auspicious aspect of life. If you see life only in the positive way, you will never be satisfied; you will always be critical of yourself. So don’t attach to the positive way and forget the other aspect. To truly live positively, live positively without expecting anything as a particular result. Just wholeheartedly throw yourself into whatever you are doing. That is to forget the self.

WALKING ALONE WITH AN OPEN HEART

WHAT DOES BUDDHISM believe in? Dharma! The philosophical definition of dharma is complicated, but dharma itself is not a concept; it is something alive. Dharma is creative energy. In the beginning of *Bendo-ho* (Model for Engaging the Way) Dogen Zenji says, “One rises with dharma; one does not rise without dharma.” In other words, if there is no dharma, you do not exist. So as long as you are alive, the presence of that energy in you is something true you can depend on. In Buddhism we depend on dharma because dharma has the great power to support our lives.

In Zen Buddhism we devote ourselves to practicing dharma in order to believe in dharma. Believing in dharma is Buddhist faith, which is called bodhichitta. This faith is true belief. True belief cannot be just an idea; it must be something alive. So in Zen practice, the main target for you to aim at is making that energy alive in your individual life. It’s up to each one of us to make our idea of dharma into the living dharma. This is our responsibility.

How do you make belief in dharma something alive? Open yourself! Go beyond your individual life and see the big picture of your life. To practice in this way is to become a universal human being. It is to always think in a universal way, to walk in freedom, and to give universal love to all beings throughout heaven and earth.

Devotion: Returning to Life

Dharma is understood in Buddhist philosophy as the principle of how the life of all sentient beings is structured. Dharma is also understood as “all things,” meaning everything in the phenomenal world. So according to that philosophy, the term *dharma* seems to have two meanings. But those meanings are just concepts we create.

The phenomenal world is not something separate from the ultimate nature of existence; the phenomenal world includes the ultimate nature of existence. That is the real meaning of “everything.” Dharma is everything; there is no exception. The dharma connected with you is connected with the whole wide range of life because without you, “all things” doesn’t make sense.

Buddha’s teaching is also called dharma. But Buddha’s dharma is not something different from human life; life itself is Buddha’s teaching. Whether you are conscious of it or not, you are living right in the middle of dharma. It is all the internal and external factors that constitute your individual existence.

In a sense, you can believe in dharma by understanding it through your head, but if you never experience dharma as it really is—a nondualistic state of existence—you don’t know how to accept it and be present there. Much less, you don’t know how to deal with it in everyday life. Seeing the human world dualistically is not bad. But to deal with human life with a calm mind, we have to return to what is true.

In order for our understanding of the dualistic human world to have a wide range, we have to return to the first germination of dualism. That is something very simple. In this simple way of life, there is no room for you to comment, analyze, or make excuses. For example, when morning comes, you have to get up. When breakfast comes, you have to eat.

When winter comes, you have to meet winter and live there without being tossed away by winter. Well, a little tossed away is fine: saying “I hate winter” is OK because you are a human being. But don’t get stuck in hatred; as soon as possible, stop creating hatred

and open yourself to winter. Maybe you have to stop hating winter again and again until finally, someday, winter and you come together, very naturally, creating a kind of energy.

Where does this occur? Moment! In the momentum energy of a moment, you and winter become one. You are right in a pure state of existence, which is very close to truth, eternity, or the universe as it really is. Then you really appreciate winter. That appreciation is belief in the dharma, which you express very simply, with a word or a bow.

From beginning to end you are alive in the dharma, so you can believe in dharma under all circumstances. That is called devotion. The practice of devotion is how you can live your life as a very simple state of existence. I don't know the original meaning of the word "devotion" in English, but in Japanese we say *kimyo*: return to life. "Returning to life" means returning to the original state of being called Truth. The life you return to is dharma, the stream of creative energy.

Sometimes we use the Japanese word *kie* for devotion. *Ki* is "return," and *e* is "where you can depend on." So devotion is returning to a place you can depend on. In human life we are always groping for some place to depend on. But that is a problem for us because the place you can depend on is not the place you are seeking; it is the place where you already are. You are alive in the dharma! When you recognize dharma and live in the dharma, a peaceful way of life arises.

In spiritual life we aim at tuning in and being present in the rhythm of life right here, right now—that's all! Religiously speaking, we devote ourselves to dharma. If you believe in God, you accept God and deal with God in the simplest way. If you believe in dharma, you take refuge in dharma. This is the practice of devotion.

Devotion is practiced in terms of two points. First, you are alone. Second, devotion is openhearted. According to the first point, you are one single being who exists in the human world as the creative manifestation of original existence. According to the second point, even though you are one single being, all beings are interconnected

with you; your life is constantly interconnecting with others' lives. Openhearted devotion means you are open to all beings.

