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EIHEI DŌGEN ZENJI

Commentary by
KŌSHŌ UCHIYAMA RŌSHI

Translated with an introduction by
DAITSŪ TOM WRIGHT

ZEN MASTER DOGEN'S TEACHING on the EIGHT QUALITIES of a GREAT PERSON

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Firstly, I would like to acknowledge Kōshō Uchiyama Rōshi, my friend, my mentor, and my teacher. For twenty-five years he guided me in my life and practice. I would also like to thank the late Elizabeth Kenney, who very carefully edited the manuscript two times before submitting it to the publisher. Finally, I want to thank Matt Zepelin and Samantha Ripley for all their editing and suggestions for clarifying the text.

INTRODUCTION

Both Shakyamuni Buddha and Eihei Dōgen Zenji selected “the qualities of a great person” as a focus for their teaching at the end of their lives. No one knows for sure why they did so, but I believe that both, knowing their end would come soon, wanted to express what they felt to be most important in concretely practicing and living out their own life.

Perhaps the Buddha and Dōgen strike us as figures distant in time and space, yet I’m not sure that the society and the world we are living in today is so different from years past. Just as there were conflicts and wars in Dōgen’s time, we can’t help but read about current outbreaks of violence, conflicts of interest, and differences in various people’s views and understandings.

Where can we learn about a more humane way to live and to take care of our universe?

WHO WAS DŌGEN AND WHAT ARE THE QUALITIES OF A GREAT PERSON?

Eihei Dōgen Zenji was a thirteenth-century Buddhist priest who helped introduce Sōtō Zen to Japan. Born in 1200 in Uji, a district south of the city of Kyoto which was then the capital of Japan, Dōgen was orphaned at age seven and ordained as a priest when he was thirteen. He studied Tendai Buddhism at a small hermitage near the foot of Mount Hiei for about four years. At seventeen, experiencing doubts about his practice, he left for Kenninji Monastery and practiced Rinzai Zen under the senior monk there, Butsuju Myōzen

佛樹明全, dharma successor to Myōan Eisai Zenji 明庵栄西禅師, who had first brought Zen to Japan from China late in the twelfth century. From 1223 to 1227, Dōgen went to China with Myōzen in search of a true teacher. While there, he did find such a person in Tiāntóng Rújìng 天童如淨, or in Japanese, Tendō Nyojō (1163–1228). Also, while they were still in China, Myōzen died.

After his return from China, Dōgen eventually opened his own monastery, Kōshōji 興聖寺, in Fukakusa, a district on the outskirts of Kyoto not far from his birthplace. While at Kōshōji, Dōgen gave many dharma talks that were recorded by his chief disciple, Koun Ejō 孤雲懐奘. Dōgen also wrote many essays on Buddhist practice for monks and lay followers. These writings were eventually compiled into what is now known as *Shōbōgenzō* 正法眼蔵 (*Treasury of the True Dharma Eye*). In 1242–43, Dōgen moved away from Kyoto to present-day Fukui Prefecture, where he established a new temple, Daibutsuji, later renamed Eiheiji, where he continued to teach and write.

The Eight Qualities of a Great Person (in Japanese, *Hachi Dainin Gaku* 八大人覚) is usually considered to be the ninety-fifth or final fascicle of *Shōbōgenzō*. Dōgen seems to have begun this final writing in the fall of 1252. Within days of trying to complete it, he left Eiheiji for Kyoto to receive treatment for what is said to have been an infected carbuncle. He passed away about a month later, in 1253.

In the text, Dōgen lays out the eight qualities, realizations, or perhaps we can call them awarenesses, that a practitioner of the Buddha's dharma should embody as a bodhisattva. They are:

1. Having few desires
2. Knowing one has enough
3. Appreciating serenity/quietude
4. Making diligent effort
5. Not losing sight of true dharma
6. Concentrating on settling in dhyāna

7. Practicing wisdom
8. Not engaging in useless argument

Hachi Dainin Gaku follows the *Yuikyögyö* 遺教経 (Sutra of the Buddha's Last Teachings), understood to be the Buddha's deathbed teaching to his disciples. It is just one of the sutras included in the *Mahāyāna Mahāparinirvāṇa Sūtra* and was translated into Chinese by the Chinese monk and scholar Kumārajīva in the fifth century. The Buddhist canon contains a related sutra called *Hachi Dainin Gaku Kyo* or Sutra of the Eight Qualities of a Great Person, which is like but not quite the same as the version Dōgen used. Dōgen composed his text with the Chinese sutra he had at hand. Although we don't know exactly which version of the sutra he had or how he came to possess it, it's clear there are differences from the version of *Hachi Dainin Gaku* we have today. Sometimes, the order is slightly different; sometimes Dōgen's version includes awarenesses or qualities not in other versions. For example, the third quality of appreciating serenity and the eighth quality of not engaging in useless arguments seem to be unique to Dōgen's version. In my view, the best way to understand these differences is simply to assume that any modifications to or deviations from whatever may have been the original sutra reflect Dōgen's own understanding and his desire to clarify the passages. In this sense, we can say that this text is Dōgen's *Hachi Dainin Gaku*. I suspect that if Dōgen had lived a while longer, he would have added more of his own comments. I also think that Uchiyama Rōshi's commentary, which places itself in this same interpretive tradition, goes a long way to elucidating each of these eight qualities. My translation of Dōgen's fascicle constitutes part one of this book, and my translation of Uchiyama Rōshi's much more extensive commentary on that fascicle constitutes part two. As in the Japanese version of this text, the Dōgen material is reprinted in sections throughout Uchiyama's commentary as a convenient reference point for his remarks.

To understand the intention behind Dōgen's text, let us take a look at the title *Hachi Dainin Gaku* (or *Kaku*) 八大人覚. In Japanese, *dainin* is written 大人, and for most Japanese today, the pronunciation would be *otona*, meaning "adult." *Adult* might seem rather mundane, but for Dōgen, the term was synonymous with *bodhisattva*. And so we might ask: Just what is an adult?

In a dharma talk he gave in Minnesota, Dainin Katagiri Rōshi is reputed to have said, "Almost people are crazy." When someone told him that he should say "almost all" people are crazy, he nodded and went on. But if we reflect on his original statement about "almost people," perhaps he wasn't mistaken. Uchiyama Rōshi often used the word *giji otona*, which means "pseudo-adult," to refer to most of humanity today. In a sense, we could say these teachers are each contributing to an ongoing conversation concerning the question: How does one become a true adult? This is the deep subject of practice, and the eight qualities are an attempt to give practitioners the signposts they need to guide them on this path. Such has been the case in my own life, and so I will make my way to introducing Uchiyama Rōshi via stories and reflections about great people I have encountered and the impact their qualities have had on me.

REFLECTIONS ON GREAT PEOPLE IN MY LIFE

As a young boy, I heard about Dr. Albert Schweitzer in our Lutheran church in a small rural town in Wisconsin and decided that I wanted to be just like him when I grew up. He seemed intent on serving and medically treating the people in Gabon, where he was living, besides being a a musician and a Christian theologian, among other things. As a teenager, I thought this was a good person to emulate. Schweitzer's qualities of compassion and social engagement had crossed continents to influence me, however impressionistically and naively my teenage mind received them.

After graduating from high school, I began studying at Valparaiso University in Indiana as a premed student. Almost failing chemistry in my first semester, as well as receiving only average grades in my theology class in my second semester, put an end to my dream of becoming a medical missionary.

At that point, I seriously considered dropping out of school. A mentor told me about a church program that sent young people to the inner cities to support youth programs in churches there. So I left school and became the youth leader at a Lutheran church in Englewood, on Chicago's South Side. When I was introduced to the members in the youth group for the first time, they asked me where I had come from. I told them how I was raised in a small town in Wisconsin, and though there were few if any Black people in our town, I had no prejudice against such people. When the kids got up off the floor from laughing so hard, they sat me down and told me that for the next six months they would show me my own prejudices and inherent racism. And they did. I may have been the youth leader, but the kids taught me a great deal about how I had been raised and about my personal biases and prejudices. Sometimes, a teacher teaches the student, but sometimes a student teaches the teacher. Teaching and learning go both ways.

While working at the church, I met Betty Armstrong, a Black woman who was married with three children. She was a member of the Southern Christian Leadership Conference headed by Dr. Martin Luther King Jr., and she asked me if I wanted to join them. I certainly did, and I attended weekly meetings held in a building near the University of Chicago.

On March 8, 1965, the Monday evening news showed Dr. King talking about what had happened the previous day in Selma, Alabama. That day became known as "Bloody Sunday." Civil rights marchers had been turned back at the Edmund Pettus Bridge by local and state police officers, some of them riding horses and making the horses bite the protestors. Dr. King asked white clergy to

come to Selma to help him. As soon as the news was over, I decided to go myself. When I called the Ecumenical Institute, where I had been taking evening classes in theology that centered on the issues of race and gender, I learned that four teachers would be heading to Selma. So I packed my bag and met them at O'Hare Airport for the evening flight to Montgomery, Alabama. There we rented a car with Alabama license plates and drove to Selma. Had we driven there in a car with Illinois plates, we would undoubtedly have been stopped and told to leave Alabama.

We went directly to Brown Chapel to meet other clergy who had arrived from around the United States as well as local activists. There, Dr. King spoke to us. Though I never met Dr. King personally, I was able to talk with some of his closest aides, including Jim Bevel and Andrew Young, who later became the mayor of Atlanta, Georgia. We were each assigned to stay with a local family. The family I stayed with had one teenage son. While I was with them, the son happened to have his shirt off, and I noticed his shoulder was bandaged. When I asked him how it had happened, he said that a horse had bitten him the previous day as he was fleeing from the police at the Edmund Pettus Bridge. That evening, Rev. James Reeb, a Unitarian Universalist minister from Boston, had been having dinner when he was taken outside by three or four local white men. They beat him up so badly that he died two days later on March 11 in a hospital in Birmingham. The fourth quality—making diligent effort, an effort to further the dharma—comes to mind when I reflect on the death of Rev. Reeb. It would have been easy to have just gotten angry and demanded justice for his death, but later in our text, readers will understand that making diligent effort to enhance the Buddha dharma is about where our energy should be placed, not on trying to take revenge.

All day Wednesday and Thursday, about 150 people stood in line outside Brown Chapel, waiting to march to Montgomery, which wouldn't happen until late March. The local and state police had

surrounded the group and did not let us advance. I was in the fifth or sixth row on the outside of the line all night and the next day. Early on the morning of March 11, I could see that the teenage girl standing next to me was very cold. So I took off my jacket and put it around her shoulders. Just a few feet away, one of the local police looked over at me and mumbled, “I’m gonna git you, boy.” The locals around me knew the cop and heard what he had said, so they moved me more to the center of the row. Around noon that day, it began to rain, and during the day as people moved around, I found myself again on the outside of the row. The rain continued most of the afternoon. Then, around 4:00 p.m., I found myself on my back in the middle of the street looking up. I had been shot.

An ambulance came and took me to the hospital. There I was treated for a slight bullet wound. As I sat on the edge of the hospital bed, there was a knock at the door. Three men came into the room and over to my bed. I could tell that one of them was the local sheriff. He asked me, “What happened, boy?” He didn’t appreciate what I told him. I said, “One of your redneck crackers shot me.” He was furious! He began to reach for his holster, but the two men with him hemmed him in so he couldn’t get to his gun. Finally, he stammered, “You better get out of Selma within twenty-four hours, or you’ll never leave this town.” With that, he stomped out of the room. One of the men went with him, and the other one came to my bed. He was from the FBI. He strongly advised me to return to wherever I had come from as soon as possible, because they didn’t have enough FBI agents to watch over everyone.

Dr. King enabled me to see that not all Americans were treated in the same way and that there was much to be done toward acting impartially and with compassion for all people, regardless of skin color, religious or gender affiliation, or status in society. I’m sure it was also Dr. King’s influence regarding American society, along with his anti–Vietnam War views, that motivated me to protest the war and go to Japan. For me, Dr. King exemplified both the fourth quality

of a great person of making diligent effort and the eighth quality of not engaging in useless argument. In Selma, I was able to listen to two of his closest aides who remarked on how much time and how hard Dr. King worked to express his concerns about American society. In the end, marching, not just talking, was so important in influencing fellow Americans to change their ways of thinking and acting.

DISCOVERING ZEN

I returned to Chicago a couple of days later. The following September, I transferred to American University in Washington, D.C. Besides classes, I spent quite a bit of time protesting the war in Vietnam. By this time, I was fed up with what was happening to people of color within my country and angry at what my country was doing to the people of a different culture in Vietnam. Americans memorialize the fifty-some thousand soldiers who died in Vietnam, but few people think twice about the two million Vietnamese, many of them civilians, who were killed by American soldiers. I felt I could no longer live in that America. So, in the summer of 1967, I joined another Lutheran youth group—this time in Japan. Although it first took me applying and being rejected by both county and state draft boards, I ultimately received conscientious objector status with a very high lottery number through a presidential appeal, and so I was clear to become a lay missionary in Hokkaido.

Shortly after arriving in Sapporo, I was introduced to a local Zen priest at Chuōji Temple, Kōyū Kawamura Rōshi 河村康秀老師, who asked me if I would like to sit zazen. I had no idea what “zazen” was, but I accepted his invitation and went to sit zazen at the temple early on Sunday mornings before going to the Lutheran church service. A few months later, Kawamura Rōshi asked me if I would like to sit a two-day intensive retreat called *sesshin* 摂心(also written 接心). I was very much looking forward to it and arrived quite early at the

temple. The first morning was very difficult for me. Each sitting period was over thirty minutes and, until then, I had sat for only fifteen or twenty minutes at a time.

These experiences of sitting zazen initiated me into two of the qualities that, over the years, I've found the most difficult to practice —the third quality of appreciating serenity and the fourth of making diligent effort. Having spent so much time protesting during the civil rights movement and the anti–Vietnam War movement, it took me a long time to appreciate the importance of settling down and not feeling that I needed to act on every instance of discrimination and violence. Now, I believe that settling down may very well be one of the best ways to fight against discrimination. This understanding naturally leads me into considering again and again, in terms of practicing the dharma, just where best to put my energy and make diligent effort.

In the midafternoon, someone tapped me on the shoulder and gestured that I had a phone call. I was surprised that anyone would be calling me, as I had told only my homestay family where I would be. As soon as I picked up the phone, I heard, "Tom, you are in the hands of the Devil! You must leave that evil den immediately or you will burn in hell for eternity!" It was the missionary who was my immediate supervisor. After hanging up the phone, I went home feeling rather defeated but also quite defiant. I decided to quit the mission.

The following week, I was called in to see the head missionary. The first thing he said to me was, "Tom, I hear you are doing that meditation thing…what's it called, zazen?" I expected to be denounced once again. However, quite the opposite, he said, "Well, that's fine. Please keep it up and tell me more about it. I'm interested to find out more." That was when I realized that there are missionaries and there are missionaries, and I reversed my decision to quit the mission. Although I didn't realize it at the time, I think the head missionary's openness was an expression of his not being

stuck on only one way to express religious truth. In other words, sitting zazen, without having to call it “zazen,” was his carrying out the sixth quality of a bodhisattva of the practice of settling in samādhi-zazen.

MEETING UCHIYAMA

In December 1968, Kawamura Rōshi told me about an upcoming sesshin at a temple in Kyoto called Antaiji 安泰寺. He said the abbot there, Kōshō Uchiyama Rōshi, allowed non-Japanese people to sit, too. (In Japanese, one’s surname is given first, so his name would be Uchiyama Kōshō Rōshi. For purposes of familiarity for an English-speaking audience, I use Kōshō Uchiyama Rōshi throughout this book.) Kawamura Rōshi had just finished reading Uchiyama Rōshi’s *Tenzo Kyōkun—Instructions for the Cook*, which several years later, I was able to translate, together with a commentary by Uchiyama Rōshi.[1] So, at the end of December, I hitchhiked down to Kyoto and arrived at Antaiji in the afternoon, before the beginning of the sesshin. I was invited into Uchiyama Rōshi’s room by the senior monk. Although I had been studying Japanese four to eight hours a day for over a year, I was still far from fluent. Still, Uchiyama Rōshi made me feel that I was, and he invited me to stay at the temple for the following nights to sit the whole sesshin. During our first talk, Rōshi related to me that when he was my age, he too had questioned what to do with his life.

All I remember about that first sesshin is the excruciating pain. By the end of the first day, I was ready to quit. Most of the time, my knees were closer to my chest than to the floor. And the zendō was freezing cold. Uchiyama Rōshi, who could see what I was going through, said nothing about my posture. On the fourth day, the senior monk came into my room, took one look at me, and told me to stay in bed. So most of that day I just rested. On January 3, 1969, I finished sitting the fifth and final day of the sesshin, and I walked out

of Antaiji swearing to myself that I would never return to that refrigerator.

Spring came, followed by a hot summer. I had completed my two-year contract with the mission, and again I hitchhiked to Kyoto and Antaiji. Something in me had shifted by that point; I no longer felt averse to Antaiji and, to the contrary, was eager to return for more practice there. I lived either in Antaiji or near Antaiji for the next ten years. In 1974, I was ordained by Uchiyama Rōshi as Shōyū Daitsū 正融大通, four years after Shōhaku Okumura 奥村正博, who in subsequent years opened the Zen practice center Sanshinji in Bloomington, Indiana.

During the years I lived in or near Antaiji, I often spoke with Uchiyama Rōshi, despite his being quite busy either meeting guests (business leaders, psychologists, lay followers, etc.) or writing explanatory texts on Buddhism. When I visited him, I often asked him questions about practice. He replied to my questions and usually added something else for me to think about. As I look back on those days, I now realize that what Rōshi was doing was always urging me to ask the bigger question. In that way, he taught me to consider what values I cherished most and what I truly wanted to be doing with my life. Very early on, he made me realize that zazen is not simply a form of meditation for getting one's head straightened out, but something far, far deeper than any sort of meditation.

When I began to settle in at Antaiji, practicing sitting for a minimum of five to nine hours a day, I started to realize how much anger and hatred were churning inside of me. So it was Uchiyama Rōshi who taught me to look inward and more carefully consider the way I was conditioned to think and act and to explore the source of that anger and hatred. Perhaps one of the most concrete teachings I received from Rōshi was his *teishō* or dharma talk on *Hachi Dainin Gaku*. While Rōshi emphasized over the many years I was with him how important it is to sit upright with folded legs, letting go of all that comes into one's head, "sitting with folded legs" encompasses the

attitude reflected in the eight qualities. Looking more particularly at Uchiyama Rōshi's own life, four of the eight qualities stand out to me. These are: (1) Having few desires, (2) Knowing one has enough, (3) Appreciating serenity, and (6) Concentrating on settling in samādhi-zazen.

He often talked about never feeling that he was impoverished and how he felt it was important to live a minimalist lifestyle. He also talked about all the "noise and racket" of our modern obsession with wanting more and more things that are only cluttering up our lives. It goes without saying that Rōshi emphasized how important it is to settle into our zazen, and he instituted monthly five-day sesshins that enabled so many people to step back and shine the light inward.

UCHIYAMA'S BACKGROUND

Kōshō Uchiyama Rōshi was born as Hideo Uchiyama into a rather well-to-do family in Tokyo, in 1912. His family lost almost everything in the Great Kantō Earthquake in 1923. Hideo finished his master's degree in Kantian philosophy at Waseda University in 1938. While he was still an undergraduate student, he met his first love, and they were together for four years. Tragically, his first wife died from tuberculosis less than a year after their marriage. After briefly teaching mathematics at a private high school in Kyushu, he returned to Tokyo and married again, this time a woman whom he had known since childhood. In yet another tragedy, his second wife died in childbirth, along with the baby.

After meeting Kōdō Sawaki Rōshi 興道澤木 in the summer of 1941, Uchiyama decided that he had to become a priest and was ordained Dōyū Kōshō by Sawaki Rōshi on December 7, 1941, the beginning of the War in the Pacific. Sawaki Rōshi knew his disciple did not have a strong constitution, so during the war, he sent Uchiyama to the remote countryside of Shimane Prefecture, where he made charcoal. He lived there for most of the war, along with two

or three other disciples of Sawaki Rōshi. Sawaki Rōshi himself had been seriously injured in the Russo-Japanese War of 1905, and I suspect he realized war was never an answer to any human problem. Later in the war, Uchiyama moved to Shizuoka, where he worked making sea salt. After the war, he lived in a couple different temples to help.

In 1949, Sawaki Rōshi was asked to be head of a new temple of the Sōtō School dedicated to training young men for the priesthood. The temple buildings, originally in Nara, were dismantled and reassembled in Kyoto. The temple was called Antaiji. As Sawaki Rōshi spent much of his time traveling around the country giving dharma talks and conducting sesshins at various temples, Uchiyama was put in charge of Antaiji. Some of that time, he was by himself, and at other times, there were two or three others who practiced with him, such as Sodō Yokoyama Rōshi 横山祖道老師 or Tekifu Honda Rōshi. By the early 1960s, Sawaki Rōshi's health was declining, and he returned to Antaiji in 1962. There, Uchiyama Rōshi took care of him until Sawaki Rōshi's death in 1965. Uchiyama Kōshō then became the abbot at Antaiji and continued the practice of holding monthly five-day sesshins, ten months of the year, for ten more years until he himself retired in 1975. For the last five years Uchiyama Rōshi was at Antaiji, he was often ill and unable to sit for all the sesshins.

From 1949 until Sawaki Rōshi's passing, Uchiyama Rōshi survived by going out on *takuhatsu* or mendicant begging.[2] Shortly after Sawaki Rōshi died, Uchiyama Rōshi married for the third time. However, as he had committed himself to ten more years at Antaiji, Uchiyama did not live with his wife Keiko until he retired in 1975. At that point, Rōshi and Keiko, who had also been a lay disciple of Sawaki Rōshi, lived in Ōgaki for two years in the summer home of a lay follower. After that, Rev. Yūhō Hosokawa, abbot of Sōsenji Temple in Kyoto, offered Rōshi a small temple located in Kohata, a

district south of Kyoto. Rōshi accepted the offer and lived there with his wife.

From 1978, Rōshi began giving dharma talks at Sōsenji about six times a year. During those years, he gave talks on several fascicles of *Shōbōgenzō*, which subsequently were published as books. On March 13, 1998, Rōshi went out for a walk along the Uji River. Upon his return home, he collapsed, and Keiko immediately called the doctor. When the doctor arrived, he knew instantly that Rōshi was not going to live much longer. That evening, with Keiko cradling his head, Rōshi smiled up at his wife and said, "Today, I finished the poem 'Ogamu.'" Those were his last words, and he soon passed away. Keiko called Dōyū Takamine Rōshi 道雄鷹峰, who came immediately and stayed with Keiko that evening. Rōshi's legacy lives on in the many disciples he ordained during his tenure as abbot at Antaiji. This is Rōshi's final poem:

TADA OGAMU ただ拝む (JUST HOLDING PRECIOUS)
Meeting right hand with left hand—just holding precious
God and Buddha becoming one—just holding precious
Everything encountered becoming one—just holding precious
All things come together as one—just holding precious
Life becoming life—just holding precious

We can also read the poem this way:

Folding right leg, left leg—just sitting
God and Buddha becoming one—just sitting
Everything encountered becoming one—just sitting
All things come together as one—just sitting
Life becoming life—just sitting

ANTAIJI—A PLACE WHERE ORDINARY HUMAN BEINGS COME TO SURRENDER

Uchiyama Rōshi often talked about *sanzen* 参禅. Many Zen students use the term to mean the time when the student visits the teacher in their room to test the student's understanding of a particular kōan. However, Rōshi defined the term differently. The kanji for *sanzen* are 参禅. The first character, *san*, can also be read *mairu*, meaning "to come," so literally the term *sanzen* could be translated as "come to Zen." However, *mairu* can also mean "to surrender" or "to give up." In this case, *sanzen* would mean "to surrender to Zen" or "to give up [one's ego] to zazen." And that is how Rōshi explained the term.

I believe another way for readers to better understand Uchiyama Rōshi is through his responses to the many people who came to see him, both Japanese and non-Japanese. Of course, Japanese visitors spoke to Uchiyama directly, but many of the non-Japanese who came to see him spoke little if any Japanese. At those times, Rōshi asked either Steve Yenik or me to serve as translator. Here are stories of just a few of the many people for whom we translated.

Some years after Rōshi retired, I was going through some difficult times, and Rōshi talked with me about some of the Japanese people who came to see him. One man was contemplating suicide. Rōshi's response was, "Well, you know, the world is really getting overpopulated, and who knows when there won't be enough to feed everyone." The man was taken aback by Rōshi's response, thanked him, and left. A few days later, he came back, saying that he had changed his mind and would be returning to his wife and family.

Another time, a young woman came to see Uchiyama. She said she was pregnant. Rōshi asked her if she loved the man and if she intended to marry him. She replied that she had no intention of marrying the man but didn't know what to do. Rōshi replied that, in that case, perhaps she should get an abortion. Years later, when Rōshi told me that story, he said that if by recommending to her to get an abortion, he would end up in hell, then so be it. By that, he simply meant that he felt he had to take responsibility for his words, as controversial as they might be.

Finally, there was one American who came to Antaiji by way of another temple and a certain Zen center in the States. But, even at Antaiji, he decided that there wasn't enough zazen. So he would sit until midnight every day, even on the days when there was no scheduled sitting. Everyone else who lived at Antaiji would do their laundry or perhaps take a bus into town to visit a bookstore or maybe go to a movie. When this fellow began sitting in the Zendō when everyone else was working, that was the last straw for Uchiyama Rōshi. He told him that he would have to leave. Perhaps he should go to Eiheiji. He did. And shortly after arriving at Eiheiji, he decided that they weren't sitting enough either, so he began sitting after hours. Finally, it got to be too much even for the monks at Eiheiji. The man's sponsor had to go to Eiheiji and take him back to his home temple. At that temple, he decided that he should sit zazen twenty-four hours a day. After several weeks of having to feed the American while he was sitting, the head priest decided that the man should go back to the United States. He was institutionalized for about two years, but after that, it was said that he had returned to ordinary life.

To surrender to zazen is to sit zazen and let go of any hope of "gaining" enlightenment or anything else from it. Living at Antaiji was not easy. It was a life of surrendering to the practice of sitting and of carrying out the daily tasks of everyday life—working in the fields, going out on mendicant begging, and letting go of our own egocentricities. Since our life—everyone's life—is new in every moment, no one was superior because they had been there longer than someone else or had read more books on Buddhism than someone else. Surrendering to Zen means to return to one's whole self, whether we think we can grasp that intellectually or not.

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For me, the transmission of the qualities of a great person means that exactly those qualities the Buddha practiced are what the Buddha passed on to others who, in turn, continued to pass them on to Dōgen Zenji, Sawaki Rōshi, Uchiyama Rōshi, Takamine Rōshi, and to me. What is critical to keep in mind is that these eight qualities are not something that the person doing them is aware of. In other words, these qualities are not something that one wears on one's sleeve or is proud of enacting. In a dharma talk Sawaki Rōshi gave, he said that he had had several major satori experiences and several smaller ones, but in the end, they don't amount to anything at all. I think this attitude applies to having few desires, knowing one has enough, appreciating serenity, and all the other qualities.

In the *Genjō Kōan* 現成公案 (*The Kōan of the Present Becoming the Present*) fascicle of *Shōbōgenzō*, Dōgen Zenji writes, "When the various buddhas are clearly buddhas, they do not perceive of themselves as buddhas. Nevertheless, they are enlightened buddhas, and continue to enlighten buddhas." In other words, even though we make every effort to have compassion for ourselves and those around us, this is not something that we ourselves can perceive. Although we practice as hard as we can, in that very same moment we let go of any idea of "being a Buddhist practitioner," of helping others, or of gaining anything by our practice.

It is my sincerest hope that readers of this fascicle by Dōgen Zenji and the commentary by Uchiyama Rōshi may come to understand in a most concrete way, through these eight awarenesses or qualities, how to actualize our practice of sitting—*shikantaza*—in our day-to-day life.

PART ONE

The Eight Qualities of a Great Person

Eihei Dōgen Zenji

Hachi Dainin Gaku

Shōbōgenzō: Hachi Dainin Gaku was Dōgen Zenji's final fascicle written before he died. This fascicle is based on a portion of what is commonly referred to as the *Butsu Yuikyōgyō* 仏遺教経. More specifically, the title of this sutra is *Busshihatsu Ryakusetsu Kyōkaikyō* 仏垂般涅槃 略説教誡教 (*A Summary of the Buddha's Teachings to His Disciples on Attaining Nirvana*). Because it was the final teaching of Shakyamuni before entering nirvana, it is referred to as *The Last Testament of the Buddha*. This fascicle from Dōgen also incorporates passages from *Daijō Gishō* 大乗義章,巻 (*Commentary on the Mahayana*), which is comprised of twenty-six volumes, explaining many Buddhist terms.

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ALL THE VARIOUS BUDDHAS are extraordinary people. As there are eight realizations or qualities of which these exceptional people become aware, they have been referred to as the eight qualities of a great person. Becoming aware of these dharmas becomes the cause for (entering) nirvana. On the evening he entered nirvana, this was the final teaching and testament of our first teacher, Shakyamuni Buddha.

1. Having Few Desires—*Shōyoku* 小欲

The first quality is having few desires. That is, not wildly chasing after the objects of one's desires [of the five senses] that have not

yet been fulfilled is what is called having few desires.

The Buddha expounded, “Monks, here is something you need to be aware of. A person with many longings or cravings suffers proportionately greater, precisely because he or she seeks greater personal gain or other benefit. When one pursues few desires, there will be less suffering and fewer troubles. Personally having few desires needs to be thoroughly studied and practiced. Moreover, not following those cravings engenders uncountable merits. A person with few cravings will never try to flatter nor ingratiate themselves with others.[1] Nor would one of few desires be dragged around by the cravings of the five senses. One whose heart acts with few desires is always at peace and has few anxieties or misgivings. And regarding various matters, such a person feels no need for more; one always has more than enough. In a word, one with few desires is virtually in nirvana. This is what is called having few desires.”[2]

2. Knowing One Has Enough—*Chisoku* 知足

The second realization of a great person is knowing when one has enough. Limiting how much to accept of the dharmas (things) one has already received is knowing one has enough. The Buddha has said: “Monks, if you wish to be rid of various pain and suffering, then you need to see clearly that you have enough.” This dharma of knowing when one has enough is precisely where you will find the greatest wealth, happiness, and peace of mind.

Despite having to sleep on the ground, a person who knows when to be satisfied will find comfort and be at ease. And, to the contrary, a person who does not know what is sufficient will never be at ease and always be unsatisfied, even if they live in a gorgeous mansion. Despite having great wealth, a person not knowing when to be satisfied is, in fact, impoverished. On the other hand, though a person may be materially poor, if they know what it means to have enough, then that person is truly rich. One who does not know

having enough will always be pulled around by the five senses, only to be pitied by those who understand the meaning of having enough. This is what is referred to as knowing one has enough.

3. Appreciating Serenity/Quietude—*Gyōjakujō* 楽寂静

The third quality is enjoying peace of mind. Avoiding noisy, bustling places that confuse the mind and living alone in a quiet, serene dwelling is called enjoying peace of mind.[3]

The Buddha said, “Monks, if you wish to enjoy true tranquility, unaffected by the conditions around you, then clearly it is critical to live in a quiet place, apart from all the noise and clamor that surrounds you internally and externally. One of calm demeanor has always been highly respected by Indra and many other devas. For this reason, surely it is essential to put aside all personal affairs, find a quiet place to live, and ponder how to relieve the sources of suffering. If you take pleasure in being in a group, you will surely encounter the disharmony and suffering of the group.[4] It is like a gathering of birds that nest in a large tree, eventually the tree will wither, and the limbs will come crashing down from the stress. Many people will sink into the depths of suffering due to the fetters and restrictions of society. It can be compared to an old elephant stuck in the mud and unable to extract itself from its depths. This is called living detached from both sensual desires and worldly affairs.”

4. Making Diligent Effort—*Gonshōjin* 勤精進

The fourth realization is one of persevering. In all matters, continually striving to carry out deeds that are true and wholesome is making diligent effort. *Shō* means to be energetic and concentrated; not being sloppy or crude [in one’s actions]. *Jin* means to deepen and improve [one’s attitude] without backsliding or giving up.

The Buddha said, “Monks, when you practice with diligence, there is nothing that is difficult. For that reason, it is critical that you

persevere in your practice. By way of illustration, it is like water flowing constantly over a rock; even if it is just a trickle, eventually it will pierce the rock. Or, for example, if the mind of the practitioner is only sometimes energetic but at other times lets up, it can be compared to one who, when attempting to light a fire often stops twirling the stick before the fire catches hold; no matter how much one may want to have the fire, no fire will result if one continues in such a way. This is called persevering and making wholehearted effort."

5. Not Losing Sight of True Dharma—*Fumōnen* 不忘念

The fifth quality is also called observing the true teaching.[5] This is also called keeping true dharma. Maintaining and not losing sight of true dharma is called practicing the true teaching.[6] This is also called not losing sight of the teaching.

The Buddha said, "Monks, in searching for a true teacher and good protector, there is nothing better than always being mindful of the dharma. Those who stay aware and are not careless or forgetful in their actions will not be torn apart by the various thieves of greed, ignorance, or anger.

"For that reason, Monks, you should take in and be ever mindful of the teaching. Those who lose sight of staying aware will lose all merit and benefit as well. As a result of constantly remaining determined and mindful, though you may be among the thieves of the five senses, you will never suffer harm from them. It is like wearing armor and being in a strong encampment: there will be nothing to fear. This is called not losing sight of true dharma."

6. Concentrating on Settling in *Dhyāna*—*Shuzenjō* 修禅定[7]

The sixth realization is practicing dhyāna-*samādhi* [zazen].

Abiding in *buddhadharma* and remaining undisturbed is called settling in dhyāna.

The Buddha said, “Monks, those who wish to settle the confusions of the mind need to sit quietly in dhyāna. Having contemplated thoroughly the functioning of one’s mind, you will come to know well the rise and fall of all worldly phenomena. For that reason, you must make diligent effort to concentrate on and carry out various forms of settling in dhyāna. Concentrating on dhyāna, the mind will no longer be lost in confusion. It is like a house that has little water; the owner will build a dam or barrier to prevent the water from escaping. Practitioners must do the same. For the sake of the water of wisdom, practice dhyāna-samādhi so that nothing may leak out. This is called concentrating on settling in dhyāna.”

7. Practicing Wisdom—*Shūchi’e* 修智慧

The seventh quality is to embody the wisdom of liberation (from one’s attachments)—*shuchi’e*. Realization based on hearing the teaching of buddhadharma and contemplating and practicing it is wisdom.

The Buddha said, “Monks, if you have wisdom, you will never become greedy. You must constantly reflect on yourself and never allow the loss of wisdom. That is how you will be liberated through my dharma. One who does not act like this cannot be said to be a person of the Way. Nor can such a person be called a lay follower either. There is no name for one who does not carry out wisdom.

“True wisdom, like a strong and durable boat, will ferry you and others across the sea of sickness, old age, and death. It is like a brilliant lamp that lights up ignorance and darkness. It is medicinal for all who are sick and infirm. It is like cutting down the tree of ignorance, hatred, and cravings with a sharp axe. For this reason, it is important to increase even more the wisdom derived from hearing the dharma, contemplating deeply and carrying out true actions. If there is one who embodies wisdom, though he or she is only human

and sees with a human eye, that person is one who can see. This is called wisdom."

8. Not Engaging in Useless Argument—*Fukeron* 不戯論

The eighth quality is not involving oneself in spurious talk or useless argument that is not beneficial. To realize the Buddha's teaching and not get caught up in illusory discrimination is not engaging in useless argument. To pursue the true reality of dharma is nothing other than not getting involved in useless discussion.

The Buddha said, "Monks, the mind that partakes in useless or frivolous discussion will only become confused and scattered. Even though you may have decided to leave home, you will never be emancipated. Monks, throw away and distance yourself from all such useless and confusing discussions. If you wish to enjoy the peace and serenity of nirvana, all you need to do is wipe out the sickness of idle talk or useless discussion. This is what is called not engaging in useless argument."

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These are the eight qualities of a great person. Within each, all the others are contained; hence, there is a total of sixty-four. From a broader perspective, the qualities are unlimited; however, in short, there are sixty-four. This final teaching and guidance of our great teacher Shakyamuni is, moreover, the teaching of the Mahayana. This was the ultimate and final teaching given on the evening of the fifteenth day of February. Shakyamuni gave no further sermons and entered parinirvana.

The Buddha said, "Monks, endeavor with all your heart to leave the [six] realms of delusion. All things that are alive, moving or not moving—all things that fall apart and come to nothing—cause one to feel insecure and ill at ease. All of you, for a while just keep still and refrain from all speech. Now, my final moment is at hand. I am about

to enter a nirvana that has destroyed all worldly cravings and delusions. These are my final words." For this reason, the disciples of the Tathāgata all studied and practiced [these eight qualities]. Therefore, anyone who does not know and practice these qualities is not a disciple of the Buddha. This is the Tathāgata's wisdom of the realization of having destroyed all cravings and delusions. Despite that, many today know nothing of these qualities. The reason so few have neither seen [them acted out] nor heard [them talked about] is that their hearts and minds have been preyed upon by demons.

Few have laid deep roots in carrying out good because they have neither heard about these qualities nor seen them in action. In the past, during the time when the correct dharma was practiced or later when it was at least heard, those disciples of the Buddha learned and manifested these qualities (through their practice). But today, only one or two out of a thousand monks know of these eight qualities.

It is truly a pity. There is no example of such deterioration of the buddhadharma as in our current degenerate age. The Buddha's true dharma has spread throughout the world. You must learn and practice this true teaching before it disappears. To encounter the buddhadharma at any time even over infinite kalpas of time is rare. Or to be blessed with a physical body is indeed rare. Though even born as a human being, those born in the (societies of the) east, west, and north are of highest quality, and some in the southern sphere are even superior to that. The reason for this is because they were able to see the Buddha and hear his words, to take leave of worldly affairs and realize incomparable enlightenment.

There are those who died before the Buddha entered nirvana. Unfortunately, they were never able to hear about these eight qualities nor learn or practice them. Today, we have had the good fortune to be able to hear this teaching and practice it, thanks to the roots of goodness that were planted in previous lives. Therefore, it is critical for us to study and practice [these qualities], to expand their

merit in each successive life, to realize deepest wisdom; and, finally, just as the Buddha did, to expound that teaching for all sentient beings.

Shōbōgenzō: Hachi Dainin Gaku #12

In a postscript to the text: written in Eiheiji Monastery, January 6, the fifth year of Kenchō (1253). This writing was recorded and finished one day before the end of the current *ango* (practice period), now the seventh year of Kenchō (1255) given by Gien and which I have gone over.

This was a draft of the final writing of my late teacher during his illness. Thinking about it, it was my teacher's intention to rewrite all his writings and compile a one hundred–fascicle Japanese version of *Shōbōgenzō*. He began to put together new material, and this fascicle (*Hachi Dainin Gaku*) was the twelfth one. After that, his physical condition worsened, and he was unable to finish. So this fascicle constitutes his final teaching.

Unfortunately, I feel very saddened that we are unable to read a full one hundred fascicles of his teachings. If you are one who feels great empathy for our great teacher, then please copy these twelve fascicles and take good care of them. These were our great ancestral teacher Shakyamuni Buddha's final teachings, as well as our teacher's (Dōgen's) final legacy.

—WRITTEN BY EJŌ

PART TWO

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Commentary by Kōshō Uchiyama Rōshi

Opening Comments[1]

All the various buddhas are extraordinary people. As there are eight realizations or qualities of which these exceptional people become aware, they have been referred to as the eight qualities of a great person. Becoming aware of these dharmas becomes the cause for (entering) nirvana. On the evening he entered nirvana, this was the final teaching and testament of our first teacher, Shakyamuni Buddha.

Unless we constantly delve deeper into buddhadharma, one scoop at a time, we will only grow more stupid or senile out of habit or custom. However, digging up that one scoop is no easy task.

Shōbōgenzō 正法眼蔵 means "a storehouse or a depository or treasury of the *shōbōgen* 正法眼, the enlightened vision of Shakyamuni"—that is, "the vision of the true dharma." This vision comprehends all things and all times without the slightest illusion or delusion. It is both freeing and refreshing. As we read through this text *Hachi Dainin Gaku* or *The Eight Qualities of a Great Person*, it is my intention to try and explain just what the true dharma is that was realized by Shakyamuni.

First, what is different about buddhadharma from ordinary scholarly studies is that there is only one true reality. From the beginning, the dharma was totally perfect, confirmed by the personal

experiences of Shakyamuni. For that reason, anyone seeking the dharma must aim with total effort at personally confirming the Buddha's perfect and personal practice. You see, from the very beginning, there has been just one true reality. And since this can't be changed, in talking about what finds people ill at ease and unsatisfied, for example, I will be repeating the same thing. It is just nonsense to say something like, "The world has progressed, so now our dharma has to change." That is not dharma. Nevertheless, as time flows on, it is also a reality that the world has changed.

In our present day, it is often said that the world is becoming one. Comparing this to the isolation of Japan 250 years ago when people were ignorant of the conditions even in our closest neighboring countries, the problems and issues we carry now have changed a lot. Just as science and intellectual issues have evolved through the ages up to today, in general people's knowledge has also advanced. Hence, today, in explaining about a dharma in which there is one true reality, it's not helpful to anyone to try and describe it by just repeating the same terms that were used in ancient times. If there are voices saying that Buddhism is becoming silly and childish, I would say that one cause for this is precisely that repetition.

For that reason, in reading *Shōbōgenzō*, it's useless to simply redefine or explain the words that Dōgen used. I want, instead, to read this text considering the life I have been given in this present age. It is my deepest intention to express the dharma, even if I'm only able to express it just a bit deeper than before. Just one scoop is enough. But you should be aware that the task of digging up even one scoop is no easy matter.

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Shortly before leaving old Antaiji when it was located in Kyoto, I fell ill. Consequently, around that time, I stopped going out to give lectures and discontinued all my writing. I knew that if I didn't turn

down all requests to speak, I would only be asked to give even more lectures. If I continued speaking and writing, everything would just get watered down, and I would be rehashing the same things. Or if I were to accept a few invitations but turn down others, some people might ask, “Oh, is it because we don’t pay enough?” So, in the end, I felt the best thing to do was to turn down everything.

Lots of people think it’s great to be asked to appear in public. And there are a lot of people who accept whatever offer comes along. Those are the people who become famous. You hear your name mentioned here and there, and then you just go running around like the proverbial chicken, and that’s all. You end up with no time to sit down and think properly and come up with a way of saying things that goes deeper than what has been said already.

So I decided to leave Antaiji, ostensibly because I was sick, but I was also thinking that I would be able to survive without having to work much, if at all. Fortunately, as I left Antaiji, I left all responsibility for it behind me.

Of course, having no work meant living without any income. But, what the heck, I figured I could somehow make ends meet, since it would be just my wife and me. And shortly after that, Yūhō Hosokawa, abbot at Sōsenji Temple, had just finished building a small house on the grounds of a deserted temple in Kohata on the outskirts of Kyoto, and he offered it to me. So I accepted his offer, and we moved there. And that took care of our housing problem.

Then, around the end of the year, Abbot Hosokawa visited me one day and said, “Oh, I’m refurbishing the living quarters at Sōsenji Temple and plan to start up a zazen group, so please come and give us some talks.” That was when I realized that he hadn’t just given me the house in Kohata for free…[laughter] But then, thinking about it, I realized that his intention was to give me an opportunity to do something. And on top of that, he said that Hakujusha Publishers wanted to record my talks and publish them as books. So I decided

that his request was a stroke of good fortune, and I agreed to give some dharma talks.

I'm going to digress just a bit here, but as far as I'm concerned, most people today are not very smart. They get taken in by whatever is popular now and make a big fuss about it and, in the process, totally lose sight of how to live out their own way of life. The only person who can live out my life is me. This is the same for everyone. All humanity for all time resides within me. And it is all sentient beings for all time that I wish with all my might to say something to.

When you take the Keihan Train and head for Osaka, after you pass Gojō Street, from there until you approach the hills around Inari, the Inari Hills, Mount Hiei, and Daimonji-yama all appear around the same height. But once you move further down the line along the flat plain area of Osaka, the Inari Hills and Daimonji-yama eventually recede until you can no longer see them. All that you can see is Mount Hiei and Mount Atago.

What I want to say about people today is something like that. You know, there are lots of so-called "famous" men and women of our time, and people today seem to think that all these folks are really something special. But when "our time" starts moving down the track toward Osaka, we completely lose sight of where it went. Personally, I don't want to be fooled by "our time." The sort of work I want to do is eternal work. As we read through the *Shōbōgenzō*, it is my sincerest hope that people today can appreciate a true way to live that is presented in this text. That is why facing the eternal, to leave such a legacy, I want to say something that, if only a little bit, goes deeper than what has been said up until now.

