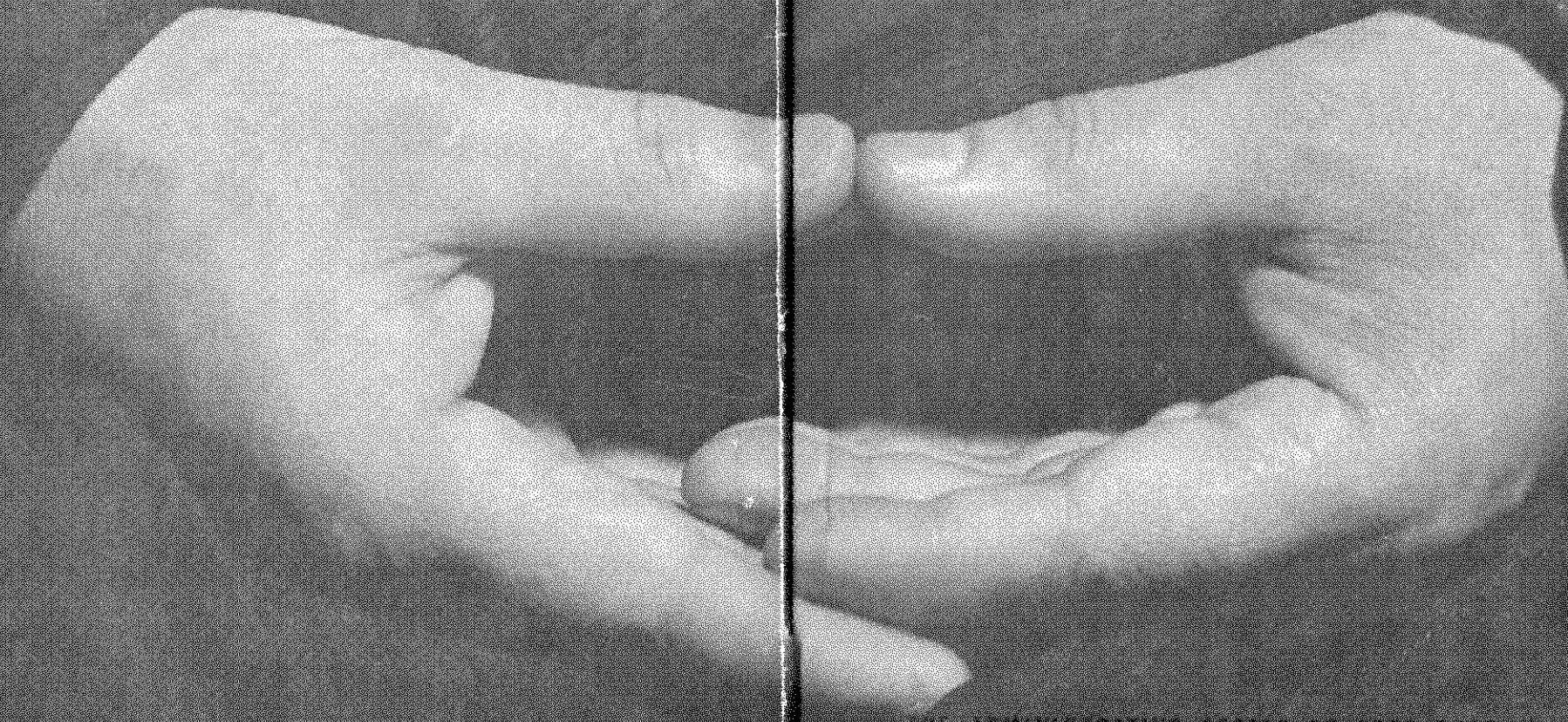


MODERN CIVILIZATION
AND ZEN

What kind of religion is Buddhism?

By
Rev. Kosho Uchiyama



THE ADMINISTRATIVE OFFICE OF SOTO SECT

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June, 1967

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Foreward

This booklet is Vol III of the Stoto-Zen series. The first volume was published in summer of 1962 under the title, 'The Way to Happy Life'. The second volume, titled, 'How to Practice Zazen', in September, 1964. The present volume constitutes the third of the series.

Zen has generally been interpreted as a way to Enlightenment. As a result, the practice of Zazen is considered to be all that is required in Zen. Such a trend of thinking has been prevalent overseas as well as at home. The writer of this booklet declares that behind Zen lies Buddhism and at the bottom of Buddhism lies human life. Founded on the principles of Buddhism, Zen is essentially religious, the author emphasizes. This point is what characterizes Soto Zen. I have been told that, abroad, Zen of the Rinzai school has been introduced widely and those who profess and practice Zen there are considered eccentric. This is due to the transcendent nature to be found in Zen. It is true that there is something that transcends the realm of common sense. Too much emphasis on this feature, however, will bring about miscomprehension. In orthodox Zen, such hypertranscendentalists have been disparaged as the ones who are carrying a board on their back. The transcendency should be tempered with proper religious faith. The spirit of Zen should be infiltrated into every day life. The booklet was written by Rev. Kosho Uchiyama, the abbot of the Antaiji Temple in Kyoto. The English translation was done by Prof. Kido Sugioka of Komazawa University. I express deep thanks to those who have undertaken the task.

June 1, 1967

Rev. Teigen Nakamura
The Chief Administrator of
the Administrative Office of Soto Sect.

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I The Present Age which has lost Its Way

A comical personage, named Hachiko, started learning to ride a horse. The horse, however, was instinctively aware of the rider's poor skill. When they passed by a greengrocer's shop in a busy street, the horse came to a halt and began to help himself to the vegetables, the ware of the shop and showed no sign of marching on. The angry shop-keeper goaded the animal with a stick on its hip. The horse stood on its hind legs and then galloped along the street, pat, pat. The rider, Hachiko, stuck to the mane of the horse, and tried not to be shaken off. Hachiko's friend happened to pass by. At the sight of Hachiko's frantic effort to hold on to the horse's neck, he yelled a question, "Hey, Hachiko, where are you going?" "I dunno where I'm going. Ask the horse."

