

IN A LETTER that went out to some of you from Yvonne Rand, President of Zen Center, she wrote: "Suzuki-roshi died early in the morning, Saturday, December 4, 1971 just after the sounding of the opening bell of the five-day sesshin commemorating Buddha's Enlightenment. He left us very gently and calmly. And he left Zen Center very carefully, teaching us in everything he did. There is almost no sense of his being gone, for he continues to live clearly in the practice and community that were his life work. His last appearance in public was on November 21 at the ceremony to install Richard Baker-roshi as his successor, according to his long-standing plan. He left specific directions for the ways he wanted the community to develop, and his wishes are being carried out."

Mrs. Suzuki, Otohiro his son, and Baker-roshi were with Suzuki-roshi when he died. Shortly after, the older disciples came up from the Zendo and moved him to the room where he usually met with students for *dokusan* (personal interview) or tea. The disciples offered incense and chanted the Heart Sutra in Japanese and English. Then all of the one hundred and fifteen students attending the sesshin came up and one at a time offered incense. They were joined by many of the older students from all over the Bay Area. The incense offering lasted until he was taken to the funeral home late in the afternoon. The funeral was to be done according to Japanese custom here in America. We waited a week for the arrival from Japan of Hoichi, his son and Abbot of Suzuki-roshi's former temple, Rinso-in, and for Niwa-roshi, his Dharma-brother and Abbot of Eiheiji in Tokyo. During this week two students at a time sat with him and did zazen and helped the many people who came to sit or offer incense.

THE FUNERAL CEREMONY was calm and very beautiful, on Sunday, December 12 at 2 p.m. It was led by Niwa-roshi, Katagiri-roshi, and Moriyama-sensei, the successor of Suzuki-roshi as Head Priest of Sokoji Temple. About five hundred people attended, including Buddhist priests of many schools and countries. Hoichi-sensei and Baker-roshi, as Suzuki-roshi's direct disciples, bowed and offered incense for all the disciples. The ceremony ended with a statement by Baker-roshi of all our feeling:

"There is no easy way to be a teacher or a disciple, although it must be the greatest joy in this life. There is no easy way to come to a land without Buddhism and leave it having brought many disciples, priests and laymen well along the path, and having changed the lives of thousands of persons throughout this country; no easy way to have begun and nurtured a Sangha and community that include a mountain monastery, a large city practice center, and other practice centers in California and elsewhere.

"He brought us Buddha, himself, and an understanding of Buddha which included us. There was room for everyone. He knew himself that well. He brought us Dharma, such a thorough understanding and living of the teaching that grasses, trees, flowers, tables did actually teach us. He brought us Sangha, the traditional ancient Buddhist community, giving us a full sense of how to live through Buddhist tradition, to learn from his own Japanese culture, and to include our own culture through which Buddhism must find its expression.

"But this 'no-easy-way', this extraordinary accomplishment, rested easily with him, for he gave us, from his own true nature, our true nature. In Hazel Paget's funeral ceremony and Trudy Dixon's funeral ceremony he spoke of three minds:



Niwa-roshi and, behind him, Katagiri-roshi

Joyful Mind, the joy of Buddha's mind in all conditions; Compassionate Mind, which includes all of us without any idea of self; and Big Mind, as big as a mountain, deep as an ocean, without discrimination, penetrating fully and exactly, one with everything simultaneously.

"Through the intimate and unconditioned relationship of teacher and disciple, he left us intimate with Buddha and ourselves. He left as much as any man can leave, everything essential: the mind and heart of Buddha, the practice of Buddha, the teaching and life of Buddha. He is here, here in each one of us, if we want him, and in the life here, which was his life work to allow us to continue.

"Let us do everything possible to allow his passage, in many forms, to be complete, treating each other as Buddha. Let us each be reborn now. Let us realize our own true nature.

"At the beginning of Buddha's Enlightenment sesshin, just after the bell opening the first period of zazen, our great teacher, Suzuki Shunryu-daiosho, joined Buddha. He passed with decision and gentleness. A few days before he died, when it was difficult for him to speak, I asked him, 'Where will we meet you?' A small hand came out from underneath the covers, made a small bow, and drew a circle in the air."

Richard Baker himself appeared, walking slowly down the narrow hall in the semi-darkness, holding the fly-whisk of horsehair, and wearing a robe given to him by Suzuki-roshi of sky-blue and gold cloth, decorated with brightly colored phoenixes. All heads bowed as he passed and entered the Zendo, where he made an offering at the altar. He returned a moment later, and, looking neither right nor left, he walked steadily back to join the rest of the procession. We heard them going back upstairs, the solid bangings of the staff and the strange notes of the bells receding in the distance, until only the gong and the drum broke the stillness of the dimly-lit hallway.

"Then we were summoned upstairs to the Buddha Hall. We filed in through the Zendo and out through its rear door, then up the stairs and into the main corridor. Walking slowly, we entered the Hall, passing the great drum, and filled up the wide expanse of tatami mats left in front of the Mountain Seat Altar. Visitors were seated in chairs all around the perimeter of the mats, while we sat on our heels, Japanese style. Meanwhile, the procession had gone upstairs to the next floor, to the room of the Master, Suzuki Shunryu-daiosho, the founder of Zen Center, whom Richard Baker was succeeding. Everyone who knew this man loved him, and I myself, though I had only met him once, regarded him with the deepest respect. I knew that he was quite ill at that time, but when he, at the head of the procession, entered the Hall, I was shocked to see him as frail and shrunken as the man who appeared, a ghost of the person whose immense vigor and spiritual strength had guided the Center through the first uncertain years of its existence. He entered, practically being carried by his son, but holding his staff firmly, and thumping it on the matting as he approached the Mountain Seat. He bowed at the altar, and was helped to a place to the right of the platform. Richard Baker entered then with the retinue, and seated himself in a lacquered chair facing the Mountain Seat Altar. The great drum fell silent. We chanted in unison the Prajna Paramita Hridaya Sutra in English, and then, having offered prayers and incense in front of the Altar, Baker-roshi ascended the steps of the platform and stood, several feet above the onlookers, offering incense to the Buddhas and Bodhisattvas and the Patriarchs, to the benefactors of the Center, and, finally, to his own beloved teacher, Suzuki-roshi. He said:

This piece of incense
Which I have had for a long long time
I offer with no-hand
To my Master, to my friend, Suzuki Shunryu-daiosho
The founder of these temples.
There is no measure of what you have done.

Walking with you in Buddha's gentle rain
Our robes are soaked through,
But on the lotus leaves
Not a drop remains.'

"Then Katagiri-roshi, acting for Suzuki-roshi, recited the brief authentication verse with a full-bodied shout, in true Zen fashion. For his sermon, Baker-roshi stated simply, 'There is nothing to be said.'

"This was perfectly true. Then followed the so-called Dharma-questions, when the other priests seek to test the new Abbot's understanding. The following marvelous dialogue ensued between Baker-roshi and the priest from the Mill Valley Zendo:

(Bill Kwong) 'Chief Priest!' (shouting)

(Baker-roshi) 'Is it host or guest?'

(Bill Kwong) 'Iiii!' (shouting)

(Baker-roshi) 'Show me your True Nature without shouting!'

Bill then simply bowed, and returned to his seat.

"Following congratulatory telegrams and such, the ceremony was concluded. Suzuki-roshi was helped to his feet and moved to the front of the altar to make his bow. But when he turned to face the people, there was on his face an expression at once fierce and sad. His breath puffed mightily in his nostrils, and he looked as if he strove vigorously to speak, to say something, perhaps to exhort the disciples to be strong in their practice, or to follow Richard Baker with faith; no one can say. He faced the congregation directly as if to speak and instead rolled his staff between his hands sounding the rings twice, once looking to the left and once to the right side of the hall. It was as though some physical shock had passed through the hall; there was a collective intake of breath, and suddenly, everywhere people were weeping openly. All those who had been close to the Roshi now realized fully what it would mean to lose him, and were overcome with a thoroughly human sorrow. As their Master falteringly walked from the



*Reb Anderson,
Baker-roshi,
Angie Runyon*



During the Ashes Ceremony there were a number of audible statements made by Baker-roshi. Here are parts of several of them.

Opening:

Suzuki-roshi said, "Which do you prefer, the whole earth or a small stone?" And then he answered himself, "I rather prefer a small stone which we can carry or move."

Suzuki-roshi! We have assembled the disciples, assembling your Great Body. We have moved here for you this favorite stone. But we know your true stupa is hard to see, that your Great Spirit is reflected everywhere.

Middle:

This stupa is the body of the Tathagata. Do not try to see it! If you desire to see Shogaku Shunryu-roshi's body: Look here! Just in front of you! By your own Great Vow you will hear his Lion's Roar.

Suzuki-roshi, from now on make this rock your peaceful home. Receive the offers that are flowing from every direction, returning from your own kind heart. Please protect endless generations of practice here.

End (Eko):

We have offered light, incense, flowers, something from the sky, something from the earth, something from the sea to this mountain stone, this formless tree, your pure body that we may continue to serve you. Farewell. May we meet you always before us in the light of your wisdom that shines from everything.

MEMORIAL SERVICE LECTURE, December 23, 1972

by Zentatsu Baker-roshi

Suzuki-roshi died just over a year ago and today we will have the one-year Memorial Service for him. It is an old old Buddhist custom to offer food to your teacher on the anniversary of his death. To treat your teacher as if he were still alive. Do you know the story of Tozan and Nansen at Baso's Memorial Service? Tozan Ryokai (807-869) is the founder of the Soto line in China. Our lineage. During Tozan's time the five lineages stemming from Hui Neng, the Sixth Patriarch, were all interconnected, everyone visiting and learning from each other. Nansen Fugan (748-838) is the great teacher famous for the koan about killing a cat. He was one of the five main disciples of Baso Doitsu (709-799). For Suzuki-roshi, Baso was one of the greatest Zen Masters of all time.

Tozan was quite young when he asked his first teacher, probably a local village priest, why the sutra said "no eyes, no ears, no nose, no tongue, no body, no mind," when he had eyes, ears, nose, tongue, body, and mind. Amazed at the clarity and matter of factness of the question, the teacher said, "I am not good enough for you, please go to Master Reimoku." Tozan did so and had his head shaved under Reimoku (747-818) who was one of the many heirs of Baso Doitsu. When he was about twenty-one he began journeying about visiting various teachers. The first teacher he visited was Nansen. When Tozan arrived the monastery was preparing for the annual Memorial Service for Nansen's teacher, Baso. Nansen said to everyone, to all his disciples, "Tomorrow we will serve food to Master Baso. Do you think he will come?"

I may ask you the same question. This afternoon we will perform the first annual Memorial Service for our teacher, Master Suzuki-roshi. We will offer him food and drink. Will Suzuki-roshi come and eat the food we serve him today?

When Nansen asked this question there was the silence of no one answering, and then from the back of the assembly young Tozan stepped forward and said, "Master Baso will wait for a companion." And then Nansen said, "Oh here is a fellow, although he is quite young, he is worthy to study Buddhism." Tozan answered, "Please do not slight me in that way!"

Let us run through it again. Nansen asked, "Is there a student in the house? Is there anyone here who knows that Baso neither comes nor goes, that he is always present?" After no one of Nansen's disciples replied, Tozan said, "He will wait for a companion. He will wait for someone to come forward who knows the true relationship between disciple and teacher." And then Nansen, cautioning him, said, "Are you pointing yourself out as a student, as a companion?" And Tozan replied, "Please do not insult me. I am pointing out Master Baso. I am pointing out how a teacher actually exists."

How does a teacher really exist? You must make an effort to be a disciple. You must come forward to be a teacher's companion in your common realization. You must make an effort, a great effort to realize Suzuki-roshi's teaching, to realize your own nature, to be his companion forever. It means actually eating with Master Baso and Suzuki-roshi, walking with them, knowing how they actually exist and existed. It means to think with him, hear with him, see with him. This is a story about how each one of us actually exists.

