

DHARMA EYE



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News of Soto Zen Buddhism: Teachings and Practice in North America

Buddhism and Peace: From the viewpoint of Buddhist NGO, Shanthi Volunteer Association(SVA)

By Rev. Zendo Matsunaga
President of Shanthi Volunteer Association



The September 11th terrorist attack on New York City has mercilessly ruined our deepest wish to make the 21st century as a century of no war. This incident has profoundly shaken the whole world. But six months after this horrible event, it now appears to be becoming one of many foolish things we performed in human history. The concept of "century" is only used within the western culture (including Japan and most western nations). Regardless of the fact that this stupid act happened at the beginning of new century we must admit that all the creatures on the earth, including human beings, have been killing each other for sake of the survival of their own species. If we leave it as it is, the events of September 11th will become only a part of this ongoing historical process. The mass-killing among human beings in modern times is the result of political and economic greed. We, as rational beings, must make a sincere effort to realize our common hope to end this vicious cycle of killing.

I think it is quite natural for people to declare "This is a war!" because it was a very brutal act targeted against a peaceful city without warning. But we should reflect deeply about the reasons behind this event. Nevertheless I cannot help but feel indescribable rage when I consider that more than three thousand precious lives were cruelly taken away in a moment. I want to express my heartfelt sorrow over the death of all the victims. SVA sent some support and condolences through AFS, which has a head office in Pennsylvania. SVA has collaborated with AFS several times in the past. There is no difference between

terrorism and war. Both are the act of killing. Killing is nothing but a terrible criminal act regardless of the reason.

PEACE?

Japan has not directly involved with any wars for more than fifty years. It seems that Japan has been enjoying the peace so much as to say we are numbed with peace. If peace means being in the state of no war, Japan is definitely at peace. But it does not necessarily mean that all the citizens living in a nation not at war feel truly peaceful. We can truly feel peaceful only when we can trust the security of our life and have a hope for a bright future.

We can not say that simply because we live in a condition of no war we have security. The terrorist attack happened at the center of the nation that is at the forefront of modern civilization and is the strongest military power in the world. The retaliatory attack was made at the area almost unknown to the common people. We were shocked to realize that there was no place in the world to hide.

I experienced the World War II when I was an elementary school student. But I have almost forgotten the terror I experienced that time and have made myself believe that Japan is a peaceful nation renouncing any war and that peace and security are equally guaranteed every place on the Earth. However for what is now almost twenty years since 1989 when I was invited to join the work in support of Cambodian refugees, I have been forced, to my great dismay, to realize that we human beings are the creatures with totally irresolvable contra-

dictions. In Cambodia two million out of seven and a half millions people were massacred or forcefully moved by the people in power only because they were intellectuals. Many of them were killed due to severe forced labor and malnutrition.

In Laos, the country neighboring Cambodia, there are a variety of minorities called "mountain people". Each of these minority groups had its own traditional culture and had been living a peaceful life in harmony with nature. They do not have a national consciousness but rather an ethnic consciousness. Therefore they did not recognize any national borders. On the other hand, the majority, called the Lao, established a nation called Laos. This caused a deep conflict between these groups, something approaching a struggle for existence. The minorities were assimilated, discriminated against, their right to live was threatened, and they were forced to become refugees. The same things have often happened in Myanmar, China and other Asian countries. There are also a variety of minorities who are in this kind of situation in Africa, in Afghanistan, which became the target of recent retaliatory bombing, in the Middle East and South America. Each of these minority groups has been living with its own traditional culture, including unique language, customs and the pride of being an independent people. Haven't we human beings killed, expelled and subordinated those powerless people with military force in order to satisfy our greed, to gain the economic and political domination? I have born witness to such foolish acts since I began working with the support project for Cambodian refugees.

It might be said that our endless desires have enormously developed human civilization. But it also can be said that we have lost so many things because of them. We are approaching the point where we can totally destroy the whole world by our foolish acts. We are living in the modern age when we can use scientific technologies to create weapons of mass destruction and control the lives of plants, animals, and human beings. The progress of civilization will not necessarily bring about peace. If we want it we will have to make peace ourselves. We have not yet accomplished it. Every year religious leaders come together from all over the world and pray, meditate, walk, have symposiums and many discussions about world peace. But we still have wars in many places. The global environment is getting worse year after year. Global warming is becoming a more and more serious problem...Of course we cannot return to the ancient life style. So what should we do now? We have not come to any conclusions on this matter yet.

SVA

In 2000 the Sotoshu International Volunteer Association finally became a corporate body, twenty years

after its foundation, fulfilling their long-cherished wish. At that time they changed their name to the Shanti International Volunteer Association (SVA), and have continued to offer underprivileged children, mainly in Southeast Asia, an opportunity to receive education. But like other NGOs in Japan, SVA has been suffering from a constant shortage of funds and human resources. The recent Japanese economic depression has made this situation much worse. Currently there are very few Japanese NGOs working outside Japan. This has drawn people's attention to SVA, and raised expectations almost beyond our capacity to fulfill them. As a result, SVA has had to extend its activity to the support of refugees, the support of cultural/educational projects, the development of farming villages and the response to the urgent needs...etc.. But I believe that in light of the present situation, SVA has to focus its energy on assisting underprivileged people (mainly children) and promoting their cultural and educational improvement.

Originally SVA was organized as a volunteer group to help refugees from one Buddhist country, Cambodia. It had neither the know-how nor the funds to help refugees outside Japan. In 1979 during the exodus of refugees from Indochina, other Japanese Buddhist sects also began fund-raising to help them. But they just donated the collections to UNHCR, Japan Red Cross and some mass media. We were strongly criticized by the world community who seemed to believe that the Japanese people thought the money solved the problem, and that Japanese Buddhists did not have sufficient empathy to feel the pain of other Asian people. This bitter criticism shocked the Japanese Buddhist circles and Sotoshu sent some volunteers to the place. Arriving there the Japanese volunteers were just amazed to see the advanced NGO activities of western countries in contrast to their own.

The people taken in to the Holding Center for Cambodian refugees had narrowly escaped from forced labor, malnutrition and land mines. Most of them had lost their families and had been wounded. They passed the Thai border with difficulty and had at last arrived at the Center. Near the borders there were more than ten Holding Centers for refugees. More than one million people, including those who could not pass the border, were surging in to those centers.

Cambodian leading Buddhist monk, Maha Gosananda was there at the border to receive Cambodian people who escaped from their own country. At that time he was staying in Thailand because due to the war he was unable to return to his temple after teaching Buddhism in Thailand. When he got the news that a lot of Cambodian refugees were gathering at the border, he ran the risk of coming to help them. Most of the refugees were women, old people and children. They were so weak that they did

not have enough strength to climb up into the truck on their own. Skinny Maha Gosananda worked so hard, sweating, to push them up to the truck. Western newspaper writers criticized him, saying that his activity was not in accordance with Theravada monk's precepts. He answered, "If the Buddha were here, he would have done the same thing".

The first center SVA went to help was Sakeo Camp located 40 kilometers west of the border. More than seventy thousand refugees were taken in to this camp. It was a center in name only. Under the blue plastic sheets supported by bamboo poles about one meter long, the people were laying down on the ground like rags one on top of another. There was some drainage, but there were pools of stagnant water all around. It formed dark green mud under the strong sunlight. All day long we could see the black smoke of dead bodies being burned on the outskirts of the camp. We heard the voices of children. Those voices told us that some people were still alive there.

We felt that something was different at the places in the camp where children gathered. Even though those children were almost naked and their bodies were so thin, their eyes were radiating a light very different from their surroundings. Their eyes were not clouded by the fear they experienced, the suffering of losing loved ones, and their hunger. We strongly felt that we could do something to help them. We played with them and we brought crayons and paper and asked them to draw something. What we saw in their drawings were all guns, tanks and battles. Some children drew pictures in which their fathers were being killed by Pol Pot's soldiers, or pictures in which their brothers were bleeding. We realized that those terrible scenes had sunk deeply into their mind.

SVA started its activities based on the hope that we could help these children truly smile. We have established schools and educational environments, built libraries and provided them with picture books. We also built places where they could learn traditional Cambodian culture. Since then the field of education has become SVA's specialty.

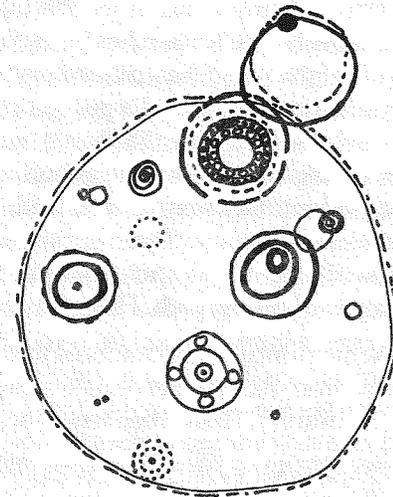
To protect the citizen's peace should be the government's job and its responsibility. But in reality this is not always possible for all the nations on the earth. What we were taught by the tragedy of Cambodia was that we ourselves must first of all learn what is going on and that we must figure out how to share the sorrow and how to live together. SVA's motto is now "To learn together, To live together". This is same as Buddha's teaching of Dependent Co-origination. SVA's activity has been sustained by pure-hearted generosity from many supporters who expect nothing in the way of reward. Their support reaches the children in Cambodia and helps them have cheerful voices. And their cheerful voices encourage their

families. This eventually will lead to the recovery of the Cambodian nation and people. When these things happen, this is also the realization of "the teaching of purity and emptiness of three (donor, recipient, and donation)".

After twenty years of war in Cambodia, the refugees now can return to their home country and the rebel forces have been disbanded. But their wounds are not yet completely healed.

In Afghanistan the problems have just begun. I do not know how long SVA will be able to continue its activity. As long as this earth exists, we will have to handle a series of problems such as wars, conflicts, natural disasters, violations of human rights, environmental crisis and so on. SVA's official name is Shanti International Volunteer Association. Shanti (serenity, peace, nirvana) is a common noun for "peace" in Southeast Asia. In the spirit of this name we hope to make ceaseless efforts toward the realization of world peace.

*shanthi=nirvana, serenity(santa in Pali) In Southeast Buddhist countries people are using this word as a common noun to mean "peace".





What Is To Be Done?

Hozan Alan Senauke
Berkeley Zen Center
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What is to be done? These very words, translated from Russian, are the title of Lenin's famous 1902 polemic on the development of a revolutionary movement, something I studied long ago. Similar words are frequently spoken in the Pali suttas when the Buddha helps a disciple to the revolutionary ground of enlightenment. "What must be done has been done!" And today, now months after September 11, anthrax scares, bombing in Afghanistan, the Taliban's fall, and open-ended hostilities, many of us are still asking "What is to be done?"