This is a funny story. But the situation of mankind in the present age is exactly like that of Hachiko. Hence the story.

"Hey, Human race. Efficiency. Oh Efficiency, you yell. But where on earth are you going?" "I dunno. Ask the machinery."

"Hey, the modern people. You seem to be satisfied with your so-called cultural life. Where on earth does that life of yours lead to?" "That's none of my business. Ask the so-called cultural life."

"Hey, mankind. What's the use of H-bombs and missiles?" "I dunno. But somehow the plan of the annihilation of mankind has formed itself."

After all, we, modern people, are exactly like that poor unlettered Hachiko frantically embracing the galloping horse neck. We are sticking to scientific, technological civilization and yet we lack the power to control it. Accordingly neither the destination nor the direction in which to proceed is clear.

Such is our present age.

Talking of direction, a decade ago we used to find it in the self-frustration before God. In one sense, it gave us great ease of mind and life. A thing always has its dark side as well as its bright side. What is called God is intangible and invisible. If we were to know of God, it would have to be through the predicative attributes which denote what he is. The predication of God or gods is said to be God's revelation. God's revelation is, in a word, a myth. The self-frustration before God signifies that man's behavior was guided by myths. The wars and peaces among ancient peoples were made mainly by the tribal or racial god's oracle or revelation. The wars of ancient peoples were wars of myths against one another.

In the present age, owing to the facility of communication and transportation, almost all mythical religions are on the market. We know that none of these commodity-like gods are absolute. In civilized countries at least, a war in the name of God no longer occurs. We, of the present age, have lost enthusiasm and power to wage war in the name of God. The reason is that even those devout Christians who believe, by some special interpretation, that God created the universe—even they hardly believe God's creation of the world as literally as is told in the Old Testament. For us, modern men, such mythical cosmogony has been replaced by natural-scientific concept of the world. It has become impossible to believe in mythical cosmogony ignoring the scientific one.

Now that natural-scientific concept of the world has replaced the old mythological view of the world and old teachings are no longer accepted as naively as before, the ground of the belief in God's existence seems to have become very flimsy. At the same time, the attitude of frustrating oneself before God

has gradually vanished. What is most important for human existence, the purpose of human life, and the destination of human journey have also gone invisible. The clamour for more efficiency, or greater productivity may make modern civilized society of our age seem outwardly splendid. Yet what about the purpose of man — as an individual and collective existence?

There may perhaps be some people who mistake the progress of natural-scientific civilization for the real human progress. To return to the metaphor mentioned before, the progress of scientific civilization is the blind gallop of Hachiko's bronco frightened by the spurn on the hip. It is not galloping in Hachiko's desired direction.

In this respect, Arnold J. Toynbee's following words reveal the true colour of modern civilization.

"Modern civilization is nothing but Adam's original sin equipped with infinite quantity of energy and explosive power."

II The Age of Consolation-Religion is Over and Yet

Since his first appearance on the earth, man has developed its culture seeking two things. The one is progress (evolution) and the other is peace.

Man has made unflinching effort to make his life rich and agreeable, sometimes adapting himself to nature and sometimes co-operating with it and at others conquering it. By his own assiduous effort, man has kept on his existence and prosperity.

At the same time, man has been aware of the limitation of his ability, power and of unrest (uneasiness). Especially to primitive man, natural environment surrounding him seemed merciless and mysterious, arousing his fear and awe. Risky hunting and dubious fight for game—these experiences led him to the belief that he was under the control of some superior being, which is apart and different from the contrivance and innovation of his tools. When man entered the stage of agriculture and learned the art of cultivating land and breeding domestic animals, he came to know that such natural disasters as, deluge or drought, hail-storm or insects, brought about famine. He found himself always exposed to the rage of nature. Timid animal as he was, man was deeply impressed with the feeling of mystery and fear of death when he experienced the death of his fellowmen, parents or those dear to him. How he trembled at the thought of the insecurity of human life.

On the other hand, he contended against nature all the time with utmost patience. He made effort to co-operate with it, too. Sometimes, he tried to conquer it. He made progressive effort. To confine nature to its own domain, he invented witchcraft and sorcery. To appease or subdue it, he contrived

rituals and prayers. There had been unimaginably vast space of time before man reached the stage of early civilizations, such as the Mesopotamian or Egyptian. What we now call primitive religions did man reach after an inconceivably long course of trial and grouping effort for peace of mind. In this respect, man's pursuit of peace of mind was as essential to his historical efforts as his effort for progress.

Now the perfect balance between the two pursuits was broken. Let me illustrate it. Before starting a difficult task of constructing, say, a big dam, formerly men used to offer human sacrifice, praying for the safe completion of the work. In primitive societies, such act was never considered criminal or cruel. A religion which issued such oracle was not regarded as immoral or harmful. But in modern society, what, if human sacrifice were to be offered, praying for the safe completion of a dam-construction? Obviously it would be considered a criminal and cruel act from a legal as well as humanitarian point of view. If some religion were to give oracles demanding human sacrifice, it would not be called a religion, but a harmful superstition which is immoral and unsocial. What is needed for the completion is not human sacrifice, but appropriate technique, fund and labor. For the same reason, religious cure of disease, prayer or sorcery which used to pass for normal religion—all these must now be branded immoral or superstitious. This is due to the progress of natural science which pursues human progress. We should be grateful indeed for that.

The task of overcoming spiritual unrest, which was formerly the function of religion, has come to be performed by scientific technique and almost all of what has been called religion has been obliged to be branded immoral and harmful. Is there any re-

ligion which is neither relic of ancient age nor immoral or harmful? If such religion exists, where are we to find it?

