

**The First Step to Dogen's Zen**  
**—Shobogenzo-zuimonki—**

by

**YUHO YOKOI**

**Aichigakuin University**



**SANKIBO BUDDHIST BOOK STORE**

**HONGO, TOKYO, JAPAN**

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# SHŌBŌGENZŌ-ZUIMONKI

## *Introduction*

### 1

The *Shōbōgenzō-zuimonki*, a work in six volumes, is the record in which Koun Ejō-zenji (1198–1280) put together the sermons of his master Dōgen-zenji (1200–1253) at the Kōsyo-ji temple in the Katei era (1235–37) and later which Ejo's disciples edited.

Dōgen-zenji, the founder of the Sōtō sect in Japan, wrote about 120 volumes of books during his lifetime: *Shōbōgenzō*, 95 vols., *Eihei-kōroku*, 10 vols., *Eihei-genzenji-shingi*, 2 vols., *Gakudo-yōjinshā*, 1 vol., *Shōbōgenzō-sanbyakusoku*, 3 vols., *Hō-kyōki*, 1 vol. and *Shōbōgenzō-zuimonki*, 6 vols. The *Shōbōgenzō* is written about his own personal enlightenment experience in Zen Buddhism and is too profound for Buddhist beginners to understand completely. However, the *Shōbōgenzō-zuimonki* is written in such an easy style that beginners can grasp the meaning of it with ease and it contains sayings about the gist of Zen Buddhism. In this sense I believe that this book will serve laymen as well as priests as the approach to Dōgen's Buddhism.

### 2

In the *Annual Philosophy Report* No. 2 there is an essay "On the *Shōbōgenzō-zuimonki*" written by Professor Yoshiharu Akishige. In it the contents of the *Shōbōgenzō-zuimonki* are summarized in seven items: 1) Buddhist followers must not be



attached to food and clothing, 2) Buddhist followers must not study Buddhism for their own sake, 3) Awakening to the Bodhi-seeking mind, 4) The primary and traditional way of studying the Way, 5) Zazen, 6) Causation, 7) Harmonious mind.

In his "Notes on the Shōbōgenzō-zuimonki" Dr. Dōshū Ōkubo says, "We must study Buddhism without expecting any effect. Among the seven items by Professor Yoshiharu Akishige the first, the second, the third, and the seventh items are ascribable to this freedom from gain."

The core of Dogen's Buddhism is the absolute mentality beyond the dualistic view of "being" and "no-being." So it goes without saying that all his sayings are ascribable to this freedom from gain. Be that as it may, I can now summarize the contents of this book in seven items: 1) Buddhist truth, 2) Awakening to the Bodhi-seeking mind, 3) Leaving home for Buddhism, 4) Non-ego, 5) Honest poverty, 6) Zazen, 7) The salvation of all creatures.

### Buddhist truth

According to Dōgen-zenji, Buddhism is beyond time and space. From this view-point he says, "It is in a temporary way that we make the three periods in Buddhism: the ages of right, formal, and degenerate Buddhism. In the Buddha's lifetime all monks were not excellent. Some were extremely poor in ability." Thus he denied flatly the deep-seated idea—characteristic of Buddhism in the Heian era—that they were in the age of degenerate Buddhism.

And Buddhist truth is universal. Therefore he commented on the *kōan* in which Nan-ch'üan cut a cat in two, saying, "Nan-ch'üan's killing a cat is the manifestation of the free function of Buddhism and also is such a 'word' as turns us from delusion to enlightenment. On hearing this revolutionary word

we must regard this cat as the Buddha." This means the universal function of Buddhism is beyond the dualistic view of "cat" and "Buddha." This eternal and universal truth of Buddhism is beyond our dualistic discretion.

He said, "Buddhist followers need not always follow the sayings of ancient persons, but only grasp the truth. Doubt may be bad, but it is also wrong that we are attached to unbelievable matters and leave our questions unasked." This means that Buddhist truth is thoroughly Buddhist truth itself, not the words of our ancestors about it.

His words "It is with this mind that we are free from 'Buddha' and 'no-Buddha,'" mean that Buddhism is the absolute Dharma-nature beyond the dualistic view, such as "being" "no-being" "good" "bad" "beautiful" and "ugly."

This Buddhist truth is equally open to every one, regardless of ability and sex. From this come his words "The true study of Buddhism does not need wisdom, talent, or extreme cleverness." But this Buddhism is beyond our conceptions.

His words "We must not pretend to know all teachings, definite and esoteric, or Buddhist and non-Buddhist books," are a warning against the idea that we should take a sūtra literally in grasping the Way. Hence a man who sees Buddhist truth must realize the uncertainty of the world, awaken to the Bodhi-seeking mind, have a firm belief in his life-long training, and do the pure deed—Zazen, according to the Buddha's precepts.

Eagerly exhorting others to study Buddhism single-heartedly, he says, "Zen monks must study the ways of Buddhas and Patriarchs. Their ways are different in India, China, and Japan respectively, but the true students of the Way have never prepared for any of the needs of living." Not attaching ourselves to worldly affairs, we must study the Way single-heartedly.

And in emphasizing the importance of practicing after enlightenment he says, "Even if we get enlightenment we must

not stop practicing the Way, regarding our enlightenment as perfect. There is no end to the practice of the Way." This is a severe warning to Buddhist followers.

### Awakening to the Bodhi-seeking mind

What is most important in awakening to the Bodhi-seeking mind is that we must realize the uncertainty of the world and the importance of life and death. It is because we are apt to regard worldly affairs as eternal and immortal that we are attached to them. Hence he exhorted others to renounce the worldly mind and enter the Way as soon as possible, saying, "If we study the absolute Way against deluded worldly people, we shall form an excellent connection with Buddhism even if they have a grudge against us."

Such awakening to the Bodhi-seeking mind is open to us all, regardless of ability. Therefore he says, "We are all endowed with the Buddha-nature. So we must not humble ourselves," and "Those who are awakened to the Bodhi-seeking mind and study Buddhism to the best of their ability never fail to get enlightenment."

According to Dōgen, the importance of the practice of Buddhism lies not so much in ability as in the intensity of the Bodhi-seeking mind. Therefore he exhorts us to renounce our body and life to Buddhism, saying, "If we fail to secure tomorrow's way of living we should resolutely be willing to starve or freeze to death. We must first of all listen to Buddhism on this very day and make up our mind to give up our life to it."

But this awakening to the Bodhi-seeking mind will never lead us to the true way if we train ourselves without the guidance of excellent Zen masters. Hence Dōgen says, "When we listen to the words of excellent persons very often we shall naturally be ashamed of ourselves and awaken to the true

Bodhi-seeking mind." This is a severe warning against the dogmatic and self-centered idea of Buddhism.

However, by awakening to the Bodhi-seeking mind we shall not only gain our own enlightenment but also save all other creatures. Therefore he says, "We must make light of our life and have a deep compassion upon all creatures and devote ourselves to the Buddha's precepts."

Dōgen, as mentioned above, especially emphasized the importance of awakening to the Bodhi-seeking mind on account of the universal salvation of self and others.

### Leaving home for Buddhism

Dōgen said, "Renouncing the world is being indifferent to worldly feelings." In other words, leaving home for Buddhism means that we are in accordance with the Buddha's mind. In this connection he says, "We should not grasp the Way according to worldly feelings and morality, but according to the Way itself." This shows us that there is a great deal of difference between the Buddhist way and worldly ones.

His words "Most lay followers, even if earnest about practicing the Way, will be affected in practice so long as they are still attached to treasure, fine residence, or kinsmen," show us how hard it is for laymen to study the Way. It is because they are attached to self and others that they are reluctant to leave their home for Buddhism. Therefore he says, "Every man seems to be mindful of leaving his home to get enlightenment, but very few can carry it out."

The best way of leaving home for Buddhism is that we resolutely renounce all worldly things. In the true sense this is also filial piety. In this connection Dōgen says, "Indeed, it may be very hard to sever the bonds of affection even in the long time of repeated birth and death, but now you have a good chance to see Buddhism in a human body. If now you renounce



kindness and affection you may be said to be a really grateful person."

### Non-ego

Dōgen's words "If we are going to practice the way of the Buddhas and Patriarchs we should follow the deeds of ancient, excellent Zen masters, seeking no reward for it," mean that our practice free from gain is an unselfish mind beyond attachment to self and Buddhism itself. Hence we must practice the Way not for fame and profit but for the Way itself. About this he says, "The followers of the Way must not study Buddhism for their own sake but for the sake of Buddhism."

To be free from this attachment to self we must first of all realize the words "Here today, gone tomorrow." Our life is too transient and uncertain. In this context he says, "If we renounce this transient life for Buddhism even for a single day it will lead us to an eternal happiness."

The same can also be said of our body. He says, "If we have really renounced our body we shall be beyond our public reputation."

This is also the case with our discretion and mentality. In this connection he says, "Buddhist followers must be free from attachment to worldly things and study the Way single-heartedly," or "If our teachers tell us that the Buddha is a toad and an earthworm we must give up our former ideas and believe in their teachings."

According to Dōgen, both arrogance and humility are attachment to ego. Therefore he says, "To think of public reputation or worldly feelings is the essence of self-attachment. Study Buddhism alone, not following the worldly feelings."

## Honest poverty

True Buddhist followers are always satisfied with honest poverty. This is characteristic of Zen priests. Hence he says, "Buddhist followers must be extremely poor," or "When we have much money we shall surely lose our desire for the practice of the Way," or "A non-Buddhist book says, 'We may find some poor men who never flatter themselves but no rich men who are free from arrogance.' Really, riches and honours are the source of luxury and a great obstacle to the practice of the Way. Therefore Dōgen tells us that Buddhist followers must not worry about food and clothing, only following the Buddha's precepts."

Buddhist followers must always lead the pure life. They are strictly prohibited from living on food which they have got by an evil way of living. About this he says, "As cloth dyed with deep blue looks blue and one dyed with deep yellow looks yellow, so our body and mind supported by this wrong life must be wrong. To seek Buddhism with our wrong body and mind is hopeless just as if we try to press sand for oil."

We must realize that making the Buddha's status or a stūpa has no connection with the enlightenment of the Way. In this connection he says, "We must think of a single word of Buddhism and do Zazen even in a moment. This will be, I think, really the prosperity of Buddhism," or "Even if the temple or the hall is in disrepair we shall find it better than living on the open ground or under a tree. If one part of it has fallen down we should do Zazen in another part."

Single-hearted Zazen in honest poverty is the primary way of becoming enlightened.

## Zazen

Dōgen's words "Buddhist followers must do Zazen single-

heartedly, regardless of other things. The only way of the Buddhas and Patriarchs is Zazen. Never follow any other things," show us that Zazen is the deeds of the Buddhas and the right gate to Buddhism.

Zazen is not only the absolute deed free from gain but also the physical practice of the Way. From this come his words "So it is through our body without fail that we get enlightenment."

In the Rinzai sect the analects of ancient Zen masters and the *kōan* are first in importance. But in Dōgen's Zen Buddhism they are second. In this connection he says, "It is, after all, useless for disciplining myself and leading others that I should realize the deeds of ancient Zen masters through their analects or the *kōan* and tell deluded people about the truth of them," or "True, you may have some intellectual and conceptional grasp of one passage of the *kōan* but it is a cause of going far from the way of the Buddhas and Patriarchs. Just do Zazen upright day and night, free from any expectation of getting the benefit of enlightenment, and you are at once one with the way of the Buddhas and Patriarchs."

We must realize that the single-hearted deed of Zazen contains the *kōan*. Therefore Zazen is first in importance and the *kōan* is second. His words "Zazen enfolds all sorts of commandments and merits" show that there is no gap between Zazen and commandments.

As mentioned above, Zazen is the body and mind of the Buddhas and Patriarchs and opens to us all, regardless of ability. From this come his words "Even a man too stupid to answer a single question will be above a well-disciplined clever man if he is strenuous in the practice of Zazen." Hence Buddhist followers must devote themselves to this single practice—Zazen, renouncing all other ways.

## Salvation of all creatures

As I mentioned in the paragraph on "Awakening to the Bodhi-seeking mind" this mind can be divided into two: 1) Gain of our own merit, 2) Salvation of others. The Bodhisattvas particularly give great benefits to all creatures with such great compassion that they choose altruistic enlightenment before their own. In explaining this Dōgen says, "When they think of all creatures they should not separate 'familiar' from 'strange' but have a mind to help them equally, free from their own benefit, worldly and unworldly and, must try to do good devotedly for others, regardless of their notice and pleasure and trying to keep even this mind of their own secret to others."

This great deed will be done when we are free from the attachment to fame and profit. Therefore when we follow the practice of Buddhism, seeking no reward for it, we naturally devote ourselves to altruistic deeds.

With this great compassion the chief priest must lead his followers and poor laymen. About this he says, "Even if the chief priest, he must not scold monks wilfully, but regard them as his own followers," and quotes the sayings of Eisai-zenji "It will be a great benefit to you monks that I help a worldly person now in need of living material."

Thus Dōgen-zenji admired the unselfish love for all creatures and emphasized the importance of the altruistic practice of the Way.



(1) One day my master (Dōgen-zenji) said, "The Book of Suh-kao-san-chuen<sup>1</sup> tells us, 'Among the disciples of a certain Zen master<sup>2</sup> there was a monk, who, zealous for a golden image and the venerable ashes of Śākya Buddha,<sup>3</sup> used to burn incense and respectfully bow to them even in the monks' hall.<sup>4</sup> One day his master said to him, "This statue and ashes of Śākya Buddha will be bad for you some day even if you worship them so earnestly." But the monk would not accept this kind advice. Thereupon, his master said, "This is the deed of a celestial devil.<sup>5</sup> Give it up as soon as you can." His master, seeing him about to leave in anger, called out to him from behind, "Open your case and look inside." When this monk did so in a rage he found a venomous snake coiled inside.

"From this story we can safely say that we should respect the statue and ashes which are the relics of Śākya Buddha but so long as we respect them in expectation of getting enlightenment we are quite wrong. This mentality is possessed by a celestial devil and a venomous snake. However, in the teachings of the Buddha it is written that reverencing a statue or ashes of Śākya Buddha is a meritorious act and that it will bring happiness to human and celestial beings, just as the reverencing of the actual Śākya Buddha will do. In any case the worship of the Three Treasures<sup>6</sup> will actually lead us to the extinction of sins and the gain of merit, or rather to the freedom from the fate of falling into three evil worlds<sup>7</sup> and, further to the happy rebirth in the human and celestial worlds. But it is wrong that we should expect to get enlightenment by worshipping the Three Treasures.

"We are called the Buddha's disciples, because we at once try to reach the same position as the Buddha by following his teachings. So we must try to practice the Way by following only the Buddha's teaching. The true practice in accordance

with his teaching is the strenuous practice of Zazen. It is now the first principle of this Zen monastery. We should think of this."

(2) Again my master said, "We must observe the Buddha's precepts and keep our mind pure, but we must guard against erroneous idea that their observance is all-important and the best way to enlightenment.<sup>8</sup> They are only followed because they are common to Zen monks and the Buddha's disciples. But we should not regard them as all-important simply because it is good to follow them. By these words I do not mean that we are allowed to lead a self-indulgent life, sinning against Śākya Buddha. If we think ourselves permitted to, we are already in a wrong and non-Buddhist frame of mind. We observe the Buddha's precepts and keep our mind pure because it is simply the way of monks and a Zen monastery. While staying in the Zen monastery in China<sup>9</sup> I never saw monks who regarded it as the essence of the Way.

"Single-hearted Zazen is the true way to enlightenment. This Zazen is the very way that has personally been transmitted from Buddha to Buddha.<sup>10</sup> For this reason Gogenbo, my fellow-monk, disciple of the late Eisai-zenji,<sup>11</sup> was dissuaded from reading the 'Bodhisattva Precepts' sūtra<sup>12</sup> all day, strictly keeping his mind pure in the T'ang monastery."

(3) I, Ejō,<sup>13</sup> asked, "In the Zen monastery the practice of the Way, I believe, should be in accordance with Pai-chang's<sup>14</sup> Regulations. In this case he says that we must first of all accept and observe the Buddha's precepts. And it is the fundamental precepts<sup>15</sup> that are personally given to new monks now. Even in the oral and personal transmission of the Way from master to disciple the precepts of Bodhidharma<sup>16</sup> are given to monks. These are the Bodhisattva's precepts that are well known to us. And the 'Bodhisattva Precepts' sūtra tells us to chant this sūtra

day and night. Why did they dissuade him from doing so?"

My master said, "Well, you are right. Buddhist followers should strictly observe the regulations ordained by Pai-chang. But his regulations are confined to the acceptance or observance of precepts Zazen, and so on. To chant the 'Bodhisattva Precept' sūtra all day and observe the precepts is, in other words, to do Zazen whole-heartedly as the ancient Zen masters did. The practice of Zazen includes all sorts of precepts or merits.<sup>17</sup> All the practices of the ancient Zen masters have a deep meaning. Therefore, we must practice the Way following their excellent examples, not with our own opinions or wishes, but along with other monks."

(4) One day my master said, "Once there was a certain monk among the disciples of the Zen master Fu-chao.<sup>18</sup> This monk, when ill, was eager to eat some meat. His master allowed him to do so. One night when his master went to his sick room in person, he found that this monk was eating some meat under a dim light and that, much to the master's surprise, a demon was sitting on the monk's head and eating meat. The meat was being eaten by the demon, though he fancied himself eating it! Thereafter, the master allowed sick monks to eat meat, thinking that the reason they wanted to was because they were possessed by a demon.

"Therefore, there should be due consideration as to whether we allow sick monks to eat meat. It is said that one disciple of the Zen master Fa-yen<sup>19</sup> also ate some meat. All the ancient Zen masters had this deep discretion as to whether they allowed it or not."

(5) One day my master said, "When we are born of a particular family and pursue the family profession, first in importance is for us to pursue our career with diligence. It is wrong, however, for us to do business unworthy of us. Now



admitted to the priesthood as Buddha's monks, we should follow the way of monks. To observe the regulations for monks is to give up attachment to self and follow the teachings of the Zen masters. The key point is to be free from avarice. To this end we should be aloof from self-attachment. To free ourselves from self-attachment is most important in realizing that all things are transient.

"Most of us often want others to speak and think highly of ourselves. But such hopes are often shattered. Therefore, gradually give up self-attachment and follow the instructions of our master, and you will practice the Way harder. But you will say, 'What that master says is true, but we cannot give such-and-such a thing up.' And if you are attached to your own discretion and have your own way, you will find yourselves sunk all the deeper in the ocean of delusion. The best way to improve Zen monks is to make them practice Zazen single-heartedly. The strenuous practice of Zazen will naturally improve them, irrespective of ability."

(6) My master said, "We cannot read and know widely. So we should decidedly give up the intention to do so. We should study the regulations and traditional way of a single practice, and seek the excellent deeds of ancient Zen masters and devote ourselves to a single practice. We must not behave as if we were leaders or enlightened masters."

(7) Once I said, "What is undisguised causality?"  
My master said, "It is inflexible."

"How can we slough it off?"

"Causality is clear. There is no gap between cause and effect."

"If so, which comes first, cause or effect?"

"If such is the case, you should remember the *kōan* about Nan-ch'üan<sup>20</sup> cutting a cat in half. Nan-ch'üan, finding his monks

completely unable to answer his question about the Buddha-nature of a cat, finally cut the cat in two. Later Chao-chou<sup>21</sup> came to him and after having heard about the episode did not make any answer to Nan-ch'üan's question, but only carried his straw sandals on his head as he departed. This deed of Chao-chou's is an excellent expression of Buddhism."

My master continued, "If I had been Nan-ch'üan, I should have said, 'I will kill the cat whether you can answer me or not. Who is it that quarrels over this cat? Who is it that wishes to save it?' In place of the monks I should have replied to Nan-ch'üan, 'We cannot answer at all because we have grasped the core of the Way.'<sup>22</sup> I beseech you, Reverend sir, to kill it,' or 'You know how to cut the cat in two with a single stroke of your knife, but I am afraid you may not know how to cut it in one.'

I asked, "What do you mean by that?"

"I means that we let the cat go. When the monks kept silent, if I had been Nan-ch'üan, I should at once have let the cat go, saying, 'Monks, you cannot answer me at all, because you have all grasped the indescribable Way.' An ancient Zen master said, 'When there appears the absolutely free function of the Way we are free from all rules and regulations.'"

My master went on: "Nan-ch'üan's killing the cat with his knife was the manifestation of a great function of the Way, and the words 'cutting a cat' is a 'revolutionary phrase'<sup>23</sup> leading us to enlightenment. Otherwise we could not say that mountains, rivers, and the earth are the manifestation of the supreme and pure Mind of Buddha, nor that our absolute mind is, as it is, the Buddha. On hearing this revolutionary phrase, we must realize that the cat is, as it is, the Buddha himself. And the Buddhist followers should also grasp directly the profound meaning of this word."

Again my master said, "This deed of killing a cat is that of a Buddha."<sup>24</sup>

"What should we call this?"

"You may call it a cat-murder."

"Is this deed sinful?"

"Of course, it is."

"How can we cast off such sins?"

"Sometimes the Buddha's deed is one thing, and a sinful one is another. And sometimes there is no gap between the two."

"Is this the case with Prātimokṣa?<sup>25</sup>"

"Yes, it is."

Again my master said, "However, the idea of revealing the core of the Way to followers by such a deed as killing a cat may be right, but we are better advised to give up such an idea because there is a fear of being abused."

(8) I asked, "Are the words 'Violation of the Buddha's precepts' applied to monks after or before their Buddhist ordination?"

After their Buddhist ordinance," was the master's answer. He went on saying, "No sin before the Buddhist ordination is an offense against the Buddhist precepts. It is only a sinful aspect and act."

I asked, "The 'Forty-eight Slight Precepts' sūtra says, 'If one commits sins before one's Buddhist ordination, one will violate the Buddha's precepts.' What do you think about this?"

My master said, "That is far from the truth. Those words mean: in the Buddhist ordination ceremony the initiated repents of his past sins such as a violation of the Ten Prohibited Precepts<sup>26</sup> or the Forty-eight Slight Precepts. No crime committed before the Buddhist ordination is a violation of the precepts."

I asked, "In the Buddhist ordination the uninitiated is asked to chant the Ten Prohibited or the Forty-eight Slight Precepts so that he may repent of his past sins or crimes, as it is written in the 'Bodhisattva Precepts' sūtra. But in the next passage we find the words 'Never tell the uninitiated about the 'Bodhisattva

Precepts' sūtra.' What do you think about this difference between the two?"

My master said, "To receive the precepts is one thing. To chant them is another. To read the 'Bodhisattva Precepts' sūtra as repentance for our sins is nothing but to remember the sūtra. Therefore the uninitiated tries to chant it. In this sense it is never wrong to tell him about the sūtra. The passage 'Never tell the uninitiated about the precepts' is a warning against his avarice for profit. It is most important to explain the precepts to make the uninitiated repent of his sins."

I asked, "A monk who has committed any of the Seven Treacherous Sins<sup>27</sup> is not allowed to receive the precepts. But the 'Bodhisattva Precepts' sūtra says that offenders of any one of the Seven Treacherous Sins should repent of it. What do you think about this?"

My master said, "Repentance of a sin is all that is necessary. The former words are provisional warning against these treacherous sins. The passage previous to this means that offenders of the precepts will be cleared of their sins if they receive the precepts again. This repentance will clear them of their sins. It is not the case with the uninitiated.

I asked, "When monks are allowed to repent of the Seven Treacherous Sins that they have committed, can they receive the Buddha's precepts again?"

My master answered, "Yes, they can. About this my late teacher Eisai himself spoke. Once one is allowed to repent of sins, one should again receive the Buddha's precepts. On that occasion the master should give them to him even if he has committed these treacherous sins. Still more should a Bodhisattva allow others to receive the precepts even if he is accused of sinning the Buddha's precepts."

(9) In an evening talk my master said, "Never scold or bitterly speak ill of other monks. No bad or wicked monk should be



hated and slandered without reason. When more than four monks assemble together, they already form the *saṅgha*<sup>28</sup>—the most precious treasure of a country, and an object to be respected and revered. Whether he is the temple master or a superior senior teacher, or a master, he should lead his disciples if they are in the wrong mercifully and kindly. In this case beating or scolding are, if necessary, of course, pardonable, but wilful slander or criticism is unpardonable.

When my late teacher Jü-tung<sup>29</sup> was staying at the T'ien-t'ung monastery as chief priest, he used to reproach or strike the dozing monks in their hall<sup>30</sup> with his clog during the practice of Zazen. But all of them appreciated and admired this merciless treatment. Once when he was in the lecture hall, he said, 'I am now old enough to leave this place and retire into a hermitage for the winter of life. But to save deluded monks and give them the way I still remain in charge of this temple as your leader.' To this end I have often scolded you or struck you with *shippei*<sup>31</sup> much to my regret. But all this is the way to lead you in place of the Buddha. Brothers! Have mercy on me! At his words all the monks present were moved to tears.