During his last years, Sawaki Rōshi used to say that the zazen expounded by Dōgen was *yūsui* 幽邃—meaning "very deep, subtle and profound."[2] I believe that his choice of the word *yūsui* best describes Dōgen's depiction of zazen. But when asked just what is subtle or deep and profound, I couldn't put that into words. Since then, it has been my deepest wish to enable practitioners to

thoroughly understand just what yūsui in Dōgen's zazen is. After Sawaki Rōshi passed away, I spent the next ten years thinking about how to explain this term while carrying out the monthly sesshins at Antaiji. Even after retiring from Antaiji, I continued to quietly ponder the expression. Despite all my efforts, I was still unable to come up with a way to explain it well to young practitioners. Recently, however, I finally felt I was able to understand it. And the result is my book *Dōgen's Zen as Religion*「宗教としての道元禅」.

I guess this book could be called my work for the last fifteen years. This sort of work just can't be done if you're always running around being busy. You must make an environment so that all you've got is time on your hands, and only then can you carry out the project. That's why I said digging up that one scoop is no easy task. It is my sincerest hope that as you read through *Hachi Dainin Gaku*, you will do so with the intention of personally digging just one scoop deeper into Dōgen zazen.

> *We're all convinced that we are adults, but if we're honest, we're just a bunch of hungry ghosts.*

Usually, when reading the *Shōbōgenzō*, you begin with the chapters *Bendōwa* 弁道話 (*Discourse on Practice of the Way*) and *Genjō Kōan* (*The Kōan of the Present Becoming the Present*). But I decided it would be better to begin with *Hachi Dainin Gaku* (*The Eight Qualities of a Great Person*).

At the end of the original text, there is a note by Dōgen's disciple Ejō that reads, "These were our great ancestral teacher Shakyamuni Buddha's final teachings, as well as our teacher's (Dōgen's) final legacy." At the beginning of the text, Dōgen himself wrote, "On the evening he entered nirvana, this was the final teaching and testament of our first teacher Shakyamuni Buddha." *Hachi Dainin Gaku* turned out to be Dōgen's final teaching. Now when we use the words *legacy* or *final testament*, generally it refers to a person's final

words conveying what they feel is most important for those following after. During his lifetime, my father was always extremely fastidious, sometimes annoyingly so. However, when I think about my father's final words, I can understand what he had constantly been trying to convey to me.

If you read the *Shōbōgenzō*, starting with *Genjō Kōan*, it seems impossible to figure out. However, if you persevere and read all the way through to *Hachi Dainin Gaku*, Dōgen's overall reasoning suddenly becomes clear. Then if you go back and reread *Genjō Kōan*, Dōgen's way of thinking becomes much, much clearer. That is why I have chosen to begin these talks with the final chapter of the *Shōbōgenzō: Hachi Dainin Gaku*.[3] The sense of these opening four characters *hachi dainin kaku* (*gaku*) 八大人覚 is quite clear: eight qualities that an adult should know and be clear about. The chapter opens with "All the various buddhas are great people." And, from that, we come to realize that we ourselves are not yet adults, but still children. Some of you may laugh, but in fact this sentence says it all. People run around with a smug face; guys grow beards, smoke cigarettes and drink all the alcohol they can, pay the adult fare for riding a train or going to the public bath, and think highly of themselves. What the heck, you're still a bunch of kids, or worse, a bunch of hungry ghosts. That's what Dōgen is trying to tell us.

All buddhas are true adults. On the one hand, we may all be adults physically, but our spirit, our attitude, remains childish and immature. Don't you think so? Just like little kids in kindergarten, we run around whining, "I want this," or "I want that." The only thing that changes is that as we get older, instead of toys and candy, we want more money and prestige. This kind of adult should really be called a quasi-adult. That is why Shakyamuni told us to grow up and become real adults. And this is precisely the overall summation of the Buddha's teaching.

There is nothing mysterious or mystical about the Buddha's teachings. I think you will also come to understand this final teaching

of Shakyamuni and Dōgen is just the most natural thing; it just makes total sense.

Often, when people hear the word *religion*, there is a tendency to think of something mysterious or mystical or perhaps something a bit strange or even bizarre. It just seems that for no reason, if there isn't something odd or unusual about it, people don't see it as a religion. For me, however, that sort of strange atmosphere has nothing to do with religion.

Perhaps for people who were very simple and who lived prior to civilization, the idea of living with "few desires" and "knowing when one has enough"—extremely bold ideas that appear in the text—might be something they probably wouldn't have been able to understand. I guess it would be impossible to suggest to people with such a mentality to turn their backs on their desires or to know when they have enough—ideas that run counter to what they have heard or believed up to that point. It would be much easier to believe and hold on to it when someone says, "God said it! If you go against Him, you'll be punished!" However, the times have changed. Today, if you say that to most people in Japan, they'll respond with: "So where is this God?" The old threatening way of speaking just won't work. In that sense, humans today have more intelligence than in ages past. So, for such people, using their intellect to inquire into just what it means to live with fewer desires or what it means to know when you have enough becomes very important. In this way, there is no need for a god; there is no need for any occult-like atmosphere. There's no need for any more fairy tales; it's enough to just be truthful. That is why I feel that Buddhism as a religion will become more and more important for people in the coming generations.

The opening line, "All the various buddhas are great people," means that for human beings becoming a true adult is of ultimate value. I think it is very important for us to firmly decide on this ultimate value. Now, salespeople bowing their heads when greeting a customer aren't bowing to their customers; they're just bowing

down before money. In other words, for such people, it is money that is of ultimate value. Or, to put it another way, money is the idol before which they bow down.

Another example. Lately I hear that for many young people looking sharp is cool and appears to have become of ultimate value for them. Or growing long hair and a beard and flying off on some big motorcycle are all the rage. Or others think that getting involved with some radical political movement is the thing to do. In a way, it's just a highly emotional value judgment. In the end, to look good or feel cool, you've got to have money. So people's brains get short-circuited, and they wind up trying to rob a bank or whatever.

Here is another example: getting into a top-tier school is better than a third-tier school, or working for a large and famous corporation is better than working in some puny little-known company, so people run around elbowing others around them to get into the elite line. What it all comes down to is that money becomes the ultimate object of veneration.

In that sense, I don't feel that humankind has made much progress since leaving the caves. But it's not just young people. Even those in our society who seemed filled with lots of self-confidence suddenly lose all their composure and begin to grovel before the bait of someone flashing around a fancy name card.

Then there are those high-class people who work effortlessly for the benefit of our society. There is a problem here, too. For example, there are young people who volunteer to help senior citizens living alone and struggling. Or others who go to India and help people suffering from leprosy. Or some who work in facilities for children with various mental disabilities.

When I was still at Antaiji, there was an institution in the neighborhood called Shirakawa Gakuen where a young boy named Takuro lived. As I interacted with Takuro, I couldn't help but feel that here was a true human being. He was very tan from being out in the sun and had only one tooth left in his mouth. And—what is the

saying?—he wasn't the sharpest knife in the drawer, but he had a truly good character. The only thing he was lacking was the guile to deceive people. He frequently came to play at Antaiji, although he rarely stepped inside the building. Undoubtedly, the doctor at Shirakawa Gakuen, a social welfare service center, taught him never to go into someone else's house. But one time when I was ill and in bed, he peered through the bushes into my room and saw me lying down. Finally, he boosted himself onto the small porch. Leaning toward me, he asked, "What happened? Are you sick?" He had come over to pay his respects and wish me well! When I was about to retire, Takuro, together with Dr. Wakita from the Shirakawa Gakuen, came to Antaiji to say goodbye. Takuro seemed sad. Later when he heard that I had moved from Ōgaki to Uji, much nearer to Kyoto, Takuro told Dr. Wakita that he wanted to see me. When he came to visit, he didn't make any fuss about greeting me or anything like that. But somehow his feeling was palpable. People said that Takuro was mentally disabled, but like I said, the only thing he was deficient in was a sense of deceiving anyone. In that sense, I think too many of us "normal" people spend too much time trying to be tricky or deceptive.

So why is it that "devils" like us go around giving a "helping hand" to saintlike people like him? To me, we have quite a problem here. Now, it's certainly possible that if people like Takuro formed an overwhelming majority in the society that still had an element of deceiving—i.e., vicious—people like us in it, I think they just might say, "These people deceive; they're a danger to our society and it would be better if they were housed in an institution and not allowed out." I think that might be a lot more humane society.

Or take, for example, the people who are protesting racial segregation. The United States is a typical example of the problem between Blacks and whites, but a similar problem also exists here in Japan. On the surface, it might appear that those doing the protesting get along quite well with those they're protesting for, but

how would they react if one of their children proposed getting married to someone of another race?

Or there are doctors and nurses going from Japan to India to help people who are suffering from leprosy. But, according to one doctor who had grave doubts and wrote an article I recently read, why was it that patients who were accommodated in hospitals housing leprosy patients had plenty to eat, even though people who were in hospitals for diseases other than leprosy were starving to death?

You might think it's a wonderful thing to send money and clothing or whatever to India so everyone can eat, but at the same time, it is said that there are some incredibly rich people living there. I read about one man who is said to have had so much money it was just about more than most Japanese own together. On the one hand, even though the poverty is so great and such people are starving to death, at the same time they're having offspring left and right. I can't help but feel the contradiction in just sending money and other things to "take care" of the situation.

While there are lots of people working for the good of society and that's fine and important, there are also any number of problems that just aren't so easily resolved. So the solutions are always half measures or half-baked. Doing "good" ends up being nothing more than half-assed. At a more fundamental level, if we don't question what humankind is, our actions will invariably be contradictory.

> *An age where what I want now is thought to be of the highest value—from a truer view of humankind, such an age is nothing but prehistory.*

Where we place the highest value ultimately determines our history. We tend to think that history is simply writings about the past, but that's not what history is. History is what determines the fundamental objectives for the future.

For example, precisely because a society created the future objective of a “Greater East Asia Co-Prosperity Sphere,” a past focused on Amaterasu Ōmikami or Emperor Jimmu (the mythic first emperor of Japan, sixth or seventh century b.c.e.) or *hakkōichiū*[4] is brought up. Or, because the idea of heaven is set up, there must be a beginning with an Adam and Eve. As the future puts forward the ideal of a “communist society,” from that comes expositions on serfdom that will set up the reasons for that society. So history isn’t something that runs from the past to the present, but rather the past is traced from the future. To put it a little differently, what we call the highest value comes to define history. In our present age, it appears that communism and capitalism are diametrically opposed to each other in a great struggle. But, what the heck, it’s not that big a thing. Sawaki Rōshi had an interesting take on it. He used to say, “With an air of importance, people run around shouting about the virtues of communism. All it is, is about how to distribute the pie. It’s just the same as a bunch of baby chicks running around in the dirt, each trying to get as much of the worm as they can. The fight between communism and capitalism over how the ‘bait’ ought to be distributed is nothing more than saying that wealth is the fundamental deity.” If wealth is held up as having the highest value, neither communism nor capitalism will change anything at all. So it’s only obvious then that as there is no aim to human life, what else is there to do but act out of one’s cravings?

In the same way so many young people today are recklessly running around trying to look good, whole societies are running around recklessly just chasing after wealth. Now this is what is referred to as *gaki no sekai*—the realm of hungry ghosts. The realm of *dainin*—great people or true adults—has yet to begin. You could say that we are now living in an era of barbaric humanity, a sort of prehistory. We haven’t yet begun a historical period of true humanity. Now, it’s just primitive human beings being led by the nose by greed. It’s like a frenzied world of people just scraping and clawing after the

bait. And the guys who didn't get any are standing around whining. That's the current state of things.

However, in Buddhism, our most fundamental objective is to grow up to be and act as true adults or, to use Dōgen's word, *dainin* 大人. That is the essential crux of the Buddha's teaching.

We often say how much the world is progressing. And yes, we can observe that the natural sciences and knowledge in various fields have made advances. Our society has become quite rich. "I was only making $1,000 a month, but now I'm taking home $1,500 a month." "I was just a clerk, but now I've been promoted to section manager." "Why, I even have quite a nice little nest egg set aside." But the bottom line is that no matter how far you take it, it's all half measures. That's because no matter how high you climb the ladder, there will always be more rungs above you. The dharma is never a teaching of half measures. There is no such thinking as, "I can always get more," or "I can always get higher." A child growing up and becoming an adult—this is truly becoming *oneself*. It's never that you become *something else*. When we can say that human society has matured and become a society of adults, then for the first time we can say that progress has been made. That is the only aim of the Buddhist teachings.

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It has taken a long time for me to be perfectly clear about this true aim of the Buddhist teachings. When I was still living in Antaiji, Ms. Isayama from Itōen brought in a guest, Kenneth Strong, a professor at London University. When Professor Strong and his family were about to return to London, they visited me once more at Antaiji, and he asked me to give his son one word of advice—something he could hold on to during his life, perhaps as a sort of guide. At the time, I honestly couldn't come up with anything appropriate. I've never been a person who could go around deceiving or deluding

myself, so there was no way I could superficially say something to a youngster who might end up being influenced by my own off-the-cuff remark.

I've been thinking about that encounter ever since. After all this time, I can finally share exactly what I would have wanted to say to the boy: "As you grow up, strive hard to become a true adult." It's a shame I couldn't have said that to him when I met him. To be able to say this to a child has taken me ten years! Honestly, for all young people today as well, I wish that teachers in schools and parents at home would instruct them that the most important objective of our life is to grow into a true adult. However, if these essential sources—teachers and parents—still act like children or hungry ghosts, then what hope is there? If we ourselves are uncertain about the aim of human life, how can we possibly teach our offspring?

Sawaki Rōshi used to put it this way: Some guy who understands nothing about his life hooks up with some woman who is just as ignorant, and the two of them have children who understand nothing about their life—and we say to them, "Wonderful! Congratulations!" It just doesn't make any sense to me at all…. It seems to me that far too many parents, despite not being the least bit thankful to having been born, in turn, have children. Is there anything more uncivilized than that?

Have a child these days, and people can't help but feel the weight of having to live a life of eighty years or more. And living in a society with an ever-increasing population, parents think only about surviving and getting ahead of the competition, so they yell at their kids, "Study more! Study harder!" All that stress on the kids who must attend school, and later cram school until all hours of the night, with no clear understanding of what their life is about—it's not hard to figure out why so many young people would contemplate suicide. And yet, when hearing about a student who has committed suicide, the teachers go around scratching their heads and wondering why. But then, critics and commentators on education in Japan have the

same response. I've never heard a critic, upon hearing about kids committing suicide, say, "Oh, I see. Well, if I were in their position, I would want to commit suicide, too."

Just put yourself in their shoes. Why wouldn't one want to commit suicide? Fifty years ago, I thought about suicide. I can remember shouting at my parents, "Why did you ever have me!?" Now I understand that what is most critical is our *objective for living*. We must clarify and see without any doubt that living a truly human life is our highest value.

In Buddhism, what is of highest value is becoming what is called a dainin or true adult. We can find the term *dainin* mentioned in the *Maha-parinibbana Sutta: Sutra of the Buddha's Last Words*, or in Japanese, *Butsu Yuikyōgyō* (*The Last Testament of the Buddha*). Later, during the rise of Mahayana Buddhism, we find the term *bodhisattva* used. Since people are continually living from one want to the next, this is referred to as *gōshō no bonpu* 業生の凡夫—a person who has little or no opportunity to hear the Buddha's teaching and who is motivated only by greed or unwholesome habits from the past. When a person begins to live by vow, to go beyond this limited way of living and seek the release of all beings from suffering, this is termed *seigan no bosatsu* 誓願の 菩薩—a person who lives by vow, a bodhisattva.

To be sure, until we die, we will always be ordinary human beings; however, even this human flesh and blood can have a different aim or motivation for living. The substance of a person's actions then differs from the former—*gōshō no bonpu*. In Mahayana Buddhism, the term used to indicate this was *bosatsu*, while in Shakyamuni's final testament in the *Yuikyōgyō*, the term translated into Chinese was *dainin*.

As I have been saying for many years, the reality of the dharma is what Shakyamuni Buddha personally experienced and realized through his practice; there is nothing that has changed. Yet, even as I say that and though the substance is the same, ways of expressing

it do change in accordance with the era and become clearer. In going deeper into the expressions, we must physically realize the dharma, changing with the times. If we don't make every effort to come up with new expressions, even if only slightly different, that are fresh and in accord with the times, then I'm afraid Buddhism will simply wither away. If we just look at the sutras of old and just comment or make footnotes, saying the same old things, Buddhism will just get weaker and weaker. Worse, by only repeating the expressions that have been around for ages, Buddhism will surely just die off.

> *Japan is a jishinkoku. No, not that jishinkoku* 地震国*! Not a country of earthquakes, but jishinkoku* 次進国*, a country that follows the leaders.*[5]

It is in the sense of being a secondary country or one that lines up behind the "advanced" countries that *jishinkoku* describes Japanese Buddhism. That is because Japanese Buddhists have rarely come up with their own expressions. As everyone knows, all the writings are in Chinese characters. I've thought a long time about why this is so, and I finally think I've figured it out.

In general, the so-called intelligentsia and people of culture in Japan have always thought it very stylish to throw in words used by people from the so-called advanced countries. Even now, Japanese intellectuals must drop some English words or phrases in their conversations—or even better, something in French. The Japanese seemed to have had this sort of predisposition since ancient times. From the time Buddhism first came to Japan from China, undoubtedly it was quite fashionable to use Buddhist terms that were, of course, written in Chinese. That is why those Buddhist scholars passed on before they were able to express the ideas in their own words. To rephrase it just a bit differently, Buddhism was finished here before anyone had made it their own. And I think what

made matters worse is that after the Meiji era (1868–1912), the next group of “advanced” countries appeared, signaling the end of Chinese Buddhism in Japan. So Buddhism atrophied without ever having been expressed in Japanese. A feeling I have always had is that from long in the past Japanese have always had this propensity to chase after whoever they think are the most advanced. And, for that reason, I have said that Japan is a *jishinkoku* 次進国—a country that follows the leaders—not a *jishinkoku* 地震国—a country of earthquakes. That is, it’s a country that can only follow the leader. Japanese always tend to set up some other country they think is advanced and just imitate that country. They don’t seem capable of seeing something with their own eyes or expressing it in their own words. Why, it’s beginning to look like I’m the only one who’s advanced! [laughter]

Today, too many Japanese have idolized the United States in this way, striving with all their might to catch up with or surpass the United States. At any rate, wealth and the scientific technology to obtain that wealth are what is considered to have absolute value; so it’s only natural that Japan looks at Europe and North America as the so-called advanced countries. The thing is, what none of you know is what is running way ahead of either the United States or Japan. To tell you the truth, it’s me! [laughter]

If you think about it, you’ll understand why I’m not really joking. An age wherein wealth is considered to have the highest value is one that, without a doubt, will soon end. And, after that, a new age will be ushered in with the dainin—true adults—standing in the forefront.

To be honest with you, I’m very poor at English. About the only thing I can say in English is “I don’t speak Engrish.” So when I see all the *katakana* loanwords[6] in advertisements these days, I don’t understand a thing. Well, okay, I guess I know that the ladies don’t call them *bloomers* anymore, they call them *panties*. But that’s about all I know. [laughter]

When I started to see all those loanwords in Japanese advertising, I realized that it was no different from the way Buddhism had once been expressed only in Chinese and then died out.

That is why I said earlier that I felt somehow, I must try and express the Buddhist teachings in my own words. That is what is behind my initial statement about wanting to appreciate the *Shōbōgenzō* as a person of the present age. Dōgen once wrote, “To study and practice the Buddha Way is to study and practice (one)self [*Jiko*].”[7] I suspect it was a unique and wonderful expression at the time. The fact is the term *Jiko* was rarely in any of the sutras then.

Originally, we now know that there were two streams of Buddhism that spread from India: the Northern stream and the Southern stream. The Northern transmission went to China, and from there was transmitted to Japan. The Southern transmission traveled to Burma (Myanmar), Ceylon (Sri Lanka), Thailand, and so forth. Now, in the Buddhist teachings of the Southern tradition, we can find in the sutras, “The foundation of self (Jiko) is self alone,” and “Do not rely on any ‘other’.” These are the words of Shakyamuni Buddha himself and recorded in those sutras. Unfortunately, these sutras of the Southern tradition were virtually unknown in Japan in Dōgen’s time. Despite that, he coined the phrase, “to study and practice (Whole) Self”; i.e., *Jiko*.

So when Dōgen was studying and learning the Buddhism of the Northern tradition, although there was no such term as *Jiko* in those sutras, the true reality of the dharma as practiced and realized by Shakyamuni Buddha was already established. That is, Whole Self becomes Whole Self—Jiko becomes Jiko. That is, Jiko as a true adult becomes Jiko. I’ve always felt that, setting aside the sutras that were available to him, as Dōgen strove to practice and realize the reality that Shakyamuni had intuited, he settled on that expression: *Jiko*.

Also, around the beginning of the Western calendar, during the time of the Andhra Kingdom in southern India and the Gandhara

Empire in northwestern India, when Mahayana Buddhism began to arise, the term *dainin* was expressed as *bodhisattva*. This must have been a remarkable era. *Bodhisattva* meant a splendid or magnificent human being. I wonder if the reason this humane image has never been taken up and promoted in the East is due to the very low education level of the general population in these countries who were unable to truly understand such a wonderful idea. They thought only from the lowest level that Buddhism would be okay only if you could make a profit from it. But now, I think the conditions have utterly changed. From now on, just thinking about one's personal profit will no longer work. In the coming era, the most basic aim for humankind will be to support and lift up this humane image depicted in the bodhisattva or dainin. Of that, I am firmly convinced.

1

Having Few Desires

—

Shōyoku 小欲

The first quality is having few desires. That is, not wildly chasing after the objects of one's desires [of the five senses] that have not yet been fulfilled is what is called having few desires.

The Buddha expounded, "Monks, here is something you need to be aware of. A person with many longings or cravings suffers proportionately greater, precisely because he or she seeks greater personal gain or other benefit. When one pursues few desires, there will be less suffering and fewer troubles. Personally having few desires needs to be thoroughly studied and practiced. Moreover, not following those cravings engenders uncountable merits. A person with few cravings will never try to flatter or ingratiate themselves with another. Nor would one of few desires be dragged around by the cravings of the five senses. One whose heart acts with few desires is always at peace and

has few anxieties or misgivings. And regarding various matters, such a person feels no need for more; one always has more than enough. In a word, one with few desires is virtually in nirvana. This is what is called having few desires."

You're such an idiot! Why did you refuse something that was being given to you?

THESE OPENING LINES are not particularly difficult. Reading them two or three times, you can pretty much get the gist. First of all, in Buddhism, the term *goyoku* 五欲 (five desires) refers to the objects of the senses of sight, sound, smell, taste, and touch. These objects become an agent or medium for arousing that desire. So they're called the five desires. More concretely speaking, these five desires have also been listed as desire for wealth, sex, food and drink, sleep, and fame. Maintaining an attitude of not chasing around here and there after the unfulfilled target of the five senses is referred to as having few desires.

What we can see here is that in Buddhism desires are not something negative to be denied or gotten rid of. Among non-Buddhist ascetics in India, there were some who greatly emphasized abstinence or self-control. Nowadays, I have the feeling that there are very few outside of these non-Buddhist ascetics who seriously make desires the enemy, railing about abstinence or being free of desires or severing or destroying all desires. At the same time, I can imagine there are plenty of Japanese who pay lip service to the idea of having no desires. However, you should know that in Buddhism there is no such talk about having no desires or abstaining or cutting off desires. There is nothing that says desires are so bad that they must be some sort of object of hostility, since, to the contrary, desires are necessary for us to live. Desire or appetite is one aspect of the

life force. In short, if we had no desire to eat, we would die in a very short time.

The issue here centers on Dōgen's passage about "not wildly chasing after the objects of one's desires [of the five senses] that have not yet been fulfilled."

In his book *Heiwa no Daishō* (*Indemnification for Peace*), Yōnosuke Nagai writes: "Most people are likely to think that a lion will kill and devour all prey that it sees; however, this does not appear to be true. In Africa, it is said that when a zebra or giraffe concludes that the nearby lion has eaten and is full, it will forage and eat or play without any fear whatever. It shows that the animals' intuition or sense of danger is very astute. And, if it decides that the lion is on the hunt, it will flee in a hurry. In other words, if the lion is hungry, it will go out and hunt, but if it is full from eating, it will refrain from going out on a kill."[1] This is said to be the posture or attitude of animals in the natural world.

However, this does not seem to hold for that animal called *Homo sapiens*, the animal with supposedly advanced powers of intellect. For example, let us say there is a rather weak country nearby. Despite feeling no instinctual urge to extend its arm, the stronger country will eat it up just because it can. Despite not feeling particularly hungry at all, it is *Homo sapiens* that reaches out and takes. Concretely speaking, it's something like what the United States did in Vietnam. Without a doubt, the United States is currently the wealthiest nation in the world. That huge country just reached out for Vietnam, thinking that if it doesn't do it, either the Soviet Union or China might try to take over. They assumed that if the Soviet Union or China were eventually to get strong enough, they might even come after the United States itself. So even though it isn't particularly hungry, it lashes out and tries and take over a tiny country. Of course, the same can be said for the Soviet Union or China. In any event, they mutually act out in a way whereby they chase desires as greedily as they can, resulting in all the problems that are arising

here and there all over the world. These are not true examples of desire. They are examples of thought-up desires of avarice or greed. They are nothing more than images mutually created in the minds of people assuming that if they don't strike now and take whatever they can, later they will suffer.

I read that during World War II, there was a tribe of cannibals living in New Guinea. The people there must have thought, *Why is it that so-called civilized nations kill so many people, but don't even eat them. What a bunch of barbarians. Cannibals only kill people for food.* It's said that when they happened to kill someone during battle, eating that enemy would be done as a ritual. They couldn't understand why anyone would slaughter so many people and not eat them. At any rate, even when "civilized" people aren't even hungry, their imaginary desires go into overdrive and they become as greedy as they possibly can, because that's become their common sense.

When you think about it, perhaps it's simply because that is what children are taught by their parents. You know, a kid goes to a neighbor's house and the auntie there wants to give the kid something, but the kid has no desire for it and goes home without anything. And their mother says, "You're such an idiot! Why did you refuse something that was being given to you?" That now passes for common sense.

Now, I was born and raised in Tokyo. In Tokyo, if you try and set a planter out in front of your house, for sure it will just get broken. When I was just a kid myself, I recall that right inside the gate to our house, there was a clump of bamboo and a sparrow decided to make a nest. This was just after the Great Kanto Earthquake in 1923. I was so looking forward to seeing the baby sparrows fly out of that nest for the first time. However, one night, someone brought a ladder, climbed over a ditch, and knocked the nest down. So all the eggs fell on the street and broke. Ever since then, I never really liked Tokyo. Even before that, there were things I didn't care for about the city, but after that I really began to detest Tokyo.

It seems that there is a streak in some Japanese that tries to kill anything that can be killed. That's just no good. However, Kyoto somehow seems different to me. Along the Kamo River, there're lots of birds playing. You can see plovers and wagtails. And the black-headed gulls are all over the place. Even within the center of the city, you can see many sparrows, and doves, too, are everywhere. People coming from Tokyo often remark on how nice Kyoto is. They're often impressed that you can walk down the street and see planters here and there. They're surprised to see planters with flowers blooming that don't get stolen. This just seems bewildering to Tokyoites. And besides that, the people in Kyoto never looked down on a monk like me who went around surviving by takuhatsu. I think this was due to the graciousness of the people of Kyoto.

For fourteen years, I lived thanks to the offerings of the people of Kyoto who graciously filled my bowl when I went on takuhatsu. As most people know, mendicant begging was the sole source of income at Antaiji, so we had to go out almost every day. In the mornings, there was rice porridge, and around noontime we would buy a roll or two somewhere to stave off hunger. Then, we would usually duck into the grounds of some small temple to eat it. Now, if there were any pigeons on the grounds, they would come over and coax us to give them a little bread. That's when I realized why the local people always put something in our bowls. We were the same as the pigeons who gathered around us and with whom we shared a bit of our bread. There are all kinds of temples in Kyoto. There are little out-of-the-way ones, and there are big rich ones like Hongwanji or Rokkakudō. The pigeons at the big temples were just shameless. They'd come straight up to you and pluck the bread right out of your hand. After a while, we just never felt like taking a break at either of those places. But the pigeons at Tōji were very different. When we would start to eat our bread there, the pigeons always held back at first. And when we tossed them some crumbs, they still acted

constrained and finally pecked at the crumbs. Those pigeons really were quite cute.

Ah! I finally realized that on takuhatsu, too, we must never act as shamelessly as the pigeons at Hongwanji or Rokkakudō but be more modest like the ones at Tōji.

What I also felt then was that the reason Kyoto was not firebombed during the war was not just due to the many temples and shrines located here. It was also thanks to the graciousness of the people of Kyoto. Even before the war, many Americans had been coming to Kyoto. As they encountered the people of Kyoto, I'm sure they truly felt that this was a nice city. No matter how many temples and shrines there might be, if people hadn't gotten a good feeling when they interacted with the residents of Kyoto, I'm sure they would have thought, *Let's just burn it down*. In other words, what's important here is that feeling of graciousness; when you see a monk on takuhatsu, give them a penny or two; if you see a pigeon, give it a portion of your bread—that is why Kyoto wasn't burned to the ground even during the war.

During my time, people just put a one-yen coin in my bowl. And if you needed an eggplant, you would hunt around until you found a place where you could get an eggplant for even one yen cheaper. Still, people maintained that inner margin to give a whole one yen to a monk out begging. That's the kind of spirit I'm talking about.

It's not a spirit of being as greedy as possible and taking whatever you can. We just can't act that way. It's a spirit of trying to give, even if it's only a little bit; it's a natural spirit of self-restraint, of reducing one's desires. That's having the wisdom of a great person. The dainin in *Hachi Dainin Gaku* is like that.

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Now it seems that wherever you look, everyone is chasing after more efficiency. I believe that here, too, we must be more judicious.

Take automobiles, for example. There're simply too many of them in Japan. It might be different if Japan were a large country like the United States, but it isn't.[2] If you try and drive so many cars in a country this small, soon it's possible that no one will be able to move because there are so many vehicles. Is that ridiculous or what?

Now, going for a walk is one of my favorite things to do, but recently it's getting to the point that the only time to go for a walk is very, very early in the morning or very late at night.

The other day I heard that the automobile companies contribute huge amounts of money to the government, so the government has no intention of curbing the number of vehicles on the road. That's very possible. To begin with, you must have roads the cars can drive on, and the funds needed to make those roads are included in the cost of the car. If that were not the case, you could make a lot more cars more cheaply and sell them, making even more money. But the roads would get worse and worse; people wouldn't be able to walk; and eventually, even the cars wouldn't be able to go anywhere.

Or take television, for example. If you look at it occasionally, well, there may be something interesting. Occasionally, you might even learn something. But, more and more, you hear about people glued to it from morning till night. It's already clear that human beings are just going to get stupider and stupider.

Having a certain amount of self-control is the wisdom or eye of the dainin. What is important here is the eye of the dainin. Looking with clear eyes at one's overall life, the life of Jiko, means having control over these imaginary desires and not pursuing them. That is the sense of "having few desires." That is what Dōgen is saying in the passage: "not wildly chasing after the objects of one's desires [of the five senses] *that have not yet been fulfilled*."

Having said that, you need to know that it just isn't a fixed thing as to how far we can go and still be okay, but beyond that would be bad. At first glance, it may appear that saying this is being a bit half-assed, but if we look at things with the eye of a true adult, no two

people are alike. So the degree of self-discipline will naturally be different depending on the individual. What is critical here is having that eye of a dainin—being a true adult.

As I have said before, the teachings of Buddhism in no way neglect or repudiate our scientific and technological civilization. What the teachings are saying is to look again very carefully at your own life and where you need to be more self-disciplined, then just be that way.

WHO AM I? SO IMPORTANT, YET WE REALLY AREN'T SURE…

Now, if we move from having few desires to the next step, and cut back on, even a little bit, having to satisfy our own personal desires, there can arise that feeling of wishing to share our portion with someone else. In the Buddhist teachings, this is what is called *dāna* or unconditional giving.

I've mentioned this before, but the reality of the Buddhist teachings was complete with Shakyamuni Buddha. However, as the times have changed, the expressions have changed. For example, Shakyamuni's final words on the "eight qualities of a great person" later in the Mahayana teachings became the "six paramitas of the bodhisattva." Or the terms applied in the first two of the eight qualities of *shōyoku* and *chisoku* later became *dāna paramita* or unconditional giving.

Looking in the text, it says, "The Buddha expounded, 'Monks, here is something you need to be aware of. A person with many longings or cravings suffers proportionately greater, precisely because he or she seeks greater personal gain or other benefit.'" So far, these are the words of the Buddha in the *Yuikyōgyō*. Just before that but written in smaller characters, it reads, "Not wildly chasing after the objects of one's desires [of the five senses] that have not yet been fulfilled is what is called having few desires." These lines are Dōgen's comment.

So just what is Shakyamuni referring to when he says “suffers.” Probably most people simply imagine that an accident occurs, and because of the accident, someone suffers. Or, for example, a person gets totally stressed out because their company went bankrupt, or a student becomes depressed because they didn’t pass a university’s entrance exam, or maybe someone else feels down because the person they were in love with jilted them. But that isn’t what the Buddha meant. The Buddha says that the more desires we have, the more we pursue them, and this results in greater suffering.

Normally, as one type of sentient being, human beings, for some reason or other, are constantly looking to be satisfied. The reaction to this thought that seeks to be satisfied is suffering. Therefore, the more thoughts we have that seek to be fulfilled or satisfied, the greater will be our suffering. In other words, the problem of suffering has everything to do with our view of the world. Everyone thinks of themself as being the most important person. So far, that is not a problem. But then, we don’t even understand who this self is that we think is most important. Let’s say that some thought of wanting to be satisfied arises in our head. We become firmly convinced that such a thought is *who we are*. Consequently, we convince ourselves that this thought seeking to be fulfilled *must* be fulfilled. We become bent on such a thought having the most value. The problem arises over the placement of this value. We see something and the thought forms, *I want this*, or *I want that*. Then, thinking that the fulfillment of this “desirous thought” is the most important thing in our life, we act on that thought.

This isn’t true only regarding our desire for material things. We can say the same for romantic passion as well. A new season arrives and with it the warmth of early spring. Now that’s one suspicious and tricky fellow. In early spring, a handsome young man meets a lovely young woman. Before you know it, they’re head over heels for each other, and the guy becomes tormented with thoughts that they were made for each other and he just must marry her. And

then one thing follows another. If everything goes according to plan, well then, no problem. Unfortunately, the world just doesn't normally follow our plan. When it doesn't, it wouldn't be unheard of for the whole matter to end in a love suicide.

So it goes like this. In late February, early March, the "buds" spring up, accompanied in April or May by the blossoming of actions; then, around July or August, things go awry, and the couple jumps into the river together and drowns. Now, July or August is good for this because the water isn't so cold…

I've talked about my formula on these matters before: thoughts are like a phantom; actions are the hard facts of reality; and the results are like wandering ghosts. In other words, those imagined thoughts of becoming fulfilled that bubble up…in fact, they're just wandering apparitions. In other words, they are thought-up or imagined desires. Now, when we conclude that they aren't just phantoms and start to act on the thoughts because we start looking to fulfill them, the acts of looking to fulfill them are no longer phantoms, but satisfaction-seeking acts.

It's winter, very cold, and you're walking along on geta—*clip clop, clip clop*. Oh. You look down and spot something; it looks like a wallet that someone has dropped, and it seems to be filled with lots of money! You look around, and luckily, no one is watching. You bend over to pick it up, but it's frozen in the ice. You can't move it. You pause, and then this genius idea pops into your head. You open your kimono and let rip a fountain of warm pee, melting the ice. You really are a genius, but as you bend over to pick up the wallet, you wake up from what was just a dream. The wallet filled with money was just a phantom! But that beautiful fountain of pee was no dream; it was a reality. And the result stays around to haunt you—now, you've got to wash the futon and set it out to dry.[3]

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The critical thing here is to examine and change our way of thinking. For example, some people think that Japan is just a little island country, where everyone is jostling for position. The businesspeople in their world, government bureaucrats in their world, artists and artisans in theirs, and even priests, too—they're all trying to survive in their various worlds by clawing and trying to hold back anyone who would get in their way. Now, if you just modified your thinking a bit, that tiny island backwater country becomes a vast ocean-facing country. Japan is a country surrounded by a vast ocean. And beyond that ocean lies an enormous, spacious world. Why not set sail for that world? You feel much better just thinking about it. That's just one example of changing one's way of thinking.

In this same way, you may consider that this thought of trying to be satisfied or fulfilled is really you, but what you need to do is look at yourself again from a changed perspective.

First, consider whether this imagined thought of being unsatisfied is really you. This unsatisfied thought looking to be fulfilled floats into your head because you are a living creature with a brain. Just like the parotid and sublingual glands secrete saliva or the adrenal gland secretes corticosteroids, a living brain secretes thoughts and emotions. That thought looking to be fulfilled is nothing more than a secretion of the brain. Your true self could hardly be little more than a secretion. A secretion is not who you are. You at least must be the power or force that makes it possible to secrete, or, that is to say, even the life force itself. But just what is this life force or living force?

I'm sitting here thinking about what to say and speaking to you. And just as you are sitting there listening to me, you, too, are thinking. What the living force is, is the complete continuity of you and me.

And it is not just you and me who are connected. Spring comes and flowers blossom. And when fall comes, trees produce fruit. The power or force that enables you and me to breathe and be alive here and now is the same force that enables the flowers and trees to

bring forth blossoms and fruit. That one life force is connected to the life force for all things. Who you truly are is that sort of thing. Mutually, you and I, the flowers and trees, the air, water, earth, and rocks live together and enable everything else to live—that is the living force.

That being the case, it just isn't okay to be as greedy as possible for the sake of the cravings secreted in our head. It's only natural that we have a feeling of yielding or sharing that mutually living force that enlivens all of us and enables everything to live. This is the spirit of dāna or unconditional giving.

Sawaki Rōshi often remarked, "Say we go out into the middle of a field and let out a long fart. Why, all the crops are going to breathe that in and say, 'Oh, what a wonderful fragrance.'" When you think about it, plants take in carbon dioxide and exude oxygen, so his theory is not bad. Conversely, we look at a flower and think, *Oh, how beautiful*, but from the standpoint of the flower, the gorgeous color may be nothing more than a fart. In short, we live, giving unconditionally and freely to each other. There is simply no way that I can live totally independently by myself. Sawaki Rōshi's famous words, "Gain is illusion, loss is satori," are his way of expressing this spirit. It's amazing that once you get into the spirit of living that way, it's as though all the suffering or bitterness and hardship, like this idea of independence, just fall away.

For example, this time of year all you hear about is the upcoming university entrance exams. The exam comes, and a student fails or almost fails and goes off and commits suicide. The parents are shocked and fall into depression or have some sort of nervous breakdown. Just think about it. If I fail the exam, that means someone in place of me will have passed! It's just not something worth getting all worked up about.

It's because people worry about getting into a top school to join some elite level that the problem of passing the entrance exam arises in the first place. But just look at the way people around you

are living. There is absolutely nothing that says elitism is the best way to live.

You might find this surprising, but occasionally people who are a part of this so-called elite society come to see me. I don't think I have ever seen such a bunch of helpless or forlorn people. Even as an outsider, looking at these so-called elite and seeing their helplessness when they stumble or fall, I just can't help feeling how ridiculous they are.

There's no way in the world that any of these elitists, whether they become the boss of some company or a minister of state, can succeed without making some mistake or having a setback. I mean there are actual examples of someone eventually becoming a CEO for some top corporation, or maybe even elbowing all the way to the top to become prime minister, and then the time comes when their past crimes come to light and they'll get put in the slammer.[4] But, for argument's sake, let's just say that, right to the end, someone does make it to the top without any mishap. Ultimately, even that person will have to let go and die alone, giving up everything. Human life is such that during one's lifetime, however much one has become self-satisfied, it is to that extent that one will fall.

That is why I think it is important that from the time we are just kids in primary school we are raised not thinking we are the best, even to have just a bit of an inferiority complex. It's not a good thing for human beings to be raised from childhood thinking that they are superior to everyone else.

Someone with a bit of an inferiority complex will be the first person to try and get back up. And the more they are put down, the more they are likely to rebound. I don't think this is a bad thing to teach children. They are more likely to grow up a better human being for it. If you think like that, failing an entrance exam is nothing. What I'm talking about here is a change in one's outlook, the whole sense of oneself. So reflecting once more, seeing that this thought of seeking fulfillment is simply a secretion of the brain and that this

living force connecting you and me is the same force and is who we truly are—our Jiko, our Whole Self—this is the transformation from child to dainin.

> *Not wildly chasing after the objects of one's desires [of the five senses] that have not yet been fulfilled is what is called having few desires.*

As I mentioned earlier, having few desires does not imply that desires are in and of themselves something bad. If all these desires are bad and must all be cut off, then we've got a real problem. But, if we're talking only about having few desires, then the discussion isn't so difficult. For example, young people today grow up without knowing what it means to be hungry. But older people personally experienced during the war just what hunger feels like. Several hours of every day, one's head was filled with thoughts of food. From just after the end of the war in 1945 until the spring of 1948, I was living at Jippōji Monastery in Tamba. At the time, there were a few young men living together with us who had just been repatriated and who had no idea how to understand their country's defeat.[5] These men were called the "Potsdam Monks."

Jippōji had only four rooms of six tatami mats each, and at times since there were as many as nine of these Potsdam Monks staying there, it was extremely tight quarters, to say the least. Anyway, they were all very young and had come starving, and the only "entertainment" was going out on part-time work doing funerals. In that rural area of Tamba, you had to gather at least four or five monks to perform a decent funeral. So when a neighboring temple needed several monks for a funeral, instead of running around to a bunch of temples trying to solicit the help of each priest, the priests in the temples in that area knew that there were plenty of Potsdam Monks at Jippōji just sitting around, so they would come to Jippōji for

help—kind of one-stop shopping. And the monks at Jippōji were all ready and more than willing to go.

These were funerals in the countryside, so even in those days, you could have as many large rice balls as you could eat. That was what was most important to all those monks. There were nine of them, so they took turns going out. These Potsdam Monks, about high school age, made up a parody of a war song entitled “In Place of Heaven, We Will Strike Against Injustice.” It went like this:

> In place of everyone else, we will vow to eat.
> We monks—peerless when it comes to eating lots.
> Sent off amidst shouts of great acclaim,
> We’re leaving, now, the country of hungry ghosts.
> We shall not return without full bellies.
> Oh, how despicable our heart-filled vow.[6]

And one more song went:

> Bravely we go off to eat
> With such hope, we leave our temple.
> How could we return with empty bellies?
>
> Every time we hear the sounds *chin don jaran*[7]
> Images of rice balls float in our eyes.

This is the ultimate extreme of desire. The craving to eat in those days was something that I could easily understand. Our situation today, however, is totally different. Most people in Japan have plenty to eat; very few people are going hungry. Despite that, there is this social surge to raise our standard of living. That’s all some people talk about. There’s an old proverb that goes, “Once it’s past the throat, one forgets the heat [of the swallowed object].”[8] The experiences of those war years became a part of me; I can never forget them. So, for me, I think we are a little too well-off.

I've always thought of my own lifestyle as like camping out. No matter how rich we might be, eventually we're going to die. We're alive for just a short time. While alive, living frugally, doing what you want to do or whatever else might have to be done, I mean, isn't that a livelihood? If you have enough to eat and a roof over your head at night, isn't that enough? That is how I have thought and why I never pursued full-time work; I've never had a livelihood. I've just been doing whatever I've really wanted to do.

Of course, during that time, a lot of things happened. For example, some of you may know that I am famous for my origami. Now, when I was about thirty-seven or thirty-eight years old, the thought occurred to me to try to find part-time work making origami. At the time, I was living at Antaiji in Kyoto, and the life there consisted of sitting zazen and going out on takuhatsu. Antaiji was a very poor temple without any income, so if we wanted to eat, we had to go out begging. Takuhatsu isn't just walking around. You must stand right in front of someone's front door, intone "*hoooouuuuuuu*,"[9] and hope someone will come out and put something in your begging bowl. So it's just not that easy. Besides that, in Kyoto, you can see all the famous Rinzai monasteries. And from those monasteries, even in the middle of winter, plenty of young monks would line up and walk through the streets barefooted wearing only straw sandals. If you didn't have that masculine or macho look, people in Kyoto just wouldn't put anything in your bowl. But, at that time, I was already in my forties. In my forties I could still handle going out begging, but as I moved into my fifties, it just became too difficult. Anyway, that was my ulterior motive for thinking about publishing a book on origami.

So around 1955 a publishing company out of Osaka, Hikarinokuni, published a small book I put together, and it sold surprisingly well. Thanks to that, I received several requests from newspapers and magazines for more material. A nice little sum of money rolled in. Now, this is just when greed begins to raise its

head. I got the idea that the next time I published, it wouldn't be just a small booklet-type thing, but a real deal of a book. So I put together quite a nice manuscript. So far, so good. But by then, most of the kids from the postwar baby boom were no longer in kindergarten, and the kindergartens that formed the bulk of the market for Hikarinokuni's books were no longer buying books and the company almost went bust. Anyway, Hikarinokuni was not able to publish my manuscript. Just about the time I was feeling depressed about the whole thing, a small company in Tokyo, Enjisha Publishers, said they would publish my book. So thinking this was like a godsend, I mailed off the manuscript. Again, so far, so good. Unfortunately, that very year, the Edo River flooded its banks, and Enjisha Publishers, whose bookbinding warehouse was located along those banks, was totally inundated, and all the company's books were lost. Oh, then I was really depressed. But, after all that, I changed my whole way of looking at it. I had thought about publishing a book on origami because I happened to possess the ability to make origami figures. Now, if from the start, I hadn't had such a skill, I wouldn't have thought anything of it. So when I began looking at it in this way, it really wasn't a big deal.