Later on in Tozan's life, he was in his fifties, there is a story about when he was preparing for a Memorial Service for his own teacher, Ungan Donjo. You know about Ungan (Yun Yen in many stories) from our morning chanting of the lineage. Beginning from the Sixth Patriarch, Hui Neng or in Japanese Daikan Eno— . . . Daikan Eno Daiocho (great teacher), Seigen Gyoshi Daiocho, Sekito Kisen Daiocho (the author of the Sandokai), Yakusan Igen Daiocho, Ungan Donjo Daiocho, Tozan Ryokai Daiocho . . . and so forth. For twenty years Ungan was also a disciple of Hyakujo who was an heir of Baso Doitsu too.

During the preparation of the vegetarian food for the offering to Ungan, a monk asked Tozan, "What teaching did you receive from Master Ungan?" Tozan answered, "Although I was in his community for many years, he gave me no instruction." This monk seeking instruction persists, "If he did not instruct you, why are you offering a Memorial Service to him now?" Tozan said, "How could I contradict him." The monk then said, "You visited Nansen first and became known at that time, why do you offer food now in Ungan's memory?" Tozan said, "I am not making this offering because of Master Ungan's virtue or Buddha Dharma, but because he refused to reveal the teaching to me. This is why I respect him."

Another monk asked at the same time, "Master Tozan, you are about to conduct a Memorial Service in honor of your teacher, Master Ungan, do you agree with his teaching completely?" Tozan replied, "I half agree, and half disagree." (And yet he could not contradict him!) The monk, who wants something to be in agreement with, asks, "Why do you not agree with him completely?" "To do so would be to do him an injustice," replied Tozan.

I have talked about these stories many times and there is still another story about Tozan I would like to tell you about again. After Tozan left Nansen he went to see Isan Reiyu and asked him about a famous statement of Nan'yo Echu. Isan (771-853) was an heir of Hyakujo and co-founder of the Igyo lineage, and Nan'yo (d. 776) was an heir of the Sixth Patriarch and is often known by his title of Chu Kokushi, or State Master, and by his request for an untiered or seamless burial mound. (See Suzuki-roshi's commentary on p. 7 in this Wind Bell.)

Tozan told Isan that he did not understand the deep meaning of Nan'yo's statement that inanimate objects expound the Dharma. Isan asked Tozan to repeat the story: A monk asked Nan'yo, "What is an ancient Buddha's mind?" Nan'yo replied, "A wall and broken tiles." "But are they not inanimate objects?" the monk said. "They are," replied Nan'yo. "Can inanimate objects expound the Dharma?" asked the monk. Nan'yo said, "Inanimate objects vigorously and unceasingly expound the Dharma." The monk asked, "Well, why do I not hear it?" Then Nan'yo replied, "Although you do not hear it,

do not hinder that which hears it!" The story goes on, but this is the statement I want you to hear: "Although you do not hear it, do not hinder that which hears it."

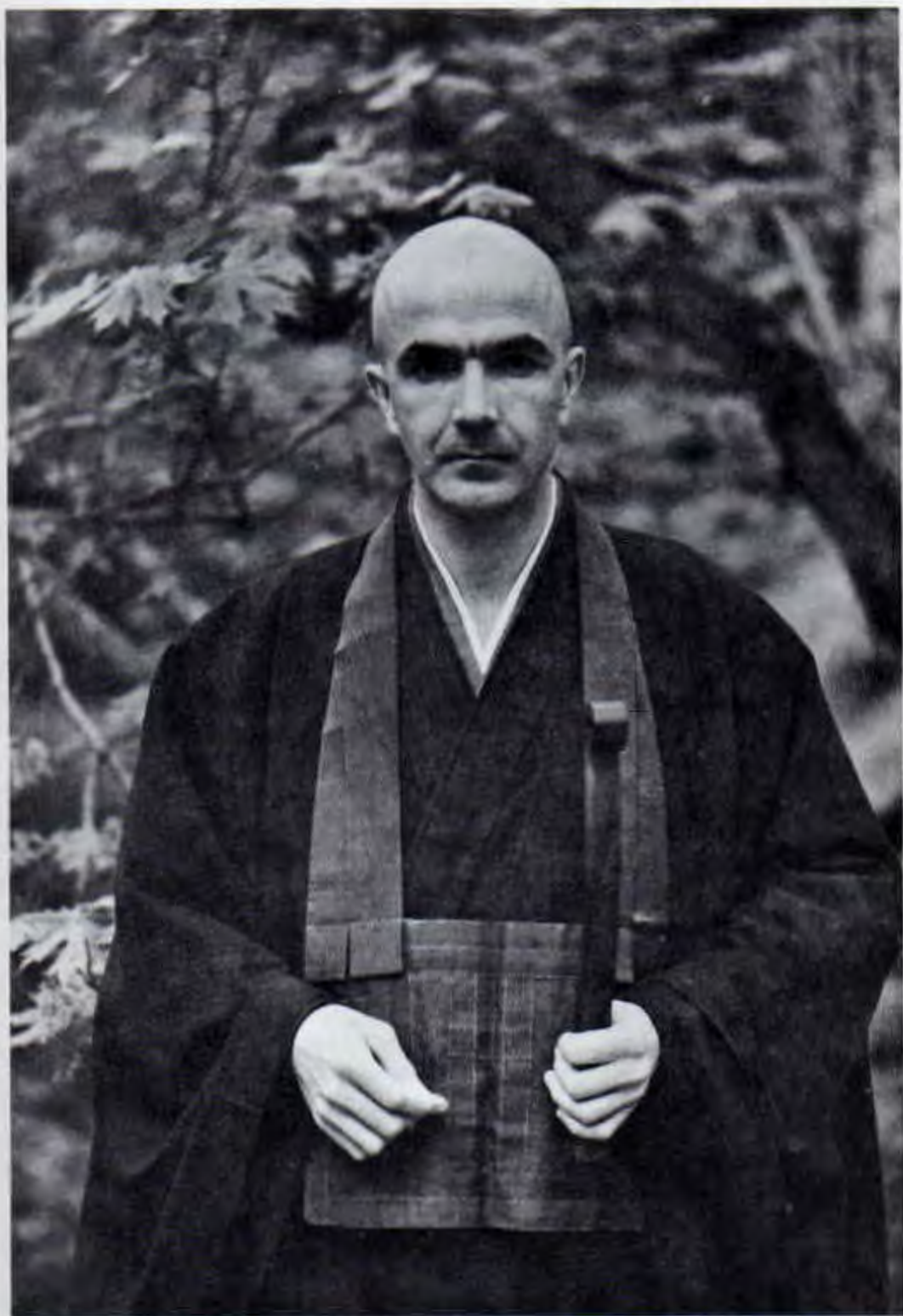
At the end of the whole story, Isan says, "I have something to say about this too, but I have not yet found a man to whom I can speak." Tozan said, "Will you please teach me, I do not understand." Isan raised his whisk and said, "Do you understand?" Tozan said, "No! Will you explain it to me?" Isan said, "This mouth from my parents will never explain it to you." After that Isan sent Tozan to the mountain cave where Ungan lived. Tozan right away asked, "When the inanimate expounds the Dharma, who can hear it?" Ungan said, "The inanimate hear it!" Tozan said, "Venerable Ungan, do you hear it?" Ungan said, "If I heard it, you could not hear my expounding of the Dharma." Then Tozan asked, "Why do I not hear it?" Ungan raised his whisk and said, "Do you hear it?" Tozan again said, "No!" And Ungan replied, "If you cannot hear my teaching, how can you ever hear the teaching of the inanimate?" Tozan said, "What sutra says, 'Inanimate objects expound the Dharma?'" Ungan said, "Do you not know that the Amitabha Buddha Sutra says, 'Streams, birds, trees, groves, all chant Buddha Dharma?'" Finally Tozan realized that all things expound the Dharma, and he said:

 "Wonderful, wonderful!
 The Dharma of the inanimate cannot be conceived.
 Listening with the ears is hearing nothing,
 Hearing with the eyes, at last you know."

Suzuki-roshi was much like this, he would not say much about the teaching. He just lived here with us. And in the first years he was here in America, it was very hard to recognize him more than that he was a very nice and remarkable man. It was not until he had visible relationships with several disciples that we began to be able to see him through these relationships, and to find our own relationships to him. Coming forward in ourselves and treating him as a teacher. By the end of his life many people could see him directly through his reflections in his many disciples. While in the first years most of the people who came to sit zazen for a while, after a while went away not knowing who Suzuki-roshi was. But by the end of his life everyone wanted to stay with him and there was so much space around him to stay.

Our relationship with him continues, our experience of our relationship with him is not gone, if we continue to come forward, continue to renew it, continue to hear with our eyes, and see with our ears. We should treat Suzuki-roshi as if he were alive and so sometimes we offer food to him and call it a Memorial Service. This relationship has some wisdom in it, we do not know what we learned—"I was with him many years, but I did not receive any teaching"—but when it is necessary suddenly it comes out, what is necessary, something we did not even know we knew, Buddhism itself. Do you know how to come forward to make the body of Buddha visible, to join Suzuki-roshi today in this Memorial Service?

Which came first: Suzuki-roshi, Buddha, or you? It is the same as Buddha, is the same as you. This possibility to come forward, this actuality exists right now and is you. The teacher is always waiting, Suzuki-roshi is still waiting for



you. Don't worry! Everything exists just as you exist just now! It is something incomprehensible, something unthinkable. "Although we do not hear it, do not hinder that which hears it!" Engo said, "Ten thousand Holy Ones have not handed down a single phrase of the pre-voice." I say the pre-voice of the ten thousand things is heard everywhere. Do you hear it? Can you practice in this realm of the incomprehensible? This actual being, this actual practice is beyond being and non-being, and so we offer food to Suzuki-roshi. Please come forward and make the body of Buddha visible for all beings, animate and inanimate, to continue this teaching.



THE MEMORIAL SERVICE

In the afternoon everyone gathered in the Buddha Dharma Hall to begin the Memorial Service. Baker-roshi entered and standing before the special altar set up for Suzuki-roshi called out:

At Baso's Memorial Service,
Tozan said, "He will wait for a companion."
At Ungan Donjo's Memorial Service,
Tozan said, "I spent many years with him,
but he refused to reveal the truth to me!"
Oh Suzuki-roshi, What do you say?
Will you refuse to reveal the teaching to us?
We come forward as one person,
hearing the ten thousand things bless you.

CEREMONIES OF CROSSING OVER

ALAN WATTS

(1915-1973)

*Led by: Zentatsu Baker-roshi
Kobun Chino-sensei
Claude Dalenberg*

Roshi:

All your ancient karma
From beginningless time
Born of body, speech and mind
Is now fully resolved.

All your ancient karma
From beginningless time
Born of body, speech, and mind
Is now fully resolved.

All your ancient karma
From beginningless time
Born of body, speech and mind
Is now fully resolved.