Yes, it is certain that there is no room for such consolation-religion as, dealing with the spiritual unrest that is conquerable by natural science when it progresses, relies on miracles or mysterious gods instead of following the path of natural science. Therefore, the true religion which has *raison d'etre* in the present age, must concern itself with the problems of spiritual unrest which are unsolvable by science.

Is there any unrest absolutely unsolvable by any scientific technique?

Before answering the question, let me say that there are facts very deplorable for mankind.

To take an example. In highly civilized society, labor has been differentiated.

And we can not get a grain of wheat or rice with our own hand. And yet we can live on wheat or rice we have not grown. Moreover such luxuries as electric machines of every kind make our living convenient and comfortable.

In this respect, the standard of living of modern people equals that of those ancient Egyptian kings who had hundreds of servants and slaves to wait on them. On the television all the artistes of the whole country will do their best to entertain you who are kings. When travelling, you, who are the kings, are carried in the car at such high speed as ancient Egyptian palanquin-bearers could not have imagined. What is it that has enabled you to live in so great luxury? Perhaps because we have reached the farthest point that man has ever reached, as far as luxury is concerned.

Are we really satisfied with modern life? Perhaps not. Almost all of modern people are dissatisfied with their present life. The employed are in

eternal dispute with the employers, demanding greater wages. Nations are ever ready to wage war against enemy or rival nations in search of further national interests. Once the time comes when the technical advance will enable man to enjoy his material life to his heart's content, such dissatisfaction and its consequent strife and war will cease. This is, however, too optimistic a view. The higher standard of life man gets, the still higher one he will want. Nations will seek still greater national interests. Weapons of higher efficiency will be invented and ultra-world war will break out.

How does it come? The higher standard of living was born of dissatisfaction and the wisdom to gratify it. Dissatisfaction is the mother of contrivance. It brings about progress. But no amount of the progress of natural-scientific technologies will satisfy human material desire. Travelling on this route, man is carrying a bag or valise filled with insatiable desires. As long as man chooses to travel along this route, man will forever remain dissatisfied.

It is quite well and good that scientific technology progresses indefinitely and human material life becomes more and more convenient along with the progress. It is also quite well that human dissatisfaction works as a motive power of progress. The problem is that the dissatisfaction with the present easily leads to uneasiness arising from desire and to struggles against fellow individuals or nations. Thus it deprives the human life of that peace of mind which should be the ideal state of human life.

Mere progress of technological civilization will never bring human happiness, no matter how splendid it may be. It will never bring serenity of mind to human beings. Genuine happiness can not be brought about by the progress of the standard of living. In a so-called welfare state, the old may be

comfortably accommodated in a hotel-like home for them. And when one falls ill, one may be nursed in the hospital complete with every sanitary and curative equipment. Even these conveniences will not make our life really peaceful and satisfactory.

A civilization, which provides no peace of mind and yet proceeds as blindly and furiously as a wild horse, is frantic in its nature. The scientific-technological civilization that started in modern Europe and has spread all over the world, may be said a frantic one. The farther that civilization advances, the clearer and more universal its frantic nature will be.

Since the development of scientific technological civilization, consolation-religion has lost the basis for its existence. That is a matter to be congratulated. At the same time, it is urgent that a true and genuine religion should be established among human kind to take the place of the old religion of consolation. This new kind of religion must be in accord with scientific-technological civilization. Moreover, it must be able to offer what the scientific-technological civilization cannot possibly offer—the perfect peace of mind.

Goethe says, "Man gets lost when he marches on." Is it the inevitable human destiny to get lost in the maze when he marches along. Can we not find a way to proceed onward without getting lost? Can we not find a way to proceed with perfect ease of mind?

III The Self settles Itself on the Self

It is significant that the present situation of unrest caused some of European people to turn their eyes to the East and some have come to be much interested in the ancient period of the East. The Religion called Buddhism contains a unique and very note-worthy remarkable culture.

Buddhism is a religion which presents no God. It was once denied religionship by Christian scholars of religious science. But it is nonsense to decide whether a teaching is a religion or not by the presence or absence of the idea of God. If one can do so, one must say man has lost religion since the time that natural-scientific concept of the world replaced the mythological view of the world. But it should not be so in the nature of the problem. For religion is a culture which teaches man what is most important to human life and gives man true and real spiritual peace. Buddhism, we should say, is the most genuine religion in its essential sense.

As we have said, Buddhism is a religion that presents no God. What is the basis of the spiritual peace it gives? The fundamental attitude of Buddhism is the principle of settling the self on the self. All other religions, including Christianity, set up God. The fundamental attitude of other religions is frustrating oneself before God. In contrast to this attitude, Buddhist attitude is that the self settles itself on the true and immovable self. We are usually tossed about by varying and various desires. The settlement on the true immovable self is the fundamental attitude of Buddhism. The attitude was initiated by Sakyamuni Buddha and has been kept unaltered since.

In the Suttanipata, said to be the oldest scripture, the Buddha says, "Walk across the world, relying only on yourself. Rely on nothing else and

emancipate yourself from all things." (501).

In the Dhamma-pada, he says, "The only reliable is the self itself." (160).

In the Nibbana-suttanta "Rely on yourself and the law and on nothing else."

These passages in the primitive scriptures show the fundamental attitude of the founder himself.

But a slight miscomprehension of this fundamental attitude will lead to the creation of idiotic civilization. An erratic step forward of the present scientific-technological civilization will lead to a mad civilization. Picking out part of human nature, without grasping its truth and developing that part only, will produce society of idiots or lunatics.

Verily indeed, the present scientific-technological civilization marches forward frantically, ignoring the truth of human life. In like manner, the Hinayanists or the primitive Buddhists of the smaller vehicle, immediately after the Buddha's death, showed idiotic tendency, ignoring the truth of human life. The Buddha's spirit expressed in the passage, "You should settle yourself on yourself alone," was interpreted in the wrong way. They thought human beings could attain to the quiet state of serenity by extinguishing every human desire of outward things. Therefore the samadhi where the self settles on itself came to be understood as complete seclusion where one performs no vital function but waits for death to come. Needless to say, therein the truth of human life is lost sight of.

