

*A
Staff
for the
Mind*

Kokoro no Tsue

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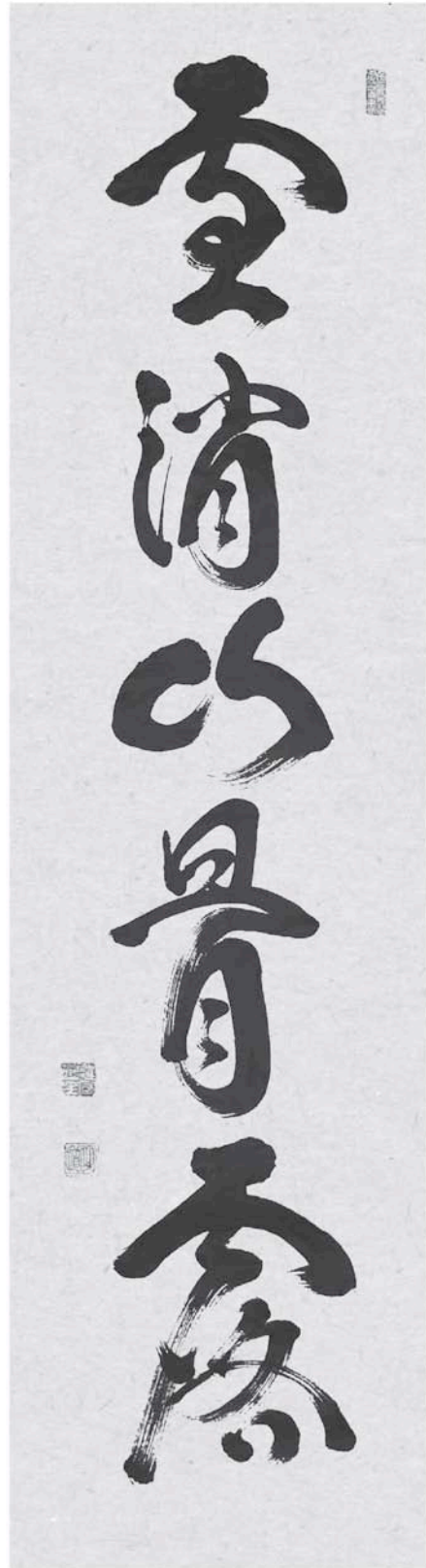
*When the snow melts,
the bones
of the mountains
are revealed*

Yuki shoshite san kotsu
arawaru

雪消山骨露

This is the first line of a couplet:

When the snow melts, the bones of
the mountain are revealed,
When the clouds disperse, the
inside of the cave brightens.



The snow is gone, and the mountains' shapes are visible again. The clouds have lifted, and the valleys that had been covered with mist can now be seen clearly. The snow that had covered the peaks, preventing them from being seen clearly, is gone, and their forms are revealed. The clouds have disappeared, and the whole landscape is revealed exactly as it is: "When the clouds disperse, the inside of the cave brightens."

During the winter, the mountains were completely hidden under the snow. But with the warmer days of spring, the snow melts and the shapes of the mountains are again revealed.

The completely white world in which everything is covered with snow is a world of complete equality, of everything as one. In the winter scenery, we can know this joy. But when the snow melts all is visible. The mountains' complexion is again evident. Before, everything had been one layer of white; now, each mountain can be seen individually to have its own shape, and we can enjoy that scenery fully.

Those clouds that had been covering the lines of the valley are burnt away by the morning sun's rays. The details of the scenery are clarified, and we again feel their freshness. Even though we are looking at the same scenery, it appears new, and we can receive it with a great freshness.

The ocean of clouds that had covered the valley rises, and the mountains' strong lines are revealed. Everything is fresh. Because the natural scenery is constantly born anew and fresh, we never tire of it.

We have to empty our minds at times, not carrying around so many thoughts, or we become very heavy and confused. Emptying our mind and not holding on to anything at all, we embrace a new way of feeling, a new way of looking at things and thinking about them. If we don't make this effort, then the clouds of grumbling and dissatisfaction come; we lose the freshness and there is no end to the misunderstanding.

Zazen allows us to clear out the clouds and snows of misunderstanding and be revitalized. We can't go slack in our effort to do this.

*And all the grasses,
trees, and forests
send forth new shoots*

Somuoku enrin
kotogotoku ho hasu

草木園林盡發萌

This phrase is part of a couplet:

Field fire cannot burn them all
completely away,
And all the grasses, trees, and
forests send forth new shoots

In Nara there's a field that's set on fire annually. In days past, this field of the Wakakusa Mountain was fought over by the monks from the temples of Kofukuji and Todaiji and of the Kasuga shrine. Both temples had many monks, and some were warriors. Their fighting became so severe that finally a wise person set fire to the field between the temples and said that the fire's path would mark the boundary. The monks from both temples agreed to this.

Though there's no conflict today, the tradition of burning the field continues and is something everyone enjoys. It keeps the mountain green, since burning the past year's dried grasses makes it easier for the new ones to sprout. In addition, the resulting ashes provide nutrition for the new spring growth.

For these reasons, a burning of the fields, the rice paddies, and their small connecting paths is a longstanding tradition. In nature the old grasses are renewed in this way, and the resulting green sprouts inspire our hope.

Our bodies as well are always being revitalized and shed. Hakuin Zenji, in his work known as Yasen Kanna (The Night Boat), writes that all living beings are made from yin and yang; this relationship is what composes all beings. Prior to that, there's a power and energy contained in us at birth that circulates throughout our organs. The organs relate to each other, working together. The various ki channels, the keiraku, also bring life energy to all parts of our body. The nutrition from the food we eat is ying, and it combines with the yin and circulates throughout our physical body.

The lungs are a yin organ and are set above our diaphragm; behind them we have the liver, which is a yang organ. Our heart is the sun, and the kidneys are water. The inhaling breath goes from the heart to the lungs; the exhaling breath, from our liver to our lungs. Whenever we exhale, the ki circulates through all the keiraku ducts, for three inches in exhaling and three inches in inhaling, and in this manner our

breath is built. Our ki channels through the keiraku fifty times a day, and the fluids always seek to go downward in our body. No matter what else we may need to do, our zazen and our mind have to be cared for. We can't ignore our body and overuse it, or its fires will burn too hot.

The mother (the lungs) and the father (the heart) take power from this ki. Without it, they get tired, and other organs suffer. When our body gets weak, the four elements of our organs--earth, air, fire, and water--lose their balance. When we don't maintain this harmony, we can become ill. One hundred sicknesses can arise from this imbalance if we're not careful. No medicine can cure this, no matter what doctor we might call.

We have to be correct in our efforts. If we force and push too hard, we sink and settle low, becoming sick and experiencing unhealthy symptoms. In days past the sage said that we've got to keep our heart's ki low. Then we won't be overwhelmed by hot and cold and the ki will not move our body around and our blood circulation will be regular. There will be no need to take any medicines. But those who haven't learned this are always in a hurry, raising their mind's ki to a high place. We have to make efforts, but if we hurry we create pressure on our heart.

Soshi said, "Those who are true persons, in order to align their life, should do it with their heels. For gathering the opinions of many people, do it from the throat." In this way Soshi taught how ki is gathered in the tanden by abdominal breathing, and our breath then comes out our heels.

Another person of old said that for people to have a true way of living and being, the ki should be put into the tanden. Then we bring forth light. With this light, we will know perfect balance and capability. To gather that ki well, we must put it in our belly's full tautness. Then, the warmth of our quiet, calm, deep energy won't overheat the lungs, because the ki moving through the lungs and heart won't be overexcited.

And all the grasses, trees, and
forests send forth new shoots

All things are given life by the same life energy. These words tell us to clarify this energy. Last year's meadows are burned, and the new grasses have turned the land green. From the ashes, new life comes forth. Nature is always being reborn. So are our bodies, as we exhale and inhale, putting ki into the belly and thence into the whole body. In that way we bring our ki naturally into full tautness. Even though this training can be difficult, it must be done. Without retreating or giving up, we can do it to the very finish. People of old learned this and applied efforts to be able to live in this way.

*A single blossom opens
and the world is in
spring*

Ikka hiraite tenka no
haru

一花開天下春

These words tell us that in one flower's blooming we can find the arrival of spring.

The Buddha was born among hundreds of flowers blooming at Lumbini, and his first words were, "In all the heavens and

all the earth, there is only One.”

As a human he expressed the greatest dignity of all humans’ truest mind, praising it with these words while pointing his right hand to the sky and his left hand to the ground. Pointing to the sky, he taught that there is no god or heaven or Buddha to which we should be attached and worship. Pointing to the ground, he indicated that there are no devils or other things by which we can be bound or that can make us suffer. Nothing is more full of chi than humans, and with this energy multitudes of people can live harmoniously. This huge mind is inside each of us, and it is to awaken to this wisdom that we have been born as humans. This is what he said with the words, “In all the heavens and all the earth there is only One.”

From his awakening by the banks of the Niruzen river, the Buddha taught humans the Truth continuously. That very Buddha had awakened at seeing the morning star and exclaimed, “How wondrous! How wondrous! All beings from the origin are endowed with this same bright clear mind to which I have just awakened. Only by being caught by attachments and desires do they not realize this!”

He awakened to this truth, and then for forty-nine years he brought this awakening to all beings, spreading it everywhere and putting everything he had into reaching all people and living and manifesting this truth. He taught everything in his sutras, then finally he silently held out one flower, and Kasho Sonja smiled spontaneously. The Buddha said, “I have the True Dharma Eye, the Marvelous Mind of Nirvana, the True Form of the Formless and the Subtle Dharma Gate, independent of words and transmitted beyond doctrine, This I have entrusted to Mahakashyapa.”

At the age of eighty, on the fifteenth of February, in the shade of the sala tree, he said, “I taught everyone I could and am finished now, and for those that remain I left the karmic affiliation with this truth.” He taught the Dharma completely and liberated all who heard, and with this he finished his life.

In the same way, all plants, as they give

birth to flowers, find the meaning of their being alive in that existence which is present.

One flower blooms and five petals open; the results come forth naturally. We first have to give birth to that flower, the greatest joy of our life. At one person’s awakening there is the awakening of all trees, grasses, and flowers, as the Buddha had experienced with his own awakening. He knew that it was the awakening of all people and that therein is the greatest joy of all humans. There is nothing greater than this, and nothing missing in it. No social fame or production or good fortune or possessions or any education or knowledge is as great as the joy of human life in awakening to our deepest mind. Then, with that awakened mind, we give birth to the awakening of as many people as possible. This is the greatest joy of all people. We also can be born and can die under the flowers, can finish this life as the Buddha did. Please be one with this great nature; know that when the one flower blooms, all of the world is then in spring.

*Fragrant,
the lone plum
by the valley stream*

Keibai ichi dan
kanbasshi

溪梅一朵香

In the valley in late spring, a single blooming plum branch is touching our mind. The whole of spring is felt in just this one bloom. In the Sung dynasty a poet wrote of the old peasant who, looking everywhere for spring, discovers it upon returning home in a plum tree

blossoming in his own front yard.

Seeking spring in this mountain and that valley, having walked around looking everywhere, I never could find it. With tired feet, at twilight I returned home, and there in the garden by the front gate two or three blossoms were on the plum tree. I realized that I didn't have to go looking for spring, it was already there.

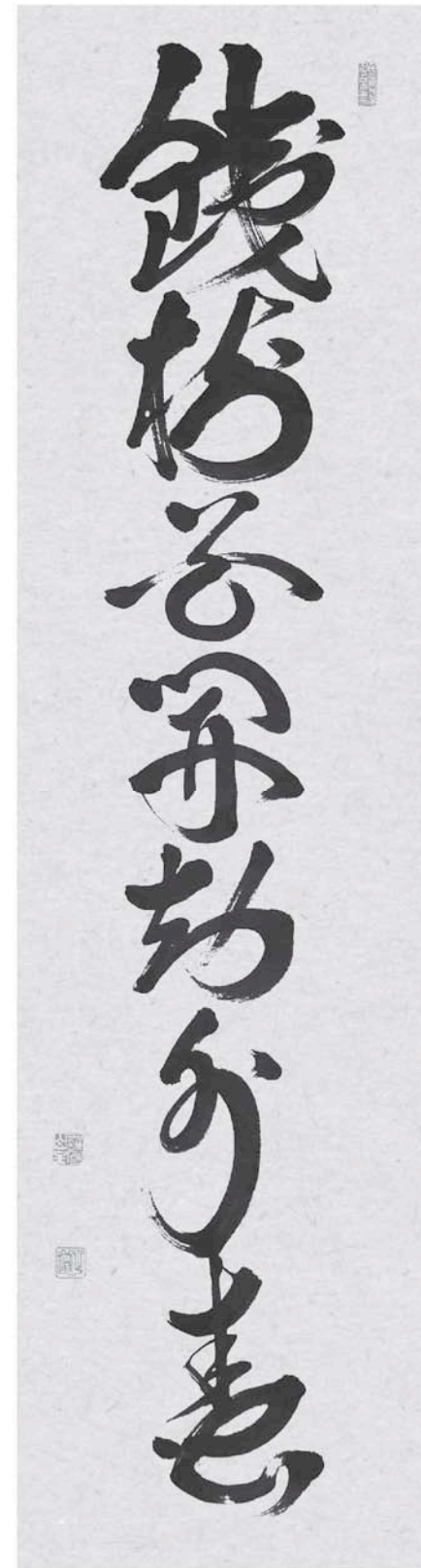
We can read this poem as one welcoming spring. We can also see it as a description of looking for the Path or truth or even looking for the Buddha. The plum flower itself is not spring, yet where the flower blooms and is fragrant, without mistake we experience spring and the promised land. This promised land is not to be found somewhere in India, in China, or at the eighty-eight temples of pilgrimage in Japan. Yet if our mind is settled, no matter where we are we can sit quietly. Then, for the first time we will meet the living Buddha.

Fragrant, the lone plum by the
valley stream

No matter where we go we can't find a living Buddha to gassho to. But if we do zazen until we realize the deepest emptiness, we can find the true Buddha. Just as the plum itself is not spring, the gassho or the form is not the Buddha, but within that form we find the birth of the Buddha. We must not just discover that but make a firm and determined vow to realize satori--this is the living Buddha as it is.

If we throw ourselves into the Buddha and are embraced by it, we are, as humans, the Buddha Dharma. Humans, as they are, are buddhas, and chanting the buddha's name is our voice calling to the Buddha within us. That is the gassho and the way of zazen. When we repeat the Buddha's name the form of the Buddha is manifested by humans; the chanting of the Buddha's name is its calling out in the voice of a human.

Fragrant, the lone plum by the
valley stream



*The iron tree blossoms,
the whole wide world
is spring*

Tetsuju hana hiraku
kogai no haru

鐵樹花開劫外春

Dogen Zenji wrote in the Shobogenzo
about the most basic koan of all:

To study the way is to study the
self

To study the self is to forget the
self

To forget the self is to be enlightened by all things
To be enlightened by all things is to remove the barrier between self and other.

In this way he taught the most basic Buddha Dharma. Learning the Buddha's way isn't about grasping grand concepts or mastering exotic philosophies. It's not about contemplating the beginning of the universe or changing careers and earning more money. Nor is it about being respected by others for following some noble truth. To really learn the Buddha's way is to meet and encounter the true you; there you will discover the true Buddha. When a deep place is realized directly, we know the source of the universe from our own experience. Each and every person's life energy and health are aligned in doing this.

Knowing our true self isn't about understanding the commonly held idea of a self. Our true self is not the modern idea of an ego and not some character or personality that can be mentally designed. Neither is it some legal entity or created persona.

When the Buddha said, "In all the heavens and in all of the earth there is only One," that was humans' basic truth spoken just as it is. A brand-new baby has no information or knowledge or life experience, but it still has the full light of the heavens and earth radiating through it. This radiance is the ultimate root of all human beings and their source. Instead of allowing that life energy to become hardened into an ego, we can be one with society and with the heavens and earth. Being at one with society and the heavens and earth is the truest base for us and our life energy.

This is why the Buddha said to look inside ourselves and take refuge there, rather than looking for refuge in anything outside. This is the self that is of the Dharma. The Buddha also said, "Who sees me sees the Dharma, and who sees the Dharma sees me." This self is the Dharma, exactly.

Ancients called this the Busshin or Bussho, Buddha Nature or Buddha Mind. It was

also called the great-clear-bright-round-perfect-mirror-mind, or was said to be mind as is. It was also referred to as the self that is embracing all things, and Rinzai Zenji called it the true person of no rank which comes and goes through the openings of this physical body. This is not something that can be known conceptually but is that which perceives through all of our senses and apertures.

Joshu used "mu" to refer to this true self which is not a name, nor a form, nor an ability. Hakuin Zenji called it the sound of one hand clapping.

Today modern philosophy calls it the absolute characterless self; to have awareness-experiencing-awareness is another way it is put. But there is no need for difficult words here. We need to let go of the ideas of form, of being male or female, old or young, rich or poor, good or bad. We have to let go of all of those expressions and of any idea of having or not having. We have to let go of any explanation and become life energy itself. This true self must at least once be realized clearly.

Our truest self is not something that has to be analyzed, explained, and accounted for. It's nothing like that; it's completely separate from all of that. We have to awaken to our original true nature and clarify it. We have to let go of the modern idea of an ego and a legal entity of a self, of all our hardened concepts of who and what and how we are.

To study the way is to study the self
To study the self is to forget the self
To forget the self is to be enlightened by all things
To be enlightened by all things is to remove the barrier between self and other.

Humans in every situation have a difficult time letting go of that ego. If we don't, we can't realize that true self that the ancients talked about. We get caught on the outer layers of the kimono and can't

see the true essence underneath.

To study the self is to forget the self

The ancients said that we must do this as we come and also as we go, all the time, never missing a beat. All of the Patriarchs struggled through this letting go of one's own thoughts and ideas about things to see the true energy and return to it. This is called the Great Death.

Many negating words such as void and empty are used to describe this. We don't want to hear about something that seems so negative; we want to live in a world of joy and positive ideas. But this Mu is not such a plain mu or energy. An infinite existence is inside this mu.

To forget the self is to be enlightened by all things
To be enlightened by all things is to remove the barrier between self and other.

This is to know the true self and go beyond any separation. Right there, a huge, wide-open state of mind is born, and from there we return to our regular awareness. This is where the flower blooms on the iron tree. But if we do not die totally first, we can't realize this flowering, just as people have a hard time realizing satori if they are not aware of their delusions first.

At the Niruzen River, after being on the mountain for six years doing ascetic training, the Buddha once again entered zazen and let go of everything. He entered the absolute state of mu, forgetting everything that is. We have to enter this state of mind, or we can't know the true meaning of Buddhism. But that deepest darkness is not yet the furthest point. We let go of everything and come and go from that deep, dark place. Then we know the ultimate state of mind from which the Buddha saw the morning star and said, "That's it! That's it! That's me!" Hakuin heard the morning bell ringing and was suddenly awakened. The samadhi of mu can also be broken through by hearing

the wind--the mu becomes the wind, and we know that we ourselves have become that. Without an ego we realize the truest Self. That which is not our ego becomes the true Self, and then we can realize that everything is our true Self. Only once we have forgotten our manufactured self can we be confirmed by all of the tenthousand things.

Put simply, we swap an other for our self.

This is like a parent who always puts the needs of the child first. The parent gives everything for the child's cultivation, no matter how miserable or dirty or painful. Only by knowing this true self can we be truly educated. In a single flower or one moment's scenery we can realize this true self. It is our duty to manifest this and become it.

Poets find this true self in the rain and wind and all growing things and write about it. Sales people find it in what they sell and through the people they encounter. Scientists find truth in what they research--when for the first time we find this true self we see how the whole universe works, and this is what it means to realize Buddha. To encounter that true self is to see everything become Buddha.

To forget the self is to be enlightened by all things

To be enlightened by all things is to remove the barrier between self and other.

This means that we know that the world is who we are and that we are all already in liberated harmony. This is our most basic koan, in which we are all confirmed by all others and we see that all of us are one great being, that it is all me.