Seeds planted earlier in life germinate when proper conditions arise. This is a fact beyond good or bad, right or wrong. We live in the conditional world of samsara. In Zen practice we try to remember what is originally known—that samsara and nirvana are not separate. Remembering, realizing this is the hard work of Zen. So here I hesitantly offer these conditional and still-forming views. Shakyamuni Buddha teaches us that "right view" or samma-ditthi is the ending of attachment to views. This is both path and goal. In either case, I am still on that long road.

The unfolding events of these last months haunt my dreams. Images of the World Trade Center and the Pentagon are etched in my mind. A jet passing overhead calls up images afresh. The Taliban has been defeated, but the bombing of Afghanistan has created more refugees and victims from among the world's poorest people, people who themselves were the Taliban's victims. The destabilization of Afghanistan and neighboring countries affected by U.S.-led military strife carries unthinkable but real risks of nuclear weapons. There are times when the sorrow of it all nails me to the spot. And yet we have to keep moving forward on the path. How shall we do that?

There are some principles or practices that I find very useful, borrowed from the Zen Peacemaker Order and the Peacemaker Community. Their three tenets are:

Not-knowing, giving up fixed ideas about ourselves and the universe;

Bearing witness to the joy and suffering of the world;

Healing ourselves and others;

"Not knowing" is deeply challenging for us. It means letting go of one's own sense of righteousness and fear, and being willing not to have the answers. It calls for

patient endurance. At the same time not knowing calls us to recognize all points of view: the views of George Bush, Osama Bin Laden, His Holiness the Dalai Lama, Jerry Falwell, our neighbor, the person sitting next to us in the zendo, oneself. Each person's view, however we might recoil from it, fully expresses life in this world of causes and conditions. And within ourselves is the human potential to embody each view.

"Bearing witness" is about seeing oneself in intimate relationship with beings. This relationship is so awesome that the proper response is to sit down and become fully receptive. To sit quietly and pay attention. Zazen. One meaning of bearing witness is that we must bear or endure what we see and hear. Avalokitesvara Bodhisattva is the hearer of the cries of the world. We try to be like her. So we go to the places in the world and in our body-mind where suffering and joy manifest, to see and learn as much as we can about causes and conditions. To touch the common identity we share with all others.

Bearing witness also means to study the suffering of all beings and to locate that suffering in ourselves. This goes hand in hand with not knowing. We bear witness to the falling WTC towers, and the thousands of people who died there. We bear witness to Afghan women suffering under Taliban oppression, and to the suffering of the Taliban themselves. We bear witness to the simple joys that persist in our lives, like grass pushing up through cracks in the sidewalk.

A further meaning of bearing witness is to carry our witness to others, to help people see life as we see it. And to see things as they see them. We have an opportunity to forge links with people from other faiths. To visit neighborhood mosques and temples, to open our eyes to life in countries where people don't have the wealth and hi-tech machines many of us share. The responsibility of bearing witness flows from seeing reality as it is.

"Healing ourselves and others" is the third tenet. These tenets and practices never move in a linear fashion. Each one is constantly informing the others. Healing proceeds from inside to outside, then back again. Healing is what happens as one sits in the meditation hall watching the tide of feelings and thought. It is creating circles where our friends and community can speak about what we are experiencing. It is writing to our leaders, organizing or participating in silent vigils and demonstrations. The Quakers call this "speaking truth to power."

The Buddha's teaching of peace is the truth we try to bring forth. In the Dhammapada Verse 5 the Buddha said "Hatred (or hostility) is never appeased by hatred in this world; by non-hatred alone is hatred appeased. This is an Eternal Law." Terrorism, the violence of bombs, the structural violence of starvation will bear fruit in more

violence. Ending violence in ourselves and in our own society is the path to healing. Can we take a stand that is both strong and kind? Can our vision and language include all suffering people, including ourselves, without falling into a warm and fuzzy all-sidedness. Thich Nhat Hanh writes, "You have to work for the survival of the other side if you want to survive yourself. It is really very simple. Survival means survival of humankind as a whole, not just part of it." When we engage honestly, fearlessly with friends, foes, and ourselves, we are risking peace. Then we know we are completely alive.

Dogen's Genjo Koan ends with the following famous case.

Zen master Boache of Mt. Mayu was fanning himself. A monk approached and said, "Master, the nature of wind is permanent and there is no place it does not reach. Why, then, do you fan yourself?"

"Although you understand that the nature of the wind is permanent," Baoche replied, "you do not understand the meaning of its reaching everywhere."

"What is the meaning of it reaching everywhere?" asked the monk again. The master just kept fanning himself. The monk bowed deeply.

What is to be done? Even though all beings without exception are Buddha, we still must realize it. Fanning is necessary practice, our work of realization. And fanning keeps the wind of Buddha nature in constant circulation, so inherent realization may manifest for all—Americans, Afghans, Israelis, Palestinians, Indians, Pakistanis, and so on—irrespective of faith, culture, race, class, gender. Our work is to keep fanning. By our efforts, by our practice, winds of change rise in the wilderness of our suffering, and reach everywhere.

The Teaching of the World Trade Center Destruction

A Talk Given on September 16, 2001

Enkyo O'Hara
Village Zendo, Dotokuji



It has been five days now since the attack that caused such devastation and suffering just a few blocks from here. Because our Zendo is so close to the site, we were not able to enter the building until yesterday, so we have been doing zazen and bearing witness through council practice in Washington Square Park and at my home. It is wonderful to be back in our Zendo this morning with such a big gathering. In times like this we realize how much we depend on a spiritual practice. And in our case, it's a practice that tells us that there's nothing to depend on. It's a practice that does not tell us what's right and what's wrong. It does not tell us what to love and what to hate.

Our practice forces us to have great courage, great daring. To participate in each moment, and to act appropriately in each moment -- without a set of rules, a set of ideas, that will dictate our actions and our response to what's around us. It's a very daring and courageous act, to practice in this tradition, to directly face suffering, anger, and fear.

Remember the story of Kisagotami who ran crying and distraught to Shakyamuni Buddha, holding her dead baby boy, begging him to give her medicine to bring him back to life. The Buddha said that he did know of a medicine, but that she must find it herself. He told her to bring him a handful of mustard seed from a household where no one had died. She went to the first household, and they said: "Oh, we'll bring you mustard seed. But -- oh, no ... grandfather died last year; we can't give you the mustard seed." And so, as you might imagine, Kisagotami went to every home in the village, asking for a mustard seed from a family which had not experienced death and suffering, and at each home she was told that someone in that household had died. Very, very slowly the wisdom of the teaching of the Buddha began to sink into her.

Finally, she walked back and still holding the dead infant, said to the Buddha: "The teaching of the mustard seed is complete. I now see that all people face death and suffering."

We grieve for those who were killed in our city, and for their loved ones -- and we also grieve for all the people that are dying today all over the world. For the people

who are dying in Africa of AIDS; the people who are starving to death in impoverished regions of the world. Today, at this very moment, there are babies that are dying of malnutrition, young children maimed by violence and greed. We must also be aware of that. And we must remember that this great earth that we sit on is in agony from the unskillful plundering of earth, air and water.

And so the teaching of the mustard seed reminds us of the dying and suffering that is going on all the time in this world. No one is untouched by these aspects of life. In another sutra, the Buddha is reported to have said that people come to Bodhicitta, the mind of enlightenment, in three different ways. There are those who, upon hearing of a tragedy in the next village, realize the truth of suffering and death. And they vow to accomplish the way to raise their awakened mind. But that's a very few number of people. For most people it's when someone in their own village is afflicted. Which is the case with us. This is our village. And, so, upon hearing about the suffering and death of so many people here, we can raise the Bodhi Mind -- and realize that we must end our own suffering, and that of others, by seeking the truth within ourselves. And the third group -- the most hardheaded of the lot -- must wait until the suffering touches them personally. Until it is they, themselves, who carry the illness or the loss of another. And only then can they truly realize The Way.

But does it really matter, as long as you see the way, whether or not you realize it because you have a diagnosis, or your loved one has a diagnosis? Or whether or not you realized it today, as we were chanting the names of many of those who died in the tragedy? Or whether it was when you heard about the Holocaust, Hiroshima, or Bhopal, that you realized that suffering is everywhere?

And what is that Bodhicitta? What is that Mind of Buddha that we raise? It's the teaching of Prajna, of Great Wisdom, which excludes nothing. Which includes everything -- the black smoke and the blue sky. Did you notice that the names of the perpetrators weren't on the list of people who had perished? Didn't they also die in the crash? Why were the names of the perpetrators not on the list? What kind of automatic separation does this reveal? Did you notice that when the Ino gave the dedication, that he included the names and the suffering of those who caused this event? Because nothing and no one is left out. We cannot leave anything out.

And we can't leave out the anger and sadness we may be feel-



ing right now. We must acknowledge our feelings, because not acknowledging them is what splits them off from our experience of consciousness and creates ideas of an 'other' which embodies what we cannot acknowledge: the bad, the evil, the separate-from-me. And this is precisely what leads to a great and horrible suffering in the world.

Maybe that doesn't seem to make sense -- and, yet, that is it. Of course it doesn't make sense. What's this about making sense? It's a paradox -- it's a reality. We are a form that experiences emotions -- fear, and anger and delusion. We experience desire, craving, hatred, aversion. But as long as we don't solidify around these things -- solidify by raising them up as truth, or repressing them as nonexistent, then we can be fresh and free in each moment, acknowledging and letting go in the flow of natural reactions. By not solidifying around our emotions, by not giving them a name and a rationale and an ideology, we refrain from creating 'isms' -- racism, nationalism, yes, even Buddhism. The 'isms' become our prisons.

And we are an emptiness that experiences that there is nowhere to stand -- there's no place to hold onto. And in that "no place to hold onto" is our complete and utter freedom. So we read these names of those who were lost on Tuesday, and then we sit -- and for each one of us different things arise. And let's say that rage arises. And we see it arise, and we just watch it -- and it falls away. And fear arises, and we just look at it -- and it falls away. And maybe it doesn't fall away for weeks. And, yet, we know we have to continue to sit, and we have to continue to observe it -- because, eventually, it will fall away. If we're awake, and aware, and we haven't started believing the story line. And that's why we sit.

Trust it -- the power of the practice. It changes us. And as Dogen Zenji tells us, even a single person sitting changes the world. As I look



around the room, almost every other person I see has been involved in some kind of volunteer activity. You have cooked food, served food, rubbed sore muscles, listened to frightened families, held hands, cried and talked and listened. And those of you who were not directly volunteering, please don't fall into the ultimate kind of neurotic story about how you weren't of help. You were of help, you are of help. By being present ... by listening, by standing in the street. By looking in the eyes of someone who can't look. By listening to someone who's filled with rage and wants to kill. Simply to bear witness -- to really listen to them. And simply by bearing witness to your own experience in each moment.

These are the acts of a Bodhisattva -- to truly serve in that way. We have to drop our striving, desiring and clinging ego. Drop that for a moment and simply listen to what you don't want to hear. Because nothing is excluded from our life. Everything that appears in our life is our life. This tragedy is our life. Because we're here -- because we're interconnected with all of the people involved. We are implicated and responsible. With everyone who was involved. And only by owning that responsibility can we begin to make things change -- to make a difference.