None but a master of such compassion can lead deluded monks. It is quite wrong for him, merely because he is the chief-director or a superior senior monk, to command the services of monks wilfully and scold them, regarding them as his followers—still worse to speak ill of, or find faults with others when he is not qualified to do so. We must be very careful about this.

"When we are compassionate enough to remedy others' evils, we should give them veiled hints about their faults lest they should become angry."

(10) Once my master told me this story: Minamoto Yoritomo,<sup>32</sup> the late Right General, was first a government officer



called Hyōenosuke.<sup>33</sup> One day when he attended a formal meeting at court, there happened to be an impolite person.

"Then the Chief Councillor of State told Yoritomo to arrest the wild fellow.

Yoritomo said, "Please leave it to Taira-no-Kiyomori, the Supreme Commander of the Heike clan."

The Councillor said, "You are very near to me."

"I am not qualified for this," was Yoritomo's answer.

This answer is quite fair. Later with this fair mind Yoritomo ruled the whole country. Such should also be the case with the present Zen trainees. We must not condemn others for their faults when we are not in a position to do so."

(11) In an evening talk my master said, "There once lived a general Lu-chung-lien<sup>34</sup> in the Chai country. He often defeated enemies for the then Emperor Ping-yüan-chün.<sup>35</sup> Ping-yüan-chün was going to give him a lot of gold and silver as a reward for his military feats, but it is said that he would not accept it, saying, 'I have defeated the enemy only because I am a general, not because I am eager for prizes and goods.' It is well known as an example of Lu-chung-lien's integrity.

"The wise, even if they are laymen, will pursue their duty without seeking any rewards. This attitude must also be the case with Zen trainees. When we enter the priesthood we should seek no reward for conducting various practices of Buddhism. Freedom from gain is the universal teachings that we can find in Buddhism and non-Buddhism."

(12) In a talk on Buddhism my master said, "It is wrong to refute others logically even if we are right and they are wrong. At the same time it is a hasty act if, while really thinking we are right on our part, we beat a hasty retreat in defeat, saying, 'I am mistaken.' It is desirable that we leave the matter as it is, neither confuting others, nor admitting our own faults.

Turn a deaf ear to the other's argument and forget it and the other will also forget ours and will not get angry. All this is a prerequisite to argument."

(13) My master said, "Here today; gone tomorrow! The matter of life and death is vital to us! If we wish to practice or study anything in this fleeting life, we must practice the Way and study Buddhism. Prose and poetry are useless for us Buddhists to pursue. Give up both of them! In studying Buddhism and practicing the Way we must not study many things, still less any teachings, either exoteric or esoteric.<sup>36</sup> This is also true of the words of the Buddhas and Patriarchs.<sup>37</sup>

"An innate stupid fellow can not apply himself even to a single thing, still less to too many things to control a deluded mind."

(14) My master said, "There is a story of a Zen master Chieh-chueh<sup>38</sup> who awakened to Buddhism and became a monk. He was first a government officer, wise and honest. When he was a local governor he stole government money and gave it to poor people. One of his fellow officers told the emperor about this. On hearing this news, the emperor was struck with great surprise and wonder, so were his retainers. It was finally decided that Chieh-chuen should be put to death on account of his grave crime.

Hereupon, after careful consultation with his retainers, the emperor said, 'This officer has somehow committed such a crime in spite of his cleverness and wisdom. I am afraid he may have done so for some good reason. His head must be cut off only if he looks sad as he is about to be executed. Otherwise he must have done this deed for a good reason. Then he should not be beheaded.'

"The Imperial messenger arrested the officer and prepared to kill him. However, there was nothing sorrowful about the

victim, rather there was something happy. The officer said to himself, 'I'll give this life of mine to all creatures.'

"In great surprise and wonder, the messenger went to the emperor and recounted this to him. 'Well,' said the emperor, 'he must have done such a thing for a good reason just as I ever guessed.' And then the emperor asked the officer why he had committed such a crime."

"The officer replied, "I would like to leave government service and give alms to all creatures and be closely connected with them. I intend to strenuously study the Way in my coming existence as a Buddhist priest."

'Deeply impressed by this remark, the emperor acquitted the officer of the charge and permitted him to become a monk. Thus the name 'Yen-shou' was given him, which meant that he was acquitted of capital punishment.

This mind we monks should also have at least once in our life. Rising above ourselves and having great compassion for all creatures, we should devote ourselves to the Buddha's way. If we have had a little of this frame of mind, we should try to preserve it. Unless we can have this frame of mind once in our life, we shall not be able to become enlightened."

(15) In an evening talk my master said, "In Zen Buddhism the traditional way of understanding the Zen talks is to change our present knowledge by degree under the guidance of Zen teachers. Indeed, concepts of the Buddha that we have hitherto entertained may be: the Buddha means Śākya Buddha or Amitabha Buddha<sup>39</sup> originally endowed with various shapes and brightness or with the ability to deliver altruistic sermons. But if our teachers say, 'The Buddha is a toad or an earthworm,' we must believe them, laying down our own preoccupied notion of Buddha. If, on the other hand, we believe that the earthworm is endowed with the various shapes, brightness or merits of the Buddha, we are not yet free from delusion. We

should consider only what we see now as the Buddha. If we try to renounce our selfish way of discriminating and our habitual attachments as our teachers advise us, we shall be identified with the Way.

"On the contrary, however, present followers of the Way, attached to their self-centered opinions, wilfully picture the Buddha in a literal way; and when they find an idea different from their own, they regard it as wrong and seek out those of the same opinion as themselves, mostly neglecting the discipline of the Way.

"If their teacher tells them to take another step above the top of a 100-foot pole at the cost of their life, they will never follow this excellent advice, saying, 'There is no discipline of the Way without our own life.' We must pay careful attention to this."

(16) In an evening talk my master said, "It is better for one, even a layman, to devote himself to one thing and do it well in the presence of others than to study many things in vain. Still more has Buddhism which surpasses the ordinary world been very hard to practice from time immemorial and is far away from us even at present. Moreover we are by nature inadequate in its discipline. Buddhism is so lofty and so boundless that we cannot master even one doctrine if we try to learn many doctrines at the same time. It is very hard for a man of poor ability to devote himself to even one subject and master it in his life. Buddhist followers should try to devote themselves to one subject alone.

I said, "Then what is the only thing or way that we must follow in Buddhism?"

My master said, "What we should follow depends upon our ability and quality. It is Zazen that the followers of Bodhidharma have practiced intensively as the only way transmitted from Buddha to Buddha. The practice of Zazen is open to us



all, whether we are great, fair, or poor in ability.

"While under the guidance of my late teacher Jü-tsung in China I happened to hear of this doctrine and thereafter I practiced Zazen day and night. In the severe heat and cold many other monks there stopped practicing Zazen for a while lest they should become ill. Then I said to myself, 'If I should die of illness I'll practice Zazen single-heartedly. What is the use of neglecting Zazen and taking care of our body when we are not sick? It was indeed my original purpose to die of illness after practicing Zazen. If I practice Zazen and die under the guidance of this excellent Zen master<sup>40</sup> in China and further have him perform a burial service for me, I shall be closely connected with Buddhism. If I should die in Japan, I could not expect to have such an excellent Zen master do so according to the formal manner for a burial service. If I practice Zazen and die before I become enlightened, I shall be born a priest in the coming existence on the strength of it. What is the use of living long without the discipline of Zazen? Still more will it be quite a pity to be drowned in the ocean or die a sudden death in spite of our expectation to preserve our health or protect ourselves from disease!' After having thought in this way I practiced Zazen determinedly day and night, but I found myself quite free from illness.

"Now make bold to practice Zazen with your whole heart, and every one of you will be able to become enlightened. Such was the teaching of my late master Jü-tsung."

(17) My master said, "To lay down one's life and cut off one's flesh or limbs is all the easier for being an act requiring great dashing. I often find worldly people who give up their life in this way on account of their desire for fame and profit or their deep attachment to something. But it is hard to control our mind according to the circumstances when some action occurs. The followers of the Way should first intend to lay down their

lives for the Way; next think calmly for some time whether their words or deeds are reasonable. If they are reasonable, then the followers should say and practice them."

(18) My master said, "The followers of the Way should not worry about food and clothing or worldly affairs, but only devote themselves to the Buddhist training. The Buddha said, 'The garment of a monk is a *funzōe*<sup>41</sup> and his food can be obtained by daily begging.' These two practices will be with us forever in any world. We must not worry about worldly affairs in vain, forgetful of the fact 'Here today, gone tomorrow.' While alive, however impermanently, we must apply ourselves to nothing other than the Way."

(19) A certain monk said, "Both fame and profit are attracting in their own way but great obstacles to the practice of the Way. So we cannot help giving them up. But food and clothing are vital to Zen monks, though less in value than fame and profit. A *funzōe* and beggings are both the practices of excellent persons and also characteristic of ancient India. The Zen monasteries of China have various kinds of property. So the monks are free from the trouble of getting food and clothing. Our Zen monasteries, however, have no such properties and the way of begging has also fallen into disuse. I am poor in quality. What shall I do now? If I am given alms by pious patrons, I shall be beset by sins of assuming myself worthy of begging. But to do the same work as people of the military, agricultural, industrial, and mercantile classes do is not the right way of living for Zen monks. If we leave our fortunes to fate, we shall remain poor after all. When famine and cold come, our care about them will prevent us from practicing the Way. Someone said to me, 'You are too severe in the practice of the Way. You seem to be indifferent to the times and your own natural disposition. We are poor in quality. Now is the age of de-

generate Buddhism.<sup>42</sup> You will make no progress in the Way if you go on practicing it like this. So you should take care of yourself and calmly practice the Way in a quiet place, having yourself supported by a pious patron or a lay believer and free from any trouble in getting food and clothing. This does not mean that you are covetous for property, but rather that you can better practice Buddhism after obtaining your immediate living needs.' I am still doubtful of this advice of his. What is the best way to act in regard of this matter?"

In answer to this my master said, "Zen monks must study the ways of Buddhas and Patriarchs. Their ways are respectively different in India, China and Japan, but the true students of the Way have never prepared for any needs of living. Only we must be free from worldly affairs and study the Way very hard.

"The Buddha said, 'We must keep nothing but three square robes and a bowl but give hungry creatures the remainder of our alms.' Even if we are given too much food, we must not store a bit of the remnants, still less should we seek food.

"A non-Buddhist book [the Analects of Confucius] says that we hear the truth in the morning and we may die quietly in the evening. Even if we die of hunger or cold, we must train ourselves in accordance with Buddhism even for one day, or for a moment. It is entirely due to our attachment to worldly affairs that we repeat birth and death continually in the countless kalpas of time. It would be eternal bliss if for once we should starve to death in this life following the Buddha's way. Further, in the great treasure of sūtras I have never heard of the Buddhas or Patriarchs of India, China or Japan who have died of hunger or cold. Daily necessities in the world, such as food and clothing, are already given us by right of birth. It never depends upon our desire for them whether we actually get them or not. Just leave them to fate! Don't worry about them. If we do not awaken to the "Bodhi" in this life under the pretext that



we are now in the age of degenerate Buddhism, in what other existence shall we be able to become enlightened? We must study the Way to the best of our ability, though we are not equal to Sushūti<sup>43</sup> or Mahākāśyapa.<sup>44</sup>

"A non-Buddhist book says, 'A lustful man loves a woman, even if she is not so fair as Si-shih<sup>45</sup> or Mao-chi'ang. The lover of a horse appreciates his animal even if it does not run so fast as Fei-tu<sup>46</sup> or Lu-erh. A man devoted to epicurianism enjoys a delicacy, though it is not so delicious as the liver of a dragon, or the marrow of a phoenix. Every man only makes the best of his ability. Such is the case with worldly people, still more should it be so with monks.

"Moreover, Śākya Buddha took twenty years off his 100-year-old longevity and gave the time to later generations as a gift in the age of degenerate Buddhism. Thanks to this benefaction the whole Zen monastery is given offerings by human and celestial beings. The Tathāgata, though endowed with supernatural powers enough to get good fortune as he pleased, ate the oats with which to feed a horse and underwent the summer training sojourn of ninety days. In this age of degenerate Buddhism we monks should never fail to follow his way."

(20) I asked, "Some monks often lead sinful lives, though given presents by human and celestial beings, having no Bodhi-seeking mind and vainly wasting the favours given by the Buddha. I think they should live a worldly life as lay people and enjoy a long life to practice the Way fully. What do you think about this?"

My master replied, "Who has told us to be sinful and free from awakening to the Bodhi-seeking mind? We must awaken to the "Bodhi" and practice the Way by all means. Still more do the sūtras tell us that the Tathāgata's favor<sup>47</sup> is equally given to every man, whether he is sinful or not, and whether he is a beginner or is experienced in discipline. However, the



sūtras do not state that we must be laymen again if sinful, nor that we must not practice Buddhism if we have never awakened to the "Bodhi." Who on earth can awaken to the "Bodhi" from the start? If only we awaken to the "Bodhi" and practice Buddhism, however hard it may be, we shall make steady and fast progress towards enlightenment. We are all endowed with the Buddha-nature. So we should never humiliate ourselves.

"The Wên-hsüan<sup>48</sup> says, 'The prosperity of a country depends upon a wise man, but the good deeds of wise men in olden times go to ruin because of a fool in later generations.' This shows us that a country will be prosperous if a wise man appears, but that the good deeds of wise men in olden times will fall into ruin if a single foolish man appears. We must think carefully of this meaning."

(21) In a discursive talk my master said, "Whether men or women, old or young, most people in the world often tell risqué stories to each other, regarding them as amusing and interesting talks. Indeed, these licentious stories may delight us or beguile our tedious hours, but Zen monks must strictly be prohibited from telling them. Not in a cordial and serious talk delivered by respectable and sincere laymen, but in a time of drunkenness and slovenliness there is some talk of this sort. Of course, Zen monks should think of the Way alone. Risqué stories are told by a few eccentric and slovenly monks alone.

"There was no story of this sort in the Zen monasteries of Sung China. Also in our country, recently while Bishop Eisai of the Kennin-ji temple was alive, no such story was told, nor even after his death while some of his disciples remained there. For the past seven or eight years, however, I have often heard young monks making this licentious talk. How regrettable!

"The Buddha said, 'Rough and harsh words may sometimes lead one to enlightenment, while a useless talk often becomes a hindrance to the practice of the Way.' Thus even in a single

utterance a useless word is a hindrance to the Way. Still more does a licentious talk often tend to lead us to a licentious frame of mind. This requires our closest attention. Once we realize it is wrong, we must try to get rid of this bad habit gradually, though we need not profess to do so."

(22) In an evening talk my master said, "In doing good, most lay people expect to have it known to others, while in doing evil, they try to keep it unknown. So this selfish deed does not meet with the approval of the invisible guardian deities. Therefore, when they do good they receive no benefits and when they do wrong they are punished for it. Not knowing this, they say to themselves, "No good deeds are attended with good effects. The merit of Buddhism is very little, too. This is a wrong view and the first thing we must correct.

Do good unknown to others and repent of your sins before the Buddha afterwards if you have committed them by mistake, and your secret deeds will never fail to have spiritual communion with the invisible guardian deities and your confessed evils will be purged. Thus we shall naturally be blessed with good fruits in the coming existence as well as in the present."

(23) Hereupon, a layman came and said, "Recently when we laymen made offerings to Zen monks and devoted ourselves to Buddhism, ominous things have often happened. So we have embraced erroneous ideas and don't feel like devoting ourselves to the Three Treasures—the Buddha, the Teachings, and the Priesthood. What do you think about this?"

My master replied, "The blame for wrong views is not so much due to monks or Buddhism as to laymen themselves. They respectfully make offerings to monks who pretend to observe the Buddha's precepts and keep their mind pure, while they make no offering to those sinful and shameless monks who drink wine and eat meat, regarding them as wrong. This dif-

ferentiation of theirs—respect and contempt—is really against the Buddha's will. This is why their devotion to the Three Treasures brings them no effect or spiritual communion. Here and there in the 'Forty-eight Slight Precepts' sutra we find warnings against such discrimination. We should make offerings to all monks, whether they are virtuous or not, and especially not judge their virtue only from appearance.

Monks in the age of degenerate Buddhism, though they seem to have something good, are really men of evil minds and deeds. Hence, if we respectfully make offerings and devote ourselves to monks, regarding them equally as the Buddha's disciples and making no difference between a good monk and a bad one, we are sure to hold communion with the Buddha and be greatly benefited.

"Moreover, we must remember the four kinds of communions between all creatures and Bodhisattvas or Buddhas: 1) A good deed done in the past is rewarded to us unnoticed; 2) A good deed done in the past is rewarded to us noticed; 3) A good deed done at present is rewarded to us noticed; 4) A good deed done at present is rewarded to us unnoticed. At the same time there are three kinds of periods when good and evil deeds are rewarded to us; deeds done at present are rewarded in this, the next, or in the third existences. These things we must carefully study."

(24) In an evening talk my master said, "When someone comes to you for help and asks you to write a letter for a court suit and so on, you may refuse his request in his presence, saying, 'I am not a layman. I have withdrawn from the world and live in a hermitage. So it is wrong to say something unworthy of a monk.' Indeed, this may seem to follow the way of Zen monks, but when I fathom your mind I find you still attached to yourself and mindful of public reputation. It is because you refused his request thinking that, as you are a monk who has renounced



the world, you would be thought ill of for such act unworthy of monks. According to the circumstances and after proper consideration you should do good, however little, to a man who is before you, regardless of the possible slander by the receiver of the letter. Indeed, this receiver may hate you and break off with you for such evil deeds unworthy of monks, but what a bad thing is it to lose the friendship of such an unreasonable person? Indeed, you may seem to be wrong and unworthy of being a monk, but you should consider it the most important to cast off self-attachment and worldly fame.

"The Buddhas and Bodhisattvas, when asked, are kind enough to cut off their flesh, hands, and legs and give them to others. When asked for a letter for a court suit you are deeply attached to yourself if you refuse it, considering your worldly fame alone. The receiver of the letter may regard you as a worthless fellow, saying, 'Every man is not a sage. Such conduct is not worthy of a monk.' But you, for your part, should do good to your friend, regardless of your worldly reputation. In this way the deed will be one with the truth. Ancient people also seem to have often regarded it as right. Believing it right, I also readily do patrons or friends good, however inadequately, by writing a letter when they ask me to tell others about some unexpected things. It is quite easy for me."

I asked, "You are quite right. Indeed, it may be reasonable when we tell our friends about something which is good and useful, but can it be also the case when our friends have a wrong intention to deprive another of his property or to tell someone about unfavorable things? What is your opinion about this?"

My master said, "It makes no difference to me whether it is right or wrong. In this case you had better inform the receiver of the letter of the one who asked for your help or write down in the letter, to the effect that you have written the letter at his request. It depends upon the receiver's discretion, how-

ever, whether the letter is acceptable. The receiver of the letter should make clear whether it is right or wrong. It is also wrong to write to friends something unreasonable beyond your means. Moreover, a man may ask you to write a wrong and unconvincing letter to a friend or a person who respects you enough to comply with your request whether it is good or bad. In this case you should comply with his request for form's sake and write in the letter: 'I only wrote this letter as I was urgently asked to. I hope you will manage it as you think proper.' By so doing it will be good for all: neither of them can be spiteful of you. You should think about these things carefully according to persons or circumstances. In short, you should be free from worry about your public reputation or self-attachment in any case."

(25) In an evening talk my master said, "Nowadays most people, laymen and monks expect to have their good deeds known to others, while they are afraid of having their bad deeds found out. So there is a gap between mind and appearance. They should, however, strenuously try to put this gap to naught, repenting of wrong deeds, concealing their own true virtue, not showing it, but ascribing good deeds to others and wrong ones to themselves."

A person asked my master, "It is quite right to conceal our own virtue, not showing it. But the Buddhas and Bodhisattvas regard it as primary to save all creatures with great compassion. If ignorant monks or laymen slander or reproach other monks for their poor appearances, they will pay dearly for reproaching the monkhood, one of the Three Treasures. There is, I think, a small benefit in making offerings to monks out of respect for their outer appearance, though we are not aware of their true virtue. What do you think about this?"

My master said, "To be indulgent is still far from the truth even if such indulgence is not readily apparent to others. It is

an extreme violation of a commandment to do evils before laymen to conceal your true virtue or be anxious to have it made known to others that you are one of the most rare Bodhi-seekers and Buddhist followers in the world while trying to keep your own faults little known to others, not realizing that the heavenly deities<sup>49</sup> or the Three Treasures penetrate your dissembling mind unnoticed to you. Therefore, I warn you against not feeling ashamed of these deeds, or being eager to win laymen's worship. You should take various measures suited to the occasion for the advance of the Way and the salvation of deluded people. It is said that we must say and do things only after careful, not rash and rude, thoughts and consideration. Truth is the thing that we should consider first in every deed.

"It is self-evident that time passes without pause—'Here today, gone tomorrow.' For this fact we need not depend upon leaders or sūtras. 'Now' is all for us. Never wait till tomorrow. Tomorrow is too unstable and too hard to grasp, so we should think of following the Way even in this living moment—of practicing various ways intensively to advance Buddhism and give benefits to all creatures."

(26) I asked, "Do we have to practice mendicancy and the like according to Buddhism?"

My master answered, "Yes, you do. But you should do it according to the manners and customs in the district. After all, you should make every effort to give greater benefit to all creatures and advance your own practice. In practicing mendicancy, if we walk, dressed in priestly robes, along the muddy road, our robes will be soiled. And when the people in the district are poor, we cannot practice mendicancy from door to door. If we dare to, we shall go backward in our practice of the Way and our benefit to all creatures will also become smaller. So long as we practice the Way reasonably according to the local manners and customs, people, high and low, will make offerings

to us of their own accord. Thus both our own practice and altruistic deeds will be accomplished.

"We should think over these things according to the occasion, the circumstances, and their reasonableness and, regardless of public notice and private gain, seeing to it that all of them are helpful to the practice of the Way and give some benefit to all creatures."

(27) My master said, "Buddhist followers should renounce worldly feelings. About this there is a matter requiring careful thought: i.e. they should lay down the world, home, body and mind. We must think this matter over.

"Some monks, renouncing the world and living in deep seclusion in the mountains, think of the maintenance of their ancestral home or the welfare of their family and relatives.

"Some, escaping far from the world and leaving home and relatives or encumbrances, are mindful of their own health and want to suffer as little pain as possible, not practicing even the Way lest they should become ill. They have not given up their body yet.

"Others, absorbed in austere discipline at the cost of their health, cannot devote their mind to the Way and wish to practice nothing against their will even though it is in line with the practice of Buddhism. They have not given up their mind yet."



Notes:

- 1) 'Biographies of High Priests, Continued,' 30 vols. Compiled by Tao-hsüan (595-667) of Tang China and consisting of the biographies of 331 high priests covering 144 years since the Emperor Wu of Liang.
- 2) Zen master. A priest versed in meditation.
- 3) Śākya Buddha. The crown prince of King Suddho-dana. It is said he left home at the age of 29, got enlightenment at the age of 35, delivered sermons for 46 years and died at the age of 80. The founder of Buddhism.
- 4) A monks' hall. A hall where Zen trainees read sūtras and the like. In the middle of it a statue of Avalokiteśvara Bodhisattva is situated.
- 5) Celestial devil. One of the four devils—devils of delusion, of the body and mind, of death and of heaven.
- 6) The Three Treasures. The Buddha, the Teachings and the Priesthood.
- 7) The three evil worlds. Hell, the world of hungry ghosts and of beastly creatures. It is said that a man of evil deeds is destined to fall into one of the three evil worlds.
- 8) The best way to enlightenment. It is the practice of Zazen.
- 9) Dōgen-zenji went over to China at the age of 24, got enlightenment under the guidance of a Zen master Jū-tsung, chief priest of the T'ien-t'ung monastery, at the age of 26 and came home at the age of 28.
- 10) Buddhas, Buddhas and Patriarchs. Buddhas are, it is said, 3,000 in number, including Śākya Buddha. Patriarchs are, it is said, the Venerable Mahākāśyapa, Śākya Buddha's disciple, and many other successors.
- 11) Bishop Eisai (1141-1215). The founder of the Rinzai sect in Japan. Another of his names was National Teacher Senkō. He went over to China twice, came home at the age of 54 and later founded the Kennin-ji temple in Kyōto.
- 12) The 'Bodhisattva Precepts' sūtra (Bōmmōkyō) 2 vols. Translated by Kumarajīva and considered the most important from olden times as the primary Vinaya sūtra for Bodhisattvas.
- 13) Koun Ejō-zenji (1198-1280). The first disciple of Dōgen-zenji and also the recorder of this book 'Shōbōgenzō-zuimonki.' Wrote



the 'Kōmyōzōzammai.