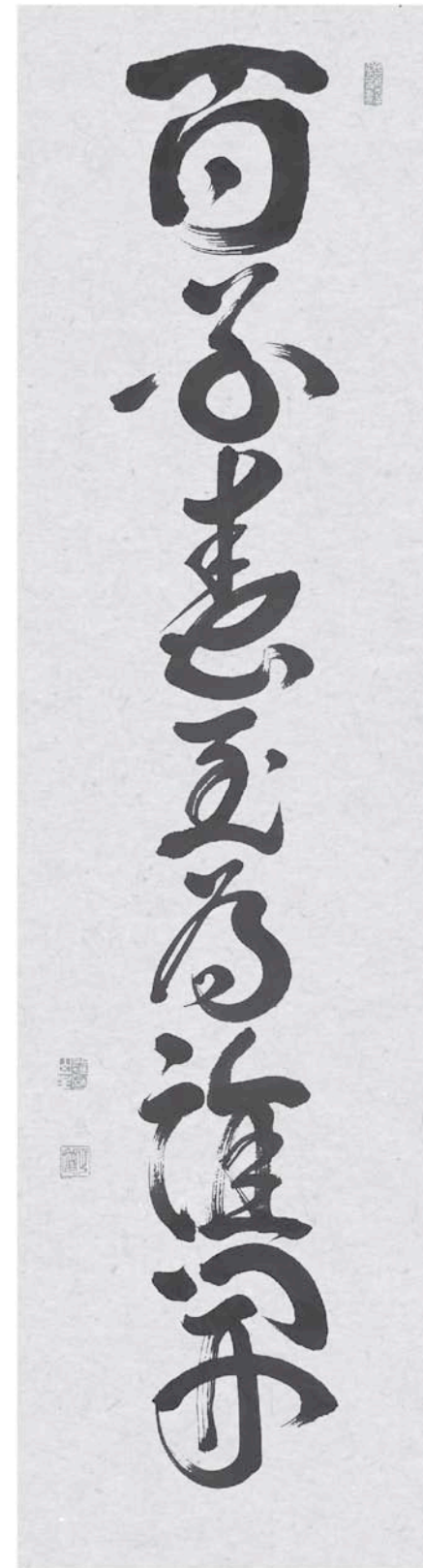
People who are alive will always die, and what laughs will always cry, but all of it is mu. When we experience the truth directly, we are always laughing with this world and with this true emptiness. We then know mu completely.

If all day long we continue, whether we are coming or going, then the iron tree gives forth a flower. Born as a human

in this world, we can encounter this awakening of our true mind. We will see how wonderful it is to be human and know that this is the greatest good fortune. To realize this directly is the greatest thing we can do.

This is not the good fortune of a single generation. For all those to come, we know this true joy and give birth to that true self. This is the truth of the Buddha Dharma.

The iron tree blossoms,
the whole wide world is spring.



*The hundred flowers
that come with spring -
for whom
do they bloom?*

Hyakka haru itatte ta ga
tame ni ka hiraku

百花春至為誰開

Setcho offered a poem for the case about Seppo in the *Blue Cliff Record* known as "Seppo's Grain of Rice." Seppo says to the assembly, "Pick up the whole great earth in your fingers, and it's as big as a grain of rice. Throw it down before you: if, like a lacquer bucket, you don't understand, I'll

beat the drum to call everyone to look.”

This is the poem Setcho wrote:

An ox head disappears
A horse head emerges
In the mirror of Sokei absolutely no
dust
He beats the drum for you to come
look, but you don’t see:
When spring arrives, for whom do
the hundred flowers bloom?”

Seppo Gison Zenji (822-908 a.d.) lived on Seppozan, or Seppo Mountain, as the abbot of the temple there. He had trained with Tokusan Zenji, from whom he received transmission. Seppo took a long time to become cultivated. As they say, great vessels are carved from large trees, and large trees take a long time to grow. When he was young, Seppo went three different times to train with Master Tosu Zenji, and he was also with Master Tozan, where he entered the assembly nine times, yet at neither of these places was he truly enlightened. He was so frustrated at his slowness and thickness that he went on a lengthy pilgrimage, offering merits at every opportunity to aid his great vow to break through, no matter what.

He carried a large rice paddle with him on this pilgrimage, and everywhere he went he did the job of cooking rice. He would prepare the rice for as many as eight or nine hundred monks, which is not a simple task; it truly was hard labor. There was no time for zazen, but he did his work with a great mind for the possibility of everyone’s awakening. Today, the Seppo Quarters is one of the names for the kitchen.

His older brother disciple Ganto was a very advanced monk. One day Ganto and Kinzan and Seppo were traveling together, as they often did, to clarify their true mind. Though he was younger than Seppo, Ganto had broken through at an early age; he was quite different in temperament from Seppo. Seppo did his training consistently and without ceasing

but couldn’t break through. Once when Seppo and Ganto were doing pilgrimage together, they were snowed in by a blizzard.

Ganto, since he could not do any more traveling, rolled out his futon and slept. Seppo sat zazen all through the night, working on his state of mind. At midnight, when he saw that Seppo still had not gone to sleep, Ganto said, “Why don’t you stop and go to bed? Lie down and get some sleep.” Seppo answered that he was not yet in the state of mind where he could sleep that easily. His deepest mind was still a tangled mess. He told Ganto that as long as he had that, even if he lay down, he could not sleep.

Ganto arose and said, “Now what is so difficult? Tell me your state of mind.” Seppo explained in detail, describing everything he had been through.

To this Ganto replied vigorously, “Look at what you’re saying! The things of true value aren’t things that come in from the outside gate!”

When Seppo heard that, he abruptly understood directly, awakening deeply and completely. Spontaneously he prostrated to Ganto, saying, “Today for the first time I have heard the teaching.” He was so deeply impressed and moved that he shouted out in a loud voice. Thanks to Ganto he had realized kensho for the first time, at the age of forty-nine.

While Seppo had been a rather slow and dull monk, once he did awaken, his function was like a ball of light, and those who trained with him knew his power well. More and more people gathered around him, until there were never fewer than a thousand training with him. Among the forty or more great monks to whom he gave birth were Unmon Bunne Zenji, Gensho Shibi Zenji, Hofuku Juten Zenji, Yosei Dogo Zenji, and Suiga Reitan Zenji.

Seppo Zenji of this Seppo Mountain once said to the assembly gathered there, “This world, I can pick it up in my fingers and it becomes like a grain of rice in size. I blew, and it disappeared somewhere. Please everyone, find and gather it up, ring the bell, beat the drum and look for it!”

This whole universe, put into a little pinch, becomes the size of a grain of rice: this is what he said. This is truly huge, beyond conceit or bragging. One who doesn’t know may think that’s what it is, but talking about it is useless. But this didn’t start with Seppo Zenji. A similar story is found earlier in the *Vimalakirti Sutra*:

“The Licchavi Vimalakirti replied, ‘Reverend Sariputra, for the Tathagatas and the bodhisattvas, there is a liberation called “Inconceivable.” The bodhisattva who lives in the inconceivable liberation can put the king of mountains, Sumeru, which is so high, so great, so noble, and so vast, into a mustard seed. He can perform this feat without enlarging the mustard seed and without shrinking Mount Sumeru. And the deities of the assembly of the four Maharajas and of the Trayastrimsa heavens do not even know where they are.

“Only those beings who are destined to be disciplined by miracles see and understand the putting of Sumeru, into the mustard seed. That, reverend Sariputra, is an entrance to the domain of the inconceivable liberation of the bodhisattvas.”

This is how Vimalakirti taught. He said that although the Buddhas have satori and liberation, which are inconceivable achievements, if Bodhisattvas can realize this liberation of the Buddhas, then Mount Sumeru can be put into one mustard seed, with this seed not seeming narrow or restrictive, and Mount Sumeru not being twisted or deformed either. All of those Buddhas living there, as is, on Mount Sumeru, are also contained in the mustard seed. This is how it’s written, and Vimalakirti wasn’t just telling tales to make a point. Our state of mind is like this. If we understand it well, we know how clearly it is expressed here.

For example, our eyes are not so large, only about three centimeters in width. Yet those three centimeters can take in the whole universe in a glance. A huge mountain, a great ocean, can fit into our small eyes. How can such a great miracle happen? It’s possible because there’s a world beyond size, beyond any lens,

where there is only emptiness. Mu is not “nothing,” but a place where everything that is can settle with no conceived idea of good or bad. It’s that huge. It is our mind, our life, our energy.

Oh! Great all embracing Mind!
It is impossible to measure the
height of the heavens,
yet the Mind is above the heavens.
It is impossible to measure the
thickness of the earth,
yet the Mind is below the earth.
The sun and the moon shine with a
great radiance,
yet the Mind is the source of that
radiance. . . .
Within the Mind, the four seasons
open in their sequence,
Within the Mind the sun and the
moon move.
All of the ten thousand things exist
within the great Mind.
Oh! Great all embracing Mind!

Our Mind holds the entire universe. There’s no sense of narrowness, not even when we encounter difficulties. If we encounter them they don’t confuse us. We resolve them with spaciousness and simplicity, not with concepts but with our mind’s actuality. If we hold on to our ego over and over again we may face things, but we get small and are easily caught.

Setcho says,

An ox head disappears
A horse head emerges
In the mirror of Sokei absolutely no
dust
He beats the drum for you to come
look, but you don’t see:
When spring arrives, for whom do
the hundred flowers bloom?”

One after the next each thing appears and disappears. Everything comes in front of the mirror and then disappears, infinitely.

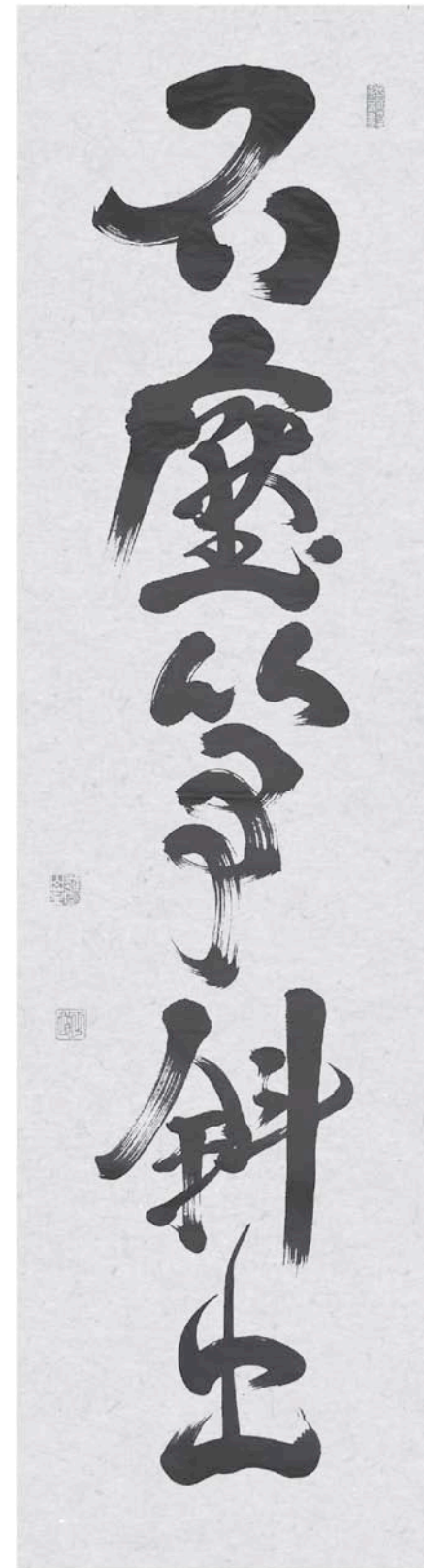
The Sixth Patriarch, Sokei, offered this poem:

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

This bright mirror for which there is no stand is from the origin empty; this mind shows all happenings, with no speck left behind. The sun as well is only the mind's one moment of exercise. All the things of the world are only a moment's appearance in the mirror; this is why we can't find where they went.

But Zen is not nihilistic. If there is anything like that remaining, then there are still clutter and shadows in the universe. Our state of mind is pure from the origin, without one thing added or subtracted. In the spring it's the hundred flowers, and in the autumn, the bright moon. In the summer the cool breeze blows, and in the winter there is snow, so cold, white, and pure.

In the spring these flowers bloom everywhere. For whom do they bloom? They bloom for no one; beyond a self and an "other" they bloom. Beyond subject and object they bloom. They are of the world beyond division into two, the mysterious world of the not-two. For whom does the breeze of summer blow? For whom does the autumn moon's beauty radiate and shine? For whom is the winter's snow so pure and bright? It's not for our mind or to exist merely as phenomena in the world. When the world and we become one, each and every phenomenon shines with truth, and this is what all of us have to know with our true inner master. The realization of this truth is the place where we can add in no extra thoughts or ideas, and this is Zen. The ultimate great joy and happiness is present. What could be more joyful than the creation of the heavens and earth, that pure blooming of phenomena into the way of the world?



*Pressed by a rock, the
bamboo grows at a
slant*

*[Hanging from a cliff,
the flower grows upside
down]*

Ishi oshite takanna
naname ni ide
[Kishi ni kakatte hana
sakashima ni shozu]

石壓竹斜出

Grasses, even if they are weighted down by a rock, will, of themselves, give forth a new sprout. A bamboo shoot, even if it's beneath a rock, will push forth and break through a crack, reaching upward, becoming a new sprout.

If a chrysanthemum seed has been dropped on a rock wall, it will sprout even if it has to grow upside down, and when the time is right the plant will bloom.

These phrases are from the *Kaian Kokugo* of Daito Kokushi. In the Records of Rinzai it is written that when Ojoji was calling on Rinzai and they went to see the zendo, Ojoji asked if in the zendo there were monks reading sutras. Rinzai replied, “No, they are not reading any sutras.”

Daito Kokushi brings up this case and asks, “Why did Rinzai say that?” Answering he says, “A bamboo that has been pressed down on by a rock without fail will send a shoot right up through a crack in that rock.”

One of Daito Kokushi’s monks asks him about the next part of the exchange between Ojoji and Rinzai: “Ojoji then asked, ‘Well then, are they doing zazen?’ and Rinzai said ‘No they are not doing zazen.’ Why did he say that?”

Daito Kokushi answers, “Hanging from a cliff, the flower grows upside down.”

What this means is that we will only bring forth our truest and greatest energy when we are working against things, when circumstances are against us. If we are safely harbored, if we are comfortable and protected, the real shoot won’t burst forth.

Shima Akishito was the pen name of a man who was condemned to be executed. His original name was Nakamura Satomu. He was born on August 28, 1932, to a poor family living in a poor village in Manchuria, where setters had gone in great numbers.

Because the situation in China was so severe and difficult, Akishito’s family returned to Japan. But after they were back in Kashiwasaki in Niigata, his mother died of tuberculosis. Having had tuberculosis himself, he missed school frequently, until he had the lowest grades in his class and was shunned and ignored by others. He began roaming about, never going home and of course not going to school. The wandering, stealing, and shoplifting continued, as he did what he needed to

stay alive. He became a confused and unstable youth.

He couldn’t hold a job because he wouldn’t do work he didn’t feel like doing and would argue with his boss and get fired. Without a job, he had no way to obtain the necessities of daily life. In those days, Japan was a poor country, and nearly everyone lived in poverty, but he was starving and miserable.

In 1959, on a rainy night, he was so hungry that he went to a big house in the small village. Thinking that no one was home, he snuck in the back gate and picked a purse out of a drawer in the kitchen. In it was two thousand yen, a huge amount of money at the time. The woman who lived there suddenly came back and was astounded at finding him in the house. He was shocked by her arrival and panicked. Without even knowing what he was doing, he grabbed a cleaver and slaughtered her.

He as caught, tried, found guilty, and sentenced to be executed. While he was in prison, the chaplains and the guards tried to educate him, but he had no interest and expressed great grief about his birth, wishing never to have been born. He cried out that people had ignored him and hated him, and now he was to be executed. This was his life’s unlucky fate, and he wished he had never been born. He cried about that constantly, but the chaplain kept telling him that there must have been one happy thing in his life, he must have one memory that wasn’t difficult. But he couldn’t remember a thing that was happy in his whole life.

He was moved to Matsuyama prison, where he had access to books. There he read essays by Kaiko Ken, a well-known writer. In the book titled *The Emperor’s New Clothes*, he read about an autistic child who had never been able to speak and thus drew pictures to tell what was in his heart. When he read that essay, he remembered that when he was in junior high school, his art teacher, Yoshida Kodo, had told him that even though his pictures were unskillful, they had excellent composition. He had had an innate ability to work creatively, without copying

others. His teacher had encouraged him as he drew, and he remembered that and wanted so much to talk to her again that he wrote and asked her to send a picture by her students. She responded with a caring letter, enclosing a picture and a photo as well as three poems. Here he encountered tanka poetry for the first time. In those three brief poems he felt as if his hometown was right in front of his eyes. In those short poems he could see all of the scenery and all of his past history. He was captivated by this mystery.

He received permission to have a pencil and paper and spent all of his free time writing tanka. He must have had inborn talent, and he threw himself into his writing. The guards encouraged him and every day gave him the poems from that day’s newspaper. These poems were by people from all over, with the best ones selected to appear in the paper. Kubota Itsuo, the best poet of the time, was included in the selection, and when Shima Akishito saw one of his poems he was stopped short. He said that even though he was a prisoner, he was always writing, and though he never knew when he would die, he knew that his instincts surged through the poems. He wanted to admit and atone for his crime. At the same time he wanted to be alive and with the slightest encouragement he could express that amazement at being alive. From this place, his tanka were born. One after another, he sent his astonishing tanka to Kubota Itsuo, who said he had never seen poetry like that.

Kubota Itsuo said that while he had never met Akishito, from his poems he could see him living in a small solitary cell from which there was no way to see outside. There was only a very high and small window with glass that he could not see out of. Even if he could have seen outside, there was only a sand garden beyond the window.

On one side of the cell there was a door through which the guard put his food and through which his guard could look in on him. In this world where everything was decided for him, his deep thoughts flourished. The expression of each mind

moment was to see life, and seeing his life he reflected on it. He said that he had to die to pay for what he had done, and that he had only a small amount of stability in each day’s life, and from this place his poems were born. His poems were never the same. It was to this degree that he wrote about today’s deep life and his profound experience of it, and his words were felt deeply by this poet who responded to Akishito’s poems every single day.

Akishito was sad about others and about missing people. One poem went like this:

If I had had a mother
never would I have committed
such a life-taking crime
if only I could apologize to her
now

He was saying: I missed out on any love from my mother. Starving for love, this me was always lonely. But now I greet death each day, with one day less to live. The ants come to see me; I hope they’ll come today too. I put a gift of candy down for them and wait for them today.

The sentence with the final penalty
decided
longing for a longer life
like the ant chased by a finger

He was in the worst possible circumstances. He knew there was no way he would ever leave the prison alive. Pressured by that fact, with an empty mind, he just crawled after his life. The ants could leave, but he never could. His thoughts were simple and basic.

The condemned criminal wanting
deeply to do something at last
for society--but who will want HIS
eyes

Even with this life there must be some way I can be of use. I have given nothing and will have left nothing behind to be remembered for--this is so melancholy. Here I am born in this world, I want to leave something and not just be resented

by people. He became this state of mind, but he knew that the only thing he could do would be to give his eyes. But who would want the eyes of a murderer? No one would want his eyes. He wanted to leave something behind in the world, but all he could see was how dirty and tainted he was and reflect on that and look at it, directly and sadly.

If I had had a mother
never would I have committed
such a life-taking crime
if only I could apologize to her
now

If my mother had been around, I would probably not have ended up as a person who murdered others. This would not have happened. But I killed a woman who had two children. I took from those children what was my most important thing, a mother. Those two must hate and resent hate me. I missed my mother so much and yet I killed their mother with my own bare hands. When he was still he would remember and reflect on it, without pause.

He received a letter from his father. Since his mother had died, his father was all alone, having to do all of the shopping and all of the housework by himself. When he went out to shop, people would point and say that he was a murderer's father. Because his father didn't want to hear that, he would always go shopping when he knew people wouldn't be around. In one instant of overheatedness and panic, Akishito had taken away all of his father's good fortune and security.

Akishito lived for eight years in the prison, every day wondering if this was to be his last day. Every day he was pursued by the fear of dying that day. He felt that only by accepting his mistake could he be rid of his guilt and that dying was the only way to atone for it. Then one day, the time came.

He wrote this poem on the evening before his execution:

Having come this far
never knowing about possessing

this clear mind
pressed by tomorrow morning's
execution
only the last night is left

After eight years of fearing death and being horrified that this day would come, now it was here. He knew that his dying would compensate for the death of the mother, but his instinct was to stay alive. Although this was a horrifying time, his mind was at peace. Why was he so settled now, when he had dreaded this day and been afraid for eight years? He could not understand.

The prison in the November weather was usually chilly, but he felt very warm. It was the last night he had--was that why? But why this quiet clear mind? He had never known he even had this mind. Had he known this mind eight years ago, he wouldn't have killed someone, would not have committed the crime. Now with this clear quiet mind he was seeing how he had lost his true self. Finding his truth directly, he knew it for the first time.