That is why Buddhism has been mistaken for a system of pessimism. It is true that the idea of samadhi where the self settles on the self implies the germic tendency to become inactive and reclusive. This point must always be borne in mind when we try to unearth the buried ancient treasure of the East and excavate the pure samadhi or Zazen

of Buddhism.

On the other hand, the Mahayanists' interpretation of samadhi was that samadhi was not a stagnant state of escapism but an active and vital state. Samadhi meant one's mental state where the self settled itself on the true and genuine immovable self. Here immovable does not mean a fixed state without any free function. The self is a stream of life-force. When the stream of life flows freely, it is called immovable (though it may sound contradictory).

That was what the Mahayanists had gathered from the founder's life-long activity for the salvation of sentient beings. The Mahayanists found the final resting place in this genuine realization of life. That was the Mahayanists' development. The self settlement on the self means freedom from the world of human desires. It does not mean the lifeless state where no life force is felt. Far from it, it is the state where life-force functions as life in the true form it should assume. There will unfold itself a boundless and illimitable world of vitality.

The argument has become too abstract. Let us return to more concrete talk. What is the purpose of our working? What do we work for? To eat? To get a better standard of living? To realize our ambition? The acquisition of fame? All these answers have come from the consideration of our desires. They are not the answers come from life itself.

What does the flower in the field bloom for? Not for any purpose, but because the life-force makes it bloom. It does not toil nor spins and yet its array surpasses that of Solomon. The attire of the flower in the field is what life-force has given it. In the same way, the violet puts forth the violet flower, the rose the rose flower. The flower in the

field has no such sense of pride, competition or rivalry as the contestants of beauty have. The violet feels no inferiority complex because it is not so big and beautiful as the rose. It does not fret, endeavoring to raise blooming efficiency. It is just blooming and revealing its own life-force.

Of course, if it can not bring forth a violet, it shows the lack of its vital force. But when it blooms, it is not blooming for any purpose. It is just blooming and that is all. The Lotus Sutra says, "All things show their true form." One of Zen people's favorite phrases is, "The willow is green and the flower is red." The rose bush puts forth the rose flower. They reveal the life-force. Buddhism is a religion which preaches men to endeavor to realize a true world of vital force.

The Amita-Sutra, a scripture of the Pure-Land school of Buddhism describes the Pure land, saying, "The blue color has blue light. The red color has red light. This is named the Pure Land." The description is note-worthy. Unguardedly, we think of a splendid feat to let the blue color emit red light. The poor people think they will be happy if they become rich.

Of course it is very good that poor people become rich. But poverty is not synonymous with unhappiness, nor riches with happiness. If you are convinced that the poor are always unhappy, the conviction will make you unhappy when you are poor. But it is a mistaken conviction that the rich are always happy and the poor are always unhappy. If you have concluded that the rich are always happy and the poor are always unhappy, you will fall into the depth of unhappiness when death comes. For riches on which you depend for happiness will be useless when death comes.

Moreover, the words, rich and poor, are relative terms. There is no fixed amount of money by

which to decide whether one is rich or poor. When you give up comparison, or rise above comparison, you settle yourself on your own true self. People may say that you are rich or poor in comparison with others. That is only a label put on you by others. What you are remains the same whatever label other people may put on you. Try to realize your own true self, discovering your genuine self. Then the blue color will have blue light and red will have red light.

Without being tossed about by human desire, you return to your own life-essence. Without envy, without pride or any sense of humiliation, without strife and yet without laziness, you make as much effort as you can to realize your own self. There lies the glory of vital force, the Buddha's bright light. Religious light will shine on such an act of self-realization.

The world unfolded by the Buddhist principle of settling your self on yourself is not the world of strife where the strong devours the weak. Neither is it the world of escapism and seclusion. It is the world where the self blooms forth into florescence of its own, where the flower of eternal and temporary self blooms. Buddhist samadhi is the basis on which life unfolds itself. The following chapters will explain the structure of such vital realization and Zazen which constitutes its center and its motive power.

IV The Structure of Life — Conditioned Origination and the Middle Path

In order to discuss the problem of life in the light of Buddhist teaching, one must take up the principle of conditioned origination and the middle path. As mentioned above, when we say the self settles itself on the self, we must ask what is that self. What is called the self in Buddhism is quite different from what is called the self in our daily life. Not only the self but also the world in which the self finds itself is different from what is commonly conceived as the world. The unique Buddhist view of the world is expressed in the principle of condition. In Buddhism, the self and the world in which the self finds itself are viewed from the principles of conditioned origination and the middle path. Therefore, to get the right view of Buddhism-as-Zazen which is nothing but the self firmly settled on itself, we must know something about the principles of conditioned origination and the middle path.

Fortunately we find concise description of these principles in the scriptures of primitive Buddhism or Pali Buddhism. Let us quote it.

"One who sees the aggregation of the world entertains no idea of nihilistic view of the universe. One who sees the extinction of the world truly, conceives no idea of the real existence of the universe. The view that all things are real is one extreme view. The view that nothing is real is the other extreme view. The Tathagata, the Enlightened one, detaches himself from those two extremes and taking up the middle path, preaches the right law. That is to say, this exists, therefore that exists. This arises and therefore that arises."

The quotation from the old scripture explains the teachings of conditioned origination and the middle path in their entirety. Furthermore, it explains

the fundamental spirit of Mahayana Buddhism which has developed from them. It is feared, however, the passages are too simple to grasp the true meaning thereof for those who read the scripture for the first time. Therefore, let us try to comprehend the words of the scripture in connection with our daily life.