Let us recite the ten names of Buddha:

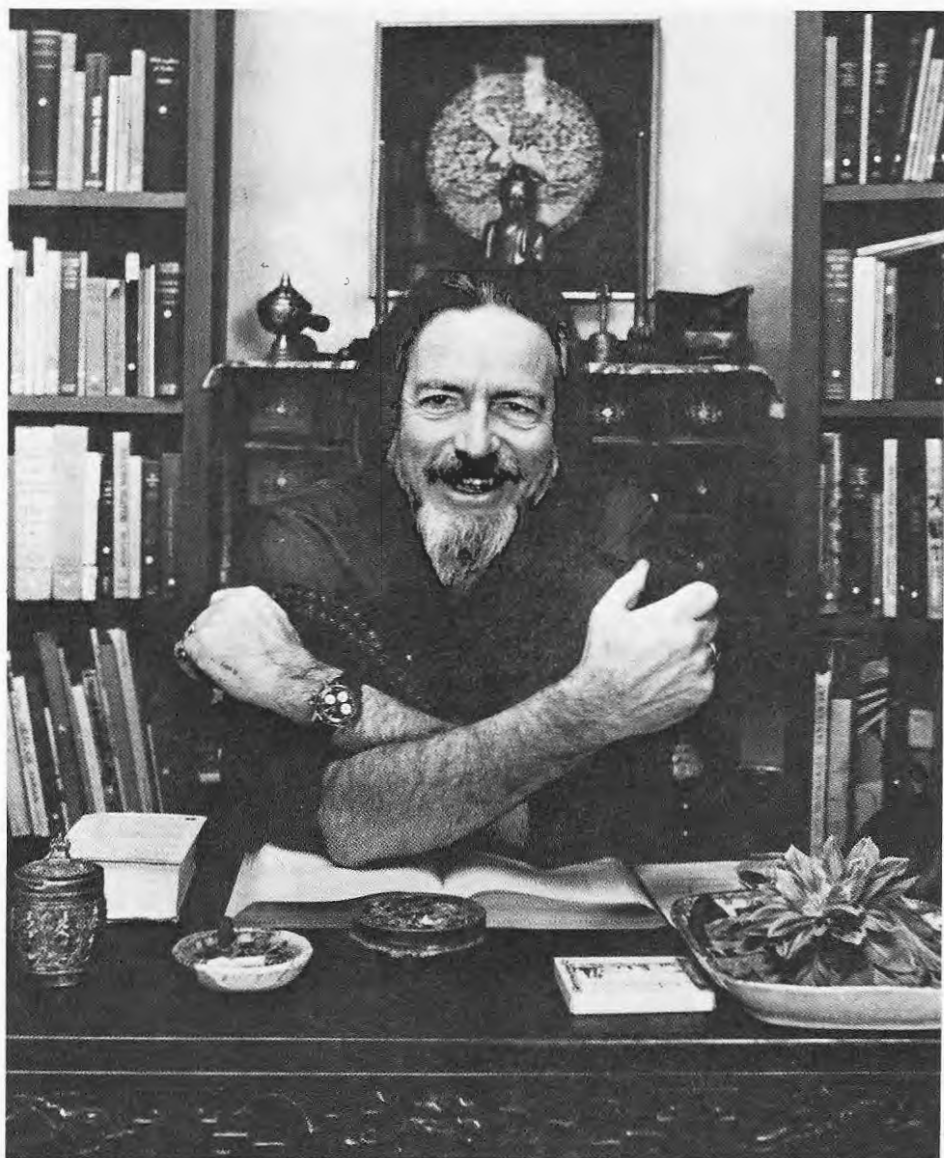
Everyone:

Homage to Dharmakaya Vairochana Buddha,
Homage to Sambhogakaya Lochana Buddha,
Homage to Nirmanakaya Shakyamuni Buddha,
Homage to the future Maitreya Buddha,
Homage to all Buddhas in the ten directions,
past, present and future.

Homage to Manjusri the perfect wisdom Bodhisattva,
Homage to Samantabhadra the shining practice Bodhisattva,
Homage to the many Bodhisattva Mahasattvas,
Homage to the Maha Prajna Paramita.

Roshi:

Alan, as you well know, there are four practices in Buddhism:
The first is the Precepts, knowing how to survive, finding out
how to live in this world. And you knew well how to
survive, and taught us all, this whole society, how to
live, in so many ways you taught us. I now give you
all the Precepts, the True Mind of Buddha that sounds
as thunder.



And the second practice is understanding, wisdom, Prajna, the transforming light that through your clarity led so many of us into wiser paths.

The third practice is compassion, putting yourself in the place of others, knowing the ultimate concern and care for the world and its beings—animate and inanimate—service. And you have served us so well, showing us the true meaning of this vow.



The fourth is the lineage. The understanding that is out of time and yet one with it. That is for all ages, all world systems, and yet one with this present age, the understanding and being of the universal source of all wisdom, all light and life.

And so I give you a Buddhist name now, to recognize this lineage, a name based on your home place, Druid Heights, where you felt so comfortable, and where you peacefully left this world. Yū Zan Myō Kō, Profound, Mysterious Mountain of Subtle, Penetrating, Transforming Light: Profound Mountain, Subtle Light; and because you are a great hero, a great founder of a new spiritual world; founder, opener of the Great Zen Samadhi Gate, I give you this title, Dai Yū In in front of your name, and Dai Zen Jō Mon after your name. A title given very rarely, once a generation or a century.

Dai Yū In Yū Zan Myō Kō Dai Zen Jō Mon:

Please take refuge in the Buddha.

Please take refuge in the Dharma.

Please take refuge in the Sangha.

Please completely take refuge in the Buddha.

Please completely take refuge in the Dharma.

Please completely take refuge in the Sangha.

Now you have completely taken refuge in the Buddha.

Now you have completely taken refuge in the Dharma.

Now you have completely taken refuge in the Sangha.

Roshi returned to his seat and chanted the 'Mantra of the Secret Treasure of the Gate of Sweet Dew,' three times, preceded by the Dharma drum which faded as he began to chant and rose again each time he finished.

Chino-sensei then offered tea and said:

With formless form you have come.
With formless form you are going.
This is how you are with us—
We are with you—
Showing what is the nature of awakening.
We are very grateful.

Claude Dalenberg then offered sweet water and said:

O Monk of mind
Broad as the sky
Not clinging
To any special Dharma.
Going, going beyond going!
The word of the Buddha
Knows no discrimination.
Thus he gave.
A gentle rain of the Dharma falls on this land.
We are grateful.



Roshi then offered food. After the Flame Lighting Mudra—the circling of the flame clockwise and counter-clockwise—Roshi said:

Alan, Dai Yū In Yū Zan Myō Kō Dai Zen Jō Mon,
Here is your lineage from Buddha through the Buddhas
and Patriarchs to you.

Alan Watts was a philosopher, a poet, a calligrapher, a
lover, a friend, a Dharma reveller, a revealer, a
great founder of the spirit for all of us.

He saw the true emptiness of all things.

He taught us to be free. To see through the multiplicities
and absurdities to the Great Universal Personality
and Play.

He gave us the Dharma Eye of a new age.

Our blessings go with You now.

Wide Mind, Joyous Mind, Careful Loving Mind.

For the true life is beyond life and death, origination
and extinction.

We are with you in the many paths you opened for us.

HOooooooooooooooooooooooooooooooooooooo!

Go! Go! Great Hermit! Great Founder!

Philip Whalen then read a tribute written for Alan by Gary Snyder:

He blazed out the new path for all of us,
and came back and made it clear. Explored
the side canyons and deer trails, and
investigated cliffs and thickets.

Many guides would have us travel single
file, like mules in a pack train, and
never leave the trail. Alan taught us
to move forward like the breeze—tasting
the berries, greeting the blue jays, learning
and loving the whole terrain.

Roshi then shook his staff and said:

Alan gave this monk's staff to Suzuki-roshi at Tassajara monas-
tery, and Suzuki-roshi gave it to me before he died. Suzuki-roshi
used it at my Abbott's Installation Ceremony, the last ceremony
he ever performed. Now I shake it for you, Alan, to help you
on your way.

*After the priests chanted the Shariraimon, the family and friends offered incense
while everyone chanted the Dai Hi Shin Dharani followed by the Maha Prajna
Paramita Hridaya Sutra in English and Japanese.*

Roshi:

We have offered light, tea, sweet water, food, flowers,
And we have chanted many things for you,
O Alan
May your great spirit rest
And may we rest and move with you
Coursing in this new peace you have shown us.
Blessings on you and all beings, animate and inanimate.

Green Gulch Farm Zendo November 18, 1973



Flame Lighting Mudra, Ceremony of Crossing Over for Vocha Fiske White.

VOCHA FISKE WHITE (1890-1974)

Vocha Fiske White first came to visit Tassajara Zen Mountain Center in the summer of 1970. At that time Suzuki-roshi invited her to live at the City Center, which she did beginning in the fall of that year. She lived and practiced with us for nearly four years—a constant inspiration to our practice. She had been a student of Buddhism and Zen for over twenty years, and to the end of her life had the quality of beginner's mind—each day making some very sincere effort to practice. Even after she had become too weak to go down the stairs to the Zendo, she would sit the daily periods of zazen and sesshins upstairs in the Buddha Hall or in her room.

She let go of the possessions of her previous active life (as an actress, a teacher, and a student of General Semantics) and left very little of the material world, but the things she did keep she used and cherished with great care. The books she had were well-worn and marked from her constant studying. Occasionally she gave dramatic readings in the dining room at Zen Center, dramatic presentations from memory of old Chinese poems which revealed her as an actress, moving performances that touched us with her dry humor and left us laughing quietly for a long time.

LECTURE

BY ZENTATSU BAKER-ROSHI (*From Sesshin Talks April 1974*)

Many of you are fond of the gatha at the end of the Diamond Sutra:

As stars, a fault of vision, as a lamp,
A mock show, dew drops, or a bubble,
A dream, a lightning flash, or cloud,
So should one view what is conditioned.*

This is not just a philosophical statement to aesthetically remind you that all is not permanent. It is a statement of what is actually so, a description of the actual nature of everything if you can look without a hint of accumulation, qualification, hesitation in your vision. It means to be lost without any way to measure anything.

In this sesshin you should not be trying to get through with some measurement, nor with a dependence on putting forth energy or a determination to get through no matter what. Just do each thing in turn without any idea of the next moment. A sesshin should disorder your usual order, take away what you usually rely on, until you find your real strength, until the reality that does not need measurement is manifest in you.

In his introduction to case number two in the Blue Cliff Records, Engo says that, "By comparison heaven and earth are too narrow, the sun, moon, and stars lose their brilliance. No teaching method, blows of the stick, thunderous shouts, can help us attain it. The Buddhas of past, present and future only know it in themselves. Generations of Patriarchs cannot expound it. All the sutras and Buddha's lifelong teaching are not enough to measure it. Even those with clear eyes who have taken on His way of life completely are helpless before it."

We need to be lost, to give up looking for meaning. We need darkness. It would be terrible if it were always light. So forget about night and day, sleeping and waking, near or far, before or after. Forget about where you are. But even though heaven and earth are too narrow, the universe too contracted, "the real way is not difficult, only without discrimination," says Joshu in the Main Subject of this story.

I want to speak for a moment about how we hold our eating bowls. Many of us pick them up using fingers and thumb as if our hand was some kind of implement that works very mechanically. In this kind of relationship the bowl is rather inactive, it is just something you hold with the mechanics of your fingers. But the way we eat in Zen, the way we handle things, the bowl should just rest in your hand. When you use the whole of your hand, the bowl is holding your hand and your hand is holding the bowl. There is some intimacy, some equality and participation of hand and bowl. Do you understand what I mean? It is like saying conditioned things are like a dewdrop. It is the sound of one hand clapping. You must act with everything so thoroughly and immediately that you are the dewdrop. There is no question of trying to make it something, trying to find a substitute.

*Translation by Dr. Edward Conze

In this beautiful spring time, when you see something, grass or flowers, if your yearning is to make the experience complete by finding some substitute in language or experience, if you feel it is not quite complete until you paint it or write it or do something about it—that is suffering. Grass is not green or anything in particular, it is not any interpretation. A drawing is a real drawing when it is independent, its own experience, as ashes are ashes and firewood firewood.

So abandon all hope, abandon any kind of location. It is a wonderful experience to realize that you are actually lost, just swimming. We do not know, here with this beautiful stone Buddha, with each other in this room, where this is. Do you know where this is, where we are? If you think you know, that is not right. When you can transcend these discriminations, here or there, near or far, big or small, before or after, lofty or common, space and time, then the real way is not difficult and you will know your one Mind, your original nature. This is to be really lost, to have no support, to be always found by you yourself, to find the life that does not need any special support, that is really like a dewdrop. In the *Perfection of Wisdom in 700 Lines* Manjusri states, "When one is not supported anywhere, just that, O Lord, is the development of perfect wisdom." Who is going to keep track anyway, your parents, your friends, your past, you who remember who you were? If things are really as a dewdrop, if you really believe that you must understand and experience everything without reliance on anything else, then there is nothing keeping track, and you can enter the real way.

If you try to pick up the bowl like your hand was a tool, already you are in some contracted world and do not know it. In that *Introductory Word* Engo goes on to say, "What is the use of specific questions? Even to call Buddha's name is like wallowing in mud and water." It means too much kindness from your teacher also cannot help you. "The word Zen in your mouth should make you blush. Now ponder what Joshu has to say."

The first story in the *Blue Cliff Records*, you remember, about Bodhidharma and the Emperor, is about how you find a teacher. Its theme is the relative and the absolute, holy reality and ordinary reality. And this second story too uses the theme of relative and absolute. But the second story is about once you've found your teacher, how do you practice with him? What is the relationship?