In the *Dhammapada* the Buddha says,

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

These are truly the words of the Buddha. This is that Nirvana discovered by the Buddha where greed, anger, and ignorance have all been extinguished. These three--greed, anger, and ignorance--are all results of the ego filter, through which we gather desire, becoming attached, leading to the heaviness with which we then commit mistakes.

We have to clarify and purify our mind until it's so transparent that there is not one thing left to hold on to or believe in.

Akishito did not train, nor did he have an education, yet looking straight at death, his inner being was able to see that mind that is no different from the Buddha. Just as Rinzai said, the monks are not studying. "No, they are not reading any sutras." "Well then, are they doing zazen?" "No they are not doing zazen."

Pressed by a rock, the bamboo
grows at a slant
Hanging from a cliff, the flower
grows upside down

Only when we meet up with great opposition, an opposing force, can we see our true source from afar and know how to see it clearly and directly.

*Harsh winds gust
across the great plains,
Misty rains darken the
enormous sky*

Taiya ryōhyō satsu
satsu
Chōten sou mōmō

大野兮涼颼颼
長天兮疎雨濛濛

This describes a truly expansive scenery, a wide-open plain reaching in every direction, where the horizon and the sun are one in their vastness. The wind blows continuously with nothing to obstruct it. Always, always blowing, it fills the huge space and then, suddenly, an enormous

rain cloud appears, and the expanse is covered with rain as far as the eye can see.

This huge, spacious scenery without boundary is our infinite state of mind. We are one with the universe. The whole of space is filled with great rain clouds quenching the thirsty earth. This state of mind is the state of mind of Buddha Nature. If it's not like this, it's not the real thing.

The Buddha said often that in these three worlds there is only one person, and this person is this whole world. He said often that if we depend on things of form, or depend on a self, or depend on an other, then we are living in a house that is burning down.

This world will always burn and disappear like a house on fire. Nothing will remain. There's not one place in this world that's secure; upon which we can depend. We have no place to turn. Liberation comes only with discovering our true nature. This world throbs with pain and misery--how can there be liberation? The Buddha's taught tirelessly everywhere he went for forty-nine years. All 84,000 sutras are about achieving liberation and nothing else.

When we realize this we know that the sheep cart, the deer cart, and the horse cart, the teachings of the three vehicles, are not actually separate but are all telling the one Truth. These are all various segments, parts of the one road and the one Dharma gate. In the teaching of the Buddha there is no such thing as a large vehicle or a small vehicle, entering by hearing or entering by experiencing, depending on self or depending on other. There are no such differences. The great way is only one, that ultimate Great Way that liberates. All people are one.

Hakuin Zenji said in The Song of Zazen, "Not two, not three, straight ahead runs the Way." What is this great path?

The Buddha said, "I have the True Dharma Eye, the Marvelous Mind of Nirvana, the True form of the Formless and the Subtle

Dharma Gate, independent of words and transmitted beyond doctrine. This I have entrusted to Mahakasyapa."

Put another way, it's the complete and pure unequaled awakening. It's the deep, solemn, true awakening to human's most sacred character. We are all of the same objective and subjective, one and the same, prior to any division. What a wonderful awakening it is to realize that the universe and I are one becoming!

In Zen it is said, "The heavens and earth and I are of one root, all things and I are one becoming." The mountains are me, the river is me, the flowers are me, and the birds are me. There is no self and no other there. No reason to separate these at all. To awaken to this mind is to know the Buddha Dharma and Zen.

The world is becoming more and more advanced technologically, but the world of mind is not at all explored or understood. We talk about the freedom of individuals, freedom of the state, freedom of countries, freedom of worlds, but we speak this way because we are all caught on this ego and do not recognize that these freedoms are all one and the same. Only when we recognize this can we stand on this true self as the one self which is the base for all of us, and from there help each other. This is true for all of humankind, and it's something everyone knows. We need to let go of ourselves to receive this, accepting everything. We all know that this is the source of great energy and awareness, but we just don't do it. To walk and actualize this is the truth of Zen.

"In all the boundless realms of space not even a hair can be inserted. From the limitless past to the immediate present we have never separated from this very moment." All that surges though the universe as the ultimate subject is matched perfectly. We have to realize this until we are the flower, until we hear the bird and it is ourselves singing, until all things are me and the whole world is myself. This huge awakening must be realized. This is where past, present, and future are us and

we are never separate from this present moment. This ripple continues in each and every moment. In every moment we are making history, so what we express must be the true mind moment, and that true mind moment is the Buddha Dharma.

As the Sixth Patriarch said, “To externally be bringing forth no thoughts to what we perceive and to be unmoved by anything within, this is zazen.”

We are, in every day and in every moment, working on this awakening for all beings. Then the freedom of the Buddha Dharma will provide rain to this whole world and to all people and all existences and quench their deepest thirst.

*Quiet meditation does
not always need hills
and streams
Once mind is
extinguished, even fire
itself is refreshing*

Anzen wa
kanarazushimo sansui o
mochiizu
Shintō o mekkyaku
sureba hi mo onozukara
suzushi

安禪不必須山水
滅卻心頭火自涼

This is a well-known couplet from a poem by To Junkaku. To Junkaku said that at the hottest time of summer, you should close the gate, put on your robes, and do zazen. Then the sparse shade from the bamboo and pines will reveal its coolness.

Quiet meditation does not always
need hills and streams
Once mind is extinguished, even
fire itself is refreshing

For zazen we don't need a cool place. If dualistic thinking has fallen away, then even when it's as hot as fire we can accept the heat as if it's cool. When we do zazen, we don't need to go into the mountains. If we make choices this way, what we're doing isn't real zazen.

As Daito Kokushi said, "If we do zazen on the bridges of Shijo and Gojo Streets, right smack among all the people who are coming and going, this is our zazen." We do not have to be deep in the mountains to polish our zazen. That is not the point.

Every day in our busy lives in the busy world, smack dab in the middle of everything, right there we extinguish our small selves completely and sit through to this still place within. More than in the quiet mountains, clarity is found here. It's better to be in the heat and among the bustling crowds than to be cool and quiet with a defended, narrow, small-minded, and guarded zazen. In the midst of the heat and the clatter, we let go of ourselves and go beyond that divided ego mind. Then our zazen is alive.

Our zazen then moves beyond the conceptual. A monk asked Master Tozan Gohon Zenji: "When cold and heat come, how can we avoid them?"

Master Tozan said, "Why don't you go to the place where there is no cold or heat?"

The monk said, "What is the place where there is no cold or heat?"

Tozan replied, "When it is cold, the cold kills you; when it is hot, the heat kills you."

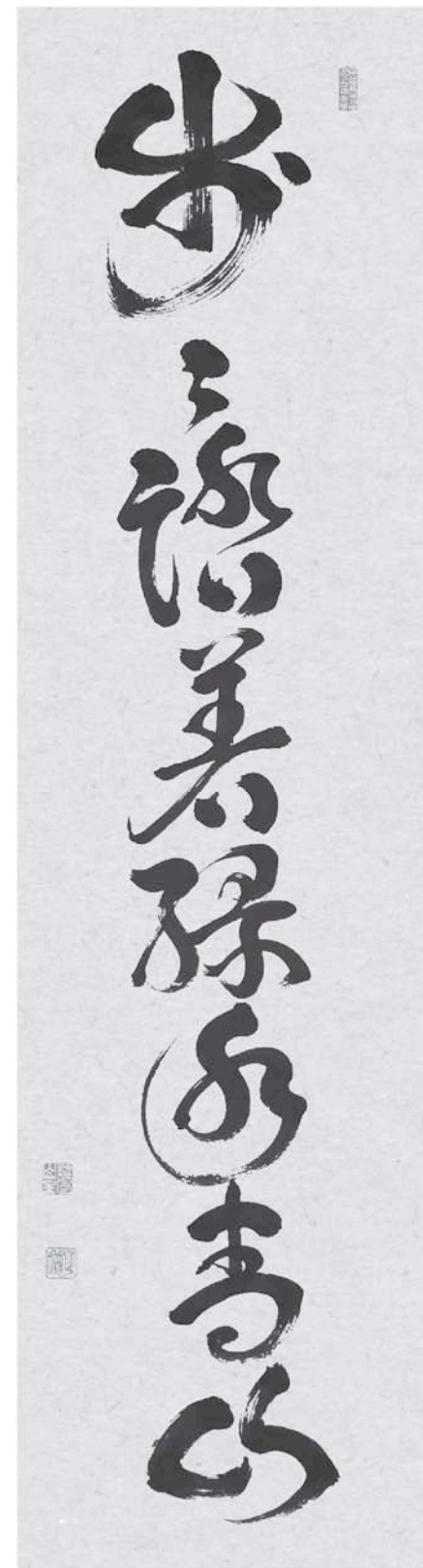
The monk questioned Master Tozan Gohon Zenji in a way that was already dualistic. He had fallen into that divided place, but Tozan saw through him and used his strong power of the path to cut everything away from under that monk.

Master Shishin Goshin Zenji further

revealed: "Master Shishin Goshin Zenji picked this out and said, 'Tozan puts the collar on the sleeve and cuts off the shirtfront under the armpits. But what could he do? This monk didn't like it.' Right then a monk came forward and asked Shishin, 'How are they to be dealt with?' After a long silence Shishin said, 'Peaceful meditation does not require mountains and rivers; when you have extinguished the mind, fire itself is cool.'"

In the world today, we're so insecure about the conditions of everyday life that we are always of two minds. We're looking for peace and happiness and security. Even though our mind is divided, we're trying to design a world that's happy and peaceful. There's a gap between the idea and its reality. This makes us agitated, allowing no refuge.

The problem isn't our feelings, or whether we're hot or cold, or figuring out about life and death, but that we have that mind of two. We have to break through that to understand that this very place is the land of lotuses and this very body is the body of the Buddha. We have to realize this place, this truth, in each and every moment and wherever we are. We have to realize this fully. Our zazen can't be something we do only when we are sitting. In sitting, in moving, in every activity of the day, we maintain this tranquil state of mind.



*Step by step,
tread the blue waters
and green mountains*

Ho-ho tojakusu,
ryokusui seizan

步步踏着綠水青山

This describes a monk on pilgrimage. Step by step, wherever you go, do not let go of the true nature. Do not separate from it. This is what is meant by "step by step."

Shaku Gessho lived more than one hundred years ago, when Japan was

entering a new era politically. He left a poem about making a deep vow, about bringing forth a deepening mind with that vow, and then leaving our homeland and seeking the Path. If we make such a vow, we won't stop until it's complete. Only then can we return home. We have to make this deep vow and begin. We have to understand it's not about going home to our ancestors' graves and leaving our bones there. Our vow has to be made from this deepest mind. Until it's fulfilled, we don't return and we don't retreat, because everywhere we go there are clear blue mountains, WHEREVER we are.

What is this blue mountain? In the past it has always been the symbol of our true mind, as in Sotoba's poems. He writes that throughout this whole world, everywhere is a place to bury my bones. This whole world is my grave, says Sotoba. This very expression is the blue mountains.

In the world of the Buddha's path, wherever we reside is the dojo of Zen. In the Vimalakirti Sutra, Kokon Doji is seeking the Path and the Truth, and for doing that he has gone to practice with the Buddha in the town of Vaisali. Kokon Doji was in the town at the very moment that Vimalakirti returned from afar. He met Vimalakirti asking, "Where are you returning from?" Vimalakirti answered, "I am coming from the dojo." But in the Buddha's time, dojo usually referred to the place where the Buddha was, where each and every day people were receiving training from the Buddha. And this place was in the middle of Vaisali. So why did Vimalakirti, who was coming from outside town, say he was coming from the dojo? Kokon Doji asked him again, "Where is that dojo?" and Vimalakirti said, "Every footstep is the dojo."

Kokon Doji thought a dojo required a building and the Buddha, that it was a place where everyone would gather and do zazen. He thought that was a dojo. But Vimalakirti wasn't so limited in his seeing. Instead, he said, "The true clear mind, that is the dojo." It's not a building or a form, but our very mind. A mind that is honest and doesn't deceive itself. This is the dojo. This is what Vimalakirti was saying.

Even if there isn't a temple, or even a building, no matter where we work in the world, no matter where we live, if our mind is pure and simple, then that is the dojo. This is what he was saying.

In our everyday mind, we can't lie and deceive ourselves. For mind to always be shining brightly, we have to realize this mind and be with everyone in society. We have to be settled and centered, so that no matter what happens we won't waiver. Our mind has to be established, and then we can see this world clearly and know this wisdom and functioning. Then we can be in society with a mind of compassion and touch everyone with that. This compassionate mind is the dojo.

In this way Vimalakirti said that a dojo is not something of form but is in each person's deep mind. In our simple and clear mind, there is the dojo.

Sitting in the moon-water dojo,
Toying with the empty flowers in
the air

We have these words as well. Our mind is like the moon reflected in water. Our mind must be like fresh, clear, crisp, scenery. The moon doesn't think about being reflected, nor does the water think of itself as reflecting. Neither are they attached. This state of mind is the most profound and subtle place of Zen and the dojo. To live every day and not be being attached, to flow naturally, is to sit in the moon-water dojo. The empty flowers are each and every thing we do; we don't leave anything behind nor become attached to anyone. We can be happy or sad, but we live each and every moment's expression completely, not trailing anything along behind us. Every day we live like this, and that is the dojo.

Vimalakirti was teaching about a dojo that is not a specific form or shape but the dojo of our being. If we know the dojo in our mind, then no matter where we go in the world, where we are is the dojo and we can always clarify and purify our mind. No matter where we go step by step, we practice not holding on to extra thoughts,

not being attached to them.

Step by step, tread the blue waters
and green mountains

A clear pure mind is then realized, and we
practice every day in this way.

*Clouds rest on the
mountain peaks,
utterly still*

*Water flows down
through the valleys
bubbling noisily*

Kumo wa reitō ni atte
kanputetsu
Mizu wa kanka ni
nagarete taibōsei

雲在嶺頭閑不徹
水流澗下太忙生

The clouds seem to have become caught on the tips of the mountains and then quietly settled in. At the foot of the mountains a valley stream runs strongly and sturdily, never stopping.



In the sky, the big clouds pass over the mountaintops so luxuriously, matching them perfectly. The cloud's form embodies empty mindedness; so does that of the gurgling mountain streams.

At the extremes of the mountaintops and the valleys, both the clouds and water behave naturally. While the clouds are quietly enfolding, the nature of water is to flow without stopping. The water doesn't stop to think about how transient things are. Only humans do that. That's the reason we become insecure and have conflict. When we allow ourselves to be pulled around by circumstances, we are far from empty mind. Each moment that we find ourselves being pulled around by our mind, we have to do as Daruma Daishi instructed: "letting go of all connections to things that are external, and cutting away all concerns with anything that is within, when our mind is like a tall firm wall, at that time we are at one with the Path."

From outside all kinds of things come at us, creating static and noise. We cut through it, not paying attention to any of it. This is what we have to practice. We don't want to have constant waves of good and bad, like and dislike, roiling through our minds. We don't stop the onslaught, but instead see everything as one. By not being pulled around by externals, and unaffected by the mind's clatter, we know that inside and outside are one. This is the mind we have to cultivate, and for that we employ zazen.

The Sixth Patriarch said that in each and every moment our mind is pulled around by various things. We use zazen in this way: "To externally be bringing forth no thoughts to whatever we perceive and to be unmoved by anything within."

While viewing the world of good and bad, clever and ignorant, sick and healthy, old and young, we don't respond with fear or resistance. Rather, like a mirror, we accept it all without adding thoughts to what appears. This state of mind is the "za" of zazen. People think of zazen and always associate it with a certain form, but it is the mind that has to sit, not the body.

People are always thinking about good and evil, about what is right and what is wrong, judging everything. That's our usual state of consciousness. But when we do that, we lose our true master, pulled around by externals and allowing them to fill our mind with every kind of thought. Insecurity arises easily from this.

But this is not about NOT seeing good and bad. We do see good and bad, and we do know what is good and what is bad, but we don't judge everything and then get pushed around by the judgments. If we do, we no longer see things clearly. All that remains are our judgments. When we get attached to our ideas of things, we can't function correctly, and that's why we become confused.

Our mind's activity has to be aligned. A single moment of confusion keeps us from seeing and hearing clearly. To not be confused by the extra thinking, we do zazen. Body and mind are one becoming, as they say about the dojo for Zen. Our mind and our body become one and the same activity; one moves within the other. When our body is quietly sitting, our mind also sits quietly.

The mind's and body's direction have to be one and the same. This is mind and body being one becoming. When we eat, we just eat; doing zazen, we just do zazen; working, we just work. All day we make effort to cultivate the state of not being moved around by thoughts, and this is zazen's subtle flavor. It doesn't happen just because we put our bodies in the form of sitting zazen. No matter how well we sit, if we are full of thinking, it's not zazen. If we have all sorts of irrelevant thoughts as we work, that's not correct working. If we stay busy judging everything in life, that's not correct living. We have to use our awareness correctly. When we move, we move; and when we are still, we are still.

Clouds dwell on the mountain
peaks, completely still
Water flows down through the
valleys, bubbling noisily

Sometimes we are quiet, and sometimes we are energetic and active. In accordance with necessity, when we need to move quickly we become the movement completely. We forget ourselves and become the act of work. This is the subtle flavor of zazen, and it doesn't just happen in the zendo. Moving is zen; sitting is zen. Everything we do is our place of practice, twenty-four hours a day. Unless we are always in accordance with the moment, matched perfectly with what we do, it's not zazen.

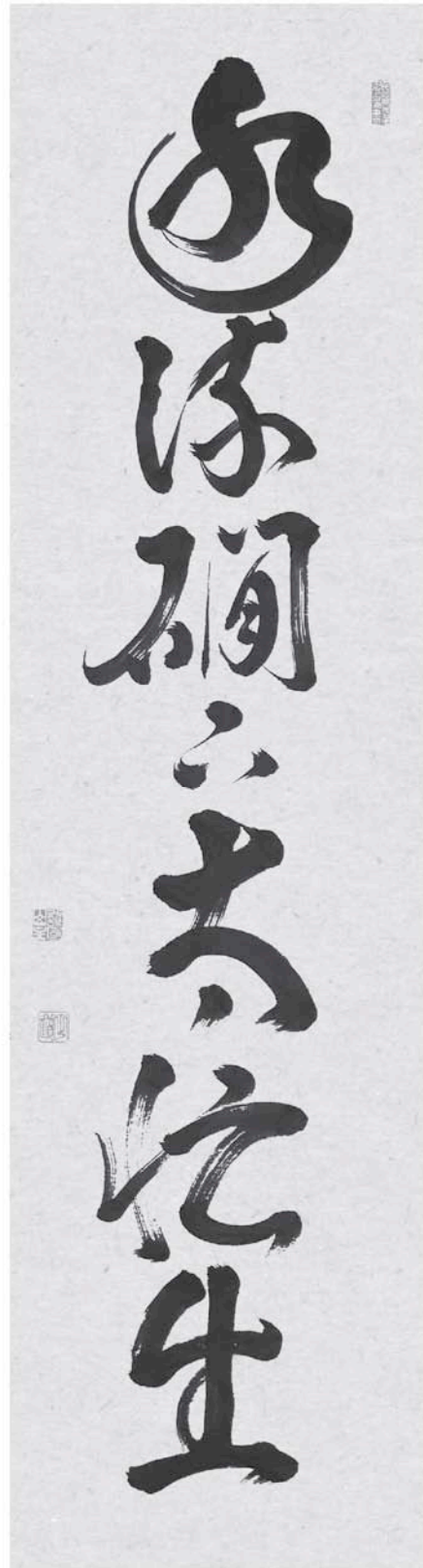
"To externally be bringing forth no thoughts to whatever we perceive and to be unmoved by anything within."

We always try to move our mind outward, but it's not like that. "If we extend our mind out to the ten thousand things, that is delusion, if we have them all come to us that is satori." What is necessary comes to us, and we respond as is appropriate, and that is satori. This is what Dogen Zenji says.

Things arise and disappear, one after another. It's as if we're sitting on a train watching through the window as the scenery passes. We see everything as it passes, and then it's gone. Whether we're happy or sad, we're not pulled around. We're settled and experience everything with a quiet mind. The scenery changes again and again and again, but the essence of our mind does not change at all. We have to awaken to that mind, and so we sit firmly and deeply. This state of mind is satori.

Thoughts themselves aren't a problem as long as we don't add to them. Scenery is just scenery, one frame at a time. It's only when we mix our thoughts and the scenery all up together that we feel busy. It doesn't need to be so complicated. No matter what comes, we simply take care of one problem at a time and clear each thing as it arises. We have to see it this way.

Because the Buddha had no special house, everywhere he went he was home. As Master Bankei said, "The mind, just as it



is." Wherever we go, we know peace of mind.