- 14) Pai-chang Huai-hai (726-814). A successor to Ma-tsu Tao-i (-788); the first ordainer of the regulations of Zen monastery life in China.
- 15) The fundamental precepts. Commandments for Bodhisattvas to observe. They consist of 16 commandments: 1. to devote oneself to the Buddha, 2. to devote oneself to his Teachings, 3. to devote oneself to the Priesthood, 4. to observe the precepts, 5. to perform good actions, 6. to give benefits to all creatures, 7. not to kill any creatures, 8. not to steal property, 9. not to commit adultery, 10. not to tell lies, 11. not to sell liquor, 12. not to speak of Bodhisattvas' faults, 13. not to be too proud to praise others, 14. not to withhold any property and sermons, 15. not to slander the Three Treasures.
- 16) Bodhidharma (-528). The 28th Patriarch in India who is thought to have come to China on September 21 in 519. He became the first Zen Patriarch in that country. It is said that he practiced Zazen gazing at the wall at the Shao-ling temple for nine years.
- 17) According to Dōgen-zenji there is no gap between Zazen and the precepts. So long as we do Zazen, all other merits will also appear.
- 18) Fu-chao (-1203). A Buddhist heir to Tai-hui and the chief priest of the Ayuwanshan monastery and so on.
- 19) Fa-yen (-1104). A Buddhist heir to Pai-yung.
- 20) Nan-ch'üan Fu-yüan (748-834). A Buddhist heir to Ma-tsu Tao-i (-788).
- 21) Chao-chou Ts'ung-shen (778-897). A Buddhist heir to Nan-ch'üan Fu-yüan. He became a monk at the advanced age of 61 and died at the age of 120.
- 22) This means that the complete grasp of the Way is beyond our conception.
- 23) A revolutionary phrase. A phrase that makes a deluded one enlightened in its single utterance.
- 24) This means that the cat is endowed with the Buddha-nature whether or not he actually kills it and that we must give up a conceptual grasp of 'killing' or 'cat' or 'Buddha-nature.'
- 25) 'Prātimokṣa.' Precepts by the separate observance of which monks slough off all the effects of behavior, speech and mind.

- 26) 'Bodhisattva Precepts' sūtra. cf. Note 12.
- 27) Seven Treacherous Sins. 1. to cause a Buddha's body to bleed, 2. to kill one's Father, 3. to kill one's Mother, 4. to kill precepts-teachers, 5. to kill leading teachers, 6. to break the harmony of the community of priest, 7. to kill venerable persons.
- 28) 'Saṅgha.' The community of monks.
- 29) Jū-tsung (1163-1228). A Buddhist heir to Hsüeh-tu and a Zen master who instructed Dōgen-zenji personally as chief priest of the T'ien-t'ung monastery.
- 30) The meditation hall. A hall where monks do Zazen, take meals and lie down. In the middle of it the statue of Bodhisattva Mañjuśrī is situated.
- 31) *Sippeī*. A bamboo stick of an arch shape with which a Zen master often encourages monks in the practice of Buddhism.
- 32) Minamoto Yoritomo (1147-1199). The first Shōgun of the Kamakura government and the founder of the military governmental system in Japan.
- 33) *Hyōenosuke*. An assistant secretary of the military office in the Imperial Court.
- 34) Lu-chuang-lien. Known as a man of integrity in the "Turbulent Age" of ancient China.
- 35) Ping-yüan-chün. Known as a lord who treated many hangers-on kindly in the "Turbulent Age" of ancient China.
- 36) Esoteric teaching. The doctrine of the Shingon sect which is a mystery to inexperienced monks. From this comes the name 'esoteric.' Exoteric teachings contain all other teachings which are clear to inexperienced monks.
- 37) Buddhas and Patriarchs. cf. Note 10.
- 38) Chih-chueh (904-975). The 3rd Patriarch of the Hōgen sect in China.
- 39) Amitābha Buddha. Became a Buddha of the Pure Land after making 48 vows and discipling himself.
- 40) This means Jū-tsung-zenji.
- 41) *Funzōe*. Monks' robes made of rags cast off by others.
- 42) The age of degenerate Buddhism. 1,000 years after Śākya Buddha's death is said to be the age of right Buddhism (There are teachings, deeds and enlightenment.); the next 1,000 years, the age of formal Buddhism (There are teachings and deeds.); the last 10,000 years, the age of degenerate Buddhism (There are only teachings.).

- 43) 'Subhūti.' One of the ten excellent disciples of Śākya Buddha. He was especially well versed in the doctrine of vanity.
- 44) 'Mahā-kāśyapa.' cf. Note 10.
- 45) Si-shih Mao-ch'ang. Said to have been the two most charming ladies in ancient China.
- 46) Fai-tu, Ju-erh. Said to have been the two most gallant horses in ancient China.
- 47) 'Tathāgata.' Another title of Śākya Buddha. It means "coming from truth."
- 48) 'Wên-hsüan' 30 or 60 vols. A collection of fine poetry from the Chou-chin dynasty to the Liang.
- 49) Heavenly deities. Sakra devānam Indra, Brāhmadeva, or Yamarāja, etc.

(1) My master said, "If Buddhist followers first control their minds, they will find it easy to give up their body and renounce the world. However this is not easy to do. Some monks, for example, being mindful of public notice about their speech and action, will not do wrong, saying, 'As this is wrong, others will think ill of us.' Thus they try to do good when the opportunity presents itself, thinking that others will consider them as true Buddhist followers by doing so. Both of these are worldly opinions. On the contrary, however, those who behave themselves as they please are indeed villains. The truth is that monks should practice Buddhism for its own sake, forgetful of their self-clinging and transient bodies. They should be mindful of particulars according to the occasion. Beginners in the Way must curb evil and do good whether from private feelings or from public. This is to give up both their body and their mind."

(2) My master said, "My late Bishop Eisai was staying at the Kennin-ji temple, when a poor man came to him and said, 'My family is poor and we have not taken a morsel of food in the last few days. I, my wife and children are going to die of hunger. Have mercy on us!'"

"At that time there was no food, clothing, or property to give him anywhere in the temple. Abbot Eisai thought and thought but in vain. Finally it occurred to him that there was a small quantity of copper-leaves beaten out as the material for the aureole of the Bhaisajyaguru image which was to be built in the near future. He took them up, folded them in half, and tied them up in a bundle. He gave it to the poor man, saying, 'You had better keep the wolf from the door by exchanging this for food.' The layman gladly took it and left there.

"Then the Bishop's disciples said reproachingly, 'Those copper-leaves are the material for the aureole of the Buddha'



image. You have given them to the layman. We are afraid you have committed the sin of putting the Buddha's property to private use. What do you think about this?

The Bishop said, "You are right. But, speaking of the Buddha's will, he was kind enough to give alms to all helpless creatures by cutting off his own flesh, hands and legs when he had nothing else to give. Even if I give the whole body of the Buddha to a man dying of hunger in my presence, it will be one with the Buddha's will. And though I fall into hell as a result of this sin, I should save all creatures from starvation.' Now Buddhist followers should think about the excellent frame of mind of this enlightened senior and never forget it."

(3) "Again, one day disciples of Bishop Eisai said to him, 'The present site of this Kennin-ji temple lies too near the Kamo River, so in the future it may be destroyed by floods.'

"The Bishop replied, 'Don't worry about the future destruction of our temple. Of the Jētavana monastery<sup>2</sup> in India, there remains only the foundation of the hall. But no merit of building the monastery will be lost. How boundless the merit will be when we practice Buddhism there for one year or half a year (No merit of practicing the Way depends upon the continuance of the temple)!

"Now from this talk I believe that since the construction of a temple is the most important undertaking in this life one should worry about possible disasters in the future, yet while embracing this sort of worry, the late Bishop knew the true meaning of building a temple. We should think over his excellent mind."

(4) In an evening talk my master said, "In the reign of the Emperor Tai-tsung<sup>3</sup> of the T'ang dynasty, Wei-cheng<sup>4</sup> addressed the emperor as follows: 'Some people speak ill of you.'

"The emperor replied, 'If spoken ill of in spite of my benevo-

lence, I have nothing whatever to worry about. But if, though lacking in benevolence, I am spoken well of, then I have something to attend to.'

"Such must be the case with Zen trainees as well as with laymen. When we are endowed with mercy or an earnest desire for Bodhi, we need not worry about being reproached by foolish people; when not so endowed, however, we must greatly guard against being thought to be earnest followers of the Way."

(5) Again my master said, "The Emperor Wên<sup>5</sup> of the Sui dynasty said, 'An emperor must cultivate moral character in secret till it is fully raised.' This means that the emperor should have mercy on his people only after disciplining himself till its virtue is fully accumulated. We should be most careful lest we Buddhist followers lack such a mind. If only we practice the Way in secret, its merit will naturally appear. Hence, if we simply follow the way of the Buddhas and Patriarchs without expecting or wishing to have our deeds known to others, others will naturally devote themselves to Buddhist virtues. However, as is often the case with the students of the Way, we, as well as others, are apt to cherish an erroneous idea that respect paid by the public or treasures given by them are an index to Buddhist virtues. To think in such a way means that we are possessed by a devil. We should think it over and over again. In Buddhism this is called the work of a devil. In the three countries<sup>6</sup> I have never heard of a man considered to be virtuous in the Way because he was respected by foolish people or on account of his riches.

"In those countries they called the true Bodhi seekers those who led poor, hard, and frugal lives, endowed with merciful and Bodhi-seeking minds.

The effects of virtue never mean that we may take pride in a lot of riches and alms. There are three ways of virtue coming into being: 1) It becomes known that a person practices

the Way; 2) Others come to him in aspiration for the Way that he practices; 3) Others study and practice the Way with him."

(6) In an evening talk my master said, "We followers of the Way must cast off worldly feelings. This means that we practice the Buddhist teachings just as they are. It is generally owing to their self-centeredness that most laymen try to distinguish good from evil and tell right from wrong, taking that and leaving this. Hence, in entering the Way we must first of all renounce worldly feelings and self-centered idea of morality and our own convenience or mentality. We should follow the words and deeds of the Buddhas and Patriarchs whether right or wrong.

"What we and laymen regard as good is not always good. So we should follow the Buddha's teachings, disregarding public notice and renouncing our own mentality. Indeed, we may sometimes feel languid in body and uneasy in mind, but we must try to follow the excellent deeds of the Buddhas and Patriarchs, and our virtuous seniors, because we have renounced our body and mind. No deed but that of the Buddhas and Patriarchs should be done, however fine and however consistent with the Way it may look and however eagerly we may wish to practice it. This is really the true understanding of Buddhism. Giving up long-cherished ideas of Buddhism on our part, we should turn our mind gradually to the words and deeds of the Patriarch under whom we are now learning Buddhism. In this way we shall advance in wisdom and become enlightened.

"If there is good reason for so doing, we had better lay down our knowledge of the Buddhist sūtras which we have hitherto studied and follow the truth shown by our present Patriarch. We study Buddhism, of course, to be detached from delusion and become enlightened. If we still think that as we have gained this knowledge after strenuous efforts of many years we cannot renounce it so lightly, we call this frame of mind one of being attached to life and death. This we must



carefully consider."

(7) In an evening talk my master said, "A lay bonze Minamoto-Akikane,<sup>7</sup> the Second Councillor of State, was asked to write the biography of the late Bishop Eisai of Kennin-ji temple. However, he refused the request, saying 'You had better have it written by a Confucian scholar, because as he whole-heartedly pursues learning from youth till old age, he makes no mistakes in his writing. But average people regard it as primary to perform their daily activities and keep company with each other, and as secondary to pursue learning. So they make mistakes in writing prose and poetry, though some of them are well-educated.' From this I realize that, in the olden times, people whole-heartedly studied even non-Buddhist books."

(8) Again, my master said, "The late Bishop Kōin<sup>8</sup> said, 'A Bodhi-seeking mentality means that we keep in mind the Tendai doctrine.'<sup>9</sup> A single remembrance enfolds 3,000 things and the like. Those who walk about mechanically in priestly robes with bamboo hats hanging around their necks are said to be possessed by a *tengu* (a long-nosed goblin) or a devil and the like.'"

(9) In an evening talk my master said, "The late Bishop Eisai used to say, 'You monks must realize that not a single article of your food or clothes has been given by me but by heavenly deities. I am only their middleman. You are each endowed with the amount of food and clothing needed all your life. So you must not seek an excessive amount, nor think it is my beneficence to you.' I think this is a most excellent speech."

(10) In the Great Sung at the T'ien-t'ung monastery whose chief priest was Abbot Hung-chih<sup>10</sup> there were prepared common necessities for 1,000 monks—700 in the meditation hall, and 300 outside. The rumor that there lived such an excellent



Zen master as Abbot Hung-chih spread all over the country, and there assembled from every part of the country a tremendous number of monks—1,000 in the meditation hall and 500 or 600 outside.

The chiji-priests<sup>11</sup> said to Hung-chih, complainingly, "Common necessities are only sufficient for 1,000 monks, but I am afraid they can't satisfy the wants of so many monks. I beseech you, my Abbot, to let the extra number of monks go somewhere else."

The Abbot replied, "Every monk is naturally endowed with food. Mind your own business. Never give such a sigh."

From this we realize that everyone of us is naturally endowed with food and clothing. They are not such that we can get them because we seek them nor that we cannot get them because we do not. Even laymen leave their food to fate and bear in mind loyalty or filial piety. Still less should monks practice anything but Buddhism. They are endowed with twenty years of favor left by Śākya Buddha and food and clothing offered by heavenly deities. And they are naturally endowed with materials needed in their life even if they do not seek earnestly. Even if they seek and gain money, what would they do if death should come to them? So Buddhist students should strenuously study Buddhism alone."

(11) On another day a certain man said, "Now is the age of degenerate Buddhism. We are in Japan far from India where Śākya Buddha was born. In this condition the most effective way, I think, to advance Buddhism is for us to practice the Way in a calm and silent place, free from the trouble of securing food and clothing."

"Now in my opinion that is a mistake. A true Bodhi-seeker cannot be found among monks who are attached to dualistic and egoistic views. If there gather people, however large in number, desirous of profit and money, it will be much

worse than no gathering of followers. They have no mind to study Buddhism for they have done many evil deeds causing them to fall into the three evil worlds. While we study the Way, leading a poor and hard life by begging or eating berries and nuts, someone will come to us for Buddhism. Then we shall find ourselves true Bodhi-seekers and hasten the progress of Buddhism. Suppose there are no followers of the Way owing to hardships and poverty, or suppose there is a big stock of food and clothing and a gathering of many people but no practice of true Buddhism. In this case there is no gap between the two in uselessness."

(12) Again my master said, "Nowadays most people think that making Buddha-images or building stūpas is an index of the rise of Buddhism. This is also quite wrong. No superb house commanding a fine view and decorated with jewels or gold leaf can be a medium of our enlightenment. There is only the sense of happiness that laymen receive when they have done beneficial deeds by introducing their riches into the Buddha-world. Such good deeds, whether they are small or great, may cause laymen to get a great effect, but it is not the case with monks. It has nothing to do with the rise of Buddhism. We must think of the Buddha's words and practice Zazen even for a while in a humble cottage or under a tree; and Buddhism will really rise. In order to build a meditation hall I am now soliciting benefactors for contributions to the best of my ability. But I don't necessarily think that this will contribute to the rise of Buddhism. Not having many trainees and much to do, I am now idling away my time. Therefore, I would like to do more active work so that this hall may help deluded people to have contact with Buddhism, and the present Buddhist trainees to practice Zazen. Even if my plan is not realized, I will not be sorry. If I can only set up a single pillar it will remind my descendants of my unattained hope. But I don't care about

this at all."

(13) A certain monk advised my master to go to the Kanto District in ordre to spread Buddhism there. My master said, "That is wrong. Those who earnestly seek Buddhism will come to me over mountains and even the ocean, while those lacking in this mind will not listen to me, however earnestly I may try to teach them. Am I to go there to bewilder others or to seek property? If so, that will only tire my body. It is not necessary for me to go there."

(14) On another day my master said, "The followers of the Way must not read books whether Buddhist works or not. They can, if necessary, read the analect of Zen masters. They should, however, leave other books unread for the time being. Today Zen monks are fond of literary pursuits in order to write Buddhist verse or teachings. This is wrong. Rather without worrying about the literary quality they should express their thoughts or describe the teachings of Zen Buddhism. Those so lacking in awakening to the Bodhi spirit as to regard this as wrong and leave it unnoticed will amuse themselves with words and phrases alone and be unable to grasp the truth, however excellent they may be in literary expression. As for me, I have liked to read literary works since childhood and even now I am attracted by the fair words of non-Buddhist books and read the *Monzen* and the like. But I think it is quite useless. So I am thinking of giving it up decidedly."

(15) One day my master said, "During my stay in the Sung country it happened that in a room where I was reading an analect of ancient Zen masters a certain monk—a true Bodhi-seeker—from Shi-chuan<sup>13</sup> said to me, 'What is the use of your reading the analect?'

I replied, 'In order to learn about the deeds of ancient Zen

masters.'

'What is the use of doing so?'

'For the salvation of my native people.'

'What for, then?'

'For the benefit of all creatures.'

'What for, after all?'

Later, after careful consideration of all this, I reached the following conclusion: it is, after all, useless for disciplining myself and leading others that I should know of the deeds of ancient Zen masters through their analects or *kōans*<sup>13</sup> and tell deluded people about the truth of it. If I devote myself to Zazen and become enlightened, I shall afterwards find no difficulty in delivering the Teachings to others even if I am not acquainted with a single Chinese character. From this comes the monk's question 'What for, after all?' Convinced of this truth, I gave up reading the analects of Zen masters and devoted myself to the practice of Zazen, till I grasped the core of Buddhism."

(16) In an evening talk my master said, "Without true inner virtue we should not be respected by others. In our country people often respect others not for their inner virtue but for their overt goodness; and consequently monks lacking in earnest desire for Bodhi often fall into evil ways and become the followers of devils. It is easy for us to be respected by others only for our looks. We wilfully pretend to renounce our body and leave the world. It is a temporary and superficial way. It is a true Bodhi-seeker who looks like a commoner and tries to control his deluded mind unnoticed.

"Therefore, an ancient man said, 'Within empty, without obedient to others.' This means that we are unselfish within and that we are obedient to others without. Entirely free from attachment to our body and mind, we must practice Buddhism following the Buddha's regulations, and it will be good for our



body and mind at present and in the future.

"It is wrong to give up what we should not do only because Buddhism tells us to give up our body and leave the world. Here in Japan some would-be priests or Bodhi-seekers recklessly behave themselves in an ill-mannered way or nonchalant way, saying, 'We have renounced our body to Buddhism.' And they walk about wet in the rain, announcing themselves above worldly feelings. Such behavior is nonsense both in action and mentality. But worldly people rashly respect monks of this sort, regarding them as honorable and free from worldly feelings, while they coldly neglect a monk who observes the Buddha's precepts and knows the way of the commandments, and acts according to the Buddha's regulations in his own practice and through altruistic deeds. They regard him as seeking fame and profit. But he himself is identified with Buddhism and can grasp virtues in body and mind."

(17) In an evening talk my master said, "It is useless that the Buddhist followers are known as wise or learned. We must teach even a single monk, so long as he is a true Bodhi-seeker, the way of the Buddhas and Patriarchs with which we are acquainted. Even to a man who once tried to kill us we must tell the truth without bearing a grudge against him, if he sincerely asks us to do so. Apart from this we must never pretend to know the definite and esoteric teachings, or Buddhist and non-Buddhist books. If asked about them, we may safely say that we are ignorant of them. On the contrary, however, if we study extensively, or pretend to know, not only Buddhist and non-Buddhist books but also various worldly affairs for fear of being considered wrong or ignorant and in the hope of obtaining further knowledge, nothing could be more wrong. It is really useless to the study of the Way. On the other hand, it is also wrong that we pretend to be ignorant in spite of our knowledge, because such a negligent air is somehow disgusting and demean-

ing enough to make others unhappy. Ignorance from the first is the best. When a child, I was fond of reading non-Buddhist books. Later till I went to China and transmitted the Way to Japan I read many books, Buddhist and non-Buddhist, and became acquainted with certain Chinese dialects. This has been a matter of importance and necessity, especially for conducting worldly matters. In fact it has been such an important subject that lay people regarded it as unusual. But now when I really think it over, I find it an obstacle to the practice of the Way. In reading a venerable sūtra, if we try to realize gradually what it tells us, we shall be able to grasp the truth. But in seeing a sentence we are firstly interested in couplets, rhymes or meters, secondly regard its expression as skilful or unskilful, and lastly try to grasp its meaning. In this case it is better to try to grasp the meaning of a sentence from the start than to worry about the manner of expression used in it. In writing Buddhist teachings, we try to compose them according to the rules of grammar and are embarrassed in arranging rhymes and meters. All this is extraneous and a sin.

"We must try to express what we think right frankly, regardless of the words or style. Even if those in the coming generation consider these poor, it is sufficient for the Way if only we can make ourselves understood. Such is also the case with other talents and learning.

"The late Kū-Amidabutsu<sup>14</sup> on Mt. Kōya, I am told, was once an excellent priest acquainted with the definite and esoteric teachings. After giving up these teachings he joined the Nembutsu sect.<sup>15</sup> Later when a priest of the Shingon sect came to him and asked him about the esoteric teachings, he answered, 'I have forgotten them all. I remember not a word of them.' This is the very example of a true Bodhi-seeking mind. Such ignorance shown by such an excellent priest! How can it be true? Yet he uttered nothing, believing it of no use. I believe it right that he did so on the very day when he began to chant

Amitabha's name whole-heartedly. Now Buddhist followers should also embrace this frame of mind. They should give up their knowledge, if any, of the sects. Still less should they want to have more knowledge of them. A true follower must not read even the sayings of Zen masters. Such is also the case with other books."

(18) In an evening talk my master said, "Now in Japan most monks know right from wrong in actions and speech, and are mindful of their worldly reputation—expecting that they may win public praise by this act or fall into public disfavor by that—and further of the result of their deeds in the future. All this is wrong. The world's criticism is not always right. Regardless of the world's criticism, such as regarding us as mad, we should lead our lives, doing what we think identified with the Way and not doing what we think not. Then any opinions of worldly people are nothing to us."

"To leave the world is to be free from the world's opinions. Only studying the deeds of the Buddhas and Patriarchs or the compassion of Bodhisattvas and bearing in mind that our wrong deeds are seen (unknown to us) by heavenly deities, we must discipline ourselves according to the Buddha's regulations. Then no world's criticism will cause us suffering. But it is also wrong that, not caring about others' criticism, we should be given to self-indulgence and shamelessly do wrong. We should only discipline ourselves according to Buddhism, regardless of public reputation. In Buddhism such self-indulgence and unshameful deeds are strictly prohibited."

(19) My master said at another time, "Even worldly etiquette tells us that whether in secret places or in dark rooms, when we change our dress, sit or lie down, we must be careful to cover our private parts. If we don't do so, we are properly condemned as ill-mannered. It is impolite behavior unshameful of



the criticism of heavenly deities and demons. We should cover the parts of our body which should be covered and be ashamed of shameful deeds as if they were seen by the public. The same can also be said of the Buddha's precepts. Hence, Buddhist followers must not do wrong even out of sight but bear in mind the Buddha's regulations whether in or out of the house and whether in the light or in the dark."

(20) One day a follower of the Way said to my master, "I have given myself up to the hard training of the Way for many years, but I cannot get enlightenment. Most ancient persons say, 'To grasp the Way we need no help from quick-wittedness, great wisdom, sense or cleverness.' So I think I need not humble myself on account of stupid quality and poor ability. If there is any traditional teaching about this, please tell me."

My master said, "You are right. To get the enlightenment of the Way we need no sense, talents, great wisdom or quick-wittedness. This is the true practice of the Way. But some have an erroneous idea of this and advise others to be like the blind, deaf and foolish. Of course, this idea is wrong. The practice of the Way thus needs no wide learning or excellent talents, so we should not dislike others on account of this stupidity or poor ability. True practice of the Way is easy to undertake.