Studying Buddhism is difficult, because it's to bring it out of ourselves. Sutras, or heaven and earth, or thunderous blows, or your teacher, are not so much. It has to be brought out of you. As Engo says, "What is the use of specific questions?" He's asking, as Dogen did, What is the use of practice? So this story is about your standpoint in practice, your standpoint in relationship with your teacher. It is an intuitive story of our inner voice.

The case begins as Joshu, quoting Sosan's famous poem, says, "The real way is not difficult, it is only without discrimination." At this point Engo says, "What's this old Chinese bringing in his bunch of briars to us today for?" Do you understand? For Joshu to make a statement already is discrimination. Then Joshu says, "As soon as we say anything about it, it becomes little." In Engo's words, "Heaven and earth become contracted." As soon as we say anything, we must

talk about the relative and the absolute. Joshu continues, "This old monk (Joshu) does not reside in cloudless clarity. What about you (you monks, who look up to cloudless clarity, the absolute), what do you say?"

So a monk comes up to Joshu. Maybe he is attached to his teacher being a sage, and Joshu is saying, "I'm not some sage, living in the absolute." Some say this monk is a little out of order, but I don't think so. He's a rather interesting person. He asks Joshu, "If you are not within cloudless clarity, if you don't reside in the absolute, how do you assess it?" A rather clever question. And he also means, what can we look for, how can we take the three refuges and the ten prohibitory precepts and the three pure precepts? What can we look up to, if you're not in the absolute? Joshu's reply is, "I don't know even this." But the monk is persistent. "How can you say 'I don't know' unless your standpoint is the absolute?" Isn't 'I don't know' already the absolute, he implies. And Joshu says, "Your questioning is over. Please bow and go back to your place." Go have lunch, go to bed. Do whatever is next. That is Joshu's way.

In this question and answer you see Joshu taking neither the standpoint of relative nor absolute. At one point he presents something broadside: The real way is not difficult. And then he says, I'm not in the absolute. Here he's presenting something upside down, in some confusing way. He's going against the stream, a boat going against the wind, maybe. And then when he says 'I don't know' he is just drifting—"Oh, I don't know." And the monk is still trying to make the answers fit together. If you try to do so, you'll never have any experience of the multiplicities of our existence or our real relationship with each other. So take the burden off your mind and eyes, and listen, just know the darkness. This sesshin is seven days and nights of darkness.

In the last response, Joshu just changes the context: Finish your bow and go back to your place. He's not slighting the question or questioner, and he's not caught by the framework of questions and answers. He's just taking one or another standpoint, but with some great respect and feeling for the questioner. When the monk makes his first question, Engo comments: "He needs a good thrashing," meaning, some teachers would thrash or be harsh with the person asking the question. And when Joshu says, "Go back to your seat," Engo says, "Some teachers would try to talk their way out of it by logic." But it's not necessary, you know, for question and answer to follow in order to know, to experience what we're talking about. Engo says, "You should know the weight by how it pulls on the hook, not by reading the numbers on the scale."

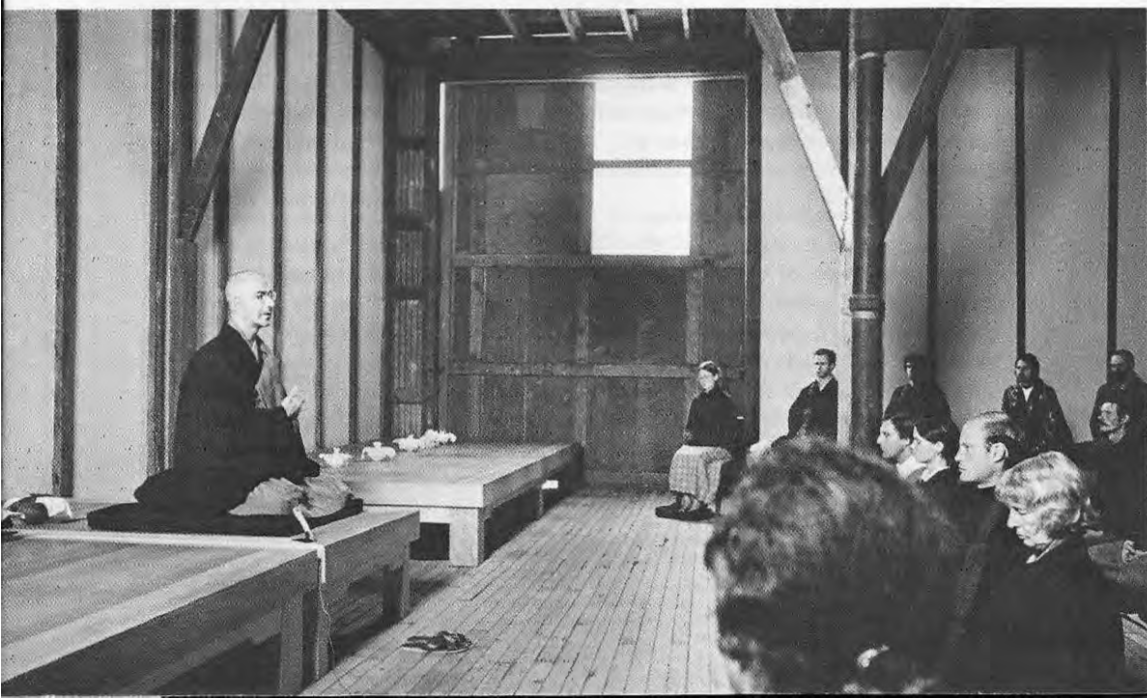
For teacher and disciple to practice together, we need to have some faith or sense of what we are talking about without the need to make it explicit or tie it down. Engo's teacher said about Joshu's way, "He showed us by letting his arms dangle down." Nothing special, no eagle eye, dramatic Zen Master stuff. Just oh, O.K. Suzuki-roshi was very much like that. On the other hand, we don't want too much kindness, "wading hip-deep in mud and water," too much attempt to make some relationship. Maybe to give you an image of Buddha, or feeling of Buddha, he says is too much kindness. Already you have some special feeling of practice, "holy practice." Already it is too much. That is not beginner's mind. The difficulty is that we have too much confidence in our teacher and also too much confidence in the absolute. So you don't have any freedom. Suzuki-roshi pointed this out many times when he talked about this story. The

problem, as he said, is that your teacher is right, but only for that moment. You shouldn't be too attached to it. So in this story Joshu and Engo and Setcho try to make it come out of the student, make it come out of each one of us, including the teacher.

Just put your strength here, in your stomach, and lift up through your backbone. You will realize you do not know where you are or what you are doing, yet even that which does not comprehend, functions. This is not some philosophical statement with illusion on one side and the absolute on the other. You are illusion and the absolute, right now, and something on which nothing can be written. This is not fooling around. There is no ducking. Dogen said, "Address the continuous body of Buddha, and realize the historical Buddha in yourself." Realize how that which does not comprehend also functions. I want you to give up your life in this sesshin, so that you can't remember who you were. Just to sit on your cushion this moment is all.

Setcho said, "The real way is not difficult. Words, phrases point to it. One has many ways. And two ways are not two. The sun rises at the edge of the sky, the pale moon sets. Beyond the porch railing, blue mountains. Cold water. From the skull, no sensation. How can joy arise. From the dry withered tree, a dragon moans. All is not dead. Difficult! Difficult! Relative and absolute. Friends, find out for yourself."

Suzuki-roshi said, "Sun and moon may not be one. Sun and moon may not be two." Engo said about Setcho's poem, "Oh, a double head with three faces. He is selling it retail." What is three faces? This is the utter darkness I have been talking about. Mountain and railing, near and far. What is near and far? Dragons do not live in pure water. Birds' feathers fill the air. Fish stir the water. From the distant, blue mountain, the water is cold.



Kassan Zenne, a disciple of a Dharma brother of our lineage, said, "The monkeys, clasping their young to their breasts, return behind the blue mountain. A bird with a flower in its beak lands before my green grotto study." This famous poem, again the utter darkness. From our stream of blood flowing in utter darkness, a withered tree comes to life, a dragon moans.

As you know, shortly before Suzuki-roshi died I asked him, "Where will I meet you?" And he brought his small hand out from underneath the covers and bowed to me and drew a circle in the air. This is relative and absolute. Which is relative and which is absolute? Where do we meet him? What did he mean? His response is not limited to bowing or moving the covers or his lying there suffering. There is no beginning or end to his response. We always meet him whenever we bow, in everything we do and see.

There is no subject and object, no realm of achievement, everything is as a lightning flash and dewdrop, without merit and demerit. There is no realm in which anything other than a dewdrop can occur, except your own illusion of self. We are not a tub, you know, that we are rinsing out of negative things and filling up with good things. The realm of our actual existence is something like "do not use your hand as a tool."

If you realize Buddhism, it is because you teach yourself. I am temporarily your teacher and you are disciples, but actually, we are companions on the path, teacher and disciple simultaneously. Oneself reveals to oneself, Dogen points out. You possess Buddhism. Buddhism does not exist in these stories. It exists only in your own realization.

So the relationship of teacher and disciple is the real teacher. And the person who realizes Buddhism can be said to unite through practice the mudra of body speech and mind in the realm of intimacy and action. Mudra means, for example, that form of speech in which joy arises. Not that form of speech which most accurately conveys some information or accurately describes something according to our discriminating mind, not the surface of things, not honesty or even naturalness. Speech, action that is free from attachment, free from harming, free from creating. It disappears, and joy arises. This way you become the teachings themselves, the mudra in which enlightenment arises, the Bodhisattva. You are the vehicle of the Patriarchs and the enlightenment of all beings. These vows, these precepts, these mudra, these seals, are what make us a Buddha, a vehicle of Buddhism.

Usually we are caught in the surface of things and without the precepts to remind us how we are caught we try to find an equivalent satisfaction or relief again in the surfaces of things, in an objectification of our experience and an objectification of other beings. You need the precepts when you are already caught, when you have already broken the precepts. The precepts are the reverse of this objectifying process. The precepts show you when objectifying begins, when you have some idea of praising, criticizing, sizing up, possessing, hiding, lying, eliminating, et cetera. So you can see how you create yourself constantly and suffer the accumulation of that creating. If your state of mind is calm and not caught by the treadmill of objectifications, you effortlessly keep the precepts, always in the center of things. This is to recognize everything as Buddha, Dharma, and Sangha, rejoicing in the merit of others.

This is the half-lit world left behind. The illusion that we have some control over the surface of things is gone. You have realized how completely we live in the dark, you have relaxed and given yourself over to the precepts, to the refuges, to being a vehicle for Buddhism. You have entered that stream of blood that flows in utter darkness. Blow the lights out and you can feel what is happening. Blow even the idea of a light and a self out and you will feel and know your oneness with utter darkness. How wonderful it is!

The Sixth Patriarch says that when you have discarded outer form and your mind is not disturbed you have realized the unity of the relative and the absolute and Buddhism naturally arises. Joshu was asked, "What would you say to a man who possessed nothing?" "Throw it away," said Joshu. And yet when you have a possibility of not doing something, of letting something go, of giving up an old habit just once, you think "Well it's not of such importance, it is just one small thing, and I am so caught by my habit, this once will not help at all." But this is 50%. If you can do it just when it occurs to you, this is the step on to a new path. This is the true meaning of being on the path, each step to enter a new path. There is no end to the originality, the creativity of a practice like this. Each moment reality is there, the creativity of you yourself.

It is like Buddhism is a time capsule, time spansule. One of those pills that is released little by little. We are each given one and it will go off in us according to our circumstances and ripeness and practice. Suzuki-roshi gave me one and I am passing it to you. It is a pill which lasts forever. Different parts will go off in each of us. Each of us is the whole pill and as we realize ourselves, the pill will be opening according to each's own circumstances and creativity. This is Buddha's own originality. This is a pill infinite in variety, as large and small as everything at once, a pill which we all simultaneously are. This description is straight from the Lotus Sutra. The Lotus Sutra makes clear that it is all of us and everything simultaneously that realizes Buddhahood, that is the Bodhi-sattva. This is our realm of intimacy and practice, beyond discrimination and time and space, near and far, before and after.

So we Buddhists do not go into political activity much or make big generalizations because we find that it is through our tiny acts each moment that we enter the new road with everyone. This is to act in zero, to act in utter darkness. Two joined made one, and all joined makes 0. And it is in the 0 in which we act, this utter darkness. Dogen wrote:

This slowly drifting cloud is pitiful
What dreamwalkers we all are!
Awakened, the one true thing,
Black rain on the temple roof.