Rinzai Zenji taught not to add any thoughts or associations to whatever we perceive. He said that to hold no second or third thoughts is worth more than ten years of pilgrimage. It's normal to think. It's normal to feel pain and hurt: we are hot on hot days and cold on cold days. That these mind moments arise is a matter of course. But we always add on more. We need to be simply hot when we are hot and cool when we are cool. When drinking and eating, we do it without any extra thoughts. We have to see this clearly and work on it, or one after another we make an infinity of problems.

Our living energy is now! now! now! here! here! here! If we hold this precious, it's more valuable than many years in the dojo. This is a better way to grasp the mind of now. Worrying about what is past and what might come is unhealthy. If we do not add these things to our mind, then we are naturally settled.

We have to let go of our preferences, otherwise they become clutter for the mind. In order to have a clear, simple mind, we have to be able to accept everything. Without a straightforward mind, we will be always pushed and pulled around and never know true rest.

Our naive simple mind is like the waters of a river--always flowing, never stopping. Our mind, too, is always new and new and new. When it is always clear, we can receive everything clearly and purely. This is living zazen.

Clouds dwell on the mountain peaks, completely still
Water flows down through the valleys, bubbling noisily

Amid the abundance of this immense nature, we sit easily and firmly and are embraced by this natural motion, undeluded by our mind's apparent busyness. We can see life with a clear, plain mind that moves in one straight line.

*Water flows cold from
the bamboos' edge
The breeze blows
fragrant through the
flowers*

Mizu wa chikuhen yori
nagareidete hiyayaku
Kaze wa kari yori
sugikitatte kanbashi

水自竹辺流出冷
風従花裏過來香

The water in the grove of tall, green bamboos is cool and refreshing on hot summer days. The water that comes out of the grove's depths feels cooler than any other. The wind seems much more fragrant after it blows through the mounds of blooming flowers. The world as it is. Yet the water, the bamboo grove, the flowers, and fragrances are NOT what these lines are talking about.

The bamboo is always straight and honest, it is said. It pierces our clear mind with its purity. The flowers each have a fragrance. We have to see their meaning in terms



of our mind's essence and our spiritual experience.

Someone with no experience won't understand, no matter what they're told. But with experience, you can understand, and training is the ground of that experience.

Clarifying our true nature to know that deep state of mind is man's challenge. In society selfish desires surface and emotions rule our lives. Our true nature is apart from that.

"In our mind there is a depth so profound that waves of grief and joy cannot reach there," as one ancient poetized. Our mind's true base is able to understand social joys, but it can go deeper than that. The griefs of this world are shallow in comparison to the depths of our mind. We must experience this true base. The Buddha realized mind's source by extinguishing the flames of greed, anger, and ignorance, and the words he used to describe it were "the serenity of nirvana."

These three--greed, anger, and ignorance--are what confuse us, leading to the darkness of grumbling and ignorance. But because we are human we can realize the mind where desires don't reach, and know this place. Once we have touched this center, no matter what clouds of ignorance arise, we won't be fooled by them. This is what all beings want. Without this base, society decays.

Humankind has this deep wisdom and huge openness of mind. Because of this, we don't have to be afraid but can meet every moment's phenomena with our deepest truth. From ancient times until today people have been willing to train to experience this, because knowing it directly is the deep wish of our true mind. Many leave the path and don't complete their vow. Those who finish are a very small percentage of those who begin. Buddha and the Patriarchs were able to complete this deep vow, and the importance of their example for us is beyond expression. That which humans can't begin to express, the pain and suffering of all of it, is right here.

We want to make our life's value clear, but to do that we've got to let go of all karmic connections and possessions. Not one of the patriarchs pursued this path casually. The Buddha did six years of ascetic training. Niso Eka Daishi, to show his deep determination, cut off his arm and then worked until he opened deeply. In realizing the true source of mind, humans' truest value is made manifest. In each day's work, we have to remember their efforts.

"How many times I have gone down into the Blue Dragon's cave for you!" How much has been given, how much life has been put at stake by those who seek the truth! Those seeking the truth have had to confront the fearful dragon with its necklace of gold. How many times have we had to enter that dragon's deep cave! This is how the ancients spoke of it.

We cry tears of blood. From morning until evening and from evening until morning, tears of blood pour from our eyes. Our legs hurt. We are pulled out of the zendo by senior students and hit by our teacher at sanzen. We sit constantly and continually. Within the pain and sleepiness, we seek to clarify the true mind. Not in social happiness and satisfaction but in suffering, we continue for more years and then even more years.

Only one who's lived through this can know what it means to not be stopped by the extremes of winter, to continue on even with snow and frost covering everything. People who have trained know what it's like to cry alone at how difficult it is. Anyone who has done this knows this state of mind.

Even if we are deeply awakened, we can't think lightly of it and waste time. We can't be indulgent, or our suffering will be useless. This is what these words are teaching us: "How many times I have gone down into the Blue Dragon's cave for you!"

Who is this "you"? For twenty or thirty years, we give our whole life to know our own true clear nature. Only one who's done this can taste the waters that flow cold from the bamboos' edge. Only one

with this experience can know the truth of the breeze that blows fragrant through the flowers. No matter what tangled mess comes along, such a person is unmoved by it. Such a person loves everyone as a matter of course.

A monk named Sassa Hokuin trained at Sogenji under Gisan Zenrai Zenji. While he was there, a letter came saying that his home temple north of Kyoto had burned and he needed to return. He was tenzo at that time, and when he read the letter he threw it into the fire saying, "If I go back now I can only help build a temple. I have to go finish my training first. A temple is important, but if I leave my training now it will never be completed." He made this firm vow and put the letter into the fire.

One of his fellow monks told Hokuin that he was astonished at his deep vow and decision. Hokuin had been told to return home and didn't go, while that monk wanted so much to go home, so much to be free from the strict life of training, that he would have given anything for such a letter to come from his home. He had even asked the priest at his home temple to please write and ask for his return, but the priest hadn't done so. Now Hokuin was told to come and he didn't even want to go. To the monk, Hokuin seemed so advanced!

Master Gisan heard this story and said that, having been born to a poor family and grown up in a poor household, he knew what it was to lead a challenging life and to have to save every drop of water. He had wanted to go to school, but he couldn't leave. Instead he continuously trained and learned humans' best way of being. He understood with his own experience why it's a big job to be alive.

Sassa Hokuin was called in to see the Roshi. "You had a letter from your parent priest, I heard? Why don't you go back?"

The monk replied, "It is not as if the temple won't be built without me. Training is most important. Even if a temple is built, what importance is there in that?"

Gisan heard this and said that, yes, training is important, but what is training for, after all? If it is not for the pain and suffering



of society, then it is all only for our own satisfaction. When you have no feeling for others, even if you do training, you will be handicapped.

He told Hokuin, "Here you received a letter saying the priest was in big trouble and wanted you to help, please, and you crumpled that letter up. You burned it in the fire. That will not get you anywhere near that mind of Buddha and Daruma Daishi. Even if you have the doctrine, you'll never be able to know the hugeness of their minds. You'll never know that mind that at one hundred and twenty years of age crossed to China. Even if you finish your training, don't you ever go into the world, or you will leave a soiled mind wherever you go and it will be a detriment to the Buddha Dharma." Master Gisan said it very carefully.

At that, Sassa Hokuin went to Hamasaka on the Japan Sea and never went into the world. From the huge headquarters temple and other places as well, many of excellent character and training came and asked him to help, but still he never went into society.

Nonetheless, as was common in those days, many gathered from the local school and the city offices. They came together and asked Hokuin to speak on Zen. He said, "I am no one to offer any teisho, but I can interpret the words," and he spoke about the *Blue Cliff Record*.

In the third case, "Master Baso Is Sick," he came to these lines:

For twenty years I have suffered
bitterly
How many times I have gone down
into the Blue Dragon's cave for
you!

When he reached these lines, Hokuin could not speak. Everyone asked what had happened, but he was in tears. All he could say was, "No more today--I quit!"

He stopped the teisho. Among those who had been listening was the child who would be Mumon Roshi's teacher, Seisetsu Roshi. When he heard that, with a child's mind, he said, "This is a strange book if

reading it makes you cry." Later, when he went to Tenryuji to train with the very famous Master Gasan, the master taught the *Blue Cliff Record*.

Every week with many monks gathered and Seisetsu Zenji present, Master Gasan spoke on the *Blue Cliff Record*. When Gasan got to the third case, Seisetsu wondered what would happen. But Gasan did not cry, and Seisetsu was a little disappointed. Then he forgot all about it. But the second time Gasan did the *Blue Cliff Record*, even though Seisetsu had forgotten all about it, when Gasan Osho came to "Sun Face Buddha, Moon Face Buddha; What kind of people were the Ancient Emperors! For twenty years I have suffered bitterly; How many times I have gone down into the Blue Dragon's cave for you," he started to cry. Sitting atop the high seat, Gasan wept. That priest who had spoken so strongly could barely continue. His voice got rougher and rougher and his face was so full of tears he could not speak. Finally, he said he was finished for the day and went to his room.

Everyone who heard that was also in tears. The priests and all the monks were looking down and crying so hard they couldn't lift their faces. They had all been through such strong fierce training together, and there, for the first time, the Buddha Dharma stood. Only in that encounter of teacher and disciple can this happen, and only one who has experienced this can speak it. To no one else will it make any sense. But one who has experienced it knows:

Water flows cold from the bamboo's
edge,
The breeze blows fragrant through
the flowers.

Those who know that depth and hugeness will brim over with understanding. If we train, our deepest base is touched. Then, we will know no more confusion, no matter what we encounter in society, with people's values of good and bad, their illnesses and poverty, and all of the political changes. That is the kind of training we must do.

*The corals' many
branches are all
suffused with the moon*

Sango shishi tsuki o
tojakusu

珊瑚枝枝搭着月

This phrase is from the teachings of Master Kokan Haryo, who received the Dharma from Master Unmon. He was the disciple described as having the ki of the heavens and earth. Haryo Kokan Zenji, who became the abbot of Shinkai-in, was one of the greatest among Master Unmon's



disciples. He was especially known for his advanced debating and speaking.

In the case known as "Master Haryo's Three Barriers," he is asked by a monk, "What is the Daibasho (School of Kanadeva)?" Haryo answers, "Snow piled up in a silver bowl." This is the first barrier. The second question is, "What is the path?" Haryo answers, "One who is very enlightened, if not careful will fall into a hole." The third is, "What is the Suimonken Sword (hair blown sword)." To that Master Haryo answers, "The corals' many branches are all suffused with the moon."

These are the three barriers of Haryo. The Suimonken sword of the third question is famous in Zen. It is so sharp that it can slice a hair in half. Anything it touches is suddenly sliced into two. This sword represents our Prajna Wisdom, which from the origin we're all endowed with and with which we slice through ignorance and attachments. The monk was claiming that he had this sword, challenging Master Haryo.

"When you meet the Buddha, you kill him; when you meet the Patriarchs, you kill them. On the brink of life and death, you command perfect freedom; among the sixfold worlds and four modes of existence you enjoy a merry and playful samadhi." In introducing Joshu's mu koan, Mumon Ekai thus described the functioning that cuts all delusions and attachments. If we manifest Mu, there's nothing to question in this matter of birth and death. With this shining, sharp, and clear state of mind we dive into any world--the world of ego, of angry demons, or even hell--and move without effort there, unafraid. This sword is the mind of satori where all is negated. How is that? Haryo answered, "The corals' many branches are all suffused with the moon."

Coral has long been considered precious. Born from the ocean, it has been treasured since ancient times by the Chinese for its exquisite beauty. In addition to red coral, there is the white coral that glows when the moon lights on the water. Each and every hole of it shines so brilliantly that

the coral itself becomes the light of the moon. This is how Haryo answered the monk, with this coral's exquisite beauty.

These words were originally used by Zengetsu Daishi during the Sung dynasty in describing our Prajna Wisdom. Realizing this wisdom is nothing like the classroom learning that involves pragmatic explanation. Instead this all-embracing wisdom must be awakened to. Then the whole universe will be exquisitely reflected as the huge great functioning of that wisdom.

This wisdom is not something we can conjure with logic. It works only when we realize the mind of no-thought. Then our awareness is its origin and the whole universe settles into that awareness.

Oh Great all embracing Mind!

It is impossible to measure the
height of the heavens,

Yet the Mind is above the heavens.

It is impossible to measure the
thickness of the earth,

yet the Mind is below the earth.

The sun and the moon shine with a
great radiance,

Yet the Mind is the source of that
radiance. . . .

Within the Mind the four seasons
open in their sequence,

Within the Mind the sun and the
moon move.

All of the ten thousand things exist
within the great Mind.

Oh! Great all embracing Mind!

This mind drinks down the entire universe. The whole universe and everything in it shine as this limitless truth. This is the Suimonken state of mind with which we are each endowed. We can't realize it with explanations or a small personal self. We have to know it with our whole being and body, extending from one side of the universe to the other. This is the truth of the Suimonken sword.

Our mind's moon shines, and the whole universe is perceived in a glance.

Spontaneously, the world and our mind are one. What happens when we stop dividing the light from the world? The object and subject become one and the same. There is no longer any self or other—they shine together as one.

This is the origin of mu. It's the source of the whole universe; the ten thousand things arise from here. We see this and we raise an arm, a leg, or a finger to express Mu! and in doing so shatter the barrier. Our entire body, part or parcel, becomes a sword. Blinking an eyelash, moving a finger, or raising a fist is all the shining of that Prajna wisdom. If our true mind's eye is open, the whole universe is the Suimonken sword. All of the grasses, trees, and flowers are Suimonken.

But Master Haryo didn't serve up explanations. He only said, "The corals' many branches are all suffused with the moon." That light shining as it is. This is how he expressed it.

Don't fall into the world of discrimination! Become this truth that is free of duality and prejudice. Experience this functioning in all you see, hear, smell, taste, touch, know, and think. This is the true way of seeing each and every thing. We do this, not by being conceited and thinking about ourselves, but by cutting that all away. This is the Suimonken sword. We become conceited only if we aren't awakened to this true state of mind.

In this hundredth case of the *Blue Cliff Record*, Engo Kokugo Zenji emphasizes not seeing anything in any of the cases as an explanation, but realizing that everything in the universe is beyond our mental understanding. If we don't receive and manifest this way of being and seeing, then it's not our true mind. There are no ideas and mentation here. This last of the one hundred cases of the Blue Cliff Record says that there is nothing that is not included in this whole world; that all sentient beings, by going beyond their small rational mind, will find this truth.

*A thousand rivers of
water, a thousand
moons*

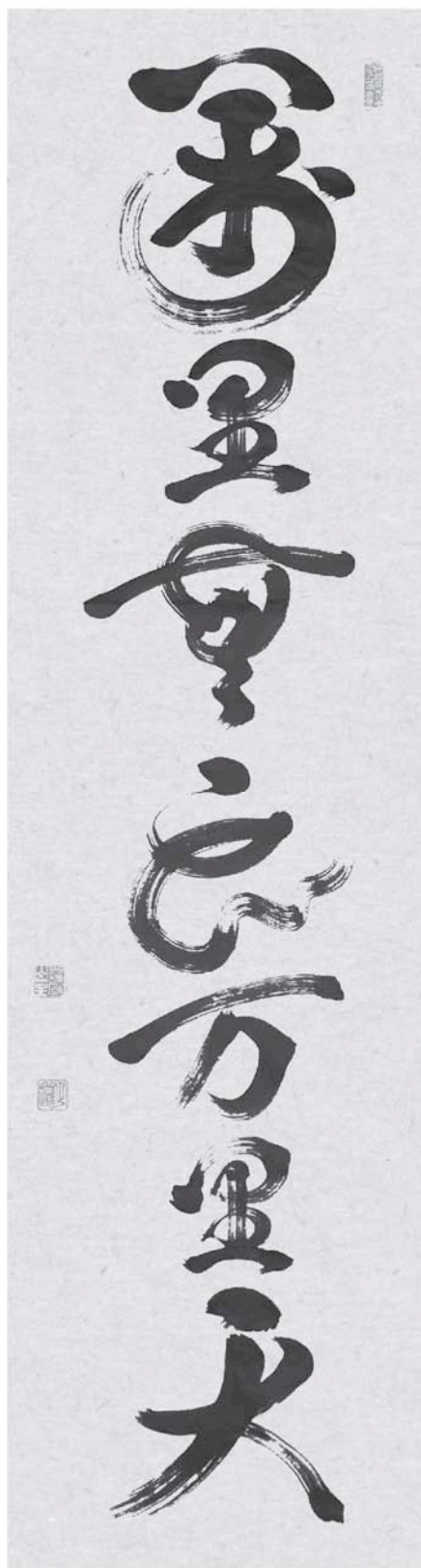
*A million miles
without a cloud, a
million miles of sky*

Senko mizu ari senko
no tsuki
Banri kumo nashi banri
no ten

千江有水千江月
万里無雲万里天

The lines are Sogen's, from the Engo Katto. If there are one thousand bodies of water, there are a thousand moons reflected in them. In our Buddha Nature there's not a single cloud anywhere, only clear sky.





There's no way for it to be otherwise; all is completely mu.

From the evening sky the bright moon is reflected in the river. Any water that is clear and still will reflect the moon--a puddle, a cup of water, dew on a flower, a river, or an ocean. Anything still enough to serve as a mirror will show the image of the moon. But if there are tears, that image will be shattered and no longer visible.

A thousand rivers of water, a thousand moons
A million miles without a cloud, a million miles of sky.

In the Flower Garland Sutra it is written that emptiness fills everything and everyone. No matter how evil, foolish, or stupid people are, if they're in samdahi, then the moon will reflect clearly boundless mind. Without any obstructions, the truth will be manifested and the Buddha will appear in that awakened mind.

In the Pure Land Sect, Honen Shonin taught that no matter what hideous thing someone has done, if that person's mind is awakened it will be clarified in a way that is no different from the mind of the Buddha. In ancient Japan there was a famous warrior in the Heike clan named Kumagai Naozane. He had killed thousands of people. Then, one day in the middle of a battle he realized that his opponent was at the most fifteen years old. That was the same age as his own son. He went to see Honen Shonin and told him that he had realized war was wrong. Honen told him to chant the Buddha's name continuously.

He answered, "But I am so evil! If you tell me to kill myself, I am willing to die. But if I can be saved by chanting the Buddha's name, I will put everything I am into doing that." Kumagai Naozane did just that, and he was able to awaken in a splendid way and become a Buddha. There's no one who is hated by the Buddha; there is not even one such person, no matter how evil or terrible they have been. Anyone who does zazen and becomes empty-minded, whose mind becomes completely clear

with not a speck remaining, realizes the mind's true root and becomes completely honest. Anyone can realize that natural Buddha which is the mind's base. Then, just as the moon is reflected in any water, the moon of Buddha Nature will reflect in that mind of samadhi.

A thousand rivers of water, a thousand moons
A million miles without a cloud, a million miles of sky

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

This was the poem of the Sixth Patriarch. Jinshu Joza had written differently:

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

But a mirror is just a concept, and this body has nothing to do with what is most important. Because of this body, we make mistakes, and eventually it gives birth to pain and suffering. To be pulled around by this body is a mistake. We're evolving constantly, always in flux, and eventually we have to return this body. As Ikkyu Zenji said, "On this date, at this time, I return this body which I have borrowed and used."

We can realize awakening because we have this body, yet we already are that mind of awakening. We have all kinds of thoughts that cloud this mirror-like mind. So we keep the mirror wiped clean, making constant effort, as Jinshu said. But that's being caught on ideas. Our mind from the beginning is empty. It's constantly transforming; there's nothing solid there that we can depend upon. We are always manifesting with response to our circumstances, going from happy to sad, from dislike to like. Since it is only

phenomena, if we leave it alone, it will fade away. If we try to force ourselves not to think, to become quiet, we'll only be creating more and more confusion.

Instead, we have to see that there is nothing at all from the origin and realize that source. In this state of mind, we can't be moved around by anything. Then no matter what thought arises, it won't stick to us. It's only when we can't let go of something that it sticks. If we know that there is nothing, then no matter what comes, we can't get stuck.

In our mind there is a place where there are no obstructions, and this is zazen. About this, the Sixth Patriarch wrote: "To externally be bringing forth no thoughts to what we perceive and to be unmoved by anything within, this is zazen." No matter what comes in, we just reflect it, not getting moved by it.

A thousand rivers of water, a thousand moons
A million miles without a cloud, a million miles of sky

Zen is the place of a million miles without a cloud. There's not one thing in our mind. No matter what god or Buddha comes along for us to be thankful to, it's only a phenomenon that is reflected there. In fact, there is not one speck in our mind.