"Even in the Zen monasteries of the Great Sung, among hundreds and thousands of monks under the guidance of a Zen master, only one or two are acquainted with the Way. Hence, it is natural that there should be some traditional teachings. When I think of this now, I think it depends upon our earnest desire for the Bodhi spirit whether or not we can become enlightened. I have never heard of a man who failed to get enlightenment when possessing an earnest desire for the Bodhi spirit and the practice of the Way. To this end we must devote ourselves to whatever we try, and should advance our own



practice of the Way. After all, we should practice the following:

First of all we must be earnest and whole-hearted in our desire for the Way. For example, a man who is always eager to steal valuable treasures or to beat a strong enemy, or seduce a lady of high rank is always concerned about the object and watches for an unguarded moment under whatever circumstances and throughout his daily actions. His wishes will certainly be granted if he is extremely earnest for it. So long as we are very earnest in our desire for the Way, when we simply do Zazen, read the *kōan* of ancient Zen masters, meet with a master or practice the Way seriously, we can achieve our object, however high it exists, and grasp it, however deep it may be. Without this earnest desire, how can we become detached from the transmigration of birth and death in the moment of getting enlightenment? With such a desire we will never fail to become enlightened whether we are dull or poor in quality or stupid or wicked.

Secondly, we should think earnestly that all is vanity. This idea surely excites our Bodhi-seeking mind. The uncertainty of all things should not be realized by the simple and temporary ways of grasping the truth of all things,<sup>16</sup> nor by a visionary idea. This is indeed a bare fact before us. For realization we need not depend upon teachings, passages of a sacred sūtra or the way of becoming enlightened. Some are born in the morning and die in the evening; a man whom we saw yesterday is gone today. We often see and hear of others who are ruled by this fact of transience. Reflecting upon my own lot in turn, I realize that although I might live to be seventy or eighty years old, I am doomed to death. Based on this regulation, pleasure and sorrow, kindness and affection, spite and hostility can be, when rightly taken, managed by any means. So we should believe in the Way and seek the true pleasure of enlightenment. Still more should a man who is old in age or who has passed half of his life, be strenuous in the practice of the Way, his days being numbered.

But even this way of thinking is too easy-going. Really even today and at this moment we must think of worldly affairs and the Way like this. Tonight or tomorrow we may be taken ill so seriously and agonizingly that we shall become unconscious of our destination or die suddenly, hated by demons or killed by robbers or sworn enemies. Our life is really transient and the length of our life is quite uncertain. How stupid it is in this transient and uncertain life to idle our time away, vainly expecting to live long and worrying about our way of living and, moreover, bearing others malice!

"It is quite true that life is uncertain. The Buddha taught it to all deluded people, and the Patriarchs also did so in their sermons and teachings. Nowadays when a master delivers a sermon in the lecture hall or trainees request his sermon, they say, 'Here today, gone tomorrow. The matter of life and death is vital to us.' We must repeatedly reflect on it and devote ourselves to the practice of the Way. We should never idle our time away, mindful of this day and this moment alone. Then we shall find all the practice of the Way quite easy. It is out of the question whether we are good or poor by nature and in capacity."

(21) In an evening talk my master said, "Most people are reluctant to leave the world. They may seem to think much of their body, but in fact they make nothing of their true body. For they are lacking in deep thought, and have never seen an excellent Zen master. As for benefits and offerings, we should seek for the benefits of eternal pleasures and offerings given by the dragon-deities and other heavenly ones; as for fame, when we win the names of the Buddhas and Patriarchs or ancient virtuous masters, wise men in future generations will not fail to respect us."

(22) In an evening talk my master said, "An ancient person

said, I hear the truth in the morning and may die calmly in the evening.' Now Buddhist followers should also have this frame of mind. After the vain repetition of birth and death through long time of existence we are born here in human body, blessed with a good chance to know about Buddhism. In what other existence can we become enlightened except in this life? We shall find it impossible to live as long as we wish even if we hold our lives dear so as to preserve them long. Abandonment of our transient life to Buddhism, however momentary or temporary, will lead us to eternal happiness some day. How regrettable it is that we should idle our time away, attached to tomorrow's living and the future so deeply that we cannot leave the world as we should do or practice the Way as we ought to! Dare to die of hunger or cold if you cannot make tomorrow's livelihood. First of all you must have such a resolute intention that you will gladly die according to the Buddha's will if you can hear the Way today. With this intention you can surely practice and realize the Way.

"Without this intention even a man who seems to have renounced the world and followed the Way is still apt to be irresolute. Even in the course of long time of existence we shall find ourselves unable to become enlightened, so long as we practice Buddhism, worry about summer or winter clothing and our way of living for tomorrow or the next year. There may be a man like this who can get enlightenment but, so far as I know, no Buddhas and Patriarchs have ever told that it is right."

(23) In an evening talk my master said, "Buddhist followers should think that man is mortal. Death is a matter of course. Apart from this idea of death, we must, first of all, try not to idle our time away but lead a significant life. We must realize nothing is more important than the deeds of the Buddhas and Patriarchs; all other things are useless to us."



(24) One day I asked my master, "If Zen monks mend their worn-out robes, instead of casting them away, they seem to be stingy and greedy. If they wear new ones instead of old ones, they seem greedy for new goods. In both ways they are wrong. What should they do after all?"

My master said, "They must give up greed and stinginess, and they<sup>17</sup> will not be wrong whichever way they act. They should mend their worn-out robes and wear them as long as they can without any desire for new ones."

(25) In an evening talk I asked, "Do monks have to return the beneficence of parents?"

My master answered, "Filial piety is the most important thing. But the filial piety of monks is different from that of laymen. Laymen, as it is said, should serve parents during their lifetime and after their death, according to the teachings of the Book of Filial Piety.<sup>18</sup> On the contrary, however, we monks follow the Way, setting aside our parents' beneficence. So the object of our gratitude is not only our parents but also all creatures. Thinking that all creatures are as beneficent as our parents, we must be merciful towards all of them. If we are grateful to our parents alone in this life, we shall go against the Way. It is true filial piety that we should practice the Way alone every day and every moment. Laymen habitually hold a memorial service for their parents every one week for 49 days after their parents' death on the anniversaries.

"From the Buddhist point of view we monks should realize that our parents' beneficence is deep. This is also the case with all other debts of gratitude. It is against the Buddha's will that we should hold a memorial service for one day alone and especially for a single person. The 'Bodhisattva Precepts' sūtra says that one should invite a monk to hold a memorial service for one's dead parents, brothers and sisters. This is a primarily applicable to laymen alone. In the Zen monasteries of Great



Sung monks hold a memorial service for their dead master on the anniversaries of his death, but seem not to do so for their parents."

(26) One day my master said, "It is before we awaken to the Bodhi spirit that we are said to be wise or foolish. When one falls off a horse, many ideas go through one's mind before one reaches the ground. When such a serious thing as injury or death happens to us, everyone of us, wise or foolish, will turn it over in this mind. So, prepared for the worst at every moment, we must assiduously try to practice the Way as if we had met with an unexpected thing, and in so doing we will never fail to reach enlightenment. Those who are stupid but earnest for the Bodhi spirit can become enlightened sooner than those endowed with common sense or eloquence. In the Tathāgata's lifetime Cūḍapāṇthaka could hardly recite even a stave of verse, but owing to his earnest desire for the Bodhi spirit, he became enlightened in the 90 days<sup>19</sup> of summer practice. Only in this moment does our life exist. Desirous of becoming enlightened before death, we must practice Buddhism, and everyone of us will attain his objective."

(27) In an evening talk my master said, "In the Zen monastery of Great Sung monks separated good rice and barley from bad for the meal.

"About this a Zen master said, 'Even if you should break your head to pieces, you must not sift good rice and barley from bad.' Versifying this, he warned his monks against such a wrong deed.

"This means that monks should not separate good food from bad, but agreeably eat the food whether it is good or bad. Having only alms given by pious patrons or food prepared in the temple, we have only to prevent us from starving and to practice the Way. We monks should not separate good food

from bad merely on account of its flavour. Now my monks should keep this in mind, too."

(28) One day I asked, "If Buddhist followers, from deep belief in the words 'We ourselves are Buddhism and so we need not seek it outside of ourselves,' give up their past practice and study and wilfully pass their lives, both virtuously and viciously, what do you think about this?"

My master answered, "this shows a great difference between words and truth. If, under the pretext that we need not seek Buddhism outside of ourselves, we are idle in the physical or mental discipline of Buddhism, we seek for something by neglecting it. But by that I do not mean that we should never seek the Bodhi spirit. Realizing that practice and study are originally Buddhism itself, we should refrain, without seeking anything, from doing wrong or participating in worldly affairs even if we wish to. And never detesting the tedium of our discipline in the Way, we should practice the Way whole-heartedly. We may sometimes get its fruits, but we should go on practising free from the idea of getting anything. This is the true meaning of the above sayings that we need not seek after Buddhism outside of ourselves.

"Nan-yüeh<sup>20</sup> polished a tile in the presence of his disciple Ma-tsu<sup>21</sup> and said, 'I will polish this until it becomes a mirror.' By this remark he meant to warn Ma-tsu against his desire to become the Buddha by practising Zazen, not to dissuade him from practising Zazen.

"To practice Zazen is to do the Buddha's deed—the absolute deed—nay, the appearance of the true self. Where are we to seek the Way except this Zazen?"

(29) One day when delivering a requested sermon my master said, "Today most monks usually insist on following worldly customs. In my belief, that is not right. Even the wise in the

world hate to follow worldly customs, regarding them as defiled. For example, Chu-yüan<sup>22</sup> never followed worldly customs, saying, 'The whole world is occupied with wrong ideas but I alone am right,' and finally drowned himself in a river.

"Still more is there a great deal of difference between the manners and customs of the priesthood and those of laymen. Laymen grow their hair, monks shave their heads: the former takes a number of meals a day, the latter one meal only. There is such a great difference between the two. But these different customs of monks' will someday lead them to the greatest happiness. Hence, monks are different from laymen in every way."

(30) One day my master said, "When everyone from the emperor down to his people does his best in his own post, the whole country is peaceful. When the incompetent are in a post, we say, 'They disturb heaven's will.' When the government is one with the will of Heaven, the world is calm and the people are peaceful. Hence, the emperor usually gets up about one o'clock in the morning, regarding it as the time for government. It is not easy. Buddhism is only different in the occupation and type of work. When the emperor thinks of the welfare of the government, follows the regulations of former ages, searches out meritorious retainers, and consequently his government is one with the will of Heaven, we call this country a peaceful one. Otherwise, his government is against the will of Heaven and will lead his whole country and its people to great confusion and sufferings.

"The emperor, feudal lords, chief officers, warriors, or common people all have their own posts. If they pursue them earnestly, they are called competent persons. If not, they incur the wrath of Heaven for going against the will of heavenly deities.

Hence, Buddhist followers must not think of relaxing themselves even for a moment merely because they have left the



world or their homes. At first idle deeds may seem to bring benefit, but they will do great damage afterwards. We monks should completely pursue our own way, following the way of monks.

"Really, a worldly government is naturally performed according to current regulations because they have no clear rules or regulations transmitted by ancient sages or persons. But Buddha's disciples now have clear ancient regulations or teachings, and also Zen masters who have inherited them from their former masters. If, to my thinking, we bear the former regulations in mind in each of the four actions—walking, stopping, sitting and lying—and practice the Way according to our seniors, we shall never fail to get enlightenment. Laymen wish to be one with the will of Heaven, while monks with that of the Buddha. In pursuing the Way both laymen and monks are alike, but monks are much more excellent in grasping fruits. So once we have got the Buddha-fruit, we shall never lose it forever. To enjoy great happiness Buddhist followers must inflict pains on their transient body and follow the Buddha's will. It solely depends upon their will whether they can attain this purpose.

"But Buddhism never advises its followers to mortify the flesh blindly or perform the impossible. If we follow the Buddha's precepts, we shall find ourselves comfortable, and also our calm manner will make lookers-on comfortable. With this in mind we must try to cast away a freakish and selfish view of pleasure and follow the Buddhas's precepts whole-heartedly."

(31) On another day my master said, "When I was staying at a Zen temple on Mt. T'ien-t'ung in Sung China, the chief priest Jü-tsung used to practice Zazen till 11:00 at night and from 2:40 or 3:00 in the morning. With him I also practiced Zazen in the meditation hall without a night's negligence. During that time many monks were apt to fall asleep on their cushion. He often went round the raised floor and struck the sleeping monks



with his fist or a wooden clog in order to put them to shame and rouse them out of their sleep. When they still remained sleepy, he used to go to the *shōdo*,<sup>23</sup> toll a bell, call in his serving monk to light a candle, and give a sudden sermon to them all:

‘What is the use of sleeping so idly while you are sitting in this meditation hall! What was the purpose of leaving home and joining the priesthood? What emperors or officers in the world lead such lives? The emperor administers the affairs of state; subjects are loyal to their lord; common people cultivate their farms with their hoes. Who of them lead idle lives? Now you have left this hard work and are in this Zen monastery. What is the use of idling your time away? The matter of life and death is vital to you, and you should not forget the sayings ‘What is here today is gone tomorrow.’ This is a common saying of Buddhist philosophers and Zen monks. You may die this evening or tomorrow morning. You may be taken ill. How stupid to idle your time away sleeping, not practicing Buddhism in this temporary life! The decline of Buddhism is due to this. In the days when Buddhism was at its height all over the country, monks in Zen monasteries devoted themselves to the practice of Zazen; while in these days when there are no masters who are advocating the practice of Zazen anywhere, we see only the decline of Buddhism.’

“In this way he advised his trainees to do Zazen. I was an eyewitness of this. The present-day trainees of the Way should aspire to the way of his discipline.”

One day an attendant priest who served near him said, “Some monks in the meditation hall are apt to sleep owing to fatigue; some will certainly become ill or lose their desire for the Way. I am afraid this is because the time for Zazen is too long. I hope you will reduce the time for Zazen.

“On hearing this, the master became greatly concerned and said, ‘That is quite wrong. When monks in the meditation hall are lacking in the Bodhi spirit, they will sleep whenever they

get a chance to; while earnest Bodhi-seekers will train themselves the harder, the longer the Zazen period is. When I was young and visited Zen masters all over the country, one of them advised me to lead trainees severely, saying, 'While young, I struck sleeping followers so hard that I felt my fist about to break off, but now I am too old and weak to do so. So there appear no more excellent priests. Also other Zen masters in all parts of the country are lenient in advising followers to do Zazen. From this comes the decline of Buddhism.' So I must strike them harder and harder."

(32) On another day my master said, "By which can we become enlightened, body or mind? Buddhist philosophers often say, 'There is no gap between body and mind,' or 'We grasp the Way by our body, because body and mind are all the same.' Yet they never say specifically, 'We can grasp the Way through our body alone.' Now in Zen Buddhism we become enlightened by our body and mind. So long as we wish to grasp Buddhism by our mind alone, we shall find ourselves unable to do so even during a countless number of rebirths. When we renounce this conceptional mind and lay down discretion and knowledge, we can grasp the Way. It was through their body that Ling-yun<sup>24</sup> became enlightened by seeing peach-blossoms and that Hsiang-yen did so by hearing the sound of a stone hitting a bamboo.

"So if we devote ourselves to the practice of Zazen, free from discrimination or knowledge, we shall grasp the Way. So it is through our body without fail that we get enlightened. This is why I advise you trainees to devote yourselves to the practice of Zazen."

# Notes:

- 1) Buddha. Bhaisajyaguru Buddha. Said to have made 12 vows to cure all creatures of their sickness and delusion.
- 2) Jētavana monastery. Built by Sudatta, a rich man in Śrāvasti State, for Śākya Buddha and His disciples.
- 3) Tai-tsung (598-649). Called Li-shih-min. He was the second prince of the Emperor Kao-tsu and was known as an emperor of virtue.
- 4) Wei-cheng (580-643). A wise vassal of the Emperor Tai-tsung. He composed the book of history.
- 5) Wên-ti (541-604). The first emperor of the Sui dynasty. He governed his country well for 24 years.
- 6) The three countries. India, China and Japan.
- 7) Minamoto-Akikane ( -1215). A lay priest, which means a man dressed in a priest's robe but staying at his own home.
- 8) Bishop Kōin ( -1216). The chief monk of the Onjōji temple at Ōtsu city. Afterwards he entered the Nembutsu sect founded by Rev. Hōnen and died at the age of 72.
- 9) The Tendai doctrine. The doctrine of the Tendai sect the founder of which was Chih-chi (538-597) and the primary sūtra of which is the Saddharmapundarika-sūtra.
- 10) Hung-chih (1091-1157). A high priest whose fame is associated with that of Tai-hui (1089-1163) of the Rinzai sect in China. The Analect of Hung-chih is composed of his sayings.
- 11) Chiji-priests. Six senior priests in charge of temple affairs.
- 12) Shi-chuan. Located in the south-west part of Chnai.
- 13) Kōan. The 1,700 Buddhist truths delivered by Zen masters.
- 14) Kū Amidabutsu (1142-1224). Formerly a priest of the Shingon sect, later devoted himself to the *Nembutsu* (chanting Amitābha Buddha's name) sect of Rev. Hōnen.
- 15) The Nembutsu sect. Sect of chanting Amitābha's name wholeheartedly.
- 16) The simple and temporary way of grasping the truth of all things. To practice meditation and realize that our mind is transient, our sensation is suffering, all things are vanity and our body is impure.
- 17) To mend and wear a worn-out robe or wear a new one.
- 18) The Book of Filial Piety (Hsiao-ching) I vol. Said to be the sayings on filial piety that Confucius showed his disciple

Tseng-san.

- 19) 90 days of summer practice. In the period from April 16 to July 15 monks are ordained to practice the Way in a Zen monastery, being strictly prohibited from leaving the monastery.
- 20) Nan-yüeh Huai-jang (677-744). A Buddhist heir to Hui-nêng (638-714). His fame is associated with that of Ch'ing-yuan (—740). The story that Nan-yüeh polished a tile in the presence of Ma-tsu is:—

Nan-yüeh, finding Ma-tsu to be excellent in his understanding of Buddhism, went to him and said, 'What do you practice Zazen for?' Ma-tsu said, 'For becoming a Buddha.' Then Nan-yüeh took up a tile and began to polish it on a stone in front of a hermitage. Ma-tsu said, 'What are you doing?' Ma-tsu said, 'I'll polish the tile into a mirror.' Ma-tsu said, 'How can you polish it into a mirror?' Nan-yüeh said, 'How can you become the Buddha by doing Zazen?'

- 21) Ma-tsu Tai-i (707-786). A Buddhist heir to Nan-yüeh.
- 22) Chü-yüan (b.c. 343-285). A noble man in Ch'u State. He tried to regain the former prosperity of his father-land in vain. Finally he drowned himself in the Mi River. Said to have been the oldest poet in China.
- 23) *Shōdō*. A hall in the rear of the meditation hall. It has a skylight to admit the light, from which comes the name '*shōdō*' (bright hall). Here a head-ranking priest delivers a sermon in place of his master.
- 24) Ling-yun Hsiang-yen. Disciples of Kuei-shan (771-853).



(1) My master said, "Buddhist followers should devote their body and mind to the Way. An ancient priest said, 'How can we go a step further above the top of a 100-foot pole?' When most of us go up to the top of a high pole, we are apt to hold on fast to it for fear that should we let go off it with our legs we would fall to death. As we daringly cast away our lives then with the idea that this further advance will not be harmful to us, so we must flatly give up worldly affairs and also our way of living. So long as we remain attached to these, we cannot become enlightened, however hard we may try to study the Way. Just venture to give up body and mind!"

(2) One day a certain nun said, "Even laywomen and the like are strenuous in the study of Buddhism. Compared to these, a woman who has shaven her head and become a nun even though she may have some faults certainly can be thought to be in accordance with the Way. What do you think about this?"

My master said, "That is not right. Indeed, laywomen may become enlightened by studying Buddhism as laywomen, but we recluses cannot become so without an unworldly mind; Buddhism does not discriminate against anyone, but some refuse to accept Buddhism. The mind of monks is different from that of laymen. Laymen with a monk's mind can leave delusion, while monks with a layman's mind make a double mistake. Monks should be greatly different from laymen in aspiration for the Way. The Way is not difficult to practice, but it is difficult to do so well. Every one seems to try to practice the Way and become enlightened, but very few really do so well. The matter of life and death is important. All things change too quickly. Never be idle. Once we have renounced the world, we should really do so. We must by no means be contented with perfunctory renunciation."

(3) In an evening talk my master said, "Now when I observe the world, I find those who are fortunate or have revived their ruined families are all honest and kind to others. Hence, they keep their families well, and their children and children's children also enjoy great prosperity. On the contrary, however, those who are wicked and unkind to others are in the end unlucky, though temporarily they seem to be lucky and to keep their family well. Even if they lead a fortunate life during their lifetime, their posterity does not necessarily enjoy prosperity.

"To do good in expectation of making another person happy and finding favour with him is better than to do harm to him, but it is not really good for him, because it is done with a selfish idea. A really good man does good unnoticed for the benefit of others, irrespective of specified persons, in the future as well as at present. Zen monks should have an even more exalted mind. When they think of all creatures, they should not distinguish 'familiar' from 'strange' but have a mind to help them equally, free from their own benefit, worldly and unworldly, and must try to do good devotedly for others, regardless of their notice and pleasure and trying to keep even this mind of their own secret to others.

"The key to this way of life is first of all to renounce the world and our body. Then we need not be anxious about public reputation. But, nevertheless, it is also against the Buddha's will that we wilfully do wrong, irrespective of public reputation. The best way to give up self-attachment is only to do good for others and to act altruistically without any expectation of rewards or fame.

"In so doing, we must first of all awaken to the fact that all is vanity; life is like an empty dream; time flies like an arrow; our life is transient as a dew-drop and easy to lose; time and tide wait for no man. Therefore, we should try to act in accordance with the Way, and do good, however small, for others even for a short span of time."

(4) In an evening talk my master said, "Buddhist followers live in extreme poverty. On viewing the world, I find the rich in the world cannot help suffering from anger and shame. If we have riches, others intend to deprive us of them and we, on our part, try not to be deprived of them. Then we and others will soon get angry with each other or argue hotly and confront each other, till we come to a struggle. Meanwhile we get angry and disgrace ourselves. When we are poor and ungreedy, we are out of this danger, being happy and free from cares. We can see clear proof of this under our noses. We need not search for it in a sūtra. Moreover, ancient sages and wise men reproached men for saving up riches; and heavenly deities, Buddhas and Patriarchs also regarded it as shameful. So it is extremely shameful that a foolish man saves up riches and gets very angry when he is robbed of them. An earnest desire for the Way in extreme poverty was respected by the ancient wise men and sages; and admired by the Buddhas and Patriarchs.

"It is an obvious fact that Buddhism is now on the decline. I witnessed that there had been gradual changes between the first time I entered the Kennin-ji temple<sup>1</sup> and the next time I entered it again seven or eight years later; every room of the temple was equipped with a lacquered case; every monk had his own furniture, liked fine clothes, saved treasure, loved to utter licentious words; neglected the manners of salutation and worship. From this I can easily imagine the condition of other temples. The students of the Way are permitted to have nothing but robes and a bowl as treasures. What do they have such a lacquered case for? We should not have so much treasure that we must hide it from others. They try to do so for fear that a robber may steal it! Let us give it up, and we shall find our lives so much the easier. When we are afraid of being killed by others, not of killing them, we shall feel tired in body and worried in mind. But when we decided not to kill others even if we are in danger of being killed, we shall be free from worries.



The same can also be said of robbery. Then we can live at ease all the time."

(5) One day my master said, "When Abbot Hai-mên<sup>2</sup> was in charge of T'ien-t'ung monastery in China, there was a high ranking priest named Yüan among his disciples. He was acquainted with Buddhism and was also enlightened. In the practice of the Way he was more excellent than his master Hai-mên.

"One evening he went to his master's room, burned some incense and humbly bowed, saying, 'I beseech you, venerable sir, to allow me to become Hou-tang Shou-tsu<sup>3</sup>?' On hearing this, his master shed tears, saying, 'I have never heard such a request as you made for promotion since I was a young monk. It is a great mistake that you, a Zazen trainee, should wish for chief-monk or shou-tsu. Your enlightenment is indeed beyond mine and yet you ask for this position so earnestly. Do you want to be promoted? If you want to, I'll give you both Chien-tang<sup>4</sup> and the position of chief-monk. But your heart is truly contemptible. From this request I can also easily imagine the hearts of other deluded monks and realize that Buddhism is on the decline."

Ashamed of his own proposal, Yüan renounced it. However, at last he was appointed Hou-tang Shou-tsu. Later he wrote down the words of his master, disgracing himself and glorifying the excellent words of his master. Now when I think of this story, I realize that our predecessors regarded it as shameful that monks want to be promoted and become chief-priests or senior priests. A Zen priest should seek nothing but the grasp of the Way."

(6) One night my master taught, "The Emperor Tai-tsung<sup>5</sup> of the Tang dynasty lived in an old palace after ascending the throne. The old palace was in such bad repair that the dampish



air or the cold wind and mist were admitted into the room and threatening to injure his Majesty's health. When his vassals asked him to build a new palace, the emperor said, "It is now the farming season. If we start to, it will surely be a great trouble to farmers. We had better put it off till autumn. If I am attacked by damp, it is because I am against the will of the earth-deities and if I am beaten by the weather, it is because I am against that of the heavenly deities. Against these deities I cannot keep my health. If I give the people no trouble, I shall naturally be one with these deities. Then they will not injure my health. So saying, the emperor did not allow a new palace to be built and continued living in the old one.