Stopping the world.

It has come to you before. Moments when your mind and body saw, moments that you remember clearly, but then you lapsed back into unconsciousness. Until you started to practice, until you noticed something again, until you saw a trace of the ox. And now your practice is in this sesshin to awaken that mudra or form which is emptiness, which will bring you back to consciousness.

The problem is the same for us. We may establish a good place to practice here, and a healthy community. But that is not so important, you know. The important thing is that you join this stream of blood that flows in utter darkness. That you continue this stream, continue this way of Suzuki-roshi and Dogen Zenji and Setcho Zenji and Engo Zenji. You actually are doing it.

Suzuki-roshi said, "When I was with my teacher, I usually felt he was really my teacher and I treated him completely as my teacher. But after my teacher died I realized I did not know what a teacher was at all and had not understood him nor what he was trying to show me. But then I felt I knew finally what he was trying to say, I realized his great kindness and effort. But then again the following year I felt that I had not understood. And each year I realized again." It is always this way. The dry dead branches of winter come out in springtime with fresh colors and blossoms. But even in our lifetime it may not come out. Our way may look dead, even for many generations, but when conditions are right it will come out again perfectly according to circumstances. So we should make no special effort to express Buddhism, or worry if we are not a great teacher. We should just take the great pill of the vehicle of Buddhism completely. Suzuki-roshi had no idea of being a great teacher. He just took care of his responsibilities in Japan, of the temples he inherited, repairing them, and humbly continuing his study of Buddhism as a student, until he came to America and saw our great need and shared his realization with us, giving us this great practice to realize ourselves.

This is the wonderful activity and supernatural power of Layman P'ang carrying water and chopping wood. Doing whatever comes to hand. This is Hotetsu fanning himself, ripening the gold of the earth and the cream of the long rivers. This is knowing the transiency of the world and the purity of intention, the reality of utter darkness and our stream of blood.

*Poems beginning and ending the mondo (question and answer ceremony)
at the end of sesshin.*

The ways of Zen are numerous,
Your own single!
Each step a new road.
What is this 50%?

When your pure intention covers heaven and earth
You can trust what occurs to you.
The blue monkeys do not know the mountain
But possess the whole of Buddhism.

to increase the volume, since our policy is to keep prices on a par with the nearby large supermarket.

Right now, Tassajara bread is the hottest item—literally, since it often reaches the store still hot from the oven—but customers are also very pleased with the fresh vegetables, picked early in the morning at the Farm and trucked directly to the store.

AWAKENING THE WILL-BODY

Sesshin Lecture by Zentatsu Baker-roshi

Suzuki-roshi felt that Buddhism needed some fresh opportunity, some place where people's minds weren't made up about Buddhism. So when he had finished his first stages of training, he asked his teacher if he could go to America. His teacher said no, so he asked if he could go to Hokkaido. Hokkaido is rather like the Japanese frontier; it was only really settled in the last century. His teacher got very angry, so Suzuki-roshi had to stay. But he never gave up his idea of coming to America.

When he did come here he felt he had not studied widely enough for us, and at the same time he felt he had come to America too late, and too old. But he was convinced his successors would do it, would find a way to study Buddhism more widely, more freely. So he instructed us to do this, and how to do this. First of all he emphasized our posture, our yogic posture, because Zen is the school of Buddhism which emphasizes yoga, the body itself.

We don't use many aids, many rituals. Our own body is our vajra. So Zen, because of this emphasis, has to start with the body. Because it doesn't use anything else, you start with what you have. We experience some divided nature from childhood, some suffering divided nature. We have two parents and various ways of looking at things. So you have to begin your practice with your various parts agreeing on something, finding how your mind and body can come to some agreement. So we have zazen. It's the feeling of "Let's sit down and see what happens."

So Buddhism projects or creates, invents, various provisional ways of practice. We could say body-only, which is yoga or posture; or mind-only, which is the Yogacara school, the Lankavatara Sutra; and emptiness, which is the Madhyamika school, Nagarjuna, the Prajna Paramita literature; and then the attempt to put that all together in Tendai, Hua-yen, and Zen Buddhism.

Now we are doing a sesshin here at Green Gulch. And if you're going to practice with your body, you of course have to trust it. You have to give up your ideas of it as being separate from you. As I have said, for example, the idea or feeling of your foot being "way down there." We have many such images of our body, mistaken images; we have to find out what they are.

The vehicle of the Tathagata can be characterized by many aspects. But what I am emphasizing now is—no perception of a separate reality behind what you see. This has several aspects. One is that there's no ultimate reality—everything is illusion—and also that reality is not repeatable, there's no way to imitate it, there's no semblance of it. Second, we have an immediate perception of truth in ourself. This means Buddha's own will, or Buddha's Will-Body. Why this is so I'll try to make clearer during this sesshin. And third is—infinite worlds. It extends everywhere, it is not graspable.

Many of our Western ideas emphasize our body as something dead, some mechanical thing. We think we can cut chunks of it off and it won't affect us, or that it can be synthesized. And there is a deep interest in living forever—freezing your body in a vault somewhere, or living forever in heaven, some idea like that. And we have this idea in our own perceptions, in that we don't trust our perceptions. For instance, you don't trust just what you hear. Instead you try to correlate and corroborate what you hear with what you see, smell, taste, touch, et cetera. In other words, you try to average your senses. And then there is further averaging over time, some experimental effort over time, which we call science.

So we think, "I saw that a minute ago, but I don't see it now, so it must have been delusion." Or, "I see this now, and it's still there on my desk tomorrow, so it must be real." But if you saw something on your desk one minute, and the next minute you did not, you'd be convinced it wasn't real, wouldn't you?

I'm talking about the fact that you do have the view that reality is repeatable. And it's our very effort to make reality repeatable which Buddhism calls suffering. Suffering means reality is not repeatable. The result of this is we don't trust our senses. We're always trying to correlate one sense's perception with another sense's perception.

But actually, hearing alone can cover everything. Seeing alone can cover everything. Just feeling can cover everything in an immediate perception of truth. Not while you monitor it and review it and correlate it and corroborate it; just an immediate perception of truth that you trust. Which means you cannot create an outside—inside-outside, over here, over there—which is threatening. If you have some outside thing you create which is threatening, you cannot really practice yoga. You cannot trust that stream of vision and sensation which actually is the path.

Buddhism is not a philosophy or practice derived from the mind; it is the mind and body itself, without any image or identity, without any review of it. This is pretty hard to do. If you have an idea of an outside, and an outside which equals danger, then your senses will always be off base. So one of the aids to penetration, to entering Buddha's Way, Buddha's body, is to see everything as your own mind. To understand everything that comes to you as you, as your

karma, not as some hostile thing. You no longer see any ill will. You develop an even mind toward everyone, which means you know how you feel, are one with how you feel in each circumstance.

So in this sesshin I would like to emphasize an even mind, an even effort. Not strong effort one period and relaxing the next, but some attempt to have an even, steady awareness throughout sitting and kinhin and meals and work and sleeping.

What we fear in our own consciousness, what we call craziness, often are our perceptions which we cannot correlate with anything else. So the emphasis in zazen is to make you strong enough to sustain them. The problem with craziness is usually not that the perception is wrong, but that we're not strong enough to sustain uncorrelated perceptions.

So by our practice of zazen, without any other aids, you become strong enough to accept anything, giving up any idea, any image of your body, of outside and inside, more and more you just accept what comes to you, accept some hearing completely, without reviewing, without thinking—What is it? What can it be? Could I see it? Could I touch it? What kind of shape does it have? Just hearing.

Your hearing can take you, can open you up to so many things, if you just trust your hearing. What you hear just then is enough. You don't have to average it and see if it's going to occur again. In Buddhism our feeling is, only once we'll hear that. Only once we'll see that. By the time you go get your camera, it's different. By the time you try to base your life on it, it's different.

Not averaging the senses, not thinking that we live in a repeatable universe, means that we don't study a particular thing in order to understand that particular thing. In Buddhism we don't study X in order to understand X and then study Y in order to understand Y and then Z in order to understand Z. We study X in order to understand Y and Z. So another assumption in Buddhism we try out by practice is that each one thing is everything, each one thing includes everything. So if you understand man thoroughly, you will understand woman thoroughly, and if you understand woman thoroughly, you will understand man thoroughly. You don't have to understand first man, and then woman, and then something else.

Sesshin is also to settle down with this kind of idea, to try it, to hold it or live it. To practice Buddhism requires an enormous confidence—confidence in yourself and your teacher and Buddha nature, a sense that you can do it. Without that confidence there is always a danger of a deep division in yourself.

So we practice many have-tos. By have-tos I mean the way a mother or father change their baby's diapers because they "have to," not because at a particular moment they want to. You don't say, "Oh boy, am I ever dying to change the diapers." You may enjoy it but your motive is not because you want to or don't want to. Someone must change your baby's diapers, so you change your baby's diapers, that's all.

And we actually need such things. We need such have-tos. People who don't have them have to create them. If you meet people who are, say, very rich, and can have anything they want, you will find they often create a neurotic array of have-tos. And people are always doing this. Alcoholics are creating some

have-to, always putting themselves in some strictness by drinking. These are rules you make for yourself. Crazy people are possessed by "have-tos." If we do not have "have-tos" or cannot accept "have-tos," then we unconsciously make them.

So in Zen we practice with these have-tos which are not in the realm of likes or dislikes. We come to service and chant, not because we like to or dislike to, but because it is a part of this practice, a wisdom of this practice. And if you're practicing with ideas like, "When will I get to like chanting?" you're missing the point. If you get to like chanting too much, we should add something else that is rather a nuisance to do. You should be able to do things without much problem.

By these kinds of strictures or have-tos, we can actually study our desires, actually find, as Suzuki-roshi said, our organic power, our tendencies. Without this kind of have-to in your life, there's no way to plumb your desire and your strength. There's no way to study one thing. We want to study just one thing, just X, until we understand every alphabet. We don't study X for X, we may study Y to understand X. Nangaku-zenji said, "If you want to practice zazen, don't sit zazen. If you want to achieve Buddhahood, there's no special type of person who achieves Buddhahood." This is what I'm talking about.

You know Nangaku was Baso's teacher, and Suzuki-roshi's favorite story was about Baso and the tile. Baso was doing zazen, studying zazen to attain Buddhahood, so Nangaku picked up a tile and began rubbing it. Baso said, "What are you doing?" Nangaku said, "I'm turning this into a jewel." So Baso said, "How can you make a tile a jewel?" And of course Nangaku said, "How can you make yourself into a Buddha?" And then he said, "If you want to make a cart go, do you hit the horse or the cart?" This is again the same.

Suzuki-roshi said we may starve to death at Tassajara or at Page Street. But he didn't think we would, if we just practiced zazen, if we just in our practice took care of everything completely. We need to trust this kind of activity—not studying X in order to understand X, and Y to understand Y, and so on. But by studying X we will understand everything. Just to have that confidence and practice Buddhism, practice zazen, just for the sake of zazen, is our way.

Many sayings reflect this kind of feeling. When it's night-time, dawn is here. Before winter is over, spring is here. Even if you don't understand it, or accept it completely, if you are practicing you should have this kind of confidence, you should try to accept it. Can you accept it? Can you just do zazen completely? Can you just do this sesshin completely, as if nothing else existed, as if you would die on Friday night?

There are two recognitions that you will come to when you are able to face things as they are, not wishing they were some other way. One, we can say, is death. By death I don't mean just that someone's going to die, though on death we may realize this deeper finality, as Dogen did watching his mother die, watching the twin trail of smoke rising from the incense stick. The finality I'm talking about you may recognize when someone goes crazy, when you can't reach someone, or when you cannot reach yourself; when there is almost nothing you can do about yourself, and less about a friend. And even less about the

suffering in this world. You can't do anything about each moment even. Each thing just happens, and hopefully you know your oneness with it.

And by zazen we're trying to develop our strength and ability to be one with our activity. You notice the finality of each thing, that it happens only once and is not repeatable, or graspable, or regainable, or re-doable. If you're not there, not present, it's too late. This recognition and not taking it too seriously, gives our life some seriousness. You know, by the time you wish or think, it's already too late. You take it too seriously when you think the outside world is there, saving up to get you.