Just about the time I'd forgotten about it, around 1962, I received a letter from Kokudosha Publishers saying that they wanted to look at the manuscript. Well, if we were talking baseball, I guess you would call it a grand slam home run. In all the newspapers and several weekly magazines, they had a whole page filled with me and my origami figures. But, by now, I wasn't all that taken in by it. If this had followed in the wake of my first small publication, I'm sure I would have been overcome with joy and undoubtedly become quite famous, as well as a bit richer. Instead of that, my fame and fortune all came shortly after I had temporarily given up on origami, so all I could muster was a faint feeling of satisfaction and not much more.

It was a good learning experience for me. What I learned was that, if from the very beginning I hadn't had such a skill, that is what

was most important—just that. I'm sure that each of you in living out your life have gone through various trials and bitter experiences. It's just at those times when we need to change our way of looking at things: i.e., if from the very start such and such hadn't been the case…. Imagine, even if something unfortunate were about to happen in your life, if before you had been born, your parents had decided, "I think we should abort this one," and then had gone ahead with it, you wouldn't be here today. You wouldn't be around to complain to them, "Why did you abort me!?"

Or to turn it around, if you're lying there in the coffin and all around you the monks are chanting and the bells, drums, and cymbals are going *chin don jaran*, how are you going to complain! No matter what you are suffering over, your whole outlook can't help but change if you look again from either the point of never having been born or of lying stiff in a coffin. The text reads, "Personally having few desires needs to be thoroughly studied and practiced." In other words, just to reduce one's own suffering, we need to carefully work through and practice having few desires. In the end, how we do that is we wake up to what a truly human life is and not give the highest value to just satisfying our physical cravings. Rather, living out the fundamental life force we have been given as having absolute value—that is having the eye of a great person or dainin and being a true adult.

> *To straighten out (clarify) one's life in terms of one's Whole Self without whining—that is having the eye of a dainin—a true adult*

As Dōgen states, "The first quality is having few desires. That is, not wildly chasing after the objects of one's desires [of the five senses] that have not yet been fulfilled is what is called having few desires."

The text continues: "Moreover, not following those cravings engenders uncountable merits. To look again at one's sufferings

from the foundation of having few desires, not only can these sufferings be relieved, but various merits can also be engendered."

I'm sure that is true. Reducing your own desires and giving something to someone else can't help but make the world more open. Your own life will surely become broader. Conversely, if you go craving after everything, take whatever you can, and disdain doing something for anyone else, well, society will surely become narrower and narrower.

A while back, I received a guest who had been a teacher at a national university. Looking at his card, it appeared that he was a full professor with a PhD—rare at that time in Japan. He said he was having difficulty dealing with some mental or emotional problems. He had no problem making a living. He said his family relationships were fine. But he said that his colleagues were all ignoring him or refused to cooperate with him. At that point, I spoke up and repeated Sawaki Rōshi's words: "Gain is illusion, loss is satori." You need to take a loss occasionally. First, I told him, whether it was his colleagues or the office staff or the building's custodian, he should not hesitate to give them whatever he could give. If he had a student who was having troubles, then to roll up his sleeves and give the student a hand. The professor listened very intently and responded with, "Well, about how much should I give them? How much of a loss should I take?" I replied, "As far as some concrete figure, why don't you talk it over with your wife, and perhaps after you've set aside a certain amount to be used to benefit others, then begin." Apparently, this very serious professor did exactly as I suggested. The plan seems to have had some effect, because not long afterward, all cheery and bright, he began attending the *zazenkai* (zazen gatherings). And, shortly after that, his wife also began to sit. After sesshins, she even started helping in the kitchen to prepare the meal for everyone. Moreover, I heard that recently he has been busying himself helping various people around him.

This was just one example, but what I wish to say is that when you alter your attitude, reduce your “I wants,” and grant things to people in need, your neurosis will lessen to that same extent; your world will get wider; and you will find yourself a whole lot livelier and happier.

It’s just no good to hold on to money so tightly. What sort of mentality says that you are a loser if you don’t use all the money that comes in to satisfy your personal desires? Such a lifestyle, in fact, is one that shoulders the heavy burden of poverty! That the world you live in would only become smaller and more confined is just natural; it’s just common sense. It’s precisely because you let go of money that everyone can benefit. And, consequently, your world can’t help but become more open and more pleasurable. I think this really applies to all people. That is why I feel that this even needs to be taught in schools. But recently, it seems the only thing teachers are thinking about is how to up their base pay. What the heck are they thinking about!?

Teachers and priests are similar in many ways. They don’t produce anything, which means that they are both dependent on other people’s offerings. Before I retired, I sat sesshin after sesshin with all I had. But, you know, doing sesshins, I never made any money, nor did I produce anything. In short, I played my whole life and lived dependent on others. So it was important for me to live humbly, like those pigeons at Tōji Temple.

If even one time I had thought about collecting money and had put out my hand to get it, I could never have lived with myself had someone said, “No, not for you.” Or if, even just one time, I had stuck out my hand, begging for money for my wife, I believe that unlimited reservoir that had nurtured me all those years would have quickly dried up. So, looking at takuhatsu, it is not an act of sticking out your hand and telling people to put something in it. You just humbly hold out the *ōryōki* bowl, and if someone puts something in it, then in all humility you say, “Thank you very much.” In the *Eihei Shingi* we find

words to the effect that naturally, an attitude of respect toward the parishioners and a deep gratitude toward one's parents should be cultivated. This is one's service toward them.

Temples in Japan were built thanks to the support of the laypeople of the temple, so naturally they should be respected. I have heard that in Thailand, Burma, and Sri Lanka, the monks have become quite arrogant and sometimes even lie down when meeting with parishioners. I'm afraid I'm a bit skeptical about acting with such confidence. After all, we are all just ordinary human beings.

So, on that point, we need to be truly thankful to those who give a donation. On the other hand, if someone gives a monetary donation and then wants to start telling others what to do, then it is necessary to firmly refuse the donation. When someone acts like that, it is no longer a donation. It's more like some gangster lording it over his underlings. That's just money with strings attached. Over many years, I have forged an attitude of never bowing down to money. That was my attitude when I first started out as a monk and has been my life over these years.

At many temples, even where they are conducting zazen gatherings, I've often seen situations where one of the parishioners who happened to put up most of the money thinks they're someone special. They won't sit zazen with everyone else or participate in the *samu* work either. They sort of enclose themselves in the best room in the temple and sit around smoking cigarettes or whatever. When that happens, the whole atmosphere of the gathering goes sour. At Antaiji, there just isn't anyone like that. I think the whole atmosphere of Antaiji as a zazen *dōjō* was always good because of that. If there ever had been someone who had donated money and then went around during work time trying to boss around my disciples, I would have thrown the donation back in their face. I would have told them that they weren't qualified to give a donation to this temple. A couple times I've had to do that, but if I hadn't, I don't think I would have been able to preserve a proper atmosphere.

To receive a gift or donation from someone is fine, but at the same time it's not good to flatter or curry favor with the giver with the intention of getting even more. In our text, we read: "A person with few cravings will never try to flatter or ingratiate him or herself with another." If you have no integrity or fawn over someone to receive an even larger donation, you really insult and do harm to the other person, as well as to yourself.

Then follows: "Nor would one of few desires be dragged around by the cravings of the five senses." This one we can easily understand just by visiting any large department store. We see so many things lined up on display exactly to attract our senses—food, clothing, appliances, everything. How can one not help but want this thing or that?

Particularly after the war, there was a popular slogan, "Consumption is a virtue!" Everyone got on board, went out, and bought up all kinds of ridiculous things. Every home you went into burst with home furnishings and other trappings. Thereupon, to house all their things, people either had to add extensions to their house or build an even bigger house. And, to do that, they had to run around everywhere to make enough money to afford all the changes. But, in the end, so many people wound up wasting their whole life running around in vain trying to make money.

When I was a kid, my mother often used to take me to Mitsukoshi or Shirokiya in Nihonbashi or Matsuya or Matsuzaka in the Ginza. And, every time I went, I would beg her to buy me something. And my mother would say, "Oh, you're infected with the buy-it-for-me virus." But when I was about a sophomore in high school, I did a complete flip-flop. I came to look at buying all the things lined up there in the stores as just stupid.

Even now, I don't dislike going to a department store. And I still think, *Oh, that's nice*, or *Hmm, I wouldn't mind having that*. And, once in a great while, I even have enough money to buy something. But then, before purchasing anything, I just go home. And the next

morning I wake up and think, *I don't really need that*. If the next day or even a few days later, I still think that I really do need something, then I might return to the store and buy it. I think that is the attitude of the dainin.

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In the *Dhammapada*, there's a passage that reads to the effect, "Lingering infestations of gloom, anger, or offense can never be resolved by continually being gloomy, angry, or offended. Only by letting go of gloom, anger, or offense can those feelings subside."[10] In that same way, any constant feeling of dissatisfaction or unfulfillment cannot be resolved with feelings of satisfaction. At first thought, one might believe that dissatisfaction should be resolved with satisfaction, but what happens instead is that once you've felt satisfied, more feelings of wanting to be satisfied arise with no end in sight. There's just no end to it! If one is not satisfied, the only way to feel calm and find any peace is to settle down and leave the dissatisfaction or unfulfillment as it is. That is the spirit of the dainin.

Many years ago, Sawaki Rōshi said to me that the dharma is immeasurable and infinite. "There is no way dharma is going to fulfill your puny feelings of dissatisfaction." Somehow, as soon as I heard those words, I felt he was right. Dharma is not some "thing" that satisfies people. It's the same with so-called satori. "Oh, I've got it. I've had satori! I'm finally feeling fulfilled!" I'm sorry, but that is just not true satori. Immeasurable and infinite dharma simply comes into us; it comes into us even as we feel dissatisfied.[11] Leaving dissatisfaction as it is, is the same as having few desires.

"Having few desires" may indeed appear to be some sort of skillful means for struggling through our secular and social affairs. We might reason that by having very few or no desires everything will be a lot easier. But it doesn't work that way. My expression "leaving dissatisfaction as it is" is simply another way of expressing

what is most fundamental in the dharma, which in the text is called “having few desires.”

These thoughts and feelings of unfulfillment or dissatisfaction (or of something missing) are another way of talking about *bonnō* 煩悩—greed, anger, and ignorance (or *mōsō* 妄想—delusions and fantasies). They are also another way to express the life force. Therefore, these are not something we should be trying to destroy or get rid of. It’s just that we need to look at these as we would a crying baby, with the feeling of babysitting and saying, “Shh, shh, baby, time to sleep…” The spirit of the dainin is like that.

The next line is: “One whose heart acts with few desires is always at peace and has few anxieties or misgivings.” Please keep in mind that, as I have stated previously, the *ui* 憂い “anxieties” and “misgivings” or *kunō* 苦悩 “anguish” and “suffering” is not a thing that has arisen outside of us due to some incident that occurred. All of this has occurred due to what we have fixed on as being valuable in our lives or in our attitude toward life. Therefore, if we change our life values, if we change our attitude toward our life, then the anxieties and suffering will disappear.

Now, physical pain is a totally different matter. There was a time when I had a severely infected boil on my leg. I couldn’t sleep for three days and three nights. This isn’t the sort of thing that simply believing in the dharma will make go away. Pain is still pain. Likewise, how can there be any doubt that when our time comes to die, there will naturally be a feeling of grief. If you think that, if you only believe in the dharma, the grief or pain will go away, you’ll be way off target.

Recently, I heard of someone on the verge of death saying, “Despite all the years I have sat zazen, why is dying so awful?” This is like being in the midst of pain just adding another layer of suffering. Sitting zazen to get something out of it is no way to sit zazen.[12] No matter how much zazen we might have done, it’s still only natural to feel grief or pain as death comes near. Now, to be

with that grief upon our own death, we need to practice with the attitude of the dainin.

Another fellow came to see me recently. He said he was working somewhere as a security guard. But at night in the dark, if some dog suddenly snarled or barked at him, he would get all weak-kneed. He felt that was proof he lacked any grit. So to build up more courage, he thought he ought to do zazen. When I told him that we don't do that kind of zazen here, he just got up and left.

If you're somewhere in the middle of the night and it's completely dark and some dog suddenly ferociously barks at you, why wouldn't you go weak-kneed? Or if you happen to be walking along and some gangster walks up to you and sticks a pistol in your face, why would anyone's face not change color? In a situation like that, if your face didn't change color and you just reacted with, "Who do you think you are, threatening me!" some people might think you've got balls. Why, who knows? The gangster just might even invite you to join his gang! Even though that sort of "satori" might be useful in our secular society, it has nothing to do with dharma.

What is critical here is that in the true sense of religion, with our whole life we must live without illusory suffering. This means to cultivate a way of living not based on suffering. Dōgen continues: "And regarding various matters, such a person feels no need for more; that they always have more than enough." Having few desires is fundamental to what comes next—having enough.

But let me finish speaking about having few desires. Here are Dōgen's closing lines to this section: "In a word, one with few desires is virtually in nirvana. This is what is called having few desires." Nirvana is defined here as birth and death both being finished. To say it in another way, looking at it from a different view, who would you be had you been aborted? Think about it, assuming you're lying there in the coffin. How about this? On your way home, go and buy a coffin and set it in your favorite room. Then, the next time you get mad, just jump inside that coffin. That would be the best way to look

at things from another perspective. But there may be some folks who might not think a coffin in the alcove is very aesthetic. So those folks can just go and sit zazen.

In short, doing zazen is looking at your life from inside a coffin. Or to put it another way, it's like reflecting on who you would be had your parents aborted you.

So my definition of *dainin* here is cleaning up your life by yourself without whining. The dainin in our text *Hachi Dainin Gaku* is a true adult who doesn't whine. The first quality or spirit of a great person is having few desires. The first thing we must do is to practice having fewer desires, and living in that way, we become a genuine model in the world for children and all the other hungry ghosts.

2

Knowing One Has Enough

—

Chisoku 知足

The second realization of a great person is knowing when one has enough. Limiting how much to accept of the dharmas (things) one has already received is knowing one has enough. The Buddha has said, "Monks, if you wish to be rid of various pains and suffering, then you need to see clearly that you have enough." This dharma of knowing when one has enough is precisely where you will find the greatest wealth, happiness, and peace of mind.

Despite having to sleep on the ground, a person who knows when to be satisfied will find comfort and be at ease. And, to the contrary, a person who does not know what is sufficient will never be at ease and always be unsatisfied even if they live in a gorgeous mansion. Despite having great wealth, a person not knowing when to be satisfied is, in fact, impoverished. On the other hand, though a person may be materially poor, if they know what it means to have

enough, then that person is truly rich. One who does not know having enough will always be pulled around by the five senses, only to be pitied by those who understand the meaning of having enough. This is what is referred to as knowing one has enough.

What is the truth? Let us be clear about it!

NOW THE SECOND QUALITY of a dainin or great person is knowing when one has enough. Frankly, I think the age we are living in now is one of having no sense of knowing what is enough. To the contrary, this seems much more of an age of valuing having lots of desires.

People these days seem to think that if you have no desires, then there can be no advancement, no improvement. Too many parents also seem to think that making every effort in educating their children means to arouse desires in a child. But the kids, on the other hand, aren't interested either in extending their desires or in buckling down to their studies. A child whose desires have been forcefully aroused or who has been forced to study winds up only mimicking the parents' wishes.

It's easy to see why people think that the natural sciences and current social organization are advancing, that we're living in a new so-called world of culture and civilization.

Now I'm not particularly criticizing that. During part of World War II, I lived in a temple in Shizuoka Prefecture. There were lots and lots of children there who had had to evacuate from their homes in larger cities. Then, after the war was lost and all hostilities had ended, the children all returned home. But that was when the children made things difficult for us. All the fleas that had swarmed around the children hatched their eggs, and an uncountable number of fleas were born. When we went to do sesshin in the *hondō* (main hall) where the children had been staying, the first thing we had to do was

clean it. In cleaning it, however, we couldn't wear any kind of kimono or clothing. We stripped down to our underpants. All those fleas that had been waiting for us came crawling up our legs. So this gross overpopulation of fleas just sucked on our blood, and we were running around in a frenzy. The situation was intolerable, and we weren't living in a time when you could easily go and buy some insecticide. So we got a large bucket and poured water in it. Then we stuck our legs in the water and began to pick off the fleas as they climbed up our legs and put them in the water. Why in no time at all, we had built up a whole "island" of fleas. Let me tell you, we didn't just fill one or two half-gallon sake bottles with fleas. It was just unbelievable. It felt like we were in some sort of house of horrors.

It became very clear to me that day that because we had been born in an age of "civilization," we were no longer able to live without insecticide. Perhaps the people who live in a place like New Guinea might be able to easily get by without any sort of bug killer, but us civilized folks would be unable to function without our scientific technology.

I remember one other incident during my childhood in the Taishō period (1912–26). My grandfather had died, and my brother and I were riding in a *rikisha* to the crematorium. As we were riding along, beggars and lepers came up to the rikisha with their hands out pleading for money. Among them, there was one beggar who was pulling his crippled mother in a cart. The Taishō period was like that. Nowadays, however, the social welfare system has made many advances. People with physical disabilities are now taken care of, and the days of beggars walking the streets are past. And I think that's fine. I mean, particularly after the war there was a lot of shouting going on about human rights or women's rights. And now the so-called *takobeya* and *jokōaishi* of the prewar days are gone.[1] In that regard, knowing when there is *not* enough is not a bad thing.

So what does "Limiting how much to accept of the dharmas (things) one has already received is knowing one has enough"

mean? Personally, I find these words a bit too soft. So I would like to take a slightly deeper look at this from the foundation of human life.

—

If there are no desires, there can be no improvement, no advancement. At least, that is what people often say. However, in this case, to the extent people use the term *improvement* or *advancement*, they're expressing a defined value judgment or value system. And there must be a starting point for making that judgment. Because there is a starting point, one can talk about progress or advancement. So what is the starting point of our value system today? I don't believe I'm mistaken in saying that it is none other than satisfying our desires. When we talk about "progress," it sounds very nice, but it is no more than furthering the fulfillment of one's desires. Sawaki Rōshi used to say rather sarcastically, "With an air of importance, people run around talking about Marxism. But what's that? It's just a kind of squabbling over the bait."

Fundamentally, as I mentioned previously, desires are not in themselves bad, since we can hardly live without any. The problem arises when we live only to fulfill our desires. It's like the end and the means have been reversed.

Let us consider living one's whole life only for one's desires. What will happen when such a person grows old and infirm and must face death? Occasionally, a letter like this lands unexpectedly in my mailbox: "I'm now on in years, my body is falling apart and all I have left to do is die. I just don't know how to think about my life. Can you help me?" Now, people who all their lives have been pursuing nothing but money, position, reputation, enjoyment, or whatever become totally obsessed by that final illness called death to the extent that they lose the energy to pursue any more desires. Moreover, when they do take their final breath, they must die totally naked and alone. So it is only natural that, having lived a life

absorbed in pursuing just their personal desires, they see their life as having been totally meaningless. The more things one has pursued and gained during such a life, the greater will be the shock of having to let everything go when death does come. Now for just a moment imagine these very rich people living in heaven. When the final illness comes, it is as though suddenly that cloud they have been sailing on all this time is jerked out from under them and they tumble back to earth. Just as in that expression “even celestial beings decay,” the higher one goes, the greater will be the impact when one falls.[2]

On their deathbed, to what extent does a person feel the shock? Unfortunately, no one has taken any survey on the matter, but unquestionably, it must be great. So if someone close to us happens to be near death, then we must try to do all we can to take care of them. In my dharma talk on *Shōbōgenzō: Shōji* 死生 (*Birth/Life/Death*), I tried to explain that when someone is near death, it is no time to say things like, “I have no reason to look after that guy,” or “She’s not my responsibility.” It’s not a matter of having the right or the responsibility to do or not to do something. I believe we should do everything possible to make them feel comfortable. Coincidentally, as we care for the person, we can learn tactilely through direct exposure just what death is, since being directly exposed to someone who is dying is also seeing the condition of our own death.

No matter what, the fact is that when anyone dies, they are going to die suffering. The more wonderful one’s memories, the greater will be the shock at death. And, on the contrary, the fewer good thoughts one recalls when dying, well, it will be more like just falling off a low porch. That is how I understand the expression *inga rekinen* 因果歷年—“cause and effect are inevitable.”

The starting point of any religion has been a fundamental doubt about the value system regarding the fulfillment of one’s desires as the highest good. When a way of life becomes confused or utterly

lost in the promises and conventions of a secular existence centered around money or status, there is no religion to be found.

In Ōgaki, I lived next door to a Jōdō Shinshū (True Pure Land) temple. One time I was invited to hear the head priest's talk. His talk confirmed my belief that Jōdō Shinshū is most certainly a religion. The priest's talk was based on *goshō o negau* 後生を願う (pray to be born in the Pure Land after death); it was rooted in the dharma.

The only unfortunate thing I noticed was that all the people who came to hear his talk were elderly; there were no young people. I believe that most people think that the expression *goshō* (literally, "after death") means "one's next life after death." And younger people assume they aren't going to die for a long time, so they aren't interested.

However, the true understanding of this expression has nothing to do with the next life. Rather what it really means is the life after one has clarified the matter of death.[3] When we die, we throw away everything we have in this world, along with all our thoughts and feelings. That is the death we need to clarify. After that, we live out our life—this life—fully. To put it another way, life after clarifying death means to no longer assume that fame and fortune or fulfilling only one's personal desires is the purpose of our existence. Right here is a total change in one's value system.

In the Sōtō School's *Shushōgi* 修証義 (*Teaching on Practice and Realization*) it is written, "For followers of the Buddha, the most crucial matter is clarifying the [direct and indirect] causes of life/death." As long as we fail to clarify what death is, we will never clarify the meaning of life. Looking at how we so often view "life," it doesn't appear that way. When one's parents or siblings are on the verge of death, we just call an ambulance. After that, everything is left up to the doctors and nurses in the hospital, and we turn away from this person's death. We're certain that we'll just keep on living and never die.

In short, we think of *life* as the survival of humankind, not one's own personal life. I suppose that is understandable. Today's human species has been around for over 25,000 years, and likely, it will still be here 10,000 years from now. The problem is that you—the one reading this—are not simply a member of some species called *Homo sapiens*. I was born and, after several decades, it is certain that I will pass away. Death is an absolute fact. It doesn't matter whether you doubt it or believe it, whether you acknowledge it or not, you will die. When we personally clarify this absolute fact, act in accord with it, and return to it and when we settle on this absolute fact, that is what is called truth.

When I was a middle school student, I firmly resolved to live out the truth of life. This resolve was the starting point for my entire life. However, at that early time in my life, I didn't really understand just what this all-important "truth" was. That I have been able to clearly define truth as settling on what is absolute fact is something that has come to me recently. That understanding is reflected in the Buddhist scriptures. To put it another way, following in accord with absolute fact is truth. It is also called "good." And, to the contrary, when we struggle and don't act in accord with absolute fact, we are living untruthfully. And that is what is called "evil."

Speaking of absolute fact, it is the same as saying all living things die. It is also an absolute fact that every single person is living out a life that is wholly oneself.[4] Recently, we have been hearing a lot about people with mental problems who claim that they have become someone else. People might think that way, but in fact one can only live out one's own life. An absolute fact is that it is impossible to become another person. Despite that fact, there are so many people alive today not living out their own life, but rather living their life through the eyes of what is socially respectable.

Indeed, perhaps this "self" may be one colleague in relation to another or a wife in relation to her husband or a child in relation to its parents or maybe a subordinate in contrast to their superior. But all

of those are nothing more than labels contrasting or balancing one thing against another. In fact, one's true self is this very reality. That is why all I can do is fully live out this life as my life. Now, if you choose not to do so and instead live only as a social being, the result will be to feel that you have become who you are not because of you, but because society made you that way. You then blame society: it's entirely society's fault that you became the way you are, and so on with such nonsense. What can I say other than such an idea is absurd and runs totally counter to the truth?

Now, if we but turn our view around and see that the life force that lives through me is the same living force that gives life to everything else—that is what is called absolute fact. Earlier, I mentioned that the force that gives life to me is the same force that in the spring gives life to new buds on the trees, but this is not limited only to the realm of living things. It is the same force that makes a car engine run or a rocket fly into space. You may want to say that human beings made those things, so they're just man-made objects, but the fact is human beings did nothing more than assemble those parts into a whole. Whether it's gasoline or electricity or whatever—they are all natural forces. Human beings are just skillfully putting together what is available in nature. Everything being moved by this great force is what is absolute fact. That is why it is just common sense for me to say that to lose sight of that absolute fact, and to think that if this "I" is satisfied then everything is all right, runs totally counter to this absolute fact. Therefore, to make sure of and confirm those absolute facts, to clarify them, to follow in accord with them, and to settle on them without floundering around—that is what truth is. Settling on those absolute facts must be our highest value; that's what is of absolute value.

Not to strive for satori is not good…but then, craving it is no good either. So what do we do?

In considering this “absolute value,” there is also value that is born out of desire, which is relative value. You know, whenever I get a sheet of paper in my hands, immediately I want to fold it into something. Moreover, as I am well known for my origami, it seems that whatever I make looks quite nice. And if someone who happens to be interested in folding origami sees it, they always tell me that my pieces are a work of art. On the other hand, for people who have no interest whatsoever in origami, my creations are nothing more than scrap paper. I think the value of a lot of so-called art is like that.

For example, I think the best kind of music is the kind that is played very quietly. For me, just sitting still in a quiet place is the best thing I can think of. But when a big concert or recital is finished, suddenly there is clapping and applause so loud that you want to put your hands over your ears. Now the musicians emerge and respond with an encore. But I keep wondering if all the people standing up clapping really understand music at all. I keep thinking that many people clap merely because reviewers and critics have written that this musician is famous, so socially speaking, they feel they must offer a round of applause. Or, for some people, clapping is nothing more than a required ritual or ceremony. In short, such people are just living their lives based on socially acceptable values.

As for what is socially acceptable, money tops the list. Of course, fame and position are right alongside money, but these are simply promises or conventions; they’re nothing more than very relative things. I can say that, from my point of view, things like position or fame simply have no value.

Once, when talking about Japanese national treasures—most specifically, Hōryūji Temple—Sawaki Rōshi really said it all. “Why did they build that temple? Who the hell practices the dharma there? All they do is sit around and collect money off the tourists. It wouldn’t be a loss if the whole thing just burned down.” And shortly after he said that, the temple did catch fire and parts of it did burn down! Well, most of the priests there certainly are a far cry from Buddhist

practitioners. Every day hordes of tourists push their way into the place, and the money is just pouring into the pots right in front of their faces. There was even an incident between some priests where one guy was so upset that a colleague had gotten a big take and he had received a much smaller portion that he gave the other guy a poisoned sweet cake! It was called the Poisoned Sweet Cake Incident.

From the standpoint of Buddhist practice, things like national treasures or important cultural assets, far from being valuable, can be harmful. And if one of them does happen to burn up in a fire, it still winds up as nothing more than ash. In any event, such things are never of the highest value.

Or take the position of some of these CEOs of large corporations. They appear to have a lot of prestige in their own circle. But even the guy who once wielded a lot of power becomes just an ordinary person when he retires. And the very day after retirement, that sleek limo that picked him up each morning stops coming. I've heard that that is the biggest shock for these people.

These types of position or power are nothing more than relative values. Even so, far too many people today actually believe that such things are of absolute value. That's nothing more than having blind faith in something or believing in myths. Despite living in this age of myth and blind faith, no one seems to have even noticed that; so it seems to be an impossible situation to manage.

In Buddhist thought there's an expression *shinzoku nitai* 真俗二諦: the two truths of the *absolute* and the social or *secular*. This term is sometimes expressed as *shintai-mon* 真諦門—view from the absolute—and *zokutai-mon* 俗諦門—view from the secular.[5] In this case, *shintai* refers to what is of absolute value, while *zokutai* refers to what is of relative value. So what are these terms trying to explain to us? In Buddhism, this would mean to look anew; that is, to view things from the foundation of what is absolute rather than from what is only relative. To put it slightly differently, this is teaching us that it is

critical to change our vision and see all those things that have only relative value from the foundation of what has absolute value.

In the text, Dōgen puts it this way: “Limiting how much to accept of the dharmas (things) one has already received is knowing one has enough.” In other words, it is not that there is no limit. It’s rather a negation of having no limitations. And that is what is called *chisoku*; that is, knowing when one has enough. He’s not saying that we should not take or accept anything. Rather, he says that we should be content with a limited amount.

Think about it: Right now, you and I, without giving it any thought, are breathing in and out. Air or oxygen is an incredible gift to receive. As far as our physical body is concerned, if we consider what is most important, then, first, it would probably be air. Without air, in a very short time we die. The second most important thing is water. Going a bit further, we can’t live without the heat and the light of the sun that gives us air and water. And don’t forget gravity, another thing we must have.

Our society today doesn’t bother to look at these things at all. People are always making a fuss over money. But when it comes down to it, money is not even something you can eat. Money is nothing more than a means of trading. Well, even so, as a social convention, I suppose you can say we can’t live without it. So if we include it as an important item, at most money might rank as number ten or number twenty.

So now let’s say we put money in that list of important things; we can’t help but feel thankful for those things that have been provided to us. “The dharmas one has already received” refers to the things that have been given to us. And just how we live giving fullest play to what has been entrusted to us is looking at everything with the eye of an adult. Children often run around whining that they want this or that. However, an adult is one who, without whining, opens their eyes and attempts to live out this life giving the most life to whatever

has been given.[6] This is the awakened quality of the dainin—the great person who knows they have enough.

Up until losing the war, in Japanese society it was law that the eldest son was the sole heir and inherited the family wealth. After the war, however, the law changed, and the family wealth had to be distributed equally among the surviving spouse and all the children. The difficulty that arises here is: What is equal? Splitting one house equally among three people is totally different from dividing a piece of mochi rice cake into three equal pieces. So, naturally, problems of partitioning estates arose. But think about it. The relations between siblings get all screwed up as they become enemies fighting over a house no bigger than a rabbit hutch and a tiny piece of land—it's like a tragicomedy. Can a bad idea really be used to divide up society in this way? It seems to me that to live through this, people will need to have a more magnanimous attitude.

Let's look at the dharmas that have been provided. First, parents must give their all to raise each child, and they've made it possible for all the kids to go to school. It would be enough just to give life to everything that has already been provided. Now, that would be a Buddhist standpoint.

A while back, there was a person who came to Antaiji for the sesshin and, right in the middle of a sitting, she suddenly began to cry. She had come all the way from Tokyo solely to sit the sesshin. Afterward, I asked her what had happened. She said that she and her brothers and sisters were going through a big fight over the family's inheritance. To come and sit zazen over something like that is just nonsensical.

It would make more sense to just give whatever you were supposed to inherit to whoever wants it. Now, if you do something like that, people around you are likely to think that you have no resourcefulness or are unreliable. But to quarrel over the family inheritance and try to get something from another sibling, and then, despite one's parents having put one through school, to live one's

life going from one pleasure to the next until all the money is gone—now that would show true lack of resourcefulness and unreliability. “Knowing one has enough” means to realize that for many years you have been provided for. Suppose you’ve been able to go on to higher education. So now it’s time to work, to give full play to all that you have been given. I believe that is the attitude one needs to have.

“The Buddha has said, ‘Monks, if you wish to be rid of various pain and suffering, then you need to see clearly that you have enough.’ ” This sentence comes from the *Yuikyōgyō*. The meaning here centers around “if you wish to be rid of various pain and suffering.”

What if I said that I didn’t particularly want to be separated from pain and suffering? This same question comes up in the next section: “The Buddha said, ‘Monks, if you wish to enjoy true tranquility, unaffected by the conditions around you, then clearly it is critical to live in a quiet place, apart from all the noise and clamor that surrounds you internally or externally.’ ” In these two passages, what does Dōgen mean when he says, “if you wish to be rid of various pain and suffering” or “if you wish to enjoy the realm of true peace and tranquility”?

There are many people who suffer from insomnia and have difficulty falling asleep. I’m one of them. I’m thinking about how much I want to fall asleep, and I become sleepy. But just at the time I consciously feel I’m about to drop off, suddenly I’m lying there wide awake. In that same way, just at the point I want to feel the pure and unsullied joy of true peace and tranquility, the purity and unsullied tranquility is no longer so.[7]

Sawaki Rōshi talked about this in his own way. “When I heard that students at Komazawa University were reading the *Shushōgi*, I thought it was the funniest thing I had ever heard. The opening passage goes: ‘Clarifying the (direct and indirect) causes of life and death is the most crucial matter for followers of the Buddha…. There is no life/death to be despised, nor nirvana to be sought after.’ Why

there wasn't a one of them who had even the tiniest thought of despising death or seeking to be in nirvana. Here comes the funny part. The next line goes: 'Understanding in this way, for the first time, we will be free from (the suffering of) *shōji—birth/life/death*. Don't you think it's almost laughable that despite having no recollection of loathing life/death nor ever having any desire for nirvana, to be free of birth and death? For sure, how can there possibly be any nirvana for one who has never sought after it? First, it is precisely because one longs for nirvana that there be any sort of nirvana. However, is it okay to just long for it? Dōgen says, no, not at all. It must be as the text goes: '(There is no) nirvana to be taken pleasure in.' " It is only then that we can see the deeper sense of the text.

As a college student, I took a class in the history of Buddhist doctrine. The professor took up the Four Noble Truths, called *shishōtai* 四聖諦, explaining that everything in the world is suffering. The first of these four Noble Truths is called *kutai* 苦諦. Then he said that the source of the suffering comes from the gathering together of various conditions that arouse one's desires. This second Noble Truth is called *jittai* 集諦. And the third Noble Truth, or *mettai* 滅諦, is that nirvana is what gets rid of the suffering. Finally, he said that to reach nirvana there is a way or path that separates us from all desires. This is referred to as *dōtai* 道諦. As soon as the professor finished his explanation, I raised my hand and asked, "Professor, if that's the case, then in Buddhism, wouldn't wanting to get to nirvana also be a desire?" The teacher was flummoxed and couldn't reply. As he was fumbling for some explanation, the class ended, and we were dismissed. At the time, I was studying in the Department of Western Philosophy. I only took the class on Buddhism out of curiosity. So it felt good to corner this professor. But then after that, I somehow wound up as a Buddhist monk. In fact, as I jumped right into Buddhist practice, this point about seeking nirvana became a critical issue for me, and my whole world was turned topsy-turvy. I suffered to no end, because as a Buddhist practitioner, to the extent

that I was practicing I wanted to make progress in my practice, if only a little; I wanted to have some sort of satori. Now, that sounds only natural, doesn't it? But, in the end, wanting to make progress or wanting to have some satori experience is just another desire. To sit zazen, thinking about how much I wanted to grab on to some satori, is like trying to pull out the very cushion you're sitting on. It seemed that my whole world had been turned on its head, and I was running around in circles trying to figure out how to think about this problem and resolve it.

I think people practicing Pure Land Buddhism must have the same problem. Looking at the 18th Vow, sometimes referred to as the Primal Vow, in the *Dai Muryōju-kyō* 大無量 寿経 (*Sutra on the Buddha of Infinite Life*), we find, "If, when I am about to become a buddha, all sentient beings who, with sincerity and joyful faith, despite desiring to be born in my land after calling out my Name just ten times, should not be born there, may I not realize perfect Enlightenment." In other words, if there are people who desire to be born in the Pure Land and chant *namu amida butsu*, this (potential) buddha vows to save them all. The problem is, unfortunately, there's no one who "desires to be born in the Pure Land." Even if there is someone who thinks about such a desire, such a desire can't be aroused. So there we have a problem.

In any event, in carrying out Buddhist practice, it is critical to have such an objective or vow. While we may make that vow, what do we do with the desire that doesn't want to be saved? That is where we find ourselves going round and round in confusion. This is an extremely difficult matter. Buddhist priests who address this problem try and sweep it away by saying that Buddhism is not a philosophy, it's a practice or a devotional faith. They all run away from the problem. What they're saying may be true in a way, but if you're not sure and don't understand the key to practice or faith, then surely, you'll be truly lost. It's not okay to just push thinking about the problem out of people's minds by saying "it's practice" or "it's faith."

Regarding this point, especially for people today who tend to be argumentative and think in more complicated ways, if you don't at least clarify the direction of that practice or faith, then no one will even take a first step. It is my intention now to address this problem head-on.

The fact is, everyone, as they are right now, is complete.

As I have said previously, human life consists of both life and death. If something is born, it will die. That is the reality of human life. So what causes this birth and what causes its death? What is the foundation for this coming into being and for death? If I were to try and express this in words, I think it would have to be called "life that transcends the individual or the particular." Or perhaps it could be called "the life force of nature." Christians would call this "the power of God," while Pure Land adherents might call it "the power of Amida" and practitioners of Zen would probably refer to it as "Buddha-nature." However, it might be phrased: looking at life and death as an absolute phenomenon, life is born and is just what it is; death is just what it is.

On the one hand, we can view this physical life that is born and dies as one action or movement. The fact is that all of us who have been born are always moving. And while we are always moving, at the same time, particularly human life is also constantly producing many secretions. In Buddhism, these secretions are referred to as *ro* 漏. From the salivary gland, saliva is secreted. There are also thoughts that are secreted; sometimes instincts are secreted.[8]

Up to this point, what I'm pointing out is an absolute fact having nothing to do with whether you think it so or not, whether you believe it or not. Whatever is born will, without any doubt, surely die, and to the extent we are alive, we will also secrete various things.

Though I say "secretions," not all secretions take a concrete form. When we think of something with our mind—say, an idea or an

emotion or a desire or some image or conception, maybe a plan—all of this is secreted from our heads. For example, imagine some desire that we conceive in our head: we're not particularly hungry, but the idea in our head thinks, *If I don't eat something now, later on I may get really hungry.*

Just look at what is enlivening all the news stories these days: the Senkaku Islands dispute. Normally, nobody lives on those islands; they're just a few rocks and basically uninhabitable. Some people start imagining, *Oh, if another country took those islands, it would be a terrible loss.* That's how the trouble begins. China says the islands belong to China, and Japan says they belong to Japan.

Honestly, desire is not such a big thing. It really doesn't take all that much to satisfy a human being's appetite for food. And as for sleeping, why, if you have one tatami mat's worth of space [approximately six by three feet] and a couple of futons to cover yourself, that's plenty. But we begin to construct an idea in our head: *Well, even though I don't want to eat it just now, I want to make sure I get it.* And then, after that thought boils a bit in our head, we put it into action, and that's where the problems begin. This sort of thinking and then acting on the thought is termed *goshō* 業生 or karmic life. Human beings all live by this karma.

Because of karma, people taste various kinds of suffering, like Sawaki Rōshi having to wash and dry out his futon after he attempted to pick up the dream wallet. This is just one example of the second Noble Truth. Looking at this secretion that becomes the seed for this kind of karma from the absolute foundation transcending any individual life, this action necessarily follows in accord with cause and effect. However, from my personal point of view, I can't help but think that this is nothing but chance.

For example, I was born Japanese. But I could just as well have been born an Ethiopian or in Papua New Guinea. Or, even as a Japanese, I could have been born into money, or I could have been born into poverty. No matter what it is, everything takes place by

chance; that is, at least from my perspective, there is nothing that requires anything to come about by inevitability.

Let's take desire. For example, I get it into my head that I want to go to a department store. So I go there, get totally carried away by all the wonderful things on display, and perceive the thought of wanting to make a purchase—that is all by chance. Still, precisely because it happened to be me who thought it, if I just separate from this thought of mine, there is nothing that is not chance.

From an absolute foundation of life greater than the individual, whether we think something is so or not, whether we believe it to be so or not, whether we wish to deny or affirm it, nothing can possibly be other than absolute fact. Now at this moment, I'm living as a Japanese; I became a monk; I'm sitting here in front of all of you thinking and talking: this is an absolute fact that can be no other way. But precisely because I am looking from my personal viewpoint, I can't help but see it as chance. However, if I separate from my standpoint and consider all things, everything together is absolute fact. And settling on this absolute reality is what is called *chōjō* 澄浄, lucid or translucent.[9] This is also the fourth of the Four Noble Truths. This is called dōtai or the Eightfold Noble Path. The stage of secretion is jittai, or the second Noble Truth. Absolute or undeniable fact applies to mettai, the third Noble Truth.[10]

I repeat myself here, but, as I have said before, when viewed from a perspective that eliminates "me" from the equation, everything is absolute or undeniable reality. It's from the foundation of this undeniable or absolute reality that we settle into what is termed *chōjō* or lucidity and *shin* 信 or faith.[11]

The aim or direction of zazen lies in being clear or lucid regarding what is undeniable or absolute fact—in other words, opening the hand of thought, viewing all things from the perspective of seeing them as secretions of the brain. To do zazen doesn't mean not thinking about anything. Zazen is not no thoughts arising, no secretions bubbling up; you would be dead. If we are alive,

secretions are excreted from the head or from other parts of our body.

People today are convinced that human ideas are quite magnificent, but those very ideas are nothing but more secretions. During zazen, we view everything from the perspective of letting go of that very secretion: *Ah, my head is secreting now.* And from that we let go.

The next section will take up Dōgen's passage, "If you wish to enjoy true tranquility, unaffected by the conditions around you," but you need to know that this isn't something that is possible just because you wish for it. When we do zazen, we look on all these secretions as secretions—that is, these secretions, too, of wanting this or praying for that. Opening the hand of thought and entrusting everything to the posture of sitting—that is our zazen.

Therefore, no matter how much you think about it in your head, wondering what to do in seeking nirvana is nothing more than another secretion. So taking up the practice of zazen is not like that. We must let go of those secretions since "there is no life/death to be despised, nor nirvana to be sought after." Further, we also must bear in mind that thinking about letting go is also a secretion of the brain. Therefore, we must sit zazen, inclusive of that thought of wanting to let go, and entrust everything to the posture of sitting. In other words, shikantaza—just concentrating on sitting—is zazen. In that way, even that thought of letting go is let go of. This is simply another way of saying *shinjin datsuraku* 身心脱落 or casting off body and mind.

We don't sit zazen and little by little cast off body and mind. Zazen, just as it is, must embody casting off body and mind. In the Hōkyōki 寶慶記 as well, Dōgen's teacher in China, Rújìng, stated unequivocally that "zazen is dropping off body and mind."[12] So, ultimately, if we look again at this expression "knowing one has enough," it's not a matter of deliberating some idea of having enough. Rather, it is a matter of you and me looking at ourselves with an eye that truly sees. In so doing, we see that everyone is

complete as they are. The fact is that everyone, as they are, is quite enough and complete. Precisely because everyone is complete right now is the reason they are truly alive. That is the sense of seeing that we have enough. We must fully live out the very present fact that we have enough. And that is the sense of living out having enough.

This dharma of knowing when one has enough is precisely where you will find the greatest wealth, happiness, and peace of mind.

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Let's move on to what Dōgen says next: "Despite having to sleep on the ground, a person who knows when to be satisfied will find comfort and be at ease. And, to the contrary, a person who does not know what is sufficient will never be at ease and be unsatisfied, even if they live in a gorgeous mansion. Despite having great wealth, a person not knowing when to be satisfied is, in fact, impoverished. On the other hand, though a person may be materially poor, if he or she knows what it means to have enough, then that person is truly rich. One who does not know having enough will always be pulled around by the five senses, only to be pitied by those who understand the meaning of having enough. This is what is referred to as knowing one has enough."

People today making, say, $1,000 a month may think, if they were only making $1,200 a month, if only they were getting $200 more…So they feel inadequate by $200. And if they were making $1,500 a month, they would be dreaming of making $2,000 a month. So let's say they make $2,000 a month, would they be satisfied? Never. They'll only wish they were getting another $300 a month. This kind of thinking just never ends. People today always desire a higher salary. In other words, people are always ignorant of having enough—they're perpetually unsatisfied.

I guess I was always a bit of an oddball. Even when I lived at Antaiji and went out begging on takuhatsu, occasionally it occurred to me, if only three people in a row would just drop a ten-yen coin in my bowl…And then I couldn't help but burst out laughing at myself. Even now, I have no fixed income. Oh, I occasionally get a royalty check from a publisher. Or someone worries that this old man just might starve to death, so they bring or send me something. I'm living a modest life. But, even though it's a minimalist lifestyle, I always feel unhurried and easygoing. I'm sorry, but I will never work some job just to support myself. If you want to call it work, I suppose if I'm asked, I may go out and give a talk. Doing that occasionally, I receive some sort of fee for the talk. Still, as I mentioned from the beginning, any talk on dharma is about carrying out the wisdom of Shakyamuni's experiences of practice. All I can do is endeavor to express what is already fixed: that is, the enlightened wisdom of Shakyamuni, which means nothing other than digging deeper to uncover that wisdom and express it, if only a tiny bit more clearly. Moreover, uncovering just that little bit is no easy task. So, if I wind up constantly running around speaking here and there, my talks will just get more and more watered down. That would be good for nothing. I refuse to get involved with such nonsense. Instead, I simply prefer to reduce my desires.