It is all connected. There's this tragedy; there's our own Buddha mind; there's the reality of suffering in the world. There's our rage; there's our fear. All of it is within the one great bright pearl of the world.

Can we see that bright pearl in the midst of the soot, and the black smoke, and the choked feelings that we all feel for those that died? And realize there is nothing that is left out of this. And that our work is to be as spacious as we can be. To open our hearts as greatly as we can, and not deny our feelings or those of others around us. Do not deny them their experience -- but see that as part of the great, precious, bright pearl of our lives.



Soto Zen in America (5) Zen at School

Prof. John R. McRae
Indiana University

What's up with Zen at school? I've been getting mixed signals from the people I talk to, and I'd like your help in figuring out what's going on. (I'll give an e-mail address below.)

Here are the impressions I've formed, which you'll see are pretty contradictory. I'll pose questions as I go along.

Quite a number of Soto Zen teachers lead meditation classes and meetings at colleges. In spite of this on-going effort, I'm told that these classes generally do not lead to increased participation or membership. That is, students come to the classes, sit a bit and talk a bit, then go their separate ways. They do not tend to become active members of the given teacher's center or group. I wonder: Is this impression accurate? In addition, are there any meditation classes being held at high schools, or at off-campus locations but aimed at secondary school students?

In contrast to five or ten years ago, there are significant numbers of late teenagers and twenty-somethings participating in Soto Zen activities, including meditation retreats. We used to talk about how even those people who became newly interested in Zen were most often in their fifties and sixties, who had heard of Zen for many years but just hadn't gotten around to trying it yet. This generalization—if it ever was true—simply isn't accurate anymore. Everyplace I go there seems to be a pretty good distribution of the participants across the generations. So: Are these generalizations accurate for your center, both past and present?

Where are the younger Zen students coming from? At one meeting in Portland last November (a combined meeting of the Dharma Rain and Zen Community of Oregon groups), about twenty-five of us went around the room and explained how we'd become interested in Zen. I wasn't taking notes, but Chozen Bays mentioned to me afterward that quite a number of people, perhaps half of those present, had mentioned college courses as part of their initial inspiration.

The inference is clear, but is it accurate? That is, the impressions stated above seem to imply that college courses on Asian religions do more to lead students to Soto Zen practice than the activities of Soto Zen teachers themselves. This has odd implications for both academic faculty and Zen teachers. That is, we academic faculty may have a greater impact on our students' lives than we think, even when we work to keep proselytization out of

the classroom. (And I'm not sure that other faculty are as strict about this as I am.) But maybe the inference is off-target because there just haven't been enough Zen teachers to go around (yet).

Recently, students and I in a graduate seminar read a book called "Religion on Campus", a detailed ethnographic description of religious activities at four different colleges and universities around the country. I was very impressed by the different ways and human levels by which Christian pastoral services reach out to students. Religious groups not only create worship opportunities, but also provide for emotional support, social bonding, and friendship. (Yes, they also create comfortable dating environments.) In order to offer these services, different traditional denominations and newer evangelical movements provide significant staffing and other institutional support to campus ministries—we're talking serious bucks and lifetimes of dedication here. Although the research did not attempt to track how many students remained active participants of the religious groups in question after graduation, many of those interviewed discussed their futures in terms of continued involvement.

The co-authors of this particular book seemed to be thoroughly uninterested in Asian religions on campus—at least, they found virtually none of it. In only one of the four institutions they studied was there a Zen center in the vicinity, and they failed to visit it to gauge student involvement. Is it possible that Soto Zen and other Asian religious groups have an essentially negligible role on American college campuses?

One hypothesis is that Zen groups that make some provision for social bonding will attract teens and twenty-somethings better than those which do not. That is, groups where people simply come to do zazen and study Dogen's teachings together, but do not have pot-luck dinners, social work outings, Zen-at-the-movies video nights, or other group activities, will attract relatively fewer younger people. On the other hand, groups that effectively cater to students' lives will have greater student participation. (Homer Simpson would say, "D'oh!") At one Zen retreat center I have visited, there seemed to be a healthy recognition that students will come and go, and some of those present were undertaking a few months of Zen training in between college graduation and moving on to graduate or medical school. (I call this "semester at Zen.") Does this happen elsewhere?

In addition to meditation groups on campus, Soto Zen teachers around the country are also deeply involved in "prison Dharma," the teaching of meditation to prisoners. There are good humanitarian reasons for this activity, which may transcend the institutional consequences. However, I can't help but wonder if the time devoted to the prison population does not overly detract from the

abilities of small meditation centers to reach larger numbers of people?

If you have answers, comments, or responses to any of the questions posed above, please send them to me at jmcrae@indiana.edu. Please use "Zen at school" in the subject line. I look forward to hearing from you!



My Zazen Sankyū Notebook (9)

Rev. Issho Fujita
Pioneer Valley Zendo
With translation assistance from
Tesshin Brooks

Fragmentary Thought XVIII
<Zazen as "Whole and One" 1>
Zazen posture as "whole and one" (2)

When we correct zazen posture, we must keep in mind that the impact of adjusting one part of the posture inevitably spreads all over the body following "the law of simultaneous and interrelated link-movement" mentioned in the last article. It is highly possible that improving the posture in one part of the body might result in making other parts worse. Moreover unless we can correct the fundamental cause which is the focal point of postural distortion (the crucial spot for the correct posture, that is, the lower back and neck in many cases), partial corrections often have only momentary effects. Therefore in order to correct the sitting posture, we have to have a wholistic and fundamental-cause-oriented approach by observing the posture as a whole, instead of partial and syndrome-oriented approach by focusing only on isolated parts of the posture.

The question is: How to deepen the correct zazen posture as "whole and one"? We should study and embody the wisdom of "the grammar of body" through daily practice of zazen. This "grammar" gives us concrete knowledge such as how moving one bodily part influences other parts of the body (the law of simultaneous and interrelated link-movement) and which parts of the body are crucial to correct the posture (vital spots of the posture).

When we begin zazen practice, we are so much caught up with the part-by-part instructions for each part of the body that we feel that all the bodily parts are separated from each other and they are totally out of order. So it is very difficult for us to physically feel our zazen posture as an integrated one. It is as if each bodily part is willfully asserting itself and is loudly complaining about being uncomfortable. It is a state of being "unsettled". But as we gradually manage to become intimate with zazen over time, we slowly begin to understand the grammar of body and to master the sitting posture. Then in zazen we can naturally feel the sense of integration and the sense of oneness. And these senses steadily become deeper. It is as if each bodily part can get along with other parts and all the parts are peacefully and quietly coming home to the totality of sitting posture. It is a state of being "settled". In the last article I expressed this state of being "settled" as "all parts are embraced by and melted into one big pose of flesh and bone". If I explain this state more concretely, it is the sense that all the weight is falling on the center of lower abdomen (the so-called Tanden in Japanese) and simultaneously the fullness (the force) we feel at that spot is spreading and permeating toward every corner of body. In this way we feel the deep sense of integration between the center and the other parts of body.

We feel these sensations of inner bodily conditions mainly through tactile sense, particularly deep somatic sensations (sensations from muscles, tendons and joints) and internal organ (visceral) sensations. Both are sometime called inner tactile senses. In zazen we aim at the correct sitting posture with our flesh and bones. Therefore it is very important for us to be able to clearly detect the information about the qualities of our inner bodily conditions (comfortable-uncomfortable, the relationship with gravity, muscle tone, bodily shape...etc). That is why our "inner receptors" have to be working very sensitively. So-called "five senses" mainly receive the information from outside. In our everyday life we tend to put too much emphasis on these "outer receptors". Zazen is described as "to take the backward step that turns the light and shines it inward". This expression maybe indicates that to practice zazen is to make a shift from the dominance of "outer receptors" to the dominance of "inner receptors".

The sense of integration or the sense of oneness is not

something fixed but something that is always subtly changing and flickering depending on many conditions of the moment, such as the precision of the posture and the sensitivity of our inner receptors...etc. It is a stream-like sensation vaguely felt by the practitioner's whole body, corresponding to the degree of whole-and-one-ness of zazen. It is different from the physical pain which has a strong intensity and clear locality. It is a kind of elusive sensation which is very vague, unclear and spreads throughout the whole body.

To cultivate the sensitivity for such a subtle sense of oneness, to refine and clarify it is to polish the ability to know, at a very deep level, how well one's sitting posture is regulated. As for the problem of zazen as "whole and one", we must examine not only the appearance of the sitting posture (He is sitting so beautifully!) but also inner qualities of sitting posture which can be only experienced through inner tactile sensitivity. And that aspect of the posture is more important than its outer shape.

Dogen Zenji's Genjo-koan Lecture (10)

Rev. Shohaku Okumura

Director, Soto Zen Education Center

(Edited by Koshin Steve Kelly)

(text: section11)

When a fish swims, no matter how far it goes, it doesn't reach the end of the water. When a bird flies, no matter how high it flies, it cannot reach the end of the sky. Only, when their need is great, their range is large. When their need is small, their range is small. In this way, each fish and each bird uses the whole space and vigorously acts in every place. However, if a bird departs from the sky, or a fish leaves the water, they immediately die. We should know that, [for a fish] water is life, [for a bird] sky is life. A bird is life; a fish is life. Life is a bird; life is a fish. And we should go beyond this. There is practice/enlightenment-- this is the way of living beings.

Fish and Bird in Zazen

In Genjo-koan, in order to discuss the meaning of our practice, Dogen Zenji uses various examples such as flowers and weeds, a mirror and its reflection, the moon and water, and firewood and ash. Such examples make his writing poetic and attractive. In the previous section he used the example of a person in a boat sailing on the midst of the ocean. In this section Dogen Zenji will once again introduce an analogy from the natural world in order to make his discussion more concrete. In this example, the fish and birds activity is more direct and immediate than a person sailing on the ocean. Later, however in Shobogenzo Zenki (Total Function, written in 1243) Dogen Zenji once again will use the analogy of a person in a boat.

In Shobogenzo Zazen-shin (The Acupuncture Needle of Zazen) written in 1242 (9 years after Genjo-koan), Dogen discusses Wanshi Shogaku's verse entitled "Zazen-shin." Wanshi Shogaku (Hongzhi Zhengjue, 1091-1157) was a famous Chinese Soto (Tsaodong) Zen Master. He was the abbot of Tiantong monastery for almost thirty years from 1129 to his death in 1157. It is said that during his abbacy, the temple buildings were completed and accommodated twelve hundred monks. Tiantong was also the monastery where Dogen practiced several decades later with his teacher Nyojo (Rujing). Wanshi was well known for his excellent poetry and composed verses on 100 koans. Later Bansho Gyoshu (Wansong Xingxiu, 1166-1246) wrote commentaries on his verses and created the Shoyoroku (Book of Serenity) which is still studied by Zen students today. Dogen respected Wanshi and called him Wanshi Kobutsu (Ancient Buddha) and quoted many of Wanshi's verses and formal discourses in his own discourses recorded in the Eihei-koroku (The Extensive Record of Eihei Dogen). This verse on the Zazen-shin by Wanshi is obviously the source of Dogen's analogy of the fish and birds found in Genjo-koan. My translation of Wanshi's verse is as follows.