And the other recognition is that we are corruptible. All of us are corruptible. All of us, when pushed, almost all of us have a price. You know, we'll sell our mother if we have to. I'm sorry to say so, but it's true. Governments use this to force people to do things. And many people use it to make the most of their own and others' corruptibility for profit or power. Much of our way of thinking is based on the idea that everything is repeatable and not corruptible.

Recognizing this suffering or this corruptibility, the Bodhisattva recognizes in himself, herself, this event, this eventuality, and so creates the conditions for good, let us say good. So the most basic suggestion in Buddhism for everyone is to practice good, avoid evil. Now good and evil in Buddhism are pretty close to the roots of the words good and evil. Good and God mean to unite something, to put something together, to recognize the larger body. And evil means to extend over, like the eaves of a house, to be off the mark, or to set something over, to set something up.

So the Bodhisattva doesn't set up anything. You don't try to create something, to make something that lasts. You don't try to possess anything. But you do



try to create—this is a rather subtle point—the conditions for people to exist beneficially. So first of all for yourself you try to create the conditions by which you can exist beneficially. And our way to do this is to practice zazen.

Student: I'm perplexed in my mind between the purposelessness of zazen and the purposes I have.

Roshi: This problem appears in every aspect of practice. One reason it's difficult for us to practice, for example, "no perception of ill will" is because of the kind of beings we conceive each other to be. "No perception of ill will" doesn't mean you are repressing ill will. It means that eventually you see a kind of being for whom you cannot feel ill will.

Many things in Buddhism are based on a whole new recognition of what we're actually doing. A kind of clue to this purpose and purposelessness is, for example: we may be practicing zazen actually because we want to get healthy, or attain super powers, or be less crazy, or not have people mad at us all the time, or to correct some gross mismanagement of our life by doing zazen every morning and organizing ourselves. This may be what has prompted us to do it, but as a practice we don't review this as the reason, and we try not to practice in the realm of the attainment or possessiveness which after all has caused our problem in the first place.

You will find out by experience that although some idea of attaining led you to sitting, when you sit with that idea, your sitting is quite dull and lifeless. Just to sit. Suzuki-roshi always said we must practice Buddhism just for Buddhism. Why Buddhism went wrong in the Meiji period, in modern Japan, is because its power had become too externalized. Buddhism is very powerful. It's such an ancient way of life that so many people have practiced. It moves so many people.

And you can use Buddhism for gain or fame or something like that. But Suzuki-roshi's emphasis with us was just to practice with each other for Buddhism alone. And he said in five or ten years Buddhism in America, and Zen Center, would have many friends. But we don't practice for this, even for society. Just to practice for Buddhism, just to sit for sitting.

The other reasons you have, you don't review them. If you find yourself thinking of them, you stop thinking of them. Do you understand? It's a kind of practice. It may seem rather artificial. But that only means you should go further and find out how artificial it all is anyway, find out that there is something there, some attitude already there, which you might as well counteract with another one, until you can drop all attitudes.

So please, in this sesshin, and those of you who are not in the sesshin too, become very friendly with your body and your life situation as you yourself, not discriminating, "this one or that one is really me." When you're doing zazen, just some painful stale feeling sometimes. Some painful ecstatic feeling sometimes. Without trying to identify or review.

And as you stop averaging your life at each moment and over time, you will find out many things. You will notice many mental phenomena, many subtle things. As I said yesterday, how wonderful your skin feels after zazen during

a sesshin. How the organ of your skin is teaching you. How cool the surface of your eyes feels. How your stomach feels. How when attitudes drop out of your breathing and mind and shoulders and hips, how refreshed you feel. Beginning to trust these perceptions.

The acts of Buddha are Buddha. The acts of you are you. These acts, these tiny acts that you are participating in. By your vow or participation, the color is very deep and you perceive things with full dimensions. When your vow is weak, your will-body is weak, you see things very flat and thin and colorless.

You begin by noticing subtle manifestations of the path, of the way of our existence, of Buddhism. And then you recede from noting them. One part doesn't have to observe it. Just let go. Just give it away. The first paramita, you know—just give it away. Until nothing but space is sitting zazen. Nothing but space is living your life. Nothing but space is sitting this sesshin, which you create something in the midst of.

To eat, to get up, in this way, in this sesshin, you may realize what you actually are—if there is a “who,” or even without a “who,” to realize how you exist, all together. Please let's do it. Let's find out how Suzuki-roshi wanted us to practice. Some fresh new way from our own intimate and immediate experience, freely studying everything, freely realizing our way. Thank you very much.



SESSHIN LECTURE

by Zentatsu Baker-roshi
April, 1976, Zen Mountain Center

When we start a sesshin, I always like to come back to very simple considerations. Why we're doing it at all. Or when you get up in the morning, why get up? What gets up? Who gets up? If you lie there a moment after the wakeup bell your body becomes stuff. Stuff which you know fairly well—rib cage, shoulders, legs; but if you look for your self in that stuff, you cannot find your self. But I think when you decide to get up, you have some sensation of finding yourself, or the stuff takes on some identity by deciding to get up. But if you look at the decision to get up, is the decision to get up you? It's correct, isn't it, to say, "It is I," and not correct to say "It is me"? But from another point of view, "It is me" is more correct. When we answer the question, "Who is there?", we don't mean, it is I from my own subjective point of view. We mean, it is me, from your point of view.

Something is here at the door. So getting up: Who is me? Doing zazen: Who is I, who is me? It's difficult to find me in the stuff of your rib cage, or even in the decision to get up. Do you carry your identity in the decision to get up or the decision to do zazen, or to do sesshin, or the decision to develop the one who gets up. It is ephemeral and very difficult to pin down. At least you can physically hit your rib cage; but you can't hit the decision to get up. It can slip away easily. On one side, most of us identify psychologically or in our daily emotional acts with the series of decisions we call character or personality or intention. But then there is a fundamental anxious identification with our physical presence and body because we know if we get sick, or have an accident, if your rib cage becomes broken, that can rapidly be the end of every other me and I.

So without making a decision, we just lie there, some meaningless stuff; and yet even making a decision, we are dependent on the health of our stuff and our inability to penetrate the oneness of our decisions and our stuff. So who is responsible for our doing this sesshin? Our continuing to sit through pain. What separates this level of decision and personality from our stuff? What brings them together? Who is doing zazen? Why are they separated?

When I was going up to San Francisco last time, I was struck again by what most of you must have already felt coming out of Tassajara. Coming out of zazen is the same thing, but maybe after having been at Tassajara for quite a while, it's more pronounced. You drive out of Tassajara, and you enter a historical period, this country, this twentieth century. But it would not be so surprising if you drove out and found the seventeenth century. Are you familiar with this feeling? How everything is so arbitrary and yet so exact. Some big

billboard, that Governor Brown put there, or President Ford, or our society. And it is very beautiful. Even some trashy song on the radio is a quite wonderful song. The bright colors. Some motel. Whatever you see has a wonderful transiency and transparency. A wonderful emptiness about it, a wonderful arbitrariness about it, artificialness about it, some sham show, you know, that we all take so seriously. But suddenly you see it as just an arrangement. You have a very tangible feeling of emptiness. Not the emptiness of meaning, meaninglessness. That too, but the emptiness of something *more* than the forms. The forms have some arrangement. So you can feel that for yourself too. The decision is just some arrangement. Your rib cage is just some arrangement.

Dogen tries to point this out when he says, "The painted teacakes are real," or "Eat the painted teacakes." His statement is a reflection on an old Buddhist story and saying that you can't be satisfied by a picture of teacakes. Dogen says, you should have painted teacakes for dinner. He means you are painted by the five skandhas. Everything is some painted picture, some billboard.

When you really have a tangible feeling for emptiness, not just an insight, but a dwelling in non-dwelling based on not needing anything anymore, you can use things, but you don't care so much one way or the other. It means you have gotten through your intriguing karmic stories. You know your intriguing karmic stories as something artificial, something you have made up, just an interpretation, one interpretation, and yet they are what tie you to a sense of reality, what keeps you from the tangibility of emptiness. The looseness of everything. Yet everything in its own residence. Not caught in a definition. It always comes out as a contradictory expression. But if you see that this period is actually the seventeenth century, our twentieth century is actually the seventeenth century, everything has a kind of looseness, of freedom of possibility, of not being just the seventeenth century, of suddenly being also the seventeenth century. Just some adjustment. And also you have that wonderful feeling of having been there before, of having been there before it happened. So most of us trying to understand our world and predict where it's going, are caught in our own prediction. Such a person can't feel the dis-illusion of it. Not only the looseness of it, but that being created, it can also be undone. In the story of Keichu's cart that Gettan tells—I've told you that story—there is a commentary on it: Taking twigs and branches and grasses, making a thatch house; undoing twigs and branches and grasses, again a grassy field.

Usual person doesn't think it can be a grassy field again, they think it always has to be something following from the thatched hut. But the seventeenth century can be undone. The twentieth century can be undone. And when you have that feeling, tangible feeling, you don't need anything, you are quite free. When you have that feeling, the world is a very different place. Zen is very simple; if I describe it, it is very simple. But when that simplicity is you completely, you live in a very different world. And your understanding of historical process and the possibilities for us and the meaning and extent of suffering, are very different when you see that the grassy field and the thatched hut are both always there.

Keichu was a mythological cartmaker of ancient China. Keichu is said to have made a great cart with a hundred spokes in a wheel. But take away front and

back, axle and hubs. What will it be? Gettan does not mean form and emptiness, the contrast of emptiness and form, or something like before and after. He means form *as* emptiness itself. Always the cart is apart—it's very loose. Wheels are floating through space, body of cart is floating through space. Arbitrarily together. Loosely together. Such a superb vehicle understood this way can carry us. Can go in any direction.

So you're not in any particular century. You're sitting with Dogen, with Nagarjuna, with Buddha. You don't have any particular history, or parents, or century to return to. Through and through you can see how we generate ourselves. How everything is generated from "inside." You can say all subjective—I, I, I, I; or all objective—me, me, me, me. Subjective and objective do not have much usefulness as expressions anymore. I like photographs which have no space in them, or which are all space—like a photograph of an illuminated vegetable leaf, so you don't see anything but vegetable leaf, or vegetable leaf behind vegetable leaf. So you don't think there's some escape over there, some space over there, some absolute or emptiness. Or some particular century you find refuge in. Rain hitting the ocean.

Letting your description loose in this way in a sesshin is sometimes a decision to sit, and then sometimes your rib cage has its own decisions. At the same time the decision to sit and the rib cage are also arbitrary painted teacakes. So beyond the decision to sit, beyond the physical need to sit, what is sitting? What is arbitrary or not arbitrary or artificial or not artificial? What century are you sitting zazen in? Do you need to give it a name?

Please enjoy the formless realm, the transiency of this sesshin, transiency of this century, transiency of your own body, of your own stuff, your own personality. Temporarily we are here together.



This photograph has been in our files for some time. No one knows what it means.

INSIDE OUT

Lecture by Zentatsu Baker-roshi
San Francisco, June, 1976

I do not like to be always adding something to your reality, something unnecessary, by asking as we do in Zen—What is your/our reality? However, all religions have some sense of another place where God lives, or another realm of spirit, of seeking, or understanding, some sense of a special state, grace or samadhi, some reference to something unaccountable. Religious people, more than other people, take into consideration the unaccountable. In fact, doing so is very practical and useful. Things do not add up in the long run for people who do not leave some space for the unaccountable.

In religions, especially those from the Near and Far East, it is very common to hear, "Do not seek outside yourself!" But practically speaking, where is this "inside"? Where is this not outside yourself? Commonly we do have some sense of this "inside." We often say, "Inside I feel such and such." But what does it mean?

We are inside this room. But actually there is not too much difference between inside here and outside there, except that the weather is somewhat modified. And outside "there" we are inside the biosphere, inside something. Most of you would say you are inside yourselves. But again, what is inside there? Isn't it just flesh doubled back on itself? A kind of loop. Is inside someplace that we cannot reach, cannot get to, and outside some place we can reach, something accessible? Who is the we who reaches? What is accessibility? Is not everything reached by itself, so everything is already inside? Does accessibility deprive us of insides? Is anything actually accessible to other than itself?