The first thing I do when I get up in the morning is some cleaning. That's my morning exercise. Next, I do whatever I want to do all day and then take a walk in the evening. But you know how narrow the streets are here, and recently, with all the increase in cars, I can't walk along my familiar routes. So I've been walking back and forth six times, alongside the junior high school that is about 200 yards long. Now if people see me walking back and forth six times, they will think I'm a bit loose in the head, so I do it at night when no one is watching. I'm satisfied with that, and I think I'm a rather, well, quiet human being.

Now, honestly speaking, people who run around whining about not having enough and who just go after a luxurious and extravagant lifestyle are only pursuing an impoverished life. For me, even though some people would say that I live an impoverished life, I believe that I'm living a very rich life. I'm sorry I can't just live an ordinary life like most people who get up and go to work at an office every day; I always feel grateful for the support I receive in living out a rich life. I've heard that just after the war, the land where Antaiji used to be located sold for a few bucks for two square meters, but today the same amount of land would cost $2,000 to $3,000! Roughly, that would come to over $1,000,000 for that land. So all the farmers in that area are filthy rich. But if you ask them if they're satisfied, they still say they don't have enough. First, they built a brand-new house. Then, they put all their kids through college. After that, when they divvied up the inheritance, they wanted to build equally new houses for their second and third sons. And then the kids, aiming to get their portion of what's left, wind up quarreling with one another. In that state of things, how could there possibly be enough? Being rich but living an impoverished life is exactly that.

What is important here is not scrambling after money and other material things, but rather giving full play to what has been given to you. Doing that is having the eye of an adult, the eye of the dainin or great person.

3

Appreciating Serenity/Quietude

—

Gyōjakujō 楽寂静

The third quality is enjoying peace of mind. Avoiding noisy, bustling places that confuse the mind and living alone in a quiet, serene dwelling is called enjoying peace of mind.

The Buddha said, "Monks, if you wish to enjoy true tranquility, unaffected by the conditions around you, then clearly it is critical to live in a quiet place, apart from all the noise and clamor that surrounds you internally and externally. One of calm demeanor has always been highly respected by Indra and many other devas. For this reason, surely it is essential to put aside all personal affairs, find a quiet place to live and ponder how to relieve the sources of suffering."[1] If you take pleasure in being in a group, you will surely encounter the disharmony and suffering of the group. It is like a gathering of birds that nest in a large tree, eventually the tree will wither and the limbs will come crashing down from the stress. It can be compared to an old

elephant stuck in the mud and unable to extract itself from its depths. This is called living detached from both sensual desires and worldly affairs.

For the most part, one human being worshipping another human being is not a good thing.

AS DŌGEN STATES, “The third quality is enjoying peace of mind. Avoiding noisy, bustling places that confuse the mind and living alone in a quiet, serene dwelling is called enjoying peace of mind.”

In Japanese, the term translated here as “confuse the mind” is *kainyō* かい閙, and as it is rarely used, I think I need to explain the nuances. The first part *kai* かい means to be mentally or emotionally confused or unsettled. Say, for example, there’s something that just doesn’t make sense to you, so you’re thinking about it all night. Then morning comes and you realize what it was. Or perhaps you meet some famous person or you’re standing in front of some precious jewel, you can feel a rush of excitement or wonder.

I heard this story from a fellow in real estate. He said that dealers who plan on buying up a large swath of land out in the countryside never take their checkbooks, they take bundles of cash. It’s not just normal bills that we might see when we go into a bank; these guys will bundle together 100 or so ¥10,000 bills. Then they’ll toss, say, ¥30,000,000 (roughly $300,000) into a case and flash it around, all the while inveigling these rural hicks with the potential wealth they could get. And when the seller starts showing signs of being willing to sell, the dealer starts pulling out bundle after bundle and sets them side by side on the table. At that point, the seller usually gives in. This reminded me of an old Chinese character, *shō* 悚, which means “horrified” or “terrified.” It’s possible that a long time ago, some Chinese guy went into the countryside with some sort of

bundle and terrified the people with it. I find the formation of kanji characters interesting.

The next character is *nyō* 鬧 formed with a gate and, inside the gate, a city. That's the simplified form of the character. Originally, the character was written like this: 鬧 with a king leading his army like a wolf into a city. The sense of the character was one of lots of struggle and competition going on in the city—in other words, a lot of noise and quarreling going on. So the term *kainyō* means to be completely unsettled in one's mind and surrounded by lots of noise.

The next term that comes up is *kūgen* 空間. The character *gen* 間 has a gate with a sun between the sides of the gate. Earlier, this character had a moon between the gates. In other words, the day's work is done, and when we go to close the gates, we look up and see the moon shining. It gives us the feeling of stillness and quiet. In the beginning of *Shōdōka* 証 道 歌 (Song of Enlightenment) by Yongjia Xuanjue 永嘉玄 覚 (Jap. Yōka Genkaku) Daishi (665–713), the opening line goes, "Have you not met one who lives the Way in calmness, (who's) beyond the study of words and letters and whose actions are no longer prescribed by intention?" What is being described in this passage of our text is someone who no longer inhabits noisy chaotic places but rather lives in a quiet place with quiet surroundings. That is the meaning of *gyōjakujō* or appreciating serenity/quietude.

Incidentally, there are many Buddhist texts that exhort us in various ways to avoid noisy, bustling places that confuse the mind and urge us to live alone in a quiet, serene place. Still, there seem to be lots of people these days who, for some reason or another, feel a resistance to such an idea. Many people have expressed such doubts to me, wondering if that sort of life is appropriate or relevant in today's world.

So many Japanese people seem to fear falling behind the rest of the world. It seems to be almost a Japanese characteristic. Not only

that, but the whole country also somehow seems hell-bent on keeping up with world trends and not falling behind.

I can't help having the feeling that people in India and China just seem to be more relaxed, while the Europeans and Americans somehow appear to have plenty of self-confidence. Japanese people not only seem to lack self-confidence, they rarely seem to give off any sense of being settled or at ease. They always seem to be restless and chasing after something. As I mentioned earlier, Japan is not only a country of earthquakes, but one of unsettled people, fearing being left behind.[2] This appears to be an idiosyncrasy going way back in Japanese history.

I can still vaguely remember a story from my high school history class. When legendary emperor Nintoku was still a crown prince, he had an older brother named Ō Yamamori. Now, the custom up to that time was that the older brother went first, so when their father, Emperor Ojin died, it was assumed that Ō Yamamori would become the next emperor.

Around that time, Confucianism was introduced to Japan from China. And, of course, in that era China was thought to be the most advanced country, and the custom there was that the eldest brother inherited everything. It's said that these two brothers began the practice of conceding to each other. So the elder brother Ō Yamamori told his younger brother, "You have to be the next emperor." And Nintoku responded with, "Heavens, no. You are the elder brother, and you must be the next emperor." This seems to have been the beginning of having a sense of give-and-take or compromise.

Later on, Nintoku did become the emperor, but around that time, his elder brother was living in Naniwa, the old name for the Osaka region, and another younger brother, Uji no Waki Iratsuko was living in Uji. One day, in Naniwa Bay, a local fisherman caught a huge sea bream, so he took it to Nintoku in Miyako. Nintoku said, "My younger brother is to be the next emperor, so you have to take it to him." So

the fisherman set off for Uji. Uji no Waki Iratsuko responded, “No, my older brother will be the next emperor, so take it to him.” So the fisherman headed back to Naniwa. After hauling the fish back and forth from Naniwa to Miyako, then to Uji, and finally back to Naniwa, the fish started to rot, so, weeping, the fisherman threw the fish back in the river.

In short, from ancient times, when something new like Confucianism was brought into the country from an “advanced” country, there was this habit among Japanese people of strictly adhering to it.

There’s also a story about Prince Shotoku’s son, Yamashiro no Ōe no Ō. Sōga no Iruka, who kept a low profile while Prince Shotoku was in power, tried to gather an army to take power after the prince died. However, some others opposed him and wanted to gather their own forces to kill him. But at the time, Buddhism had taken hold in Japan and Yamashiro no Ōe no Ō, who adhered to the teaching, said that in Buddhism a compassionate mind is of highest value. So he refused to make any military preparations. Later, because of that, he was destroyed by Iruka.

Buddhism came into the country, and right away everyone adheres to it. Similarly, at the beginning of the Meiji era (1868), Western thinking was introduced into Japan, and soon everyone became crazy about it. And then right after World War II, everyone became infected with the idea of democracy. Japan always seems to see itself as a backward country.

I can remember reading in high school about Japan being depicted as backward. I thought the depiction was shameful. I knew I didn’t want to be or think like that. I was determined to live my own life. After that, I was determined to try and live the true reality of life. I think most young people in their third or fourth year of high school, in some way or another, decide on the direction for their life.

In my case, I felt that my life was like having been given a totally blank canvas. But I couldn’t paint just anything on it. Rather, I had

the feeling that I had to paint for myself one theme for my life, and that's when my life first began. At the same time, I felt that I had to study various things, so I studied Western philosophy and then went into studying Christianity. And, during that period, I ran into Dōgen's remark: "to study and practice the Buddha Way is to study and practice one's whole identity—*Jiko*." Reading that, I said to myself, *Why there's a guy who thinks just like me!* You laugh, but at the time I read it, I really thought that way.

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Among the various writings of Dōgen, there is a passage in *Shōbōgenzō: Jishō Zanmai* 自証三昧 (*The Samādhi of Self-Realization*) that reads to the effect that, from ancient times, it has been said that to live one's Whole Self, you must study and learn from one who has done precisely that—i.e., lived their whole life—or else your pursuit will be false and lead in an entirely wrong direction. After I read that, I realized it wasn't enough to just say that I wanted to live my own life. I changed my perspective and sensed I had to follow one who him-or herself had truly lived their Whole Self. And, what do you know? I wound up ordained as a monk.

You know, I didn't have to become a monk; I could have become a Christian or a Communist. Why, even if I hadn't become the president of some big company, I probably could have at least become his secretary; I really think so. However, the one thing that has governed my life is that I wanted to live it in a fresh way.

On that point, let's face it, someone like me comes along only once in a couple thousand years. I'm not joking. Why, the Buddha himself at his own birth said, "In Heaven or on Earth, I alone am the most precious."[3] Actually, this applies to all human beings. Without the slightest hindrance whatever, every person is the most precious. It's not that someone like me appears once in several thousand years; I appear only once in eternity. Now, even if I firmly believe

that, at least it's not against the law and I won't get arrested for thinking so…but I do think it is true. That everyone would believe that they are a once-in-eternity being is the same as living out buddhadharma.

It seems that Japanese people are bent on following the crowd. Right from the start, Japanese first must demean themselves and then live by chasing after someone else's behind. They seem to feel secure only after following someone else. I've read somewhere that this is called the mentality of "insular agriculturals,"[4] and that could very well be so. On this small island country, just now is the time of rice planting, and everyone is out helping to plant the rice. Pretty much all over the country, rice must be planted now. And then, when harvesting comes, if everyone pitches in, generally there'll be a good crop. Even a lousy farmer—if they follow what the neighboring farmer is doing—will generally come out okay.

At any rate, Japanese think they must act like everyone else. If they can't do what everyone around them is doing, they become neurotic. The Buddha said, "To depend on others means to always be unsettled." Without a doubt, the Buddha was right on that point. Without any sense of self, if you feel you must depend on someone else, you're always going to feel anxious, and eventually this will only lead to neurosis.

Another aspect I have noticed recently about Japanese people is that basically they think that being liked must surely be a good thing. They just assume there can't be anything wrong with being liked by everyone. Because they carry out their actions with that as a basic principle, people hold on to the idea that, whatever they do, they mustn't be laughed at by Mr. Worldly.

Well, I suppose it's not a bad thing to be liked, but I don't think it's unconditionally a good thing. For instance, some people hear that they are highly esteemed by others and immediately think they're in seventh heaven. The neighborhood women all gather around talking, and one says, "Oh, I hear your husband just became the new section

chief at his company." And the one with that husband sticks her nose up, thinking she's now better than everyone else. Or else she goes around telling everyone about how her husband has just been promoted. I'm not talking just about salaried workers; this holds true for overnight pop stars or currently popular writers or whomever. Anyway, they carry no doubts that becoming famous or well-known must surely be a good thing.

A problem arises then: Is that a true picture of who you are? Take me, for example. I'm fairly well-liked by the ladies, but just how do they look at me and why do they find me attractive? If they glom on to some image that they have of me that has nothing to do with who I really am—now let me tell you, that is painful. In fact, I'm quite a shy guy, so when that happens, it's horrible for me. But this just doesn't seem to be so for some people. People make a big fuss over them, and right away they think they must be something special. Lots and lots of Japanese are easily taken in by whatever is popular or fashionable. Some journalist writes in a weekly magazine about a rising singer, and everyone rushes to get a look. Or someone says doing zazen is a good thing, and before you know it, tons of people come running to sit.

Now, Sawaki Rōshi was a well-known figure in his day. Lots of people used to come just to see him or hear him talk. The thing is, these people were coming to see the false image they held in their minds of who he was, but that image had nothing to do with who he actually was.

This has nothing to do with the dharma. There are plenty of examples of people giving credence to a false image and the actual conditions being left by the wayside. In other words, this false image stands all by itself while the actual circumstances are totally ignored. Despite having very little talent, some singers have become extremely popular. Say, the weeklies bestow extravagant praise and lionize some singer, and the singer goes along thinking it must be true. And then, suddenly, the person falls out of favor with the public

and goes out and commits suicide. We can see or read about incidents like this all the time.

Or in some company or corporation, some man or woman succeeds in currying favor with the uppy-ups and gets promoted to some place in management. So far, so good. But, from the beginning, the person's abilities weren't nearly adequate to handle the position. So the person gets pushed up by those below to make room and gets stepped on by those above. In the end, they develop some neurosis and wind up in the hospital. There are lots of cases like this.

Now, it's not just in big companies that this sort of thing happens. We can see this in certain instances of famous religious figures as well. Some guy throws everything into his practice, and before he knows it, he becomes idolized by those around him and ends up believing it himself. Now, for the most part, I don't think people should go around worshipping or idolizing another human being. At any rate, that guy becomes desperate, throwing everything into what he's doing, and becomes even more idolized, firmly believing that he probably deserves the worship. The more he himself believes it, the more he goes around wearing an "honorable" face. You should know that this sort of thing has nothing to do with religion. What is being idolized is a false image, a false reputation that just goes around by itself—here, any true human life is gone. True religion is not like that at all.

To begin with, we are all living human beings. And, naturally, everyone has desires. However, once a person is idolized and put up on a pedestal, they can't afford to make any mistakes, so they sneak around behind people's backs. If they are a man, they surround themselves with women, keeping everything a secret. When it goes that far, then you can be sure this man is certainly no sage, and his connection to religion is zero. If there is going to be someone of the opposite sex around, don't you think it's closer to the truth of human life to be open and clear about it?

In short, more than anything else, it is best to reveal and give of yourself as you are—if you don't do that, then it just isn't real. Either as a religious person or just as a human being, this is what is most important.

No matter how upset you are, it is possible to settle down.

In the latter portion of this text, the character *shū* 衆, meaning "multitude" or "the masses," comes up quite often. In short, "masses" here refers to balancing oneself against or comparing oneself to all the "other people." Now, no longer living a life of trying to balance this relationship with that is "appreciating quietude." This is also referred to as "living alone in a quiet, serene dwelling."

There seems to have been nothing that Dōgen loathed more than fame and fortune. There is probably no one who spoke out against fame and material gain as he did. That's because seeking fame has, from the very start, nothing to do with dharma. Further, without any doubt, in pursuing and seeking after fame, one completely loses sight of Jiko—Whole Self.

Despite Dōgen's thinking on this matter, there is a problem that arises for people living now. If you tell people today not to pursue fame and to live alone in a quiet place, I wonder if they might not begin to doubt what there is to live for.

For example, look at India, where you might find people quietly doing zazen in the forest. Many people today might seriously question why anyone would do such a thing when they themselves feel like they are doing something in the world only after they've secured a good job. I suspect that if you take the job away, they may very likely feel that there is no longer any meaning in their life. On that point, to live in a quiet place and deeply consider how to relieve suffering would be incomprehensible to many.

Most people would probably interpret pondering "relieving the sources of suffering" as nothing more than repressing their sexual

desire and other feelings or emotions. They would likely question going into the forest to repress their sexual desire as nothing more than waiting for death and feel that such a life is pitiable or pathetic. With this sort of perspective, many people presume that Buddhism is a pessimistic religion.

However, relieving the sources of suffering has no connection to repressing your sexual desire, no matter what any number of Buddhist priests might tell you.

I touched on this earlier when I was talking about the Four Noble Truths as the foundation of Shakyamuni's teaching: you must distinguish between what is real and what is just a secretion. So what is the meaning of those Four Noble Truths for people today?

Reviewing the Four Noble Truths, the first is that everything in the three worlds—the world of desire and the worlds of material and nonmaterial things—is suffering. Up until now, Buddhist teachers have been explaining this as four types of suffering: birth and living, aging, sickness, and death. This has also been defined as *shiku hakku* 四苦八苦, the four or eight sufferings. Added to the first four are another four: the suffering of having to separate from what one wants, the suffering of having to experience something one loathes, the suffering of not getting what one wants, and the suffering of losing one's vigor.

This sort of categorization runs so counter to what most people today personally experience that it probably doesn't resonate very much. For example, I have the feeling that priests today, when talking about the four kinds of suffering, focus on aging, sickness, and death but don't mention birth or living. Many of them take it for granted that being alive is a pleasure. But it's this first one of birth and living that is critical. If we are living as a member of society, we have enormous problems to confront. Just to name a few, there's the problem of labor; then, there's the problem of discrimination. We also have the issues of politics and economics, and don't forget all the

issues surrounding international relations. These are all different faces of the suffering of being alive, that first Noble Truth.

Originally, the Japanese term *ku* 苦 meant to suffer being persecuted or criticized. All kinds of troubles and contradictions impinge on me: this is all suffering. Every individual is different—one person suffers over not finding someone to love; someone else suffers because their marriage isn't going well; and there are others who're always suffering or frustrated due to problems in their workplace with colleagues or bosses or supervisors—in short, with human relationships.

And soon will be all the problems associated with our aging society. The number of senior citizens is growing by the day, so their suffering will increase. As I mentioned earlier, people who have lived their lives totally ignoring that they will die will eventually be forced to acknowledge and face the reality that they're dying.

At any rate, let's look at "everything in the three worlds is suffering," in Japanese, s*angai kaiku* 三界皆苦. As long as we are alive, it's only natural that we're going to be inundated with many contradictions and paradoxes. But I'm not saying this to be pessimistic. We are constantly surrounded in our day-to-day lives by unfulfillment, disappointment, rejection, and so on. It is all this that goes into the Buddhist expression *sangai kaiku*—the three worlds are filled with *dukkha*.[5]

Next comes the second Noble Truth, in Japanese, *jittai* 集諦. The first character, *ju*, according to one Buddhist dictionary, means "a craving for love." So if we just get rid of this thirst for love, we can be emancipated. My thinking on this is, isn't wanting to escape suffering just a form of this craving for love?

By and large, the character 集 is read *shū* or *atsumeru*, which means "to gather together." Priests who explain it as a craving for love are mistaken. In *Honyaku Meigi-shū* 翻訳名義 集, a reference book that renders Sanskrit terms into Chinese characters, the definition of *shū* 集 is given as "to assemble or gather together."

There is no definition that means craving for love. So I think the reason one Buddhist dictionary defined the term this way may have been related to the low level of understanding of the Buddha's disciples. At that time, there wasn't much education, and poverty was widespread. So to explain suffering to such people, it was taught that they suffer because of their craving for sex.

Thinking about the biggest problems practitioners faced in those days, first, they were able to get enough to eat, so it wasn't a lack of food that caused suffering. However, many were very young, so craving for love became the biggest issue for them. They could easily understand the prohibition against such a desire.

Fundamentally, *atsumeru* meant "to invite or gather together." In another reference work, *Hokkai Shigi* 法界次義, we can find this definition: "If one's mind accords with one's desires, surely you will gather the suffering of life and death." In short, if you act on your thoughts, then surely the result will end in suffering. Just recall my earlier example of having to wash the futon after trying to pick up the dream wallet.

To explain it in very plain language, this character *shū* 集 means that blood goes to the head. Blood rushes to the head; next we develop some fantasy in our mind; then, if we act on that fantasy, we invite the suffering that accompanies life/ death. This is what I have been saying again and again.

One more reference to *shū* can be found in the *Mahar Bagga* of the *Vinaya Pitaka*: "the dharma of gathering together is the dharma of falling apart." This scripture describes the enlightenment of Shakyamuni, and his expounding of his first teaching appears in a very fresh way. I think that these words, "the dharma of gathering together is the dharma of falling apart," may very well have been spoken even earlier than the Four Noble Truths. To put it very simply, the blood that rises and "gathers" in the head can also disperse or recede. Blood isn't something that just keeps rising. Whatever rises will recede.

So *sangai kaiku*—that is, everything in the three realms is suffering—refers to nothing other than our daily life. Now, for example, if I were to take up some problem in international relations, say, East and West locked in heavy negotiations. This is a huge problem. I think both the Americans, on their side, and the Soviets on their side, are working hard to maintain peace. Still, there's always the possibility that if things don't go well, someone will blurt out, "I'll go to war for peace!" The reason for this is because each side has a different way of thinking and uses a different logic. My idea of peace and your idea of peace will clash, and that is where the problem arises. So how does this clashing of ideas arise? It's because too much blood runs up into the head. Each one frames the logic in their mind favorably to themselves and becomes firmly convinced that they're right and the other guy is mistaken.

Most of the fights and struggles in the world are this sort of thing. If both the Americans and the Soviets just let the blood recede from their heads, it would all be over. Just doing that would bring about peace.

The third Noble Truth, *mettai*—the cessation of suffering—means to just stop, to let the blood recede. What I just explained as "the dharma of gathering together is the dharma of falling apart" is the same as *mettai*.

It won't be long before the word religion is erased.

Next, I would like to look at the *dō* (meaning "path or way") of *dōtai* 道諦, the fourth Noble Truth. First of all, we have the term *chūdō* 中道, Middle Way, as well as the expression *hasshōdō* 八正道, the Eightfold Noble Path. The *chū* of *chūdō* shouldn't be thought of as the same as the *chū* of *chūtohanpa*—"half-baked or half-assed." Rather, it's the *chū* of *tekichū*, that is, "hitting the target or being true." Being right on target of what true reality is. I'm constantly

talking about this: letting go of delusion and homing in on the true reality of things—that is chūdō or the Middle Way.

In Japanese, the Eightfold Noble Path includes *shōken* 正見, right view; *shōshii* 正思惟, right resolve; *shōgo* 正語, right speech; *shōgyō* 正業, right conduct; *shōmei* 正命, right livelihood; *shōshōjin* 正精進, right effort; *shōnen* 正念, right mindfulness; and *shōjō* 正定, right samādhi. What is interesting is this character *shō* 正. It's formed with the radicals for "one" 一 plus "stop" 止, so "stop at one." The true reality stops at one. Consequently, the fundamental objective of "living in a quiet place, apart from all the noise and clamor" is to return to the reality of the life of Jiko.

Because we look at all our suffering and anxiety from the perspective of our relationship to the "other," it is vital for us to see everything from the foundation of the reality of Jiko. Now, even though I use the term the *reality of Jiko*, this is not a particularly difficult thing to do, for everyone is [living out] our whole all-inclusive self. It doesn't matter; whichever way we might stumble or fall, we're still living out Jiko. East or west, north or south, everyone is always living out Jiko. The problem that arises is this: because even though it is as I've just explained, still it is possible to *lose sight* of Jiko, what with all the blood flowing into our heads, and we start to look at everything based on ordinary social values, comparing ourselves with others.

Recently, I've heard that several high school students have been questioning why they must live and then committing suicide. I can still recall that, when I was in high school, I also gave some thought to suicide, so I can certainly empathize with them. In fact, precisely for those high school students, I've been thinking about writing a textbook entitled "A Course on Human Life."[6]

I've thought for some time that there's a need for a course on human life aimed at high school students and taught in the schools. I've been saying for a long time that our twentieth century has been a period of total barbarism. And, at the same time, we're now at a

transitional period, with a new age of humanism about to begin. In schools today, human life or human living is just not being taught. Instead, they teach sex education. You don't really have to teach that; when kids get to that age, they find out by themselves through their peers. However, from now on, we are going to have to be serious about teaching human life. I firmly believe that the day is not far off when the most important subject taught in schools all over the world will be human life.

And, if I go even further, I would say that, when such an age arrives, religion will simply be obliterated. So often at places where you hear the word *religion*, a weird sort of scent wafts through the air. That's just no good. It is time to wipe out that word *religion*. In its place, the subject of human life should be taught in a matter-of-fact way, like the way we teach that the sun rises in the east and sets in the west because the Earth turns. Of course, we're going to need a textbook. I'm the one who has to write that book.

Now, in that textbook, the first thing to be brought up is the question: Exactly why must human beings live? I think young people today may be thinking, *For what or for whom do I have to live?* To put it another way, they assume there must be someone outside of themselves who's putting pressure on them to live. If you take away that outside pressure, there is no other reason to live, so they commit suicide. For me, this is an absurd way to think.

First, for all living things, there is nothing outside that is forcing us to live. Living things are alive because being born means being born simultaneously with everything in the world. In the case of every single human being, the world they see is their world alone.

In short, just looking at this cup, our common sense predisposes us to think that we are all looking at the same cup. But this is not the case. I look at the cup from my angle and with my vision. And you look at it from your angle and with your vision. To look at anything from exactly the same perspective and with the same vision is impossible. In that same sense, I look at the world that only I can

see. At birth, I was born together with a world that is mine alone. And, when I die, my entire world will die along with me.

That is precisely why I want to take utmost care of my world—just that. Precisely because it is my world alone, I want to take care in living it out. That is the value of our living.

I've asked several visitors to Japan about this problem: "Have you ever thought about what you have to live for?" But it seems that, even among young Americans, many reply that they have never thought much about that question. Because I thought about committing suicide way back in junior high school, I live today still holding on to that feeling that I might want to commit suicide sometime. And if you have that feeling somewhere inside of you, then you'll also have the feeling that any way of life is fine, that however you may stumble or fall is okay, too, and that dying, too, is okay.

Occasionally, I receive visitors who come to see me because they're thinking of committing suicide. Not long ago, quite a wealthy young woman came and said she felt this way. Immediately, I said to her, "Oh, that's a good idea. We've just got too many people living here in Japan anyway." And then I added, "Oh, by the way, since your family has a lot of money and your parents probably want to pass it on to you, before you end your life, please write out a will and bequeath the money to me."

Later, she sent me a letter in which she wrote, "When you said that to me, I felt like a chicken whose feathers had all been plucked off. So I decided not to commit suicide just yet…"

I suspect that most people who talk of suicide are on about that level. Still, thinking about it, it is not just Japan but everywhere in the world that is overpopulated, so perhaps it's not a bad idea to have a carefree attitude that even committing suicide is okay.

However, if you do decide to live, then it is vital not to look outside of yourself for some raison d'être for living. No matter which way we might fall, I am always living out my own life and you are

always living out your life alone. When looking at values, society in general looks only at what's valuable overall for society, but that's not any good. What is most important is that you discover for yourself that your life is worth living. For me, I believe that the Antaiji way of doing zazen is the quickest way to discover that.

After Sawaki Rōshi died and Antaiji was passed on to me to take care of, I began the practice of sitting zazen for five days a month without any sutra chanting or any talking. Carrying out this practice, I can tell you that you can't help but become yourself. In any case, no matter how many years or decades you stay at Antaiji, there is no acknowledgment or authorization of a monastic career.[7] Since the temple has no income, of course there are no salaries paid out, nor is there any retirement package or pension. Consequently, no resident at Antaiji is "qualified" or authorized to take over their own temple. So, obviously, you can't live at Antaiji with a wife or children.[8] Without anything whatever coming in, daily life is one of just facing the wall. Even if you don't want to, you can't help but live your own life.

I have told all my disciples to just sit silently for ten years, because if you do that, you can't help but discover by yourself your own worth. If you sit without any expectations whatever, you realize that so-called social values or worldly values really have no value and that there is no reason to look outside of oneself for one's existential value. Moreover, after those ten years, I tell them to sit for ten more years. And, after twenty years, I tell them just ten years more. Now if you sit like that for thirty years, there is no human being who won't clearly understand their own value within themselves. That is what is most important. And that is the sense of "living alone in a quiet, serene dwelling."

—

When all is said and done, if we can't live in a quiet, serene dwelling, we'll never find true peace of mind. If you only see your own value in some social position or in having great material wealth or in being famous or having some reputation, in the end you'll always be living your life unsteadily, not having a clue as to what you're doing. Even if you decide to live in some outback, if you're still dependent on fame or wealth, it won't be the same as living in a quiet, serene dwelling.

I've been talking about Antaiji, but you don't necessarily have to go to Antaiji. It's enough to just sit zazen wherever you are. If you're sitting true zazen, then anyone can become who they truly are. By true zazen, I don't mean a zazen that presupposes some purpose for doing it. Nor is it a zazen carried out to have some satori experience. I'm talking about a zazen whereby you discover your own worth within yourself, by yourself.

Take an artist, for example. If the person is only thinking about being praised for their work, I don't think such a person is a real artist. A while back, I was visited by a young, rising female artist. She came to Kyoto prior to the war, when she was about twenty years old, and began painting. All her works received the highest awards, and she was praised as the next great female artist. But then the war broke out, and she returned to her parents' home in the country. Later, after twenty years had passed, she returned to Kyoto and began painting again. But this time she was unsuccessful, and all her paintings were rejected. Feeling depressed about her situation, she came to talk with me. I simply said to her, "What a waste! In the first place, you paint because you enjoy painting. If you start painting with the attitude of just satisfying your desire for fame, then you've gone off the track of what is fundamental for painting. I think you should stop trying to make a name for yourself, return to the countryside and just paint what you enjoy painting."

In that same sense, if you start practicing just to be revered by your students, you're making a big mistake. What we call religion must deal with nothing other than Jiko—the Whole or All-Inclusive

Self. What's most important here is that Jiko settles on itself. As we find in the *Hōkku-kyō* 法句教 (Pali: *Dhammapada*), "The foundation of Self is Self alone." And for doing that, Jiko must settle on the reality of Jiko. Also, in the *Hōkku-kyō* is another passage that reads, "Become the foundation of Self that has been put in order." This is our true place to settle.

Even though I use this word Jiko, or Whole Self, this has nothing to do with some made-up "self." It must be the *true reality* of Jiko. Why, there are any number of priests who go around putting on the face of a practitioner to show others that they're "practicing," but for me that is a great mistake. What you must be careful about here is that the way I'm using the word *Jiko* is not as some kind of individualism or egotism. Nor is it a Jiko that becomes an isolationist.

So, repeating what I said earlier, each one of us is born together with their own world. And our death is the death of our world. So this Jiko I'm referring to is the Whole Self inclusive of all worlds and all sentient beings. During the time of Shakyamuni Buddha, it doesn't appear that clearly, but in the years that followed Jiko was defined as *issai gurumi* 一切ぐるみ or "all-inclusive."[9]

Later, in the *Lotus Sutra*, we find: "The three worlds are all mine, and the sentient beings in them are all my children." In other words, your world is your world alone, and all the people you encounter in it are your children.

Here I am, sitting in front of you, talking. It certainly seems as though I'm sitting opposite all of you as I speak, but the reality is, I am all of this. Right now, I can see all your faces in the retinas of my eyes. If that face begins to appear a bit sleepy, I'll try to say something that piques your interest or perhaps makes you laugh—anything to wake you up. Or I'll see a face that doesn't look like they've understood what I've just been talking about, so I may try to make my talk more comprehensible. In that way, I'm speaking to the faces reflected on the retinas of my eyes. Why, I'm just facing myself

and talking to myself until I am convinced and understand what I'm talking about.

Again, there is nothing else for me to do but to live out that Jiko that is totally, or all-inclusively Jiko. And all sentient beings are contained within that Jiko that is all-inclusive.

The other day two philosophers, one from Doshisha University and the other from Kyoto University, called on me along with a German colleague of theirs. This German philosopher's background was in Western philosophy. He asked me just what the differences are in thinking between Western philosophy and Buddhism. Being a philosopher, I thought I needed to address his question in a philosophical way, and here is how I explained it to him.[10] Western philosophy assumes that the whole is inclusive of the particular. I think this is only natural. Individual parts are included or contained within the whole. In the case of Buddhism, however, in the fundamental relationship between the whole and the particular is Jiko. Now, if I express Jiko in a mathematical way, it would be 1. The whole is contained within the 1. And if I put this into a numerical formula, it would look like this. 1 = 1/1 = 2/2 = 3/3 = the whole / the whole = infinity. My German philosopher guest seemed satisfied with my explanation.

This way of expression didn't really come about until the beginnings of Mahayana Buddhism, even though this understanding clearly existed within the Buddha himself. As I mentioned previously, at the time of the Buddha, the dharma as a teaching was complete. I mean, what can I say, that guy Shakyamuni was great.

In short, what is most critical here is that this Jiko is inclusive of all sentient beings. If that were not the case, living in a serene, quiet place would be nothing more than an existence of waiting for death. Sitting zazen as Jiko inclusive of all sentient beings is what is most important in Buddhism: this is the basic principle or standard of living in a serene, quiet place.

4

Making Diligent Effort

—

Gonshōjin 勤精進

The fourth quality is one of persevering. In all matters, continually striving to carry out deeds that are true and wholesome is making diligent effort. *Shō* means to be energetic and concentrated; not being sloppy or crude [in one's actions]. *Jin* means to deepen and improve [one's attitude] without backsliding or giving up.

The Buddha said, "Monks, when you practice with diligence, there is nothing that is difficult. For that reason, it is critical that you persevere in your practice. By way of illustration, it is like water flowing constantly over a rock; even if it is just a trickle, eventually it will pierce the rock. Or, for example, if the mind of the practitioner is only sometimes energetic but at other times lets up, it can be compared to one who when attempting to light a fire often stops twirling the stick before the fire catches hold; no matter how much one may want to have the fire, no fire will result if one

continues in such a way. This is called persevering and making wholehearted effort."

It is said that Japanese people are very industrious, but has any Japanese person seriously worked to satisfy anything other than their own desires?

THIS NEXT SECTION deals with *shōjin* or diligence. For us today, when we hear the word *shōjin*, immediately we think *shōjin ryōri*, vegetarian cooking. However, you should know that when Shakyamuni talked about *shōjin* 精進, "making diligent effort," he wasn't talking about vegetarian cooking. Words and language, in a sense, are like mementos of things left behind. And, with age, that which has been bequeathed or left behind gets old; it gets musty and wears out. So when people of later generations use a word that has been around for many years, the meaning changes.

When I was a child, we sang a song in school that was mandated by the Ministry of Education.[1] But I just couldn't understand one of the lines in the song, and I didn't want to ask because everyone else was singing right along. Then, just this last summer, I was reading an article in the newspaper, and the writer was saying that he hadn't understood the same line. That's when I understood that I wasn't the only one who hadn't gotten it. Buddhist terms are a lot like that.

Even in this age, there are lots of so-called Buddhist scholars who are agonizing over how to interpret certain Buddhist terms. But, from my point of view, what they're agonizing over is not unlike the line in the song that I couldn't comprehend.

For the most part, what they don't understand about the teaching will find them ill at ease and unsatisfied, so it's no wonder they don't understand Buddhist terms. And that's why their explanations get shallower and shallower, rather than deeper and subtler. What is most critical in understanding Buddhist terms is to reflect again and

again on those terms from the foundation of buddhadharma, seeking out their deeper meaning. Here the issue isn't academic accuracy or absolute certainty about the source. What is important is the reality of the Buddha's teaching.

Unfortunately, for me, those with a hinayana attitude interpreted the truly profound words of the Buddha in a rather shallow way.[2] So followers who thought differently gave rise to Mahayana Buddhism. They felt they had to make every effort to dig deeper by examining the Buddha's words from the foundation of human nature. Consequently, the expressions we find in the Mahayana Buddhist scriptures are deeper and subtler. That is why I, too, have sought to look at buddhadharma from an entirely fresh point of view and dig deeper, even if it's only a little bit deeper, so that a fresh Mahayana spirit can be born.

Apart from the way *shōjin* is used in the expression *shōjin ryōri*, when *shōjin* is used as a verb, it normally means "make every effort." It's used in the sense of being diligent or industrious or to persevere. So when the term *shōjin* was introduced by the early Buddhists, the sense of it was to strive without letting up.

In the sixteenth volume of Nagarjuna's *Mahaprajnaparamita sastra*, he writes, "In the early so-called hinayana[3] scriptures, it says, 'In regard to all good *dharmas*, persevere without quitting. This is called *shōjin*—diligence.' " So, for the Theravadins, this term *gonshu mugen* 勤修無間 was defined as "striving without ever letting up." We can find this as a kind of footnote in Dōgen's writing where he quotes Nagarjuna's remark. However, Nagarjuna perceives the deeper meaning when he adds, "*Shōjin haramitsu*—(to) persevere to the other shore—means being diligent for the sake of the Buddha Way."[4] In other words, to *shōjin*—to proceed, endure, persevere—means to make every effort, but that effort must be for the sake of the Buddha Way. Likewise, Dōgen, following *gonshu mugen* (never ceasing [to carry out various good deeds that are true and wholesome]), adds his note, "To be diligent without mixing, to

proceed and not fall back."[5] With this, the whole sense of the term for the Theravādins totally changes, and we can see the deeper meaning of buddhadharma.

On this point, Japanese people often presume that being very industrious is a good thing. I'm not so sure, however, that unquestioning industriousness is necessarily good. You must ask yourself just *why* you must be so industrious. Is it in order just to increase your material wealth or to improve your status in society? In other words, is it just to fulfill your egotistical desires? That's why I have little admiration for people who just work hard. For the most part, do people work honestly and seriously for any purpose other than to satisfy their own desires? If you're just working to satisfy your own personal desires, then, no matter how hard you might be working, it would not be called shōjin or true diligence.

It sounds nice to hear someone say, "Oh, that guy's really a workhorse." Or even better, people might say about you, "That guy perseveres diligently in his work." People are easily influenced by others' figures of speech. Occasionally, even among my disciples who don't like the Antaiji way of practicing, upon quitting the temple they might say something like, "I'm leaving because I want to live in a more progressive and forward-looking way." For sure, to say you're "progressive and forward-looking" has its appeal. It seems everyone is tossing those words around these days. But too many people today haven't a clue as to what is "progressive" and what is backward. They use the term to mean they're working progressively to make money and end up frivolously spreading all their money around.

It used to be that husbands would go out to work and wives would stay in the home, and the husband's earnings were enough to get by on. But more recently it has become more prevalent for both husband and wife to work. With wives going out to work, too, there's obviously more income, and people will spend it on a new car or an

air conditioner or whatever. Or perhaps the couple may save to go on an expensive vacation.[6]

None of that is either progressive or regressive. What is important here is “continually striving to carry out deeds that are true and wholesome is making diligent effort.” Following that line is Dōgen Zenji’s footnote, “strive without mixing, proceed without falling back.” The sense of this is totally different from people’s idea of progress today. “Without mixing” means there are no impurities; that is, living out one’s life force completely and not mixing in one’s own personal agenda. One can say, “proceed (make progress) without falling back,” but only if the direction in which one is proceeding is clear. If the direction is not clear, then we can’t call that making progress; that’s nothing more than just moving around. The kanji *ugomeku* 蠢く is comprised of two parts; the upper portion is the character for spring 春 and below are two insects or *mushi* 虫. It means “to squirm or crawl around.” Now, if our proceeding does not go in a clear direction, we are just blindly squirming around, no different from maggots in a toilet bowl.

Just think about our society today. For sure, everyone is working hard. But that doesn’t mean society is moving forward or making progress. People are just crawling around trying to make more money or advance in status or make a name for themselves. They’re like a swarm of mosquitoes dancing around.

If you try and sit zazen for a while, you will easily see that the active, dynamic society we live in is, in fact, nothing more than a kind of squirming. Even so, there are far too many Japanese who are convinced that if they don’t squirm along with everybody else, the world will pass them by.

You might think this is the posture of progress or dynamic movement, but as long as your true aim is not clear, this can only be called *ruten rinne* 流転輪廻, “transmigration between birth and death.” I believe we need to clearly decide on what our own true way to proceed should be, as well as just what our aim is. Once you have

your aim and direction and you feel truly grateful to have been born and wish to have children, only then do I think it's fine for you to bring children into this world. Despite your being born and not feeling good about it, you go out and have children and work your head off nonstop and educate those kids with no direction—that just doesn't make any sense to me. And then to try and whip them into shape to survive all the competition—I find that just too pitiable for the children. It's no wonder that young people would seriously consider suicide.

What is most important in considering shōjin is the phrase that reads: "Continually striving to carry out various good deeds that are true and wholesome." So what does "deeds that are true and wholesome" mean? That's the first thing we must clarify.

[In the *Dai Bibasha-ron* 大毘婆沙論,] the definition of true and wholesome is "to be in accord [with that dharma, with the truth]," and "to settle all things in this and other worlds for the benefit of oneself and others." In short, doing good means to follow in accord with buddhadharma. To put it another way, it means to follow the life force or living force; that is, to follow the life of Jiko that encompasses all sentient beings. Therefore, carrying out various deeds that are true and wholesome means to follow in accord with the life force—that is what is fundamental. It has nothing to do with the self-righteous attitude of carrying out one's good deed for the day and, at the end of the day, collecting one's reward.

So deeds that are true and wholesome is simply another way of talking about what I mentioned previously: the reality of life. It's not about doing something for some purpose or object outside of us, but rather progressing in the direction of living in accord with the total life force. To follow that life that fills the universe, inclusive of all beings, that is what is most basic.

To go a bit further, "making progress" has nothing to do with acquiring something special. While the life force I'm talking about is the same life force that encompasses all beings, at the same time,

this is also the Jiko that is only Jiko, regardless of how one might stumble. Therefore, making every effort, then getting caught by some sort of bait that has been thrown to you, and finally exchanging it for some prize is not what is meant by *shōjin* or striving with unceasing diligence. For example, making every effort to bag satori or to have more guts or to feel more courageous is not what is meant by *shōjin*. The whole aim of progress is to live out the true life of Jiko.

As I have stated previously, no matter in which direction we might fall, we are still Jiko that is always Jiko. That Jiko is a Jiko that is inclusive of all sentient beings. Therefore, when we talk of progress, there is nothing outside of Jiko progressing into Jiko.[7] So where Jiko "progresses" is, ultimately, nothing other than a child becoming an adult. The true meaning of becoming a great person or dainin is embodied in the aim of progress.

Now, making progress toward becoming an adult has two aspects. For example, for a ship to sail over the ocean, first, the engine must run full throttle. And, for the ship not to move in the wrong direction, the captain must continually check the compass. The engine moving full throttle is shōjin—unceasing diligence—while determining the proper direction is the content of the next characteristic or quality of a great person—*fumōnen*, never losing sight of true dharma.

> *While on the one hand we are always wholly Jiko no matter how we might stumble, at the same time, we must continually maintain the aim of a Jiko that fills the universe.*

Now, finally our discussion is going to approach the subtlety and depth that Sawaki Rōshi described as *yūsui*. The first thing I need to explain is that any discussion of buddhadharma will be one of *mushotoku* 無所得—that is, nothing to be gained.

The meaning of *shōjin* is not just an unceasing diligence through which we'll benefit in one way or another. It must be a *shōjin* or

unceasing diligence with nothing to be gained.

Sawaki Rōshi often said, “No matter how long you sit zazen, it won’t come to anything. And if you don’t understand that, then zazen will really be good for nothing.” When I recall Rōshi’s words, I can’t help remembering an incident concerning a certain elderly woman. Obviously, the woman wasn’t always elderly. When I first became a monk, I think she must have been around fifty years old. Anyway, even at that time, she had already regularly attended several sesshins with Sawaki Rōshi. Until Rōshi grew ill and could no longer sit sesshin, this woman sat with him. I suppose you could say she was practicing in the shōjin style.

Now, it was during the period when Rōshi’s legs could no longer support him and he was settling into his final years at Antaiji that, one day, a letter came from the son of this now elderly woman. In the letter, he wrote, “My mother is now currently ill with stomach cancer and greatly suffering. What I can’t understand is why she, despite having sat zazen for many, many years with you, must suffer in such a way? She’s suffering so terribly. Can’t you do something for her?” The woman must surely have heard Sawaki Rōshi’s words so often that she would have had calluses on her ears: “No matter how long you sit zazen, it won’t come to anything. And if you don’t understand that, then zazen will really be good for nothing.” Still, somewhere inside her, this woman must have continued to think, “Well, even though Rōshi says that kind of thing, actually, a little something must happen.” I’m sure that those thoughts would have only added more to her suffering from cancer. Around that time, as I mentioned, there was no way I could simply say to Rōshi, who was already elderly and not well himself, that so-and-so is suffering from cancer and I must leave you for a while and go up to Tokyo to talk with her.