The scripture says about the principle of conditioned origination: As this arises, that arises. What does this passage mean? Let me explain. When things come into existence, they do so through various conditions. When abstract things come into existence, they come to have meaning through interrelation with one another. In all forms of existence, nothing exists by itself, quite independent from other things.

To take up an example of the existence of myself. The common thought is that something called the self exists as an independent entity and keeps its existence consistently. But deeper reflection will show that it is not so.

To speak of myself, I have an album containing the photos of myself taken every four or five years from my infancy up till now. When I look at these photos, I am filled with an utterly strange feeling. A human being, called I, has been continually growing or getting old. How the face and figure change year by year. I feel nothing but wonder and admiration at the excellent function of creative evolution.

Among these changes only the black mark under the eye commonly called crying mark and the peculiar shape of my head have remained comparatively unchanged. If I must call "I" what have remained comparatively unchanged, the crying mark and the peculiar shape of my head must be called "I". Therefore I cannot decide whether I should call all these pictures mine or not.

In the same way, that mental content of the

brain which is called "I" must be constantly changing, from childhood, youth, maturity, to middle age period by period. What constitutes the present "I" is also constantly changing, ceaselessly streaming on. Yet taken momentarily at a given moment, the streaming self is called the present "I".

In this respect, the self is like the flame of a candle light. Molten by the heat of the flame, the oil keeps burning and at a central point emits light. The point, at which the oil emits light, is roughly the same one. The certain volume and shape or size of the flame of the candle. What is called "I" is like a flame. Both "my" body and mind never cease changing. It is a temporary existence of the changing body and mind. In reality, there exist no entity which keeps its identity as a lump. There is only impermanence. The principle of impermanence applies not only to the living creature which is called "I" but also to all of the animate and inanimate things. In Buddhism, it is expressed in the two principles.

One says all things are impermanent and transient. The other says that all things are non-substantial.

The concept of impermanence, hard to grasp as it is, does not imply the negation of the existence of things. Our life is a flowing temporary unity. It is like an eddy formed in the stream. The stream is constantly flowing. The eddy is produced by various causes and conditions just as the flame of a candle-light. This is the principle of conditioned origination. In the case of the flame, various causes and conditions, such as heat, air, oil etc., generate the flame. In the case of the eddy the volume and speed of the current, the topography etc. constitute, its generative causes and conditions. Not only an eddy and a flame, but all things come into being through

causes and conditions. Everything in the universe, however solid it may seem, is just like an eddy or flame. The solidity is a question of degree. This fact can be easily understood by us who live in the age of natural science.

We are now discussing the problem of the self. This "I" is also impermanent. The particular shape of its existence has been formed through various generative causes and conditions. From the Buddhist point of view, the attachment to this which is falsely thought to be a substantial entity is the root of greed, anger, suffering, strife and all other evils. We must have a thorough understanding of "I" as a temporary and transient aggregate of thing, material and immaterial.

What is it that we think "Me"? Biologically it originates in the union of the father's spermatozoon and the mother's ovum. Temperature, water, nutrition and other causes and conditions have contributed to bring about what it is now.

What are the constituents of the mental content of "Me"? Hereditary character, temporal geographical and social environment, and education and experience. These combined to make up its thought and feeling. This self sometimes gets deluded. But the delusion is not permanent either. Delusion itself dissolves. In last analysis such is the truth of man's life. The Buddha is said to have acquired Enlightenment by the insight of the principle of conditioned origination of the world.

Putting aside the problem of delusion, let us consider the proposition that the self has come into being or got transient existence as a result of various causes and conditions. As long as the self exists, not as an immutable entity, but as an ever-changing accidental aggregate, we must accord it some sort of existence. The Buddha admits it when

he says in the scripture, "Those who see the aggregation of the world as it is, will cherish no nihilistic idea about the world."

Given a sort of existence, what form of existence does the self assume? Is it permanent? No, it is not. It is constantly changing. The Buddha says, "Those who see the continual extinction of things will cherish no realistic idea about the world."

After all, the Tathagata, the Enlightened one, taught the middle way. The middle way he taught is the way apart from two extremes. The process of self-development of universal life-force must not be conceived as an immutable entity. Neither is it to be conceived as non-entity or nothing. The only and middle way is to see the process as an ever-changing process of conditioned origination. The middle path of the Buddha is not an equivocal way halfway between nihilism and realism, but a positive way over and above the extremes. Casting away the two extreme views of realism and nihilism, we, who practice the middle path, let the universal life-force function to the full.

How is the middle way explained correctly? The next chapter on Zazen will deal with it and give a concrete explanation of the middle path.

V Zazen or Sitting in Meditation

Zazen expounded in Buddhism is the practice of the middle path. Those who practice it must view our life to be a life-stream or the process of a truly human life worthy of the name.

It may be said that if our life is the process of conditioned origination it would be unnecessary to try to make it so on our part. That is quite right. In Buddhism, this fact is signified in the phrase, "All sentient beings have Buddha-nature." They are potential Buddhas.

Nevertheless we are not always realizing our life to the full. Why? The reason is that we, human beings, unlike the flower in the field, have a troublesome burden called human thought. Thought is a product of life-force. But thought sometimes departs from the fact of life and thinks of utterly irrelevant things. This duality of thought causes strange things.

A man says to himself, "In the coming election, I must kick down A by all means" though this "I" is now alone in his room and not in grip with A.

Another thinks, "I will secure that mine and make a fortune" though this man is not in possession of the mine and the ore of the mine is not evaluated yet.

In short, a man thinks of things quite irrelevant to his own fact of life. This duality of thought makes men blind to the true fact of life as it is.

The truth is that one who sees the aggregation of the world entertains no nihilistic ideas and one who sees the extinction of the world entertains no realistic ideas. Thought, detached from the true fact of life, creates some substantial things which can be cumulated, such as money, position or power. Consequently they contrive, hate and wound one another. Or else they are obsessed by various mental

complexes. Some develop neurosis through fretting.