But if you do put two things together something happens by their being together. (When are things not together?) Nagarjuna says that a plus b is not equal to a and b , but rather equals c , a third, something other than the simple sum of the first one and the second one. It is like a good camp or fireplace fire—with the logs together in a certain way you can create a great deal of heat in the spaces between the logs. This heat, or "third," or " c ," is close to what we commonly mean by "inside." So I think we can understand "inside" to mean something that is more or other than the sum of two or more things in a particular conjunction, and something that is not enterable, or something that is privy only to itself. If you can enter, another outside or two insides are created. Is there only one outside—one big outside and many insides? Or is there no outside at all? How do we seek in what is not enterable?

You know the story of Hui-neng, the Sixth Patriarch, and Shen-hsiu, the head monk under the Fifth Patriarch. The story has been an important teaching for many years, despite the likelihood that it is largely fabrication. Shen-hsiu was requested to demonstrate his understanding with a poem and he wrote the following:

Our body is the Bodhi tree,
Our mind a mirror bright.
By polishing, from dust keep free
And let no more alight.

When Suzuki-roshi was a boy, his teacher told him his mind should be like a mirror, just reflecting each thing as it comes. This is good advice for the beginning stages of practice. Let circumstances speak for themselves. You will be more patient and compassionate. As Dogen said, "To practice and confirm all things by conveying one's self to them is illusion; for all things to advance forward and practice and confirm the self is enlightenment."

You notice that your mirror distorts and obscures things quite a bit, and so you have to polish and clean your mirror in some way. You find that doing certain things leaves you feeling contaminated, uneasy or unclear. And then find by doing zazen you feel purified, washed clean, and through many simple situations learn that we do have to take care of things.

Across the street in the Neighborhood Foundation building there was an apartment of an alcoholic. Employed, he always paid his rent, but seems to have virtually never cleaned his apartment. Because of the health and fire danger the Neighborhood Foundation insisted that he clean it, and finally when he refused, the Neighborhood Foundation volunteered to clean it for him. In the end he seemed unable to face having anyone face his apartment, so he moved. Cleaning the apartment they found that in front of a broken refrigerator he had placed a new one that was already gaggingly full of spoiled food and covered in raised relief with cockroach eggs. He had replaced a couch with another in front of it too. The plaster was so filthy it fell off the walls when it was being cleaned. And under the trash on the floor we found disintegrating rats. What is surprising is that more people do not live this way. It is obvious that if you do not polish your mirror, if you stop washing your face and picking up after yourself, things get very bad quickly. Our state of mind and life can deteriorate rapidly. The mayonnaise-like suspension of our life and culture can degenerate rapidly back into yolk and oil when personal or cultural credibility is gone.

We feel the power of the outside world, the power of the illusion—of the mayonnaise—and the necessity and need to take care of and maintain things at least minimally. But the concept of a mirror is not adequate for these subtleties. The mirror still poses an "outside" and a "who" that wipes it. However, the closer you look at the wiping of the mirror, to the illusion drawn by taking care of ourselves, presenting ourselves, the more the horizon of our imagined singularity recedes. We find ourselves in a world some physicists describe as "participatory reality." Which produces further questions such as: are there gradations of participation, or are we always participating fully beyond choice or intention? Here we have gone beyond the mirror to mutual interdependence, or mutual interpenetration—immersion in the totality of details, in the preciseness and oneness of co-emergent minute reality. So the Sixth Patriarch answers Shen-hsiu with the poem:

—
There is no Bodhi-tree,
Nor mirror to wipe.
With all completely void,
Where can dust alight?

In this poem the mirror itself is eliminated as a kind of dust, and the illusion of a "who" is wiped away.

Let me tell you a story about the priests Tao-wu (Dogo Enchi) and Chien-yuan paying a visit to a house where someone had died. As they came into the house Yuan knocked the coffin and said, "Alive or dead?" Wu answered, "I won't say alive, I won't say dead!" Yuan persisted, "Why won't you say?" Tao-wu answered, "I won't say, I won't say." This is not just a casual question, but a question in which Yuan was investing his own life, as is necessary if we are to realize these fundamental questions. Not knowing what to do, as they were walking home, he chased, or continued to follow Wu's words and said, "Tell me right away, Teacher. If you do not, I'll hit you." Wu said, "You may hit me, but I won't say." There is a commentary at this point that to hit him is like making a notch in a boat to mark where you are in the water. But Yuan felt this question so strongly that he did hit Wu. This proved to be the pivotal question for Yuan and it turned his own investigation and his times with other teachers. Finally he was enlightened by it.

In his introduction to this Blue Cliff Records story, Yuan-wu (Enko) says, "Secure and intimate with the whole of reality, realization occurs right here. In contact with the flow, able to turn it about, you assume responsibility directly." The feeling here is not just that you are in the midst of the flow going with it, accepting it; but that you are so one with it that you are the flow itself. This is to show people a "continuous path in their home territory."

Intellectually it is pretty easy to see that Yuan was caught by the words and ideas, and was unable to let the coffin, and the dead person, speak for itself. He had neither the patience nor the eye to allow circumstances to speak for themselves. This is one sense of the word samadhi, "to receive correctly." Samadhi in this sense means that your mind is not full of assumptions and patterns but is able moment on moment to receive correctly.

Someone reminded me this morning how Catholicism uses, and how Brother David explained, the word obedience as meaning to listen completely. This meaning is contained in its etymology too. For example, because we do not, are unable to listen completely, in most of our political activity we are pushing a goal which has already been accomplished, beating a dead horse that may return to life because we will not leave it alone. The change has already occurred, but we are unable to see it. We do not have the patience to allow the change its own time because we want the change to occur for our anxiety or ego. The initial accurate push is usually made very quickly and only the alert can go on just as quickly to the next action. The mayonnaise, the flow, can be turned, changed very immediately when we realize it is in our own possession, and that all change occurs this way. But it seems to take nine years of wall-gazing, or a century of fumbling to realize that fundamental changes or steps are possible and within our possession.

The same is true with people and every situation; we seldom realize the communication has been received, and we do not understand the person's and situation's own time. We do not realize we have been understood. To understand without even having to acknowledge understanding is to receive correctly

and to obey. We do not like the idea of obedience, and obey has this interesting and common paradoxical turn, of meaning not just the ability to take orders, but also the ability to be responsive, to be free to love, to change the flow.

So although in the story Yuan did not obey actually, he was listening, he was open to move, he did not try to defend himself, he vulnerably chased Wu's words. He made himself a target. This is a kind of obedience, a willingness to go into something.



*Amida Buddha, in the
Buddha Hall of the
San Francisco Center,
80 inches.*

The commentary says that Wu “met an error with an error, baring his heart completely.” It also says, “He buys a hat to fit the head, kind-hearted as an old lady.” Or, “When a dragon exhales, a fog gathers.” And, “The first arrow was light, but the second is deep,” (I won’t say, I won’t say). This is how Chao-chou teaches too, a simple ordinary answer that does not quite pass the time. Yuan was finally enlightened when overhearing a workman in a small temple chanting the Lotus Sutra, “To those who would attain salvation as monks, Buddha appears as a monk to expound the Dharma for them.”

The next related story I want to tell you is about this Chao-chou (Joshu), one of the great Chinese Zen Masters. Although he was famous for his mild and ordinary way of teaching, it is said that his lips flashed light. One day, doing the morning sweeping, a monk said to him, “You are a man of knowledge, where does this dust come from?” Or it could be interpreted, “Why are you not free of dust?” Chou answered, “It comes from outside.” Here you can see his reputation for not setting up a solitary path, but for reaching people in their home territory. Chou just said it comes from outside. Then the monk said, “Why in such a clean and pure monastery, is there dust at all?” Chou answered, “There goes another one.” It seems the mirror and the “outside” are back. What happened to the Sixth Patriarch’s understanding, his pointing out of the void.

Let’s go back to zazen. When you are doing zazen and are able to simply follow your breathing, you will often find the quality of your inner space

Detail of Green Dragon Temple bell (see p. 26).



becomes more open with an increasing clear, permeating, blissful feeling. But then you may become distracted and deeply buried in storyline thinking. Your state of mind will feel neutral or deteriorated and the spacious, intense, connected, and blissful feeling will be gone. It is almost as if that blissful feeling is too much for us. We are scared of it, or scared to relax our guard against the outside world. But then something will come to remind you to return to counting or following your breathing. But then where does that which reminds you come from? In fact, where does the storyline come from? The origin is very elusive. We can at least say the reminding reminded you. The breathing breathed you. Here again there is no mirror, no dust, no origin.

The Perfect Wisdom Sutra puts it, "The nature of all dharmas in its true reality is empty. It does not come nor go; it is not produced nor stopped. It is the same as the reality limit, it is the same as the true nature of Dharma, non-dual, not discriminated, like unto space. Therefore the skandhas, sense-fields, and elements are without self, and have non-existence for their mark. This is the perfection of wisdom which demonstrates to the Bodhisattvas the practice of the ten stages." And Nagarjuna, the outstanding logician of Buddhism, says, "Those of lesser insight who see only the existence and non-existence of things cannot perceive the wonderful quiescence of things."

There is another story about Joshu based on his being named for the city of Joshu. Someone asked Joshu, "Where is the path?" Joshu said, "Outside the wall (or gate)." And then he was questioned again, "I was not asking about that path, where is the Great Way?" Joshu answered, "The main artery runs through the capital." This is the same outside/inside we have been talking about.

Another time Chao-chou was asked, "For a long time I have heard of the famous bridge of Chao-chou city, but now I find only a simple plank foot-bridge." Chou said, "Yes, you see the plank bridge and do not see the stone bridge." This response is to base yourself on the other's question, and the monk climbed on to the hook, "Where is the stone bridge?" Chou said, "Donkeys cross, horses cross."

The Sixth Patriarch is pointing out that everything is inside, that you are already in the inside—there is no mirror, there is no dust, etc. While Joshu is emphasizing that the outside which is already inside is entered by your intention—the inside is entering itself, that entering is a creative or co-emergent activity, privy unto itself. The outside then is a name for the past. The point ascribed to the Sixth Patriarch is the more philosophical or absolute point of view. While Joshu is emphasizing practice—how we enter this inside which cannot be entered from the outside. (Like the problem my Grandfather gave me when I was very young—to get up early enough to see the squigamumzee swallow itself.)

Your hands are separate and joined, from their outside and their inside, and yet we tend not to notice that they are joined, that everything is joined, that your body is one big hand that drooped, or that the universe is a hand that drooped. So it is fundamental to practice to question what separate means, what kind of arrangement boundaries are. Dogen Zenji says that if you examine



everything carefully you will see that everything shares a common life. Sangha is a distillation of this recognition.

This inside of which there is no outside is what Dogen Zenji means in *Zenki* by “inner dynamic activity.” Getting your *mojo* working. At first, we enter in this way. The inner dynamic activity of practice is similar to when the logs of the fire are close enough to generate heat. Nagarjuna says, “Fire is not wood, nor is it in something else than wood. Fire does not contain wood. There is neither wood in fire, nor fire in wood.” He points out that the relationship of any two concepts into a whole, for example fire and wood, entails a mutual denial of each other. He also says, “Nothing can be known apart from entity and non-entity, characterization or characteristics. This is also true of all elements—earth, fire, water, wind, and consciousness.” In other words, he says, through conceptualization into existence and non-existence you can never reach real perception or understanding.

And Dogen says, “Firewood is firewood, and ash, ash; neither can turn back into the other. One should not take the view that it is ashes afterward and firewood before. Firewood is beyond before and after. Firewood and ash both have their own past, present, and future. Dogen also says, “When the Dharma is still not fully realized in man’s body and mind, he thinks it is already sufficient. When the dharma is fully present in his body and mind, he thinks there is some insufficiency. The remaining virtue is always inexhaustible.”

So from your simple breathing practice you begin to notice when your mind deteriorates and when it maintains a pure concentrated state, ready to accept

everything. As your practice matures, in your whole life activity you will begin to see the manifestation of this inner dynamic activity as the matter of everything you do. In Dogen's words, "The total dynamic working is being activated by the manifestation." So you begin to know where the "capital city" is, where donkeys and horses cross.