As one human being, if you want the human world as a whole to develop, you have to take responsibility and do something. Life is depending on you to act. What should you do? Open your heart, live mindfully, and start to walk with all beings. That way of walking is steadfast, tranquil, and positive. You share your life and practice benevolence, sympathy, and compassion. This is the practice of walking alone with an open heart.

The Tranquil Sage Walks Alone

Shakyamuni Buddha said, "Tranquil sage is he, who steadfast, walks alone, unmoved by blame and by praise (like the lion who is not scared by noises, the breeze that is not to be caught in a net, like the lotus that blooms unsullied above the muddy water). A leader he, not led" (*Muni Sutta*, translated by G. F. Allen).

"Unmoved by blame and by praise" means you are not tossed away by what you see or hear objectively. Blame and praise are almost the same because whichever one we get, we are tossed away by it. In particular we are tossed away by blame. If somebody criticizes you, it's pretty easy to be confused. Most people are always busy getting excited, blaming others, fighting, and struggling so much. That's pretty noisy, like a Japanese spitz dog who is always barking at something.

While a spitz is with his master, he enjoys barking; but if he doesn't have his master near him, he is a coward and runs away. A lion is not like that. Whatever happens to a lion, whichever kind of animal appears, the lion is always calm. When you receive blame and praise with a calm mind, you are like the lion who is not scared of noises.

To be like the lion you need a calm mind. So sit in zazen, calm your six senses, and touch manas, your original self-consciousness. Calm down again and touch alayavijnana, the whole universe. That state of consciousness is called the tranquil sage. Everyone can become, even

for a moment, a tranquil sage. You are steadfast, stable, and imperturbable, living in the human world with a dignified spirit.

Buddha says, “A leader he, not led.” Being a leader means you are master of yourself in whatever situation you may be. This is very important. Always be a leader! Be a leader for you and all sentient beings. To be a leader, you have to walk alone right in the middle of each moment. Each moment is enormous energy connected with the whole universe. You can never control it; you must be there exactly. That’s all you can do.

Sometimes it’s very difficult to be a leader, particularly in the midst of difficulties. But don’t change your life so much according to the difficulties you encounter. Be like the lotus flower that blooms unsullied by muddy water. Just walk, step by step, moment after moment, and manifest yourself in the simplest way. This simple way of life is based on the foundation of wisdom. It is not dogmatic; it is just very strong. But to live in this way, first you must be tranquil. Otherwise you cannot see the panorama picture of how the life of all sentient beings is functioning.

There is not much excitement in just walking, so sometimes you will try to pour knowledge into your head by catching air with a fishing net or scooping water with a bamboo basket. But air is never caught by a net, and your head is always leaking. So just return to the basic pace of walking alone. You are you, taking care of each moment, from day to day, from beginning to end. That self is completely open to everything.

All-Embracing Love

Buddha said, “Practicing benevolence, equanimity, compassion and sympathy, seeking release, unobstructed by anything in the world, roam, like the unicorn, alone!” (*Khaggavisana Sutta*, translated by G. F. Allen). The unicorn (rhinoceros) has just one horn, so it’s a symbol of aloneness. You walk alone right in the middle of the human world.

But walking alone doesn't mean you stay by yourself and ignore the human world. Your presence must be benevolent to everybody and everything in many ways. Practicing benevolence and equanimity, expressing sympathy and compassion, you are magnificent, calm, and steadfast. What is the difference between sympathy and compassion? Compassion has a little deeper meaning than sympathy. Sympathy is something you express under certain circumstances; compassion is something you express under all circumstances.

In the *Metta Sutta* (translated by Lord Chalmers), Buddha speaks of compassion as “an all-embracing love for the whole universe, in all its heights, depths, and breadth, an unstinted love unmarred by hate within, not rousing enmity.” That all-embracing love is your original heart. You have a precious heart spreading to every inch of the world. This is the human heart. Everyone has this heart. It is the original nature of human beings.

No one is originally bad or stupid. Beyond any speculation on who is good and who is bad, everyone is a completely precious and beautiful being. That beauty is called Buddha. You already have that beauty within you, but to realize that beauty, you have to seek for it. You have to walk toward Buddha forever.

Don't worry about where you are. Buddha's world is right under your foot. It exists every time you walk. Wherever you go, you are completely enveloped by Buddha's world. If you return to the very first stage of the expression of your life, you touch that all-embracing love. Immediately love penetrates you. That is real love. Real love is very deep, profound, and sublime. We don't know what it is intellectually, but we can experience it because we are already there. This is called dharma. So believe in dharma, live with “unstinted love unmarred by hate and enmity,” and deal with everything as Buddha.

Still, in everyday life, it's pretty easy for us to be critical and to create hatred and enmity. Hatred is really destructive. So if there is hatred inside you, please be careful how you deal with hatred, because there is always communication between you and your object. When you look at the outside world with hatred, the seeing doesn't

go just one way. You look at the world, and simultaneously the world looks back at you.