Zazen-shin

The essential-function of each buddha and the functioning-essence of each ancestor.

Knowing without touching things.

Illuminating without facing objects.

Knowing without touching things, the wisdom is by nature inconspicuous.

Illuminating without facing objects, the illumination is by nature subtle.

The wisdom, that is by nature inconspicuous, never has discriminative thoughts.

The illumination, that is by nature subtle, never has the slightest separation.

The wisdom, that never has discriminative thoughts, has no dichotomy but sees oneness.

The illumination, that never has the slightest separation, has no attachment, but is evident.

The water is clear to the bottom; a fish is swimming slowly, slowly.

The sky is infinitely vast; a bird is flying far, far away.

Even though Dogen does not use the word "zazen" at all in Genjo-koan, it is clear to me that this analogy is about our zazen practice not excluding our day-to-day activities and the entire universe as our environment. He discusses the nature of our zazen practice and how it forms the foundation of our attitude toward our entire lives. The water or the sky does not simply refer to an environment that is outside of ourselves.

What is the water?

In his comments on the "water" in which a fish is swimming in Wanshi's verse, Dogen Zenji says in Shobogenzo Zazen-shin;

As to the meaning of the water is clear, the water suspended in space is not thoroughly clear to the bottom. [This water in Wanshi's verse] is not the clean water that is deep and clear in the external world. [The water] that has no boundary, no bank or shore, is thoroughly clear to the bottom

According to Dogen, the water Wanshi is talking about is not simply the water in the ocean, or a river that forms the environment in which a fish is swimming. It is not the water in the "external" world separate from us. The water has no boundaries such as a bank or a shore.

"When a fish goes through this water, we cannot say that there is no movement. Although [the fish] migrates more than ten thousand miles, [their movement] cannot be measured and is unlimited. There is no bank from which to survey it, there is no air to which [the fish] might break the surface, and there is no bottom to which it might sink. Therefore, there is no one who can measure it. If we want to discuss its measurements, [we say] only that the water is thoroughly clear to the bottom. The virtue of zazen is like the fish swimming. [Although, in our sitting, we progress] a thousand or ten thousand miles, who can estimate it? The process of going that thoroughly penetrates to the bottom is that the whole body is 'not flying the way of the birds'."

According to Dogen, the water in Wanshi's verse is boundless water without the limitations of a shore or a bank by which we can objectively measure how vast or how small it is. This is, of course, the water of emptiness. No separation between the fish, and the water, the earth or the air. This is another description of what Dogen has said earlier in Genjo-koan; "Conveying oneself toward all things to carry out practice/enlightenment is delusion. All things coming and carrying out practice/enlightenment through the self is realization." Dogen's emphasis here is not on the objective facts, but on the reality that is manifested when we practice with the attitude of "all things carry out practice through the self."

In the Bendowa (Wholehearted Practice of the Way) Dogen also said, "Even if only one person sits for a short time, because this zazen is one with all existence and completely permeates all time, it performs everlasting buddha guidance within the inexhaustible dharma world in the past, present, and future." It is obvious that the key is our practice of zazen.

What is the Sky?

About the sky in which a bird is flying, Dogen comments;

"The infinitely vast sky" is not what is suspended in the firmament. The sky suspended in the firmament is not the infinitely vast sky. Moreover, the space that permeates here and there is not the infinitely vast sky. [The sky] that is never concealed or revealed and that has neither outside nor inside is the infinitely vast sky."

Again, this sky is not the space outside us. The sky and the bird are one without separation. We are completely part of the sky. The sky is inside us too.

"When a bird flies through this sky, flying in the sky is the undivided dharma. Its activity of flying in the sky cannot be measured. Flying in the sky is the entire universe, because the entire universe is flying in the sky. Although we do not know the distance of this flying, in expressing it with words beyond distinction, we say "far, far away." "Go straightforwardly, there should be no string under the feet." When the sky is flying away, the birds also are flying away; and when the birds are flying away, the sky also is flying away. In studying and penetrating the "flying away", we say "Simply being here." This is the acupuncture needle for the immovable sitting. In travelling ten thousands miles by "simply being here," we express it (zazen) in this way."

When a bird is flying, the sky is also flying. The bird is a part of the sky and the sky is the part of the bird. The entire sky is the wings of the bird.

This is not true only in zazen. When a fish is swimming, the whole water is swimming. When a bird is flying, the entire sky is flying. When we live, the entire universe is living with us. Fish and water, bird and sky, all living beings and the universe are completely one. When we sit in zazen and let go of our discriminative thoughts, we are completely one with the universe. When we stand up from our cushion, however, and go out of the zendo we again start to think, make distinctions, evaluations, and judgements. As Dogen says, sometimes we think the shore is moving, sometimes we think we are moving, sometimes we think both are moving, sometimes we think all things in the world are totally separate individual entities. Based on such thinking, naturally we make choices and take action. But our unity with all beings remains because whatever we think about, thinking is just thinking. Thinking cannot change reality.

For example, until the time of Galileo Galilei (1564-1642), people in Europe thought that the earth was not moving, but rather the sun, the moon and the stars were moving around the earth. In reality, regardless of both common people's and Galileo's ideas, the earth had been moving around the sun since its birth 4.6 billion years ago. Our thought cannot change the reality.

In reality we are all tiny parts of the universe. Each one of us is a collection of causes and conditions. We are products of the co-evolution of Life and the Earth. I am made of things that are not "me". The foods I eat are not "me". The air I breathe is not "me". The water I drink is not "me". But without, foods, air and water that are not "me", "I" don't exist. Not only water, air and foods, our life itself is a gift from the universe.

As Human beings, we are born in human society and because we are born in a very immature stage, we cannot live without support from others for a long time. We cannot even stand up until we are over a year old. We need to be fed without working for a long time, at least until we become teenagers. In order to become really independent members of our society, we have to study for about 20 years or more. Until then we are basically supported and taken care of by our society.

Even the language we use to think is gift from our society. We are taught how to think and behave through the process of education. Because I was born and grew up in Japan, I think using the Japanese language and act mostly according to my Japanese system of values. The Japanese language is the result of a culture created by all the Japanese people who have lived in the land of Japan.

Our self and all beings in the entire universe, past, present and future are all connected. This is not a mysterious truth, which can only be seen in a certain mental condition such as a trance or by using some special spiritual intuition. This is a very simple, plain reality we can understand using our reason. Still, we are almost always losing sight of this plain reality due to the separation and discrimination created by our thinking using words and concepts.

Dogen's Zazen-shin

In the end of Shobogenzo Zazen-shin, Dogen writes his own poem with the same title as Wanshi's.

Zazen-shin

The essential-function of each buddha and the functioning-essence of each ancestor.

Being actualized within not-thinking.

Being manifested within non-interacting.

Being actualized within not-thinking, the actualization is by nature intimate.

Being manifested within non-interacting, the manifestation is itself verification.

The actualization, that is by nature intimate, never has defilement.

The manifestation, that is by nature verification, never has distinction between Absolute and Relative.

The intimacy without defilement is dropping off without relying on anything.

The verification beyond distinction between Absolute and Relative is making efforts without aiming at it.

The water is clear to the earth; a fish is swimming like a fish.

The sky is vast, extending to the heavens; a bird is flying like a bird.

Does Dogen's understanding in his verse exactly match Wanshi's? This is an important point in understanding Dogen's teaching on zazen. But that is not the point of Genjo-koan. So I won't discuss it now. Dogen Zenji says that there are no independent entities separate from the water or the sky called a fish or a bird, but still there is something like a fish or a bird, which is swimming or flying. This is his expression of the reality of our lives that function together with all beings in the world in the past, present and future.

This total reality in which each and every thing exists within the network of all beings is what Dogen wants to show us. However we must not forget that within this reality, we are living as an individual person. For example Shohaku is not a fixed entity but still Shohaku is living like Shohaku. And Shohaku needs to take responsibility for what Shohaku does. This integrity of totality and individuality is the way we actually live. Dogen Zenji's teaching in Genjo-koan shows how we can recognize reality and live according to it.

Range of life

(text)

When a fish swims, no matter how far it goes, it doesn't reach the end of the water. When a bird flies, no matter how high it flies, it cannot reach the end of the sky. Only, when their need is great, their range is large. When their need is small, their range is small. In this way, each fish and each bird uses the whole space and vigorously acts in every place.

During the time I was living at Valley Zendo from 1976 to 1981, my range was very small. The Zendo's property was about 5 acres but most of the land was covered with trees. We cut the trees and dug out the stumps in about one-acre and built the zendo and made a garden. That one-acre of land was the entire range of my life for five years. I did not go out of the zendo very much. I did not get out of Western Massachusetts so often. Since I had neither a TV nor a radio and I did not read newspapers, I

knew almost nothing about what was going on in the world. The range of my life was really very tiny. I just practiced zazen with two other Japanese priests and a few American practitioners. I knew nothing about the world and almost no one knew me.

In comparison, since I began to work for the Soto Zen Education Center in 1997, I have traveled extensively from California to New England and from Alaska to Florida. I have met and practiced with so many people. I am on an airplane almost every month. Although I still don't have a TV or a radio, I do get the news of the world through the Internet. I also give many lectures. My range looks much bigger than while I was at Valley Zendo. But in either case, what I have been doing is just sitting facing the wall with my body and mind and talking about my understanding of zazen. That's all. In whatever condition, I am simply living my own life that is connected with all things in the universe.

No matter how large our range may be, we cannot reach the end of the universe. And yet, no matter how small our range may be, we are living being connected with the entire universe. Our body and mind are much larger than we usually think. And our life has a much more intimate connection with all things than we can imagine. We share the same DNA structure with all living beings on the earth.

In Shobogenzo Shinjin-gakudo (Studying the Way with Body and Mind), Dogen Zenji says about the mind, "Mountains, rivers, the great earth, sun, moon and stars are the mind." And he says about the body, "The entire ten-direction world is the true human body. Using this body, we refrain from the ten unwholesome deeds, keep the eight precepts, take refuge in the Three Treasures and leave home to become a monk. This is the true study of the Way."

It is certain that the source of Dogen's image of fish and birds in Genjo-koan is Wanshi's verse of Zazen-shin. I am not one hundred percent sure, but I guess that the source of Wanshi's image of fish and birds might be Chuang Tzu. In the very beginning of the first chapter of Chuang Tzu entitled, "Free and Easy Wandering", it is said that there was a huge fish and the fish transformed into a huge bird and flew to heaven.