In this world of conditioned origination, there is no substantial entity, physical or mental. But the world of conditioned origination has a definite order. Human thought, however, ignores this order. And human beings turn to the objectives of their own choice. They exhaust their energy to slaughter others or destroy properties or impatiently sparks and causes short circuit.

After all, human thought, whether realism or nihilism, curbs or thwarts the realization of life-force. In Buddhist terminology, the fundamental thought at the bottom of nihilism or realism is selfish desire. Selfish desire is the attachment to substantial ego which human thought fabricated in the world of conditioned origination where no such entity exists, the world being an accidental aggregation of various elements.

Whatever we may see or do, this attachment always and everywhere accompanies us and affects our seeing and doing and tosses us to and fro, back and forth. It obstructs the realization of true self or life-force and the true life-force gets hurt and thwarted. To be tossed about by the self-attachment is the primal or original sin which man committed at his start as man. What a dreadful act Adam and Eve perpetrated!

Speaking of the primal sin, I remember seeing a very interesting cartoon in a newspaper. Adam was trying hard to vomit what he had eaten. Eve, peering anxiously at him, said, "Why, Adam, the apple eaten that time hasn't come out yet? It was the sort of cartoon which we seldom see nowadays. The present age is facing various problems. But apart from the other problems, I thought of the problem of original sin and wished, "Only if man could vomit the apple once for good."

The right Zazen taught in Buddhism is the at-

titude that enables us to vomit the apple eaten that time. What time does that time signify? Surely not the primeval mythical time. As has been said before, we are the resultant product of heredity, temporal and social environment, customs and habits, education and experience, age, temperature, moisture, physical strength, nutrition etc. We have put a dignified label "ego" to this accidental aggregation. And we are strongly attached to this temporary aggregate as if it were some entity specially made up of necessity. Where on earth can be the apple that was eaten that time out of ignorance-born attachment? The apple is now being eaten from time to time in every act of selfish attachment.

Nevertheless it is far from easy to vomit the apple. It is intelligible enough intellectually that the attachment to the accidental aggregation called "I" is groundless and that it is the root of all kinds of sin, delusion and suffering and wants prompt vomiting. The intellectual understanding will not effect vomiting. The attachment does not lie on or near the surface of consciousness. It is deep-seated. The apple has been eaten into the greatest depth of psychology. The desire to vomit it may be due to the poison of the fruit. The use of human brains is of no avail here. The use of brain itself is questionable.

In this respect, Zazen, which the orient has discovered, nurtured and perfected, is the only cultural remedy that dissolves the lump of selfish desires. Zazen casts away the idea of "I" fabricated by ignorance. Zazen repulses the selfish desires as they come one after another from within. The attitude of Zazen is the attitude of refraining from acts of selfish desire and thought. It is, so to speak, the attitude to crucify Adam's body and limbs with the primal sin on his back.

To say a few words about the bodily attitude of sitting in meditation. Put the hip on the sitting

cushion thickly packed with vegetable silk. Put the right foot on the left thigh and the left foot on the right thigh. Thus the legs are crossed. Those who find it inconvenient to cross the two legs, may just put the left foot on the right thigh. Then put the right hand on the left foot with the palm upward and the left hand on the right hand so that both thumbs meet. The waist and the spine should be erect. Sit upright so that the back would pierce into heaven. The mouth should be shut tightly and do not keep air in the cavity. Stick the tongue to the palate. The eyes should be open in an ordinary manner and cast slightly down. Do not lean to left or right. To sit upright is the correct pose of Zazen.

You will notice that the posture is the exact opposite of that of Rodin's sculpture, the thinking man. All his spine, waist, legs and arms are crooked. Even fingers and toes are crooked. The title, the thinking man, is very good. But that pose suggests that he is thinking deluded thought and he is peering into the hell of his thoughts. The pose of Zazen is different. The waist and the spine are straightened. The head is held high. In this posture, blood will come down from the brain easily. It is a subduing posture. Thought will check itself in this posture. All the fabrications in the brain will be dissolved. Therefore, while sitting in this posture, one can easily cast all the thought from the head. All that has been taught, memorized or thought must be thrown away.

And yet, during Zazen, the brain is not empty. As long as we are alive, it is only natural that all thoughts come into the brain even when we are practicing Zazen. The important thing is that one should not try to pursue or repulse them as they come and go. If you pursue them, you are indulged in thinking and you are not practicing Zazen though you are assuming the posture of Zazen. Then what about

repulsing them? If you try to repulse them, you are thinking of repulsion. When practicing Zazen, leave all to the muscles and bones which are assuming the pose of Zazen.

If you doze, you are dozing and not practicing Zazen. Neither thinking nor dozing, you sit in the posture of Zazen, leaving all with the bones and muscles.

A more important thing is not to reflect on yourself in the least. Do not introspect whether your mental disturbance, if any, has been subdued or not. Do not try to evaluate the effect of the practice of Zazen. It will not help you at all. On the contrary, it spoils Zazen and you are getting away from Zazen by doing so. Apply yourself single mindedly and learn to sit in correct posture with the bones and muscles.

When you are told not to evaluate the effect of Zazen while sitting, perhaps you will feel to miss something which you expected to get. But try to do without it. Zazen is an exercise of realizing the genuine life-force. The feeling that you miss something is quite natural. But what makes you feel so, is your small self. The truth of the boundless and illimitable life-force feels no such thing.

Only when you have done with all sorts of petty selfish desire, the genuine life-force within you will attain the absolute peace. It is only the human desire and delusive views arising from it that produce suffering, strife, despair and other evils. When sitting in this posture, quite free from all human selfish desire, you will realize the absolute peace of mind.