I think this sort of thing happens all the time. As long as you’re thinking that if you sit zazen for a while your situation will change for the better or that you’ll have more willpower—that’s all a kind of bait. It’s not sitting without any expectation of gain—*mushotoku*. It’s not

sitting emptiness—*kū* 空. And because of that, we're no longer talking about buddhadharma. Saying that everything is empty, or that all things are without self, or that nothing is to be gained no matter how long you sit zazen or practice Buddhism or diligently apply yourself to all your actions, it all must be based on what Sawaki Rōshi said: it won't amount to anything.

In Pure Land Buddhism there is this story. A man who had recited the *nenbutsu* his whole life passed away. As the old man trudged along and crossed to the other side of the Sanzu River,[8] he looked up and saw a gate in the distance. Delighted with himself, the old man was thinking, *I guess there was some value in reciting the nenbutsu all these years. I'm on my way to paradise.* As he approached the entrance gate, he saw a fierce demon standing there and was surprised. When the man asked the demon about it, the demon growled, "Don't be a fool. This is the gate to hell."

Of course, this is just a story, but in fact I rather think that mistakes like this occur quite frequently. Why wouldn't anyone expect dying to be painful? That you've chanted the nenbutsu all your life or sat zazen for many years, so therefore, death should be painless—who would believe such nonsense?

We all must become more aware of this and acknowledge it. I think there are too many people these days who have never seen anyone die. Whether someone becomes ill or gets injured in an accident, right away, someone calls an ambulance, and everything is left to the doctor in the emergency room of the hospital.

Speaking of someone dying, I think far too many people just see some actor on television who looks to be in severe pain, says a few last words, and bows his head. "Oh, he's gone!" They assume that's what death and dying are like. Dying, however, is nothing like such foolishness.

It appears recently that any number of people have been thinking that they want to die peacefully. So suddenly lots of them have been paying their respects to the local temple. Just the fact that so many

people show up at the temples only goes to prove that one doesn't die so easily.

Being on the verge of death does not just mean that time when we physically stop breathing. As human beings, once we're put into that category of "elderly" or "senior citizen," we need to acknowledge the fact that we are in the process of dying. Once we get past sixty-five, we ought to recognize that we are in old age. I feel that we should not expect to recover from a serious illness and recognize that sooner or later such an illness will be closely connected to our death. That we may recover from an illness when we are young but not when we get old is just a matter of common sense. Our blood pressure is through the roof or we have hardening of the arteries and there's little chance of recovery, yet we still cling to the idea that something about it is wrong—that is just frantically struggling in desperation. I hope that when we reach sixty-five, we can give up struggling. That's called *ōjōgiwa ga yoi* 往生際が良い—knowing when to give up.[9]

Despite having become old, there are people who pretend to be strong and go around complaining about the thinking of young people today or who boast that they will beat death. I just think that's going too far. What is most critical in Buddhism is an attitude of mushotoku or nothing to be gained. No matter if we have practiced for many years or have been diligent, clinging to the idea of getting some favorable condition because of our practice or diligence is not following buddhadharma.

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What I have been talking about so far—diligence without expectation of gain—is my conclusion. So why would mushotoku or not gaining arise when discussing shōjin? To answer this question, I need to look at the fundamental structure of religion, which is deep and subtle.

First, I would like to examine the nature of diligence as buddhadharma.

Most people generally live their lives without any aim as to how that life should be lived. They believe that if they don't break any laws of the country, they can get on well with their lives. If they think that just what they are doing is fine, there is no shōjin in the Buddhist sense.

Those of you who come to hear me speak are a bit different in that you probably don't naively believe that the way you're living out your life is just fine. Precisely because you harbor a certain amount of doubt about what you are doing, you figure that, if you listen to something about Buddhism, just maybe you will hear something that is connected to diligence. Unfortunately, it doesn't work that way, and here is the difficult thing about it.

The fact is, as soon as you think, *Oh, maybe I should do such and such*, the bait is already on the hook. Almost all religions are like this. And right away, the person begins to think how their circumstances have or have not changed. However, that's just not buddhadharma; that's not the Buddha's teaching. *Selflessness* or the notion of the *illusion of a self* is fundamental to buddhadharma.[10] That all things are *empty* is what is most fundamental. [11] As long as there is something to be gained, there can be no understanding that all things are empty, or in Japanese *issai kū*一切空. Regarding the buddhadharma, there is no idea of comparing ourselves with another person. Whichever way we may fall, we are always and only ourselves; you, me, north, south, east, or west, there is no fixed way we must fall. Any which way we fall is fine. That's the first point.

At the same time, each of us is individually living out a self that fills the entire life of the universe. But, as the life of a Jiko that fills the universe, there must be a definite aim. Both aspects are simultaneously contained within this Jiko—this Whole Self.

When we become aware of this, for the first time can we realize true shōjin. The discussion now becomes more complex, so I would

like to go into more detail without rushing on. Sawaki Rōshi often said that the zazen of Dōgen Zenji was yūsui—subtle and profound. And that subtleness and profundity are exhibited right here: this zazen is different from the zazen of catching some sort of satori.

Where all things are empty—in Japanese, issai kū—there is the practice of all things being empty; so, in whatever way we may stumble, we are that which fills the universe. However, at the same time, there is the *aim* of acting as *Whole Self*—Jiko. In fact, there is just this *aiming*.[12]

Any true religion will have this two-dimensional construct. The discussion of Inaba no Gensa in True Pure Land Buddhism was like that. My eyes were opened when I read his story. The story goes, a preacher in the Pure Land School, after giving a talk, asked everyone, “After you die, all of you who think you’ll be able to go to the Pure Land raise your hand.” Everyone looked around, but no one had enough confidence to raise their hand. Suddenly, and with full confidence, Gensa alone raised his hand. The preacher then asked, “Okay, all of you who think you will go to hell after you die, raise your hand.” Well, everyone had just heard the wonderful words of the preacher, so again, no one felt that they would go to hell. However, again, Gensa, with full assurance, shouted, “Yes, I will.” Gensa’s comment is very interesting: “To fall into hell is my role; to save me is Amida’s role.” I find his statement remarkable.

As for me, as a human being, it goes without saying that I’m headed straight for hell. *Why, I’m doing all this zazen, building up all this merit, by my own power, I’ll show you that I’m on my way to paradise!* Thinking like that is nothing more than an expression of your personal character. However, that sort of personal grit doesn’t apply when it comes to Mother Nature. Rather, falling into hell is *my* role; that I am just an ordinary fellow, totally unworthy, is just natural.

Yet, at the same time, no matter which way we may stumble, we are still a *self that is only self*. We are always living out a life that fills the entire universe. So while on the one hand it’s only natural that as

a human being I stumble and fall, as the very living force of the whole universe I am saved. At the point where this two-dimensional construct comes into play, we can feel the gratitude of Inaba no Gensa's nenbutsu. So in Zen it's not a matter of the power "my" shōjin that somehow accumulates merit. It is Amida, who is at work in place of me. That is precisely what is so precious, saved by chanting *namu amida butsu* and being thankful for being able to chant the nenbutsu to Amida.

In the Christian writer Karl Barth's *The Epistle to the Romans*, the term *interim* comes up. In other words, we are between Divine Revelation and the end of days. Although we have a spirit that contemplates God in heaven, our body is on the Earth. In a sense, we are between a spiritual heaven in our head and our body tied to the Earth. So when we think about what Jesus taught, in the Bible it says that the "Kingdom of Heaven is at hand"—just that. Barth implies that the "Kingdom of Heaven is at hand" means that it isn't that there is no heaven, but that the present isn't heaven itself. There is only prayer. Ultimately, this too is double-structured.

For us, no matter which way we may stumble or fall is fine; we can feel at ease. Yet, at the same time, we still aim at being a self that fills the universe. Just as in Rikyu's story of the nail, the nail can be pounded in anywhere and yet, at the same time, it must be pounded in right *here*. The discussion now is not one of success or failure. If we say that you must get enlightenment, that is no different from the student who graduated from high school but failed the university entrance exam this year but who will try again next year—that is, one of failing or passing. You're always going to feel uneasy.

Dōgen's zazen is not like that. In the Sōtō School, there is a ceremony for becoming a disciple of the Buddha by becoming ordained and receiving the precepts. However, before becoming ordained, one must recite the Repentance Verse (*Sange Mon* 懺悔文) and the Three Refuges Vow (*Sanki Raimon* 三帰礼文). To repent means to step outside the enclosure one has created for oneself.

Next, the reasoning behind reciting “I take refuge in the Buddha; I take refuge in the Dharma; I take refuge in the Sangha” is that one makes a vow to return to a whole self that fills the universe with no comparing oneself to others. Only after this is one ready to receive the precepts. But, now, although I say “precepts,” you shouldn’t get the idea that the precepts are about not doing this or not doing that.

For example, the precept of not killing doesn’t literally mean that. Since we’re talking about the living force that fills the entire universe, there is nothing that can be killed. That is the sense of the precept. Or the precept of not stealing does not mean you shouldn’t steal. Now if my right hand secretly takes the watch off my left hand, all that has happened is that my watch has transferred hands. Nothing has been stolen. From the standpoint of Whole Self, inclusive of all sentient beings, there just cannot be anything to steal. The true meaning of all the precepts is the same.

When Shakyamuni Buddha became enlightened, he said, “At my attaining of the Way, the earth and all sentient things simultaneously attained the Way. Mountains, rivers, grasses, and trees—everything attained the Way.” These are the words of Shakyamuni Buddha upon his attainment of the Way. In other words, it’s not a matter of me as one individual having some “enlightenment” experience. We are saved precisely because Shakyamuni Buddha already attained the Way.

Now, admittedly, as people who have already attained the Way, we may seem like pretty poor examples. That is precisely why we aim to clarify who this Whole Self that fills the universe truly is. This is what Dōgen refers to as *shōjō no shu* 証上の修—practice beyond enlightenment. Since we’re already enlightened, that’s *shō* 証; right there is where we practice, *shu* 修.[13] Dōgen also described this as *shushō ichinyo* 修証一如—practice and enlightenment are one and the same.

I mentioned earlier that aging means that *already* we are dying. Now there are many ways to complain about it. Finding fault in

whatever young people do is one kind of complaining. *I'm lonely living by myself: I need a partner, even a mistress!* That's another kind of whining. *How am I going to make a name for myself?* This is just another form of grumbling about one's circumstances. What we need to do at those times is, without complaining, recall that fundamentally we're already enlightened by Shakyamuni Buddha, so we need to consider carefully what it truly means to live out one's life and just aim at that. The most fundamental standard for living without complaining is doing zazen.

No matter how we may look at zazen, it's just not a posture of complaining or whining. And yet, by doing zazen we somehow imagine that we have become a success—that's also a failure. There is no "success" to our zazen. That is what is so subtle about it, but also what is so difficult. After all, we aim to do *good* zazen: take the posture and just sit. Sitting there half-slumped over is not good zazen. Letting go of whatever is in our head and just sitting straight and firmly—that is our aim. However, as we aim, is there some sort of target we're trying to hit? I'm afraid not. Now, wouldn't it be nice if we could aim and hit the target—*Bingo! Satori! Clang! Clang! Clang!* That would make sitting worthwhile, but if that's the case, you're better off going to the local pachinko parlor. Aiming with all one's energy but with no target to hit is zazen. Even though I frequently talk about "opening the hand of thought," if we *think* about how we are letting go, we've already lost our aim. Just entrusting everything to a zazen that takes the posture and attitude of opening the hand of thought is true shōjin.

Though people may use the word *zazen*, there are many cases where it's not zazen. I remember reading about a fellow who had been sick, and he sat zazen for several years and recovered. He wrote proudly to his teacher, "Despite my illness, I wasn't a bit afraid. What do you think of that?" The rōshi replied, "Oh, for sure you've been blessed to be in such fortunate circumstances." But I found this very odd. This guy was some big industrialist and apparently had a

lot of money. So the rōshi simply praised him for his claim of being strong in fortunate circumstances. But what will happen the next time this big industrialist falls deathly ill? Will his “fortunate circumstances” work then, too? Absolutely not.

True salvation or true liberation is just not that kind of flat, one-dimensional thing. As I mentioned earlier, to *fall* is my role, to *save* is Amida’s role. In other words, true salvation is multidimensional, not one-dimensional. So there is this totally opposite multidimensional aspect. This is the form of true diligence—shōjin as an adult.

5

Not Losing Sight of True Dharma

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Fumōnen 不忘念

The fifth quality is also called observing the true teaching. This is also called keeping true dharma. Maintaining and not losing sight of true dharma is called practicing the true teaching. This is also called not losing sight of the teaching.

The Buddha said, “Monks, in searching for a true teacher and good protector, there is nothing better than always being mindful of the dharma. Those who stay aware and are not careless or forgetful in their actions will not be torn apart by the various thieves of greed, ignorance, or anger.

“For that reason, Monks, you should take in and be mindful of the teaching. Those who lose sight of staying aware will lose all merit and benefit as well. As a result of constantly remaining determined and mindful, though you may be among the thieves of the five senses, you will never suffer harm from them. It is like wearing armor and being in

a strong encampment; there will be nothing to fear. This is called not losing sight of true dharma."

Children don't think they're an offshoot of their parents. They see a parent as another person. That's just natural.

Fumōnen 不忘念 is defined as "not losing sight of true dharma." Many years ago, when I first encountered this expression, I misread the characters. I thought it meant something like not being deluded by having flawed ideas, and I went into a panic when I discovered my mistake.[1]

That was shortly after I had become a disciple of Sawaki Rōshi. Normally, Rōshi always gave the talks, but one year, in the evening, a week after the February parinirvana sesshin, he said, "Okay, tonight each of you has to give a talk on one verse from the *Yuikyōgyō*." He had told us about a month beforehand, and I was assigned this expression, *fumōnen*.

Having misread the expression, I thought that in doing zazen, *fumōnen* meant not to indulge in deluded thoughts, and I began to puzzle over what to say. So on the day I was to give my talk, I took another look at the text. Shock! The text didn't say "don't have deluded thoughts," it said, "don't lose sight of the true teaching." I was quite upset with myself.

Many people discussing zazen seem to be of the understanding of not attaching to delusive thoughts during zazen, but what is important here is not to lose sight of true dharma, or in Japanese, *nen* 念. When I realized my mistake, I quickly ran to the bookshelf and looked up the *Hachi Dainin Gaku* chapter in the *Shōbōgenzō*. There I found in very small print Dōgen's comment. "It is not losing sight of the truly functioning life force. This is called taking care of true dharma, or not losing sight of the true teaching." I recall trying to

put some sort of argument together, but what is most relevant here is not losing sight of the truly functioning life force.

Whenever this word *dharma* 法 comes up, I've usually defined it in my own words as *seimei no jitsubutsu* 生命の実物 or the true reality of life. I think that's as close in meaning as possible. Now, there are many rather doctrinaire definitions, but for me, what is most basic is not to lose sight of the reality of life. It's precisely because we lose sight of the reality of life and misdirect all our energy that various problems arise. Now, if it's just mistaking a rope for a snake or some pampas grass for a ghost or something, well, that's a rather innocent mistake; when one mistakes the overall direction of one's life, however, the dimension of the problem is much greater.

Let's look once more at the expression *seimei no jitsubutsu*. How people have understood the meanings of *bonnō*, human cravings or worldly appetites, or *mayoi*, delusions, changes with the times and the culture. It seems that in the Buddha's time in India, the main culprit was sexual desire. Anyway, imagine how hot it was and how rather simple life was then; controlling one's sexual desire seems to have been the biggest issue. Then, if we look at China in the past, the focus was more on saying that the desire for fame and reputation needed to be controlled, rather than sexual desire. So how about today? What seems to be the main issue to deal with?

Sawaki Rōshi used to say it's "group senility" or "group dementia." So many institutions today have become more complex, [2] various levels of prestige and status have evolved—manager, director, supervisor, and so on—to the point of controlling every individual's life. As a result, everyone begins to pursue rank or position, thinking they have the highest value. This is one type of group senility. In the priesthood as well, as the organizational hierarchy of the so-called religious body got more complicated, people began to compete to achieve a higher rank. It's just another type of group dementia.

I've said it before, but as our society becomes more affluent and with no wars, people today only think about living, they don't pay any attention to dying. To put it another way, they think in terms of survival, not of life. If I were to express this another way using flowers, it would be that "life" is a fresh and vibrant flower, while flower "survival" is like an artificial flower that never ages or dies. Flowers are truly lovely. They blossom, but eventually they wither and die. An artificial flower never dies. It pretentiously blossoms in full glory, but over time it looks weather-beaten and gets thrown in the garbage.

I first came to Kyoto in 1949. Kyoto was never bombed, so the city was exactly like before the war—beautiful, quiet, and sedate. But, these days, so-called "modern" buildings are going up all over without any planning; the air is more and more polluted; and Kyoto is gradually turning into one of those artificial flowers. Particularly after the elegant city tram was done away with, much of the charm of the city was lost.

During the time I was living in Ōgaki, there was a popular tune on the television, "Tokyo Desert." But today it's not only Tokyo that is becoming a desert, but all of Japan is also becoming like a desert. I can't help wondering if, before long, the whole world isn't going to wind up being a desert.

Perhaps not thinking of death may be because the atmosphere of the times encourages us to forget about death and think only of survival. Life just isn't like that. It's precisely because life is impermanent and all creatures will, without any doubt, die, that there is true beauty. Looking at the dewdrops on the wildflowers in full bloom, we can feel their true beauty. But if we refuse to look at death and focus only on survival, then just as an artificial flower becomes discolored and dusty and ends up in the garbage, we, too, will become just another expendable existence that gets old and dirty and must be thrown out.

For instance, any salaried person will eventually reach retirement age. Everyone who is working, as they approach retirement, naturally thinks about their life after retirement. Now, what else would you call a person who blithely forgets all about their retirement, espousing that they've given their all to the company, except a fool. In the same way, forgetting to consider your own death, saying you've given everything for the sake of humanity, is nothing but the pinnacle of folly.

The truth is that each and every person will cease to exist. As I have said many times before, quoting Sawaki Rōshi, there is no way we can say to someone, "Hey, lend me a fart and I'll return it with interest." It's impossible to trade even a fart with another person—that's the reality of life.

At the same time, human beings have a head. And that head speaks words. The words serve as a medium for communicating in a rough way. You say, "Could you give me a light?" And someone responds by giving you a lighter. There is a realm in which people can communicate with one another. So what is referred to as the existence of humankind is nothing more than a convention or rule that unfolds as people who share the same language use it to form relationships. Everyone takes that very life force they are living and projects it into that limited framework called humankind. To express it another way, humankind is nothing more than a theoretical or abstract concept.

Here is where we have a cognitive distortion of reality. We assume that human society is a kind of stage and that we are born onto that stage. And we think of death as leaving that stage. We think that living is moving around on that stage from the time of our entrance up to our departure from the stage. We entertain the idea that humankind is an existence that is neither born nor dies, and that you are just one member of humankind.

This perception is a distorted view of reality. The truth is I was born, I am alive now, and I will die. Here, I am totally me. So,

naturally, what is most important is my life. Because we fail to grasp this head-on and look on “society” as this sort of thing, we hold the social marketplace as having highest value. In the social marketplace, first, we chase after money, position, or power as having the highest value, and in that process, we completely lose our life.

Why would this happen? After all, everyone knows that they’re going to die. Despite that, they completely forget about death. Infants have no idea what dying means. Even small children, for the most part, do not understand dying, either. But, by the time those children are in junior or senior high school, I think they realize very clearly that they are going to die someday. Now, just around that same time, they also begin to notice the opposite sex.

Okay, to be perfectly honest here, I’m not just talking about young folks. I’m speaking out of my own personal experience. Moreover, I can tell you that when it hits, it comes on like a freight train. Now, rather than look seriously into the fact that one’s death is inevitable, for most people, one’s sexuality takes the stand, and you start chasing after the girls. Now the outcome of that often results in children being born. So then we see our children as another portion of our life. Now, by leaving our children—that portion of our life—to the world, we somehow feel a connection that ties our existence with humankind. Consequently, we somehow nurture the feeling that we’re somehow not really going to die. I would analyze the psychological progression something like that.

I’m not saying that all boys consciously think in that way, but around that time young people can be driven by their sexual desire, and the result is “the child of Sanger’s mystique.”[3] In Japan, there’s an expression *ko wa sangai no kubikase* 子は三界の首枷, meaning a child is an everlasting responsibility.

Once a child is born, there’s no time to think about one’s death, because one is caught up in raising the child. So why wouldn’t it be natural to suppose that survival and competition are the important

things? To survive, if thinking solely about how to make lots of money and get into a good position or how to obtain a luxurious lifestyle, takes all one's attention and energy, it's no wonder that survival and competition become the sole objects of one's mind. So including wanting to get your kid into the best school and forcing the kid to walk the "right" path, to survive and compete to win and get ahead, you sharpen your claws and show your fangs.

In times past, families were larger; brothers and sisters were raised tossed about like you'd wash and shake a bunch of potatoes in a tub. I suppose that wasn't so bad, but nowadays people have only one or two children and live in one of those apartment complexes, and the mother must face the children the entire day. On top of that, the mother is always harping on "study, study, study." She warns the children that if they don't get into a good school and onto the elite track, they'll never have a rich lifestyle. I think it's just terrible. It's only natural that the children in such homes grow up with the idea that a rich lifestyle is what is most valuable. In other words, the children and the parents view society from an economic perspective. Beyond that, the children are raised to have strong willpower and be determined, to make every effort and develop their ability to take strong action. So the children turn out just perfect, having no empathy for others, only to become human beings with their claws sharpened and their fangs set to strike.

I can remember well when I was a student and the time for tests came around. We would help each other. Now, in my case, I rarely attended class, and it didn't make any sense to just bone up for the test, since I couldn't understand anyone's notes and I couldn't get the point of the textbook either. So throwing up my hands on the morning of the test, I'd whisper to my friend, "Psst, I'm counting on you." He'd wink and say, "I got your back." But once we got to the test site, waiting for my friend to write in all the answers was tough. I mean, there were always a few students who finished up quickly and left, and here I was with a blank test paper. But then, my friend

worked as fast as he could. He would secretly place a sheet of paper over his finished test paper and write in all the answers. Then, when he was finally finished, without the teacher looking, he'd roll up the second answer sheet and drop it on the floor. I would pick it up and, as fast as I could, write in all the answers on my paper until the time was up. You know, cheating on tests became quite a virtue for me.

I have heard that today's youth, however, far from helping one another, want to kick others down the ladder. If you aren't careful about who you ask to help you cheat on an exam, they might very well write in all the wrong answers and give them to you. When I heard that, I could only think how deplorable it is that the Way of Cheating is no longer venerated. Kids today are being raised without being encouraged to show empathy for a friend or lending a friend a hand. When it has come this far, we can only guess what lies ahead.

Even though parents raise their children thinking of them as an extension of themselves, the children don't see it that way. Even though there's a biological instinct, the children feel it's natural to see their parents as an "other." Moreover, there's not even a shard of compassion for the parents. Instead, there is only a focus on money and a drive to compete in society. Why wouldn't they see their aging parents as so much economic waste, having already served their purpose? And, further, old people are just dirty. They want to get rid of the dirty things as quickly as possible. It's just like getting rid of your kitchen garbage. As for the parents, despite having completely forgotten about their own death and put all their energies into raising their kids, they've aged and no longer have enough strength or willpower to rethink their lives or make any corrections. For me, it's just tragic to see the parents being thrown away by the very children they've raised.

In Japan, there's a tale about *ubasuteyama* 姥捨山—a mountain where the elderly women were abandoned. I have no doubt that there probably was such a custom once. But ubasuteyama occurred in a time of real poverty, when the family could not support an elderly

person who could no longer work. The society was that poor. So even the old woman who was about to be abandoned completely understood she had to go for the sake of the family. On the way to the mountain, both the old woman who was about to be abandoned and the child who was abandoning the parent shed copious tears. Somehow, as tragic as it was, it was at least comprehensible. Today is different. Young people have money to gamble, to take luxurious tours, to buy a new car, but they feel nothing regarding caring for their parents. Of course, the ones who "educated" the children in this way are those very parents.

Even those parents, when they were still young, thought they were very cool to say, "Oh, we have no intention of being taken care of by our children in our old age." However, when the time comes and they have no hope of being cared for, or even being acknowledged, can they withstand the terrible loneliness? Now if this were just the fate of only a few people, it would still be sad but perhaps tolerable, but I think we are soon entering a time when there will be a flood of elderly to be taken care of.

> *Trees, grasses, insects—all things are born, live, and die. Jiko (You) is one child of that enormous life.*

The source of all this is a kind of existential dementia. Losing sight of the reality of life and thinking only of survival are the basis of this mistake.

There are other areas in our day-to-day life in which we lose sight of the reality of life, for example, discrimination. We think: *Ours is a superior, advanced culture; that country's culture is backward*. Ideas like "race" or "ethnic group" are nothing more than abstract concepts. What is real is just this person. Is this person of superior character or not? In any country or in any ethnic group, there are those who are superior and those who are not. That's the reality. There's also the discrimination against people who have a criminal past. That's

another mistake. The issue is one's present behavior and actions. That's the reality.

In Kyoto, people often talk about social standing or family pedigree. Talk of marriage comes up, and then the troubles begin. This is also a problem of discrimination. What's the problem if the two people who want to get married are fine with that? Just one thing regarding the so-called lovebirds: there's also a problem when it comes to falling in love. If one isn't careful, it's like that old saying, "pimples look like dimples," and that is no good either. It's essential to also see the flaws in one's lover as well, or later trouble is bound to rear its head. Okay, so even if we can't do much about people suddenly falling in love with one another, for sure within a year those dimples will no longer look like dimples, but rather turn into huge pockmarks.

Truth be told, after three days of staring at the most beautiful woman you thought you'd ever see, you'll get tired of looking at her. And at the same time, no matter how ugly she might be at first, after three days you'll grow accustomed to her.

In any event, for sure, in our actions we often lose sight of what is real. And the reason we lose sight of the reality of things is our habitual ways of thinking about things. It is a critical mistake to become convinced that the imaginings in our head are real.

So how can we act without losing sight of reality? As it says in our text: "Maintaining and not losing sight of true dharma is called practicing the true teaching." For me, it simply means there is nothing we can do but open the hand of those thoughts that come into our head. As you already know, in the end, my conclusion is always to open that hand of thought.

Opening the hand of thought just once or twice isn't good enough. Thoughts are always bubbling up, so we must do it again and again and again. From the foundation of opening the thinking hand, we constantly reflect, and then reflect again, on our actions.

I've said it many times before, but zazen is the full-hearted posture of opening the hand of thought. Our zazen is not sitting zazen and then thinking how great we'll become. Rather, the zazen of Dōgen Zenji is one of living, being protected by zazen, and reconsidering again and again just what we're aiming at. In practicing that zazen in which thoughts are let go of, all the fabrications and fixations in our head simply break apart. And consequently, we can no longer be deceived by them.

So when that happens, does that mean everything just disappears? No, not at all. It is then that we can see the reality of the true living force, inclusive of all sentient beings and inclusive of the whole universe. If our mind and spirit are calm and humble, then we can sense this reality. However, at times when we aren't settled, we aren't going to perceive this. But when we do perceive this—that we are indeed a life inclusive of all sentient beings, that we are indeed that life that fills the universe—then it is enough to clarify it and carry out living actions. Now, it's not inevitable that this will be perceived. However, whether it's perceived or not, we are still that life that includes the whole universe and all sentient beings.

To express it more simply, it would be like this: parents, children, and grandchildren are all interconnected. My parents were born, they lived, and they died. I was born, I live my life, and I will die. And, anyhow, my children[4] were born, they're living, and they will die, too. Not only that. All the people I have encountered in my life were born, they're living now, and at some point, they will die. Every living thing had a birth, is living, and will die. What is the significance of all this?

Ultimately, being born, living, and dying, we are inside this one grand living force. In fact, every one of us is a part of this life that enfolds the entire universe, of the life that constitutes all sentient beings. There just is no *other* person. Now, if we understand that well, what is the significance? To love and to have a cherishing or loving mind—in Japanese *itoshimu* 愛しむ or *itsukushimu* 慈しむ—

means to be connected, to be tied together.[5] In other words, the moment we feel that connection, that *is* cherishing, loving. This connection applies not only to human beings. It also applies to all the grasses, trees, and insects. Everything is connected. At the same time, when all things ultimately die, everything feels that sadness, everything feels that love—*itsukushimu*. In Buddhism, this is referred to as *jihishin* 慈悲心, compassionate mind. When we see the reality of all life, we feel the connection with all things. That is the sense of *jihishin*, or compassionate mind. When our mind is at ease, we can understand this.

But what if our mind is not at ease, and some fear or desire arises? In that case, we may not think so. At such times, perhaps it is just best to believe that the true reality is that all living things are interconnected. But even when we don't necessarily perceive that it is so, is it that it just isn't perceivable? Not necessarily. Because I think it is so, do I die? And if I don't think so, then I don't die? Hardly. Whether I think it is so or not, when I am about to die, I will die. In that same way, we are not a *self that is inclusive of all sentient beings* just because we think so. We are that *self that totally fills the universe* whether we think so or not.

Living as we are in an era when filial piety no longer holds, I would like to address this issue even if it is just to those of you who have come to hear me. So many people have totally lost sight of the fact that they're going to die and are living only for survival, so they educate their children with the strength or power to compete in this struggle for existence. What they're forgetting is that the true reality of life is that your child is not just a part of yourself. Your child is a part or extension of the life of the entire universe. When a mother bears a child, of course, the mother gives her own blood, and the offspring is a part of her. Not only that, but a mother also throws all her energy into raising that child, and the child grows. Still, at the same time, it is equally true that one's child is also the life of the whole universe, which has been given to a mother to take care of.

So it is better to think that a part of the life of the whole universe has been given to you to take care of. Therefore, it is critical to throw all your energies into raising what has been given to you and realize that very soon, when it comes time to educate the child, you will have to return it. In other words, I'd like you to understand the work of raising and the work of educating are separate matters. As for a tiny infant, it is fine to raise it as a part of yourself. However, when the time comes to educate the growing child, both you and the child are parts of that life inclusive of the whole universe; therefore, it is critical to educate the child so that both of you nurture that mind of love and compassion. This is where there is a parting of the ways of educating to strengthen a child's competitiveness or educating a sense or mind of compassion. If you are a person who can see the true reality of life and know that you will soon, without any doubt, die, I don't think you will be able to think only about how to make tons of money or strive only to have power or prestige.

"Before long, I'm going to die and throw everything away. What I leave behind—all the money, the power—my flesh and blood children will inherit it all. They're a continuation of me!" People who think like that are nothing but uncivilized fools and emotionally primitive. There's just no way that your children are simply a continuation of yourself. Now, if I say that once you have raised the child, the child sees the parent as a totally other person, some people may think I'm just saying something awful. Even so, if I ask you in turn what you think of your father or mother, no one will reply. Not one person thinks that they are an *extension* of their mother or father. Everyone assumes that they are a human being, completely independent from their parents. Our children think the same way. Leaving all your wealth and property to your children is behaving just like Toyotomi Hideyoshi or Tokugawa Ieyasu, a couple of guys whose sense of things was just too low level. Before Hideyoshi died, he called Ieyasu and begged him to protect his son, Hideyori, even going so far as to have him sign a pledge or contract to do so. Now

isn't that a great specimen of someone who's gone completely off the rails![6]

We just cannot ever forget that everything that is born will live and eventually die. If we just understand that, then most naturally a sense of giving to others, if even just a little bit, and of feeling happy when others are grateful to receive it will arise. And, next, this sense is taught to our children. In other words, feeling that sadness and love together and feeling that pain and suffering together—this becomes the fundamental principle of education.

In my case, my family line will cease to exist. My elder brother has two daughters, but both married outside the family. Since I have no children, the Uchiyama name will not continue after my death. I'll die happily as a *muen-botoke*—someone who dies with no one to attend their grave.[7] And, further, I simply don't care whether people respect my memory for the next several hundred years.

I never even held a funeral for my teacher Sawaki Rōshi. Not only that, I have been totally ungrateful in all family matters. Outside of an occasional letter to my brother, I haven't associated with any of my relatives. I left the urn containing my parents' ashes on top of a chest of drawers. I've always been selfishly doing just the things I've wanted to do. So when I die, I don't need any funeral. But don't worry: even if you don't hold a funeral for me, I won't come back to haunt you! Muen-botoke reminds me of another similar expression: *muen no daijihi* 無縁の大慈悲, "great compassion with no object or target." Letting go of all the things that are going on in one's head and living as the reality of life inclusive of all sentient beings and of that life that encompasses the entire universe—that is *muen no daijihi*. So *muen*, literally meaning "no connection," here means having no objective, no target. Concretely speaking, our child is not the *object* of our love. Rather, it is our aim to live simply as the reality of Jiko or Whole Self, filled with compassion.

> *The time will come when we say, "Wow! The whole world has become buddhadharma!"*

Fumōnen is defined as not losing sight of the true dharma; that is, not losing sight of the true reality of life. This means to open one's mind and let go of one's thoughts and not be deceived by these fabrications. Some people say that it's all well and good to open the hand of thought when one is doing zazen, but we shouldn't let go of a mind bent on peace and justice. However, this is a mistake. It's certainly a fact that we have waged wars to uphold peace and justice. Japanese soldiers went to war to "uphold peace in the East." People think about this in their heads, and the argument gets totally twisted around. In this same way, someone might *think* that having great compassion with no object or target means they must go out and save all sentient beings! The moment we grab on to this with our head, though, the whole argument gets overturned, and we wind up with a bunch of rich priests. When I speak of opening the hand of thought, it means letting go of everything in our head. And from that point of letting go, we must consider again and again just what is meant by "peace" or "justice" or "great compassion."

If we try to express this in specific language, it would be the Four Great Vows:

> Sentient beings are infinite, I vow to save them all. Human cravings are inexhaustible, I vow to sever them all. The dharma gates (teachings) are immeasurable, I vow to learn and practice them all. The Buddha Way is supreme, I vow to be one with it. This is most fundamental to the teaching of the dharma.

So not losing sight of the true reality is the aim of the dainin in our text. Accordingly, fumōnen—not losing sight of true dharma—is the direction of any adult.

As I pointed out earlier when explaining shōjin, ordinarily people assume with shōjin there must be an aim or target. So people aim at the target and forge ahead with all their might. But that attitude has no connection with shōjin as buddhadharma. As buddhadharma, to the extent that we make diligent effort it must be without expectation of gain—that is, just throwing all our effort into whatever we are doing but without concern as to the purpose.[8]

Now it would be a lot easier for me to say to everyone, “If you make diligent effort, surely you’ll get some merit from it.” But it just doesn’t work that way. Sorry, but the fact is, you’re not going to get any merit. I’ve heard of plenty of cases where the priest goes around telling everyone how much merit they’ll get out of making diligent effort. Do you see? If you give someone some bait, it’s a lot easier to understand why you might be doing something. Rather, whatever way you may stumble or fall, precisely at that point where there is no gain, no merit, and still you aim at doing whatever is being called for with all your might—that’s shōjin.

And, as for the aim of one’s own life, just how should you act? You act, aiming at not losing sight of the reality of your Whole Self—of Jiko. Now that is the sense of not losing sight of true dharma.

To put it another way: precisely because we have this sort of direction as a true adult, we can continue to practice the Buddha Way. Now, I have also taken on working with my disciples who are ordained. The one thing I have been emphasizing to them is that to carry on practicing the Buddha Way all one’s life, more than anything else one must not lose one’s fundamental direction. At a temple like Antaiji, you can practice for one or two years or maybe even three years. But, after you’ve been there for more than three years, you begin to think, *Hmm, I wonder if this is really what I want or need to be doing?* Oh, there may even be someone who’s been there for as long as five or six years and begins to question himself. Why, I’ve been thinking about this my whole life!

In any event, no matter how long young people have been practicing zazen at Antaiji, they get no monthly salary and they do not gain any status within the priesthood of Sōtōshū. And, of course, no matter how long they stay, there won't be any bonus coming, nor any retirement payment or pension. You get absolutely nothing. And even though you do somehow manage to continue sitting through your twenties, knowing those conditions while harboring some doubt, you arrive at your thirties and begin thinking about your friends who are now becoming assistant managers or even section heads in some company. And you can't help but think seriously about whether or not you should continue this kind of life. Still, to continue, you must reexamine again and again what your true vow is.

In the twenty-seventh chapter of *Daichidoron* 大智度論 (Sanskrit *Mahā-prajnāpāramitā-śāstra*), usually attributed to Nagarjuna, is a passage, "Among the Teaching of all the Buddhas, showing compassion is most important. If there is neither compassion nor empathy, surely the person will die in short order."

In other words, precisely because we have a heart and mind of compassion and empathy, we have a true reason for living. Nagarjuna is saying that if we lack that direction in our life, we will surely die without having had any life value.

Speaking of life values, there are too many people running around the world whose life values consist of ransacking those around them and throwing everything into confusion; especially those who have plenty of economic power to do so throw their energy into this. It would certainly appear that characters like Tanaka and Kodama threw their power around and collected millions of dollars in bribes.[9] Then there were people like Hitler who are of a different magnitude. There aren't many who could throw the world into such confusion in one lifetime of just sixty years. But these are certainly not examples of people with true life values. If it were Shakyamuni thinking of doing something like that, he would surely say he would be better off dead. And when he did gain

enlightenment, one of the first things he said was, “I should enter nirvana.” In other words, “I should die now.” But then those around him said, “Oh, you can’t do that. That would be terrible.” They pleaded for him to stay with them, so he decided to live. The Buddha’s rethinking the matter, reflecting again, that is *daiji daihi* 大慈大悲—great compassion, great empathy. Shakyamuni lived out this life value of great compassion and empathy. That is why Nagarjuna said, “If there is neither compassion nor empathy, surely the person will die in short order.”

Because most of us are living with many imperfections and impurities, our life doesn’t go like Shakyamuni Buddha’s. Still, it is critical for us to settle on this fundamental direction. This is also what is referred to being as a bodhisattva.

To put it another way, we can consider living by vow: this is referred to as *ganshō no bosatsu* 願生の菩薩—bodhisattva living by vow—as opposed to one who knows nothing of the teaching of the buddhadharma, *gōshō no bonpu* 業生の凡夫—an ordinary or unenlightened person living by karma. That is, continuing to live by karma (delusive actions) means that we are living without any meaning or direction. It would be better to die as quickly as possible. In Hitler’s case, it would have been better for his mother to have aborted him. Whether it’s politicians or wealthy entrepreneurs, they are all making a big fuss because they’re living only by the continuation of their karma. We must bear in mind that although they may carry things out on a large scale, in essence, it’s totally worthless.

In that regard, when you think about true buddhadharma in terms of scale or capacity, you might think it certainly doesn’t amount to much. However, its essence is magnificent. And surely, moving forward, the guiding principle on Earth will have to be buddhadharma. Seeking to instill true buddhadharma in human beings on this planet is our vow.

Speaking of vows, in Buddhism, there are two types of vows: one is *sōgan* 総願—vows common to all bodhisattvas; the other is *betsugan* 別願—separate vows depending on the individual. *Sōgan* refers to the Four Great Bodhisattva Vows:

1. Sentient beings are numberless; I vow to save them all.
2. Cravings are inexhaustible; I vow to extinguish them all.
3. The dharma gates (teachings) are limitless; I vow to learn/practice them all.
4. The Buddha Way is superior; I vow to practice it fully.

But, in addition to these vows, depending on each person's capabilities and circumstances, each person vows individually to act accordingly, particularly in this direction—this is referred to as *betsugan*.

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There is a passage in *Shōbōgenzō: Gyōji* 行持 (*Continuous Practice*) that I frequently read and that gives me strength to carry on my practice. It's a beautiful passage:

> The first ancestor in China sailed from West to East to disseminate the buddhadharma of his teacher, Hanyatara Sonja. Sailing three cold winters and flowering springs, bearing the snow and winds, along with the foul weather, the mist and heavy waves smashing all around him, must have been very trying. And, all of that, heading to a country totally unknown. Such a journey would be incomprehensible to ordinary people unwilling to put their life on the line in such conditions. The great compassion to transmit the dharma to those who were deluded and confused was an example of gyōji—行持 continuous practice. It is continuous practice because transmitting the dharma is the transmission of Jiko—Whole Self. And, also because it is the transmission of the

> dharma that is the entire universe. It is continuous practice because the entire universe is the practice of awakening. It is continuous practice because transmission of the dharma is transmission of Whole Self—Jiko—the entire universe. It is continuous practice because it is all worlds being all worlds. Under such conditions, where wouldn't be his palace? And what palace wouldn't be his dōjō 道場—place of practice? Because of this, Bodhidharma came from the West. Because he came to save deluded human beings, he had no doubt; he had no fear. Because he came to save deluded human beings in all worlds, he had no doubt; he had no fear.

"The first ancestor in China, sailed from West to East to disseminate the buddhadharma of his teacher, Hanyatara Sonja." The first ancestor in China refers to Bodhidharma, who sailed from India to China. Nowadays, we could easily take a plane and get there in no time, but in those days, "Sailing three cold winters and flowering springs, bearing the snow and winds, along with the foul weather, the mist and heavy waves smashing all around him, must have been very trying. And, all of that, heading to a country totally unknown." Three years of troublesome obstacles, the foul weather and all, and then arriving in a country completely foreign to him.

"Such a journey would be incomprehensible to ordinary people unwilling to put their life on the line in such conditions. The great compassion to transmit the dharma to those who were deluded and confused was an example of continuous practice." Bodhidharma must have felt that the time had come for teaching the buddhadharma to the Chinese.

"It is continuous practice because transmitting the dharma is the transmission of Whole Self—Jiko." In other words, transmitting the dharma is the very living force itself: that is, Jiko or Whole Self. "And, also because it is the transmission of the dharma that is the entire universe." The Japanese Buddhist term *hengai* 徧界 means "all

worlds," or "the entire universe." So this Jiko that fills the universe is the very transmission of the dharma. To put it another way, by *transmission of the dharma*, the Jiko that fills the universe acts throughout the entire universe. "It is continuous practice because the entire universe is the practice of awakening. It is continuous practice because transmission of the dharma is transmission of whole self—Jiko—the entire universe. It is continuous practice because it is all worlds being all worlds." Because it is the Whole Self that pervades the entire universe, Bodhidharma couldn't help but feel that he had to transmit this to people who were confused and deluded—that was his vow.

But further, "And what palace wouldn't be his dōjō—place of practice? Because of this, Bodhidharma came from the West." Where he would live or where he would die, all connections or relationships were the actions that fill the entire universe. "Because he came to save deluded human beings, he had no doubt; he had no fear. Because he came to save deluded human beings in all worlds, he had no doubt; he had no fear." Since he was acting under the assumption that his actions were the living force of a Whole Self that filled the universe, he had no fear and was not in the least bit afraid.

These were Dōgen's words, indeed grand in nature and very beautiful. When I first came to Antaiji, feeling I was truly alone and cast off by society, reading the lines in this passage, I felt the fire of my life had begun burning brightly. There may be few human beings who live by this kind a vow, but I feel that just such people are so important for us. It is my sincerest hope that all my disciples will live their lives with that intention. And I can't help but feel that several of them will grow into such human beings.

I don't mean to brag about it, but looking at all my disciples, they're all stronger and stabler than I am. I'm always saying to them, just be quiet and sit zazen for ten, twenty years. If you do that, without a doubt, you'll grow into strong, stable human beings. It's not just my Japanese disciples, there're also some American disciples

as well, and they've also been listening to me and have been carrying on their practice as well. Some are here at Antaiji. Others are at Kannondō in Kantō. And still others are at Valley Zendō in western Massachusetts. They're all still young and throwing their lives into continuing their sitting practice. Just think about what they could carry out by their thirties, forties, or fifties. They're bound to have a huge impact on those around them. They'll surely have plenty of disciples who will also be strong and stable. Now imagine how they will continue to flourish and increase. Over 100 or 200 years, it'll be like a chain reaction, and the buddhadharma of zazen will surely cover the whole Earth. Just like a nuclear explosion—*Boom!* And people will say the whole world has become one buddhadharma.

Now, some people might laugh at my talking in this way, but honestly, I'm living my life by my vow, seeing that such a phenomenon really takes place. Fumōnen—not losing sight of true dharma—means to make every effort not to lose sight of this vow. In practicing the buddhadharma, this is of ultimate importance.

That is why in our text continues, "The Buddha said, 'Monks, in searching for a true teacher and good protector, there is nothing better than always being mindful of the dharma.' " The Buddhist term *zenchishiki* 善知識 means "a teacher," while the term *zengojo* 善護助 refers to someone who will help or protect you. And, then the Buddha adds, "As a result of constantly remaining determined and mindful, though you may be among the thieves of the five senses, you will never suffer harm from them." In fact, I can't even remember how many times I thought of quitting being a monk. On the other hand, every time I thought that way, I would reflect on fumōnen and continue with my practice.

Now just how much people living in the world would value the idea of not losing sight of true dharma, I don't know, but for those who endeavor to practice the Buddha Way, fumōnen is of prime importance.

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So far, I've discussed up to the fifth attribute or quality—fumōnen—in our text. At this point, I would like to add an explanation regarding *hachi dainin gaku* 八大人覚, the eight qualities or attributes or practices of a true adult, and *roku haramitsu* 六波羅蜜, the six perfections.