"In the northern darkness there is a fish and his name is K'un. The K'un is so huge I don't know how many thousand li he measures. He changes and becomes a bird whose name is P'eng. The back of the P'eng measures I don't know how many thousand li across and, when he rises up and flies off, his wings are like clouds all over the sky. When the sea begins to move, this birds sets off for the southern darkness, which is the Lake of Heaven." (Translated by Burton Watson)

According to a Japanese commentary, one li is about 405 meters (1336 feet). The size of the fish/bird is out of our imagination. There is, however, an important difference between Chuang Tzu and Dogen. In Chuang Tzu, small creatures such as a cicada, a dove or a quail laugh at the large bird.

"Where does he think he's going? I give a great leap and fly up, but I never get more than ten or twelve yards before I come down fluttering among the weeds and brambles. And that's the best kind of flying anyway! Where does he think he's going?"

Then Chuang Tzu said, "Such is the difference between big and little." By comparing the big bird with a cicada, a dove and a quail, Chuang Tzu looked down and laughed at those small creatures. His conclusion is that people in the mundane world caught up in the conventional concepts and systems of value are like those small living beings and his ideal person is like the large bird. Chuang Tzu said, "Therefore I say, the Perfect Man has no self; the Holy Man has no merit; the Sage has no fame."

Dogen says that even a small bird like a quail flies the entire sky. Even a cicada that lives only for several days in the summer is one with entire past, present and future. For Dogen, we are like those small living beings. As a bodhisattva, it is important to aware of how small we are. And yet, no matter how tiny we are, we are flying the entire sky and the entire sky is flying with us. I think this is one of the differences between Taoism and Buddhism.

Life is a bird; Life is a fish

(text)

However, if a bird departs from the sky, or a fish leaves the water, they immediately die. We should know that, [for a fish] water is life, [for a bird] sky is life. A bird is life; a fish is life. Life is a bird; life is a fish. And we should go beyond this. There is practice/enlightenment--this is the way of living beings.

We cannot live separated from the world. For us, this world is our life. Since we are one with the world and supported by all things as a part of the net of interdependent origination, we have to take care of the world and the self and others. How can we live our lives with such a magnanimous view of the self, others and the world?

Life needs to be a bird or fish or something else to manifest itself in a concrete way. Otherwise, life is just an abstract concept. Without a particular body and mind of living beings, no matter how tiny, weak, deluded or self-centered it is, there is no way for life to live life.

In Buddhism, the reality of all beings (the Dharma) is the way we should study and the way we should live. One of the problems for us human beings is that we usually don't think that the world in which we are living is our life. We think our life is only this body and mind as

individual and it continues only between the date of our birth and the date of our death. We think that all other people and things are the materials we can use to make us meaningful, happy and satisfied.

The Necessity of finding our own place and path

(text: section 12)

Therefore, if there are fish who want to swim or birds who want to fly only after they investigate the entire sky or all the water, they will find neither path nor place. When we make this very place our own, our practice becomes manifestation of reality (genjo-koan). When we make this path our own, our activity naturally becomes actualized reality (genjo-koan). This path or this place is neither big nor small, neither self nor others. It has not existed before this moment nor has it come into existence now. Therefore, [the reality of all things] is thus. In the same way, when a person does practice/enlightenment in the buddha way, as the person realizes one dharma, the person permeates that dharma; as the person encounters one practice, the person [fully] practices that practice. [For this] there is a place and a path. The boundary of the known is not clear; this is because the known [which appears limited] is born and practiced simultaneously with the complete penetration of the buddha dharma. We should not think that what we have attained is conceived by ourselves and known by our discriminating mind. Although complete enlightenment is immediately actualized, its intimacy is such that it does not necessarily form as a view. [In fact] viewing is not something fixed.

This is Dogen Zenji's conclusion of how we should live based on the buddha dharma he discussed in the very beginning of Genjo-koan.

(text)

Therefore, if there are fish who want to swim or birds who want to fly only after they investigate the entire sky or all the water, they will find neither path nor place.

When I was a high school student, I was exactly like the fish and birds that hesitate to swim or fly until they completely investigate the entire water or sky. Before I started to do anything, I wanted to find the purpose and meaning of life. I tried to find the answer in books. I thought if life is meaningless, I should not continue to live. I was very childish but extremely serious. I read many books on religion, philosophy and science. But according to the books I read, I discovered that there was no meaning that supports our life. I found that "meaning" or "value" can have "meaning" and "value" only within a relationship with other things. I cannot judge the meaning of just myself. Human beings cannot measure the value of human beings. Anyone in the universe cannot evaluate the universe. In order to do so, we need something like an Absolute Other, like God. But I could not believe that God existed outside the universe.

I became nihilistic and I was completely lost. I could not do anything, even commit suicide. To commit suicide,

I needed to find a reason or a meaning to do so. But if our life has no meaning, to kill myself is also meaningless. I could not live and I could not die. I faced a dead end. As you can imagine, my high school life was not a joyful one.

I think that if I did not have the chance to read my teacher Uchiyama Roshi's book, such a condition would have lasted much longer. As it was, I had a friend who has the same kind of question. Because he knew someone who went to Antaiji monastery to practice zazen with Sawaki Kodo Roshi, he visited Antaiji and stayed there during a summer vacation. That was around the same time Uchiyama Roshi published his first book entitled "Jiko" (Self). My friend allowed me to read the book after he returned from Antaiji.

In the book, Uchiyama Roshi wrote about his own search for the meaning of life. I read that when Uchiyama Roshi was a teenager, he had the same question as I did and he had spent his life searching for the answer to it. After he found the answer, he practiced it and taught it. Since I knew nothing about Buddhism or Zen, I did not understand Uchiyama Roshi's answer, but I knew I wanted to live like him. That was the one of the main reasons I started to study Buddhism and Zen and became Uchiyama Roshi's disciple. Although I had read about many spiritual teachers who taught the truth, for me, Uchiyama Roshi was the first actual person who I met who lived in such a way. Somehow I wanted to become his disciple.

After practicing with my teacher for some time, I found that meaning is created when we find our own place and path and we begin to do something. Until that moment there is no ready-made meaning or purpose to our lives. When I found my place as a student of Uchiyama Roshi and a practitioner in the lineage of his teacher Sawaki Roshi, and the source of their teachings; Dogen Zenji and Shakyamuni Buddha, life became meaningful and precious to me. To continue my teacher's vow to transmit the tradition to the next generation became my path and many different kinds of support to my practice became available.

When I first read Genjo-koan, this point on how we create meaning really struck me and based on that I decided to follow Dogen Zenji's teaching even though I didn't understand anything else. I was saved by Uchiyama Roshi and Dogen Zenji.

(text)

When we make this very place our own, our practice becomes manifestation of reality (genjo-koan). When we make this path our own, our activity naturally becomes actualized reality (genjo-koan). This path or this place is neither big nor small, neither self nor others. It has not existed before this moment nor has it come into existence now. Therefore, [the reality of all things] is thus.

When I made up my mind to become Uchiyama Roshi's disciple and actually started to practice zazen, I finally found my own place and path. When I choose one thing and actually did it, I found the path to proceed. The Manifestation of reality (genjo-koan) is not a concept or philosophical idea, but rather it is actual practice using our body and mind that is connected with the entire world. This path of zazen practice has led me to a wondrous and unbelievable way of life. The path is so broad, flexible and endless. Since then, I have been walking the path for thirty years. I am still a beginner in this path. The path has no beginning and no end but permeates all time and space. And yet, it is only this moment right now and right here.

One thing at a time

(text)

In the same way, when a person does practice/enlightenment in the buddha way, as the person realizes one dharma, the person permeates that dharma; as the person encounters one practice, the person [fully] practices that practice. [For this] there is a place and a path.

I found my place as a zazen practitioner under the guidance of Uchiyama Roshi, and committed to it, and in each moment, each day, and through each stage of my life, I have tried to see the many people, things, and situations I have encountered as my own life and practice. Whatever I encounter, I try to do my best with a sincere attitude.

In the Tenzo-kyokun (Instructions for Tenzo), Dogen Zenji teaches how we should work together with each and every thing with our sincere heart, using the example of cooking.

"Next, get ready the following morning's breakfast. Select the rice and prepare the vegetables by yourself with your own hands, watching closely with sincere diligence. You should not attend to some things and neglect or be slack with others for even one moment. Do not give a single drop from within the ocean of virtues; you must not fail to add a single speck on top of the mountain of good deeds." (Dogen's Pure Standards for the Zen Community, P.34)

When we work on one thing, we study it, do some experiments with it, take care of it and penetrate it. One by one, each time. This is how we study the characteristics of all things. One thing at a time. When we practice that role sincerely, we penetrate that thing. When we make a mistake, we penetrate that mistake and learn from the mistake. Then a mistake is a great teacher for us. Nothing is meaningless when we have our own place and path to walk. Actually this place and path is not something outside us. The place and path are nothing other than ourselves.

The way is endless

(text) The boundary of the known is not clear; this is because the known [which appears limited] is born and practiced simultaneously with the complete penetration of the buddha dharma. We should not think that what we have attained is conceived by ourselves and known by our discriminating mind. Although complete enlightenment is immediately actualized, its intimacy is such that it does not necessarily form as a view. [In fact] viewing is not something fixed.

Even though we walk on the path, we cannot measure how far we have come and how much farther we will have to go to reach the goal. As Buddhist practitioners, we commonly think our goal is very clear, that is, to become a Buddha. According to Mahayana Buddhist teachings, a bodhisattva must practice through the fifty-two stages to reach Buddhahood and it takes three great kalpas, which means almost forever. And yet, to become a Buddha is not the end of the story but rather it is simply the starting point of life as a Buddha. A Buddha practices Buddha's practice. That is helping all living beings to become buddhas and to make entire world into buddha land. It also takes almost forever.

Within such an endless process of the Buddha way, it is nonsense to measure how much we have achieved, which stage we are at now and what we need to do to go further. In Buddhist teachings of many different traditions, there are many sets of stages of spiritual achievement, such as the four stages toward arhathood, and the fifty-two stages of the bodhisattva. But these stages are all a kind of expedient means.

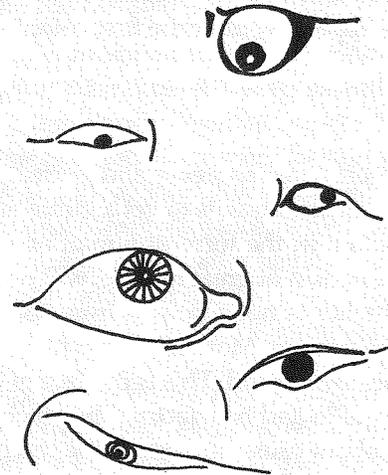
Dogen Zenji does not use such expedients. He simply says the buddha way is endless and there is no way to measure where we are now. No matter how long and how hard we have been practicing, within the infinite length of the buddha way, the distance we have walked is the same as zero.