Rinzai put it like this:

We are the Dharmakaya, the clear pure light in a moment of our mind
the Sambogaya, the undifferentiated light in a moment of our mind,
the Nirmanakaya, the undiscriminating light in a moment of our mind.

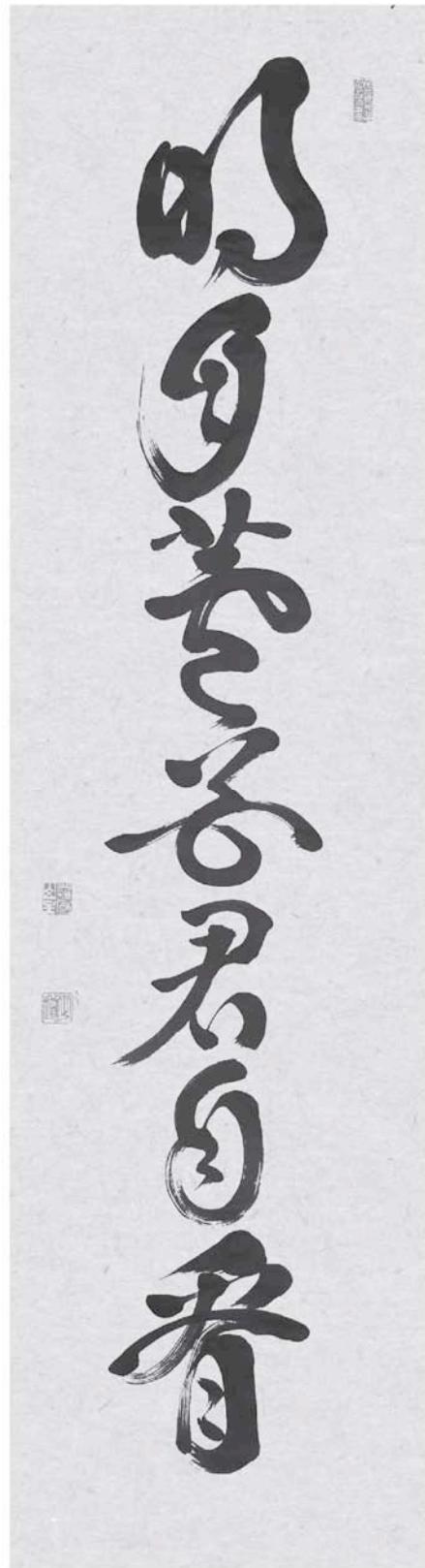
With no thoughts whatsoever, realize this clear mind. That is kensho, to know the true self directly.

*See for yourself
the white reed flowers
in the moonlight*

Meigetsu roka kimi
mizukara miyo

明月芦花君自看

The whiteness of the reed flowers is truly an exquisite thing, and the bright moonlight of September also is brilliantly white. While they become one and the same, they remain both bright moonlight and the white reed flowers.



They exist in one and the same actuality and have the same essence. They are completely different, yet they become one and manifest in that way.

See for yourself
the white reed flowers in the
moonlight

The very experience of the flowers and the moon is expressed here.

This phrase is from the sixty-second case of the Blue Cliff Record, when Unmon says, "Within heaven and earth, through space and time, there is a jewel, hidden inside the mountain of form. Pick up a lamp and go into the Buddha hall, take the mountain-gate, and bring it on the lamp."

It is from Setcho's poem to this case that the phrase comes:

Look! Look!
On the ancient embankment, who
holds the fishing pole?
Clouds roll on.
The water, vast and boundless-
The white flowers in the moonlight,
you must see for yourself.

Unmon Zenji said to the assembly, "Within heaven and earth, through space and time, there is a jewel, hidden inside the mountain of form. Pick up a stone lamp and go into the Buddha hall, take the mountain-gate, and bring it on the lamp."

The entire spacious universe is inside this jewel. There is but one jewel, and what gives light to that jewel is one truth. This truth is inside our physical body, I'm not sure where, but it's right inside us. Within the huge space of this infinite sky, within the eternity of time, there is but one truth, and this one truth is within this physical body.

Unmon Daishi said this to the assembly, but these were not his own words. Jo Hoshi first used them in the Hozoron, and they were then used by Master Unmon when he addressed the assembly. In

this great universe which stretches out infinitely and eternally, what is the most splendid thing? It is something that is also within our own bodies!

Rinzai Zenji said, "In this five-foot lump of red flesh there is a true person of no rank always coming in and going out of the orifices." In our very own bodies this truth is settled and established. We clarify this truth of the universe, and that's what our life is about.

The goal is not to make lots of money and become famous. No matter how much money we have, it's only a help in making the truth clear. For company presidents and heads of state who hold positions of importance in the world, these positions are assumed only for the sake of realizing this important truth. If we don't awaken to the fact that this is what those positions are for, life is nothing more than a fleeting phenomenon, the same as money and fame. We can't take them with us when we die. The eternal jewel, the precious thing within each of us, can be found only in our hearts.

This is what Jo Hoshi wrote and what Unmon expressed to the assembly. Unmon began with the words of Jo Hoshi and then elaborated: "Within heaven and earth, through space and time, there is a jewel, hidden inside the mountain of form. Pick up a stone lamp and go into the Buddha hall, take the mountain-gate, and bring it on the lamp."

In front of our eyes, right in front of the hondo, there is a stone lantern. This stone lantern is brought into the hondo, and the lantern takes the hondo inside it. Before us the huge soaring mountain gate is drawn into the stone lantern, and the mountain gate resides in the stone lantern.

Can you understand this? If you do, the words of Jo Hoshi--"Within heaven and earth, through space and time, there is a jewel, hidden inside the mountain of form"--become clear to you, says Master Unmon.

That the stone lantern can go into the hondo is a matter of course, but how do you put the mountain gate into the lantern? Putting something small into

a large place is easy to understand, but putting something large into something small goes against our notion of how things are. This narrow mind has to be broken through, and our usual way of thinking has to be cast off, so that we might see it all differently. Master Unmon is saying that this is the truth that has to be seen. We don't ignore the common boundaries of our world, we just work within them without getting caught up. When we can turn it upside down, we reveal our humanness and our freedom. Without that, we are not enough.

The sutras talk about putting a mustard seed inside Mount Sumeru and putting Mustard Sumeru inside a mustard seed. In this mustard seed the freedom of our imagination is forged.

Our Buddha Nature, which has no shape or form or color or outline and isn't expressed in terms of large or small, goes beyond concepts, beyond time and space as well. So of course it can reside inside our bodies. But how do we find it? This isn't something that can be negotiated or seen. The whole universe fits comfortably in our mind. In our small eyes the moon, the oceans, and billions of stars can be seen. The sun, the moon, and the whole universe can all be there in our mind. This must be seen. We have this freedom in our mind from our birth, and to actualize it we have the Buddha Dharma and zazen.

Eisai Zenji offers the poem:

Oh! Great all embracing Mind!
It is impossible to measure the
height of the heavens,
yet the Mind is above the heavens.
It is impossible to measure the
thickness of the earth,
yet the Mind is below the earth.
The sun and the moon shine with a
great radiance,
yet the Mind is the source of that
radiance. . . .
Within the Mind, the four seasons
open in their sequence,
Within the Mind the sun and the
moon move.
All of the ten thousand things exist

within the great Mind.
Oh! Great all embracing Mind!

This is how Eisai Zenji poetizes mind. All is contained in mind. Within it, the seasons come and go, the ten thousand things appear and dissolve. The flowers of spring and the abundance of summer, the harvest of fall and the barren landscape of winter, all come and go in our mind.

We aren't separate from the world; nor are the mirror and what's reflected in it separate. With infinite compassion we liberate everything. The great wisdom we have from birth tells us we are not apart from anything that is. We are no different or separate from anyone else. Our body, for example, can help others with their problems and liberate them from their suffering, without our having any self-consciousness about it or need for recognition. People's physical pains, their difficulties, are the same as our own pains. This is our infinite compassion.

This manifests within each and every person. This is our Buddha Nature. To understand this is life's jewel and the most important thing we can do. This is the Buddha Dharma. It is what Master Unmon is teaching us.

The rain's sound is mu. The wind's sound is mu. The bird's song is mu. Hot and cold are mu. Hurting and happy and sad are all mu. In this way everything that comes forth and appears and manifests is mu. If we can know this deeply and directly, then everything we ever think just disappears; everything is that mu.

This state of mind is the place of no more distinction between inside and outside. It becomes no longer possible to separate things, there is only that one mu, surging forth. When we ripen our mind to this way of being--whether sitting, standing, or walking, mu unfolds continuously all day long. When we have plunged deeply into that life energy of mu completely, our state of mind becomes fully ripened and pierces through. Then suddenly, without fail, we shake the heavens and earth.

As Mumon Ekai wrote: "Arouse your entire body with its three hundred and sixty

small joints and its eighty-four thousand hair pores, carry it day and night, then all of a sudden an explosive conversion will occur, and you will astonish the heavens and shake the earth. It will be as if you snatched away the great sword of the valiant general Kan and held it in your hand. When you meet the Buddha, you kill him; when you meet the patriarchs, you kill them. On the brink of life and death, you command perfect freedom; among the sixfold worlds and four modes of existence you enjoy a merry and playful samadhi."

This must be lived until even something that has the name of a hondo or a stone lantern or a mountain gate is no longer a shape and a name but expands throughout the heavens and earth. Our life energy has to become the mountain gate and the stone lantern and our zazen becomes the Buddha hall. It's not about the shapes and forms and what differentiates them. There's no need for that. Whether the mountain gate is the mountain gate or not, whether the mountain gate is the Buddha hall or a stone lantern, is all irrelevant. We experience this and taste its flavor, and then the Buddha hall is not large and the stone lantern is not small. Then everything is beyond such discriminations. We realize a newborn awareness, and we don't even know what to call it. This is something we can't know through dualism. Being newborn, we receive and accept everything exactly as it is.

You can call the mountain gate the Buddha hall and you can call it the stone lantern, and there isn't any problem there at all. Only when we taste this truth can we say we know Zen. Zen isn't about mental understanding and following the common rules of society.

Because we want to know this one truth and this place where we have just been born, Unmon Daishi used these words. He didn't use Jo Hoshi words because Jo Hoshi was such an advanced person, but for us to be able to make use of them and function. Otherwise we won't be able to see when Setcho says, "Look! Look! Where is that jewel?"

Is it in our body? Where is it in our body? Where is it not as an idea, but as an actuality? Where is that mountain gate? Where is that Buddha hall? What is that stone lantern? Are we seeing this with our dualism or from beyond that?

As Rinzai says, "In this five-foot lump of red flesh there is a true person of no rank who is always coming and going in and out of all of our orifices. If you have not seen it yet, Look! Look!"

We don't just understand it, we become it. We keep it going from morning to evening, from evening to morning, whether working or resting or doing zazen. We have to become that true person, then see it! see it!!

"Within heaven and earth, through space and time, there is a jewel, hidden inside the mountain of form."

Master Unmon Daishi used Jo Hoshi's words, and many saw what he was saying clearly, while others did not. Master Unmon placed Jo Hoshi's words in front of the assembly and asked if anyone knew it for themselves--has anyone seen it directly? When Unmon brought in the stone lantern, the mountain gate, and the Buddha hall, everyone was having their bellies checked.

But Unmon Daishi wasn't concerned with whether the others understood or not, whether each had known satori or not. That is like talking about putting a bare line into the water. Without any fishhook, the line has no meaning. What Unmon is saying is that it's okay to catch the fish or not to catch the fish. This huge state of mind can't be looked at as something over there. See the heavens and earth as they are, right here where we stand. As Mumon Daishi said, "The clouds are coming forth one after the next, the water flows along bubbling and bubbling."

We are sailing in water full and brimming with blue, spreading infinitely in every direction, while the clouds go by one after the next. This is what we feel. So where is there any mountain gate or Buddha hall or stone lantern? There is only this

immensity, with scenery reaching to the furthest horizon and the clouds spreading across the sky. This huge boundless world is felt, and it is right here inside us.

See for yourself
the white reed flowers in the
moonlight

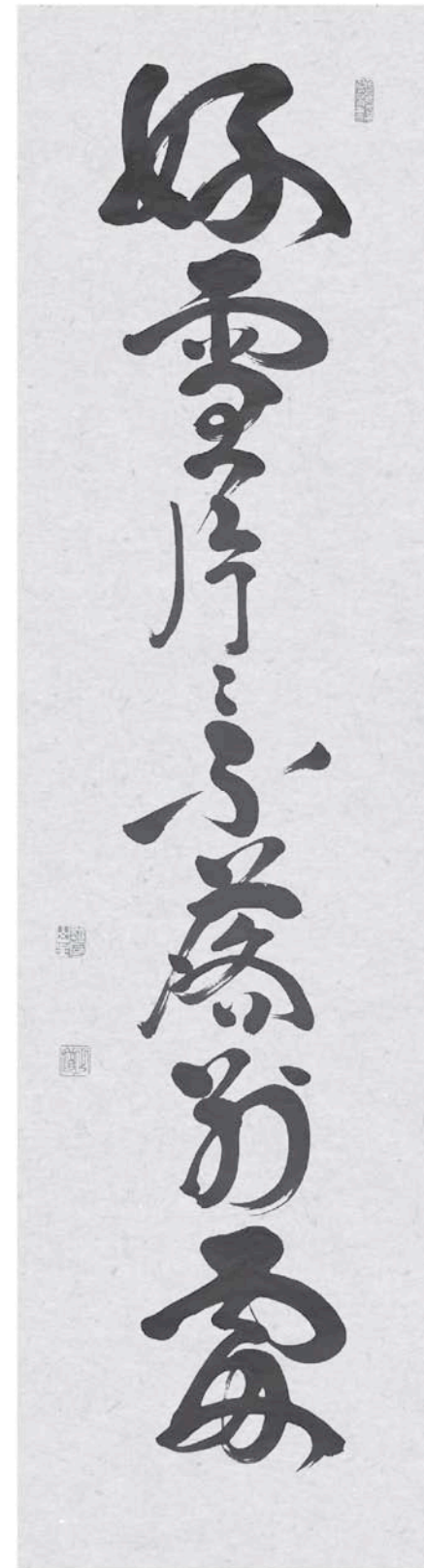
Is it the moonlight or the flowers? Both are pure white, but is the moon shining on the reeds or are the reeds reflecting the moonlight? Are we manifesting this world, or are we melting into the huge universe?

See for yourself
the white reed flowers in the
moonlight

Buddha Nature is not one individual person's mental understanding. It's not found like that, with only a personal self being looked at. We have to see the whole world everywhere, and there we know that the Buddha hall, the stone lantern, and the mountain gate are all melted into one another. There is nothing to be concerned about and it doesn't matter if one mentions it or not.

This huge wide open space is "Within heaven and earth, through space and time, there is a jewel, hidden inside the mountain of form." Is this this world? Setcho Zenji is offering this to us, and this is Unmon's state of mind, this huge universe. Let everyone experience it themselves.

See for yourself
the white reed flowers in the
moonlight.



*How wonderful the
snow!
Each flake falls in its
place*

Kōsetsu henpen bessho
ni ochizu

好雪片片不落別
處

These famous words are from Layman Pang, who was also known as Ho Koji. Ho Koji lived in China and is recognized as a splendidly awakened student of Buddhism who had a profound influence on society. Although not ordained, as a layperson he was very advanced at raising the Buddha

Dharma. He was to China what Vimalakirti was to India.

Records of birth and death for him are not clear, but we know that his first teacher was Sekito Kisen (700-790) and that he eventually received transmission in the line of Baso Zenji (709-788). He always posed the same question: "If we put everything over there, what is it that sees it?"

If we put the world over there and look at it, what is it that clarifies that? When he was doing sanzen with Sekito Zenji, he inquired, "If you put this whole world over there and look at everything that is there, see it, hear it, and feel it, if everything in this world is in your mind, that great true master, what is that?"

Before Ho Koji had even finished asking his question, Master Sekito put his hand over Ho Koji's mouth and said, "Don't say it!" He was saying, "You will separate from it if you speak!" But Ho Koji wasn't yet awakened, so he asked the same thing of Master Baso Doitsu.

He asked Master Baso, "What is it that perceives when we put everything in this whole world over there someplace? What is it that manifests that world, that which creates the heavens and earth, that absolute creator, that master within the master, what is that?"

Master Baso answered, "When you drink down the whole of the Yangtze River, I will tell you."

Hearing those words, Ho Koji became one with the heavens and earth. With those words, there was no longer any space or division between them, and he saw this directly.

Ho Koji had a wife and two children, all deeply awakened, living as householders. But because of the kind of layperson he was, he was almost never at the house. Instead, he trained for sixteen or seventeen years with Yakusan Gigen Zenji. Although he never ordained, he was a longtime disciple of Master Yakusan. After years of training with the master, it was time to leave. As he departed, a group of the younger monks waited at the temple's mountain gate to see him off. As Ho Koji

was getting ready to say good-bye, it started to snow.

The snow came dancing down from the sky, creating a fantasy world. Ho Koji looked at this dancing snow and said,

How wonderful the snow!
Each flake falls in its place

He spoke as if he was talking to himself, saying, "This snowy scene is amazing. None of these flakes can ever fall anywhere else." It was as if he was soliloquizing. "If that is the case, then where does the snow fall? And if it can't be somewhere else . . ."

Ho Koji was about to descend the mountain, leaving his teacher and all of the monks who were seeing him off. But there was no artfulness in just leaving abruptly. He felt a need to give them an offering for all that had been done for him. These words were his offering--a great feast, not something that will leave you hungry again right away, but a feast that will fill you eternally with the truth of Buddhism exactly as it is, right here, right now.

One who has passed the barrier of mu, who has realized the root source of mu, will know what an excellent offering this was and will respond with gratitude. But among the monks gathered at the mountain gate there was one who said to Ho Koji, "So where do they fall?"

Did this monk understand, or did he not understand? When Ho Koji was asked this, he responded by slapping the monk across the face, as if to say to him, "What are you doing talking in your sleep like that? Where else is it going to fall?"

But the monk didn't understand and said to Ho Koji, "Don't be so rough and extreme!"

Ho Koji had replied with great compassion, but this compassion hadn't been understood. So Ho Koji said to the monk, "At this time, after long years of training, do you still not understand something so basic? That is not something you should say so proudly, or you're going to have your whole lifetime's rice bill presented

to you at the gates of hell." He cautioned the monk in this way.

The monk responded, "Then what DO you say?"

This monk kept nipping at him, and so Ho Koji hit him again, as if to say, "Do you STILL not understand?"

How wonderful the snow!
Each flake falls in its place

He was saying, "You have eyes, but you are not seeing anything; you have a mouth, but you don't speak truth!" With that Ho Koji went quickly down the mountain. Here he had offered a big feast, but it had gone to waste on this monk.

But this fine snow that danced on infinitely, where, after all, did it fall?

"The snowball hits, the snowball hits!
Old Pang's ability cannot grasp it!
Gods and humans do not know for themselves"

Setcho poetizes here, saying that even though everyone looks at the snow, no one knows where it is going. It's not about understanding it, but who really sees these snowflakes that fall one after the next without stopping? The snow covers the whole world, the mountains, the valley, the river, the fields, with one layer of white silveriness in every direction. What is the sound of the snow's truth, burying the mountains, the houses, the people, the forests? Who can hear that?

Hakuin Zenji taught about hearing the sound of the snow falling at the old temple. When Hakuin was twenty-nine, he was in Sakae training at the temple of Inryoji. When doing yaza for one whole night, he heard the snow, sitting in the midst of it. When the morning came, the snow was piled deep around him. Listening continually to the sounds of that snow, he wondered, "How many can hear this snow?" How many can hear that one sound that has no sound, that no wind of no sound, with not a single

thought arising in the mind? This true encountering, when that which sees and the snowy scenery that is seen become one and the same as they dance and pile up together--who is it that encounters it? Who tastes the flavor of this clear and transparent moment that melds perfectly with the snow? Who is the one who knows this true experience? Without it, how can we know what Zen is?

Our head is crammed full of ideas and thoughts. Thinking that they are zazen is a great mistake. There is no zazen there. Zazen is to see and not see, to hear and not hear, to have nothing within to hold on to or to think about whatsoever, where subject and object are not two and there's not one speck in our eyes, but the snow falls and piles up, that sound of no sound.

We have to know this state of mind of doing zazen. We have to do that, or we won't know what it is that pierces heaven and earth. Otherwise we'll only know the surface layer by way of mental understanding and explanations. That is not understanding Zen.

Feasting on this phrase and deepening our practice is what I hope everyone will do.