In a word, what dainin awaken to are the *eight qualities* or *attributes*. And, the fundamental practice of the bodhisattva is the six perfections. The eight qualities for the dainin are:

1. Having few desires—*shōyoku*
2. Knowing one has enough—*chisoku*
3. Appreciating serenity/quietude—*gyōjakujō*
4. Making diligent effort—*shōjin*
5. Not losing sight of true dharma—*fumōnen*
6. Concentrating on settling in *dhyāna—samādhi—shuzenjō*
7. Practicing wisdom—*shuchi'e*
8. Not engaging in spurious talk or useless argument—*fukeron*

And the six perfections for the bodhisattva are:

1. *Dāna paramita* or unconditional giving—*fuse*
2. *Sila paramita* or maintaining the precepts—*jukai*
3. *Ksanti paramita* or patience—*ninniku*
4. *Virya paramita* or diligence, persistence—*shōjin*
5. *Dhyāna paramita* or concentrated sitting (zazen)—*zenjō*
6. *Prajna paramita* or wisdom—*chie*

The term *bodhisattva* became prominent with the rise of Mahayana Buddhism and was interpretively translated into Japanese as *kakuujō* 覚有情, or "enlightened, but still experiencing the emotion of compassion which compels one to teach sentient beings." To put it another way, a dainin or a bodhisattva is a person who is a true

adult, living by vow to carry out the buddhadharma. In the end, the eight qualities or attributes of a great person and the six perfections are the same thing; they simply arose historically at different times. The hachi dainin gaku are the last testament or legacy of the Buddha himself and are, therefore, the oldest. At the time, what was most fundamental to Buddhism was striving of the self to become oneself. We read in the *Dhammapada* (*Hokku-kyō*), “The foundation of the Self is only the Self.” And, “Never rely on another.” This is the fundamental attitude of the buddhadharma. In the *Hachi Dainin Gaku*, too, what is most fundamental is the self that is only self.

However, naturally, the times changed, and when Mahayana Buddhism arose, that period of it being best to go by oneself into the forests or mountains and live alone had finished. Living with others now became important: associating and getting along with others and carrying on one’s daily life, and yet, carrying on such a life being understood as self that is only self. That is how the times changed.

Looking at just one example of how the eight qualities later became the six perfections, having few desires and knowing one has enough became *dāna*, or “unconditional giving”; *dāna*, here, is defined as having no possessions. Understood in an ordinary way, we usually think, *Oh, this is private; this is* mine. However, with dāna, there is no enclosure or partitioned off area that is private or mine. So-called public things are used publicly. Living out a public self is the sense of the perfection of dāna or unconditional giving.[10]

6

Concentrating on Settling in Dhyāna-Samādhi

—

Shuzenjō 修禅定[1]

The sixth quality is practicing dhyāna [samādhi zazen].

Abiding in buddhadharma and remaining undisturbed is called settling in dhyāna.

The Buddha said, “Monks, those who wish to settle the confusions of the mind need to sit quietly in dhyāna. Having contemplated thoroughly the functioning of one’s mind, you will come to know well the rise and fall of all worldly phenomena. For that reason, you must make diligent effort to concentrate on and carry out various forms of settling in dhyāna. Concentrating on dhyāna, the mind will no longer be lost in confusion. It is like a house that has little water; the owner will build a dam or barrier to prevent the water from escaping. Practitioners must do the same. For the sake of the water of wisdom, practice dhyāna-samādhi so that

nothing may leak out. This is called concentrating on settling in dhyāna."

People who sit zazen to improve themselves should just give it up.

THE JAPANESE WORD *zenjō* derives from the Sanskrit term *dhyāna*, and has been transliterated as *zenna* 禅那 and *dana enna* 駄那演那, and interpretatively translated as *jōryo* 静慮 or *jō* 定. Then, there are other expressions that convey the same meaning as *zenjō*, like *samādhi*, and yet other words that are used to describe samādhi, like *shin ikkyō* 心一境, "(bring) the mind (that deliberates and that which is deliberated) into one state"; or *tōji* 等持, "holding (all things) impartially." In other words, *zenjō* carries the meaning of "to settle, to be still and winnow through," or "to settle the mind and look impartially at all things."

Consequently, Dōgen quotes Shakyamuni Buddha: "Monks, those who wish to settle the confusions of the mind need to sit quietly in dhyāna." Actually, the kanji for the type of *sesshin* 摂心 we sit are *setsu* 摂 and *shin* 心, together meaning "to listen carefully to the mind."[2] Now some people hear this and may be apt to think that if they sit zazen, those terrible delusions of greed, anger, and ignorance will all go away. But, if that were the case, then zazen would be nothing more than *seishin tōitsu* 精神統一, some sort of mental concentration, or perhaps *munen musō* 無念無想, being free from worldly or trivial thoughts. But, if you think like that, just try and sit zazen. When you do zazen, see if all those terrible thoughts go away and you're able to sit with no thoughts or feelings. Or see if you can pull all those threads together into a single concentrated thought. Now, occasionally, you might experience a sense of that. For example, just after the heat of summer is over and a late

afternoon autumnal breeze flows in, you might just think, *Oh, so this is the state of munen musō…. This must be what satori is like.* Good grief! Why that's just a combination of the temperature and humidity. The proof of that is returning to one's normal life and the mind reverting back to its original state of confusion.[3] So then you get it into your head that you haven't practiced hard enough and start doing zazen again. Once you think you've experienced something like satori, you think you want one more taste of it…but this time you sit like your head is on fire. The truth is many monks start out sitting zazen as though their head is on fire. The problem is, no matter how long you sit as though your head were ablaze, it still doesn't amount to anything. Eventually, most people wake up and realize that it's useless to sit like that. So they stop sitting zazen and quit being a monk. I know many examples like that.

I've heard that there are also many former monks in the Theravada Buddhist tradition who at first thought that was what zazen was. In a text entitled *Butsu Hongyō Jikkyō* (Sutra of the Collected Stories of the Buddha's Deeds) 仏本行集経, there is this story. Originally, Upāli was the barber for the Shakya clan. However, it is said that after becoming a disciple of the Buddha, he practiced very seriously and maintained all the precepts. When Upāli was still a young boy, he was invited to come up to the palace to shave the Buddha's head. Shakyamuni, who was now enlightened, had just returned to Kapilavastu. At the time, Upāli's mother took him to the palace and stood nearby, looking on while Upāli shaved the Buddha's head, worried that Upāli might cut the Buddha in some way. As Upāli shaved the Buddha's head, there was a short pause, and Upāli's mother inquired; "How is my son doing? Is he shaving you well?" Shakyamuni replied, "Hmm, his body is bent a little to the right." Upon hearing the Buddha's words, Upāli entered the first level of dhyāna. As Upāli continued to shave the Buddha's head very carefully, there was another pause, and Upāli's mother asked again, "How is he doing?" Whereupon Shakyamuni replied, "Well, it seems

that his body is slightly bent to the left." At this, Upāli entered the second stage of dhyāna.[4] At the next pause, the Buddha replied, "His inhalation is a bit shallow," at which point Upāli entered the third stage of dhyāna. And, finally, at the fourth pause, the Buddha said, "His exhalation is still too shallow." And, after Upāli adjusted his breathing once more, the Buddha told those around him, "Help him stay standing and take his razor away from him. He's entered the fourth stage of dhyāna."

In other words, every time the Buddha uttered a few words, Upāli adjusted his body and breath, until finally he entered a state of hypnosis. That is probably why the people around him were told to help support him and take the razor away from him. Looking at zazen in this way—seemingly as various stages, one, two, three, four—it doesn't amount to anything more than hypnotism.

Adherents with a hinayana attitude seem to conceive of zazen as a sort of stepwise refinement, whereby one cleans out one's head, gradually calming or suppressing one's thoughts. However, dharma could never be such a thing, and the Buddha would never have taught such a thing. We need to see that it was simply that Buddhist monks with a hinayana attitude gathered the lowest denominator of the Buddha's teaching.

In the *Eihei Kōroku* (*Dogen's Extensive Record*) 永平広録, Dōgen writes, "Never undertake the practice of *nijō* 二乗, the two vehicles, or of *jichō* 自調, self-regulation in which the practitioner attempts to rid him-or herself of all desires. It is not the same as the zazen of the various buddhas and bodhisattvas."

The term *two vehicles* refers to the *śrāvaka* (similar to *arhat* or sage in the early scriptures) and *pratyekabuddha* practitioners (those who attained buddhahood on their own).[5] By self-regulation, in Japanese *jichō*, is meant someone who tries to regulate or control their body, gradually reducing desires and eventually gaining satori. However, true Buddhist zazen is not the same as nijō or jichō.

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So what then is “the zazen of the various buddhas and bodhisattvas”? This is not an easy question to answer. And, for many generations, no one has replied with a simple, “The Buddha’s zen was this or that.”

In order to make it at least a little easier to understand, I need to first take a careful look at how the word *shin* 心, “heart or mind,” is used in the expression *shin-ikkyōshō* 心一境性.[6] Far too often, we assume we understand what is meant by *heart* or *mind*, and that’s part of the problem. First, in Japanese, the word *shin* is a translation of the Sanskrit word *citta*. This has been defined in Japanese as *shūki* 集起. So *shin* or *citta* is that which gathers and is aroused. Actually, it’s not just a matter of gathering together and being aroused or awakened; this is also called *ryochishin* 慮知心 or “mind that considers deliberately and thoroughly.” Now, to whatever extent there is deliberate and thorough consideration, there must be that which is being considered. Experiencing being alive implies, at the same time, that there is a world that is being experienced. Moreover, these two cannot be separated. In other words, the mind that considers or deliberates cannot be separated from the object being considered.

As I have said before, you and I seem to look at the same cup, but the cup that I see and the cup that you see are not the same. In short, someone who is color-blind will see gray instead of red or green; or a person who has astigmatism will see things distortedly. Or even take two people who have been brought up in the same environment; their lifestyles may be totally different. Or two people might be in the same circumstances, but one feels extremely unsatisfied, while the other person is perfectly satisfied. In other words, the reality is, you can’t separate what each person experiences from the world they experience. Each will legitimately say, “This is my experience alone.”

Here is where a huge difference arises between a Western way of thinking and a Buddhist one. In Western thought, everything in the world that is *experienced* is the same. Then, it is abstracted and understood as a generalization or concept. On the other hand, the Buddhist teaching looks at the reality of the experience of Jiko, or Whole Self. As I've said so many times, I was born together with my own world. And I live and die with that world. Ordinarily, people think that when we are born, we appear on the stage of an already existing world, and death is leaving the stage of that world. However, we don't live in any such preconceived or conceptual world. Ultimately, I am born along with my world; I live in that world; and when I die, everything in my world dies with me. Now, *that* is the reality.

A Western view would propose that I am no more than one single human being among all of humanity. Say that humanity consists of some four billion people, I am no more than a paltry existence of 1/4,000,000,000.[7] However, reality is just not that way.

I was born 1/1. I wasn't born 1/all, but 1/1 which is, at the same time, all/all. I'm the first one to come up with this equation. Why, maybe I should get a Nobel Prize for it…[audience laughs]. That who you are is, from top to bottom, in every way, self that is only and totally self, *Jiko giri no Jiko*, is what is of greatest importance.

Now, even though it may generally be true that a certain medicine worked for this guy, so it'll probably work for you, too, there are many cases where it just doesn't turn out that way. Your body is not the same as someone else's body. It's very possible that if you were to take a medicine for a viral infection that happens to be effective for everyone else, you could suddenly die. Within the boundaries of the life force, that sort of rough, imprecise action may just not work. Doctors must find out just what sort of physical constitution the patient has and just what medication will work for this particular person. In this regard, from long ago, at least publicly, doctors of Chinese herbal medicine (*kampōyaku* 漢方薬) diagnosed each

individual and prescribed the medication and dosage for each patient. On the other hand, Western doctors tended to view a cold or flu as a general concept or idea, and then the patient should take a standard medicine. Now, having said this, I have certain reservations regarding Chinese herbalist doctors' methods as well. Given that they diagnose and prescribe for each individual, how can we know for sure whether a particular doctor is for real or a quack? Being completely sure one way or the other is not so easy. With each doctor being different, there's no way to compare one against another. Knowing this, some Chinese herbalist doctors try to overwhelm their patients by bragging about their skills; perhaps they grow a nice goatee, trying to pose as a physician of great note.

Among priests as well, there are plenty who strike a very dignified appearance and go around overwhelming people with their self-importance. It is my personal vow to peel the skin right off their mugs. Because, if no one does it, the true dharma will never appear. And to do just that—to tear the skin off their faces—it's critical to thoroughly acquire Western knowledge. For example, no matter how great they look or how eloquently they speak, you need to have the knowledge to be able to critically comment on their authenticity. Right now, we are in a period of significant exchange between East and West. And I believe that it is in such a milieu that we need to discover a true way to live.

Returning to my earlier comment that *my living experiences* and the *world of those experiences* comprise one life (in Japanese derived from the Sanskrit word *hridaya*), in the Chinese text *Zong jing lu* (Jap. *Sugyō-roku*) this is referred to as (and here I am using the Japanese pronunciation) *kenritsudaya* 乾栗駄耶.[8] This is also called *kenjitsushin* 堅実心—"stable or reliable mind"—or *nyoraishin* 如来蔵心, or in Sanskrit, *tathāgatagarbha*—"buddha womb." In *Shōbōgenzō: Sokushinzebutsu* 即心是佛 (*This Mind Is Buddha*), there is a passage, "The mind that has been correctly and directly transmitted is 'one mind is identical to all the dharmas, all dharmas

are the same as one mind.’ ” In other words, the mind that has been correctly transmitted as buddhadharma is one in which my mind is composed of all dharmas and all worlds. This means that all existences, all realms, are my mind. And further, in the beginning of the *Dasheng qishin lun* 大乗起信 論 (Jap. Daijōkishinron, *Treatise on the Awakening of Faith in the Mahayana*): “What are called dharmas is the mind of sentient beings.” This is expressed as *shinpōichinyo* 心法一如: “mind and dharmas are identical.”

Personally, I don’t care to bring up a lot of technical Buddhist terms, but at the same time I don’t like it when people say, “Oh, that guy just says whatever comes into his head.” So those of you listening here today don’t need to try to remember all these terms.

What is important here is to ascertain clearly just what *shin* 心 refers to. When I use *shin*, I often replace it with the word *seimei* 生命, “living force” or “life force.” But even then, I’m not referring only to one’s physical life. One’s living experiences and the world’s experiences are identical and comprise one whole life. Or, to put it another way, all living things and all nonliving things form one life. And the reality of this kind of living force is what I am now living out.

Accordingly, the idea that when you do zazen, little by little all your mental disturbances will gradually go away is not the teaching of buddhadharma. Rather, as buddhadharma, it’s understood that, however we may fall, my true or whole life is everything that I’m always living out, and that my “self” is nothing but “self.”[9] Further, practicing a zazen of self that is nothing but self regardless of whatever befalls us, or to put it slightly differently, seeing the boundary of our mind (life force) as one with the boundary of all worlds (the universe), *shin ikkyō shō* 心一境性 is exactly the same as Dōgen’s *shikantaza* (just sitting) 祇管打坐.

However, I doubt that many of us think that our mind is nothing other than the universe. Generally, we’re apt to think that outside of myself, there is “something” that exists. Because of that, we chase

after that something that is out there. But that doesn't make sense. No matter how or where we fall, I am, without a doubt, my life experiences, and there is no way I can be separated from them. Sitting with that understanding is shikantaza. This is also referred to as *tōji* 等 持, "holding all things impartially," as well as *jōryo* 静慮,[10] *dhyāna*, or as in the text, *zenjō* 禅定.

"The sixth quality is practicing dhyāna-*samādhi*. Abiding in *buddhadharma* and remaining undisturbed, this is called settling in *dhyāna*." Because of that, the text continues, "The Buddha said, 'Monks, those who wish to settle the confusions of the mind need to sit quietly in dhyāna. Having contemplated thoroughly the functioning of one's mind, you will come to know well the rise and fall of all worldly phenomena.' " Here, we can clearly see how, within my life, all worldly concerns function. Everything can be seen impartially. That is the sense of shin ikkyō shō—seeing the boundary of our mind (life force) as one with the boundary of all worlds (the universe). This is no longer a zazen of the lesser vehicle; rather, it is a *mahayana zazen*. Further, this is the fundamental zazen of Shakyamuni Buddha.

Now, there are plenty of people in ordinary society who wish to become better human beings by doing zazen. Frankly, people like that are better off not doing zazen. If you're just looking for some sort of clear state of mind, then I think you had better go relax in some nice cool place. Feeling hot and sweaty in a hot and humid city like Kyoto is just normal.

Then, there are other people who sit zazen because they want to look like they are someone with grit. When you think about it, I suppose people like Tanaka (Kakuei), or Kodama, or Osano are people with a lot of grit. Getting hounded like that in court and still feigning innocence, now that's something you've got to admire. Sometimes, I wish I could sort of have that kind of pluck. [laughter]

These corrupt politicians have been possessed by a demon. Sawaki Rōshi often used to say, "A satori whereby one has been

possessed by a demon is surely no good."[11] Any true enlightenment as buddhadharma means to cease being possessed by a demon. It's no good to become famous. To say, in any way, that one has become famous is to be possessed by a demon. Zazen practiced as buddhadharma has no connection to zazen that purports to have attained the power of a demon.

So then what is the aim of a zazen practiced as buddhadharma? Just what is the zazen of the dainin depicted in *Hachi Dainin Gaku*?

To press the question: ultimately, just what am I living for?

To begin with, such a discussion requires starting from the most fundamental standpoint. Have you ever asked yourself why you should live? Or have you ever seriously asked yourself how you should live your life as a human being?

In such a difficult time in this world, what is most fundamental is for us to take the trouble to ask ourselves just what it is we are living for. Recently, I purchased a book on astronomy and the universe and have been reading through it. It is very interesting, but frankly I don't understand it. Unfortunately, when I was in middle school, when it came to all the complicated subjects like physics, chemistry, solid geometry, or trigonometry, I slipped through by cheating. Consequently, I learned nothing about those subjects. But, more recently, I reformed and thought I would try again. So I went and bought a reference book that high school students today might use. I was amazed!

Just Chemistry I is filled with so much information and data, I think if a person could understand just that, they could become quite a scholar. And, if there's a Chemistry I, there is probably Chemistry II and III. Moreover, there's also Physics I and Physics II. And then there're all the reference volumes on [the] Japanese language and sociology.

Being isolated from society now, I've been quite ignorant about these things. I really wonder how the Ministry of Education feels about this situation. If high school students today must read all those books to get into college, I would think their heads would just explode. What's more, if they don't study all that stuff, they won't be able to live in this world; it just seems most natural to me to wonder why I had to study so much just to live. I think it's only normal that students would consider committing suicide.

I was never forced to study all that when I was in middle school, yet even I grew tired of living. I think this is the issue that we must start with. As I mentioned earlier, it was in my third or fourth year of middle school that I seriously began to think about why I had to live. That was the time when I had to prepare for university entrance exams. I didn't, and every day I was thinking whether to take my own life. In the end, I decided it was a little too soon to commit suicide, and I decided to consider the question of why I had to live. Subsequently, I became a monk. So even now, for me, the most fundamental question I ask myself is why and for what must I live out my life? That question is directly tied to the question of what is of highest value.

Having no understanding of what is of highest value or of what is most important and then simply acting on whatever is going on at the moment—that is a half-baked way to live. Being born as a human being and admitting that one doesn't know what is most important, but anyway, one is alive, is only what barbarians do.[12] Not feeling grateful about having been born, yet anyway thinking that you have to bear many children, is also nothing more than barbaric. Lots of people today think that human culture has progressed to a very high level, but personally, I think we're living in a barbaric age. In any event, I think we need to start by personally being aware that we are still behaving like barbarians.

We speak of "making progress" or of "advancing," but what are you using as a yardstick to measure progress? If we aren't clear as

to our most fundamental values and then fix on what is of absolute value, then there is no way to measure such things. To just act from one situation or circumstance to the next is living as a child, as a barbarian. The sense of a truly great person, or dainin, is one who firmly fixes on how to live by first asking what they are living for and what is of highest value. That is what we call an adult.

We can also find mention of this in *Shōbōgenzō: Zuimonki* 随聞記 (*Notes on Things I Have Heard*) (2-9):

> I, Dōgen, traveled to China. One day, I happened to be reading through a collection of sayings of the old masters, when a monk asked me, “What good is it to look through those old writings?” I replied, “Because I can learn about the practice of the ancients.” The monk said to me, “So what good is that?” I answered him, “When I return home, I’ll be able to teach others.” He again inquired, “So what’s the value of doing that?” I answered, “It will be a blessing to their lives.”

So far, Dōgen is simply saying that he’s studying the old records, so that when he returns to Japan, he’ll be able to save all sentient beings. But the monk queries him further. “He said, ‘Okay, but ultimately, what good is there in doing that?’ ” Although Dōgen wrote that, up to that point, he was always thinking seriously about what he was living for, his exchange with the monk led him to a new depth in asking the question. Now, here is what I want to ask young students today: “You study hard for all those exams. But for what purpose?” And these young people reply, “I’m studying so I can graduate from a top-tier university and get a job with some famous company.” Then I would ask, “So what good is it to work for some big company?”

“In order to live a stable life.”

“And, what good is that?”

“To support my family, and my wife can have peace of mind.”

“Okay, but ultimately, what’s so good about your wife having peace of mind?”

We must take the question this far, as it brings us to the fundamental question: For what do we have to live?

Unfortunately, it appears that, even more than young students, many people in society aren’t at all inclined to think about these things. Rather than decide on the fundamental issue of just what is most valuable in life and settle on one’s life attitude, people don’t seem to be at all interested. They only seem to be concerned with not falling behind in competing to survive. Even though some young person who is still open-minded and considering the issues of what is most important and what they must live for asks such a question of some adult—a parent or a teacher, or perhaps some dignified authority—no one can answer the question to their satisfaction.

Someone comes out with, “I want to commit suicide,” and what they get back is some stupid reply, such as “Oh, that’s just a cowardly way out,” or “You were born, so it’s your obligation to live.” Or if they ask someone why they must live, they’re just told, “You’re still very young. Once you become an adult and start working in society, you’ll come to understand,” or “Once you become a parent and have kids, then you’ll understand.” That just doesn’t make sense. The reason it doesn’t make sense is that the one who’s answering the question doesn’t understand.

To put it another way, so many people today fail to answer that most important and fundamental question of why they must live because they themselves are failures as human beings. If this isn’t a barbaric age, then what else could you call it? I would like to reply as clearly as I can to this question, as I understand it. There simply is no outside or external force compelling you to live—not one. I strongly suspect that our social life has gradually become systematized; resulting in the tendency of people trying to control others or be controlled by others. Consequently, these living creatures called human beings hope for some external or outside

force, be it the laws of the country or the dictates of some feudal lord, to decide whether they should live or die. Unfortunately, there is no such thing.

So let us return to that question: What is it we live for? Personally, when I thought about wanting to commit suicide, I also became aware of wanting to live. Right when you think about taking your own life, the feeling of wanting to live is there. I rather think that this feeling of wanting to live is true.

Even when I became a college student, I often thought I wanted to die, that living was pointless. Then, after I left school and lived a totally self-indulgent lifestyle, I came down with tuberculosis. In those days, coming down with tuberculosis was a very serious matter. Up until I was told that I had tuberculosis, I had often thought, *Oh, I want to die. I want to end my life.* So you would think that I would have thought, *Oh, that's great.* But it didn't work that way. I was shocked at my own feelings when I faced my possible death.

It felt like I was fighting a losing battle. Every morning I would take my temperature, worry about the sedimentation in my blood, then I'd measure my pulse. I'd crawl around, doing anything to live.

So even in my own case, clearly, I was fighting a losing battle. Despite the extent to which I had asked myself the question, *Why do I have to live? If I don't understand that, I want to commit suicide*, I finally began to realize that it was not so simple. Shortly afterward, the tuberculosis went into remission, and though I continued to have a slight fever, I entered Daichūji Monastery and was ordained as a monk.

The pulmonary tuberculosis has remained with me all these years. So the tubercle bacillus remaining in my lungs is a battle-tested warrior and has so far been totally impervious to any new medicine or wonder drug. Fortunately, most recently I seem to be feeling much better.

After digressing there for a bit, the point I would like to make is that, most fundamentally, *being* alive means that *I* am alive. And my

life is what is most important—this must be our most fundamental value. This value is not something given to us by society. The living force that flows through me is a value that is more important than anything else. The living force that I am speaking of is of one life that is inclusive of all the dharmas, all the dharmas are identical with one life.[13]

Now, when I say, "I'm important," I don't mean my ego is important. If all that was important was just *my* ego, then that would mean only my individual life is valuable or precious. My life, my *shin* 心, my mind/life, is not that kind of trivial thing. The shin/mind I am talking about here is the mind/life that is inclusive of all the dharmas, all the dharmas being identical with my life. This is what I must take most care of.

For followers of Pure Land Buddhism, this is referred to as *Gohonzon-sama*: "one mind is inclusive of all dharmas, all dharmas is identical with one mind" is none other than Amida Buddha.

So when speaking of values, we need to keep in mind two kinds of values. First is what is valued by society, any society—that is, worldly values—and second are values as reality, or necessary values. For example, diamonds, mink coats, or national treasures are worldly values. Earlier, I mentioned necessary realities. First, thinking about our physical bodies, obviously the most important thing for us is air. We might be able to go a day without drinking any water, but without air after two or three minutes we'll surely die. Next, we would probably say water is most important or perhaps gravity, and then, of course, food is important.

On this point, if we hold on to worldly values, those values will run counter to the values of necessity or physical realities. For instance, when we say our child is very important, we don't mean the child is important as a worldly value; we value the child because the child is a physical reality.

Thinking of this same child, if that child is born with a physical or mental disability, some parents might not want to raise the child.

However, intrinsically or by nature, for that parent, we should know that the child is valuable as a physical reality, not something that is valued by society. To be sure, parents of such a child would be very concerned, if not troubled, by the situation. However, I think in most parents' eyes, they would see clearly for the first time that there is also a physical or true reality completely separate from the values of society.

It's the same with love between two people. When a woman looks at a man and thinks, *Oh, he's very good-looking*, or, *He has a lot of money*, or, *He's in a very high position*, I don't think we can call that true love. Or, just the opposite, a man looks at a woman thinking that she's good-looking or is very charming, of course, these responses are just instinctual, but if the man further thinks, *She's very well educated, refined, and she also has a lot of money…*we're making a big mistake. Simply because the woman is very good-looking, he decides to live with her. What is the guy going to think when the lovely bride becomes a wrinkled old granny? Or, in the woman's case, she marries him for his good looks and money, what will she do after he retires?

For most of us, our human body has very little worldly value. In a book by a certain scientist, he wrote that, scientifically speaking, human existence has very little meaning. If the amount of protein and the amount of fat, etc., were calculated, a human body wouldn't be worth much more than $100. For me, however, my life, my existence, is inclusive of everything, what is fundamental to all values, and therefore is of absolute value. Therefore, whether each of us as human beings are conscious of it or not, there is no one who is living merely by worldly values. What I wish to emphasize here is that whether we're aware of it or not, the fact is, each of us is living out a reality of absolute value.

Therefore, as true value or absolute value, it is critical for me to take care of my life that is "one life inclusive of all the dharmas, and all dharmas identical with one life"—that is, where the living force

and all dharmas are the same. This is the same as holding Amida Buddha to be the most important; it is totally different from holding *only* my life, as opposed to others' lives, as being important. At the same time I say that my life is important, the living force in me and the living force in you and everyone is equally valuable. Then, we can begin to understand that in the same way I say my life is important, you say that your life is what is most important; this just becomes common sense. In Buddhism, this is referred to as *jihishin* or compassionate mind. Now this compassionate mind is not limited to other human beings. This compassionate mind applies to the smallest of insects or a single blade of grass; in other words, a compassionate mind for all living things—everything that exists. Although it might be just one tiny insect or one blade of grass, that feeling of never heedlessly taking a life naturally arises.

All things exist due to the same living force that enables our own existence. That is why in the Buddhist teachings taking care of all existences is referred to as *muen no daijihi* 無縁の大慈悲, the compassion of the Buddha.[14]

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All of us have various delusions. Among them, I think the most fundamental delusion is totally confusing and disordering the living force of "one life inclusive of all the dharmas, and all dharmas identical with one life" with worldly or secular comparisons.

To put it simply, worldly comparisons are nothing more than living by personal cravings. As I mentioned earlier in talking about "having few desires," if we're just talking about our physical desires, those desires don't amount to much. However, what goes wrong is we falsely and grossly upgrade those desires in our heads. Because we up the price in competition with others and take whatever we can from others, we end up just competing for survival. Before long, everyone begins to live only by materialistic values.

All of us, whether we think so or not, are living a life of “one life inclusive of all the dharmas, and all dharmas identical with one life.” Despite that, we become blinded by the material or secular values of our society and wind up disordering our most fundamental life.

As the number of elderly people dramatically increases and our society becomes one of the elderly, those who have up to now been faithfully galloping along in their respective companies are going into retirement to find themselves sitting around the house with a dour face. And, little by little, the wives begin to distance themselves from their husbands. As for the children, they, too, avert their eyes. With no work to do, some begin to contemplate suicide.

Being in my mid-sixties, I can readily understand their feelings. These elderly men advance in years, lose all their dapperness, and grow weaker and weaker. Both their spouses and their children begin to ignore them. With no one to talk to, they become lonely and begin to think that there is nothing left but to die. For those who have lived their whole lives according to society’s values, how can their final years be anything but total loneliness?

Even though they may have earlier had a commanding appearance and wielded power, if their eyes never opened to what are the truest values, how could their lives be expected to end any differently?

True and genuine life is “one life inclusive of all the dharmas, and all dharmas identical with one life.” This is something for which there is no substitute. Only one’s life, inclusive of the compassion of the Buddha (muen no daijihi), must be more important than anything else.

This is the practice of samādhi, the zenjō of the dainin. This samādhi or zenjō entails letting go of the imaginary delusions in our heads. In plain language, this zenjō is our zazen and our sesshins. One step further would be to take the ordination of “leaving home” or *shukke* 出家.

I strongly feel that shaving one's head and throwing one's life into leaving home, throwing all one's energies into sesshin, is most important. I became a monk under Sawaki Rōshi, but there was no connection to any official Sōtō School *sōdō* (monastery). So no matter how long I practiced with him, I did not increase my rank in the official hierarchy and become the abbot of a temple. Nor could I expect to receive even a penny from Rōshi. Under such conditions, just sitting silently whether I liked it or not, I slowly began to realize that the value of my existence was an internal matter within me.

The true meaning of a life of leaving home lies here. I suppose that Japanese people, when they think of priests, assume they must be someone who chants sutras and performs funerals. In fact, none of my disciples would know how to chant a sutra. Year by year, all year long, there is nothing but zazen and takuhatsu or else samu. Still, they've all stayed over five years. Several of them have stayed over ten years! I feel most grateful for this. I've been saying for years, "Just shut up and sit silently for ten or twenty years." Most of them have been doing just that. Now, most are in their thirties.

Getting through one's twenties is what's most important. Convincing young people in their twenties who are brimming with energy and desire is no simple matter. All you think about at that age is women, women, women [laughter], but really, it's no joke, it's true. I'm saying that because that was what it felt like for me at that age. I think that's just normal. Looking at my disciples now, despite all those feelings, they've continued to sit zazen through their twenties and into their thirties. And now even some of my disciples have their own disciples.

I've mentioned this before, but at Antaiji, Kannondō, or Pioneer Valley Zendo in Massachusetts, there is not one iota of social or worldly value in any of these places. All those who live in those places are finding the value for their existence by themselves. The essential point in shukke—leaving home—lies right there.

That is why Dōgen, too, emphasized shukke more than anything else. To discover one's value within oneself, leaving home is the best way. Now, I'm not saying that everyone must go through the leaving home ceremony. The point is you have to find the value for your life within yourself. So those who are unable to leave home can still sit sesshins. Or they can sit zazen by themselves. As we read in the *Shōbōgenzō: Zuimonki*, "Zazen is the true form of the Self."

Once more let's consider the expression, "One life inclusive of all the dharmas, and all dharmas identical with one life." The expression *Jiko giri no Jiko* 自己ぎりの自己, my Self is totally Self, is another way of saying that within my life—心 *shin*—all things in the universe are contained. At the same time, all the things in this universe *are* my life—心 *shin*. There, we can experience the true sense of unity or solidarity. And there is where the *mind/life* 心 gives birth to *itoshimu* —love—and *itsukushimu*—compassion. *Ito* is a string, and it is this string that connects all things. This is most fundamental. It is here that the true value of our life thrives.

To live in this world involves a lot of pain and effort. You shouldn't get the idea that living is just unending happiness. It isn't. I have lived to this day with a sense that somewhere lurking within me is always a feeling of wanting to commit suicide. And I suspect that this is true for most other people as well.

It is said that this was true even for Shakyamuni Buddha. After his enlightenment under the bodhi tree, he considered immediately entering nirvana—that is, dying. However, just then, the deva Brahmā appeared and implored him, "Please transmit the teaching to all sentient beings." And so the Buddha continued to live.

The bodhisattva in Mahayana Buddhism must be of this nature. So, suddenly, we think we're in some wonderful circumstance and feel so happy to be alive; why should we care about anyone else? That's just not any good. Sure, personally, I might think I'd like to be in nirvana instead. There is just no value in living in this world. Moreover, there is certainly nothing outside of ourselves that says

we must live. Yet, at the same time, having that feeling that we can't help but live out our life is a manifesting of *daijihishin* 大慈悲心, "great compassionate mind/life," or *muen no daijihi* 無縁の大慈悲, "unlimited compassion." That is what is called being a bodhisattva.

Take me, for example. I know very well that I'm a poor specimen of a human being. I'm the one who's saying this, so it must be true. [laughter] Still, as poor an excuse as I am, I'm also a bodhisattva. If our aim for being alive is clear, even if we're only an insignificant bodhisattva, a bodhisattva is still a bodhisattva.

Finally, we come to the end of Dōgen's commentary on this quality: "For that reason, you must make diligent effort to concentrate on and carry out various forms of settling in dhyāna. Concentrating on dhyāna, the mind will no longer be lost in confusion." What he's saying here is that we're constantly creating delusions out of the things we imagine in our minds. And then we proceed to lose ourselves in these one-sided imaginings we've conjured up and end up chasing after them. Instead of wasting away the energy of our most precious living force, first we need to sit zazen, let go of these delusions, and gather our life energy.

Further, the text reads, "It is like a house that has little water; the owner will build a dam or barrier to prevent the water from escaping. Practitioners must do the same. For the sake of the water of wisdom, practice dhyāna-*samādhi* so that nothing may leak out." In other words, we need to hold precious the wisdom that functions as our life force. In order not to waste our life energy by chasing after delusions, we need to sit zazen and use our wisdom and our life force for the sake of our vow to save all sentient beings.

7

Practicing Wisdom

—

Shuchi'e 修智慧

The seventh quality is to embody the wisdom of liberation (from one's attachments)—*shuchi'e*. Realization based on hearing the teaching of buddhadharma and contemplating and practicing it is wisdom.

The Buddha said, "Monks, if you have wisdom, you will never become greedy. You must constantly reflect on yourself and never allow the loss of wisdom. That is how you will be liberated through my dharma. One who does not act like this cannot be said to be a person of the Way. Nor can such a person be called a lay follower either. There is no name for one who does not carry out wisdom.

"True wisdom, like a strong and durable boat, will ferry you across the sea of sickness, old age, and death. It is like a brilliant lamp that lights up ignorance and darkness. It is medicinal for all who are sick and infirm. It is like cutting down the tree of ignorance, hatred, and cravings with a

sharp axe. For this reason, it is important to increase even more the wisdom derived from hearing the dharma, contemplating deeply and carrying out true actions. If there is one who embodies wisdom, though he or she is only human and sees with a human eye, that person is one who can see. This is called wisdom."

WHEN I HEAR those full-of-it priests playing to the audience saying, "There's nothing you can say in words about zazen," I just want to peel the skin off their faces. Of course, wisdom as it is talked about in Buddhism is different from, say, intelligence or knowledge. On the other hand, it isn't that there is no connection either.

I read in the newspaper the other day that recently on television, there is a commercial with a lead-in that says, "For those with a discriminating taste." Apparently, it's a popular lead-in for your product, and I recall reading about something like that in one of the newspapers. An older guy—maybe around sixty—takes his grandson to a restaurant on the top floor of a department store. They sit down, and at the next table, a father is sitting there with his son, who's about three years old. The father orders a beer, and the waiter brings it over. Then the father pours some of his beer into a glass for his three-year-old son. Without any hesitation, the boy drinks the beer as though it's the most natural thing to do, and he looks at his father. "This is definitely not Kirin. This is Asahi." The man who wrote the article was stunned that a young child could tell the difference in beers. He added that it may be fine to talk about someone who has a distinguishing taste, but what kind of a parent teaches a three-year-old how to distinguish between beers?

Setting aside the suitability of this father's action, we could say that "knowing the difference" is a type of discrimination which could be the starting point of intelligence. However, knowing a true

difference among things is not so easy. For example, someone takes a bunch of seeds from various plants and sows them, and after the first year, they sprout. Now, looking at which ones have grown the most and simply deciding that “plant a” has grown a lot, so that one will be good growth stock, but “plant b” is definitely a loser because it’s tiny would be an example of the absence of intelligence. Spruce or pine trees, for example, may grow only ten centimeters in the first year, while goldenrod will grow two meters.

When [Takeo] Fukuda was prime minister, he talked about instituting an educational program for gifted children. If the intention is to decide on who’s “gifted” at the junior or senior high school level based on grades, I think the result will be nothing but a whole lot of “goldenrod.”

It’s just not that easy to measure distinctions among people. Just looking at other animals, some live in the water and some live on land. A dragonfly naiad lives in the water, but a full-grown dragonfly flies through the air. On the other hand, a cicada larva lives in the ground, but an adult cicada flies about the sky. There are all kinds of living creatures. So if you’re going to look at junior or senior high school students and then divide them saying that this is a gifted one, those are just a bunch of delinquents, and that one is a dunce, I can’t help but feel that some of the delinquents or dunces may turn out to be gifted.

On that score, Japanese people don’t really have a lot of intelligence. In making distinctions, they don’t have a sense of what is primary or most essential. Making the most primary distinctions requires an eye that sees there is no other choice. For instance, in viewing plants as large or small, you can determine that only when you’ve seen the plant at its fullest growth. It’s when you choose to separate and distinguish between things after only one year that you wind up with an elite bunch of “goldenrod.” When you decide to throw a lot of money at educating a whole bunch of goldenrods, what’s the result going to be? Probably the most you’ll get out of that

is a bunch of leaders for the pollution industry, which is causing a startling increase in asthmatics.

I have no children, so I'm not personally affected by the educational policies of today, but when I look at what's going on in education, it appears to be falling into ruin. Perhaps because Japan lost the war, they've chosen to carry on with an educational formula that naturally leads to ruin of the country. In my view, education is the work carried on to raise the next generation; so it seems to me that some of these educators ought to be more serious in their thinking.

In Buddhism, wisdom is defined as *kantaku no gi* 簡択の義. *Taku* 択 means "to select." That is, choose or select what is better. But the *kan* 簡 in this word *kantaku* means "to make the best selection." So selecting what is better here becomes markedly stronger in meaning. As I've mentioned many times before, Buddhism never speaks in half measures. Consequently, in this case, *kan* means "to make the absolute best choice." Now, if we say, "Choose this rather than that," and then say, "And even more than this, that other," there's just no end to choosing or selecting. If we separate and select until we can't possibly make any further selections, ultimately we arrive at a place where we simply give up selecting. That is the sense of the opening lines in *Shinjin-mei* 信心銘 (*Verses on the Believing-Mind*):

> The Great Way is not difficult
> For those not attached to preferences.[1]

To arrive at the true Way is not difficult. All you need to do is stop making preferences; that is, you winnow through and distinguish all the differences and pursue that as far as you can until it is clear there can be no more. In other words, while seeing differences, we let go of the discriminatory thoughts in our head. This is no longer just simple discrimination, nor is it nondiscrimination. This is where the difficulty of Buddhist wisdom lies.

Start from the discriminations going on in one's head and discriminate between what is good and what is not as far as you can, and then ultimately open that hand of discrimination. If you don't go that far, there is no way to call anything absolute. So going to that point where there can be no difference in the reality of life is the teaching of Buddhism.

One verse in Tōzan Ryokai's *Hōkyō Zanmai* 宝鏡三昧 (Samādhi of the Jeweled Mirror) reads, "A silver bowl filled with snow, a heron hidden in the moon." A chilly metaphor: the bright moon, the white heron, the snow, a silver bowl—all of them white and shining brightly, how can we possibly distinguish one from the other? Despite that, snow is snow and the white heron is still a white heron; both are white, yet they are undeniably different. That's the important point here.

Undeniably, we wouldn't want someone who can't distinguish miso for the soup and *kuso* (poop) for the toilet; the color looks similar, and even the texture may be similar. Still, no matter how similar they may look or feel, I don't want anyone in my kitchen saying afterward, "Well, I meant to make miso soup for breakfast, but instead I made poop soup." Most naturally, we must make distinctions. Yet we can't really say that they are absolutely different either. They are both made up of atoms with electrons flying around protons and neutrons. No one would say this nucleus from a miso atom is simply delicious, but this nucleus from a pile of poop stinks. After all, if we go to the ultimate reality of life, there are no distinctions. At the same time, there is most definitely a difference between the pile of miso and the pile of poop. Looking at everything in this way is to understand the meaning of wisdom in the Buddhist teachings.

Still, even though there are differences, those differences are seen from our human perspective. From the perspective of a fly, perhaps there are no differences between the two. They both taste

great! When all is said and done, each of them, both miso and poop, is a natural phenomenon.

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In *Shōbōgenzō: Yuibutsu Yobutsu* 唯仏与仏 (*Only a Buddha with a Buddha*), there's a passage, "The action of a buddha is carried out together with the whole earth, together with all sentient beings." If you ask where the magnificence of buddha actions is, it would lie in the fact that in all places and in all times those actions are inclusive of the actions of the whole universe, the whole earth, and all sentient beings.

Even in regard to never committing evil as a Buddhist teaching, there's a passage in *Shōbōgenzō: Shoaku Makusa* 諸悪莫作 (*Refraining from Evil*) that reads, "Where various evils can no longer be created, there the power of practice manifests directly." In other words, it's not a matter of thinking you will no longer do something bad and then not doing it. Even if you're *thinking* of doing something evil, the will to carry it out does not arise. That is where the true power of practice manifests. The passage goes on, "This living actualization does so in all lands and all worlds, at all times and all dharmas. This vivid actualization of the entire universe is the parameter of various evils refrained from." Dōgen liked this character, *jin* 尽, meaning "all," very much.[2] Here, *jin* implies carrying out actions that fill or encompass the heavens and the earth, actions that include the entire universe. And exactly when our actions fill the entire universe, there is no possibility of committing an evil act. Only when we have gone that far, then for the first time can we make the best selection, as I mentioned earlier in my explanation of *kantaku*. To put it another way, it is not a matter of making no discriminations. Yet, it is not simply a matter of discriminating in our minds. That is the difference between wisdom in Buddhism and intellect in Western thought.

Now, the problem is that many Buddhist priests in Japan are not even familiar with how intellect is understood in Western thought. When a little reasoning comes along, they throw up their hands. So regarding zazen, they just say, “Oh, you can’t put it into words.” Or, “You just have to do it.” The consequence of that is that many people wind up practicing a zazen that is just nonsense.

I’ve said this many times before: In doing zazen, there must be an aim. It’s not a matter of just saying, “Oh, it just can’t be explained in words.” We must explain it in words as clearly as we can. We have to appeal to people’s intellectual or rational capacities and explain as much as possible what can be said in words. We must explain until we just can’t explain any further.

I realize that I’m one of the only people speaking like this. The reason I say we have to say it in words as best we can is because there are just way too many charlatans in Asia, especially in Japan. There are too many people with a smug face, implying that they’re already fully enlightened and telling others that Buddhism/zazen/enlightenment just can’t be explained in words. It is my vow to peel the skin right off the smug faces of those charlatans. I just can’t forgive those imposters. For this, we must fully utilize our intellect and reason. With the same sense that some people consecrate an ancient tree as a holy being by tying a rope around it, some of these imposters just grow beards. That’s no good.

Speaking of beards, from a long time ago, Japanese people have had a weakness for people with beards. It’s even been said that Catholic missionaries sent to Japan were advised to grow a beard. Westerners seem to have more chiseled faces, so beards look good on them. But Japanese faces are smoother and flatter, they just don’t look very good with a beard. But one thing about Japanese people is that right away they want to imitate whatever is in vogue.