When faced with this truth, what we can do is try to be mindful in each moment, and practice one thing wholeheartedly in the way that we can penetrate that one thing. This is what Dogen Zenji means when he says, "When Buddhas are truly Buddhas, they don't need to perceive that they are themselves Buddhas. However, they are enlightened buddhas, and they continue actualizing buddha."

This is a lesson we can apply to many parts of our lives. For example, if peace is the condition in which there is no war among countries, no fighting or conflict among people, and no pain, anxiety, or struggle in our minds, probably there is never a time that such a condition can be completely achieved. Then is "peace" a meaningless dream? Not at all. According to Dogen Zenji, our peaceful efforts themselves are the source of peace in each

moment and each step we take. Nirvana or buddhahood is the same thing.

Our practice is just to practice one thing at a time wholeheartedly and manifest our own lives moment by moment without evaluation. That is all. This is what shikan (just) in Dogen's expression shikan-taza (just sitting) means. This is also what Dogen means when he says



Treasury of the Eye of the True Dharma Book 28

Getting the Marrow by Doing Obeisance

Raihai tokuzui

Translated by Stanley Weinstein

Introductory note.

The title of this essay is taken from a well known story, in which Bodhidharma asks four disciples to state their understanding of Buddhism. After each does so, Bodhidharma characterizes their degree of understanding. To the first, Daofu, he says, "You get my skin"; to the second, the nun Zongchi, he says, "You get my flesh"; to the third, Daoyu, he says, "You get my bones." The fourth disciple, Huike (who will become Bodhidharma's successor), makes no reply but instead does obeisance before

Bodhidharma and is then told, "You have gotten my marrow."

The text of this essay exists in a shorter and longer version. The former occurs in the 75-chapter Shobogenzo, often now treated as the "standard" redaction; the latter is preserved only in the so-called "secret Shobogenzo", in 28 chapters, housed at Eihei-ji. The additional material in the longer version was incorporated into the popular 95-chapter Honzan edition of the Shobogenzo, published in the early nineteenth century. We have translated the longer version here, with the additional material appearing after the first colophon.

When one practices supreme and perfect enlightenment, the most difficult task is to get a guide and teacher. That teacher is not in the form of a man or woman but rather will be a person of great resolve, will be just such a person. The teacher is not a person from the past nor a person from the present. More likely it will be a fox spirit who will be the good friend. This is the face of getting the marrow, your guide and benefactor. The teacher will not be in the dark about cause and effect; the teacher may be you or I or someone else.

After you have encountered a guide and teacher, you should cast off the myriad distractions and, without losing a moment, devote yourself energetically to pursuing the way. You should practice, be it by using the mind or by using no-mind, or by using half-mind.

Therefore you should learn to practice with the same sense of urgency that would drive you to put out a fire on top of your head or to stand with one leg raised [in order to pay homage to a buddha]. If you do this, you will not be assaulted by Mara's legions who will lead you to commit blasphemy. The ancestor who cut off his arm to get the marrow does not refer to another; the master who will teach you the sloughing off of body and mind is already within yourself.

Getting the marrow and receiving the dharma always depend upon utmost sincerity and the believing mind. Sincere faith is not something that comes to you from the outside, nor is it something that moves to the outside from within you. It simply signifies prizing the dharma while making light of yourself. It is to flee the world and regard the way as your abode. If you think of yourself as being even only slightly more precious than the dharma, the dharma will not be passed on to you, nor will you attain it. There is not just one instance of a person who had the determination to regard the dharma as something precious. Although you need not turn to the teachings of

others, I shall present just a few examples here.

To prize the dharma is to protect and preserve the great dharma, whether as a pillar, a lantern, all buddhas, a little fox, a demon, a man or a woman. If you have gotten my marrow, you will attend the buddhas for countless eons, employing your body and mind as a seat for them. Getting a body and mind is as easily accomplished as the spread of rice plants, hemp, bamboo, and reeds throughout the world. But to encounter the dharma is something rare indeed.

Sakyamuni Buddha said,

When you meet a teacher who speaks of supreme enlightenment, you must not consider the teacher's caste; you must not look to see whether the features of the teacher's face are pleasing; you must not scorn the teacher's shortcomings; you must not think about the teacher's behavior. It is precisely because you venerate and prize the teacher's wisdom that you should let him or her eat food worth hundreds or thousands ounces of gold every day. You should make offerings by presenting the teacher with heavenly foods; you should make offerings by scattering heavenly flowers. You should do obeisance and respectfully pay homage to the teacher three times daily and not let feelings of disdain and weariness arise. When you behave in this way [toward your teacher], the path to enlightenment will surely appear. By having practiced in this fashion since I first set my mind [on realizing buddhahood], I have today attained supreme and perfect enlightenment.

Thus you should request [the teachings] from trees and rocks; you should seek [the teachings] in the fields and villages. You should put your questions to a pillar and practice intensively with a wall. A long time ago the god Taishaku took a little fox as a teacher, to whom he did obeisance and put questions about the dharma. Taishaku consequently received the appellation 'great bodhisattva,' which was a spiritual level that he did not attain simply as a result of his past karma.

However, those ignoramuses who do not listen to the teachings of the buddhas say: "I am a senior monk and should not do obeisance before a younger monk who has acquired the dharma; I am one who has practiced over a long period of time and should not do obeisance before one who began his studies late in life but has acquired the dharma; I have been assigned the title 'master' and should not do obeisance before one who does not have the title 'master.' I hold the office of superintendent of the monastery and should not do obeisance before other monks who have acquired the dharma; I hold the office of

bishop and should not do obeisance before laymen and laywomen who have acquired the dharma; I have attained the three wisdom stages or the ten noble stages [on the bodhisattva path] and should not do obeisance before a nun even though she has acquired the dharma. I belong to the imperial lineage and should not do obeisance before those who are ministers of state or members of families that have produced prime ministers, even though they have attained the dharma." Ignoramuses such as these neither see nor listen to the buddha dharma because they have left the land of their father to wander in vain along the roads of another land.

A long time ago, under the Tang dynasty, the great master Zhaozhou Zhenji, having set his mind [upon the dharma], undertook a journey by foot [in search of a teacher]. He declared on this occasion, "If I meet someone superior, even if only seven years old, I shall ask [the person about the dharma]. If, I meet someone inferior, even though a hundred years of age, I shall give instruction to the person."

When asking a seven-year old about the dharma, even an old man should do obeisance. This shows a determination rare and great; it is the mindset of an old buddha. When a nun who has attained the way and attained the dharma has appeared in the world, if a monk in search of the dharma, engaging in practice and study, should join her community, do obeisance, and ask her about the dharma, it is a wonderful achievement, like a thirsty person finding water.

The Chan master Zhixian in the country of China was a venerable monk under Linji. Once, when Linji happened to see the master coming, he grabbed hold of him, whereupon the master said, "I understand."

Linji released him, saying, "Well, I'll spare you a blow."

From this time, Zhixian became Linji's descendant.

Zhixian subsequently left Linji and went to the nun Moshan, who asked him, "Where did you just come from?"

Zhixian replied, "From the entrance to the road."

Moshan said, "Why didn't you come here after blocking it?"

Zhixian had no words. He immediately did obeisance and saluted her as a disciple acknowledges a teacher.

Zhixian in return put a question to Moshan, "What is Moshan?"

Moshan responded, "Its peak cannot be seen."

Zhixian said, "What sort of person dwells in the mountain?"

Moshan said, "Not with forms such as a man or a woman."

The master said, "Then why don't you change yourself?"

Moshan replied, "I'm not a fox spirit; why would I want to change?"

Zhixian did obeisance.

Zhixian consequently set his mind [on achieving awakening] and for three full years served as the supervisor of a [monastery] vegetable patch. Later, when he assumed the position of a teacher, he said to the assembly, "I got half a ladle at Papa Linji's place, and I got half a ladle at Mama Moshan's place, which together made a full ladle. Since that time, after having fully digested this, I've been satisfied to the full."

Hearing these words and reflecting fondly on the footprints of these great teachers, we see that Moshan was Gaoan Dayu's outstanding disciple, who possessed the power transmitted through the veins [of a lineage of teachers] to become the "mama" of Zhixian. Linji, the dharma heir of the Chan master Huangbo Yun, possessed the power transmitted through strenuous effort to become the "papa" of Zhixian. "Papa" means "father," and "mama" means "mother." That the Chan master Zhixian did obeisance to, and sought the dharma from, the Moshan nun Liaoran is a splendid realization of his determination [to become awakened]; it is an act of integrity that should become familiar to those who began their studies late. This is what should be called "attacking the barriers and breaking the knots."

The nun Miaoxin was a disciple of Yangshan. When Yangshan was looking to choose a director of the monastery's office for secular affairs, he asked around among the retired senior and junior officers, "Which person would be suitable to appoint?"

After an exchange of questions and answers, Yangshan at last said, "Although [Miao] Xin, the "kid" from the Huai [river region], is a woman, she has the determination of a person of great resolve. She is truly the one qualified to serve as the director of the office for secular affairs."

All in the assembly agreed.

When, in the end, Miaoxin was appointed director of the office for secular affairs, the dragons and elephants among Yangshan's disciples had no misgivings. Although this was not an important office, she was careful [in performing her duties] as befitting one who had been chosen [for this responsibility].

After [Miaoxin] had taken up her position and was residing in the office for secular affairs, seventeen monks from Shu banded together to go in search of a teacher to ask about the way. Thinking that they would climb Yangshan, at sunset they took lodgings in the office for secular affairs. During the evening lecture, while they were resting, someone brought up the story of Caoqi Gaozu's words on the wind and the flag. But what each of the seventeen monks had to say was wide of the mark. At that time, Miaoxin, who was on the other side of the wall, heard the monks and said, "How lamentable, you seventeen blind donkeys! How many straw sandals have you wasted [in your futile search for the dharma]? The buddha dharma has not yet appeared even in your dreams!"

At that time there was a postulant who, having heard the disapproving remarks about these monks by Miaoxin, reported them to the seventeen monks. The seventeen monks did not resent Miaoxin's disapproval. To the contrary, they were ashamed that their words were inadequate and so, comporting themselves in the proper fashion, they offered incense, did obeisance, and respectfully inquired [about the dharma].

Miaoxin then said, "Step forward!"

As the seventeen monks were walking toward her, Miaoxin said, "It's not the wind moving, it's not the flag moving, it's not the mind moving..."

Instructed in this fashion, all seventeen monks were awakened. They expressed their gratitude, establishing the formal relationship of teacher and disciple, and quickly returned to Western Shu. In the end, they never climbed Yangshan. Truly this [incident] was not something that could have been accomplished by even one on the three wisdom stages or the ten noble stages. It was the practice of the way in of the unbroken transmission from the buddhas and ancestors.