*What a pity!
to have worked hard
and accomplished
nothing!*

Awaremu Beshi!
Ro shite, Ko nashi

可憐勞而無功

In the world, what we do is judged in terms of its material success and whether the result enriches us. Something that isn't successful has no value. In Zen, the value is our effort, which, no matter what, won't be lost. Apart from the outcome, the effort itself is valuable.

When Daruma Daishi arrived in China and met Emperor Wu he said as much during their first visit. The emperor told Daruma Daishi that he had ordained many tens of thousands of monks, translated many tens of thousands of sutras, and built many thousands of temples. He asked, "What is the merit in that?"

Daruma Daishi answered, "No merit"

He didn't mean that no effort had been made. At that time, merits were the basis of Buddhism. Even in the scholastic expression of Buddhism, the merit aspect was what people considered most important. Daruma Daishi was pointing there when he said, "No merit." If you aren't aware of the possibility of having no merit, no matter how much effort you make, it will be just a small self praising itself and not the Buddha Dharma at work.

It's the same with doing takuhatsu and receiving offerings. The giver, the receiver, and that which is given must all be empty. That all three are empty is the central truth. Only with them empty can we let go of our small selves. By letting go of the ego we're able to let go of everything.

It's not about how much was given or how much was received. There is no material aspect to giving. When the giver, the receiver, and the offering are empty, three as one, that's the truth of the Dharma.

This phrase is from the case of Enkan's rhinoceros fan, number ninety-one in the *Blue Cliff Record*.

The National Teacher Enkan Saian Zenji had received transmission of the Dharma from Baso Doitsu Zenji. One day Enkan called to his attendant, "Bring me the fan that is made of rhinoceros horn."

But Enkan wasn't talking about a fan of form. Everything that a Zen monk does, whether waking or sleeping, is an act of expressing the clear nature. The everyday life of both teacher and disciple is for that purpose only. It's why we have training, standing, sitting, samu, sutras, and zazen. From dawn to dusk to dawn, we express our Buddha Nature with clarity; there's

nothing to do but that. Training is for manifesting that Buddha Nature of no-form. To awaken to our Buddha Nature we use every means possible.

Master Enkan wasn't asking about a specific rhinoceros fan, but about the attendant's Buddha Nature. He wanted to see what the attendant would do. But the attendant had no clue what the master was talking about and got caught on the notion of a specific thing. He was deaf to what was really being asked. The teacher made another attempt: "So, the fan is broken and can no longer be used? Then bring me the rhinoceros." He was saying, "That source of the fan, the rhinoceros, bring me that!"

The attendant had no answer. He was silent. Unfortunately, this attendant had a strong ego filter. Because he couldn't realize the actual experience, he was silent.

The exchange between Master Enkan and the attendant ends here, but the case is so excellent because other great masters then added their ideas of what the attendant should have said when he was caught unawares.

These teachers--Tosu Daito Zenji, Sekiso Zenji, Shifuku Zenji, and Hofuku Zenji--all brought their awakening to the Buddha Nature in its actuality, and each answered in place of the attendant. Setcho then offered a poem to bring it all together.

The attendant said, "Oh that fan is broken and can't be used anymore!" He honestly answered.

Master Tosu's answer is, "If you want me to, I shall bring it to you, but the horns and nose and ears and tail are all broken and torn. It's really an imperfect thing I would have to bring." Of course he is saying that Buddha Nature cannot be brought forth because to do so would be to explain it, and any explanation would be insufficient. If he brought it in, he could only do so in part.

Setcho says to that, "I want that imperfect one!" He was saying, "I want that cow of handicapped nature! The one with all

those broken parts, that bumpy one of all those mangled parts, I want to see that!"

Master Sekiso then says, "I want to give it back to you but then there is nothing at all left." To this Setcho adds, "There is still the rhinoceros." If you are asked to bring in that formless true self, then there's nothing to bring in, because holding on to nothing is the Buddha Nature. Setcho points out that Sekiso Zenji is saying there isn't anything there, but if someone is doing the answering there, isn't something there? "Why do you say if I give you mine it will be lessened?" Setcho criticizes.

Next Kyozan Shifuku draws a circle and put the character for ox (rhinoceros) inside it, as if to say, "Well, please take THIS ox." Setcho Zenji responds, "Why didn't you bring it out earlier?" He was saying, "Oh, there IS an ox. Let it out of there quickly! Don't keep it in there!"

The successor of Setcho Zenji, Hofuku Juten Zenji, says to this, "Old priest, you are aging and you ask for this fan and this ox, but I don't know why you're asking this from someone like me, still so unripe that I can't keep up with you. Please ask an attendant who is more cultivated than I am. Please pardon me, but I can't do what you ask, it is too difficult for me." To which Setcho responds, "Long labor lost." He's saying that if you can't put everything out there even halfway, if you can't manifest it, then all of your work up until now is wasted.

It has to be about our own deep Buddha Nature and its understanding, not about whether we can or can't "put it out there." One who has had a true experience will know it and be able to function as clearly as Tosu, Sekiso, Shufuku, and Hofuku. They all functioned directly from their own positions. Though their words were different, they responded from experience, manifesting fully that Buddha Nature.

Through these exchanges, the Buddha Nature of all of us is represented. We don't develop a clear nature because we do training. We have that from the origin. But with training we pierce through all ideas and explanations and shatter dualism. We fill the heavens and earth with the Buddha

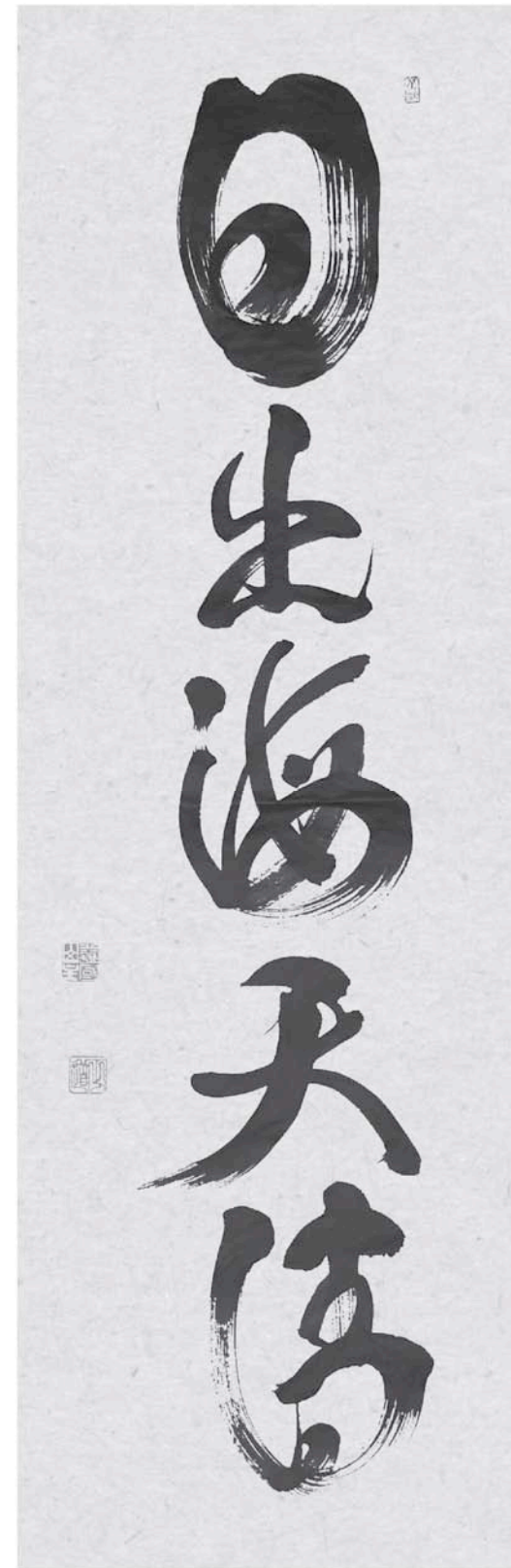
Nature that pierces through everything in a genuine way.

Everyone is endowed from the origin with the true nature, but we have to awaken it. Because the attendant wasn't clear on this, each and every one of the Masters--Tosu, Sekiso, Shufuku, Hofuku--took this true essence and expressed it from the place of no form and no shape. It's about taking that experience and, without depending on any thing, manifesting it completely.

All four of the patriarchs manifested from that clear awakened place, from the state of mind of true kensho. Though the expressions are different, they say the same thing with subtlety and clarity.

Without speaking or explaining or indulging in mental gymnastics, from morning to evening, every moment, realize the samadhi of the mu or the koan. Allow no gaps. We have to put the truth of our whole body and being into doing this. When we let go of thinking, the truth from within will reveal itself and we'll have this awareness. If we use that functioning always, as Master Enkan did, we won't remain silent. The four masters and Setcho, who had all realized this truth, used different words to express it. With great effort and great work, they all struggled their entire lives to manifest this truth and share it with others.

In the Buddha Dharma we don't depend on the sutras or on something called a Buddha Dharma or a set of Buddha forms. They're not so important. What is important is the straightforward clear mind. With this we clarify human's truth, and for this all of the Patriarchs struggled. Even the Buddha, until he was eighty-four, never rested; he continuously offered his truth. Daruma Daishi took everything and went to China. We still have a Buddha Dharma today because of great efforts with no results. "To have worked hard and accomplished nothing!" Without these efforts, Dharma will fade away. We have to use these words and taste this flavor and clarify it completely.



*The sun comes out,
sea and sky are
clear*

Hi idete kaiten
kiyoshi

日出海天清

This phrase from Goto Egen means simple and easy, plain and everyday.

There is a wide field in a large country with no light at all. Although there are infinite varieties

of vegetation growing there, since it's so dark each plant thinks it's the only one. They are all so lonely and isolated, so pitifully sad. But, suddenly, there is light! An advanced person comes and shines a great light on this land. The dark meadow is suddenly a shimmering meadow. Everything growing there feels the light and perceives the other vegetation. They give out a great cry to celebrate this wondrous knowledge!

The meadow is a metaphor for our life. The brightness represents leaving the dark for true wisdom. Those people without wisdom can't know real intimacy and connection. They believe that we are born alone, live alone, and die alone.

We think that we move without meaning, and we think that we interact without meaning. Then in the light of the Buddha's wisdom, for the first time, we know ourselves and can live in harmony. No matter how many tens of thousands of people live in a country, if we don't know each other we are not a society. A true society needs true wisdom, not the wisdom of personal benefit but that of faith and belief in each other. Then we become true friends and can live in harmony, making the one world into one society. It's been said that to know everything is to love everything. When we experience the immensity of knowing all of the ten thousand things and all of the phenomena of the mind, we know the depth of loving everything too.

According to the *Lotus Sutra*, the Buddha taught that all of the three realms were his home and every person in them was his child. This way of putting it manifests the same deep feeling. Because there's no small self in the Buddha Mind, it can love the whole world as its own existence and receive everyone as its own child.

This wisdom and compassion are not separate. They are the nature of the Buddha and, even beyond that, they are the original mind that all humans have from their origin. Everyone has this purity and clarity, and right there we are all Buddhas.

The Buddha asked Ananda, "When I

die, in what will you take refuge?" He then told Ananda that he and the other disciples should take refuge only in the Dharma, not in anything outside themselves. He told him this because only by taking refuge in the Dharma can we love all beings equally. This mind of compassion is the Dharma, and with this mind we find our true self. With this mind we can go into society and live firmly and boldly as part of humanity. And the source of this mind is satori. That is why the Buddha said at his awakening, "How wondrous how wondrous! All beings are from the origin endowed with this great clear mind to which I have just awakened! Only because of extraneous thinking and attachment they are unable to realize it!"

Our special mind is our compassion. The Buddha's kindness and wisdom are one and the same, whether a person is ignorant or awakened.

The founder of Myoshinji, Muso Daishi Kanzan Eigen, called this the totally perfect round and complete Buddha Nature. All beings are from the origin endowed with a perfect Buddha Nature. So why do we throw that away and become involved in the conflicts and anger of a small self? We become greedy, yet we are all Buddhas. Don't you understand that yet? Muso Daishi said this often.

We have to realize that which is most important. But because we have so many attachments, and because we aren't pure and clear or empty in our mind, we don't realize this. We have to do zazen all day long, or continually repeat the Buddha's name, or align our daily life in each moment. We deepen our mind with constant efforts.

We don't do this to be saved by something external, but because we have to clarify our nature. Only that is necessary. This wisdom is not some small-minded understanding but that which reflects all people equally, exactly like a mirror that has no face of its own but can receive the world exactly as it is and recognize that from the origin there is not one single thing. Right there, letting go of our own personal form and our ideas about how people should be, we realize that place of

"realizing the form of no form as form, whether going or returning we cannot be any place else." From morning to evening we work, and while we work we have no idea that we are even working because we aren't attached to ourself at all.

Every moment we give attention to that moment only. No matter how short or how long something takes, it's just one moment after the next. We receive the world exactly as it is, with nothing remaining. "Realizing the thought of no thought as thought, whether singing or dancing we are the voice of the Dharma."

"How are you?" "Good morning." "How are you feeling?" In this moment with nothing preceding it and nothing following it, we know only a breezy free feeling. Our mind has a bright transparent wisdom that extends to the farthest reaches of the universe. The tangled lumps are uprooted and the moon in the big clear sky shines on the whole earth. When we can receive this experience and know this love, we don't need to become insecure and worry about this and that. There's nothing to pick up or to pull along, nothing to design in our heads. We are just being round and full, with nothing to protect, and nothing to be attached to. Letting go of everything, we become like the water deep in the mountains. We know true peace, and we become serenity itself.

From this mind we perceive everything around us, and "this very land is the land of the lotuses." Everything we see is the truth; there is nothing to be thinking about or be confused by. Whatever is, is what it is.

At the same time, this is the light of our awareness. It reaches to the furthest corners of the universe and provides the light that enables us to see clearly and to recognize that "This very body is the body of the Buddha."

"Becoming that whole complete perfect round Buddha that we are."

This light is huge and bright and shines everywhere! Where is there any greater wonder or joy? We can be in a world that

is suffering from conflict and differences and see it all as one truth as it is. We aren't trying to become complete. We are incomplete, but we are complete in that incompleteness. This is the truth of the Buddha's life energy. It is our truth.

We have all been born to encounter this mind and live it. This is our ultimate goal. All of our worldly possessions, all of our education and knowledge, and everyone we have known have been for realizing and aligning to the abundance of our true mind. It's for this that we have this life. Humans' truth is always to be full of love and not get caught in some stuck way of thinking and being. We must know the eyes of the true master. To become awakened to that is the Buddha.

Our truth is not realized through training; we all have it from birth. No one is missing it, nor does someone have more of it than others. From birth we are all Buddhas with a splendid sacred mind and we are all prostrating. This is how it should be. We shouldn't be criticizing and putting down others. If we can't respect others, it's because we haven't yet seen the truth in our own mind. We're still caught on the form and shape of others, groping in the dark rather than seeing with the light of their true nature and our own.

The Lotus Sutra tells the story of Jo Fukyu Bodhisattva, who would not speak or teach formally but instead went into the city everyday and prostrated to everyone he met. That was his bodhisattva expression. When he prayed he would say, "I have nothing against you, nor any discrimination against you whatsoever. You are one to be a Buddha." He would say this to each person and then prostrate, but some people didn't like him doing that. They would tell him angrily to get out of the way and throw sticks and stones and spit on him or hit him. But he would continue, "I have nothing against you, nor any discrimination against you whatsoever. You are one to be a Buddha." He would repeat this again and again.

He was known as Jo Fukyu Bosatsun because he did these prostrations his entire life. This is said to be one of the Buddha's previous lives. In our lives in

the democracy of today, we have to first realize our own clear mind and know that we are endowed with that. We then bring all humans to this amazement and great good fortune. This is the religion of truth.

To find the Buddha and god inside each of us is to build heaven on this earth. To construct that is our true religion. Even though science has become the most modern religion, Zen offers us this possibility. It's the best way of realizing the awakening of the Buddha. It doesn't have to be the form of Zen. We have to know this true mind of the Buddha. Then we know the truth of the Dharma as it has been kept alive and brought through to today. This is what's most important.

This is how we can know the Dharma and be thankful to the Buddha, the Patriarchs, and all of the continuing Buddhas and Patriarchs. We feel our grace and know our debt to them, and they respect and honor that in us. Awaken to that and tend it carefully. Give it to all beings to enable them to go to the other shore. This is the best possibility for a living Dharma.

The sun comes out, sea and sky are clear.

When that brightly shining sun rises, its clear pure bright light spills into everything. This is the most important meaning of these words, I think.



*[Kannon's] entire body
is hands and eyes*

Tsushin kore shugen

通身是手眼

These are the words of Dogo Zenji.

The Bodhisattva Kannon is said to have a thousand hands and eyes. Kannon consists of nothing but hands and eyes, and that is what's being talked about here. The basic building block of Zen is Kannon, which is

the entire universe. The whole universe is Kannon, full of our true origin. Our infinite functioning is Kannon's hands and eyes. A huge state of mind is expressed in this verse.

The whole of it is one eye.
This whole body is the heavens and earth as one eye.

To have a heaven and earth that is one eye means to see and not be aware of seeing, because that eye which sees and that which is seen aren't separate. The same follows for the ears. When that ear which hears and that which is heard are not separate, there can be no difference between them.

If our whole body is our mouth, then it is the mouth that fills the heaven and earth, and what is spoken of and the speaking are one and the same and can't be separated. If our whole body is our mind and our awareness, then that awareness fills the heavens and earth and there's nothing apart that can be judging.

If there's no eye, there is no world to be seen; if there is no ear, there's no world to be heard; if there is no mouth, there are no words to speak; if there is no awareness, there's no way to judge. "No eyes, no ears, no nose, no tongue no body, no mind."

If there are no eyes or ears or nose or tongue or body or mind, then isn't everything mu, one absolute emptiness? But if we get stuck here, we extinguish this world, destroying it completely.

Only once do we need to touch this place of no eyes, no ears, no nose, no tongue, no body, no mind, and then we are reborn from that place. We have to die completely only once and we're reborn to where there is no self and no other. This is the samadhi of the koan, of mu and susokkan, where the koan and the breath disappear and there's no more idea of even wanting to know. But still with this state of mind there's not yet any fresh new world. We must move beyond this until, for the first time, all of our ideas and preconceived notions are let go of. Then

and only then can we encounter this new world. There's no Zen without kensho, without this newborn awareness.

Few people have actual experience of dying completely. People who are half slaughtered and not thoroughly realized, who are not yet reborn, are often acknowledged as having broken through though even though they haven't. These people still get moved around by dualism and stuck in reasoning. They think they understand when they don't. With this, Buddhism will rot and no humans will be liberated.

The monks Ungan and Dogo went to Master Yaukusan to train. Dogo Zenji was a little more senior than Ungan Zenji. It was Ungan Zenji who became the teacher of Sozan, who started the Soto line.

Ungan Zenji asked Dogo Zenji, "If Kannon has one thousand hands, and an eye on each hand, then for what does he use all of those eyes?" Ungan Zenji asked Dogo Zenji this because he knew Dogo had some understanding.

Dogo answered, "If it is dark in the middle of the night and we lose our pillow, our hands can find it and put it right back under our head. It is because you have eyes on your hands that you can find your pillow."

Ungan Zenji said, "I understand."

Then Dogo Zenji said, "If you think you get it, then how do you get it?"

"My whole body is eyes and hands." This is what Ungan Zenji answered.

Hearing this Dogo said, "What you have said is true, and while it is not bad, it is not thoroughly realized. It is still only your lips speaking the truth. You have 80 percent, but not the whole thing yet."

Ungan pressed, "Then what would you say?"

I would say, "The whole body is the hands." This is how Dogo answered.

How are these ways of putting it the same, and how are they different? We have to understand this or the Buddha Dharma will fade away. It's common today for people

to speak about the Dharma, thinking they understand when they only know it in their heads. There's no truth there. If it is just in our head, we have passed over it. There is nothing useful there. If we don't go beyond our own self-conscious awareness, we can't have something on which we can depend. We'll learn that it wasn't truth but just phenomena, and we still haven't reached the source of our life energy.

Master Ungan transmitted this Dharma to Master Tozan, whose disciple was Sozan. These two later founded the Soto school. Once Master Sozan said to his disciple, "When you meet things, from where do you see them?"

There is only one moon, but it reflects equally into the ocean, the river, the lake, and the puddle. In the terraced rice field, the moon reflects at each level of the paddy.

In society and for liberating others we have to be able to see how the moon works in each case individually. It's essential to have this freedom when working with others, or we can't liberate them. This is what the monk was being asked.

He answered his teacher, "The donkey looked into the well and its face was perfectly reflected there."

Sozan said, "That is a fine explanation. That is just how it is. But when it comes to the actual experience, that's only 80 percent of it."