"Thus even a layman held his people dearer than himself; still more should we Buddhists love all creatures as we would do our own son, following the Buddha's way. 'We must not scold or trouble any attendant priests merely because they are our followers. Still more should we respect fellow-monks or senior virtuous priests as we do the Tathāgata, as is clearly written in the precept sūtra. Hence, we Buddhist followers must make no differentiations, such as 'high,' 'low,' 'intimate' or 'alien' in our hearts, but try to do good for others even if they themselves are unaware of our actions. We must try not to trouble others in doing things, serious or trivial.

"In the Tathāgata's lifetime there were many heretics who slandered and hated the Tathāgata. One of his disciples said to Him, 'You are by nature endowed with mildness and compassion. So you ought to be an object of common respect to all creatures. Why are they so disobedient to you?'

"The Buddha said, 'When I led many disciples in the former existence I often scolded them sharply or made them perform the ceremony of confession to remonstrate them for their misconduct. This is why I am now slandered and hated by them.' So says the Vinaya.

"So when we lead monks as their chief-priest we should not

scold them with sharp words to remonstrate them for their misconduct. Even if we remonstrate them with gentle words they will obey us so long as we are right. Still more should Buddhist followers rigidly refrain from scolding others with rough words even if they are relatives or brothers. We should take good care of this."

(7) On another day my master said, "Zen monks must try to follow the deeds of the Buddhas and Patriarchs.

"First of all we must not be covetous of treasure. For the Tathāgata was endowed with immeasurably profound compassion. All his deeds were done only for the benefit of all creatures. He did nothing harmful to them. The reason is as follows:—

Śākya Buddha was the Crown Prince of Cakravartī-rāja,<sup>6</sup> and therefore if he had ascended the throne he could have ruled the whole world as he pleased or presented his disciples with treasures or fed them with his possessions. But he left his throne and practiced begging. Why? He renounced riches and practiced begging like this, because he considered it good for all creatures as well as for the practice of his disciples in the age of degenerate Buddhism. Ever since then all famous and excellent Patriarchs in India and China have practiced begging in honest poverty.

Still more have all Patriarchs advised us not to save riches or treasure. In admiration of this Zen Sect Buddhist philosophers praise us for our poverty and also describe it in their traditional books. I have never heard of rich men who practiced Buddhism. All excellent Buddhists wear the *funzōe*<sup>7</sup> and always practice begging. People have often called Zen Buddhism an excellent sect or considered Zen trainees different from any one else. This is chiefly because, when once staying with monks of other sects in temples of Buddhist philosophy or commandments, Zen trainees gave up their lives for the Way and were

always poor. This is, we should realize first, the way of Zen Buddhism! We need not depend upon the teachings of sacred sūtras. As for me, once I had rice-fields as well as treasure. But, compared with those times, the present time when I have only three robes and a bowl is more comfortable for me. There can be no more positive proof than this."

(8) Again my master spoke, "An ancient person said, 'Unless we are similar to a man we must not talk about his way.' This means that, so long as we remain unlearned and unaware of his virtue, we must not think that such a good man could have such a fault or do such a wrong deed. We should respect him for his virtue and overlook his faults. Therefore, it is said that a virtuous man attaches more importance to virtue than to faults."

(9) One day my master said, "We should do good by stealth, and we shall surely be given visible or invisible benefits. We must respect even the plain Buddha-image made of mud, wood, or clay; respect the sūtras, however poor they may look; take refuge in priests, however sinful, so long as they are in the form of priests. If we piously worship all of these, we shall surely be given happiness in return. If we are impious and impolite to all of them because some monks violated the commandments or sūtras and Buddha-images are poorly made, we shall never fail to undergo punishment. All of them are given by the Buddha's will for the benefit of human and celestial beings. Hence, our respect for them will necessarily bring us benefit, while our unbelief, unhappiness. We should respect the 'Three Treasures' even if they seem extremely unworthy. It is quite wrong that Zen monks wish to do wrong under the pretext that they need not do good nor accumulate virtuous deeds. I have never heard of any old commandment which told monks to love wrong."



"Tan-hsia T'ien-jan<sup>8</sup> burned a wooden Buddha-image to protect himself from the cold. It may seem wrong but it is really a most excellent sermon. According to the record of his manner, he was always cordial in sitting or standing as if before venerable personages. Even in sitting for some time, he used to sit cross-legged and in standing, to clasp his hands palm to palm. He held dear the common property in the temple like his own eye-balls, never failing to praise the monks for their diligence in the Way and valuing good things, however small. Especially he was excellent in the conduct of his daily life. So in writing down his deeds he has been regarded till now as an example to follow in Zen monasteries.

"Besides him, all excellent Zen masters and enlightened Patriarchs, it is said, observed the precepts and led regular lives, making much of a little good. I have never heard of enlightened priests who neglected good deeds.

"Therefore, if the trainees try to follow the way of the Patriarchs they should devote themselves to it, not belittling their good actions. The great Way practiced by the Buddhas and Patriarchs will never fail to bring together many kinds of good. Now that we have fully realized that all things are a manifestation of Buddhism, we must grasp that evils are definitely evils, and far from the way of the Buddhas and Patriarchs; that good is decidedly good and is connected with the Way. If this is so, how is it possible, then, that the 'Three Treasures' are not to be respected?

(10) On another day my master said, "If now you want to, follow the way of the old, enlightened saints and follow the deeds of Patriarchs, free from selfish ideas such as expectation and demand, gain and benefit. However, under the pretext that we should renounce our acquisitive mind and not expect even to attain enlightenment, if we refrain from practicing the Way and continue our former evil actions, we shall be attached



once more to our past acquisitive mind and find ourselves in the old pitfall. Expecting only to make human and celestial beings happy, we should acquit ourselves well as monks, try to help all creatures, do many kinds of good willingly, renounce all past evils, and go on practicing all our life free from the idea that we have done good. Then we shall be freed from delusion. This is compared to breaking up the bottom of a black lacquered tab<sup>9</sup> in an old saying. Such were the deeds of the Buddhas and Patriarchs."

(11) One day when a certain monk came and asked my master about his mental attitude in practicing the Way, my master answered, "Buddhist followers should first be poor. If they have much money, they will surely lose their desire for the practice of the Way. Most lay followers, even if earnest in their practice of the Way, will be affected as well so long as they are still attached to treasure, a fine residence or kinsmen. None of the laymen, even though some of them are excellent, who have hitherto studied the Way are better than monks. Monks have no treasure but three robes and one bowl. Free from any attachment to food, clothing and shelter, monks study the Way single-heartedly. So all of them can enjoy benefits according to their own efforts. They are one with the Way, because they are poor.

"P'ang-kung<sup>10</sup> was a layman but as excellent as a monk in ability. The reason that we can find his name in the history of Zen Buddhism is as follows:—

"When he started to practice the Way he gathered together his treasure and decided to throw it into the sea. Seeing this, a man advised him to give it to others or make use of it for Buddhism. He said to that man, however, "I am going to abandon it, thinking it is harmful to me. How can I give it to others? Riches give pain to our body and mind.' So saying, at last he sank his treasure into the sea.

"Thereafter he led his life, making and selling bamboo baskets, Layman as he was, he was said to be an excellent Zen Buddhist, for he had abandoned his treasure in this way. Still more should we monks simply cast away our possessions."

(12) A monk said, "The Zen monasteries in China are always equipped with common property of the temple and the monks have definite temples in which they may live. It helps monks with Buddhist training materially and saves them from the trouble of making their livelihood. But here in Japan the reverse is the case. Simply abandoning our possessions, I am afraid, will cause all the more confusion to disciples. So I think we had better secure someone to depend on for food and clothing. What do you think about this?"

My master said, "That is wrong. More than the Chinese people the Japanese are apt to make offerings to monks without any reason and give things beyond their means. As for me, I became enlightened in this way: without anything to rely upon or expectation of receiving alms I have passed more than ten years. Fatal is our desire to save a small quantity of things. Possessions enough to sustain our transient life will naturally be ours even if we don't worry about saving them up for the future. Everyone is naturally endowed with food and life by Heaven and Earth whether he seeks them or not. Still more are monks, Buddhist disciples, naturally blessed with the legacy left by the Tathāgata. If we cast away worldly treasure and practice the Way, we shall naturally have no lack of money or things. The proof of this you can see right before your eyes."

(13) Again my master said, "Buddhist followers often say, 'If we do so-and-so, the world will slander us.' This is very wrong. However bitterly the world may slander us, we must follow the way if it is the Way of the Buddhas and Patriarchs or the truth of Buddhism; while, however loud all their praises may

be, we must not follow the way in the opposite case. The reason is as follows:—

Suppose that we follow worldly people, intimate or alien, merely because they admire or slander us. At our death's door when we are going to fall into the evil worlds as the result of our evil actions there is no hope of their saving us.

"If we follow the way of the Buddhas and Patriarchs, regardless of public slander or hatred, we shall really be prohibited by Heavenly deities. Hence, in spite of others' slander, we should not give up the practice of the Way.

"Those who slander or admire us are not always acquainted with the deeds of the Buddhas and Patriarchs, nor are they always enlightened. How can they judge the way of the Buddhas and Patriarchs from the moral point of view of the world? Therefore, we should not yield to worldly opinion but simply follow the Way if we have good reason to do so."

(14) One day a certain monk said, "I have an old mother now. I am her only son. She depends on my support. She loves me very much and I am very dutiful. Therefore I follow worldly affairs and persons; and with their help I can buy food and clothing for her. If I renounce the world and live in a hermitage she cannot live even for a day. But it is also hard for me to remain in worldly circumstances, not daring to enter the unworldly. What truth is there, if any, that in spite of this difficulty I should leave the world and enter the Way?"

My master said, "This is a very difficult problem. But it should not be decided by others. You must think it over and over again yourself. And if you really have the intention to enter the priesthood, you should take every possible means to enable your mother to live in comfort and thereafter yourself to enter the priesthood. Then it will be good for your mother and for you as well. Simple concentration of mind will surely enable you to do anything that you wish. Whether it is a strong



enemy, a woman with whom one is deeply in love or a precious treasure, there will surely appear some way to obtain it if we are really eager to do so. Then with the invisible help of the guardian deities of Heaven and Earth<sup>11</sup> we shall surely be able to attain our object. Hui-nêng<sup>12</sup> lived at Ts'ao-chi monastery. Originally, he was a wood-seller at Shin-chou and supported his mother by selling firewood. It happened that, one day when he heard a customer reading a passage of the 'Diamond-wisdom' sūtras in the street, he suddenly awoke to the Bodhi spirit. When he left his mother and joined Hung-yên<sup>13</sup> at Huang-mêi monastery he was given 10 silver ryō<sup>14</sup> which he appropriated to her living expenses, so I hear. Owing to his earnest desire for the Way, he was, I think, given the money by Heaven. We must think about this carefully. This is quite reasonable.

Indeed, it may be natural and suit you well if you enter the priesthood without any obstacle after your mother's death. But, as you know, death comes to young and old alike. It is not entirely impossible that your old mother might outlive you contrary to what you might usually expect. Then you will regret having been unable to enter the priesthood, while your mother will have committed a crime of not having allowed her son to join the priesthood. Neither of you will be benefited, committing a crime. What do you think about this? If you enter the Way, she may die of hunger. But it will help her to get enlightenment in the next existence on account of the meritorious deed of allowing her only son to enter the priesthood. Indeed, although it is very hard to sever the bonds of affection even in the long time of repeated birth and death, you now have a human body and a good chance to become acquainted with Buddhism. If now you renounce kindness and affection you may be said to be a really grateful person. How then can you not be one with the Buddha's will? If one's son, it is said, becomes a monk one's ancestors in the past seven generations will become enlightened. How can we neglect the source of



eternal happiness, attached to this transient body in our lifetime? We should think this over."

Notes:

- 1) At the age of 15 Dōgen-zenji visited Bishop Eisai of the Kennin-ji temple on the advice of Bishop Kōin.
- 2) Hai-mên. A Buddhist heir to Fu-chao ( —1203) and fellow-trainee of Wu-chi.
- 3) Hou-tang Shou-tsu. An overseer of the rear part of the meditation hall.
- 4) Chien-tang Shou-tsu. An overseer of the front part of the meditation hall.
- 5) Tai-tsung. cf. Note vol. 2, 3.
- 6) Cakravarti-rāja. Said to have been the king who, having 32 fine looks on his body, ruled the whole world.
- 7) *Funzōe*. cf. Note vol. 1, 41.
- 8) Tan-hsia T'ien-jan (739-834). First he learned Confucianism but later entered the Buddhist priesthood and became a Buddhist heir to Shih-t'ou (700-790). The story that he burned a wooden Buddha-image is as follows:—  
Once when there was severe cold weather at the Hui-ling temple, Tan-hsia took out a wooden Buddha-image and burned it. A priest reproached him for his misconduct. Then he said, 'I've done so to pick up the Buddha's bones.' The priest said, 'How can you do so out of a wooden Buddha-image?' He said, 'Then, why do you reproach me so bitterly?'
- 9) A black lacquered tab. So dark that we cannot discern anything in it. Hence it is often likened to delusion.
- 10) P'ang-kung. A man of the T'ang dynasty: a Buddhist heir to Ma-tsu and associated with Shih-t'ou and Tan-hsia.
- 11) Guardian deities of Heaven and Earth. The former is Brahma-deva and Sakra devānam Indra, etc.; the latter is a local deity and 8 dragon-kings, etc.
- 12) Hui-nēng Ta-chien (638-713). A Buddhist heir to Ta-men (602-675). First he made his living by selling fire-wood and later awakened to the Bodhi spirit by hearing a customer chanting one passage of the Diamond-wisdom sūtra in the street and joined Ta-man-zenji and got enlightened after eight months' training.
- 13) Hung-yên. Ta-man.
- 14) *ryō*. Monetary unit.

(1) One day in a sermon my master said, "We students of the Way should not be attached to our own small view-point. Even if we grasp one thing we should think that something may be wrong with it or that there may be some way of improving it. To solve this problem we should visit learned men far and wide or inquire into the sayings of ancient people. Even at this time we should not be attached to their words, because they may be mistaken. With this critical approach we should gradually follow any better view."

(2) Furthermore my master said, "National Teacher Hui-chung of Nan-yang<sup>1</sup> said to an attendant priest of the emperor, 'Where do you come from?'

He said, 'From the southern part of the country.'

'What colour is the grass there?'

'Yellow.'

Then Hui-chung asked a little boy the same question. His answer also was the same. On hearing this, Hui-chung said that even this child could be given a purple robe in the presence of the emperor and precisely tell him about the core of Buddhism. This means that boy can also tell the emperor the true colour of grass as his teacher and that the observation of this priest is not out of the ordinary.

"Later a man did not agree with the words of the national teacher, saying, 'What is the reason for this remark? Both of them tell about the true colour of grass. This priest is indeed a leader.'

"From this story we can realize that we should follow the truth alone, not always following the words of ancient persons. Indeed, doubt may be wrong but it is also wrong to be deeply attached to things unworthy of belief and also to leave things worthy of question unasked."

(3) On another occasion my master said, "The primary requisite for Buddhist followers is to leave self-centeredness. This means we must not be attached to our body. Even if we have mastered the sayings of ancient persons, always do Zazen and our mind is steady fast like iron or stones, yet we shall find it impossible to master the Way of the Buddhas and Patriarchs, even in the long kalpas of repeated birth and death, so long as we are attached to ourselves. This is even more the case with those who are acquainted with any of the teachings, assumed or real,<sup>2</sup> definite or esoteric,<sup>3</sup> but still remain attached to their body. They, so to speak, do not have even half a penny of profit but vainly count others' jewels.

"I pray you, followers, to do Zazen quietly and think carefully whence this body came and whither it will go. Our body and all its members are made by the union of the semen and an ovum of our parents and perish with its last gasp. The corpse is scattered on the fields and mountains and changes into mud in the long run. Is there any body to cling to eternally? Moreover, from the Buddhist point of view, the coming and going of our body depend upon the coming-together and the separating of the six sense-organs, etc.<sup>4</sup> Which of these can be considered to be our body? Indeed Zen Buddhism is different from other sects which rely completely on written Buddhist scriptures, but both of them are the same in that we cannot grasp the beginning and the end of our body—this is what we must know in the practice of the Way. When we are first of all acquainted with this truth we can truly grasp the true Way clearly.

(4) One day my master said, "An ancient person said, 'It is like walking about in a fog or dew to associate with a good man. Even if we never try to wet our robes yet we shall often find them moistened.' This means that while we keep company with a noble man we shall become such a man before we are



aware of it.

"Formerly under the guidance of Abbot Chu-chih,<sup>5</sup> a little boy became enlightened<sup>6</sup> after long attendance on his master though he was not aware of the span of the time of his training.

"If we do Zazen for a long time we shall suddenly grasp the Way and realize that Zazen is the right gate to the Way."

(5) On the night of 30th of December in the second year of Katei,<sup>7</sup> I, Ejō, was the first priest to be accepted as *shuso*<sup>8</sup> of the Kōsyōji temple.<sup>9</sup> That is to say, Dōgen-zenji, following his own sermon in his room, asked me to deliver a sermon. In this way I became the first *shuso* of this temple. His sermon was as follow:—

Now let me tell you how Zen Buddhism has been transmitted down till now. Bodhidharma<sup>10</sup> was the first Patriarch to come to China from India and stay at the Shaoling temple.<sup>11</sup> He waited for a time to spread his teachings, sitting and gazing at the wall. At the end of that year Hui-k'o<sup>12</sup> came to see him to inquire about Buddhism. Finding him an excellent aspirant, Bodhidharma trained Hui-k'o personally. The right Law was transmitted to Hui-k'o with the Buddha's *kesa* (a square-shaped scarf), thither to used as the insignia of enlightenment. Again these two things were transmitted to his disciples. Thus Bodhidharma's followers are found all over the country and true Buddhism is now practiced far and wide.

"In this temple I have received Ejō as the first *shuso* and today allowed him to deliver his first sermon to the monks on my behalf. Never mind that the monks are small in number nor that you are a beginner in the Way. Fêng-yang<sup>13</sup> had only 6 or 7 monks; Yao-shan<sup>14</sup> had less than ten, but both of them followed the Way of the Buddhas and Patriarchs. Therefore, their monasteries were said to be prosperous. Have you ever heard of a Zen master<sup>15</sup> who obtained enlightenment at the sound of a bamboo hit by a stone or a Zen priest<sup>16</sup> who grasped

the truth at the sight of peach-blossoms in full bloom? How are bamboos endowed with 'bright' or 'dull,' delusion or enlightenment? Or how are blossoms endowed with 'shallow' or 'deep' or cleverness or stupidity? True, blossoms open every year but every one who looks at them does not obtain enlightenment; bamboos make sounds when hit by stones but all who hear them do not grasp enlightenment. By virtue of long and painful training in the Way we may grasp Buddhist truth, not because the sound of a bamboo hit by a stone is sharp nor because the colour of bamboos is extremely fine. The delicate sound of a bamboo is not so much made by the bamboo itself as by a stone that happens to hit it. Pretty blossoms come out with the help of the spring wind, not with their own strength. This is also the case with the cause of studying the Way. We are all endowed with the Way but we depend upon the collective strength of all monks who are practicing the Way for its grasp. Clever as we are, we are dependent on them for our training in the Way. We must, therefore, study and seek the Way whole-heartedly and earnestly. Just as a jewel becomes valuable by polishing, so do we become excellent by training. Is there any jewel which emits a bright light from the start? Is there any person endowed with excellent ability from the first? We should train ourselves just as we polish a jewel. We must not belittle ourselves nor be idle in training.

"An ancient person<sup>17</sup> advised us not to idle our time away. Now let me ask you whether the passage of time will stop on account of your love for it or whether it will not stop in spite of your love for it. We must realize well that time never passes away meaninglessly but that a man idles it away. This tells us that, as in the case of time, we must simply study Buddhism, not idling time away.

"Buddhist followers should study the Way so whole-heartedly. It is not easy for me to tell you about the Way by myself, however now I have appointed a new *shuso* who will help me in

my task. Many obtained enlightenment according to the Tathāgata's teachings, and others did following Ānanda's.<sup>18</sup> You, new *shuso*, must not belittle your own capacity but tell your fellow-monks about the *kōan* of 'three chin<sup>19</sup> of hemp' by T'ung-shan.<sup>20</sup>

"So saying, my master left his seat, again a drum was beaten and I, the new *shuso*, delivered a sermon to the monks on behalf of my master. This was my first vicarious sermon in the Kōsyōji temple. At that time I was thirty-nine."

(6) One day my master said, "A layman said, 'Whoever does not like fine clothes? Whoever is not covetous for good tastes? But he who wants to grasp the truth goes up into the mountains, sleeps in the clouds and bears the cold and hunger. In former times people were not free from sufferings, but they bore these in order to follow the truth. So people in later generation, hearing this fact, should respect their example and their virtue.

"Even in the case of ordinary men and women excellent persons act in this way. It can be the case with Buddhist follower, too. None of the ancient persons were made of golden bones; in the Buddha's lifetime everyone was not excellent in capacity. According to the precepts sūtra of the Greater or Lesser Vehicle some monks committed unimaginable errors but later all of them became enlightened and became Arhats.<sup>21</sup> So humble and inadequate as we are, we should realize that if, awakened to the Bodhi spirit, we train ourselves, we can necessarily get enlightenment. Formerly all people trained themselves bearing sufferings, cold and grief. Now Buddhist followers should make every effort to study the Way, however painful and grievous it may be."

(7) My master said, "It is chiefly because they are attached to their previous view-points that Buddhist followers cannot become



enlightened. Though they do not know who told them about it, they think that the word 'mind' means a discriminating one, not believing the words 'Mind is grass and trees.' And they believe that the word 'Buddha' means a person endowed with 32 fine looks and 80 subordinate characteristics, emitting a brilliant light. Therefore they are surprised at the words 'The Buddha is a piece of tile or stone.' Such wrong views have never been transmitted by fathers nor taught by mothers but, without any reason, long believed as a result of following other's opinions blindly. However, the sayings of the Buddhas and Patriarchs are eternally stated infallibly, so we must give up our previous views, believing afresh that mind is grass or a tree or that the Buddha is a tile or a pebble. Then we shall be able to get enlightened.

"An ancient person said, 'The sun and the moon are bright but sometimes they are covered with floating clouds. Orchid bushes want to grow thicker but sometimes the stormy autumn wind breaks them.' The above sayings we can find in the Book of Cheng-kuan Cheng-yao<sup>22</sup> as a parable of a wise king and his wicked vassals. Now I say that floating clouds never cover the sun or the moon for a long time but will drift away and that the strong autumn wind may break the orchid bushes but finally fragrant flowers will bloom. Similarly, a wicked vassal can never mislead his king if the latter is wise. This is also the case with present-day Buddhist trainees. However often evil arises, it will cease to exist, so long as we followers practice the Way firmly for a long period. Just as the floating clouds disperse or the autumn wind stops blowing."

(8) One day my master said, "Buddhist students, when Buddhist beginners, must read and study sūtras, sāstras or other sacred teachings very often whether they are awakened to the Bodhi spirit or not. I was first awakened to Bodhi, when, bereaved of my parents, I found that all is vanity. In the end



I left Hiei monastery searching for a teacher throughout the country. Before I visited Kenninji temple I had never met an excellent teacher or good fellow-monks and therefore I had many erroneous ideas.

"Teachers of Buddhism also told me to be equal to my seniors in learning and become a worthy man of national and international repute. So in learning Buddhist philosophy I first tried to be equal to excellent men in ancient Japan or to the great masters whose posthumous titles were 'daishi'<sup>23</sup> (Great Teacher). Once when I happened to read the 'Biographies of Excellent Priests'<sup>24</sup> or a 'Continuation' of it,<sup>25</sup> I found that the teachings of the excellent priests and Buddhists of the T'ang dynasty were different from those of my teachers. And I realized that all my former ideals were denounced in the sūtras and sāstras. Then I thought about the truth of Buddhism afresh and reached this conclusion: even if attached to fame and profit, we should be concerned how wise and good persons both in the past and in the future would judge us rather than whether we are spoken well of by our contemporaries; even if we try to be equal to excellent persons, we should be concerned with being equal to those in China or India rather than to those in this country; or rather to the deities of heaven or of the invisible world, Buddhas and Bodhisattvas. Since then our Great Teachers seemed to me to be of as little value as soil or tiles and consequently all my former ideas have been changed.

Looking at the life-long deeds of the Buddha, I find him leaving the throne and going into the mountains or entering the forests, and practicing begging even after getting enlightenment. The Vinaya says, 'When we realize our home is not ours, we renounce and leave it.'