And so, today too, when the position of abbot or head monastic falls vacant, a monastery may invite a nun who appears to have acquired the dharma to fill the vacancy. Of what use would it be if a monk of advanced age with many years of practice were invited if he had not acquired the dharma? Those who are the leaders of monastic communities should rely on their clear eye.

However, those [leaders] sunk into the body and

mind of a villager are obstinate, and are frequently the object of derision by even lay people. How much less are they deserving of mention in the buddha dharma. And there will also certainly be some who have decided not to pay homage to dharma-transmitting teachers who are lay women and nuns. Because they know nothing and have not studied, they are close to animals and distant from the buddhas and the ancestors.

When one makes it one's goal from the depths of one's being to throw body and mind fervently [into the practice of the buddha dharma], the buddha dharma will always have compassion for that person. Even ignorant men and gods have a turn of mind that responds to sincerity. How could the true dharma taught by all the buddhas lack the compassion that rewards [such sincerity]? Even the earth, stones, sand, and pebbles have a spiritual essence that responds to sincerity.

At the present time, in the Great Land of Song [China], there are nuns practicing in monasteries. If one of them has the reputation of having acquired the dharma, the court will grant an edict appointing her abbot of a nunnery. She will then immediately go up to the dharma hall in the monastery [to give a lecture]. From the abbot on down, all the monks will attend and, standing erect, they will listen to her expound the dharma. It is the monks who will put the questions. This has been the rule since ancient times.

Since a person who has attained the dharma is none other than a true old buddha, you must not wonder when you meet that person who he or she was in the past. When that [old buddha] sees you, he or she will treat you as if [the encounter] is something entirely new and special. And when you see [the old buddha], you should respond to him or her immediately on that very day. If a nun has received and holds the treasury of the eye of the true dharma, the arhats, the pratyeka-buddhas, and those on the three wisdom stages and ten noble stages [of the bodhisattva path] will come, do obeisance, and question her about the dharma, and the nun will receive such obeisance. What is so exalted about a man? Space is space; the four elements are the four elements; the five aggregates are the five aggregates. For a woman it is the same thing. In acquiring the dharma, all acquire the dharma equally. All should pay homage to and hold in esteem one who has acquired the dharma. Do not make an issue of whether it is a man or a woman. This is the most wondrous law of the buddha dharma.

Furthermore, what is called a "layman" in Song Dynasty [China] is a young gentleman who has not yet

left home. Some live in small huts with their wives; others live alone and remain chaste. Even though we must say that they are still in the dense forest of defilements, when one of them attains enlightenment, itinerant monks will gather to do obeisance and seek instruction, just as they would from a master who has left home. And so it should be whether it be a woman or an animal.

When someone has not yet seen the truth of the buddha dharma even in a dream, though such a person might be an old monk 100 years of age, he cannot reach the level of a lay man or lay woman who has acquired the dharma. He ought not to be revered but should be treated only according to the rules of etiquette governing the relationship between a guest and a host. But when someone practices the buddha dharma and expounds the buddha dharma, though such a person be a girl seven years of age, that person is a guide and teacher for the four groups and a compassionate father for all sentient beings. Such a person may be compared to the daughter of the Dragon King who attained buddhahood. Offerings should be made and respectful homage paid equal to that accorded to the buddhas and tathagatas. This is an ancient rule in the buddha dharma. Those who do not understand this, who have not received the single transmission, are to be pitied.

Treasury of the Eye of the True Dharma, Book 28

Written at the Kannon Dori Kosho Horinji,

on the day of the Seimei [festival], in the canoe-ne year of the En'ō [era]. [April 5, 1240 C.E.]

Furthermore, in both olden times and today in Japan and China, there have been women who held the rank of emperor. These emperors controlled all the land of their empires, and the people all became their subjects. They were venerated not as individuals but for their rank. Also with nuns, since olden times they have been venerated not as individuals: they are venerated solely for their having acquired the dharma.

Also, when there is a nun who has become an arhat, all the merit that accrues from the four stages of fruition will come to her, and that merit will continue to follow her. Who among humans or gods surpasses one at the fourth stage of fruition? Even the gods inhabiting the three realms do not reach her level. Yet the gods venerate her as one who has cast aside [worldly concerns]. Even more so is this the case with those who have received the transmission of the true dharma of the tathagatas and revealed their noble intention of becoming bodhisattvas! Who would not venerate them? Not venerating them is a

personal offense. When one does not venerate supreme enlightenment, one is a fool who slanders the dharma.

Furthermore, in our country there are daughters of emperors or daughters of ministers of state who have been appointed empresses in all but name, and there are empresses who have been given the title "cloistered." Some have shaved their heads, and others have not. However, monk-like clergymen who court fame and seek advantage hasten to the gates of these women's homes and bang their heads on the footgear [hoping to gain favor]. [The behavior of these clergymen] is more vile than that of an inferior [groveling before] his superior. And so much more so is this case with those who turn themselves into menservants and spend their years [catering to noblewomen]. How pathetic it is that, having been born in a small country that is a peripheral land, they do not realize that this is a corrupt custom that never existed in India or China but is found only in our country. By shaving the hair on the top and sides of their heads for their own selfish reasons, they destroy the true dharma of the tathagatas, which must be called a profoundly serious offense. It is to be deplored that they are bound as menservants to [their female patrons] entirely because they have forgotten that the world is a dream-like phantom or flowers in the sky. They behave in this fashion for the sake of a vain world. Why, then, in order to attain supreme enlightenment, will they not pay homage to one who has acquired the dharma and hence is deserving of veneration? This is because their intention to treat the dharma as important is shallow and their intention to seek the dharma is not all-embracing. When they covet riches, they do not think that they should not accept a woman's riches. When they seek the dharma, this attitude should be even stronger. If it is, the grass, trees, and walls dispense the true dharma; the myriad things of heaven and earth likewise bestow the dharma. This is a truth you should certainly understand. When you do not seek the dharma with such intention, you will not receive any gain from the dharma water [that washes away defilements] even though you might encounter a true good friend. You should ponder and work on this carefully.

Moreover, profoundly ignorant people today, believing that women are lustful objects, view them thus and do not correct this way of thinking. Followers of the Buddha should not behave this way. If you despise women, believing them to be lustful objects, should not all men likewise be despised? [If it is a matter of] becoming a cause for [sexual impurity], men likewise may serve as objects [of sexual attraction], just as women may be objects. Those who are neither men nor women likewise may serve as objects; dream-like phantoms and flowers in sky also may serve as such objects. Sometimes impure

acts have been committed because of an image reflected on the water. Sometimes impure acts have been committed because of the sun in the heavens. Gods may serve as objects [of sexual attraction] and demons may serve as such objects. It is impossible to count the number of causes [that might stimulate sexual lust]. Although there are said to be 84,000 objects [in the cosmos], are we to abandon all of these? Are we not to look at any of these?

In the Vinaya it is said, "With a man it is two places; with a woman it is three places. [Violation of these places constitutes] equally an unpardonable offense requiring expulsion."

Since this is the case, if you despise people in the belief that they have become objects of sexual lust, then men and women will all have to despise one another, such that there will be no opportunity for anyone to cross [to the other shore]. The implications of this truth should be examined carefully.

Furthermore, some non-Buddhists do not take wives, but even though they have no wives, they are still non-Buddhists, harboring false views because they have not entered the buddha dharma. Even among the disciples of the buddha, there are husbands and wives within the two groups that comprise the laity. But since they are disciples of the Buddha, there are no others among humans or the gods in the heavens who can stand shoulder to shoulder with them.

Furthermore, in the country of Tang [China] there are ignorant monks who make a vow saying: "For a long time, from life to life and generation to generation, I will not look at a woman." On which teachings is this based? Is it based on the teachings of the buddhas? Is it based on the teachings of the non-Buddhists? Is it based on the teachings of Mara? What offenses are women guilty of? What virtues are men endowed with? As for evil persons, these are found among men. As for good persons, these are found among women. The desire to hear the dharma and the search for emancipation certainly do not depend upon whether you are a man or a woman. When delusions have not yet been severed, whether it be a man or a woman, those delusions remain unsevered. When delusions are severed and one experiences the truth, no distinction exists as to whether it is a man or woman. Furthermore, if you vow never to look at a woman, must you then abandon women when you chant, "Beings are boundless, I vow to free them."? If you abandon them, you are not a bodhisattva. Would you call this "the compassion of the buddhas"? Since [monks who vow not to look at a woman] are profoundly intoxicated by the wine of the sravaka, these are words of madness induced by drunkenness. Humans and gods ought not believe [such talk].

Furthermore, if you despise people because they have committed offenses in the past, then you should also despise bodhisattvas. If you despise people because they will likely commit offenses in the future, then you should also despise all bodhisattvas who have set their mind [on realizing Buddhahood]. If you despise people in this way, you will be forsaking everyone. How then will the buddha dharma be realized? Such words [as "I vow never to look at a woman"] are the crazy talk of ignoramuses who do not understand the buddha dharma. How sad! According to your vow, would Sakyamuni and all the bodhisattvas in the world be guilty of offense? Or would their mind [set on] enlightenment be shallower than yours? You should reflect on this quietly. Since this vow did not exist at the time of the ancestors who received transmission of the dharma and the bodhisattvas who were contemporaneous with the Buddha, you must think hard about whether it is something to be learned in the teaching of the Buddha. If you were to act in accordance with your vow, not only would you not be saving women, but when women who had acquired the dharma go forth in the world to preach the dharma for the benefit of humans and gods, would it not be the case that you could not come to listen to them? If you do not come and listen to them, then you are not a bodhisattva; you are a non-Buddhist.

When we look at the great country of Song [China] today, [we see that] there are some monks who appear to have practiced over a long period of time while floating about in the sea of birth and death, vainly counting the grains of sand by the sea. [On the other hand] there are those who, though they are women, have gone to ask friends [about the dharma], and who, after having made strenuous efforts to pursue the way, are guides and teachers of humans and gods. There is [for example] the old woman who did not sell the pastry [to the master Deshan] but [instead] threw it away. How sad it is that although [Deshan] was a male monk, he had spent his time in vain, counting the grains of sand by the seashore without getting so much as a glimpse of the buddha dharma even in his dreams.

When you see an object, you must learn to understand it clearly. If you learn to see it as something only to fear and flee from, you are following the teaching and practice of the Hinayana sravaka. If you try to flee the east and hide in the west, the west too is not without objects. Even though you might think that you have made good your escape, if you do not understand clearly, there are objects in distant places and objects in places close at hand. Running away from them is not the path to liberation. The further away the objects, the greater the attachment to them will become.

Furthermore, there is something laughable here in Japan: places called "restricted realms" or "training halls for the practice of Mahayana" that do not allow nuns or lay women to enter. This evil custom has been handed down over a long time, and no one has ever questioned it. Scholars of things past have not investigated it, and men of great accomplishment have given it no thought. It is said to be something established by transformed deities, or declared to be something bequeathed to us by our predecessors. That no has gone on to question this makes you laugh till you bust your gut. What is meant by a "transformed deity"? Is it a wise man or a sagely man, a god or a demon, someone on the ten noble stages or someone on the three wisdom stages, someone with virtual enlightenment or with wondrous enlightenment? Furthermore, if we should not change our old ways, should we then also not cast off our wandering through birth and death?