The monk asked his teacher then, "What would you say?"

Master Sozan answered, "The well is seeing the donkey." The well sees not only the donkey but also the man, the woman, the old person, the young person, the rich person, the poor person. It sees each and every person who comes, reflecting them all with an empty mind. That's what Master Sozan was saying.

The words themselves seem the same. So how are Ungan and Dogo different from each other? How was Sozan's answer different?

The whole body is the eye

Throughout the body is the eye

How are these different? It can't be made into a problem of words.

The whole body is the eye
Throughout the body is the eye

It's not about a difference in wording. If we are thinking in terms of a restricted physical world, neither of these ways of putting it works, because they're not about a physically limited world but about a huge Kannon that fills the whole universe. If we're thinking in terms of our own small body, we're leaving out everybody else in the world.

Chuang-tzu writes about a bird that is so huge it has a wingspan of hundreds of kilometers. When it spreads its wings, the clouds are pushed out of the sky from above the oceans, and great waves are created that make heavy rough seas. This bird's greatness doesn't have anything to do with some small body, or words like "the whole body is the eye" or "throughout the body is the eye." Thinking that way gets us nowhere.

Yet Chuang-tzu's bird is only a speck of soot in one of Kannon's eyes. It seems like clutter moving in one of Kannon's eyes. What we're talking about is that big.

It is like Indra's Net of the King of the Heavens. A diamond is attached at each link in the net. There are 1,000,000,000,000 diamonds, each reflecting the others. Each one reflects all the others infinitely, creating infinite worlds. In the same way, our Buddha Nature reflects every one else's Buddha Nature. We all enter into one another's worlds and are thus eternally reflected.

"The mustard seed is in Mount Sumeru; Mount Sumeru is in the mustard seed."

The eternal and infinite worlds are expressed here. We radiate and illuminate each other. This is the world of the eyes and hands of Kannon. We can't be satisfied with a small idea of the body. Beyond speaking about the concept of it, we have to lose track of our body, becoming one

with heaven and earth. From here we can function fully.

Master Ungan and the disciple of Master Sozan see things correctly. But without that full and complete death, without the return to that life, without amazement at this eternal world and truth, they're only 80 percent arrived. Each person must open those eyes, and behold the truth of the Buddha Dharma and of Zen.



*A worn-out straw
sandal*

Ha So Ai

破草鞋

These words describe straw sandals that are falling apart. They're no longer of any use.

Straw sandals are used by people of training who offer their lives for truth. Going on pilgrimage, they offer themselves

completely, along with everything that one thinks of as one's own. Pilgrimage is for deepening one's own state of mind and for using one's life to teach others. This phrase about sandals is about that process.

In ancient times, monks put on straw sandals and went from this teacher to that teacher, seeking the Dharma wherever they went. Because they had to walk great distances, they were indebted to their straw sandals, without which they could not have traveled.

Master Juetsu Tosotsu says that to realize the true mind,

1. You leave no stone unturned to explore profundity, simply to see into your true nature. Now, I want to ask you, just at this moment, what is your true nature?

2. If you realize your true nature, you are free from life and death. Tell me, when your eyesight deserts you at the last moment, how can you be free from life and death?

3. When you set yourself free from life and death, you should know your ultimate destination. Where will you go when the four elements separate?

These are the three barriers of Master Tosotsu. It's a very noisy koan.

To realize kensho we put straw sandals on our feet, strap on the pack that carries our robes and eating bowls, tie in our sutra book, take a razor for cutting our hair, put on a rain poncho, and we walk, whether it's raining or not. No matter how hot or how cold it is, when you put your life on the line for the truth, the weather has no effect. We go with the wind and sleep with the dew. We're determined to know this truth, and until then we can't rest. We look for a teacher and seek a sturdy path. Pulling out the weeds by the root along the profound and mysterious path of Buddhism is done only for the purpose of attaining kensho. Realizing this true self is our only goal.

As the Sixth Patriarch answered when Goso Gunin Zenji asked him what he came for, he said it was only for realizing the truth and experiencing his original

mind; for kensho and that only. There is nothing to do in our whole life except to clarify this great matter. This is how he answered. Daruma Daishi went all the way to China from India to teach, "See directly True Nature and become Buddha."

We have to reveal that true mind, not with self-conscious ideas or desires. We have to reach beyond all of those things. We become that Buddha Nature itself, becoming that connective unifier. The thousands of sutras are only a finger pointing at how to attain kensho. Their words aren't the truth itself. The records of the ancients are a rock with which to knock at the gate, as are the koans. The Buddha's Dharma is only for knowing kensho, not for attaining anything but this truth. Having done pilgrimage for a long time, have we realized this true nature or not?

If we've realized it, we know this true self. Tosotsu says, "Now, I want to ask you, just at this moment, what is your true nature?"

Immediately people say "mu" or hit the floor or make their eyes big and fierce looking, but all of these are from self-conscious intention. Only our dualism is doing that. Our true mind, what is it?

No eyes, no ears, no nose, no tongue, no body, no mind.

No color, no sound, no smell, no taste, no touch, no object of mind.

No world of eyes through to no world of mind consciousness.

No ignorance and also no extinction of it. Through to no old age and death and also no extinction of it.

No suffering, no origination, no stopping, no path, no cognition.

Also no attainment with nothing to attain.

The *Heart Sutra* says this clearly, but we have to go beyond the words. No matter how hard we ponder their meaning, this thinking isn't useful. We can't encounter that mind with mental understanding.

That is why Mumon Ekai Zenji wrote in his introduction to Joshu's koan of Mu,

"Arouse your entire body with its three hundred and sixty bones and joints and its eighty four thousand pores of the skin; summon up a spirit of great doubt and concentrate on this word 'mu.' Carry it continuously day and night, Do not form a nihilistic conception of vacancy or a relative notion of 'has' or 'has not'. It becomes like having swallowed a red hot iron ball which can't be spit out even with great effort. All the illusory ideas and delusive thoughts accumulated up to the present will be exterminated and when that happens, internals and externals will be spontaneously united."

We lose track of our body and our dualistic ideas. If we don't take it that far, we can't achieve this great death. Without that, this original mind can't be fully realized. The majority stop halfway or are acknowledged for an experience that's incomplete, and the damage of that lasts on and on. If we don't realize our true mind, we can't even swallow today's food. It's a life incomplete if we don't realize this truth.

Life doesn't last forever. Our body gets old and weakens. Mind weakens along with our physical body. No matter how wonderful a thought is, it isn't permanent. So Tosotsu asks us, "If you realize your true nature, you are free from life and death. Tell me, when your eyesight deserts you at the last moment, how can you be free from life and death?"

We have to die completely to that nature with which we all are endowed. Holding on to nothing, we break free. If we do it totally, we can pierce beyond life and death. As Master Hakuin said, "Young people of training! Die once now and you will not have to die again."

The experience of the great death is the one essential of Zen Buddhism. Let go of your ideas about it and your ingrained habits of perception. The superficial way of living and pretending to understand is not the way to live your life.

You can't break through birth and death by living superficially. When we meet death we'll be choked by insecurity and fear. As long as we think we have a tomorrow, we feel settled today. But

when we think about death and loss, we become insecure and unstable. If we wait until death is upon us, it'll be too late. We're like cows being pulled along by a rope. Without a clear mind and a clear sense of where we are going, it is pitiful.

The founder of Myoshinji, Kanzan Musho Daishi, said, "There is no birth nor death here!" This is an easy thing to say, but if we have not really gone beyond birth and death, even though we can say the words, we can't live it. We have to let go of everything we hold dear. When not a single hair remains, the goal is reached. It's not an idea of birth and death. It's that clarified place beyond any idea. There is no one who won't face this challenge of dying. We can't just plan to do it. We have to actualize this thoroughly.

"If you realize your true nature, you are free from life and death, Tell me, when your eyesight deserts you at the last moment, how can you be free from life and death?"

We can only resolve this if we know where we're going. This is the most important of the three barriers.

Piercing through that world of birth and death isn't three separate problems. They are all the same, beyond past, present, and future. We must not get caught on those, as people do.

This mind cannot be reached by thinking about it. Each of us has to realize it. This is the value of Buddhism and the meaning of our training. We train to realize this, not to add training to our life's accessories. Going beyond every problem we have, we touch that source point. All of the crime and conflicts and suffering in the world arise from ignorance of this true source. From the origin, from the time of the Buddha, the truth of all those who searched for the Buddha Dharma has always come right from this place.

For finding the truth, we don those sandals to meet that teacher, struggling every day. We rest our staff on the wall at the temple and train there. The most important thing in our life is to realize this truth. It's not done for our satisfaction. It's got to be for all of society, supporting and helping

everyone. The goal of liberating people can also become just another form, but it won't work as only a form. The fulfillment of our life has to be completed. This is an important adage in Buddhism as well.

What does it mean to liberate all beings in society? It's not about giving a house, or clothes, or food to someone who has none, or helping people with their pain or making them feel better. These are all just transient, temporary forms of help. Each and every person has to experience that place where they are not in any way different from each and every other person. To not depend on anyone or anything but this huge Mind: this is our ultimate truth. This is the goal for all humans. If it isn't, these worn straw sandals lose their essence.

Buddhism seeks to liberate all beings, but each and every person has an individual life into which they have been born. To use this life well, we need all kinds of things. But the most important thing we need is to let go of all of our stuck and attached places, to wear the straw sandals and look for the truth and reveal this deep mind. Then the path to liberate others naturally opens, and we're aware we're only halfway there. We can't stop. The journey has to be completed, and we work to enable everyone's awakening.

A monk asked Master Ganto, "What is the path?" Master Ganto said, "A worn-out pair of straw sandals! Throw them in the lake!"

People think the path is something to be thankful for. But if we think that, we still have very far to go to reach the point where a path is no longer needed. This is Ganto's state of mind. If we don't know this, we are still midway.

Joshu says in his "Song of the Twelve Hours of the Day":

The cock crows. The first hour of the day.
Aware of sadness, feeling down and out, yet getting up.
There are neither underskirts nor undershirts,
Just something that looks a little

like a robe.

Underwear with the waist out, work pants in tatters,
A head covered with thirty-five pounds of black grit.
In such a way wishing to practice and help people,
Who knows that on the contrary it is being a nit wit.

First he says that when the cock crows, he wakes up and again has to see his ugly face in the mirror. He can't even find the holes for his legs in his underpants, and while the kesa still has a bit of a shape, his under-kimono wrap is all loose and twisted and his head is full of grayness and dandruff. He used to train and think he would help people. He offered his whole life to that end. When did it all turn into this? What in the world happened?

This is what Joshu says in his poem. He sings of having no good form, and how it's his own doing, deriding himself. But it's here where Joshu reaches the truth.

Another poet offers: I used to be a handsome young man. But now I am a man of long white hair, old and with no energy to do anything at all. I used to look for the path and burn with passion for it. That was in my youth. But after long years of hard training, when I look at what I've turned out to be, my hair is white and my face is full of wrinkles. I cannot get onto the Zen seat without borrowing someone's hand. This body been reduced to this.

It's to this point that the worn-out sandals have to be realized. In this one mind moment is the truth of the Buddha, the Buddha's truth understood completely with no sense at all of having even realized it. If we're still think about realizing it, we aren't there yet. We have to polish and peel away without rest, until we resemble these sandals. Unless we become this kind of a Zen monk, we only know things by concept, and there's no truth there. It's very rare to find words of such high quality. We can't let our practice dissipate with the fever of youth. We pray it won't end like that.

*The heavens and earth
and I are one root
The myriad things and
I are one body
People today see this
flower as if in a dream*

Tenchi, ware to dokon
Banbutsu, ware to ittai
Hana yume no gotoku
ainitari

天地我と同根
万物我と一体
花夢の如くに相
い似たり

These phrases are from the koan of "Nansen's One Flower" in the *Blue Cliff Record*. Riku Taifu (764-834) was a government official in the Tang dynasty, in charge of overseeing the decisions made by the judges. Nansen (748-834), who was Joshu's teacher, died the same





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When Nansen died, Riku Taifu, burst out laughing in front of the coffin. The attendant and head of the administrative quarters asked him, "Why are you laughing when everyone is crying! What an inappropriate thing to do!"

Riku Taifu replied that if the monk could say one word of truth, then he'd take his advice and cry too. Riku Taifu handed it back to the monk in doing so.

The monk couldn't say one word of any truth. He wasn't that developed. So Riku Taifu said, "How sad!! How sad!! Here Nansen is gone. How sad! How sad! Nansen is gone from this world and you can't hear the truth from him any more!!" With that he cried heartily.

Riku Taifu, whenever he could spare time from his responsibilities, would call on Nansen to work on his state of mind. Riku Taifu once said to Nansen, "I think I almost completely understand Buddhism."

This is what he said, but if we think of it in terms of the patriarchs' whole life of walking the Path, it seems pitiful.

Nansen replied, "What is your everyday state of mind?" Nansen was baiting Riku Taifu.

Riku Taifu answered, "Through all the day I am mu and forget myself and my body. Everywhere I go my mind stops nowhere at all."

Hearing him speak like that, Nansen knew it was only words, devoid of essence.

Nansen replied, "You are only saying words of social understanding. They weren't spoken by the one who's on the

Path. A sage or a top political leader or a prince doesn't get drowned in superficial wisdom and become so conceited and full of himself."

Riku Taifu accepted the criticism, but he thought he'd done it all. He had read all the books and thought he had seen his practice all the way through. Later, drinking tea with Nansen, he said:

"Recently, I have been reading the analects of Jo Hosshi. In them he says:

The heavens and earth and I are one root,
The myriad things and I are one body.

"What a skillful thing Jo Hosshi said. Don't you agree? Everything about Buddhism is encapsulated therein. Don't you agree?"

He spoke like this to Nansen, bragging and pronouncing.

Jo Hosshi was one of the four great translators who were disciples of Kurmarajiva. Jo Hosshi (382-414) wrote many superior treatises, such as those on the *Prajna Sutras*, and translated other great records as well. His writings speak to the marrow of Zen. He left us these works, along with his analects, which are known as the *Jo Analects*. The words that Riku Taifu brought up were from his chapter on the inconceivable wonder of Nirvana.

The heavens and earth and I are one root.
The myriad things and I are one body.

Riku Taifu was saying, "What a very skillful way to put it. Don't you agree? All of the 5,084 sutras are included in these lines. Don't you think so? Zen's satori is just this, isn't it? If you know this, then all of Zen's marrow can be said to have been realized and all of the koans can be said to be understood. Zazen also is just to realize this one sentence, isn't it?"

Riku Taifu kept saying it as if he'd understood, badgering Nansen for approval. He wanted his teacher to say,

“Yes, yes, it’s just as you say it is. You have studied well.” That is probably what he thought his teacher would say.

The heavens and earth and I are one root.
The myriad things and I are one body.

The heavens and earth and I are of one root, one and the same and in accordance. All things and I are one body. This is said all the time in Buddhism, and today’s science has shown as well that we are all made up from the same root matter. All things in existence are composed of one and the same material. This is how it’s been from the source. It is the same whether we look at it subjectively or objectively. We look at everything from the point of view of our awareness, but we are all atoms from the origin, so where is it that subject and object become two? From the origin there’s only this infinite universe, an ocean of atoms. We have an “I” or think of ourselves as a person, but from the origin that is impossible to understand.

I am the same as heavens and earth, and so are all things. The mountains and the rivers and the moon are all me, and so are the stars and all the ten thousand things. There’s nothing that’s not me. This is what Jo Hosshi said in his analects. And when Riku Taifu read this truth he was deeply moved. He knew it could not be mistaken and was in great wonder.

The heavens and earth and I are one root.
The myriad things and I are one body.

Whether we’re enlightened or not this truth doesn’t change, but to understand it mentally and to know it by experience are two different worlds. If an ignorant person had responded in this way, that might have been fine. But Riku Taifu was a disciple of Nansen presenting his understanding to his teacher. Of course Riku Taifu wanted to be recognized and acknowledged, but Nansen was deeply and truly experienced, completely

awakened; when Riku Taifu spoke the wisdom of Jo Hosshi, Nansen knew it was a mental conversation and not an actual experience that was being presented to him. Riku Taifu’s words had nothing to do with experience. Nansen called him over and pointed at a flower blooming nearby and said, “People today see this flower as if in a dream.”

Master Nansen said it as if he was talking about someone else. It was as if he was saying, “As you are saying, when people in the world see this beautiful flower, they see this individual thing. When they say this flower as so beautiful, are they saying it from the place of

The heavens and earth and I are one root.
The myriad things and I are one body.

“Are people actually seeing this with their deep seeing when they say, ‘Oh it is so beautiful!’? When they see it as if THEY are blooming there, they don’t have such a big mental explanation coming first.” Nansen corrected Riku Taifu in this way.

For those who are not yet awakened, it is indeed a superb truth.

The heavens and earth and I are one root.
The myriad things and I are one body.

But we must not treat our body and our limited mental understanding as something precious. Approaching it that way we can never reach our true source. We’ll only have a mental understanding. If from the ancient times people had settled for that, there could be no possibility of awakening today. Libraries are full of books that educate people, but they can’t help people resolve their pain and suffering unless they’re able to throw away what needs to be thrown away. Instead, they want to clutch their limited understanding, refusing to let go. Coming and going, all day long, we grapple with this. It must all be thrown away. We

have to let go of everything we decorate ourselves with and the ideas we’ve picked up far and wide. All must be let go. If we don’t do that, it’s not the actual truth.

This is why Master Rinzai said, “In this five-foot lump of red flesh there is a true person of no rank who is always coming in and going out of the orifices, if you have not seen it yet, see it now, see it now!!”

Rinzai challenges us, “Did you really realize the true mind? Not yet! Not yet! Well, see it! See it!” He says it so clearly. It’s the difference between this world and I versus this world and what’s not me. Me and not me can be divided. In all of the mountains and flowers and rivers and birds and sunshine, in all of the ten thousand things everywhere, if there are differences it is because there is a “me” seeing and a “something” to be seen. If there is not a something doing the seeing, then nothing can be seen. If there is no one there to see, then there is no way for awareness to be there either. So whatever changes there might be, there has to be one to see and a world to be seen. That’s why there is a “me” to see.

This world is a combination of subjective and objective vision. We and the world are one and the same, but there are also two. Yet it is all only one, and THAT is what we have to realize with our experience and not with faulty understanding. Then we can say,

The heavens and earth and I are one root.
The myriad things and I are one body.

This actuality can be known, but doing it mentally we’ll never move beyond dualism. Putting it differently, there’s a world, which is not who I am; nonetheless, neither is it separate from me in any way whatsoever.

Let go of a “self” and an “other” and drop away mind and body. That “other” which is “outside” is just “me,” but outside. And that “inner self” is just the world which has become “me,” inside. This is exactly the same as Rinzai’s five-foot lump of red

flesh and that which comes and goes from all of its orifices all the time. The inner self is the world coming inside, and the world is the “me” going outside.

That self which is me is the world coming inside, and all of the ten thousand things are just this self going outside. This person of no rank who fills the world through all the senses just comes in and goes out. Yet there isn’t a thing that comes and goes. It’s simply that functioning manifesting. Coming in, it is subjective; going out, it is objective. But there is no material thing that comes and goes at all.

We see this person of no rank becoming subjective and becoming objective, and so we see that objective is subjective and subjective is objective. They are always coming in and going out—that is our healthy and pure state of mind. There is nothing more pure than this, and to realize and know it is to know the true self.

People of old said, “Am I the moon or is the moon me? I sit and I gaze at the moon until I don’t know any seam between us.” I look at the bright autumn moon to where there’s no division between me and the moon. In this high autumn sky the moon radiates and offers bright clarity to each and every thing. Just as in the clear night air the bright moonlight reaches every corner of the universe, the objective and the subjective are one. In this state of mind we know directly that “we are the Dharmakaya, the clear pure light in a moment of our mind; the Sambogaya, the undifferentiated light in a moment of our mind; the Nirmanakaya, the undiscriminating light in a moment of our mind.”

This is our true self. We are not some object or thing, but “Am I the moon? Is the moon me? In this moonlight there is no more self and other.”

“The water does not think to reflect the moon, the moon does not think to be reflected by the water, the moon on the water on Hirosawa pond.” The moon and pond do not intend to reflect or to be reflected. The moon is shining in the high sky, and that pond is untouched by

the wind, so there are no waves and the surface of the water is a perfectly brilliant reflection. But the water does not think that it is reflecting, and the moon does not think it is being reflected. This is the true shining.

Upon reflection, there is no self and other. Self and other are perfectly matched, together empty. Living that way all the time reveals:

The heavens and earth and I are one root.
The myriad things and I are one body.
The true world of the awakened.