But this peace and ease is not the cessation of life-stream, nor extinction or seclusion or escape from actuality. On the contrary, life with that absolute peace in it is free realization of life-force. In that state, you are not quite unaware or oblivious

of things. Rather all things will be reflected on the clear mirror of yours and they arise according to the principle of conditioned origination. The polished mirror keeps the reflections. It reflects things as they appear. In this sense, Zazen is the practice of the middle path, detached from two extremes (realism and nihilism).

Everyday life shows how the practice of the middle path is the realization of genuine life-force. Suppose you are driving a car, you should not be thinking of other things. You should not be too much strained. You can not take an appropriate step or drive the car correctly because life-force within you is disturbed by the thought of other things or through too much stress. Dozing driving or drunken driving is dangerous because only when the life-force within you is undisturbed and given free play, you can drive the car freely and smoothly.

As can be illustrated by an ordinary thing such as driving, Zazen is the posture of life-force realizing itself in a most natural and genuine way.

VI The Religious Life of the Zen-Man

a) Zazen as Religion

Behind Zazen, there is religion called Buddhism. Behind Buddhism, there must be your own life. Therefore the training of the mind or the promotion of health is not the proper aim of true Zazen. The existence of the mind to be trained and of the body to be kept healthy presupposes the existence of things which can be accumulated one on another. It is a kind of realism. That view is a wishful product of our selfish or ego-centric desire. What is important in Zazen as a religious exercise is the freedom or liberation from the selfish desire itself.

Zazen that rejects all sorts of human desire is the most sacred object of reverence in our life. Buddhism as practical religion watches over us and guides our daily life and gives strength to it.

Therefore, one may say Zazen is for Buddhists what God is for Christians. Be still, and know that I am God: I will be exalted among the heathen, I will be exalted in the earth. (Psalm 46:10)

"The kingdom of God cometh not with observation." (Luke 17:20)

"Neither, shall they say, Lo here or Lo there, for, behold, the kingdom of God is within you." (Luke 17:21) Further Cf, (St Matthew 12:28), (The Acts 17:27, 28), (Romans 14:17 1), (Corinthians 2:9 etc.)

Again

"And when thou prayest, thou shalt not be as the hypocrites are; for they love to pray standing in the synagogues and in the corners of the streets, that they may be seen of men. Verily I say unto you, they have their reward,

"And thou, when thou prayest, enter into thy closet, and when thou hast shut thy door, pray to thy Father which is in secret; and thy Father which

seeth in secret shall reward thee openly."

"But when ye pray, use not vain repetitions, as the heathen do: for they think that they shall be heard for their much speaking." (St. Matthew 6:5-7)

Such sincere prayer is said in most genuine manner in Zazen.

And the prayer done in the form of Zazen has such genuine content in it as is shown in the words of the Bible.

"O my Father — nevertheless not as I will, but as thou wilt."

(St Matthew 25:39)

... "God be merciful to me a sinner." (St. Luke 18:13)

... Our father which art in heaven, Hallowed be thy name.

Thy kingdom come. Thy will be done in earth, as it is in heaven." (St. Mathew 6:9-10)

And yet how is it possible that Zazen practiced by us, who are sinful mortals, can have contents approaching God's? The fulfilment requires the endorsement of Vows and Repentance which will be the subject matters of the succeeding chapters. To put it inversely, Zazen, implying Vows and Repentance in it, is Zazen as a right religious exercise.

b) Vow

As has been said, Zazen consists in casting away all the human wishes. To part with the human wishes in this way is to frustrate oneself before God, having thrown out all human haughtiness. By doing so, one can act as God please and thus the works of God should be manifest. (St. John 9-3)

Now in what form are the works of God made manifest? It will be clear when we compare the life by Zazen with that guided by principles other than Zazen.

We divide all into that and this by the faculty of our own thinking. But when we cast away all our act

of thinking, thought or judgment is not yet born or formed and therefore this and that are not yet divided from each other. At the moment when one is practising Zazen, "Now" is not yet divided from eternity and the self is not yet divided from the World. This may sound to be a theory of judgement or logical inference, but it is not so. To a Zen-man it is an immediate experience which Zazen makes possible.

In Zazen, all is not yet divided. It does not mean that all is confused and indistinct. There life is vividly manifest and all is reflected there. So "Now", "Here", or "I" can never be lost sight of.

What does it all mean? It means that "Now", "Here" or "I" represents Eternity, the Universe and All sentient beings.

--- This is remarkable indeed. This is not a logical statement, but a real thing that Zazen is. By practising Zazen, we are enabled to experience the personal Self wherein Eternity is united with Now, the present Time. To live by the religion named Zazen is to cause that Self as a Personal Unity of Eternity and The Present Time to function in daily life.

To live by Zazen as our Guiding Principle, and live watched over by it, is to live oriented toward freedom from selfish thinking which is raging in ourselves, and at the same time so act that Now and Eternity might become one.

As we deem the undivided state to be true, we will intend not to establish the objects of our desire, not to imagine rivals or opponents. So long as we proceed in this direction, we will not part under the passions of avarice, irritation or jealousy, nor will we try to cheat, swindle, wound or kill one another. We will have absolute rest and peace of mind, keeping to the genuine self. At the same time we must make unceasing effort, for we aim at the realization

of the most vivid Self. It unites "Now" with "Eternity," "Here" with the "Universe", and the Individual Self with the whole realm of sentient things.

Yes, herein lies the life of ourselves as persona that proceeds with rest and rests while proceeding. Dogen Zen-master calls this state the unity of Practice and Enlightenment. It is that which characterizes the structure of the realization of true life.

Dogen Zen-master says, "The action of the Enlightened one is simultaneous with that of the entire earth and the whole realm of sentient beings. The action, not in accordance with the whole entirety, is not the action of the Enlightened one." (The Shobogenzo: Yuibutsu-yobutsu)

This is not a theoretical description, but a piece of bodily experience confirmed and functioned by a true Zen-man.