"An ancient person says that we should not fancy ourselves equal to the wise in ancient times, nor should we humble ourselves with the idea that we are of little worth. Too much humility is a pride. Hence, we must not forget to be modest

when we are in a high position and that there is danger in safety. Today do we exist but tomorrow we shall not always exist. We are clearly near imperious death!"

(9) My master said, "A stupid man will often think and say useless things. Here once lived an old nun as a servant. Ashamed of her humble position, she would often tell others that she had once been a noble lady. Indeed they may have considered her to have once been such an honorable person, but what is the use of being thought so? Nothing is more useless than this. But most people, I am afraid, have this frame of mind. From this we can understand how unawakened they are to the Bodhi spirit. We should give up such an erroneous mind and try to become something of a Bodhi-spirited man.

There is a layman who follows the way but is extremely lacking in the Bodhi spirit. I am a close friend of his, so I would like to advise him to pray to the Buddha or gods that he may awaken to the Bodhi spirit. Perhaps this may anger him and cause a break between us. But, so long as he remains unawakened to the Bodhi spirit, what is the use of associating with him?"

(10) My master said, "An old saying goes, 'Think thrice before you speak.' It means that before we have anything to say or do we must think about it thrice. Ancient Confucianists regard this as meaning speaking or acting if it is good after thinking about it thrice. But by 'thrice' wise men in the Sung dynasty meant 'frequently.' They advise us to think frequently before we say or do anything and then carry it out if it is right each time you think it over. This must be the case with Zen monks. Sometimes we may be wrong in thought or speech. So we should deeply reflect first whether it is one with the Way and second whether it is gainful for oneself and for others. If we consider it as good we should do or speak it. If we followers

are always careful like this we shall not go against the Buddha's will all our lives.

"The first time that I was in the Kenninji temple each monk, according to his ability, was prudent about his behavior, speech and mentality and was determined not to say or do harm to the Way or to others. That was the case at least while there remained the influence of Bishop Eisai's virtue. But now such a good manner is gone.

"Now we Buddhist followers must surely say or do anything that is useful for us, others and the Way even at the sacrifice of our lives; while we should say or do nothing that is useless. When virtuous senior priests have something to say or do, beginners in Buddhism should not break in. This is the Buddha's teaching. We should think of it carefully.

"Even laymen are mindful of the Way at the cost of their lives. Formerly Lin-siang-ju<sup>26</sup> in the Chao dynasty, in spite of his low birth, was wise enough to govern the whole country under the Emperor Hui-wen.

"One day this Emperor sent him to the Chin state as his Imperial messenger to deliver an invaluable jewel called the 'Chao-jewel.' The Emperor of Chin<sup>27</sup> had offered to exchange this precious jewel for fifteen castle-cities. Hearing this, other retainers held a secret conference about it and reached this conclusion:—

'If we should allow this humble man to carry this precious jewel our country will seem to have few men of ability. What a shame to us! We shall probably be slandered by our descendants. Let's kill him on his way to Chin and deprive him of the jewel.' One of them secretly advised him to give up the mission for his own safety.

"However, he said, 'I cannot do so by any means. How glad I am that posterity should learn that I was killed by wicked vassals on my way to Chin carrying a jewel as an Imperial messenger! My body may perish but my fame will remain as



a wise man.

So saying, he at last started for his destination. Those wicked vassals, on hearing these resolute words of his, gave up the idea of killing him, regarding it as impossible.

"Finally he was received in audience by the Emperor of Chin and gave the Emperor the jewel. Then, contrary to his expectation the Emperor seemed reluctant to give him the proposed fifteen castle-cities. Lin thought of a plan and cheated him into returning the jewel, saying that it had a flaw and that he would show it to Him. Thereafter he said, 'His Majesty seems reluctant to give His fifteen castle-cities, so I will put this jewel on a copper column myself and break it to pieces with my own head. With these words he gazed at Him with angry eyes and went towards the copper column carrying the jewel with him. His threatening look was such as denied even the emperor's majesty. Seeing this, the Emperor said, 'Don't break the jewel, I will give you the fifteen caste-cities. While I am making the arrangements, you may keep the jewel.' However Lin-siang-ju secretly ordered his followers to take the jewel back home.

Again it happened that one day when the Emperor of Chao exchanged courtesies with the Emperor of Chin at Sheng-ch'ih,<sup>28</sup> the latter asked the former to play a lute. The Emperor of Chao was well known as a good lute player. Not consulting with Lin about it he played the lute. Lin, furious at his Emperor's blind obedience to the Emperor of Chin, went to the latter to ask him to blow a reed-organ and said, 'I hear you are good at the reed-organ. My Emperor wishes to hear it. Will you please blow it?' But the Emperor of Chin refused his proposal. At this he said, 'If you do not I will kill you.' At this critical moment a general of Chin came towards him, putting his hand on the hilt of his sword. Lin gave him such a sharp glance that his eye-lids were broken with fury. This general, struck with Lin's menacing look, was on his seat again without



drawing his sword. Then the Emperor of Chin was obliged to blow the reed-organ.

Later Lin became a minister of Chao and assumed control of the government. Then another minister, jealous of not having been given control of political affairs, was going to kill him. However, Lin dodged about here and there and would not visit the Imperial palace unless necessary. He seemed afraid of seeing this minister. Then his retainer said to him, 'It would be very easy to beat that minister. Why do you dodge about so timidly?'

Lin said, 'I am not afraid of him. I once made even a general of Chin withdraw with my menacing look and got back a precious jewel from the Emperor of Chin. It is, of course, very easy to kill him, but we organize the army and muster warriors only to fight with the enemy. Now we two are in charge of defending our country as Ministers of the Right and Left. If we get into a dispute and go to war with each other, one of us will be killed. Then a neighbouring country will gladly start war against us. So I think that we must cooperate with each other to defend our country. This is why I don't get into a dispute with him.' Hearing this from another person, the other minister, ashamed of his narrow mind, came and bowed, making an apology to him. Thus they became reconciled with each other and governed the whole country together. It was in this way that Lin did his best for truth even at the risk of his own body and life. This must also be the case with us when we now think of the Way. It is said that it is better to die for the Way than live without it."

(11) My master said, "The standard of good and evil is indefinite. Worldly people say that it is good to wear figured cloth, thin silk or brocade embroidery and that it is bad to wear rough clothes or a *funzōe*. But in Buddhism poor clothes are good and pure, and those made of gold and silver thread, figured

cloth or brocade embroidery are bad and impure. This reverse idea can be applied to everything else.

"As for me, I am rather good at composing verses and writing. Some laymen regard me as out of the ordinary; others slander me as an improper monk. Which can definitely be said to be good or bad?

"A certain sūtra says, 'What is spoken well of and considered as pure by others is good and what is spoken ill of and considered as impure is evil,' or 'What is predestined to result in suffering is evil and what is done to bring us pleasure is good.'

In this way we should discriminate carefully, practicing true good and giving up true evil. Monks come from the pure world, so we consider something simple and humble as good and pure."

(12) My master said, "Most people say, 'Though I feel inclined to study the Way, yet we are in the age of degenerate Buddhism. We are too poor in capacity to train ourselves as Buddhism tells us. So we should want to get enlightenment in a future existence, while presently only forming a connection with the Buddha in an easier way according to our ability.'

"The above sayings are quite wrong. It is only an expedient way for Buddhism to express the three periods<sup>29</sup>—right Buddhism, formal Buddhism and degenerate Buddhism. Every monk in the Buddha's lifetime was not more excellent. Some of them were extremely foolish and despicable in quality. It was for these sorts of people that Śākya Buddha established many commandments. We are all by nature able to believe in Buddhism, so we must not think ourselves unequal to it. When we train ourselves according to the Way of the Buddhas and Patriarchs, we can surely get enlightenment. Since we are endowed with mind we can tell right from wrong. We do have hands and feet, so we have no trouble in clasping our hands together or going on foot in the practice of the Way. Hence

the practice of Buddhism is open to everyone, foolish or wise—to those who are born in this human world, not to those in the beastly world. We students of the Way should never wait for tomorrow. We should train ourselves in accordance with Buddhism on this very day, or rather at this very moment."

(13) My master said, "Laymen say, 'The decline of a castle comes from discontent within it,' or 'When there are two opposing opinions at home we cannot buy even a needle,<sup>30</sup> but when there is only one united opinion we can buy even gold.' Even laymen say that a family or a castle will be ruined without unity of opinion. Still more should Zen monks study Buddhism under one teacher in as perfect harmony as if milk were blended with water. There are also the six Ways of Harmony and Respect<sup>31</sup> for monks to follow. We monks should not train ourselves wilfully by having our own rooms and separating ourselves from our fellow-monks. Just as if we are sailing on the ocean in one ship, we should practice the Way, united in mind and behavior, mending each other's faults and taking heed of each other's merits. This is the traditional way followed since the Buddha's lifetime."

(14) My master said, "The first time that Abbot Fang-hui<sup>32</sup> of Yang-chi monastery became a chief priest there, his building was in bad repair. It was a constant source of trouble to the monks there. One day a Chiji-priest<sup>33</sup> said to him, 'Please have it repaired.'

He said, 'Indeed it is in bad condition as you say but staying there is still better than living on the open ground or under a tree. When one part of the roof is so badly broken that the rain leaks, do Zazen under another unbroken part. If monks can get enlightened by having a fine monastery built I will have one built of gold or jewel. Enlightenment lies not so much in the residence as in the effects of Zazen.'

"The next day he went to the lecture hall and said to his monks:—'I have just become the chief priest of this monastery, but the roof and the wall are both in bad repair. The whole floor is covered with so much snow. The monks there shiver because of the cold and heave secret sighs.' After a long pause he said again:—

'This reminds me of ancient monks who practiced Zazen under a tree.'

"This is the case with political administration as well as with the Way. The Emperor Tai-tsung of the T'ang dynasty did not build a new palace; but rather, he continued to live in the old one.

"Abbot Lung-ya<sup>94</sup> tells us that we students of the Way must first of all study poverty and that we can be one with the Way only after we are in poverty. From the time of Śākya Buddha till now I have never heard of true Bodhi-seekers who were rich in treasure."

(15) One day a visiting priest said, "As the modern way of renouncing the world, every person makes provisions in advance for heat or cold, etc. This may seem trifling but it will do much for their study of the Way. If short of them we shall be disturbed in our practice. According to your opinion you make no provisions for the future, simply resigning yourself to your fate. In this case you will be disturbed later. What is your opinion about this?"

My master answered, "There are old examples about this. This opinion has been formed not only by me but also by all the Buddhas and Patriarchs in India and China. A light, however small, from the white hair on the Buddha's forehead is inexhaustible in efficiency. Is there any need of making provisions in advance? Even if we have done so tomorrow is indefinite. This way has been followed by the Buddhas and Patriarchs and is not of my own making. When actually short



of necessities or provisions we should think of the best way to secure them, not in advance."

(16) My master said, "About the late Chūnagon Jimyōin-motoie,<sup>55</sup> a lay priest, there is (I cannot vouch for the truth of it.) a story. Once it happened that his favorite sword was stolen. On investigation some warriors found the criminal among their fellows. When they brought it to him he sent it back to the criminal saying that it was not his and that those who had brought it labored under some mistake.

"That was the very sword that had been stolen, but he sent it back for fear that the criminal might disgrace himself. They were aware well of this fact but the incident was allowed to fade away without any great commotion being made. So Jimyōin's descendants are now prosperous. Even in the case of lay people a wise man was like this. Still more should it be so in the case of monks. We Zen monks have no treasure with us from the start. So we regard wisdom or virtue as treasure. When we find those who are lacking in the Bodhi spirit we should not speak ill of them, readily betraying our feelings. With an expedient means we should warn them in a way that they won't get angry. It is said that if we try to persuade others roughly and violently its effect will never last long. This is also true when we use rough words in criticising another person even though our criticism may be in keeping with the Way. Those narrow in mind and poor in ability tend to get angry at any rough words and feel disgraced. This is not the case with a great man. Even if someone strikes him he will have no mind to revenge himself. In our country we have many such narrow-minded people, so we must be careful not to utter rough words.

# Notes:

- 1) Nan-yang Hui-chung ( -775). A Buddhist heir to Hui-nêng Ta-chien. Said to have confined himself in the Tan-tsu Valley of Mt. Pai-ai for more than 40 years.
- 2) Teachings, assumed and real. Real teachings, according to the Tendai sect, are the Saddharmapundarika-sūtra and the Nirvāna-sūtra; assumed teachings are all other scriptures.
- 3) Esoteric teachings. cf. Note vol. 1, 36.
- 4) The six sense organs, etc. 18 dhātu which consist of the six sense organs, their objects and sensations.
- 5) Chū-chih. Joined Rev. T'ien-lung and got enlightened by seeing T'ien-lung raise his finger. Thereafter in regard to any question about Buddhism he only raised his finger without saying a word.
- 6) The story that a little boy got enlightened is:—  
Once a man said to a little boy, 'What is the core of Buddhism that your master tells you?' The boy raised his finger after his master's usual manner. Hearing this, his master cut the boy's finger off with a knife. When the boy felt an acute pain and left with a loud cry, his master called him back. The boy turned his head. Then the master raised his own finger and suddenly the boy got enlightened.
- 7) The second year of Katei. 1236.
- 8) *Shuso* (Shou-tsu). The first-ranking priest.
- 9) The Kōsyōji temple. Located on the opposite side of the Byōdōin at Uji.
- 10) Bodhidharma. cf. Note vol. 1, 16.
- 11) The Shao-ling temple. Situated on the foot of Mt. Sung-shan in Hōnan Province. Bodhidharma is said to have practised Zazen there for nine years gazing at the wall.
- 12) Shen-kuang Hui-k'ō (487-593). Visited Bodhidharma of the Shao-ling temple at the age of 40 and got enlightened after six years of attendance and became the second Patriarch in China.
- 13) Fêng-yang Shan-chao (947-1024). A Buddhist heir to Shou-shan (926-993).
- 14) Yao-shan Wei-yen (751-834). Born in Shan-shih Province, got enlightened under the guidance of Ma-tsu and later became a Buddhist heir to Shih-t'ou.
- 15) A Zen master who obtained enlightenment at the sound of a

- bamboo hit by a tile. Hsiang-yen, disciple of Kuei-shan.
- 16) A Zen priest who grasped truth at the sight of peach-blossoms. Ling-yun, disciple of Kuei-shan.
  - 17) An ancient person. Great Teacher Shih-t'ou. This statement is found in his book 'Sandōkai.'
  - 18) 'Ānanda.' One of the 10 high disciples of Śākya Buddha, Śākyamuni's cousin. Said to have attended on Śākyamuni for 20 years and learned all His teachings by heart. Here Ānanda is compared to Ejō.
  - 19) Chin. Unit of weight.
  - 20) Tung-shan Shou-chu. A disciple of Yün-mên Wên-yen ( -966). The *kōan* of 'three chin of hemp' recorded by Tung-shan in the 12th chapter of the 'Hekiganroku' tells us that three chin of hemp is Buddhism itself.
  - 21) 'Arhat.' A man who grasped the last result of Śrāvaka.
  - 22) The Book of 'Cheng-kuan Cheng-yao' 10 vols. Compiled by Wu-ching and dealing with political theory in the era of Cheng-kuan (627-648).
  - 23) *Daishi*. For example, Dengyō, Jikaku, Kōbō, Chishō, etc.
  - 24) The 'Biographies of Excellent Priests,' 14 vols. Compiled by Hui-chiao and consisting of the biographies of 257 high priests covering 453 years since the Emperor Ming-ti of the Later Han.
  - 25) The 'Biographies of High Priests, Continued.' cf. Note vol. 1, 1.
  - 26) Lin-siang-ju. Known for his dissuading the King of Chin from depriving the King of Chou of his precious jewel.
  - 27) The emperor of Chin. Chao-Wang.
  - 28) Sheng-ch'ih. Located in Honan Province.
  - 29) The age of degenerate Buddhism. cf. Note vol. 1, 42.
  - 30) Needle. A trifling thing.
  - 31) Six Ways of Harmony and Respect (Rokuwakyō). 1. to behave rightly toward each other in harmony and with respect, 2. to speak to each other in harmony and with respect, 3. to think about each other in harmony and with respect, 4. to observe the commandments with relations to each other in harmony and with respect, 5. to have the right opinions of each other in harmony and with respect, 6. to enjoy the benefit of each other in harmony and with respect.
  - 32) Yan-ch'i Fang-hui (992-1049). A Buddhist heir to Tzu-ming; founder of the Yan-ch'i School.
  - 33) Chiji-priests. cf. Note vol. 2, 11.

- 34) Lung-ya Chu-tun (835-923). A Buddhist heir to T'ung-shan Liang-chieh.
- 35) Jimyōin. Another name was Motoie Ichijō whose father was Michimoto Ichijō. Chūnagon was the Second Councillor of State.



(1) One day my master said, "We should not spare our body and life for Buddhism. Even lay people lay down their body and life for truth, neglecting their relatives, or they serve their emperor with loyalty and keep integrity unsullied. We call such persons loyal retainers or wise men.

"Formerly when the Emperor Kao-tsu<sup>1</sup> of the Hang dynasty was going to open hostilities with a neighboring country, one of his subjects happened to have his mother in that country. The army wondered if he might betray the emperor. Kao-tsu was also in doubt that the warrior might desert to the enemy since he was deeply attached to his mother, and in that case the emperor's army might be beaten. In turn, the warrior's mother wondered if her son might return yearning for her and advised him not to neglect his loyalty to his lord. Later she killed herself by casting down her body on a sword out of fear that her son might betray his emperor if she were alive. The warrior had not been two-faced from the first and was very loyal to the army. Still more should Zen monks be single-hearted in the practice of the Way. Then they will truly be one with the Way. Some monks are naturally endowed with compassion and wisdom, others not. But if not endowed, they will become enlightened by studying Buddhism. We must only sacrifice our body and mind for Buddhism, following the doctrine of Buddhism and giving up our own opinions.

In the reign of the Emperor Kao-tsu of the Hang dynasty a wise retainer said, 'To correct a political disturbance is like untying a knot bound tightly. We should untie it after looking at it carefully, not in a hurry.'

"The same can also be said of the Way. We must practice the Way after adequate understanding of the truth. No one can realize Buddhism without an earnest for the Bodhi spirit. No clever and wise man can grasp the Buddhist truth as a

follower of the Way, unless he awakens to the Bodhi spirit and is free from attachment to self or worldly fame and profit.

(2) The master said, "The followers of the Way must not study Buddhism for their own sake but for the sake of Buddhism. Our traditional way is thus: we renounce our body and mind for Buddhism. Thereafter, without discrimination or clinging to our own inclinations, we must try to put ourselves at the mercy of Buddhism alone, however hard and unbearable it may be. What is against Buddhism should be left undone, however eagerly we may wish to do it. We should never expect good fortune as a result of the practice of the Way. Once we have cast away our body and mind for the Way, we should discipline ourselves, not clinging to our own opinions again but to the precepts of Buddhism. All this has been demonstrated by our predecessors. When we are free from wishes or expectations, we enjoy great pleasure. Some laymen who dislike society and grow up at home alone behave as they please and regard their own opinion very highly. Those who act like this and pay no attention to the opinions and thoughts of others must be wicked. Such must also be the case in the practice of the Way. We should have friendly relations with our fellow-monks and follow the teachings of our master, giving up our own views and renewing our own thoughts, too. Then we shall readily become good followers of the Way.

"In the practice of the Way poverty is the first thing that we must study. Cast away desire for fame and profit or flattery or rather anything and everything, and we shall surely be good followers. In Great Sung the 'excellent priests' were all poor; their robes were worn-out and their other daily living necessities, scanty.

"Once there was the Ven. Tao-ju, a secretary priest at the T'ien-t'ung monastery when I was staying there. He was a son of a State Councillor, but he left his family and relatives and

sought no worldly gain. Therefore, he was dressed too poorly and raggedly to look at. However, he was well known for his virtue in the Way and he became the secretary priest of a famous large temple.

"One day I said to him, 'You are a son of a State Councillor and come from a noble family. Why are your belongings so simple and poor?' He replied, 'Because I am a monk.'"

(3) One day my master said, "'Treasures are an enemy who often ruins ourselves. This is true both in the past and at present,' so say laymen. About this there is the following story.

There once lived a layman who had a beautiful wife. When a man of influence asked him for his wife, he was reluctant to give her away. Finally the man of influence organized an army and made them surround his house with the intention of capturing her. About to be deprived of his wife, he said to his wife, 'I am going to die on your account.' His wife jumped down a high building and died, saying, 'I am also ready to die for you.' This story was later told by the husband who escaped death then."

(4) My master said, "Formerly when a certain wise man governed his province as a government officer, his son appeared to say good-by to him. This son was to leave for a new post. Then the officer gave his son a roll of silk as a present.

"The son said, 'You are noble-minded and clean-handed. How did you obtain this silk?' The father replied, 'I bought it with the money left over from my salary.' The son left his father and presented this silk to the emperor and then he informed the emperor of this deed. The emperor was deeply impressed with this officer's wisdom.

"The officer's son said, 'My father has kept his name unknown to the world, while I have made my name known. He is really wiser than I.'

"This means that a wise man never turns even a single roll of silk to his own use. A truly wise man keeps his name unknown to the world. This officer bought a roll of silk with the money left over from his salary. Such is the case with a layman. Still more should Buddhist followers be free from their own self-interest. If they love the true Way they should not advertise themselves as Buddhists."

(5) One day my master said, "There once lived a genius. A certain man said to him, 'How can I become a genius?' He replied, 'If you want to, you should devote yourself to the way of a genius.'

"Therefore if Buddhists want to grasp the way of the Buddhas and Patriarchs they must first devote themselves to it."

(6) My master said, "There once lived an emperor. He ruled his country, and once said to his retainers, 'I have governed our country very well. Am I wise enough?' All his retainers with one exception said, 'Yes, you have ruled the country very well.' But one of them gave him a negative answer. When the emperor asked him why, he replied that when the emperor had ruled the whole country he had given no part of it to his brother, but to his sons. Not satisfied with his remarks, the emperor at last banished him from his country.

"Later he again said to a retainer, 'Am I merciful?'"

The retainer said, 'Yes, very merciful.'

'Why?'

'Because a merciful emperor must have at least one loyal subject. A loyal subject never fails to speak frankly. The retainer whom you banished was really an outspoken loyalist. None but a merciful emperor could have the service of such a man.' Deeply struck by his remarks, the emperor at once recalled the banished retainer."



(7) My master once said, "In the reign of Shin-huang-ti<sup>2</sup> of Chin, when he told his retainers to enlarge a flower-garden for the Crown Prince, one of them said reluctantly, 'That is good. Perhaps there will come many birds and beasts, but shall we be able to keep off a neighboring country with them?' Thereupon, the plan was renounced.

"When again the emperor told his retainer to have a palace built and have the columns lacquered, the retainer said, 'That may be good but if we lacquer the columns, will the enemy not burst into the palace?' The plan was also dropped.

"With such expedient advice the Confucianists often urged us to do good, instead of doing wrong. This must also be the case with Zen monks who must lead deluded people."

(8) One day a certain monk said to my master, "Which is better after all, a clever man lacking in the Bodhi spirit or a stupid man awakened to it?"

My master replied, "The latter type of man will often go backward in his practice, while the former will awaken to Bodhi in the end, though not at first. Now we have many positive proofs of this. Hence, we must first of all be strenuous in the practice of the Way whether we are awakened to Bodhi or not.

"In the practice of the Way we should only be in poverty. Many books, Buddhist and non-Buddhist, say that some were in such poverty that they had no house to live in, some<sup>3</sup> set a ship afloat on the river, some<sup>4</sup> hid themselves on Mt. Shou-yang, some sat upright under a tree or in an open air, some lived among mounds or in mountain-recesses, and that some were so rich and noble that they had palaces painted with vermillion and lacquer or decorated with gold and jewels. Those books tell us about the two types of persons, but, in principle, urge later generations to be poor persons with no treasure. In criticizing others for their wrong deeds we should reproach those

who are rich in treasure for their arrogance."

(9) My master said, "We monks should never be glad to receive alms from others, nor should we refuse them.

"The late Bishop Eisai said, 'To be glad to receive others' offerings is against the Buddha's precepts, but the reverse is also against the good wishes of pious patrons.'

"As is often said from olden times, we must look upon offerings not as gifts for ourselves but as offerings to the Three Treasures. Therefore, we should reply to the donor that this offering will surely be accepted by the Three Treasures."

(10) My master said, "An ancient person said, 'A virtuous man is mightier than an ox but he never struggles with one.'

"Now we Buddhist followers must not love to quarrel or argue with others even if we think ourselves above others in wisdom and capacity; nor should we scold others with rough words; nor look at them in anger.