Master Dogen said, “Hearing it as it is, without thinking about it, our ears just as it is, the drop of water from the eaves.”

There is no me who listens--no mind, no body, and no awareness of listening. There is only that filling of the serene world and the truth of its resonation within everything. The drop of water falls from the eaves, and there’s no seam between my listening and that falling drop.

As Daito Kokushi also said, “If we see it with our ears and hear it with our eyes it is beyond doubting, the rain dropping from the eaves.” There’s no separation whatsoever; no eyes or ears. There is no more division into two there, not even an idea of it. If we were to say there is a self at all, it is a self that fills the heavens. This flower also fills the universe beyond any ideation we have of it.

Nansen heard Riku Taifu’s words clearly, and he responded by not affirming him. In this way he saved Riku Taifu. Riku Taifu was brilliant, and Nansen knew that he would accept only the truth. Nansen knew how to keep the fulcrum straight, cutting into and then digging out his weaknesses. Riku Taifu was stuck on Jo Hosshi’s words and on mental understanding. He was in a dark cave of words and phrases, and Nansen saw through it and crushed the cave. That very functioning is Nansen. Thus he said, “People today see this flower

as if in a dream.”

People see this flower and vaguely say, “Oh, how pretty!” This flower blooms right there, but how many really see it? You too, Riku Taifu, you say those words so easily, but HOW are you one and the same root with this flower. Can you speak to that? You know the mental idea of it, but HOW are you one and the same? Nansen’s kindness was like pushing someone off a high cliff by taking away the last available handhold, leaving nothing to hang on to.

If Nansen had offered Riku Taifu even the least bit of confirmation, he would never have revealed the marrow of Buddhism. Riku Taifu would never have known that eye of truth, rather than an eye that sees two. It has to be experienced to the roots. If Nansen hadn’t responded as he did, Riku Taifu couldn’t have gone deep enough to cut free.

People today see this flower as if in a dream.

If Nansen had responded intellectually, he couldn’t have cut to the essence for Riku Taifu. They could have discussed Jo Hosshi’s lines in a conversational way, but because Nansen took it to completion, his response left no room for that. If you can’t see this, then the whole case is nothing but explanation.

Setcho Zenji sees through this well and offers his poem:

Hearing, seeing, touching, and knowing are not one and one;
Mountains and rivers should not be viewed in the mirror,
The frosty sky, the setting moon--at midnight;
With whom will the serene waters of the lake reflect the shadows in the cold?

In this way Setcho Zenji commented on the words of Jo Hosshi which Riku Taifu brought to Nansen and on Nansen’s response, with which he pounded down Riku Taifu’s enthusiasm. Nansen said, “People of today see this flower as if in

a dream,” and Setcho saw this well, saying,

Hearing, seeing, touching, and knowing are not one and one;
Mountains and rivers should not be viewed in the mirror,
The frosty sky, the setting moon-at midnight;
With whom will the serene waters of the lake reflect the shadows in the cold?

As Rinzai says, “With our eyes, we see; with our ears, we hear; with our nose, we smell; with our mouth, we taste; with our hands, we make things; and our feet carry us around.” We see that world of objects with our eyes and hear it with our ears. We taste sweet and sour and feel hot and cold and see what is good and bad. In this world we are our eyes, we are our ears, we are our nose--we are all of our perceiving senses. It’s with them that we’re joined perfectly with this world, fitted without a gap.

As Rinzai Zenji says, “From the origin it is one bright light, then it divides into the six rays.” What we perceive passes through our six senses. The root of all of those is one and the same, and it does not exist only as subjective or objective. Those two become one complete whole, and awareness arises from there. From this place where subjective and objective become one, we perceive each thing we see, as we and the thing seen simultaneously become one.

That awareness which sees and the world that is seen become one. When we see the flower as red and the tree as green, our awareness is already divided. When each form is clearly both subjective and objective, we begin to see how they’re not separate. We see with our eyes and smell with our nose, but this is how our senses work alongside each other. This is how Kannon hears these sounds of this world with her entire body.

Yet Riku Taifu was saying,

The heavens and earth and I are

one root
The myriad things and I are one body.

He had drunk Jo Hosshi’s words down in one gulp, and Nansen showed this to him. But this is still a rational understanding. Even if we drink it all down, our stomach does not become full. That would be the world of the small view. We have to see that we actually are that whole universe, to know this state of mind of forgetting ourself completely, hearing with our ears to forget them completely. We have to go beyond any ideas of good and bad and all of our self-conscious awareness. If we realize that place of no eyes, no ears, no nose, no tongue, no body, no mind, and realize it completely, then the whole of nature, all of it, is the complete subjective. It all goes into the mirror and there’s no self seeing the mountains and rivers. We’re one with the heavens and earth, the moon is right inside our mind, and there is no person seeing and no moon being seen. The mountains and rivers are all in the mirror of our subjective view until there is not even any seeing. This is where we are one and the same with the heavens and earth, in all of our coming and going.

Master Nansen says that the people of today see this flower as if they are in a dream. What is he saying? He didn’t say that just to tell Riku Taifu about a flower and other people. It was Nansen’s own true experience. That is why he said, “People today see this flower as if in a dream.”

As Setcho says:

Hearing, seeing, touching, and knowing are not one and one;
Mountains and rivers should not be viewed in the mirror,
The frosty sky, the setting moon-at midnight;
With whom will the serene waters of the lake reflect the shadows in the cold?

In the depths of winter, the frost is heavy.

It's midnight, and everything is so serene there's nothing to notice, not one thing in the world. The dark is deeper and deeper, and no one else is there, but we stay sitting zazen. The chilly winter sky has some moon left, until it finally goes behind the mountain. It's cold with no wind. With no waves on the lake, the mountain is just reflected. Nothing goes by and nothing is reflected or to be seen, only a quiet darkness with no person's shadow and no "I" to see an "other." There is no seeing or being seen, only one matched whole into which we melt and disappear. This world, this me, melts into one layer of being with this scene.

Not one moment of anything to think whatsoever, with no ideas of this or that. Completely at one with the heavens and earth, with no me nor heavens or earth left there at all. We have to taste this place, or we can't say we know Zen. If we know that place, we see that truth of dying completely and totally.

The heavens and earth and I are
one root.
The myriad things and I are one
body.

They are easy words to say, but we have to actualize the experience, or we haven't resolved the question. It can't be done with just mental understanding.



*Host and guest are
clearly distinguished*

Hinju rekinen

賓主歷然

These are among the best-known words of Master Rinzai. In the *Records of Rinzai* he teaches of "the four positions" of host and guest. At times there is a person and no world, at times there is no person and a world, at times there is no person and no world, and at times there is both a

person and a world.

When there is only a person and no world, that person is completely the true host or master, with no thing or anyone else acknowledged.

When we become the guest, we become totally the guest with not one single speck of ourselves being put into what we are doing. We throw ourselves into becoming this world without a speck a small self involved in our doing of that.

On another occasion there is no self and no world. Smack in the middle of deepest samadhi, there is no self and no world here.

On another occasion there is a world and there is a person and we recognize the whole world widely and bring ourselves into everything.

These four are what Rinzai teaches as the four relationships of host and guest, from his basic teaching of the true person of no rank. Master Rinzai says that to be at one with this world is humans' truth. Master Rinzai expresses this truth as "the true person of no rank."

As eyes it is seeing, as ears it is hearing, as a nose it is smelling, as a mouth it is tasting, as a body it is feeling, and as a mind it is thinking. The world comes in as our eyes, and as eyes it extends to the very edge of the universe. Our ideas extend outward, and the world manifests as all things occurring outside because there's no difference between inside and outside. To awaken to this true person of no rank we employ the Buddha's way, and the four positions express the subtleties of how the master and the guest engage. In our everyday life, how is this mind expressed in an awakened way?

One day the head monks of the east zendo and the west zendo met and both gave great shouts. Since both monks were Rinzai's disciples, and since he always let forth a great shout, they also made a great shout. One of the other monks who saw this went to Master Rinzai and asked, "So which is the host and which is the guest?"

The monk knew that Master Rinzai was

always teaching about the matter of host and guest, and so he went and posed the question.

If it does not matter who is host and who is guest, then the world would be very confused. That the host is supported in that role is important, and in this is a flavor of how things function. We all invite guests over and serve them, and we all are also invited by others and serve as their guests.

Sometimes we are guest, and sometimes we are host. Sometimes we invite guests over, and sometimes we visit others as guests. When we talk with people we listen to what the other person says, and sometimes we offer our own opinion. We must understand these subtleties in order to have good relationships with other people.

At times we have to become master, and we have to do it with responsibility. Master Rinzai was always emphasizing the importance of this free functioning. So when the monk asked Master Rinzai which head monk was master and which was guest, Master Rinzai replied, "This is obvious. If you don't understand, ask the two monks themselves. A third person can't understand this."

Was your shout that of a host or that of a guest? Only the people involved can know this. Saying this, Rinzai came down off the high seat. Sometimes we think we are the guest, but we are the host.

The host or master prepares for the guests, putting everything into the doing of that. If we have invited someone, we want them to have a good time. Knowing their essence, we provide them with what they will enjoy. This is not being conceited or being full of oneself. Bringing forth joy from the guest is the host's work, and such efforts are important.

The guests as well have to honor the host. They have to appreciate what the host prepares and offers to them, not judging but respecting and sincerely appreciating whatever the host provides. And then, while they may appear as guests in making efforts to honor the master, they also become the master. This is the

absolute master and the absolute guest. It is the absolute master that fills the whole universe until we do not even know that we are the master. This is the most basic truth and has to be realized.

When we awaken to this absolute master, we become one with everything. In realizing it as truth, we're accepting in every situation.

*A foundation that
doesn't decay in a
thousand years*

Sen nen no motoi wo
dassezu

千年不打基

These are the words of Taigen Shigen, used by Master Shaku Soen to present his own experience in September 1893 at the first World Congress of Religions in Chicago. It was there that the first teisho in the West was given by Master Shaku Soen Zenji and translated by Daisetsu



Suzuki, who was also present. Daisetsu Suzuki translated many historical Zen texts into English, making them available for the first time to the West. Master Shaku Soen was Daisetsu Suzuki's teacher, the one who trained him. When Master Shaku Soen was young, he trained with Master Gisan Zenrai Zenji.

Sogenji is where Gisan Zenrai Zenji realized his awakening and did wholehearted Zen training. Later, Gisan Zenrai completed his training with Master Imakita Kosen in the monastery of Engakuji in Kamakura.

Master Shaku Soen's Dharma uncle was Eneki Shigen Zenji, also a disciple of Gisan Zenrai Zenji and who in turn received Dharma transmission. Thus, Shaku Soen was raised with the influence of both Eneki Shigen Zenji and Gisan Zenrai Zenji. Zen in the world today is built on the base established by the efforts of Master Shaku Soen and Daisetsu Teitaro Suzuki. The Zen master who trained Gisan Zenrai Zenji was the person from whom we have this phrase, Master Taigen Shigen Zenji.

When Taigen Shigen first went to Sogenji, it was not yet a Zen dojo. It was a place for young novices only, with no official Zen master in residence. Taigen went from there to Zuioji for training with Inzan Gigen Zenji. For many years he struggled, eventually receiving Master Inzan's Dharma transmission. A new era had begun in Japan, with the Open Door Policy of the Meiji Restoration. After the Closed Door Policy of the Tokugawa government, the change was radical and important. Although the country was open in terms of its international policy, Buddhism was now forbidden, considered a religion from a foreign country. The government said that Japan was a country of god and Shintoism and forbade all other religions. The Tokugawa government had supported Buddhism for more than three hundred years, and for this reason, the times were painful and difficult for Buddhism.

During the Tokugawa time, the lord of this area, Haramasako Ikeda, gave his royal temple to Sogenji so that Buddhism could continue. Insisting that there had to be a place where real training could

continue, or Buddhism would decay, Lord Haramasako called home Taigen Shigen Zenji, who was still training with Master Inzan. Sogenji then opened as a place of official training, as a Zen dojo. It was Taigen Shigen Zenji who first opened Sogenji as a place of training. It was because of his good character and reputation on the Path that many came from all over the country to train. There were eighty people doing zen training here then; it was an enormous dojo with many monks.

It was Master Taigen Shigen who raised Gisan Zenrai Zenji. Gisan had grown up in a very impoverished village and went to practice as a novice with Taigen Shigen Zenji. Taigen Shigen Zenji passed the dojo along to Gisan Zenrai Zenji. It was a very full and taut place, with both an east and a west zendo. It brimmed over with fine training power from Master Gisan Zenrai to Master Tekisui Giboku, Master Ekei Shigan, Master Imakita Kosen, and others. These were monks who were all raised at Sogenji in that era, Shaku Soen among them.

Taigen Shigen Zenji was one who always did things from this perspective of "A foundation that doesn't decay in a thousand years." He kept this as his state of mind, his fundamental belief, always refining it.

With the political regime of the Meiji, an era began that would influence Japan for a thousand years. This is why it was so important. Gisan Zenrai Zenji lived during this Meiji era, when Japan became officially a Shinto country. Gisan Zenrai Zenji had wholeheartedly raised disciples with everything he had. Then the Meiji saw Japan as only a Shinto country and said that they didn't need Buddhism any longer. They destroyed Buddhism, claiming Japan as a country of god's will and seeing politics as a matter of god's power as well. The country supported the slogan of "to worship god and love one's country," so loving one's country and worshiping god became the equivalent of respecting the emperor as holy. This made the whole country a vertical hierarchy, with the emperor as a god at the top.

The political body decided on the ways of Confucian filial piety with the honoring of the emperor as the absolute. There wasn't a place for the Buddha's teachings. Temples were burned and priests were disrobed. This was what Japan turned into, and it was at its most extreme in the prefectures of Shikoku, Yamaguchi, and Kyushu. The effect can still be seen today. All four hundred of the temples in Kagoshima were destroyed, and in the Tosa region of Shikoku there are still places with not a temple.

Following the Meiji, Japan once again was made an abundant country with equal religions. But it was the politics of power for a government of god that led to the First World War. The source of Japan's participation in the Second World War was also present here.

The Buddha had taught to not kill even one single insect. Yet Japanese Buddhist priests took up arms because government orders were absolute and mandatory. Gisan Zenrai Zenji was raised in this atmosphere of worshipping the emperor as god, and he rebelled.

He taught the Dharma by offering teishos on the *Blue Cliff Record*. The *Blue Cliff Record's* words weren't from a Buddha of 2,500 years ago. Because the Buddha wasn't Japanese, his sutras were said by the government to be irrelevant. The *Blue Cliff Record* said that today, right now, we have to find Buddha in our very own mind, showing us how to realize our true nature and love all beings. In doing so we guide all people in the world to this awakening available and present in every being.

The *Blue Cliff Record* is a tool for teaching that all people have this perfect mind and how we might awaken to that. It teaches that this is what we take birth for and how that true nature is revealed. This realization is the only doorway to Zen. It's not about economics or being useful to people. Without realization, we can't be useful to others. We're useful only when we can reach out to others and direct them to true awakening.

If we realize our true mind, we're no longer caught on form and ritual. We

can then put the whole of our energy into our capabilities for freeing others. For humanity's harmony we have to put everything in it, not just to defend our own small state of mind. Unless we're doing this for everyone's benefit, nothing we do moves us toward that goal.

All of the Patriarchs and Buddhas followed this Path, but why? They came to open in each of us this eye that's not any different from the eye of the Buddha. For doing that, all of the successive Buddhas have taken form.

Dokyo Etan Zenji never came into this world but stayed in the mountains. Nonetheless, he saw the law of humans' minds very clearly, and he deepened it every day. This is the point of living. Yet today people are only concerned with their own personal benefit. They have eyes only for their own profit. We must have this clear-seeing eye as our way in every era; without it, we become unstable. It's not the functioning of a form but the functioning of that mind which sees the future of all beings clearly. That seeing eye, how does it function and guide people? This is what is most important.

The country of Japan stressed the god of heaven and earth, but this true Buddha Nature, which we have from the origin and which connects all beings, isn't something outside ourselves. It is not external. That is dualistic and relative. Within us is a place where we receive all existence, and we have to awaken to this clearly seeing eye. There is a very simple, honest, direct place in all of us. This clear mind is Buddha Nature, the mind of god.

Gisan Zenrai Zenji taught using words from the *Blue Cliff Record*. Politicians say to worship god and love the country, but what is that god? What is that country? It can't be just politicians that guide. There is no essence in that. But the *Blue Cliff Record* does have essence. It tells us how to shed the ego and be free. Then we can realize that place to which all beings return. This is the wisdom which is the *Blue Cliff Record*. By doing this, all beings will love one another. Then the true god and the true country, the whole universe, will be loved and the wisdom of god will

be brought forth. This is the meaning of being human--not pushing others externally, but from within knowing love and wisdom and gratitude and great joy. We can help society from here. Our joy at being born will bring joy to all people. This is true human love, isn't it?

Buddhism isn't just the mental ideas in analects; it's not a hierarchical ordering from top to bottom. Buddhism works to honor all beings as equal and all people together. As the Buddha said, "All beings in these three realms are my children and everywhere in these three realms is my home." All people are equal. We don't press things onto people but see this world as our responsibility. Everyone is cared for as if they were our children. So it is my responsibility and not something I can toss away. This is what he was teaching. If we throw that away, awakening is at risk.

The government was saying that the emperor's words are absolute. That's not the awakening of mind but just pushing people around with power. People don't want to be pushed around by official rules and told what to do. There is no individual truth in that. To allow everyone to become awakened is the true progress of Japan and of the whole world, and Buddhism teaches this. It isn't possible to throw Buddhism out when it's in Buddhism that basics are taught and everyone has responsibility for society. It is important that it is understood that this can't be done with political power but must be done with the joy of being alive. Only then will true responsibility and full use of our capabilities be possible. Without this true loving of the country, only damage can result. Isn't what Buddhism teaches the true loving of the country and worshipping of god?

This was the teaching of Buddhism during the Tokugawa times, and then it was stopped. Gisan Zenrai Zenji took responsibility for keeping it alive so that people would not be oppressed by others, so that people could bring forth from their own inner awakening, and spread it to all people. People don't believe in Japan because it only acts for its own benefit and economy; it must not be this kind of

a country!

We have to ask what is a true human and look at this carefully. Only this essence will bring everyone to see that Japan is not only concerned with money and fame. When true clear mind is deemed essential, all people will see this. Experiencing that is the responsibility of all people in each person's lifetime.

There were some important people who, since it was said that Japan was god's country, felt that they had a mission to spread god's teaching, when they did not even know what god was. They were influenced by political power and stuck in their own opinions. This is what was ruling them.

Our true mind is pure and open. Each and every person is that clear mind in the way that a dewdrop on a green leaf becomes green and, if it receives the moon, reflects the moon. The emperor is not god, and if he is, then all humans are also god. Why can't this be understood? Isn't finding that god in one's own mind a true country of believing in god? Our true clear mind is, as it is, god. Since all people have this same mind, then all people in the country have to also be god. If the emperor is god, then it's because he also has that true clear mind, one and the same with our mind. We all have to awaken to this mind.

We are not so conceited as to say that we are god's hands and feet. People who are not yet awakened have dark hearts and use political power without seeing clearly. Those who say they will take away our life have never seen this dewdrop. I don't mind losing my life, but all beings have this clear mind within. If we take away that, then who can love this country and praise god? So sad. So sad! Gisan said it so clearly.

Today as well, it is not so peaceful or safe. In these times, you never knew what crazy person might come at you. Gisan lived in times as chaotic as these.

This same Gisan Zenrai Zenji, along with Imakita Kosen and Yuri Tekisui, moved Japan in those years. Gisan Zenrai gathered them all, and while his name is not well known, he was surrounded by

people who were great. This isn't about a personal opinion but about our own pure heart. Each person's mind is like that clear dewdrop on the leaf that takes on the color of the leaf and when shone on by the bright moon takes that brightness. It can't be possible that only an emperor is god. All of humankind is god. That is the true humankind.

If Japan is a country of god, then everyone in it has to be recognized as god. That is clearly how it has to be. The emperor is god only in the sense in which his mind is clear and bright. That one mind that we and the emperor both have is what we all have to awaken to.

It's not about losing our body in war but about losing all people's deepest faith. In each person's mind there is this jewel, and if we don't realize that jewel, we can't love the country nor worship god.

Gisan says it clearly for everyone, "How sad! How pitiful!"

Today this teaching of Gisan Zenrai is still essential. It needs to be heard. It's not about the success of one country, but about the deepest faith of 6.3 billion people. This is Zen. Zen is the mind of all people. None of us can interpret that personally and according to our own needs. This is the meaning of these words, "A foundation that doesn't decay in a thousand years."