To act in harmony with the entire earth and the whole realm of sentient beings is the objective a Zen-man should keep in his mind all his life and at the same time the aim he should have "here and now". Such life is termed the life of a vow in Buddhism.

Hitherto I have cited the words of the Bible in explaining Zen. But only in this point, that is, that a Zen-man lives by his vow—his religious life is very different from that of a Christian. For in Buddhism we have no concept of self-sacrifice. A Christian works in the spirit of sacrifice. A Buddhist works by his vow.

The concept of sacrifice presupposes the division of "I" and "thou." But in Buddhism there is no division of "I" and "thou." A Buddhist sees only one unity of life which is prior to the division into "I" and "thou." Therefore the encounter of "I" and "thou" is like the encounter of mother and child.

The mother is not sacrificing herself for the sake of her child. On the contrary, she is taking

care of her child as if she were taking care of her own life. In the Lotus-sutra, the Buddha says: "The three worlds are my possession and the sentient beings therein are all my children." This is the fundamental spirit of Buddhism. The source of this spirit is the act of Zazen. In practicing Zazen, one returns to the primal state where the self and the other are not yet separated.

After all, a Zen-man sees no distinction in the encounter -- such as things, events, thou, society etc. He sees only his own life. He works only in the spirit with which he takes good care of his own life. Therefore there is an indefatigable and unconditional service which requires no reward.

We take good care of things, work hard on our jobs and intercourse with others with loving kindness and think of the good of the society we live in. These are never done out of avarice, or for the sake of fame. We are only taking tender care of our own life and letting the flower of our own life bloom and the light of the Buddha shine brightly. In this sense, to act along with the whole earth and all the sentient beings is the aim a Zen-man he should never lose sight of.

We can make this aim our own only by the practice of Zazen.

c) Repentance

In principle we are acting in harmony with the entire earth. But to think that we have acted with the entire world is to commit a sin of haughtiness. We can not act as perfectly as the Buddha. We think that we have achieved the objective because of our petty judgment. Rather we can not help repenting of the imperfection of our doing now that we have taken the vows.

Repentance is not over when we say verbally, "I am sorry. It was my fault." No mere apologizing will do in the presence of the Absolute. A pick-pocket will say to the boss of his gang. "I am sorry.

I have made a blunder." A soldier would apologize before the martial court, "I am sorry I failed to kill the enemy. I was not brave enough." The words of repentance vary with various cases. They are meaningless before the Absolute.

True repentance consists in setting such sinful self before the Absolute and letting the light of the Absolute shine on it. It does not consist in saying, "I am sorry", before some kind of authority. The Kan-fugen-bosatsu -gyobo-kyo says, "If one wishes to repent, one should meditate on the truth of all things while sitting correctly."

A Zen-man takes vows by Zazen and thus achieves or fulfills the aim of life and at the same time return to Zazen when he has anything to repent of. Thus the life of holy vow and true repentance is the Buddhist's religious life. His life is watched over, guided and encouraged by Zazen. Zazen is his guiding star or guardian deity. Without vows, one would make no progress and without repentance, one would make blunders in marching on his way. Vows strengthen us and repentance crushes our conceit. Our religious life should be very austere and full of vital activity.

d) **Bodhisattva --- Three Minds**

One who finds the true aim of life in Zazen and at the same time reforms his life by repentance is called a Bosatsu or Bodhisattva. Bosatsu means one who finds the aim of life in the Buddha or the enlightened. Though still unenlightened, a Bosatsu is different from other unenlightened ones so long as a Bosatsu lives by vows. For the unenlightened of common kind lives as a result of his karma or action, and life assumes quite a different meaning for the Bosatsu. A Bosatsu is born of his vows. Therefore we need not depreciate ourselves saying, "We are unenlightened and so not qualified to be Bosatsu. Because we are unenlightened we have earthly body.

Because we aim at the Buddha's Zazen, we can make effort for spiritual peace. In this respect, we, Zenmen, should openly (frankly) have the desire to be bosatsu. In his book of precepts for the kitchen-master of the monastery, Dogen Zen-master tells of three mental attitudes as concrete ways of living of Zenmen or Bosatsu. They are magnanimous, tender-hearted and joyful attitudes. The explanation of these three attitudes is most appropriate for the conclusion of this discourse.

Magnanimity is, as has been said, is the mental state where no discrimination has yet risen. I like this and hate that. That is desirable and this is detestable. All things I encounter are included in my life-experience. And so I regard them equally as my life. Yes, my life does not exist only in the pulsation of the heart within the human body of a human being called "I". My life reveals itself in every field of my life experience. Therefore life reveals itself wherever my life functions as life. In Buddhism, when one says that the self settles itself on the self, one means that the universe settles itself on the universe. In this way, the self is identified with the universe. The attitude of magnanimity makes one regard every encounter as the revelation of one's life and desires its revelation. That is the Bosatsu's magnanimous way of thinking.

This magnanimity brings tenderness with it. Tender-heartedness is that parental care with which the parents look after their children. Impartiality or indiscrimination of Zazen-man is by no means a sign of confusion of mind. On the contrary, he never loses sight of his situation he is now and here set in. How to realize the Now and Here as the standing mode of eternity and universe? Here we must be most careful. That is to say, the Zazen-man's way of life is to live so as to pay close attention and consideration and tenderness to every man and every-

thing and to make the flower of life bloom. This is the function of tender-heartedness.

This kindness includes the joy of life in it. That joy is not sensual or sensuous. It is pure joy one feels in every encounter with things and persons. Woman is said to achieve her true adulthood only when she becomes a mother. Likewise we regard all things we encounter as the revelation of our life and look after them as if they were our children. We become grown-ups only when we can feel real joy, strong will to live and passion for life. The Bosatsu who wishes to achieve the path of the Buddha will exactly embody magnanimity and kindness and joyfulness.