"Now most people give others money or beneficence, but they often tend to get angry or scold others with rough words. Therefore, they never fail to stir the spirit of resistance.

"Abbot Chêng-chin<sup>5</sup> once said to his monks, 'Once when I swore friendship with Yün-fêng<sup>6</sup> and practised the Way with him, he began to discuss Buddhism with one of his fellow-monks and quarreled loudly with his opponent in the monks' hall. Finally they spoke ill of each other and began to fight. When the hot talk was over, Yün-fêng said to me, 'You and I are studying the Way with one mind and have sworn deep friendship with each other. Why did you not participate in this quarrel?' Then I only bowed, feeling small.

"Later he became an excellent master, while I am the chief priest of this temple. At that time I thought that his talk about Buddhism was after all useless and that a hot talk was definitely wrong and such quarrelling was nonsense. This was why I kept

silent.'

"Now Buddhist followers should also think of this story most carefully. If we are eager to practise the Way, we must devote ourselves to it, holding all our time dear. Is there any time for us to quarrel with others? After all, it is useless both for oneself and for others. Such is the case with Buddhism. Still less should we have a trifling discussion about worldly affairs.

"As stated before, a virtuous man never quarrels with an ox, though superior in power. So we monks must not confute and despise others even if we think ourselves versed in Buddhism and excel them in ability.

"To a true Bodhi-seeker who comes to us for Buddhism we must wilfully give him the teachings. But we have only to answer him once when he asks thrice in all, for fear that we should utter many idle words. Really, I am also cursed with this fault. So, thinking that this talk was a warning to me, I have made it a point not to argue with others over Buddhism since then."

(11) My master said, "Ancient persons often say, 'Make the best use of every moment,' or 'Never idle your time away.' Now Buddhist followers must hold even a single moment dear in the practice of the Way. Our transient life passes quickly and time flies like an arrow. In this transient existence we must apply ourselves to Buddhism alone and not be mindful of anything else.

"In today's world some often say, as an excuse for not becoming monks, 'It is hard to turn our back on our parents' love,' or 'We cannot go against our lord's order.' Some say, 'It is hard to leave our wife and children—family,' or 'We cannot support our family.' Some say, 'Worldly people will speak ill of us,' or 'We are too poor to buy the proper equipment of a monk,' or 'We are by nature poor in our understanding of

Buddhism, so we are not equal to the practice of the Way.'

"Having these thoughts, they cannot leave their lord, parents, wife, children and others, but idle their lives away. Only after they are about to die they repent of it.

"We should be determined to sit calmly and seek Buddhist truth and awaken to the Bodhi spirit as soon as possible. Neither lord nor parents can help us to get enlightenment; neither family nor others can save us from suffering; no treasure can save us from transmigration of birth and death; no worldly people can help us after all. If we never practice the Way under the pretence of poor ability, when can we become enlightened? We must leave everything else and devote ourselves to the Way alone single-heartedly. We must not wait for tomorrow to do so."

(12) My master said, "In the study of the Way we should leave self-attachment. However many sūtras and sāstras we may read, we will fall into the den of devils unless we are free from attachment. An ancient person said, 'Without devoting ourselves to Buddhism whole-heartedly we cannot expect to become Buddhas and Patriarchs.' To be free from self-attachment is to cast away our body and mind in the ocean of Buddhism and discipline ourselves in Buddhism, regardless of our sufferings and sorrow. When we go begging, we fear that people may regard it as wrong or shameful. But, so long as we think like this, we can by no means enter Buddhism. We must study the Way, forgetful of all worldly views and mindful of Buddhist truth alone. It is on account of self-attachment also that we think ourselves poor in ability and unequal to Buddhism. It is originally due to self-attachment that we worry about our reputation or take public opinions into consideration. We should study Buddhism alone, not following worldly inclinations.

(13) One day I said to my master, "What is the way for us



to follow strenuously in a Zen monastery?"

My master replied, "It is the single-hearted practice of Zazen. We should do Zazen in the upper or lower story of a lofty building. We should have no company nor chat with others but always practice Zazen as silently as if we were deaf and dumb."

(14) One day in his sermon my master taught, "Abbot Ta-tao<sup>7</sup> said, 'I always sit in the wind and sleep in the sun. I enjoy greater pleasure than a man now dressed in brocade.' These words did this ancient person utter, yet I have some doubt about them. By the words 'a man now dressed in brocade' did he mean a person covetous for worldly profit? If so, it is quite idle to match himself with such a person unworthy of mention. Or did he mean a Buddhist follower? If so, why did he say 'I enjoy greater pleasure than a man now dressed in brocade'? From his words I can suppose that he was still attached to brocade. The reverse is the case with an enlightened person. He is attached neither to gold and jewels nor tiles and pebbles, because he makes no difference between the two. For this reason Śākya Buddha ate the milk gruel given by an ox-herd girl and equally oats used as fodder for horses. Both of them were equal to the Buddha in the way of food! In Buddhism there is no difference, such as 'valuable' and 'valueless.' Only in human opinion is there a difference, such as 'shallow' and 'deep.' In the present world there are those people who refuse to accept gold or jewels because such things are considered valuable. On the contrary, however, there are also those who gladly accept wood or stone because such things are considered to be of little value. Primarily, gold and jewels are dug from the ground. The same can be said of wood or stone. Why do we make such a difference between the two? True, the acquisition of valuable things may inspire us to attachment, but the same can be said of the acquisition of valueless things if

we become attached to them. We Buddhist followers should pay attention to this."

(15) My master said, "The Ven. Myōzen,<sup>8</sup> my former master, was planning to go to China, when his master Myōyu, a leading priest of Hiei monastery, became very ill and was dying.

"Then Myōyu said to Myōzen, 'I am already old and ill and am going to die. I hope you will give up the idea of going to China for some time and take care of me and pray for my happiness after I die. I want you to attain your cherished desire to go to China after doing thus.'

"Then the Ven. Myōzen called his disciples or Buddhist relatives together and consulted with them about this matter. He said:—

'I have grown up with the help of this teacher since my childhood when I left my parents. Nothing is more important than the beneficence that he has shown to me till now. I owe it entirely to his beneficence that I could learn the teachings, Greater and Lesser or true and temporary;<sup>9</sup> that I could grasp causality and know right from wrong; that I am blessed with greater fame than my fellow-monks; and that I could grasp Buddhist truth and am eager to go to China to seek the Way. But this year my teacher is old in age and badly ill in bed. His days are numbered. I cannot expect to see him again if I leave him now. So he told me to give up the idea of going to China. It is very hard to go against his request. But it is from the great altruistic compassion of the Bodhisattva that I am going to China to seek the Way at the cost of my life. Is there any reason for my going to China against his wishes? I pray each of you to express an opinion.'

"Then each of them present said, 'You had better not go to China this year. Your teacher is old and dying, or rather sure to die. If you go to China next year, not this year, you will not be going against his wishes and also against his pro-

found beneficence to you. What obstacle is there in the practice of Buddhism if you go to China one year or half a year later? If you don't go to China, you will satisfy his wish and your own as well.

"Then, inexperienced as I was, I said, 'If you are now satisfied with your enlightenment of Buddhism, you had better stay here.' Rev. Myōzen said, 'You are right. I am content with my present practice of Buddhism, If I go on practising the Way like this, I shall be able to become enlightened in the long run.'

"I said, 'If so, you had better stay here.'

"When the whole talk was over, my late master said:—

'You have all advised me to stay. But I have another opinion. Even if I stay here now, I can't protect him from death if he is to die. If I stay here and nurse him, I can't relieve him of his pains. Even if I treat his body with due ceremony at his death, I can't detach him from the transmigration of birth and death. To stay here is only to obey his orders. It may be a great solace to him but it is all useless in getting enlightenment. If he should hinder my earnest desire for Buddhism by mistake, he will commit a sin.

'But if I can realize my wish to become enlightened in China, I shall be able to help many people become enlightened, though against the deluded mind of a single person.<sup>10</sup> If I can get excellent merit by it I shall be able to return his beneficence. While crossing the ocean I may die without realizing my cherished desire, but my earnest desire for Buddhism will go on for many lives. We must look back on the brilliant deeds of Hsüan-sang Tripitaka.<sup>11</sup> It is against the Buddha's will that I should idle my fleeting time away for the sake of a single person. Hence, now I have firmly decided to go to China.' Thus he finally went to China.

"From this we realize how desirous my late master was for the Way. Hence we Zen monks must not exert ourselves vainly



for our parents or teachers and idle our time away in the practice of the Way which is more excellent than anything else."

Then I said, "It is quite right that we should cast down all the worldly beneficence of our parents or masters for the sake of Buddhism. Indeed we may cast away our love for them but in the deeds of a Bodhisattva we must attach more importance to public gain than to private gain, so I think. Yet Ven. Myōyu was old and seriously ill without anyone to care after him. Ven. Myōzen alone was in charge of nursing his master. But he was too much attached to his discipline to do so. Did he not act against the compassion of a Bodhisattva? Monks should not neglect the benevolent deeds of a Bodhisattva. We should think of Buddhism according to the circumstances and on all occasions, I think. If that is the case Ven. Myōzen should have stayed and nursed his master. Why would he not nurse his sick master? I think he was too much attached to his own desire for Buddhism. What do you think about this?"

My master said, "It is the good act of a Bodhisattva to choose the better over the worse in every profit, selfish and altruistic. To be dutiful to sick parents in poverty is only a temporary love and delusive pleasure in this life. Practise Buddhism alone, casting away such delusive feelings, and this will cause you, though you may be thought ill of, to grasp unworldly Buddhism. This is worthy of your repeated consideration."

(16) One day my master said, "Most people say, 'We cannot understand our master's speech well.' They are wrong. I cannot understand why they say so. Perhaps they regard his speech as wrong merely because the doctrine of holy sūtras given by him is beyond their understanding. If so, it is quite an ordinary and foolish idea. Or does his speech itself not come home to them? Then why did they ask their teacher about Buddhism



first? (They should have studied Buddhism for themselves.) Or do they speak thus from their deluded feelings? If so, this is a delusion which has existed from time immemorial.

In the practice of the Way we must follow whatever words our teacher or the teachings tell us even if we do not agree with them, and be free from our past opinions. This is the traditional and primary mentality in studying the Way.

"Formerly, one of my fellow-monks who was attached to his own opinions visited a certain master. Thinking that whatever went against his opinions was wrong, and that whatever he agreed with was right, he idled his life away and could not grasp Buddhism. Seeing this, I realized that the reverse should be so with the Way. With this in mind I disciplined myself as my master directed, till I became completely enlightened. Later I was reading a sūtra, when I noticed this passage: those who want to study Buddhism should not stick to the same opinions in the three stages of time.<sup>12</sup> Then I realized that we must not cling to our past views but gradually correct them. The Household Precepts of Confucius tell us that good advice is harsh to the ear. It means that good advice for us is always against our will. Even in this case we must forcibly follow it and in the end we shall find it of some help to us."

(17) One day in a discursive talk my master said, "A man's mind is not inherently good or bad. Moral discretion depends upon circumstances and occasions. For example, when we enter mountains or go into forests for the Way we tend to regard them as good for discipline and ordinary human habitations as bad. On the contrary, however, when we are discouraged and leave the mountains or forests, we are apt to consider them bad. This shows us clearly that there is nothing definite in our minds but that moral discretion depends upon circumstances and occasions. Hence, good circumstances will make us happy, while bad ones make us unhappy. We must not regard our

own mind as primarily bad. We must only try to follow good circumstances and occasions.

(18) At another time my master said, "I think our minds are surely affected by others' words.

"The Notes of the Mahāprajñā-pāramita-sūtra<sup>13</sup> go:—

'For example, suppose that a stupid man has a Mani-jewel in his hand. If someone sees it and says, "You are despicable. You have a valuable thing in your hand!" he regards himself as such to his great bewilderment, because he clings to the jewel and his public reputation too much. Yet only for public reputations he takes the advice and wants to give the jewel to others, till at last he loses it.'

"Such is the human mind. Some, admitting the word surely useful to him, will accept it, afraid of others' criticism; others, admitting it surely harmful, will take it, mindful of worldly reputation. When we follow good and evil, our mind is attracted by them. Hence any innate wicked mind will naturally improve in the company of excellent leaders or good persons. On the contrary, however, if we are in the company of bad men, we may at first regard them as wrong but in the end we shall be really defiled by them before we are aware of it.

"We are so capricious that if another person earnestly begs us to give a thing we give it to him unwillingly and reluctantly; on the other hand, however eagerly we may try to make a present, we often leave it undone if there is no chance to do so.

"Hence Buddhist followers, even if lacking in the Bodhi spirit, must try to get acquainted with a good person and have a good chance of hearing the same thing repeatedly. We must not think that words once heard should never be heard again. Those once awakened to the Bodhi spirit will often listen to the same thing and cultivate their minds all the harder. Those lacking in the Bodhi spirit will naturally feel ashamed of them-

selves and truly awaken to it if they often listen to the words of a good person, though for the first or second time his words may seem a mystery to them. It is just as when we walk about in a fog and dew-drops our clothes get wet before we are aware of it.

"Hence we must read sacred sūtras over and over again even if we are well versed in them; and often listen to our master, though tired of his words; we shall find the contents even more profound. We must try to keep off a hindrance to our study of the Way, however hard it may be. We should keep company with good friends and practice the Way together."

(19) My master said, "A Zen master Ta-hui<sup>14</sup> once had a swelling on his hip. The doctor said, 'It is serious.'

Ta-hui said, 'If so, am I in danger of death?'

'Maybe.'

'Now that I am dying, I'll do Zazen still harder.' So saying, he practiced Zazen all the harder. At last the pus oozed out of the swelling and nothing serious happened.

"Such was the mentality of this ancient person. He did Zazen all the harder because he became ill. No Zen monks must neglect Zazen when not ill.

"Illness seems to depend upon the mind. Suppose there is a man who is suffering from the hiccups. If someone deceptively tells him something that will make him feel discouraged, he will take it seriously and earnestly try to make excuses; meanwhile he forgets his hiccups, recovering from them. Formerly I was attacked by diarrhea aboard a ship bound for China, but later when all the passengers were in great confusion owing to a storm, I forgot my sickness and I recovered from it. From this I conclude that if we are so strenuous in the practice of the Way that we forget everything else we shall be safe from sickness.

(20) My master said, "A worldly proverb runs, 'Unless we are like the deaf and dumb, we are not qualified to be the master of a family.'

"This means that we can attain our objective if we are deaf to others' criticism or dumb to their faults, and that a man of this sort can be called the lord of a family.

"Though it is a worldly proverb, yet we should apply it to Zen monks. How can we practise the Way, keeping deaf to others' slanders and complaints, and remaining dumb to their good and evil deeds? This way is open to him alone who devotes himself wholly to the practice of the Way."

(21) My master said, "A Zen master Ta-hui said, 'Buddhist followers must study the Way in the same frame of mind as a penniless man who is in deep debt and who is urged to repay the money. With this mind we shall find it easy to become enlightened.'

"The Hsin-hsin-ming<sup>15</sup> runs, 'The Way is not hard to grasp. Just never have a discriminating mind.' Leave such a frame of mind, and at once you can attain enlightenment. To this end we must be free from self-attachment. We must not practise the Way for our personal benefit but for Its own sake. Even if we learn a countless number of sūtras or sāstras and practise Zazen so hard that we break the floor, we cannot grasp the Way of the Buddhas and Patriarchs without such an unselfish frame of mind. We must only give our body and mind to Buddhism, and leave our former opinions, following our teachers, and we shall at once become enlightened."

(22) My master taught, "An ancient person said, 'The property of the monastery should be managed by chiji-priests who are well versed in Buddhist causality and whose office-works are done in several rooms and sections.' This means that the chief priest must be single-hearted in the practice of Zazen and the



guidance of his monks, not troubled by large or small temple affairs.

"And they say, 'We would rather have some accomplishments, however poor, than have a lot of fertile fields of rice.'

'We must give others beneficence without expecting any return nor repenting of giving.'

'We are free from disaster if we keep our mouth closed just as a speechless nose.'

'Our lofty deeds will naturally cause others to respect us. However, those with great knowledge will naturally be devoted. Even if we plough the land deep and sow there shallowly, yet we cannot protect the crops from the visit of a natural calamity. How can those who do themselves good and do others harm be free from retribution? When the followers of the Way read the kōan they should whole-heartedly try to understand its true meaning.

(23) My master said, "An ancient person said, 'Make another step forward at the top of a 100-foot pole.' This means that we must renounce our body and mind as if we were to go up to the top of such a high pole and let our legs and hands go.

"About this there are important examples worthy of our repeated note.

"Monks at present seem to have renounced the world and left home. But from their daily deeds I can affirm that they never follow the true way of monks. First of all we monks must be free from self-attachment and the desire for fame and profit. Otherwise, however urgently and earnestly<sup>10</sup> we may practice the Way, we shall overexert ourselves, vainly trying to get enlightenment. In the Sung dynasty there are some who give up their love for their families or for their valuable treasure, enter a Zen monastery and make a Zen pilgrimage all over the country. But all of them idle their lives away, unable to become enlightened, owing to their lack of knowledge of this

traditional way.

"True, they may at first have become monks from an awakening to Bodhi and followed their leader, but in due course of time they seem to wish to have their high position known to donors and pious patrons; or they tell even their families and relatives that their person or temple is highly ranked in the expectation of respect and offerings, not of becoming Buddhas and Patriarchs. Besides this, they contrive ways to show that other monks are wrong but they alone are true Bodhi-seekers and good men. Their words are not worth discussing. They are doomed to hell just like the five sinful priests<sup>17</sup> in the lifetime of Śākya Buddha. Not knowing what is right, laymen often take them for true Bodhi-seekers or noble monks.

"There are rather better monks than the above: they discipline themselves in a Zen monastery, not attached to alms from donors and pious patrons nor to their families. But ashamed of showing their innate idleness, they pretend to be strenuous in the presence of the chiji-priests or *shuso*, while they idle their time away in their absence. Of course, they may be better than some sinful laymen, but they still remain attached to self or frame and profit.

And some, regardless of the care of their master or *shuso* and other fellow-monks, think that Buddhism must be practised for themselves, not for others, and earnestly discipline themselves, believing themselves able to become Buddhas and Patriarchs only through their own body and mind. They may seem the better Bodhi-seekers but they still aim at their own improvement. Therefore, they are not free from selfish desire yet. They expect to please the Buddhas and Patriarchs, or to get enlightened, because they are attached to their own fame and profit. They are all like a man who sticks to the top of a 100-foot pole without going a step farther. There is a man who has cast away his body and mind to Buddhism, not for enlightenment but for Buddhism itself. We call him a pure

monk!

"There is an old saying 'We must not be attached to either the Buddha or no-Buddha.' This may be taken in the above-mentioned sense."

(24) My master said, "We must not worry in advance about food or clothing. When we are lacking in food, if we think of going begging and asking others for food, it is the same as hoarding it and a wrong way of living. Zen monks are called as such because they have no definite house to stay in like clouds nor a fixed place to take refuge in like running water. Even if we have nothing but three robes and a bowl, so long as we expect a single patron or relative to give us food, it is not the right way of living, because both the expectant and the expected are under restraint. When our body and mind are supported by this wrong way of living, how can we grasp the great right way of the Buddhas? As cloth dyed with deep blue looks blue and one dyed with deep yellow looks yellow, so our body and mind supported by this wrong life must be wrong. To seek Buddhism with such a wrong body and mind is hopeless just as we try to press sand for oil. We must always try to be one with the Buddhist truth on all occasions. To hoard food beforehand is all far from the Way. This fact we must carefully consider."

(25) My master said, "Buddhist practitioners must realize that every man has some great faults. Among them arrogance decidedly comes first. Against this arrogance many books, Buddhist and non-Buddhist, equally warn us.

"A non-Buddhist book says, 'Some poor persons are free from flattery but no rich man is free from arrogance.' It advises us not to be proud of riches. Nothing is more important than this. This needs our careful consideration.

"It is the most extreme arrogance that we think ourselves



superior to others, regardless of our low birth. But a man of this arrogance is rather easier to correct. Those who are rich and happy in the world are often proud that they are openly surrounded by their flattering kinsmen, and therefore become an object of envy and grief to their humble neighbors. How should rich, noble persons act not to grieve their neighbors? It is hard to criticize these persons; they cannot behave themselves prudently. Even their condescending deeds will grieve their humble neighbors if they act imprudently. Those who are mindful of this may be said to be careful of arrogance; while those who, ascribing their riches to their good retribution, are careless about the envy of their humble neighbors may be called arrogant persons.

"A non-Buddhist book says, 'Never pass the poor man's door in a vehicle.' Hence even if we are entitled to ride in a vermillion-lacquered carriage, we must be careful not to pass the poor man's door in it. Such is also found in Buddhist texts.

"Now, however, the practicants and monks of the Way tend to think themselves superior to others in wisdom and the teachings of the Way. We must not be arrogant towards others with this idea. It is the most extreme arrogance that we should find faults with and speak ill of our juniors, seniors or equals.

"An ancient person said, 'True, we may be defeated before a wise man, yet we must not win before a stupid man.'

"It is also wrong that we should speak ill of others because they have misunderstood what we are well acquainted with. Even in the case of discussing Buddhism we should not slander the shallow knowledge of our seniors. Especially we must be careful when foolish and dull persons may have envious feelings.

"During my stay in the Kenninji temple many monks asked me about Buddhism. Some of them were cursed with mistakes and faults but, carefully thinking of that point, I told them about the merits of Buddhism as they were, regardless of their mistakes. Therefore, nothing troublesome happened among us.



The foolish, too much attached to their own views, never fail to get angry, hearing others speak ill of their ancient virtuous persons, while the wise and sincere, when they become acquainted with the Buddhist truth, will realize mistakes of their own and of their ancient virtuous persons without others' information. At this time they will correct their past opinions. To this fact we must pay careful attention."

(26) My master said, "In the practice of the Way Zazen decidedly comes first. The Sung people mostly depended upon Zazen for their grasp of enlightenment. Even a man too stupid to answer a single question will be above a long disciplined clever man if he is strenuous in the practice of Zazen. Hence Buddhist practicants must be single-hearted in nothing but Zazen practice. Zazen alone is the Way of the Buddhas and Patriarchs. Follow no other way than this."

Then I said, "When I do Zazen and read the *kōan*<sup>18</sup> and *goroku*,<sup>19</sup> I can grasp one out of a hundred of the latter. But I cannot make so much advance in the former. Should I still go on with Zazen?"

In answer to this my master said, "True, you may have some intellectual grasp of one passage of the *kōan*, but it is a cause of being far from the Way of the Buddhas and Patriarchs. Just do Zazen upright day and night, free from any expectation of getting any benefits or enlightenment, and you are at once one with the Way of the Buddhas and Patriarchs. Ancient persons also advised to read the *kōan* and do Zazen equally, but after all they urged their monks to prefer the latter. Some became enlightened by grasping the core of the *kōan*, but for this they depended entirely upon their discipline of Zazen. True merit of the Way comes from the practice of Zazen."

Notes:

- 1) Kao-tsu. Another name was Liu-pang. He was on the throne from B.C. 206 to 195.
- 2) Shih-huang-ti (B.C. 259-210). The first emperor of the Chin dynasty who unified the Empire, subduing the six states.
- 3) Chü-yüan. cf. Note vol. 2, 22.
- 4) Pê-i. Shu-ts'í (B.C. 1100). Pê-i was the elder brother; Shu-ts'í, the younger. Noted for their loyalty and filial duty. When Wu-wang of the Chou dynasty intended to conquer Chou-wang they tried to dissuade him from doing so but in vain. Consequently retiring to the recesses of Mt. Shou-yan, they lived on bracken and died of hunger.
- 5) Chên-tsing K'ê-wên (1025-1102). A Buddhist heir to Huang-lung Hui-nan (1002-1069); founder of the Huang-lung School.
- 6) Yün-fên-yüeh. A Buddhist heir to Ta-yü.
- 7) Ta-tao Ku-ts'üan. A disciple of Fêng-yang Shan-chao.
- 8) Myōzen Butsujubō (1183-1225). First joined Bishop Eisai, later became the master of Dōgen-zenji, went over to China with Dōgen-zenji and died at the T'ien-t'ung monastery at the age of 42.
- 9) Teachings, true and temporary. cf. Note vol. 4, 2.
- 10) A single one. Ven. Myōzen.
- 11) Hsüan-sang Tripitaka (602-664). Born in Lo-yang in China. He decided to go to India alone to solve the doubt about the 'Setsudaijōron.' After many difficulties on his way he reached the Nālanda monastery, came home carrying sūtras, Buddha-images and Buddha-bones with him and translated a great many Buddhist scriptures into Chinese. Tripitaka: a title of a high priest who is acquainted with the doctrine of Tripitaka (scriptures, commandments and philosophy).
- 12) The Three stages of time. Past, present and future.
- 13) The Notes of the Mahāprajñā-pāramita-sūtra (Ta-chih-tu-lan) 100 vols. Compiled by the Venerable Nagarjuna (150-250) in South India.
- 14) Ta-hui Tsung-kao (1089-1163). A priest of the Rinzaï sect. His fame is associated with that of Hung-chieh (1091-1157), a priest of the Sōtō sect. He wrote the 'Shōbōgenzo' 6 vols.
- 15) 'Hsin-hsin-ming' (Shinjin-mei) 1 vol. Compiled by Seng-ts'an

- ( -606), the 3rd Patriarch in China and consisting of 624 Chinese characters. This phrase is the first one of this book.
- 16) In Zen Buddhism the practice of the Way, it is said, must be urgent as if we were trying to protect our head from catching fire, or as earnest as if Śākya Buddha chanted a verse in admiration of Puṣya Buddha for seven days and nights, standing on his tip-toes.
  - 17) Five sinful priests. Said to have deceived others by cajolery and consequently fallen into hell, still remaining slaves though born into the human world again.
  - 18) *Kōan*. cf. Note vol. 2, 13.
  - 19) *Goroku*. The analects of words and deeds of Zen high priests.