I can remember when I visited Hiroshima in 1962 or 1963, I noticed when I arrived at the train station that there were lots of non-Japanese with beards. And I thought to myself, *Oh boy, just wait,*

now the Japanese are going to start growing beards. And, shortly after, with many non-Japanese coming to Antaiji and many of them sporting beards, sure enough, several of the Japanese guys started growing beards as well. That was around the beginning of the hippie movement in Japan. And when these hippies first came to Antaiji with patched clothes and whatever, the young Japanese people got right on board imitating the trend. And shortly after that, clothing stores opened selling clothes with patches already on them! It seems to me that Japanese can be so foolish and guileless. That is why, right away, they get deceived by these charlatans and imposters. If you want to deceive Japanese people, act very dignified and solemn, perhaps even a bit menacing, and then push them around.[3] I mean just think about that character for *i* 威, meaning "dignified, majestic," but also "menacing or commanding." If we take a look at how the character is composed, we see a woman 女 totally enclosed by a lance 矛. I myself am just not a threatening, forceful person. If anything, I'm sort of a conversational type of person; I'm just not very formal or literary. But that sometimes causes difficulties. When it comes to people who are just rather uncouth, then you need someone who has some *igen*—who's rather lordly or intimidating. To lead a bunch of barbarians, it seems that you need someone who can instantly appear rather menacing, even if they're just bluffing. That's why a barbarian chief would have the most tattoos and feathers and parade about wearing necklaces made from the bones of animals, and all the underlings would just fall in line. I can still remember seeing a photo of the "Chief of the Barbarians" and a translator, alongside the American president.[4] This showed me that the more civilized a person is, the less you need to look menacing or falsely dignified. So I guess that's why I look more like a civilized man. [laughter] I think this is where the importance of intelligence comes in to play.

At the same time, can we say there is no end to intelligence? I don't think so, because fundamentally, Buddhism is a practice, not a

philosophy. Buddhism is practicing what is real.

Once more, the Buddhist teachings abide by those absolute or undeniable values. This is very different from the relative values of pragmatism, utilitarianism, and efficiency so predominant in North America. Americans today, and Japanese as well, seem to think that satisfying one's desires is a good thing. But if that's the case, I'm reminded of the monk's response to Dōgen, "But, ultimately, what's the use of that?"

There are lots of people who just want to eat delicious food. For me, if I have enough to keep me alive, that's fine. I don't mean like it was during the war when everyone was famished all the time. But if you have enough decent food to eat to keep you alive, you'll be fine even if not everything is some super delicacy. Or, like Kodama-san going all out with his own private airplane and thinking nothing of living in a palatial estate. Ultimately, what's the use of that? There's no reason a person has to live in such a luxurious place. It's more important to live without having to make a big to-do in one's own airplane. And it's far more important to be able to go to sleep in peace every day with an ordinary roof over your head.

If we consider very carefully this question of "what's the use of that?" ultimately there's nothing left to clarify but one's fundamental life force. All there is, is to continually clarify, if only a little, that self (life) that encompasses everything—everything in the universe.

That is why Buddhist thought begins with being discriminating and moves toward transcending that discrimination. It begins with a view of values and proceeds to go beyond any view of values in a relative sense. This is just not something that comes out of a human being's ordinary mind. What comes out of the human mind is nothing but separation. Where it settles on as being of highest value is fulfilling one's desires. Truly, the idea of transcending discriminative or discursive thought can never come out of our head.

That is precisely why it is crucial to listen carefully to discussion of buddhadharma. After that, we must think carefully using our own

reason. And when we finally understand that it is important to open that hand of thought, to actually do it. That is the meaning of *monshishū* 聞思修—listen, consider carefully, and act.[5] And that is the meaning of this line in Dōgen's text, "For this reason, it is important to increase even more the wisdom derived from hearing the dharma, contemplating deeply and carrying out true actions."

> *Right now, it isn't me you're listening to. What you are listening to is Jiko—whole, all-encompassing self.*

I think it's probably the same for many people in Japan as for me: my first encounter with the Buddha's teachings was when I was a junior or senior in high school. Around that time, I thought that since I had to live out my life, I wanted to live it the best way possible. Figuratively speaking, if I looked at my life as a painting, then I had just been given a blank canvas. But in making this painting, I didn't want to just splash any colors here and there. I felt I had to paint a picture with a certain theme or motif. So I thought that I would *paint* my life with the theme of living out the reality or truth of life. However, at that time in my life, I didn't yet understand what the most important element of that theme was—what is the reality or truth of life. That is why I went around listening to the teachings of various religions.

At the time, I was living in Hongo, in Tokyo, not far from Bukkyō Kaikan at Tokyo Imperial University. I also went to Holiness Church in Kanda many times. I also went to a Pure Land temple located near the Hongo ward office. After that, since I'm a rather argumentative person, I visited a Tenrikyō church with a friend of mine and even listened to lectures at an Omotokyō temple. In any event, I went anywhere and everywhere searching for "truth" or "reality."

The thing is, whatever religion I looked at, all of them were saying that their "god" was absolute. Now, there should have only been one absolute god. Despite that, they were all saying, "Step right up, step

right up!” It was like there was a god auction going on. I just couldn’t accept any of them as possibly having the corner on some absolute god. For me, this sort of discriminative thinking was using my own reason.

Looking at what people are saying today, including Sōka Gakkai, Seicho no Ie, Reiyu-kai, Messiah-Kyō, Genri Undō—they’re all saying just about the same thing.[6] And they’re all furiously arguing with one another. I’d really like to know what’s different about each of them.

Many years ago, if you had been born in Western Europe, you would most likely have been raised a Christian; in the Middle East, probably a believer in Islam; and in Asia, probably a Buddhist. If these matters were fixed by geography, perhaps it would have been fine to have them a part of your tradition and culture. But today they’re all laid out in front of us, so we must use our reasoning to decipher which among them is the real thing.

In my case, first of all, I stopped thinking about joining any of them. All I could think of was that I wanted to pursue the true reality of myself, of who I am. I happened to buy a copy of the *Shōbōgenzō*, although I couldn’t understand any of it. But then my eyes stopped at a passage in *Genjō Kōan*: “Practice of the Buddha Way is the practice of oneself.” I thought, *Wow! This guy Dōgen is thinking just like me.* [laughter] No, I really thought so. And I thought that Shakyamuni was saying the same thing: “The foundation of the Self is Self alone.” That is why I felt that I had to become a monk and disciple of Dōgen Zenji. What further aided me in making that decision was when I came across a passage in the fascicle *Jishō Zanmai*: “Following the teacher or following the sutras, these are both examples of following Jiko—self.” In the text, the word *chishiki* 知識 is used to mean “teacher.” In other words, to follow a teacher and to study the scriptures is not adhering to or studying something outside of oneself. The teacher is within me, and the scriptures are

my substance. It's saying, I am learning myself. It is exactly like the example I gave earlier; that is, I look at the cup from my position.

The text continues, "Because it is like that, visiting teachers far and wide is, in fact, visiting *oneself* far and wide. To be curious and puzzle over the hundred grasses is to be curious and puzzle over *oneself*. And to approach variously the ten thousand trees is to look at *self* in a myriad of ways." Now, in ancient times, it was common for a monk to walk around in straw sandals and call on the person they thought would be the best teacher. The text here is saying that the monk was, in fact, walking around calling on themself as Jiko. Also, picking up the hundred grasses—i.e., taking up and observing everything that comes up—is looking at and observing Jiko—oneself. Accordingly, "Studying the Buddha's Teaching is this kind of creative endeavor of studying Jiko—self." Normally, when we use the word *self*, we falsely assume we're referring to this individual self. The hundred grasses and the ten thousand trees, everything we encounter, is the content of our Jiko—universal self. That is the Jiko we need to consider carefully and to practice. Those of you who are here today may think that you are sitting and listening to me. But that is not true. Every one of you is listening to your own Jiko. Within this *sangaku* 参学, *practice and learning*, egotistical self is cast off and true Jiko is realized fully. All that Jiko encounters is my life. Whichever way we may stumble or fall is our Jiko. So this means that by encountering all things as that Jiko—*universal self*, we encounter our true Jiko—*all-comprehensive self*.

Consider these words from *Jishō Zanmai*: "People presumptuous and disagreeable, when hearing the words 'self-realization' or 'self-enlightenment,' might assume that there is no necessity to receive direct transmission from a teacher; that they can learn all by themselves. However, that is a huge mistake. Those who miscalculate their own discriminatory understanding without having received transmission from a true teacher are like the non-Buddhist heretics in India (who thought they were enlightened from birth)."

The Buddha, too, said, “The foundation of self is only self.” People of a coarse nature hold on to this and assume that means they don’t have to learn anything from anyone else. But that is totally wrong. In India, those who clung to their own thoughts and assumed they didn’t have to learn from a teacher were renounced as “naturalist heretics.”[7]

When I read the above passage from the *Jishō Zanmai*, I became convinced that I had to be ordained and become a monk. I was thirty years old at the time. Just by chance, my father said to me, “Well, if you want to become a disciple of Dōgen, Sawaki Rōshi looks like the best teacher around.” So I was ordained and became a disciple of Sawaki Rōshi. I remained his disciple until he died twenty-five years later in 1965.

That was how I became a monk. I decided to become a monk the moment I read these words in *Samādhi of Self-Realization*. If it hadn’t come about in that way, I would have naturally thought, *Oh, this teacher is better than that one.* Isn’t that the same with marriage? If you’re going to get married, then it’s best to marry with the firm intention that this is the best person to marry. It’s hard to say what will happen or how things might turn out if you get together only thinking, *Oh, she’s pretty nice.* In days long gone, it might have been fine for Taro in this village to marry Hanako from a neighboring village and for them to spend their whole lives in the quiet countryside.

Still, in deciding on what sort of teacher is best for you, you have to settle on what your own attitude should be. First, you must decide that to learn the Buddha Way, you need to study with a teacher. Then, you mustn’t forget or lose sight of the buddhadharma. These two points are critical.

I talk about these things because there are lots of people who just hop around visiting one temple or another or calling on Rōshi So-and-so. Now, looking at these people, you can see right away that some are “canine” believers and others are “feline” faithfuls. The

canine believer is the type that clings to people. They cling to the charisma of Rōshi So-and-so. With this type of person you can't tell whether they come because they're in love with the rōshi or because they want to learn about the buddhadharma.

The feline faithfuls are the ones attracted to the temple buildings. They think the shabby, run-down structures like Antaiji are just no good. It's only the magnificent structures like Sōjiji or Eiheiji that are worth something.

It's the same with disciples. Canine disciples or feline disciples are no good. A disciple must be one who pursues the buddhadharma in a true way.

In the Sōtō School temples, every day during the morning service, in reverence to the ancestors who received transmission, everyone recites the *busso-rei* 仏祖礼, that is, the names of the first six buddhas: Shakyamuni Butsu Daioshō, Makakashō Daioshō, Ananda Daioshō, ~~ Daioshō, ~~ Daioshō, and so forth. Counting from Shakyamuni Buddha, Dōgen Zenji is number fifty-two, down to me, number eighty-two. Every day the names of the ancestors of each generation are recited. In other words, the *eye* of Shakyamuni Buddha is reflected in the *eye* of Makakashō Daioshō, which is then reflected in the *eye* of Ananda Daioshō, and so forth, down to the eighty-second ancestor.[8] In Japanese, this is referred to as *shishisōjō* 師資相承, receiving the wisdom of the Buddha that has been passed down from teacher to disciple, generation after generation.[9] This is very important.

> *Receiving the enlightenment of the Buddha is something like the grafting of a sweet persimmon branch.*

In this regard, it seems to me that other religions are more theoretical or conceptual and lack concreteness. There's a story that from the Tokugawa period (1603–1868) about a debate between a scholar of the Chinese classics and a Sōtō monk. The monk asked

the Chinese scholar, “What generation are you descended from Confucius?” The scholar replied that there was no such thing as transmission from teacher to student and said he had no idea. “If you don’t know that, you have no right to call yourself a Confucian scholar. After Shakyamuni Buddha, comes Makakashō Daioshō, and then Ananda Daioshō…” He was reciting what monks recite every morning, the *busso-rei* or reverence to the ancestors. He continued, “And I’m the ~~th ancestor.” Thereupon, the monk totally defeated the scholar in the debate.

Anyway, if we look at all these Zen ancestors and consider whether all of them were saints, the answer is certainly no. Sawaki Rōshi’s teacher was Jōkoku Zenkō Daioshō, and Rōshi talked about him frequently. He had quite the background, graduating from Daigakurin in Azabu (precursor to Komazawa University). In those days, if you’d graduated from a school like Daigakurin, that was considered quite an accomplishment. So, after that, he decided to go to Hokkaido to save up some money by chanting sutras for people. At the time, there were very few temples in Hokkaido, so if you went here and there to chant sutras for people’s ancestors, the donations were fantastic. He put all his earnings into a savings account in a bank. But, during the panic just after World War I, during the Taishō period (1912–26), the bank went bust and he lost everything.

After that, he got word from his teacher, Jōryū Kōhō Daioshō, who lived in Amakusa in Kyushu, saying that he was getting old and that Jōkoku should return home. So he did. In Amakusa, not only did he go around chanting sutras, but he also raised silkworms to save up money. There in Amakusa, when monks chanted sutras at funerals or other services, people would donate large rice cakes. Instead of eating them, however, Jōkoku would give them to the neighborhood children. Anyway, he again saved up a lot of money. But, this time, instead of putting the money in a bank, he put it into a money pouch and hung the pouch in a storage room.

However, one day while he was warming the silkworms, a fire broke out and the temple caught on fire. When this sort of thing happens, the first thing a priest normally does is carry out the central Buddha image on the altar. Next, if there's time, you take out the book with the parishioners' death register. However, this time, our Daioshō first brought out the money pouch and hung it on a branch in a persimmon tree. Next, he rescued the Buddha statue, and finally, he brought out the parishioners' death register. But when he went to look for the money pouch, it was gone.

I heard Sawaki Rōshi relate that story several times. So there are various kinds of teachers. And what's more, every morning, Sawaki Rōshi would chant, "Shakyamuni Butsu Daioshō, ~~ Daioshō, ~~ Daioshō," ending with "Jōkoku Zenkō Daioshō," and then, bow three times. I could never get why he did that, so one time, I suggested that he just leave out that last Daioshō. His reply was, "That is what *shishisōjō* is all about. You can't leave his name out." After that, I matured somewhat and eventually realized that leaving it in was the right thing to do.

In that respect, a name ending with Daioshō sounds very imposing in ways that might not match the reality of the person being named. But it isn't just Jōkoku Zenkō Daioshō; I don't think this transmission of the wisdom of the Buddha from teacher to disciple was just between monks who were saints. I'm sure there were plenty of monks just like Jōkoku Zenkō Daioshō who have passed on the enlightenment of the Buddha. Ultimately, we are all just ordinary human beings.[10] As a student or disciple of a teacher who is also an ordinary human being, we learn and practice the buddhadharma. However, if we just read about the buddhadharma without connecting to such a human being, we end up with knowledge that is only theoretical or academic.

I hesitate to say this, but among the Christian priests I've seen, they talk about love and charity, but it all seems very abstract and theoretical. I recall when my first wife was very ill, the maid brought

her some rice porridge that wasn't soft enough for her to eat. So I decided to cook some for her by myself. But, at first, I just couldn't cook it right. I added some water to it, and when I finally finished, I took it into her. She said it was delicious, but I know, in fact, it was terrible.

Even though I had the *intention* to cook some porridge for her, if you don't actually know how to cook it right, it's just an idea; there's nothing concrete to it. Even for something as trivial as cooking porridge, you have to learn how to cook it from someone who is good at it.

Practice also requires that we find an actual teacher who will teach us. Moreover, by finding a teacher who teaches us very concretely, we can have our masks peeled off for us.

From the time I was just a kid, I was spoiled and always depended on others. Up until now, I haven't been able to rid myself of that attitude. Even my disciples say that I'm soft. Sawaki Rōshi's experience was completely the opposite of mine; any number of times he almost lost his life. He must have gotten tired of my lack of self-reliance. Thanks to him, I had my mask peeled off many times. At those times, thinking of how I was tied to him, I could only be angry. But that wasn't it. When I'd tell myself that it was the buddhadharma that I was tied to—that is how I could get through those times.[11]

Cats attach to houses; dogs attach to people; neither way is any good. It is the buddhadharma that we must connect to.

I'm repeating myself. However, even though I talk about the necessity of connecting with a teacher, as in that expression of Prince Shotoku's, "we are all just ordinary human beings," make no mistake about it: a teacher is also an ordinary person. And yet, even within that, Jōkoku Zenkō Daioshō and Somon Kōdō Daioshō (Sawaki Rōshi's Buddhist name) were different. Within nondiscrimination, there is also discrimination. I have several disciples, but I have no desire to be a teacher like Zenkō Daioshō.

Somehow, striving to be as good a teacher as possible is the point of my practice.[12]

Zen transmission from teacher to disciple is an odd thing. I believe it is very deep and profound, a very vibrant thing. It's odd yet profound because although we must connect with a teacher, the buddhadharma is not something that originally comes out of the human mind.

For example, wherever we go, there's always someone we just can't get on with. We think, *Everyone's against me.* Now, at just those times, we should give some thought to the possibility that we're not correct. But that thought just doesn't seem to come into our minds. Rather, we use our own measuring stick to declare that that guy is bad and the guy over there is no good, either. We start thinking that we're surrounded by bad people. Now, just about this time, we happen to hear the teaching of the buddhadharma. So we think very carefully about it and then decide to connect with a teacher, and for the first time, we get the mask torn off our face and have an opportunity to truly practice.

Before I began practice, I was such a person. I couldn't get along with anyone. I often wondered why I had to suffer so much. I wondered why I was dealing with so many worthless and insignificant people. But then I entered the Buddha Way, and Sawaki Rōshi tore my egotistical mask away. And for the first time, I began to realize that perhaps I was the louse.

Fundamentally speaking, buddhadharma is letting go of this calculating measure we use to discriminate between good and evil. When I first met Sawaki Rōshi, he said to me, "You look like you're carrying too many troubles. You need to lighten up." I have this habit of always calling everything into question: why this, how come that? Way too often, I was overly confident that this was right and that was no good. After that, brooding over what Rōshi had said to me, I had an even more troubling thought. Throwing out the very thought of discriminating between good and bad—that is, throwing out one's

own measuring stick—I just couldn't get it out of my head. Realizing that—or, as it is conveyed in the Buddhist expression *monshishū*, the wisdom of hearing, contemplating, and practicing—for the first time, we can throw out our egocentricity. One's personal calculating mind is one's egocentricity. Only when we can throw out our egocentricity can we, for the first time, become like the grafting of a sweet persimmon as buddhadharma.

As many of you probably know, even if you plant a variety of sweet persimmon tree, the tree will only develop as an astringent tree. Whatever kind of seed you plant, all the trees will be astringent. Only when you graft a branch from a sweet persimmon tree onto an astringent one will it grow sweet persimmons. But how did that first sweet persimmon branch become sweet in the first place? It always intrigued me that no matter what variety you planted, all the trees grew only astringent persimmons; so how can there be sweet persimmons? I asked a specialist about this, and he said that an astringent persimmon tree, if it were to live a hundred years or more, will eventually produce a branch that bears sweet persimmons. So if you cut off that branch and graft it onto a young persimmon tree, the branch will still bear sweet fruit. In this way, you keep grafting sweet persimmon branches onto astringent trees. The transmission of the buddhadharma is very similar to grafting.

Without a doubt, the people in India were barbarians, thinking only about their cravings. But remember that India goes back a long way. And in that very ancient climate, the sweet persimmon called buddhadharma came about. Now a branch of that sweet persimmon was brought to the barbaric people of China and grafted on there. And the sweet persimmon of the Buddha's teaching came to be transmitted there. Further, a branch of the Buddha's teaching was brought to Korea and Japan. That is *sōjō—transmission*.

The buddhadharma is not something that just comes out of my head. Nevertheless, through grafting, it grows and spreads. *Sesshin* 接心 means to touch or connect with the essence.[13]

Our text says, “Monks, if you have wisdom, you will never become greedy.” In this case, *wisdom* means to be mindful of that grafting which is the buddhadharma.[14] If we are attentive to the grafting, the perspective of valuing one’s cravings will shift to a perspective of valuing buddhadharma.

“You must constantly reflect on yourself and never allow the loss of wisdom.” This means that we must look inward again and again to see whether that wisdom of the buddhadharma is being grafted within our hearts and minds.

“That is how you will be liberated through my dharma. One who does not act like this cannot be said to be a person of the Way. Nor can such a person be called a lay follower either.” In India, lay followers wore a *kesa*-like robe that was white, while monks were only allowed to wear robes that had been dyed black. So *byakue* 白衣, “white clothing,” referred to lay followers or believers.[15] Or even if they were wearing the black robes of a monk, if the person was not receiving and connecting with the essence, *tsugi-shin* 継心, they were not considered to be a *dōnin* 道人, follower of the Way. Likewise, even though they were wearing the clothing of a lay follower, they were no longer considered to be lay believers. Whether monks or lay followers, “There is no name for one who does not carry out wisdom.” They were a breed that was inconceivable.

“True wisdom, like a strong and durable boat, will ferry you and others across the sea of sickness, old age, and death. It is like a brilliant lamp that lights up ignorance and darkness. It is medicinal for all who are sick and infirm. It is like cutting down the tree of ignorance, hatred, and cravings with a sharp axe. For this reason, it is important to increase even more the wisdom derived from hearing the dharma, contemplating deeply and carrying out true actions.” In other words, this wisdom of true reality, or the perspective of truly seeing, is not something that we can think up in our heads, so it is

critical for us to listen very carefully to the buddhadharma teaching, and then *real*-ize and *actual*-ize it.

The text finishes, “If there is one who embodies wisdom, though he or she is only human and sees with a human eye, that person is one who can see. This is called wisdom.”

8

Not Engaging in Useless Argument

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Fukeron 不戯論

The eighth quality is not involving oneself in spurious talk or useless argument that is not beneficial. To realize the Buddha's teaching and not get caught up in illusory discrimination is not engaging in useless argument. To pursue the true reality of dharmas is nothing other than not getting involved in useless discussion.

The Buddha said, "Monks, the mind that partakes in useless or frivolous discussion will only become confused and scattered. Even though you may have decided to leave home, you will never be emancipated. Monks, throw away and distance yourself from all such useless and confusing discussions. If you wish to enjoy the peace and serenity of nirvana, all you need to do is wipe out the sickness of idle talk and useless discussion. This is what is called not engaging in useless argument."

In the end, everyone will wind up aging and bedridden. What will you do then?

IT WOULDN'T BE UNUSUAL to assume that *fukeron*, or useless argument, simply means not saying things that are nonsense or not saying silly things or not making jokes, but that is not what it means. In this section on fukeron, the last of the eight qualities of a great person, our discussion becomes settled.

To realize the Buddha's teaching and not engage in illusory discrimination means to begin by discriminating between right and wrong, but making the absolute best choice that accords with true wisdom. And, finally, in accord with wisdom, separate from discrimination. This is the meaning of fukeron or not engaging in useless talk. In short, all discrimination based on human thinking is *keron*—useless talk. What human beings normally have in their heads—thoughts, ideas, opinions, philosophies, some ism or other—all sounds very grand. But the fact is, they're all useless talk or keron. There is no connection to reality. In Buddhism, there is an expression *gūjinjissō* 究尽実相, meaning "to completely penetrate the true reality of all things." So to open that hand of thought and just act *is* acting out the true reality.

On the one hand, thinking it could be this way or that, we can come up with various views of reality. But regarding the true reality, we are right now living it out. In contrast to that, we start thinking about what we should do or what we should not do…and from that, communism comes up or democracy arises. But to think that the teachings of Buddhism are just another one of those isms is a huge mistake. Buddha's teaching is not some sort of ism, nor is it a kind of philosophy; the teaching is completely practice. Buddhism is letting go of isms and ways of thinking or philosophizing; just act. Here I am talking, saying that you have to settle on a direction. I'm doing

nothing more than talking about that aim. What is more important than anything else is just practice.

Repeating once more what I have said earlier, there is only one true reality. Still, there are any number of discriminating ways of looking at a reality that is *undivided*. That is why it is referred to as *keron*.

Depending on the way we look at it, if we insist that it must be like this, but another person says, “No, it must be like that,” we come up with nothing but conflicting opinions. Therefore, such argument is useless. So not engaging in such useless discussions, but instead realizing or practicing the true reality of life is fukeron.

Sitting zazen is most fundamental in practicing the true reality of life. In *Shōbōgenzō*: *Bendōwa*, it is written, “Zazen is the best way to enter the Buddha Way.” To practice true reality, what is most critical is to let go of what comes up in our heads. Our zazen is exactly that posture for letting go of whatever comes up. Letting go of thought and just aiming—that is our zazen.

That is why, doing zazen with the aim of bagging satori or improving one’s life, or pondering how far one has come, thinking that you’re almost there—that is just not zazen. The whole aim of the zazen taught by Dōgen Zenji is to actualize true reality.

When we think, we discriminate A from B. Or if we think A is B, then we’re thinking about the relationship between the two, A and B. If we think that by doing zazen we’ll bag satori, we’ve already divided zazen A from satori B. Further, we are separating satori from delusion. That’s not the way. Zazen is just zazen. If we start thinking about how far we’ve come or what might happen next, then we separate ourselves A from our circumstances B. Even if we let go of thought, we are still who we are. Just aiming at the posture of letting go is precisely what shikantaza is.

Dōgen admonished, “Never practice the Lesser Vehicle in which practitioners strive only to improve themselves.”[1] The so-called śrāvakas and pratyekabuddhas strive to straighten themselves out,

focusing on mental concentration. That is their sole aim. However, we must let go even of the intention to put everything in order. This is one of the key points to Dōgen's zazen.

In fascicle 2:26 of *Shōbōgenzō: Zuimonki* we find the passage, "Is the Way attained through mind or through body?" The teaching of Dōgen was, "In my tradition, the Way is attained with both mind and body. If you project and calculate buddhadharma with your mind alone, you will never in ten thousand kalpas or a thousand lifetimes gain the Way. Only after letting go of your mind, will you gain the Way. Moreover, when you completely let go of your narrow ideas and understandings and concentrate on shikantaza, you will become most intimate with the Way. Therefore, gaining the Way is attained through sitting straightforwardly with the body."

For me, these are the most important words in *Zuimonki*. Sawaki Rōshi frequently told me that I had far too many troubles; that the first thing I always did was ponder over things. Even during zazen, I would just be thinking; consequently, there was no way I could ever be liberated. That is why the night before beginning sesshin, I would always reread this passage, "If you project and calculate buddhadharma with your mind alone, you will never in ten thousand kalpas or a thousand lifetimes gain the Way." And I would tell myself, just thinking about buddhadharma is no good. It is completely letting go of my narrow ideas and understandings that is most important. "Gaining the Way is attained through sitting straightforwardly with the body"; that is, we must use our body. In a word, the teaching of Dōgen is *shikan—just doing*. During zazen, it means just sitting zazen. During samu periods, just working. Or when doing the work of the *tenzo,* just cooking.

All those students preparing to take the various entrance exams: they can't be thinking about their romantic interests while they're studying, or thinking about English while they're studying mathematics, or they'll surely fail the exam. When they're studying, they must put everything else away and just study. And yet I still

think it's a pity to force young people to study like that, just when their young minds and emotions are like that Japanese expression *ibashinen* 意馬心猿—thoughts running around like wild horses, emotions totally uncontrollable like monkeys.

When I was a novice monk, that was all I did; when I became an abbot, that was all I did; and now that I'm retired, that's it. That's my motto. After I retired, it has never occurred to me to send out a spy to see what's going on at Antaiji. Once I retired, Antaiji no longer has any connection to me. Once I left, it's up to someone else. As far as Antaiji goes, I'm dead. I think that's the kind of ingenious retirement there ought to be. It's just that sort of interference that is referred to as keron or useless argument.

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The other day on Respect for the Aged Day, there was a letter to the editor in the newspaper. The gist of his letter went something like this: On television, I saw this sad figure of an old man completely bedridden. I, too, am living by myself, and my kids no longer come to visit. Just thinking that very soon I myself could be facing the end of my days like that, I wonder what old people live for and who they live for? Someone, please tell me. If there is some pleasant way to die, then wouldn't it be the compassion of Buddha?

So I got to thinking about it and wondered if I were to say to this fellow, "Okay, so you can die peacefully, shall I just give you this injection?" He'd probably respond; "Oh…hold on. Wait a second." Earlier, I talked about how anyone who asks who or what they're living for is mistakenly searching for a most fundamental value outside of their self. That I am living means that I myself am living right now. Our text, *Hachi Dainin Gaku*, lists eight different aspects or qualities, but what it all comes down to is just this: When I was born, I was born along with my world. When I die, my entire world will die with me. I am living right now—this is the foundation of all values.

So if we ask what we're living for—I am alive, living for me. I'm living right now; that's it. Living fully right now is what is of absolute value.

In my mother's family, there's an element of palsy, a loss of muscle function. So at some point I will most likely develop it, too, and end up bedridden. I've been resigned to this for many years. Bedridden and covered with my own feces. This may be unbearable for some people to contemplate, but I am totally what I am. For me at that time, bedridden and covered with my own feces, that will be my world. That is what will be of ultimate value for me. At that time, I won't be asking, *For what or for whom am I living?* Living without whining about it is what I feel must be my aim. Living honestly and directly without whining: what is important is to aim at just doing that. Some people might say, "Well, now you're feeling healthy and can say such a thing. But if that does happen, you just might grumble and whine, and make a big stink about it." Nevertheless, whatever happens, my world is of ultimate value and absolute, so to the extent that I can, that will be my aim.

In *Shōbōgenzō: Yuibutsu Yobutsu*, there is a passage, "When one is free of all delusions, that person is said to be one of supreme wisdom and is called a *buddha*.[2] When a buddha has perfect wisdom, that person is said to be of supreme wisdom. It is foolish not to know the features of this teaching. The feature of this teaching is *fuzenna* 不染汚—free of discrimination. *Fuzenna* means to act strongly, without scheming or intending; neither picking up nor throwing away. Where there is no scheme or intention, there is no way to put up a front or put on airs. Truly, when one is free of discrimination, there can be no intending or scheming, no picking up or throwing away."

The look or features of a buddha—Zen practice is just useless if we don't know what they are. The text says that the appearance or features of a buddha are free of discrimination. The reality of life or the life force is nondiscriminatory. This term *fuzenna* means "to be

free of discrimination, without any intention or scheming" and "does not pick up or throw away." The Japanese expression *shukō* 趣向 means "to think that there is some place to go." However, there really is no place to go.[3] The second term used to define *fuzenna* negates *shusha* 取捨, "picking up, throwing away." So *not* thinking *this is good* or *that is bad*. "Truly, when one is free of discrimination, there can be no intending or scheming, no picking up or throwing away." This is the definition of a buddha.

In other words, the implication is *not* to think of getting oneself into just a little bit better situation or circumstance. It is just being *now*, just being *here*. Notwithstanding being bedridden and covered with one's own feces, still, that would be my whole world. For me, that is what is most important and my aim of what is of highest value.

I'm sure everyone here has heard the expression, "In this cramped little Japan, where are you going in such a hurry?" I think these are the memorable words of Minobe Ryōkichi, a well-known Japanese politician. I would just add, "In such a hurry, your destination is Jiko—you!"

After all is said and done, when we ask where we think we're going, our ultimate destination is ourselves. Jiko giri no Jiko—self that is only self—is just that. At any rate, we are all living out a self that is only self. So living out this self that is entirely self, in as straightforward a way as we can without whining about it, is just that.

Despite that, most people are living in the world far too much only in terms of their relationships with some "other," something they think is outside of themselves. They're living too much in a worldly society; further, they're playing with too many toys. The other day I was taking a walk with someone in the hills behind Kohata. Back there, there's the Kyoto Country Club. And along another hill beyond that is the Kyoto Prefectural Country Club. The hills look like one big golf course. At any rate, it seems to me that golf is just another toy. Taking up all that land just to play. Good grief, think of all the money that must go into it.

If you ask me, it would be better if people stopped this kind of playing and didn't work so hard. My "playing" is making origami. Making origami is easy. So playing doesn't have to cost a lot of money. All that is left is having food to eat. Now, I'm used to the life of a mendicant monk: brown rice, miso soup—*munch munch, slurp slurp*—wash the rice down with the soup. It tastes best that way. Living this kind of life, I can get by without having to work much. Why, without much money, I can get along quite well without worrying about it.

So if you ask me what I do these days, I come here to Sōsenji to speak for two hours—that's it. Just for these two-hour talks, it takes me a month to dig down and come up with the best way to express the teaching of buddhadharma. All of you come here to hear me speak—sometimes getting sleepy—but you stick it out and quietly listen. I'm very thankful for that. The buddhadharma is already established; I can't go and talk about something else. Still, even though nothing has changed, I spend the month before my next talk trying to come up with something that expresses that teaching just a little deeper. Thanks to all of you, I'm not feeling any older and, so far, I've avoided growing senile. Now, if you begin thinking, *Oh, he's starting to get a bit fuddled, this isn't any good*, I'll just stop coming. But, as long as I don't go senile, I'd like to continue the talks. In that respect, I think I have found the best work possible. As I've said previously, what is most important as we age is to live in a straightforward way without whining or grumbling.

What am I living for? Who am I living for? To ask questions like these is just whining about your life. That's why it's best to begin Buddhist practice while you're young.

Even though that letter to the editor on Respect for the Aged Day may be pertinent, it's too late to be thinking about that now. Even if I could say something to him, what must be done is to totally change everything about his self-conception. And that is no easy matter. People today are always looking outside themselves for company,

someone to play with. They have a habit of whining if no one admires or speaks well of them. In Buddhism, this is what would be called a *shōnin* 小人 or small person. So the practice of hachi dainin gaku, the eight qualities of a great person, is the practice of *self practicing oneself*.

When I'm asked by a non-Japanese just what Zen Buddhism is, my reply is that Zen Buddhism is the most refined and distilled life attitude. First, you put every effort into using your intellect and reason and make the best decisions you can. And ultimately you live your life, opening even that hand of the intellect and reason without making a fuss. This life attitude is precisely buddhadharma. This settling on the final destination is fukeron—not engaging in spurious talk or useless argument. To put it another way, not engaging in spurious talk or useless argument is to thoroughly investigate the true form of the whole universe.

Closing Comments

These are the eight qualities of a great person. Within each, all the others are contained; hence, there is a total of sixty-four. From a broader perspective, the qualities are unlimited; however, in short, there are sixty-four. This final teaching and guidance of our great teacher Shakyamuni is, moreover, the teaching of the Mahayana. This was the ultimate and final teaching given on the evening of the fifteenth day of February. Shakyamuni gave no further sermons and entered parinirvana.

The Buddha said, "Monks, endeavor with all your heart to leave the [six] realms of delusion. All things that are alive, moving or not moving—all things that fall apart and come to nothing—cause one to feel insecure and ill at ease. All of you, for a while just keep still and refrain from all speech. Now, my final moment is at hand. I am about to enter a nirvana that has destroyed all worldly cravings and delusions. These are my final words." For this reason, the disciples of the Tathāgata all studied and practiced [these eight qualities]. Therefore, anyone who does not know and practice these qualities is not a disciple of the Buddha. This is the Tathāgata's wisdom of the realization of having destroyed all cravings and delusions. Despite that, many today know nothing of these qualities. The reason so few have neither seen [them acted out] nor heard [them talked

about] is that their hearts and minds have been preyed upon by demons.

Few have laid deep roots in carrying out good because they have neither heard about these qualities nor seen them in action. In the past, during the time when the correct dharma was practiced or later when it was at least heard, those disciples of the Buddha learned and manifested these qualities [through their practice]. But today, only one or two out of a thousand monks know of these eight qualities.

It is truly a pity. There is no example of such deterioration of the buddhadharma as in our current degenerate age. The Buddha's true dharma has spread throughout the world. You must learn and practice this true teaching before it disappears. To encounter the buddhadharma at any time even over infinite kalpas of time is rare. Or to be blessed with a physical body is indeed rare. Though even born as a human being, those born in the (societies of the) east, west, and north are of highest quality, and some in the southern sphere are even superior to that. The reason for this is because they were able to see the Buddha and hear his words, to take leave of worldly affairs and realize incomparable enlightenment.

There are those who died before the Buddha entered nirvana. Unfortunately, they were never able to hear about these eight qualities nor learn or practice them. Today, we have had the good fortune to be able to hear this teaching and practice it, thanks to the roots of goodness that were planted in previous lives. Therefore, it is critical for us to study and practice [these qualities], to expand their merit in each successive life, to realize deepest wisdom; and, finally, just as the Buddha did, to expound that teaching for all sentient beings.

Unfortunately, the state of Buddhism today is one of digging up the dharma and throwing one's energies into totally off-the-mark research and scholarship or performing grand ceremonies and funerals or building grand structures. Buddhism today has been reduced to throwing energy into ceremonies and memorial services, and to temple buildings and fixtures, totally unrelated to the dharma.

WHEN I FIRST BEGAN these talks on the *Shōbōgenzō*, I mentioned briefly why I started with *Hachi Dainin Gaku*. In the spring of 1941, Sawaki Rōshi told us, "Normally, I'm the one who does the talking, but after the coming *Nehan-e* sesshin, I'm going to be one of the listeners and I want each of you to take turns leading the discussion." After that, we began our roundtable talk and discussion on *Yuikyōgyō*, each of us being assigned a portion of the text. We continued this until February of the year Rōshi passed away, 1965. There was one year when, in the spring, Rōshi asked if I had allocated the parts to everyone for the *rinkō*—the roundtable talk and discussion. He asked me just at the time the temple had received a supply of apples [*ringo* in Japanese]. I said, "Oh yes. I split them up and gave some to everyone." He screamed back at me, "You moron! I didn't say *ringo*—, I said *rinkō*—!"

Now, for those rinkō, there was a batch of still green disciples who didn't know left from right, along with several laypeople, all of whom had to participate in these discussions. So there were several amusing blunders. In the beginning of *Butsu Yuikyōgyō* (*Sutra of the Buddha's Last Words*), there's a passage, "Monks, [after my demise] revere the precious precepts." In Japanese, this is called *haradaimokusha* 波羅提木 叉 (Skt. *pratimokṣa*). One guy looked at the kanji and quipped, "Well, I don't get it, but it looks like there's a tree (木) and a fork (叉) or something there…maybe he's talking

about a scale”—obviously a strange idea. The Japanese for the Sanskrit word *pratimokṣa*, meaning “precepts,” is written with characters that only give us the sound, not any of the meaning. So to see him interpret the term literally was just hilariously funny.

I still have many memories of those days studying the *Yuikyōgyō*. In early commentaries and introductory Buddhist texts, the *Yuikyōgyō* is categorized as a hinayana text. So, early on, I didn’t really devote myself to examining it further. However, the more I came across these words, I began to realize that they were the foundation of the Buddhist teaching. So during those days of Sawaki Rōshi’s roundtable discussions, my appreciation for this text grew more and more.

Fortunately, having this opportunity to speak to you, I realize now that the hachi dainin gaku are truly the foundation and essence of buddhadharma. And, as we read through other fascicles of the *Shōbōgenzō*, I would like you to keep this perspective in mind.[1]

So considering what I’ve been talking about up to this point, just what is the foundation, what is the essence of buddhadharma? Our concluding text begins with, “These are the eight qualities of a great person. Within each all the others are contained.” The text is written by dividing it into eight items, but if we read through it very carefully, each of the eight items is saying the same thing. In my comments, too, so far, I have been trying to say just one thing. And what is that one thing I’ve been saying?

The first one begins with having few desires; the second one is knowing one has enough; and so on. And after each comes Dōgen Zenji’s comment. Now, if we take them one by one, first is having few desires; that is, not wildly chasing after the objects of desires [of the five senses] that have not yet been fulfilled is what is called having few desires. Next is limiting how much to accept of the dharmas (things) one has already received is knowing one has enough. Number three is avoiding noisy, bustling places that confuse the mind and living alone in a quiet, serene dwelling is called enjoying

peace of mind. The fourth is diligence; in all matters, never ceasing to carry out various good dharmas (that are true and wholesome) is making diligent effort. The fifth is observing the true teaching;[2] it is to maintain and not lose sight of the true dharma. The sixth is practicing dhyāna—samādhi; to abide in dharma and remain undisturbed, this is called dhyāna. The seventh is realization based on hearing the teaching derived from one's own deep contemplation and from sincere and continuous practice. And the eighth is to pursue the true reality of dharmas is nothing other than not getting involved in useless discussion.

Looking at all of them in this way, we can see that the word *hō* 法, "dharma(s)," appears several times. In my own words, *hō* 法 or *dharma* is another way of saying *the true reality of life*.

Where the word *dharma* does not appear, for example, in number three—avoiding noisy, bustling places that confuse the mind and living alone in a quiet, serene dwelling—what it is saying is to stop comparing oneself with others and return to one's own true reality; it's speaking of the dharma itself. And, again in number seven on practicing wisdom, the expression *monshishō* appears; that is, realization based on *hearing* the teaching well, deeply *contemplating*, and sincerely *practicing.* The true reality of the life of Jiko cannot be comprehended by oneself. For example, in the same way that you cannot see yourself with your own eye, the true reality of the life of Jiko cannot be comprehended by oneself. Because of that, we have to *listen* carefully to what buddhadharma is, *consider* it deeply, and then *realize* it in our practice—that is what *monshishō* is—(realization or wisdom based on) listening-contemplating-practicing. And, further, in number eight, fukeron—not engaging in useless argument, but rather completely *penetrating the true reality of all things*—is precisely what I mean when I use the expression *seimei no jitsubutsu* 生命の実物 or the true reality of life.

In other words, the heart essence of hachi dainin gaku is buddhadharma. And this dharma is what I have been calling the

reality of life.

These eight qualities of a great person are eight aspects of dharma. The text continues: “These are the eight qualities of a great person. Within each all the others are contained; hence, there is a total of sixty-four. From a broader perspective, the qualities are unlimited.” Since our practice is one of putting this dharma—*the reality of life*—to work in our day-to-day life, our practice is limitless and infinite.[3] Precisely because our practice functions in an unlimited and infinite way, there is the realization of a great person.

This dharma, or as I refer to it, this *reality of life*—seimei no jitsubutsu—never means just our physical life nor our sense of just surviving. As I have been saying all along, this life is the life of the whole universe. It is the life inclusive of all realms and of all sentient beings. Always aiming at the true reality of life and practicing it are what is most important for us as disciples of the Buddha. As it is written, “Therefore, anyone who does not know and practice these qualities is not a disciple of the Buddha. This is the Tathāgata’s wisdom of the realization of having destroyed all cravings and delusions.” Or an alternative translation would be “this is the supreme realization and essence of the Tathāgata’s profound wisdom of the true dharma.” *Nehan myōshin* 涅槃妙心—“the essence of the deepest realization”—here means the life *after* life and death. Precisely because it is the living force of the universe, it transcends both life and death; neither is it born nor does it die (*fushō fumetsu* 不生不滅). Because it is a birth/life/death that is neither born nor dies, we use the expression *nyokonyorai*—literally meaning “like going, like coming” 如己如来. *Tathāgata*, or in Japanese, *nyorai*, is an abbreviation of the longer term *nyokonyorai*.[4]

These days, however, priests and so-called Buddhist scholars are throwing around the word *dharma* or *the reality of life* depicted in these hachi dainin gaku as “Buddhism.” However, it takes the form of some totally off-the-mark and confusing philosophy or research, or

grandiose memorial services or ceremonies, or else these priests throw all their energies into building huge ornate temple buildings. This is nothing but decadence, degeneracy without comparison.

As for us, as the final testament of Shakyamuni, as well as the final legacy of Dōgen Zenji, it is imperative for us to see this as the most important teaching—the teaching of the *true reality of life*—and to practice and realize this teaching of the eight qualities of a great person. “Therefore,” concludes Dōgen Zenji, “it is critical for us to study and practice [these qualities], to expand their merit in each successive life, to realize deepest wisdom; and, finally, just as the Buddha did, to expound that teaching for all sentient beings.”

In short, as I said from the outset of my talks, humankind, just maturing into true adulthood, is what is most important. I think Dōgen Zenji wrote his *Shōbōgenzō* for us to become adults or dainin. It is my hope to continue our gatherings and talk about other fascicles of the *Shōbōgenzō* and appreciate them in today’s age, trying to dig deeper into these texts, if only by one scoop.

AFTERWORD

IN 1975, as I had mentioned I planned to do for several years prior to that, I left Antaiji and retired.

For a while, I had no place to which I could retire, but then, thanks to their kindness, optometrist Dr. Tanabe Takeo and his wife from Nagoya offered me residence at their second home in Ōgaki. However, this was understood to be only a temporary residence. At some point, I was hoping that I might be able to stay in some nook or cranny of some temple. And just about that time, Hosokawa Seiyu Rōshi, the former abbot at Sōsenji Temple, located just south of Gojō Street in Kyoto, and the current abbot, Yūhō Hosokawa Rōshi, through the intervention of Hosokawa Ekiho Rōshi, arranged for me to stay at Nōke-In, in Kohata, a suburb south of Kyoto. So I moved there in the spring of 1975.