Being critical toward the outside is simultaneously being critical toward the inside. That is the situation of your life. So if you are being critical toward some object, you are being critical toward yourself. I don't mean you shouldn't be critical. But if you feel critical toward yourself, other people, or outside circumstances—be careful! Be careful because, in terms of the deep meaning of dharma, you are being critical toward all beings. So if you are going to be critical, try to think of how your criticism can be helpful for all beings.

“Seeking release” means we seek emancipation from constantly thinking that everything is separate from us. We want to be peaceful, so we are always seeking release from dissatisfaction with our dualistic way of life. But originally your life is already perfectly peaceful. Your presence is already “unobstructed by anything in the world” because you are deeply interconnected with everything in the universe. That is why you can be open to everything and share your life with all sentient beings, no exceptions.

In the *Metta Sutta*, Buddha said, “So, as you stand or walk, or sit, or lie, reflect with all your might on this; 'tis deemed a state divine.” This is the practice of devotion to dharma: open yourself, return to dharma as the simplest expression of your ultimate existence, and make dharma alive in your heart. You can practice devotion in every aspect of your life: walking on the street, working, or sleeping.

Whatever you do, practice opening your heart, believing in the dharma, and living in the dharma. Then, whatever comes into your life, you can receive it very simply and deal with it wholeheartedly. At that time you are a true human being who is roaming like the unicorn, walking alone with an open heart.

Tozan's Whole Heart

The Zen master Tozan was asked, “What is real Buddha beyond three categories of Buddha?” Meaning, from the perspective of dharmakaya, nirmanakaya, and sambhogakaya, what is the true

Buddha? Tozan said, “Now, here am I, wholehearted.” Wholeheartedness is a time and place where all categories, levels, and forms of discrimination simultaneously loosen into *just this*. That wholeheartedness is very serious but also soft and flexible. Seriousness and flexibility come together and walk together as one.

To learn how to walk together as one, Christians and Buddhists often meet together and discuss our religions. But no matter how often we shake hands with each other, no matter how long we discuss, still there is a wall between Buddhism and Christianity. So day after day there is useless discussion. But it doesn't mean that meeting together is wrong. Useless discussion can be a bridge between people, so it is important.

There are many kinds of bridge: short, middle-size, and long bridge. When you are caught by ideas or attached to your own understanding, the bridge is very long. Discussion just makes that bridge longer and longer. Finally the bridge is so long you cannot cross over it. Then you become angry, because you don't know what to do. So how do you make the bridge shorter? Simple! Meet together with wholeheartedness. At that time, you can become Tozan's real Buddha. When you become Buddha, other people become Buddha for you, and all become one.

In *Shobogenzo Uji* (Being-Time), Dogen Zenji said, “Self is arrayed in the whole world.” When you see the panorama picture of your life, interconnected and interpenetrated with every being, beyond races and cultures, you see yourself arrayed in the whole world. Then immediately there is spiritual communion between the universe and you, Buddha and you, others and you. Then Buddhists and Christians can meet, talk, and share our life.

Originally your life is peaceful because your life is completely supported by dharma. Dharma, from the point of view of Christianity, seems to be like God. Christians say that God is in us. I think Christians use the word “God” so much because that word has penetrated their life. You can feel that God supports their life. Buddhism doesn't say “God” so much. In Buddhism, we simply try to be with dharma as the very basic nature of existence, tasting it with

our body and mind. If you are mindful of dharma, then very naturally joyfulness is coming up. This joyfulness is not your usual idea of pleasure. It is human emotion coming up from the bottom of your heart.

Human consciousness is very complicated and makes your life confused. Sometimes you don't want to be peaceful. Still, even if you don't realize it, your life is supported by that stream of great energy. So you can learn it and practice with it. Even though you don't understand the meaning of dharma exactly, continue to practice opening your heart. Then dharma lets the flower of your life force bloom, and very naturally your light appears. This is not something you should try to produce. All you can do is practice in this way.

Whatever happens in your life, try to go beyond your pleasure or anger, like or dislike, and just be with dharma. Stand up in the depth of human existence, and take a deep breath there. Then take best care of your everyday life. Act wholeheartedly, constantly trying to be with that stream of great energy. That is the Zen way. This is a wonderful practice for us.

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as function of Buddha
wisdom (*prajna*)
of emptiness
of enlightenment
of impermanence
mirror

womb of Buddha

Y

Yamada, Reirin, Roshi
Yogachara School

Z

Zen meditation (*zazen*)

posture

retreat (*sesshin*)

as *samadhi*

as seeking truth

as *shikantaza*

technique

Zen practice

bowing (*gassho*)

as communion

in everyday life

mindfulness

offering incense

as returning to zero

samatha (tranquility)

as tuning to rhythm of life

vipassana (insight)

as working with energy

See also practice; spiritual life

Zen teacher

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