(1) My master said, "If one is concerned about someone's criticism of oneself it should be criticism made by a man who has grasped the truth. When I was staying in China Jü-tsung Zenji<sup>1</sup> of T'ien-t'ung monastery was going to appoint me his attendant priest. He said to me, 'True, Dōgen, you are a foreign monk but you are excellent in capacity.' I refused it flatly. The reason was that, though this matter might be reported to Japan and do much for my further practice of the Way, some enlightened fellow-monks, I was afraid, might slander me much to my regret, saying, 'Sung China seems to have none equal to this post if he, a foreigner, is appointed to this office of such a great temple.'

"Hence I wrote to him to that effect. Finally, finding how respectful I was for Sung China and how concerned I was about criticism from other excellent monks, he accepted my refusal and did not ask me to accept this post again."

(2) My master said, "A certain man said, 'I am too weak in body and mind to be equal to the practice of the Way. I am going to spend my whole life listening to the core of Buddhism and leading a solitary life, taking care of my delicate body.'

"This is quite wrong. Ancient Patriarchs were not all of sturdy build; all ancient persons were not excellent in capacity. It is not so long yet since the death of Śākyā Buddha. In the Buddha's lifetime all people were not excellent. Some of them were good and others not. Some monks committed extremely bad deeds and others had very limited capacities. But none of them humbled themselves enough to give up the idea of awakening to the Bodhi spirit or practicing the Way on account of their limited capacities. If we do not practice the Way in this life, in what other life can we expect to practice it as able and healthy men? What is most important in the practice of the



Way is that we are awakened to the Bodhi spirit and discipline ourselves even at the cost of our lives."

(3) My master said, "Buddhist trainees must not be covetous for food or clothing. Every man is endowed with food and life. Even if we seek more than is endowed, we shall find it impossible. Moreover, Buddhist followers do not want for food because they are given food by donors or receive it through their own begging. The monastery has common property. This is not operated as a private business. There are three kinds of food—fruits and berries, food acquired by begging, and that received from pious donors. All of them are pure. Any other food eaten by the people of the military, agricultural, industrial, and mercantile classes is not pure and should not be eaten by monks.

"Once there was a monk. When he died and went to hell, King Yama<sup>2</sup> said, 'His life has not ended yet. Send him back again to the human world.' Then a hell officer said, 'Indeed, his life has not ended yet, but his food is eaten up. 'The King said, 'Then let him eat lotus-leaves.' Since he was again in the human world he led his remaining life on lotus-leaves alone, unable to eat human food.

"Hence Zen monks are wanting for no food thanks to their strenuous discipline. Owing to the far-reaching light emitting from the Buddha's forehead or legacy left by the Tathāgata, we shall not exhaust our food and life even if we use it in the long kalpas of time. We must whole-heartedly devote ourselves to the Way, instead of seeking after food and clothing.

A sound mind is in a sound body,' so say books on medical science. If Buddhist trainees lead pure lives according to the Buddha's precepts or the deeds of the Buddhas and Patriarchs, their minds will accordingly be better.

"When Buddhist followers utter some words they must think thrice whether these words are useful or not for themselves and

others. If useful, they should be uttered. If not, they should not be spoken. It is impossible for us to master this all at once. So we should bear this in mind and start to practice it gradually."

(4) In a discursive talk my master said, "Buddhist trainees should never worry about food and clothing. Small and distant from India as our country is, there are many people, ancient and modern, who have distinguished themselves in the definite or esoteric teachings and who are well known to latter generations or who are born in families famous for poetry and music, or who have excelled in and have a taste for, literary and military pursuits or learning and art. Nevertheless, I have never heard that them were rich both in food and clothing. For the acquisition of such a fame everyone of them depends upon the fact that he devoted himself to his special area of concern, bearing poverty and forgetting everything else. Needless to say, the seekers of Zen Buddhism leave worldly life and never seek fame or profit. How could they become rich?

"In the Zen monasteries of Sung China, though in the age of degenerate Buddhism, there have come a large number of monks from distant districts or from their native places. Most of them are poor. But none worry about it. Their only fear is a failure to become enlightened. Some of them sit on the higher or lower floor of a lofty building in order that they may discipline themselves in Buddhism as single-heartedly as if they were in mourning for their departed parents.

"Now let me give here an excellent example as seen with my own eyes in China. There once came a monk from the distant district Shi-chwan. He carried nothing with him, except two or three pieces of Indian ink-stick. These cost 200 or 300 *mon*,<sup>3</sup> equivalent to 20 or 30 *mon* in Japanese currency. With this small number of Indian ink-stick he bought some sheets of thin paper of the lowest quality and made them into a coat and a *hakama*<sup>4</sup>. Every time he stood or sat in this paper dress,

there was the sound of crackling. But he was quite detached from his shabby appearance. A certain monk said to him, 'You had better go home and equip yourself with clothes.'

"He replied, 'My home is far away. On my way home I would be idling my time away and losing precious time in the practice of the Way. With these words he strenuously disciplined himself all the harder, regardless of the cold. Hence, in Great Sung we can find excellent priests."

(5) My master said, "It is said that when Hsüeh-fêng<sup>5</sup> once founded his temple he studied the Way every day in such poverty that he was sometimes obliged to abstain from food or sometimes to have only steamed rice and green peas. But later there were always at least 1,500 monks in residence. Such was the case with ancient monks. It must also be the case with modern ones.

"It is mostly due to riches and honors that monks fail in Buddhism. It was because Śākya Buddha was given 500 cartloads of offerings a day, that Deva-datta<sup>6</sup> became jealous of Him in the Buddha's lifetime. Riches and honors will not only spoil us but also lead others to evil. How is it possible for true Buddhist trainees to be rich? When we are often given devotive offerings by pious donors we undoubtably will be grateful to them for their benefaction.

"As is often the case with our countrymen, they give alms for their own sake. We often give flatterers presents. It is the way of the world. It will be a hindrance to the practice of the Way if we do so only to win the other's heart. Just practice the Way single-heartedly, bearing starvation and cold."

(6) One day my master said, "An ancient person said, 'We must hear, see and experience it.' Or some say, 'If we cannot experience it we must see it,' or 'If we cannot see it we must hear it.'



"This shows us that it is better to see than to hear; better to experience than to see; and that we must see something unless we have experienced it and we must hear something unless we have seen it."

(7) Again my master said, "In the practice of the Way we must try to cast aside innate attachment. First of all we must improve our own deeds and we shall find our mind much quieter. To this end we must observe the Buddhist commandments, and our mind will accordingly improve. Lay people in China habitually gather together at a mausoleum to discharge their filial duties towards their deceased parents and mimic weeping till they come to weep in reality. So Buddhist followers will finally awaken to the true Bodhi spirit if they energetically try to love and study the Way, though lacking in a Bodhi-seeking mind at first.

"Beginners in the Way must practice the Way, only following other monks, not trying, in a hurry, to know the customary ways of discipline. It is necessary to know them exactly only when we discipline ourselves unnoticed in the mountains or in a town. We can get enlightened if we discipline ourselves following other fellow-monks. It is just as when we go in a boat we can reach the other bank by trusting the destination to a skilled boatman even if we do not know how to row the boat. If we follow an excellent leader and unselfishly practice the Way along with fellow-monks we shall naturally get enlightenment.

"Buddhist followers, even if they have attained enlightenment, should not refrain from practicing the Way, thinking that there is nothing higher. There is no end to the Way, and therefore there must be discipline after enlightenment. We must bear in mind the story<sup>7</sup> of Chief Lecturer Liang-chu who disciplined himself and was enlightened under the guidance of Abbot Ma-ku."



(8) My master said, "Buddhist students should not think of practicing the Way in the future, but only at present—nay on this very moment—not idling their time away.

"Near here there was a layman. He has long been ill in bed. Last spring he made a promise that when he recovered from his illness he would not fail to leave his family, build a hermitage near a temple, join the repentance meeting<sup>8</sup> which is held twice a month, devote himself to daily practice, hear the teachings, and lead his remaining life, observing the Buddhist precepts according to his means. Later owing to careful medical treatment he got somewhat better. But again getting worse, he idled his time away. On the first of this January his illness suddenly took a grave turn. Troubled with ever-increasing pains, he had no time to spare to build his hermitage and carry the furniture there which he had previously prepared. Such being the case, he was obliged to live in a rented hermitage and died there in one or two months. The night before his death he received the precepts for Bodhisattvas and devoted himself to the Three Treasures. Judging from these good deeds at his death's door, his merit was above that of lay people who have died still attached to their families and with disturbed minds. But he should have left his home and entered the priesthood when he sought the Way the previous year. Then he could have become acquainted with life as a monk and practiced the Way for a year's time. From this one can conclude that the practice of the Way should not be put off till the future.

"We may want to practice Buddhism only after recovery from illness but this resolute frame of mind comes from the want of a Bodhi-seeking spirit. Our body consists of the four elements.<sup>9</sup> Who on earth can be free from illness? All ancient persons were not of sturdy build. Once there arose the earnest desire for Bodhi they disciplined themselves in Buddhism, forgetful of everything else. When an important thing befalls us, we

are habitually apt to forget trifles. Of course, the Way is vital to us, so we must try to grasp it during our lifetime and not idle our time away.

"An ancient person said, 'Never idle your time away.' While we are trying to cure our illness, we may get worse and feel still more pain. We should try to practice the Way while there is still only a little pain, disciplining ourselves before we get worse. In the worst case we must determine to practice the Way before we die. With medical treatment some will get better and others worse; without medical treatment some will get better and others will get worse. This fact we must carefully realize.

"Buddhist followers should not think of practicing the Way after securing a residence for practice and three robes and a bowl and the like. Those who are poor and short of robes, bowls and the like are approaching death day by day while waiting for these things to be prepared. Then what would one do? If one wants to discipline himself after having prepared a residence, robes and bowls, he will idle his life away. Realizing that even without robes and bowls one can discipline oneself in the Way, one should be strenuous in practice. Robes and bowls are only decorations for monks. The true monk never depends upon them. It makes no difference to him whether he possesses them or not. There is no need of energetically seeking them. But we must not think of abandoning our possessions. It is an unBuddhist idea to leave illness unhealed purposely when there is some hope of recovery. We must be willing to cast away our lives for the Way; but we should not waste our lives in vain. In medical treatment we may cauterize, if obtainable, one affected part with moxa or take medical preparations. It should not, however, keep us from practicing the Way. It is wrong that we put the treatment of illness above the practice of Buddhism."

(9) My master said, "In the ocean (the Huang-ho) there is a place called Lung-men, where often high waves arise. As soon as various kinds of fish have passed through those waves they never fail to become dragons. From this comes the name of Lung-men (Dragon Gate). In my opinion the waves there are not different from those of other places in height and saltiness. But, strange to say, as soon as fishes pass through the place they never fail to become dragons, their scales and bodies still remaining unchanged.

"The same can also be said of monks. They live in the same type of place as lay people do, but when they have entered a Zen monastery they never fail to become Buddhas and Patriarchs. They eat the same food and wear the same kind of clothing to protect themselves from starvation and cold as lay people do; but if only they shave their heads, wear square-shaped robes and take only two meals, i.e. breakfast and lunch, they soon become monks. The best way to become a Buddha or a Patriarch lies not far from us but near to us—in the fact that we enter a Zen monastery. It is just as the possibility for fishes to become dragons lies in the passing of the Dragon Gate.

"Worldly people often say that they cannot find any buyer for their gold in spite of their earnest desire to sell it. Such is also the case with the Way of the Buddhas and Patriarchs. The Way is open to us but we do not seek it; no grasp of Buddhism depends upon our own capacity. Everyone can become enlightened. It is entirely due to the intensity of our efforts whether we are fast or slow in becoming enlightened. The difference between efforts and idleness is attributed to the existence of a Bodhi-seeking mind. Lack of this frame of mind comes chiefly from our ignorance of the transience of human life. Every moment our flesh is changing and never remains unchanged even for a moment. Hence in this transient life we must not idle our time away.



"An old saying goes: 'A rat living in the granary starves within easy reach of food. An ox tilling the rice-field starves within easy reach of grass.' It shows us that a rat is hungry for food even when near it, and that an ox is lacking in grass even while walking amongst it. The same can also be said of man. Though already in the Way, he is not aware of it. So long as we remain attached to fame and profit, we cannot live in comfort all our life.

(10) My master taught, "In the doing of good and bad all enlightened persons have such deep thoughts that ordinary people cannot fathom them.

"Formerly Bishop Suffragan Eshin<sup>10</sup> ordered his servant to beat away a deer grazing in a garden. Then one of the people present said to him, 'You seem merciless. Why are you so stingy with your grass as to bother the beast?' The Bishop replied, 'If I don't order him to beat it away it will finally become accustomed to persons and will surely be killed when it approaches a wicked man. That is why I did so.'

"Indeed, beating a deer away may appear merciless, but it was done out of a very deep compassion for it."

(11) One day my master said, "If asked about Buddhism or the gist of its discipline monks must tell the truth. They should never tell what is not true, regarding the listener as poor in capacity or as a beginner weak in Buddhism. The Bodhisattvas' precepts state that even if a man of the Lesser Vehicle<sup>11</sup> calibre asks us about the way of the Lesser Vehicle we should answer him according to the Greater Vehicle.<sup>12</sup> Such was the case with the sermons which the Tathāgata delivered during his lifetime. Quite useless were the temporary and expedient sermons<sup>13</sup> which he delivered before he spoke the true teachings. Really useful are only his last true sermons<sup>14</sup> which were delivered shortly before He was to die. Hence we must



tell the truth alone whether the questioners can grasp it or not. When we see a man of the truth we should not judge him from his look and apparent virtue but from his true virtue.

"Formerly a certain man came and asked to become a disciple of Confucius.<sup>15</sup> Confucius said to him, 'Why do you want to become my disciple?' The man replied, 'When I saw you going to the Imperial palace I found you very grave and gallant. So I would like to become your disciple.' Confucius ordered his other disciples to take out his vehicle, clothes, gold and silver and other things, and gave them to the man, saying, 'You have never been devoted to me in a true sense. Rather you have simply been interested in my outer trappings.'

Again my master said, "Fujiwara-yorimichi,<sup>16</sup> the Chief Advisor to the Emperor, living at Uji, once came in the Caldron Hall<sup>17</sup> and watched a burning fire. An officer in charge found him and sent him out, saying, 'Who are you to come here without permission?' Then Yorimichi took off his shabby-looking dress and again appeared in full dress. The officer saw him at some distance and ran away struck by his stately manner. Then Yorimichi put his fine dress on the top of a pole and bowed to it respectfully. A certain man asked him why he did this. He replied, 'It is not because of my own virtue but because of this fine dress that I am respected.'

"Such is the reason why the foolish respect others. The same can also be said of those who make much of the words in the sūtras and creeds.

"An ancient person said, 'He has made a speech all over the country and never used untruthful words. He has ruled the country well and never made an enemy among the people.' This is because he says what he should say and does what he should. This is the saying and doing of a man who has grasped the highest merit and the core of the truth.

"Worldly people often say or act from the selfish view-point. It is probable that they do nothing but wrong; however, Zen

monks speak or act following the traditional examples, not their own opinions. This is the way which the Buddhas and Patriarchs have long followed.

"Buddhist followers should reflect on themselves—on how they should behave themselves. They are already disciples of Śākya Buddha. So they must follow the Buddha's way. In body, mouth, and mind they must conduct themselves rightly as the former Buddhas did. Even lay people tell us that clothes should be worn according to the previous style and that words must be uttered in accordance with the former ones. Still more should Zen monks be free from their own opinions."

(12) My master said, "Nowadays most Buddhist trainees, on hearing about Buddhism, want to have others know about their quick understanding and to give others good answers. So every word of their teacher falls unheeded. In the last analysis it is because they are attached to self too deeply to be awakened to the Bodhi spirit. Just give up this self-attachment, listen to your teacher and thereafter think about it calmly. If you find something unclear or doubtful, you should later inquire about it. If you understand it you should then express your understanding to your teacher. It is because you did not carefully listen to the lecture on Buddhism that you pretend to have understood it on the spot."

(13) My master taught, "In the reign of the Emperor T'ai-tsung<sup>18</sup> of T'ang, a fine horse was given to this Emperor by a foreign country. It could run 1,000 *ri* a day. Discontented with this present, he said to himself, 'Indeed I may cover a course of 1,000 *ri* on this horse but it is useless if I have no retainers to follow me.'

"Then he called Wei-chêng<sup>19</sup> and said to him, 'What do you think about this?' Wei-chêng said, 'I agree with you.' Then it is said that the Emperor ordered the messenger to send the

horse back with gold and silk on its back.

"The Emperor, though a layman, never saved a useless thing but sent it back. Still more should Zen monks have robes and a bowl alone. What is the need of hoarding useless things? Ordinary people who devote themselves to one thing need no private property, such as fields or manors. They only regard the people of the whole world as those of their own country and as their relatives.

*Hokkyō*<sup>20</sup> Jisō left a will to his sons, saying, 'You must devote yourselves to Buddhism.' Still more should Buddhist followers first of all devote themselves to one thing—Buddhism. This is the most important thing for monks to care about."

(14) My master said, "When Buddhist followers ask their master about Buddhism they should do so exhaustively and repeatedly to their complete understanding. Leave necessary questions unasked and necessary words unuttered, and it will be disadvantage to you.

"The master's answer is always given only after a question is asked by his disciples. So we must ask our master questions over and over again to our complete understanding even if we think ourselves acquainted with them. The master should in turn ask his disciples if they have completely understood his words."

(15) My master preached, "The mental attitude of Buddhist followers is different from that of ordinary people.

"When the late Bishop Eisai of Kenninji temple was still alive, it happened that all monks there did not have even a morsel of food to eat. Then a pious patron invited Bishop Eisai to conduct a memorial service and gave him a roll of silk in appreciation. Very much delighted with this, he returned to his temple with it in this pocket, not even having his own followers carry it. Then he gave it to a chiji-priest, saying,



'Make some gruel tomorrow morning by selling this.'

"However, a layman asked for silk, saying, 'To my shame I need some rolls of silk. If you have any, please give them to me.' Without a moment's delay Bishop Eisai got back the silk from the chiji-priest and gave it to the layman. Then the chiji-priest and many other monks were extremely doubtful about his action.'

"Later Bishop said, 'You may all regard my deed as wrong, but in my opinion all of you have come here to practice the Way. What if you abstain from food for a day and die of hunger? It will be a great benefit to you monks that I help worldly person now in need of living material.' So profound is the mind of a true Bodhi-seeker."

(16) My master said, "All the Buddhas and Patriarchs were originally ordinary people. When ordinary, they were never free from wrong deeds and a wicked mind or dullness and foolishness. Deciding to improve themselves, however, they all disciplined themselves under a good teacher, till they became Buddhas and Patriarchs. Such should be the case with the people of today. Merely because we are dull and foolish we must not depreciate ourselves. Unless we are awakened to the Bodhi spirit in this life, in what other life can we discipline ourselves? Energetic practice will surely bring us enlightenment."

(17) My master said, "There is an old saying about the emperor's way: he cannot accept good advice unless he has a mind as boundless as the empty sky. It means that the emperor should prefer his loyalist's words to his own view and act according to the way of an emperor in line with the truth.

The same can also be said of the traditional way of the discipline in the Way. Self-attachment will prevent us from hearing our master's words and grasping his teachings. When



we wholly listen to his teachings, forgetful of worldly affairs or starvation and cold as well as of our own personal views on Buddhism, we can understand them. Then we shall be able to clear our doubt and grasp the Buddhist truth. To grasp the true Way we must cast away our past views and single-heartedly follow our object. Then we are, as we are, truly enlightened persons. This is the first principle of Buddhist discipline.

# Notes:

- 1) Jü-tsung. cf. Note vol. 1, 29.
- 2) King Yama. The Great King of Hades in charge of seeing which creature committed sins and crimes and showing him the dreadful effects of his misconduct.
- 3) *Mon*. A monetary unit in ancient China and Japan.
- 4) *Hakama*. A divided skirt.
- 5) Hsüeh-fêng (822-908). A Buddhist heir to Tê-shan (792-865) and noted for his severe training.
- 6) Devadatta. Śākyamuni's cousin. Notorious for his wicked deeds. Once he tried to deprive Śākyamuni of his Buddhist authority in vain and died in agony.
- 7) The story of Chief Lecturer Liang-chu. The 21st of the '300 Stories of Shōbōgenzō' says:—  

First when Liang-chu came to Ma-ku, Ma-ku was mowing grass with a hoe. Ma-ku took no notice of Liang-chu but returned to his room and shut the door. Next day Liang-chu appeared again, but Ma-ku still kept the door shut. Finally when Liang-chu knocked at the door, Ma-ku asked who it was. As soon as Liang-chu told his own name he got enlightened.
- 8) The repentance meeting (upavāsa, upavasatha). Held twice a month—on the 15th and the 29th or 30th. Then monks gather together, read the precepts sūtra and confess their sins before those present.
- 9) The four elements. According to Buddhism all things consist of the four elements—earth, water, fire and wind.
- 10) Bishop Saffragan Eshin (942-1017). Another name was Genshin. He went up to Mt. Hiei at the age of 9 and became a monk when 13. Well versed in the doctrines of Kusha, Immyo, Tendai and Jōdo. Said to have been the forerunner of the Jōdo teaching (doctrine of the Pure Land).
- 11) The Lesser Vehicle. Studied by those who are poor in their capacity for Buddhism. Their main purpose is to perfect themselves, not to save others. It applies to the doctrines of Agon, Kusha, Jōjitsu, etc.
- 12) The Greater Vehicle. Studied by Bodhisattvas excellent in capacity. Their main purpose is to perfect themselves and save all others. It applies to the doctrines of Keron, Tendai, Zen, Jōdo,

etc.

- 13) Expedient sermons. Assumed teachings. cf. Note vol. 4, 2.
- 14) His last true sermon. The Saddharmapundarika-sūtra and the Nirvāṇa-sūtra.
- 15) Confucius (B.C. 552-479). First a petty officer of Lu State and later became a Great Judicial Officer and tried to crush the influence of the chief retainers in vain and went canvassing all over the country. His words and deeds are recorded in the 'Analects of Confucius.'
- 16) Fujiwara-yorimichi (992-1074). The first son of Fujiwara-michinaga. He became the *kampaku* (Chief Advisor to the Emperor) in 1019 and kept this post for 50 long years. He built the Byōdōin temple at Uji.
- 17) The Caldron Hall. The hall in the Imperial court and the Shōgun's residence where the water of a bath is heated.
- 18) Tai-tsung. cf. Note vol. 2, 3.
- 19) Wei-cheng. cf. Note vol. 2, 4.
- 20) *Hokkyō*. A rank of Japanese monks.

## 著者略歴

- 大正七年 愛知県に生まれる  
昭和18年 駒沢大学文学部東洋学科卒業  
昭和29年 早稲田大学・大学院英文学研究科修士課程卒業  
昭和36年 印度学仏教学会々員となる  
昭和42～3年 ハワイ・カリフォルニア・ペンシルバニア各大学で、Visiting Professorとして、「英訳、正法眼蔵」の巡回講義をした  
現 在 愛知学院大学・名古屋工業大学に在職

## *The First Step to Dōgen's Zen* — Shōbōgenzō-zuimonki —

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昭和47年6月25日 発行 © 1,200

著 者 横 井 雄 峯

発 行 者 浅 地 康 平

発 行 所 有限会社 山喜房仏書林

〒113 東京都文京区本郷5-28-4 東大赤門前  
振替口座 東京1900 TEL. 811-5361  
815-1410

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