It was at the end of that year that refurbishment of the *kuin* hall, which had been under construction at the temple, was completed. At the suggestion of Yūhō Hosokawa Rōshi to give talks on the *Shōbōgenzō*, and the encouragement of Mr. Shinsaku Nakayama, who said he wanted to publish any books garnered from talks I could give on *Shōbōgenzō*, I, too, felt it would be a good thing to do. Consequently, from a sense of appreciating the *Shōbōgenzō* from the perspective of a modern person, the Shōbōgenzō Midoku Kai (Appreciating the Shōbōgenzō Gathering) was formed, and

gatherings were set for the third Saturday of every month, where I would talk for two hours. The talks began in January 1978.

—KŌSHŌ UCHIYAMA RŌSHI

EPILOGUE

Comments on Dōgen's *Shōbōgenzō: Hachi Dainin Gaku*

BY DAITSŪ TOM WRIGHT

DŌGEN ZENJI AND HIS TIME

More and more people today are becoming familiar with a several of the fascicles of Eihei Dōgen Zenji's *Shōbōgenzō*. But perhaps not so many are familiar with the last fascicle to this great work, *Hachi Dainin Gaku* 八大人覚. We know, of course, that Dōgen (1200–1254) lived in thirteenth-century Japan, during rather tumultuous times. After being forced to leave Kyoto and the area near the capital, at that time called Miyako, Dōgen moved as far as he could from all the hustle and bustle of factional Buddhism and the intrigues of the religious powers of that time. He spent most of the final years of his life at Eiheiji Monastery, located in what is today Fukui Prefecture. During his final years there, he worked hard, practicing with the monks who had traveled with him and putting together several of the fascicles that would comprise his *Shōbōgenzō*, with *Hachi Dainin Gaku* being the last fascicle.

Toward the end of his time there, he seems to have developed a carbuncle that became infected and eventually took his life. During this period, his chief disciple, Koun Ejō, strongly urged Dōgen to go to Miyako to receive medical treatment. Dōgen agreed, and a small party of monks accompanying them began their trek down the mountain, yet it soon became obvious that Dōgen would be unable to walk himself. He was lifted into some sort of palanquin and taken the rest of the way to the capital. Once in the capital, however, Dōgen's condition worsened and, within a month, he had passed away.

It wasn't until early in the 1900s that Dōgen's writings were "rediscovered." Up to that time, they were a well-kept secret in the archives of Eiheiji. But as the writings were made available to more and more Buddhist scholars, published editions of the *Shōbōgenzō* became available. Most of the ninety-five fascicles of the *Shōbōgenzō* are not an easy read. And, even when the expressions and ideas written in these fascicles have been uncovered, one is still often left scratching one's head as to what it all means. However, I believe Dōgen's final fascicle, *Hachi Dainin Gaku* or *The Eight Qualities of a Great Person*, is different. The challenge of this fascicle is not so much the difficulty in understanding the text as it is in practicing it.

ORIGINS OF HACHI DAININ GAKU—EIGHT PRACTICES (QUALITIES) OF A GREAT PERSON

Hachi dainin gaku is part of the *Butsu Yuikyōgyō* (The Last Testament of the Buddha). Dōgen Zenji, however, seems to have used a slightly different version of that sutra when he wrote his final fascicle of the *Shōbōgenzō*. One version appears in the Aṅguttara Nikāya, a Theravādin scripture. It is like the version used by Dōgen, except for the eighth awareness or eighth quality. One version translates this eighth quality as a person who appreciates

nonproliferation. In this case, the meaning may be to stress the importance of not being obsessed with material gain. And another version translates the eighth quality similarly as one who delights in unworldliness. Another version of the eight qualities of a great person has been translated by the Venerable Thich Nhat Hanh, who translated the *Bussetsu Hachi Dainin Gaku Kyō* 仏説八大人覚経 (*The Sutra on the Eight Realizations of the Great Beings: A Buddhist Scripture on Simplicity, Generosity and Compassion*) into Vietnamese, which was further translated into English by Diem Thanh Truong and Carole Melkonian and published by Parallax Press in 1987.

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First, let us look at the title: *Hachi Dainin Gaku* 八大人覚. In the first three characters, *hachi* 八 means “eight,” while *dainin* 大人 refers to “a great person,” such as a bodhisattva. And the fourth character, *kaku* or *gaku* 覚, ordinarily refers to something one is aware of or becomes awakened to. Hence, “the eight awarenesses of a great person” might be a more literal translation of these characters. However, I have rendered them in this text as qualities. Here is a list of those qualities. I think we could also see them as our most fundamental attitude in living out our lives. These qualities are what we put into practice in our daily lives.

1. Having few desires
2. Knowing one has enough
3. Appreciating serenity/quietude
4. Making diligent effort
5. Not losing sight of true dharma
6. Concentrating on settling in dhyāna
7. Practicing wisdom
8. Not engaging in useless argument

These are qualities that, as human beings, we absolutely must activate in our lives if we have any intention of passing anything on to the next generation.

BE AND ACT AS BODHISATTVAS OR OUR HOME MAY BECOME LIKE VENUS! THE COMING OF THE SIXTH EXTINCTION

I believe that if I—actually, all of us—don't begin to act as bodhisattvas, or as Uchiyama Rōshi expressed it, "true adults," then within a few millennia our planet may very well begin to look more like Venus than like the Earth we know. We must learn and act in a way that actualizes our understanding of the interrelatedness and interconnectedness of all things. We need to appreciate that taking care of those around us, inclusive of the environment surrounding us, is taking care of our Whole Self and at the same time taking care of the living force that flows through all things in the universe.

Sawaki Kōdō Rōshi coined the expression *jibun ga jibun wo jibun suru*, that is, "self selfs the self." Uchiyama Rōshi coined a similarly unusual expression: *Jiko giri no Jiko*, that is "self that is only or wholly self." These are two modern-day Zen teachers' equivalent of Dōgen Zenji's *jin issai Jiko* 尽一切自己, or "all-inclusive, all-comprehensive self."

One might wonder why Dōgen, Sawaki, or Uchiyama all use this word *Jiko*, normally translated as "self," since in Buddhism we hear constantly about there being no self. Unfortunately, I think the idea of no-self may often be misinterpreted. What the Sanskrit term *anātman* or "no-self" means is that there is *no permanent* or independent self. That is, there is no self that is independent of the phenomena and events that are constantly going on around us—and, inside us, as well. Uchiyama Rōshi's *opening the hand of thought* is not some sort of escape from the world or of not taking responsibility for one's life. Nor is it a kind of thoughtlessness. Rather, *opening the hand of thought* means to no longer see all the

thoughts that arise in our head as being something we must act upon. But rather in letting go of our thoughts and returning to the reality of our life prior to or despite those thoughts, we can settle in our life in a true way and function in a way that our life becomes even more alive. That is the sense of living out our Jiko—Whole Self.

Most scientists today are discovering that “things” or objects, don’t actually exist apart from everything and independently of everything else. Rather, what we see as *things*, including ourselves, are, in fact, processes. To our eyes, tables, chairs, trees, automobiles, etc., certainly don’t seem to be just processes. They seem to be stable, physical realities. And I certainly wouldn’t suggest that you go outside to test this out by standing in front of a moving car to see if it feels like a process. Yet on a scale or dimension that we cannot comprehend with our mind, all things are made up of atoms and particles—and tinier things like quarks—that are not solid in themselves. Frankly, this is what some Greek philosophers and our Hwa Yen ancestors were discovering as well. It is so in such a way that we cannot comprehend in thought that all things are interrelated and interconnected.

I also think it is critical for us to make connections between what our teachers are expressing to us in terms of who and what we are and how that must extend to our relationship with the universe we live in and live out. In a recent article on our environment today, I read, “The Arctic continued its unwavering shift toward a brand-new local weather in 2020, as the results of near-record warming surged throughout the area, shrinking ice and snow and fueling excessive wildfires…. The story is unambiguous: the transformation of the Arctic to a hotter, much less frozen and biologically modified area is…underway…. Whereas the entire planet is warming due to emissions of heat-trapping gases via burning of fossil fuels and different human exercise, the Arctic is heating up more than twice that of other different areas. That warming has cascading results farther south in additional temperate, and extremely populated,

areas, elevating sea ranges, influencing ocean circulation."[1] This is part of what some scientists call the Sixth Extinction.

We can read in Old Testament scripture of how God created human beings and told them to *subdue* and to have *dominion over* the birds of the air and over every living thing that moves upon the earth. I suspect the more human beings believed such a thing, the faster our earth began to approach the Sixth Extinction. I believe that the more human beings think only in terms of conquering and domination, the sooner will be the demise of not only the human species, but of all the flora and fauna and the very environment and the planet itself. As long as our values are based on subjugation and dominion, we will lose sight of what Uchiyama terms *seimei no jitusbutsu*—the true reality of life. As we become more awakened to the living force that surges through all things, we will also become more attuned to what it is that very living force is calling us to be and do.

THE EIGHT QUALITIES OF A GREAT PERSON

Now, let us take a further look at these eight qualities.

1. **–2. Having Few Desires and Knowing One Has Enough:** The first two of these eight awarenesses or qualities go hand in hand. Not chasing after every thought of wanting this or that surely is contingent on realizing that one already has enough, and that more "things," greater status, or a higher position does not lead to any greater comfort or joy in one's life. Knowing that we already have enough frees us to consider how we can help or encourage others whom we encounter in our life. Knowing we have enough enables us to give of ourselves wholeheartedly. And when we do that, either through our words or through our actions, our own life becomes that much richer.

3. **Appreciating Serenity/Quietude:** This quality may sound perfect for the back-to-nature crowd, but appreciating peace and quiet is something that most people can benefit from, regardless of where they are living. With more and more human beings moving into urban areas and large cities, it becomes more and more important not to be hassled constantly by commercials trying to sell us things that we need but just don't know that we need them or to be able to sit down and reflect on ourselves and to consider why we think and feel the way we do or to take the time to reflect on our values and opinions and why we hold on to them so tightly.

   It is not just the noise or the hustle and bustle of urban living that is at issue here. After all, movies and operas can be very nice to attend and can point out the positive and negative aspects of our society. Rather, it is the constant pressures of the society surrounding us that distracts us from considering more deeply what it is we are being called to do with our lives, taking into consideration our own personal talents and capabilities. Constantly being bombarded by the urgings and pressures of others, it is easy to lose sight of who we truly are as creator-participants of the entire universe.
4. **Making Diligent Effort:** There are many, many people who may be diligent and are making a lot of effort. Making effort in what we do may seem to be just common sense. However, the question we must ask ourselves is: Into what are we pouring such great effort? Is it just to make lots of money? Or is that effort going into making us well-liked or to gain some respect and be well-known or to acquire more power and authority to do things that please us? When that effort goes only to enhance our ego, then that effort is not the same as the effort the Buddha told us about. The effort we put into our life must work and function toward the relieving of suffering. That is the effort expended by the bodhisattva.

5. **Not Losing Sight of True Dharma:** In our day-to-day life where there are so many variables coming in and going out of our consciousness, it is easy to get lost in confusion, to get dragged around by one desire or another, or to be influenced or urged to move in this direction or another by those around us. And in the process, we completely lose sight of what is most important and valuable; that is, not losing sight of the true reality of our life. What is that "true reality"? The true reality of our life is our interconnectedness to everything in the universe. The true reality is that while we exist as single individuals, we are simultaneously the whole of the universe. The problem in talking about this is that when using the word *interconnectedness*, it is easy to assume that it means that we are all "parts" of the universe. From the perspective of true dharma, however, interconnectedness does not mean the connection between the parts; rather, as true dharma, interconnectedness means that who we truly are is one whole reality. When we understand our life in that way—and I don't mean in just a mental or intellectual way—for the first time can we understand why taking care of everything around us is, in fact, taking care of ourselves.
6. **Concentrating on Settling in Dhyāna:** For me, this sixth awareness or quality, settling in dhyāna, and the seventh quality, practicing wisdom, also go together. This works iconographically, too; where we find Monju (Skt., Manjushri), the bodhisattva of wisdom, in the monasteries and temples is in the Zendō. In most monasteries, Monju Bosatsu greets everyone when they enter the Zendō to sit in dhyāna, or zazen.

   Uchiyama Rōshi comments, "In his *teishō* (dharma talk), Sawaki Kōdō Rōshi often talked about two things; (1) the preciousness of our sitting posture, and (2) the importance of becoming intimate with oneself—Jiko." Yokoyama Sodō Rōshi,

Uchiyama Rōshi's brother disciple, expressed this as *zasō kōrin* 坐相降臨—the posture of zazen has come down from the heavens.

7. **Practicing Wisdom:** When considering this quality called wisdom, there is no such thing by itself that can be called wisdom that a person accumulates. This awareness or quality is what must manifest through our practice. When someone talks of how much knowledge or wisdom they have, this is no more than the swagger of egotism. We could say that wisdom is the activity or function of our zazen in daily life.
8. **Not Engaging in Useless Argument:** To be sure, when the Buddha talked about not engaging in useless argument, he was referring to the uselessness of debating or quarreling with other people about what is right or wrong, good or evil. But I think that another aspect of not engaging in useless argument is not getting completely caught up in and confused by our own thoughts. To be sure, there are times when it is essential to use our reason and consider carefully concerning what our actions should be. However, at least for me personally, I know I can waste far too much time thinking only about what I want for me. And this translates into, *What's in it for me; what can I get out of it?* I think this becomes clearer and clearer to us the longer we practice a zazen of just sitting and letting come and go whatever comes to mind. In other words, letting go of whatever comes up in our zazen is the functioning of not engaging in useless argument.

These are the eight qualities of a great person. Dōgen points out in his conclusion, "Within each, all the others are contained; hence, there is a total of sixty-four. From a broader perspective, the qualities are unlimited; however, in short, there are sixty-four." He goes on to say, "Today, we have had the good fortune to be able to hear this teaching and practice it, thanks to the roots of goodness that were

planted in previous lives. Therefore, it is critical for us to study and practice [these qualities], to expand their merit in each successive life, to realize deepest wisdom; and, finally, just as the Buddha did, to expound that teaching for all sentient beings."

It is my earnest hope that this book may serve as a tiny light in the darkness—which is just another word for the division we see in so many modern societies today, divisions that emanate in intolerance and an unwillingness to accept those who don't think or look like us or who don't share the same culture. I think we can see this even further in the way we, as un-human beings, have treated other flora and fauna and our whole environment. May we all strive to bring these eight qualities of a bodhisattva into our personal lives.

NOTES

INTRODUCTION

1. *How to Cook Your Life—From the Zen Kitchen to Enlightenment*, with commentary by Kōshō Uchiyama and translated by Thomas Wright (Boulder: Shambhala Publications, 2005).

   BACK TO NOTE REFERENCE 1

2. Readers interested in knowing more about *takuhatsu* or mendicant begging can read about Rōshi's experiences going out on takuhatsu in "Laughter through the Tears," by Uchiyama Kōshō, translated by Daitsū Tom Wright and Jishō Warner, published in *Buddhadharma—The Practitioner's Quarterly* (Spring 2006): 30–37.

   BACK TO NOTE REFERENCE 2

Hachi Dainin Gaku

1. The Japanese expression Dōgen used is *dengoku* or *tengoku* 諂曲. *Den* or *ten* is also read *hetsurau*, meaning "to flatter," while *goku* (also read *kyoku*) means "to bend one's will in a servile way" and "to receive even more."

   BACK TO NOTE REFERENCE 1

2. Here, Dōgen is quoting from the *Butsu Yuikyōgyō* 仏遺教経.

   BACK TO NOTE REFERENCE 2

3. References to locating in quiet surroundings can first be found in *Yuikyōgyō*. Nagarjuna also mentions the importance of living in quiet surroundings and away from noisy places.

   BACK TO NOTE REFERENCE 3

4. Sawaki Kōdō Rōshi referred to this as *guruppu boke* or group dementia/senility.

   BACK TO NOTE REFERENCE 4

5. What we must remain vigilant of is the Buddha's dharma or teaching. The *Zengaku Daijiten* defines *fumōnen* 不忘念 as "not forgetting the clear, pure, or subtle teaching."

   BACK TO NOTE REFERENCE 5

6. In other words, this means not losing sight of the way the life force truly functions.

   BACK TO NOTE REFERENCE 6

7. The Buddhist term used here is *zenjō* 禅定, meaning "to take in or contemplate," or sometimes *zenna* 禅那, a transliteration of the Sanskrit *dhyāna*; also *jōryo* 静慮. *Zenjō* is comprised of two characters: *zen* 禅 is a transliteration of *dhyāna*, while *jō* 定 is an interpretative translation. The two characters were then put together to form the single word *zenjō*. *Jōryo* means "to settle down and quietly ponder or winnow through the thoughts and images that arise in one's head." These terms are transliterations from Sanskrit or Pali into Chinese or Japanese. *Zazen* is an interpretive translation of the Sanskrit term *dhyāna*.

BACK TO NOTE REFERENCE 7

OPENING COMMENTS

1. *Shōbōgenzō: Hachi Dainin Gaku* was Dōgen Zenji's final fascicle written before he died. This fascicle is based on a portion of *Yuikyōgyō* and expanded on from passages in *Daijō Gishō*大乗義 章(Commentary on the Mahayana), 巻13.

   BACK TO NOTE REFERENCE 1

2. In the Japanese expression Sawaki Rōshi used—*yūsui* 幽邃—the first character *yū* 幽 has the various connotations of deep, profound, or tranquil. The second character *sui* 邃 carries a sense of depth or profundity.

   BACK TO NOTE REFERENCE 2

3. The Japanese characters 大人 can be read as *dainin*, literally "a great person," or as *otona*, the commonly used Japanese word for an adult. In a Buddhist sense, the term could also be translated as *bodhisattva*.

   BACK TO NOTE REFERENCE 3

4. *Hakkōichiu* 八紘一宇 has been variously interpreted. In 1903, the term was interpreted to mean "all countries under one roof"—that being the *roof* of Japan.

   BACK TO NOTE REFERENCE 4

5. Here, Uchiyama Rōshi is playing with the language. *Jishinkoku* can be translated as "country of earthquakes," a term any Japanese would understand. But Rōshi has changed two of the characters and, though pronounced the same way, they have a very different meaning.

BACK TO NOTE REFERENCE 5

6. *Katakana* loanwords are foreign words that have been incorporated into Japanese using the distinct syllabary katakana to establish the Japanese pronunciation.

BACK TO NOTE REFERENCE 6

7. The term Dōgen coined at the time was *Jiko* 自己 or “Whole Self.” It is often coupled with *jinissai* 尽一切 to indicate a sense of all-inclusive or interconnected self. The nuance Dōgen gives to it is much broader than the sense of the word *self* in Western psychology.

BACK TO NOTE REFERENCE 7

CHAPTER ONE: HAVING FEW DESIRES—*Shōyoku* 小欲

1. Translated by Tom Wright. From Nagai, Yōnosuke, 平和の代償 (Indemnification for Peace) (Tokyo: Chuokoron-Shinsha, 2012).

   BACK TO NOTE REFERENCE 1

2. It is said that if all the people living west of the Mississippi River were moved into California, and then California were made 85 percent mountainous, and all those people were settled on the remaining 15 percent of that land, and finally, all the rice and other crops were also grown on that 15 percent, that would be like Japan.

   BACK TO NOTE REFERENCE 2

3. This is a reference to a true story from Sawaki Rōshi's life. He dreamed he was leaving Antaiji on a very cold morning, discovered something frozen under a sheet of ice along the temple path, and saw that it was a wallet that looked full of money. He looked around to see if anyone was watching, and when he was sure no one was looking, he parted his robes and peed over the ice to free up the wallet. That was when he woke up from his dream and had to deal with his wet futon.

   BACK TO NOTE REFERENCE 3

4. Uchiyama Rōshi is referring to Tanaka Kakuei, a former prime minister of Japan who was indicted and found guilty of accepting "five peanuts" (a code word for $5,000,000) from Lockheed Corporation. Tanaka died before he was put in prison.

   BACK TO NOTE REFERENCE 4

5. In Japanese, there are two terms that refer to the result of World War II in Japan; one word is *shūsen* 終戦, meaning “the *end* of the war,” and the other is *haisen* 敗戦, meaning “the *loss* of the war.” The nuance of the two words is quite different.

   BACK TO NOTE REFERENCE 5

6. The original war song *Shussei* 出征 (Going to War) might be translated something like this:

   BACK TO NOTE REFERENCE 6

   In place of Heaven, we strike out for injustice.
   We, peerless soldiers with great courage
   Sent off with shouts of great acclaim.
   We’re leaving now the country of our mothers and fathers.
   We shall not return alive without victory,
   Oh, the courage of our heart-filled vow.

7. The sounds *chin don jaran* are the sounds of a bell, a drum, and cymbals clashing together.

   BACK TO NOTE REFERENCE 7

8. Similar English proverbs might be “Danger past, God forgotten” or “Once on shore, we pray no more.”

   BACK TO NOTE REFERENCE 8

9. A monk on takuhatsu intones rather vigorously “*hooooooouuuu*,” as he walks down the street to let people in the houses know that a begging monk is coming (and, if inclined, to prepare a donation). The intonation derives from the word *hatsu-u* 法鉢 or *ho’u* that means literally “a dharma bowl.”

   BACK TO NOTE REFERENCE 9

10. This is my interpretive translation of Uchiyama Rōshi's statement. The word used in the Japanese translation of *Dhammapada* is *urami* or *uramu* written with several characters that can all be read with the same pronunciation: 恨む, 怨む, 惆む, 悵む, 慍む, and more. The different characters all carry slightly different nuances that render the term almost impossible to translate with a single English word.

    BACK TO NOTE REFERENCE 10

11. Perhaps Rōshi's point can be illustrated by Dahui Zonggao's 大慧 宗果(Jap. Dai'e Sōkō's) statement, "The horse arrives before the donkey has left."

    BACK TO NOTE REFERENCE 11

12. Earlier, Uchiyama Rōshi was explaining *mushotoku no zazen* 無所得の坐禅, that is, "sitting zazen with no expectation of gain." Here he uses the expression *ushotoku no zazen* 有所得の坐禅, that is, "sitting zazen with the expectation of getting something out of it."

    BACK TO NOTE REFERENCE 12

CHAPTER TWO: KNOWING ONE HAS ENOUGH—*Chisoku* 知足

1. The *takobeya* refers to the terrible living conditions for laborers, both Japanese and Korean, who were forced to work in the coal mines around the country, while the *jokōaishi* literally refers to the "sad history of female workers" in the sewing factories in Japan.

   BACK TO NOTE REFERENCE 1

2. The Japanese expression *tennin ni mo gosui ari* 天人にも五衰 あり (translated slightly more literally as "Even heavenly beings will suffer the five characteristics of decay") is found in the *Abhidharma-kosa* by Vasubandhu (Japanese, *Kusharon* 倶舎論). Heavenly beings live in the highest of the six realms that, in Buddhist cosmology, all sentient beings pass through many times during their many lives. The other realms are fighting spirits, humans, animals, hungry ghosts, and hell. As wonderful as heaven may seem, even the heavenly being eventually dies. And the signs of this impending death—like for us humans being on our deathbeds—are the "five characteristics of decay." Various versions can be found in different texts. In the *Abhidharma-kosa* they are: (1) dirty clothing, (2) disheveled hair, (3) body odor, (4) foul sweating, (5) no longer being able to enjoy one's high status. Other Buddhist versions include that the dying person loses their aura and the dying person blinks frequently.

   BACK TO NOTE REFERENCE 2

3. In Uchiyama Rōshi's *teishō* on this point, he explains it using two Japanese words that sound alike. Both of these words, 諦める and 明らめる, can be read *akirameru*; however, their meanings are very different. The former means "to give up on or abandon

hope," in this case, give up hope of living and abandon oneself to death. The latter word means "to clarify," which is the meaning Uchiyama Rōshi is using.

BACK TO NOTE REFERENCE 3

4. Here, Rōshi uses the term *Jiko giri no Jiko* 自己ぎりの自己. Literally, it could be translated as "self that is only self."

   BACK TO NOTE REFERENCE 4

5. *Shintai-mon* refers to seeing from an absolute or undeniable perspective, while *zokutai-mon* refers to viewing things from the ordinary or perhaps social point of view that sets up the individual as a part of the whole, rather than as the whole. It would be the difference between seeing oneself as inclusive of all things and seeing oneself as just one member of the whole.

   BACK TO NOTE REFERENCE 5

6. Interestingly, Uchiyama Rōshi reads Dōgen's use of the word *dainin* 大人 to mean a "great person," but also as *otona*, the modern Japanese word for adult, or true adult. He also uses the verbs *ikiru* 生きる "to live" and *ikasu* 生かす "to give life to something," in this case all the dharmas we have been given, in the same sentence.

   BACK TO NOTE REFERENCE 6

7. Acts that are *mui* 無為 are acts performed naturally and without any human artifice of intention. If an act is intentional, then it is said to be *ui* 有 or an action carried out with intention or deliberation and, is in a sense, sullied by the intention or conscious deliberation. If we do something with the intention of doing good for someone, then the deed becomes sullied with that very intention.

BACK TO NOTE REFERENCE 7

8. The Japanese word for secretion, *bunpibutsu* 分泌物, is made up of three characters. The first character *bun* 分 is also read *wakareru*, meaning “to separate.” And the second character *pi(tsu)* 泌 is also read *shimideru* and means “to ooze or secrete.”

BACK TO NOTE REFERENCE 8

9. *Chōjō* 澄浄 is also another term for *shin* 信 or faith. The nuance of faith as dharma is not so much believing something to be true as it is to affirm and clarify true reality. It is this true reality or absolute fact/reality that Uchiyama Rōshi is encouraging us to settle in.

BACK TO NOTE REFERENCE 9

10. That is, there is a way out of suffering.

BACK TO NOTE REFERENCE 10

11. This is also the same meaning of faith in Aśvaghoṣa’s *Awakening of Faith in the Mahayana* (Japanese, *Daijō Kishinron* 大乗起信論).

BACK TO NOTE REFERENCE 11

12. *Hōkyōki* 宝鏡記 (*Record of the Hōkyō Period*) is Dōgen’s record Rujing.

BACK TO NOTE REFERENCE 12

CHAPTER THREE: APPRECIATING SERENITY/QUIETUDE—*Gyōjakujō* 楽寂静

1. Here Dōgen is picking up another passage from *Yuikyōgyō*.

   BACK TO NOTE REFERENCE 1

2. As noted, when Uchiyama Rōshi first brings this up, he is making a play on words, using the same sounds *jishinkoku* to express two different entities. *Jishinkoku* can be written as 地震国, meaning a country of earthquakes, and 次進國 meaning a backward or, in this case, unsettled country.

   BACK TO NOTE REFERENCE 2

3. Here, Uchiyama Rōshi is quoting the Buddha's words *tenjō tenge, yuiga dokuson* 天上天下唯我独尊, "I alone am the most precious."

   BACK TO NOTE REFERENCE 3

4. The Japanese term used is *shimaguni-teki nōgyōminzoku* 島国的 農業民族, "an island of insular agricultural people."

   BACK TO NOTE REFERENCE 4

5. There really is no one good translation for the original Pali word *dukkha*. The most common translation is "suffering," but in reading Uchiyama Rōshi's explanation, it should be clear that the term is subtle with many nuances. Suffering is only one option. The term also implies sorrow, lamentation, pain, grief, as well as various forms of unsatisfaction.

   BACK TO NOTE REFERENCE 5

6. Uchiyama Rōshi indeed finished writing just such a book entitled *Jinsei Ka Tokuhon* (*A Course on Human Life*), published by Hakujusha in 1980.

   BACK TO NOTE REFERENCE 6

7. In the Sōtō School, whether at Eiheiji, Sōjiji, or at one of the sixteen regional monasteries in Japan, the resident monks are given credit for living so many years in such a monastery, and it becomes part of their monastic record, for taking over an ordinary temple. Antaiji, however, is different in that as far as the Sōtō administration is concerned, no credit is given for time spent there. From the time of Sawaki Rōshi to today, the Sōtō Headquarters has tried to have Antaiji recognized as an official Sōtō School monastery where young monks can go to build up their monastic career. However, every abbot has declined to have Antaiji so recognized because then the temple would be obligated to accept anyone who was sent there, regardless of their motivation, which might be simply to accumulate years in a monastery for the sake of their career.

   BACK TO NOTE REFERENCE 7

8. Subsequently, after Uchiyama Rōshi's death, there have been abbots who have lived at Antaiji with their spouses and children; however, the temple remains unrecognized and without any income.

   BACK TO NOTE REFERENCE 8

9. It should be clear to readers by now that trying to translate the Buddhist term *Jiko* is no easy matter. There is no exact equivalent in English. Furthermore, even in ordinary Japanese, the term *Jiko* doesn't have all the connotations that Dōgen gives it. The word *self* in English has its own baggage to carry, which is

for the most part psychological and refers to an individual. Dōgen's term for this JikoJiko that is *issai gurumi* or "all-inclusive" is *jinissai-Jiko* 尽一切自己, "exhaustive, all-inclusive Jiko."

BACK TO NOTE REFERENCE 9

10. Although Uchiyama Rōshi earned a master's degree in Western philosophy, with a focus on Kantian philosophy, at Waseda University, for the most part he avoided using philosophical terms to explain Buddhism.

BACK TO NOTE REFERENCE 10

CHAPTER FOUR: MAKING DILIGENT EFFORT—*Gonshōjin* 勤精進

1. The Ministry of Education in Japan to this day decides what songs are to be learned or sung in all schools in the country.

   BACK TO NOTE REFERENCE 1

2. For Rōshi, *hinayana* referred to anyone who strives to get something out of their practice.

   BACK TO NOTE REFERENCE 2

3. Uchiyama Rōshi read and studied not only Zen writings, but extensively other scriptures as well.

   BACK TO NOTE REFERENCE 3

4. *Shōjin haramitsu* 精進波羅蜜. *Haramitsu* means “complete or perfect” and, by extension, to have arrived on the other shore.

   BACK TO NOTE REFERENCE 4

5. To strive without “mixing” means not to mix in one’s fixed ideas, one’s own agenda, or one’s narrow values.

   BACK TO NOTE REFERENCE 5

6. There is even a term that was popular at the time: *maika* マイ カー, literally “my car.” Streets became so crowded that, finally, there were even signs in Kyoto discouraging people from driving their private cars on certain streets. Today the situation has changed in that it’s almost a necessity for both spouses to work, not to enhance their wealth, but just to get by.

   BACK TO NOTE REFERENCE 6

7. That is, we can't make progress by becoming someone outside of who we are already. But we can make progress by going deeper into understanding who we already are.

   BACK TO NOTE REFERENCE 7

8. The Sanzu River or *Sanzu no Kawa* 三途の川 is the Buddhist equivalent to the river Styx.

   BACK TO NOTE REFERENCE 8

9. In Japan, when a person is approaching death and does not complain about it, it is said that that person has accepted their death in a good way. The opposite is also said: *ōjōgiwa ga warui*, the person is clinging to life or complaining about dying. Uchiyama Rōshi gave this talk more than forty years ago, and obviously medical advances have been made, but the point about not complaining about dying is something that still applies today.

   BACK TO NOTE REFERENCE 9

10. The Japanese term for "selflessness" or "no-permanent self" is *muga* 無我, derived from the Sanskrit term *anatta* or *anatman*. It is a refutation of the Hindu *atman* or "immortal soul" and separates Hindu Vedanta philosophy from Buddhism.

    BACK TO NOTE REFERENCE 10

11. In Japanese, the term usually translated as empty or emptiness or void is *kū* 空, in turn derived from the Sanskrit *śūnyatā*, meaning that there is no intrinsic or independent self-nature in all things.

    BACK TO NOTE REFERENCE 11

12. By aiming, Rōshi is using the word in the sense of having a direction one is moving in, but no set “goal,” e.g., satori, to attain.

    BACK TO NOTE REFERENCE 12

13. Dōgen’s expression *shōjō no shu* 証上の修 is the true aim of his *shikantaza* 只管打坐.

    BACK TO NOTE REFERENCE 13

CHAPTER FIVE: NOT LOSING SIGHT OF TRUE DHARMA—*Fumōnen* 不忘念

1. Rōshi had mistakenly read the kanji *mō* 忘 *wasureru* as another similar character also read *mō* 妄, meaning “deluded or flawed thinking.”

   BACK TO NOTE REFERENCE 1

2. Some people call it “progress,” although postmodernism would see it as the control over and exploitation of the masses. *Editor’s note:* John Zerzan writes extensively about this in his works, particularly in *Future Primitive Revisited*.

   BACK TO NOTE REFERENCE 2

3. Margaret Sanger was the founder of Planned Parenthood and strongly advocated for greater birth control and women’s rights.

   BACK TO NOTE REFERENCE 3

4. Uchiyama Rōshi did not have children of his own. Here, he is speaking rhetorically.

   BACK TO NOTE REFERENCE 4

5. Uchiyama Rōshi points out that part of the word *itoshimu* 愛しむ sounds like the word for string, *ito* 糸, and, in that sense, all things are tied together or connected.

   BACK TO NOTE REFERENCE 5

6. Toyotomi Hideyoshi (1536–1598) and Tokugawa Ieyasu (1543–1616) were two important historical figures, known for unifying Japan into one country.

BACK TO NOTE REFERENCE 6

7. *Muen* 無縁 means “unconnected” or “having no connection,” in this case, no offspring or relatives.

BACK TO NOTE REFERENCE 7

8. In saying this, Rōshi isn’t implying not to think about our actions; he is simply emphasizing that our actions must not be based on some expectation of what we will get from carrying out the action.

BACK TO NOTE REFERENCE 8

9. Tanaka Kakuei was the prime minister of Japan who was accused and convicted of accepting millions in dollars in bribes from Lockheed Aircraft Corporation in the mid-1970s. He died before he was sent to prison. Kodama Yoshio was also convicted of accepting millions of dollars from Lockheed.

BACK TO NOTE REFERENCE 9

10. Here, Uchiyama Rōshi is using the word *public* in a somewhat unusual way. Whereas we might normally think of *public* as the opposite of *private*, in this case, public may be understood to include the entire universe and not merely mean *public* as in public transportation, etc.

BACK TO NOTE REFERENCE 10

CHAPTER SIX: CONCENTRATING ON SETTLING IN DHYĀNA-*SAMĀDHI*—

Shuzenjō 修禅定

1. The Buddhist term used here is *zenjō* 禅定, meaning “to take in or contemplate,” or sometimes *zenna* 禅那, a transliteration of the Sanskrit *dhyāna*; also *jōryo* 静慮. *Zenjō* is comprised of two characters: Zen 禅 is a transliteration of *dhyāna*: while *jō* 定 is an interpretative translation. The two characters were then put together to form one-word *zenjō*. *Jōryo* 静慮 means to settle down and quietly ponder or winnow through the thoughts and images that arise in one’s head. These terms are transliterations from Sanskrit or Pali into Chinese or Japanese. Zazen is an interpretive translation of the Sanskrit term *dhyāna*.

   BACK TO NOTE REFERENCE 1

2. The older way of writing the character *setsu* is 攝. There’s a cupped hand 手 near three ears 耳 (for better listening).

   BACK TO NOTE REFERENCE 2

3. The Japanese expression Uchiyama Rōshi used was *moto no mokuami* 元の木阿弥. There are various explanations of its source, but one of them is about a man named Mokuami who left his wife, shaved his head, and became a monk, then went into the forest and lived off fruit and nuts. But, as he aged, he grew weaker in mind and body, and he returned to his wife. Those who had known him thought that all his years practicing hard in the forest had come to nothing. So the expression indicates a return to one’s original state.

   BACK TO NOTE REFERENCE 3

4. In Theravada Buddhist thought, there are four stages of *dhyāna* 禅定, each stage going deeper than the previous one.

   BACK TO NOTE REFERENCE 4

5. By *vehicle* is meant a mode or method of spiritual practice in Buddhism.

   BACK TO NOTE REFERENCE 5

6. *Shin* 心is a complex word with several meanings. Loosely translated, it can mean “heart” or “mind.” Broadly speaking, it can include one’s thoughts and emotions, the various sense consciousnesses (taste, sight, smell, touch, etc.), as well as one’s subconscious. The expression *shin-ikkyōshō* implies that the subject and the object are identical or, at least, not separate entities.

   BACK TO NOTE REFERENCE 6

7. Readers should bear in mind that Rōshi began these talks on the *Shōbōgenzō* in January 1978.

   BACK TO NOTE REFERENCE 7

8. Yongming Yanshou (Jap. Eimei Enju) 永明延寿 (904–975 or 976) was a Zen monk whose only writing was the *Zong jing Lu* 宗 鏡 録 (Jap. *Sugyō-roku*, Eng. *Record of the Essence of Mind*).

   BACK TO NOTE REFERENCE 8

9. “Self is nothing but self” is a translation of *Jiko giri no Jiko* 自己ぎりの自己.

   BACK TO NOTE REFERENCE 9

10. The first character of the term *jōryo* 静慮 is also read as *shizuka* and is the same character used in the expression *jakujō* or "tranquility or calmness of the mind or heart," which also means *omonbakaru* 慮る, "to consider or deliberate carefully."

    BACK TO NOTE REFERENCE 10

11. Historically, Buddhists often referred to such a demon as Māra, any evil force that hinders one's way to enlightenment.

    BACK TO NOTE REFERENCE 11

12. Here, Uchiyama Rōshi used the word *shōnin* 小人, meaning literally "a little person" or "child," contrasting it with the word *dainin* 大人, "great person," or, as Rōshi interprets it, "true adult," the word Dōgen used in our text.

    BACK TO NOTE REFERENCE 12

13. Here, I have retranslated a quote that appears earlier in Rōshi's commentary, *isshin issai hō issaihō isshin* 一心一切法、一切法一心.

    BACK TO NOTE REFERENCE 13

14. In a very interesting explanation of Buddhist compassion (*jihi*), Ogawa Ichijo of Otani University writes about the origin of compassion in Buddhist history. He states that, undoubtedly, Nagarjuna talked of compassion in his *Mahaprajnaparamita Shastra* or *Daichidoron* 大智度論 and goes on to say, "*Ji*, also read *itsukushimu* 慈しむ in Japanese, means to bestow benevolence on or mercy toward something, while *hi*, read *kanashimu* 悲しむ, means to take away suffering. Next, bestowing relief and seeing the person's suffering removed brings *ki,* read *yorokobi* 喜び, joy. And, finally, thinking that we have taken away that person's suffering and brought them joy

we must throw away even that thought of joy (*ki*).” These four characters form the Buddhist expression *jihi kisha* 慈悲喜捨. In other words, feeling compassion or benevolence toward another and relieving their suffering is fine, and feeling the joy of having done so is also fine, but then it is critical to let go of even the thought of having relieved someone’s suffering. I believe this is also behind Uchiyama Rōshi’s expression “just doing.”

BACK TO NOTE REFERENCE 14

CHAPTER SEVEN: PRACTICING WISDOM—*Shuchi'e* 修智慧

1. Taken from *Hsin-Hsin Ming* 信心銘 (Jp. *Shinjin-mei*) (*Verses on the Believing-Mind*), written by the Third Zen Ancestor, Jianzhi Sengcan 鑑智僧璨 (Jap. Kanchi Sōsan, died 606), translated by Richard B. Clarke (Buffalo, NY: White Pine Press, 2001).

   BACK TO NOTE REFERENCE 1

2. Besides meaning "everything" or "all," *jin* also implies comprehensive and all-encompassing.

   BACK TO NOTE REFERENCE 2

3. The word translated as "dignified" comes from the character *i* 威, which can be translated as "dignified" or "solemn" but also means "menacing or threatening." Rōshi writes, "From the time I was in junior high school, I hated this character *i*. In my second year, we were given a Confucian proverb, 'A man of high rank/wisdom without stateliness/augustness is a man with no dignity [*i*] and cannot command.' As soon as I read it, I hated it. Ever since, I have never been able to get into Confucianism."

   BACK TO NOTE REFERENCE 3

4. Rōshi appears to be describing something he saw in a magazine, but I'm not aware of what exactly it was, nor whether the preceding sentence is also from something he saw or just his speculation.

   BACK TO NOTE REFERENCE 4

5. That is, to hear carefully (*mon* 聞), reflect on (*shi* 思) what is the best choice using one's reason, and then carry out (*shū* 修) the

most appropriate action.

BACK TO NOTE REFERENCE 5

6. The groups listed here are part of what is referred to as the Japanese “new religions,” some dating back to the 1920s or ’30s. Some are offshoots of Buddhism or Christianity. They encourage their followers to adhere to their doctrines so as to become happy or receive fulfillment of some wish.

   BACK TO NOTE REFERENCE 6

7. *Naturalist heretics* is a translation of the Japanese expression *tennen gedō* 天然外道.

   BACK TO NOTE REFERENCE 7

8. In this case, *eye* is used as a metaphor for wisdom.

   BACK TO NOTE REFERENCE 8

9. *Shishisōjō (shishisōshō)* 師資相承refers to the transmission from a teacher, the first teacher being Shakyamuni Buddha, to the disciple of the wisdom (enlightenment) of the Buddha. Concretely, this refers not only to the passing on of knowledge, but also of how to actually practice and what practice is all about.

   BACK TO NOTE REFERENCE 9

10. The full expression occurs in Article 10 of Prince Shotoku’s Constitution of Seventeen Articles: “I am not necessarily a saint nor is the other necessarily a fool. We are both just ordinary human beings.”

    BACK TO NOTE REFERENCE 10

11. Uchiyama Rōshi told the author any number of times that there was hardly a day when he didn’t want to leave Antaiji.

BACK TO NOTE REFERENCE 11

12. In Uchiyama Rōshi's teishō to his students, he often said that he never thought of himself as the "perfect" teacher. And, if he said something that seemed odd or not right, then we should set it aside and think about it later.

BACK TO NOTE REFERENCE 12

13. The *kunyomi* or Japanese reading for the first character *setsu* 接 in the word *sesshin* 接心 can be *tsugu* 接ぐ meaning to connect or graft. *Sesshin* can also be written 摂 or 攝心, where the character for *setsu* means to take in or receive. Both characters are quite interesting. The first instance of *setsu* 接 is written with three parts, a hand that is standing (above) a woman, perhaps implying connection. The second instance of *setsu* 攝 is a cupped hand listening with three ears. The second character of the word *sesshin* is *shin* 心, often translated as "heart or mind" but also meaning "essence."

BACK TO NOTE REFERENCE 13

14. In Japanese, Uchiyama uses an unusual expression *tsugi-shin suru* 接ぎ心する, meaning "to take care or be attentive to" the graft or transmission that has been received.

BACK TO NOTE REFERENCE 14

15. In the text, *byakue* 白衣 refers to the white robes that lay followers were allowed to wear. Monks were not allowed to wear any clothing of a primary or striking color. They had to be a dark color, hence, black became the most common color for monks' robes.

BACK TO NOTE REFERENCE 15

CHAPTER EIGHT: NOT ENGAGING IN USELESS ARGUMENT—*Fukeron* 不戯論

1. The term *nijō* 二乗 or “two vehicles” refers to the practices of those who strive to rid themselves of the three poisons or *sandoku* 三毒—anger, greed, and ignorance—and thereby become saints. There were those who heard the Buddha’s words but interpreted it in their own way. They were called *shōmon* 声聞 or *śrāvaka*. And there were those who became “self-enlightened” without having practiced with a teacher. They were referred to as *engaku* 縁覚 or *pratyekabuddha*. The term *nijō* can also be used to differentiate between Mahayana Buddhism 大乗仏教 and hinayana Buddhism 小乗仏教.

   BACK TO NOTE REFERENCE 1

2. In Volume 4, page 452 of Mizuno Yaoko’s edition of *Shōbōgenzō*, there is a footnote to this passage in the fascicle *Yuibutsu Yobutsu*. From: *Shobogenzo*, vol. 4, trans. Mizuno Yaoko (Tokyo: Iwanami Shoten, 1993). Mizuno defines *hotoke no mujōbodai* 無上菩提 as “a person who is completely one with the true reality of *Jiko*—universal self.”

   BACK TO NOTE REFERENCE 2

3. *Shukō* 趣向, which I have translated as “free of discriminating,” implies moving, by intention, in this direction, or avoiding, by intention or desire, that direction. As it is negated, the implication is to *not* be moved by one’s personal intention or scheming.

   BACK TO NOTE REFERENCE 3

CLOSING COMMENTS

1. In subsequent teishō, Rōshi talked on three other fascicles of *Shōbōgenzō* in *Deepest Practice, Deepest Wisdom—Three Fascicles from Shōbōgenzō with Commentaries* by Kōshō Uchiyama, translated by Daitsū Tom Wright and Shōhaku Okumura (Somerville, MA: Wisdom Publications, 2018).

   BACK TO NOTE REFERENCE 1

2. The *Zengaku Daijiten* defines *fumōnen* 不忘念 as "not forgetting the clear, pure or subtle teaching." *Nen* here is understood not so much to mean thought as it is to refer to being mindfully aware.

   BACK TO NOTE REFERENCE 2

3. That is, there are no boundaries in our practice; it is ongoing and lifelong.

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4. It is said that the Buddha, when referring to himself, called himself *Tathāgata—Nyorai*, "like coming," to indicate that he was not simply a particular or fixed entity or human being, but rather that his appearance was, in a sense, ephemeral.

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EPILOGUE

1. From Henry Fountain, “Shift to a Not-So-Frozen North Is Well Underway, Scientists Warn,” *New York Times*, December 8, 2020, https://www.nytimes.com/2020/12/08/climate/arctic-climate-change.html.

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