In addition, the great teacher Sakyamuni is one who has attained supreme and perfect enlightenment: all that he should understand he has understood; all that he should do, he has done: all that from which he should be liberated, he has been liberated from. Who today comes close to him? Yet, within the assembly of the Buddha during his lifetime there were, in all, four groups: monks, nuns, laymen, and laywomen. There was the group of eight; there was the group of thirty-seven; and there was the group of 84,000. Together they formed the realm of the Buddha that newly constituted the assembly of the Buddha. In what assembly were there no nuns, no women, no group of eight? We ought not seek to create a restricted realm superior to and purer than that of the assembly of the Buddha when the Tathagata was living in this world, for it would be a realm of Mara. The conventions of a buddha assembly do not vary, whether in our realm or in other quarters, or among the 1,000 buddhas in the three time-periods [of past, present, and future]. We should realize that, if the rule varies, it is not a buddha assembly.

What is called "the fourth stage of fruition" [i.e., the rank of arhat] is the ultimate level. In neither Mahayana nor Hinayana is the merit of the ultimate level distinguished. Yet there are many examples of nuns who realized the fourth stage. Be it within the three realms or the buddha lands of the ten directions, is there any realm which they do not reach? Who could obstruct their activity?

Furthermore, wondrous enlightenment is the supreme level. Since women have attained buddhahood, what dharmas have they not exhaustively mastered? Who would think to obstruct them and prevent them from proceeding? Since they are already endowed with merit

pervading and illuminating the ten directions, what could it mean to speak of boundaries [to exclude them]?

Furthermore, would you obstruct a goddess and prevent her from proceeding? Would you obstruct a female deity and prevent her from proceeding? Both the goddesses and the female deities, having not yet severed their delusions, are still sentient beings subject to rebirth. When they commit offenses, they commit offenses; when they are without offenses, they are without offenses. Similarly with human females and animal females: when they commit offenses, they commit offenses; when they are without offenses, they are without offenses. Who would block the path of the gods or the path of the deities? Since they take part in the assemblies of the buddhas of the three periods, they have practiced and learned at the dwelling places of buddhas. If these were different from the dwelling places of the buddhas and the assemblies of the buddhas, who would believe that they are in accord with the buddha dharma? [Restricted realms that bar women] are the ultimate stupidity that deceives and confuses people in the world. [People who defend them] are even more stupid than the little fox who tries to prevent humans from violating his lair.

Furthermore, the categories of the disciples of the Buddha, whether they are bodhisattvas or whether they are sravaka, are monk, nun, layman, and laywoman, as already mentioned. These categories are known in the heavens and the human world, and their names have reverberated through the ages. The second category of disciples of the Buddha [the nuns] are superior even to Wheel-Turning Sage Kings and to Shakudaikan'in, and there is no place it cannot reach. It goes without saying that it is superior to the sovereign and ministers of state of a small country [like Japan] that is a peripheral land. When we look at the training halls today that forbid entry to nuns, we see that men who work in the rice paddies, people who toil in the fields, farmers, and old woodcutters enter freely in disorderly fashion - not to mention the sovereign, ministers of state, high officials, and prime ministers. Who of these could not enter the training halls? If the men who work in the rice paddies, and the others were to debate with the nuns about learning and practicing the dharma or were to debate about reaching the various stages [leading to buddhahood], who, in the end, would have the superior understanding and who the inferior? Whether they were to debate from a secular standpoint or whether they were to debate from the standpoint of the buddha dharma, the men who work in the rice paddies and the people who toil in the fields would never be able to reach a nun's level of attainment. In our extreme confusion, our small country was the first to bequeath to later generations this tradition [of exclud-

ing women from monasteries]. How sad that the eldest daughters of the compassionate father of the three realms, the Buddha, having come to our small country, discovered that there were places that obstructed them and did not let them enter.

Furthermore, the sort of fellows who live in those places called "restricted realms" have no fear of the ten evil deeds and in fact violate each of the ten major precepts. Did they simply create a realm within which to commit offenses, and do they disdain those people who do not commit offenses? Worse still are the heinous offenses, which are regarded as the most serious. The fellows living in the places within a "restricted realm" have surely committed these heinous offenses. One should destroy Mara realms such as these; one should learn the teachings of the Buddha and enter the realm of the Buddha. This is how one repays one's debt of gratitude to the Buddha. You predecessors who have behaved in this fashion! Have you understood the meaning of "restricted realm." Whose dharma did you inherit? Whose seal of recognition did you receive?

Everything within the vast realms created by buddhas, whether buddhas and sentient beings or the immense earth and space, is free from the bonds of defilement and illusion and returns to its source in the wondrous dharma of the buddhas. Therefore, sentient beings who even once set foot in this realm receive the buddha merit just as they are. They are endowed with a kind of merit that does not misapprehend and distort; they are endowed with a kind of merit that has gained for them purity. When we restrict one direction, then the entire dharma-realm is restricted; when we restrict one level [of the ordination precincts], then the entire dharma realm is restricted. There are realms restricted by water; there are restricted realms restricted by the mind; there are restricted realms restricted by space. There is always a lineage or transmission through which these are known.

What is more, when the ritual of fixing the boundaries of "restricted realms" is performed, after the ambrosia is sprinkled, there is a refuge ceremony and so on until, following the purification of the realm, there is the chanting of the verse: "This realm permeates the dharma realm, unconditioned and purified."

Have [you] predecessors and old men who now always [prattle about] what you call "restricted realms" understood the meaning of this verse or not? I do not think you understand that the all-permeating dharma realm is restricted within the restricted realm. Intoxicated by the wine of the sravaka, you think your little realm is the vast realm. May you speedily awaken from your long-standing confusion and intoxication, so that you will not

continue to misapprehend and distort the all-permeating realm that is the vast realm of the buddhas. And may all sentient beings receive the benefits of the transforming power of the buddhas, so that they might be delivered to the other shore and embraced by these buddhas. Let us do obeisance and respectfully reverence their merit. Who would not say that this is acquiring the marrow of the way?

The Treasury of the Eye of the True Dharma: Getting the Marrow by Doing Obeisance

Written at Koshoji,

on the day before the winter solstice in the canoe-ne year, first year of the Ninji [era]. [December 1240 C.E.]



SOTO ZEN EDUCATION CENTER ACTIVITY SCHEDULE

April to October, 2002

DHARMA STUDY GROUP

Place: At Sokoji Temple
1691 Laguna Street
San Francisco, CA 94115
Led by: Rev. Shohaku Okumura
Director of Soto Zen Education Center
Text: Shobogenzo Buddha Nature

Dates: On Sundays

*May 5, June 9, July 14 (Lecture only at 2:00 PM),
August 4, September 8, and October 20*

8:00 AM	Zazen
8:40	Morning Service
9:00	Work period
9:30	Lecture

Pilgrimage to Eihei-ji for the 750th Anniversary of Dogen Zenji's Entering Nirvana

~ Tracing Steps of Dogen Zenji and Keizan Zenji ~

2002 is the year of the 750th Anniversary of Dogen Zenji's Entering Nirvana. At Eihei-ji, the great memorial service has been held every 50 years since the 16th century. Thousands of people will visit Eihei-ji from all over Japan as well as from many countries outside Japan to show their reverence and gratitude to Dogen Zenji. The Soto Zen Administrative Office and Soto Zen Education Center of North America have planned a group tour to Eihei-ji. We would like to invite you to visit Eihei-ji in the deep mountain in early autumn to reflect on Dogen Zenji's vow to establish the monastery and his teaching of, "Yearning for the ancient way." We will also visit the main sites of Dogen Zenji and Keizan Zenji in Kyoto, Fukui, and Ishikawa Prefecture. We believe this will be a very rare opportunity to study the history of the Soto Zen tradition by actually visiting the important places of our founders. Please see the itinerary below.

TOUR PRICE \$1,000

Sep. 13-KYOTO ARRIVAL

Meet at International Hotel Kyoto.

Sep. 14 Full-day sightseeing in Kyoto

Visiting Kosho-ji, Cremation place of Dogen Zenji, Kennin-ji and Shisen-do Jozanji.

Sep. 15 KYOTO-MT. HIEI-EIHEI-JI

Visiting Ordination place of Dogen Zenji on Mt. Hiei, Hokyō-ji and staying at Eihei-ji.

Sep. 16 EIHEI-JI-KATAYAMAZU

Attending Zazen, Morning Service and Dogen Zenji 750th Memorial Service. Transfer to a ryokan (Japanese Style Hotel) in Katayamazu Spa.

Sep. 17 KATAYAMAZU-NOTO-KANAZAWA

Visiting Soji-ji Soin, Yoko-ji and Daijo-ji. Staying in Kanazawa.

Sep. 18 KANAZAWA-KYOTO

Transfer to Kyoto and tour disbands at Kyoto Station.

This price does not include airfare to/from Japan. For more information, please contact Soto Zen Education Center.

Deadline of tour registration is May 15th. Please make registration as soon as possible.

SOTO ZEN EDUCATION CENTER
1691 LAGUNA STREET, SAN FRANCISCO, CALIFORNIA 94115, USA
TELEPHONE 415-567-7686 FACSIMILE 415-567-0200

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NEWS

FROM THE SOTO ZEN ADMINISTRATIVE OFFICE AND EDUCATION CENTER

- The Mountain Seat Ceremony for Rev. Shuichi Tom Kurai was held at Sozenji Buddhist Temple in Montebello California together with the Shuso Hossenshiki for Rev. Koshu Sheel from October 27th through 28th, 2001.
- The Annual Soto Zen Conference was held at Miyako Inn Hotel in Los Angeles from February 9th through 10th, 2002. We discussed many topics such as: "Pilgrimage to Eihei-ji for the 750th Anniversary of Dogen Zenji", "The new translation of Soto School Scriptures", "Definition of Dendokyo-shi, Dendo-shi and Kaigaisoryo", and etc..
- The Genzo-e Sesshin (Shobogenzo Study Sesshin) was held at San Francisco Zen Center from March 9th through 15th, 2002. Rev. Shohaku Okumura lectured on Shobogenzo Sansuikyo (Mountain and Waters Sutra) twice a day for a week. About seventy people participated in the Sesshin.
- Rev. Ikki Nambara at the Sokoji in San Francisco became a full-time secretary of Soto Zen Education Center of North America on April 1, 2002. Rev. Kiko Tatedera from Kojin-an Zendo took over his place at the Sokoji.



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Shohaku Okumura, Editor

Please address all inquiries or comments to: **Soto Zen Education Center**
1691 Laguna Street, San Francisco, CA 94115
Phone: 415-567-7686
Fax: 415-567-0200