We begin to have a sense of when the "inside" is there for us in the widest sense, and when we are trying to approach things from outside like Yajnadatta, who thought he had lost his head when he looked into the back side of the mirror. As soon as you shift to seeing things from the outside, you notice again a kind of decay in your state of mind. This is what is meant by seeking things outside yourself, thinking an inclusive outside exists in which you can seek, not recognizing all conception as past. So to be secure and intimate with reality means to be in contact with this inside of which there is no outside. (There is nothing but entrance.) Depending on Buddhism or zazen is to seek outside yourself, to try to make a tile a jewel. But a tile is a tile, a jewel is a jewel. Hsuan-sha said, "The whole universe is one bright pearl." This is a deep understanding of causation. The fertility of two people being able to produce another person, of every joining producing a third. This is the creativity of our intention, of our concentration, of our manifestation of every moment. You yourself cover everything already.

There goes another one.



The following is an excerpt from a talk given by Baker-roshi in 1973 to a group of Sensory Awareness students.

Charlotte and Charles have been my good friends for twelve or thirteen years now. I couldn't have better friends. But they are more to me than friends because they were my first real teachers. At Suzuki-roshi's ashes site there is a wooden pagoda tower in the back of the stone and each side is marked with one of the four gates of practice. The first and most important gate is the "awakening the mind of enlightenment," or the first thought of enlightenment—when you were first turned around. It was Charlotte Selver who first made me realize, who showed me it was possible. She embodied what I thought should be possible for humans, but had long ago given up thinking was possible.

Up until the time I met Charlotte and Charles, I was trying to figure out the world as best I could with as much as I could of what our society offers you to do it with. I had access to most of the tools or education, attitudes or people, whatever is supposedly useful, and somehow none of it came together. And then I saw this little brochure. I read it on a friend's table, as many of you must have read of Suzuki-roshi. Normally I would hardly look at such a thing, but there was something in the language of the brochure, something in the statement about practice. I went to their seminar on Broadway Street, and I immediately knew there was more possibility to life than I had felt before. Not something new; it was a recognition of something that was there but confined or given up.

First of all I saw straightforward clear behavior without worrying so much about what other people think. Some internal confidence. So I asked myself, where does that confidence come from? And I looked at the two of them and I realized it's because they reside in their bodies. Or—we can't just say bodies—something wider than our idea of body. They gave me a practice to begin to realize that. And for Buddhism this is an extremely important point, the point at which you make this recognition. We call it bodhicitta, or the thought of enlightenment. Bodhicitta means many things on many levels. In physical terms it means an actual transformation of energy which you begin to wake up to. There are many aspects to bodhicitta, but the simplest is, we could say, the thought of enlightenment. The thought occurs to you. Then what do you do with the thought? First, you can accompany the thought by an actual inner vow. If it's a deep recognition, you make some vow that transcends or is wider than what you previously thought was possible. And so you commit yourself to it. It's not just necessary to notice it and make some vow, you also have to learn how to enter the mandala, to stay within the vow, to enlighten all beings. You cannot be enlightened just for yourself. You have to give up enlightenment, give up your own ideas about your own self. Whether you are alone in the mountains or in a group in the city, still there's no separation between you and others. "Others" is not something outside yourself. So you make the vow, you find some way to maintain, to renew that vow.

Then there is repetition. We use our mind in Buddhism not so much for its ability to think, but for its ability to make a vow and to continue a vow, to

repeat. Something very deep happens to you when you find some way to repeat, and thus find the new, not just verbally but in everything you do. Some deep repetition. You have to wear away your tendencies. Charlotte and Charles gave me the continuing example of a teacher, of someone who can practice. I met Suzuki-roshi shortly after Charlotte and Charles left San Francisco. I waited many years to introduce Suzuki-roshi to them.

They gave me, started me on a practice, of letting go of monitoring. We monitor ourselves and even when you nearly have given up thinking about yourself, noticing what you are doing all the time, still you don't have a real sensation that you are alive unless you are leaving some vapor trail. You want some record, at least in your own memory, that you've been alive. So this tendency to monitor our activity is very pervasive. The most mild statements, little throwaway statements they'd make that were so quiet, turned out to be concept-shattering thunderbolts. Charlotte wouldn't just say stand up, she'd say come to standing. That is something entirely different. Or as Charles asked



last night, is it your hand feeling your head or your head feeling your hand? It is almost impossible to deeply have this kind of recognition without a teacher. You can read about it but it's not the same.

So we talk about three bodies of Buddha—Dharmakaya, Nirmanakaya, and Sambhogakaya. The usual idea of practice is some kind of step ladder idea, you practice and practice and practice and pretty soon you have some more and more together way of behaving. But Buddhism does not think that is such a useful way to think about it, but rather that you actually give up your past, your family, your ideas of yourself, and you are reborn from Dharmakaya. Dharmakaya means emptiness itself or the ground of being or the mind out of which all minds arise. The spaces between words. When you reside in the spaces between words rather than in the words you live in an entirely different space. No matter how fast things go, things are very slow. So bodhicitta and Dharmakaya can mean the same thing. It is like a flower, emptiness flower, which you open out from then on. You open it out to Sambhogakaya, which means bliss body, or that wider sense of being that Charlotte and Charles are bringing you into. In meditation we know it and in their work you know it. As many of you said last night, you could feel people. It means the subtle level of communication beyond words. And Nirmanakaya is how you exist in this world, how you act out of that potential; every moment as a potential for infinite possibilities is turned into some action. It's the same thing instant after instant. So Nirmanakaya means your actual activity in the world.

But how to stay with this, how to continue this kind of practice. It does not just mean coming to seminars every now and then or even on a regular basis, or coming to zazen, or living at Tassajara. At best that way of Zen practice is a kind of therapy which alleviates your problems. Often people use Zen practice to remove the surface disturbance as a way to protect the root of the disturbance. You find yourself in some neurotic situation or some frustrated life that you can see through enough to know that you are tied up somehow. So you use practice, not to cut deeply through and turn yourself completely around, but just to alleviate it enough so you can continue your deluded views, your desires, your anger and hatred. Practice used this way is maybe beneficial, but unfortunately it often eliminates the possibility for deeper practice, and often deludes others by your reinforced, supported delusion. To prevent that kind of superficial using of practice to protect our opinions, we have to have the example of a teacher and the vow to achieve enlightenment and, strangely, simultaneously the power to give up enlightenment. For a Buddhist also the care of the Eight-fold Path and the abandonment of the ten bhūmis are found simply in the joyful accuracy of a teacher and our own recognition and vow.

FOREGROUND AND BACKGROUND CONCENTRATION

Sit Down, Sit Still, Sit Long

Lecture by Zentatsu Baker-roshi

Every sesshin I am again impressed by the power, by the winning combination of foreground and background concentration. By foreground concentration I mean the ability to concentrate on a specific object of concentration, for example your breath or your posture, in much the same way as a watchmaker concentrates on his work.

One point for the beginner to watch is that the specific concentration of the watchmaker or chess or *go* player is often accompanied by a stopping of the breath for stillness or a deathlike clarity as if stopping the breath would momentarily stop the objects of the world. And it may be so. Stopping the breath can bring on a kind of clarity, and in fact in mature zazen your breath may slow down evenly until it is nearly stopped. But the beginner, like the watchmaker, may stop the breath unconsciously, equating stillness and concentration or confusing stopping the world with stopping yourself. As a result he or she may be flooded with another world of hallucinatory or confusing images, a kind of *mappo*, induced unnecessarily by stopping the flow of breath to the brain.

This is most likely to happen when you breathe with your chest, with the upper part of your body. But when you find the deep even breathing from the lower part of your body, from your gut or hara, the breathing that is most characteristic of zazen, then you will not unconsciously stop your breath in your upper chest when you concentrate.

By background concentration I mean the resolution that is always present in the background of what we are doing no matter what is going on in the foreground. Although you may not be able to sit still or sustain concentration on your breath, at the same time, your decision, to sit and to continue your practice is unwavering.

Studying mind and body you will find out that the form of your thinking is a kind of vowing, recognitions that you stick to as real and permanent. To try to see vowing as the nature of your thinking will give you insight into how your mind works and how you have built a world-view and an identity. For example, as a child you may have eaten a lot or a little because of your particular metabolism, and then have been told that you are a "big eater" or that you eat "like a bird". And then years later, long after your metabolism has changed, you are likely to retain the idea that by nature you are a big eater or eat like a bird. This is a kind of vowing. Our world-view, our identity, our mental and physical baggage is formed by acceptances like this — suppositions, super positions, that we usually carry with us all of our life.

To see yourself it is necessary to undo or see through the accumulation of observations that for all practical purposes have become vows, that have made up your mind. Insight is only the beginning. I think Western psychology has put too much emphasis on the catharsis of insight as if recognition and its occasional cleansing were permanent change. It is very hard to change the unconscious vows of your

lifetime. The only way or at least the most effective way is to fight vows with vows. We must use the habits of our mind to realize the nature of our mind. The experience of Buddhism is that practice, repetition, the active holding of conscious vows is the primary means of radical and real personality change and growth. Vowing must be conscious and sustained, repeated over and over again in the background of everything we are doing, in the midst of the activity of our unconscious vows of many decades, until you look through your personality, your now transparent personality, at the world. This may give you a taste of the term *sunyata*: emptiness, or boundarilessness. It is an inner sense, a wildness we are talking of, as a wild animal depends on itself in an actually uncharted world, a world only nominally predictable.

Your new vows must not further encumber you. But please do not be confused by the mental division of things into opposites like freedom and restriction as if opposites excluded or were opposed to each other. Freedom proceeds through limitations, through the restrictions and definitions of form, of life itself. We are not talking about God or aether or some mysterious other. Freedom is the realization of the activity, clarity, and preciseness of form in our non-repeating universe. Our new vows should reduce desire to the most fundamental desire, our most fundamental thought, the intention of life itself. We say the thought of enlightenment, *Bodhicitta*. This you must find on your own. Life is not separate from intention. A flower is not separate from a particular change or growth. This is not a gaining idea or goal in the comparative sense of "I want to be the biggest, most beautiful, and best located flower."

In Zen the emphasis is first on background concentration, the vows that renew the fundamental direction of your life. Foreground concentration then becomes the expression, work, satisfaction, and fine tuning of background concentration. It is like loving your child. You may be angry or discouraged with your child, but your anger or displeasure remain expressions of your love and concern for him or her. The awareness of Buddha, the one who is awake, is not a dry, dispassionate philosophical mechanical alertness, but a wet concerned warm-hearted compassionate awareness. An awareness, a seeing that also hears, that actively listens to the activity, the cries of the world.

Zazen can be considered as having three parts — to sit down, to sit still, and to sit long. To sit down is just to be able to sit down and start zazen. It is not so easy to cut through the currents of your day and sit down to meditate even for a moment. Many things lead to your unavoidable daily activities — eating, sleeping, working, and so forth — but very little leads to meditation except sometimes suffering or discomfort, or the occasional memory of the deep mystery of our life. And for most of us suffering and discomfort come and go and we forget them as quickly as possible. So to be able to sit down outside the usual currents of your life is to be able to answer a call from the background, from the whole of your life, from your recognition of the scale and suffering of human life, from your decision to give space and expression to your wide life.

Not so many of us do this unless it is forced on us by circumstances obviously outside our control. But we can do it within our usual circumstances by the simple act of sitting zazen, even just to sit down for a moment. You can find many reasons why you do not have 30 or 40 or even 20 minutes to sit. There are many things you must do and they will come up with a special clarity and an unreal urgency just when you want to sit or as you are sitting. This clarity is one of the reasons we sit. We also sit to question the urgency. But sometimes the urgency is real, and the responsibilities are

probably real. However you always have the time to sit down at least for one or two minutes. Everyone does. Even if there is a car waiting outside for you, you can still sit down for one minute. If you say you do not have time for even one minute then you have not recognized the value of sitting as part of your life, or you are resisting change or awareness in your life. When you do sit down you often find that you do have more than a minute; but the point is not to trick yourself into sitting longer. It is to develop the detachment and awareness that allows you to act on that vow from your wider life, to act on what Suzuki-roshi called your inmost request.

Trying to sit still is more obviously the experience of zazen, to be able to sit without moving inside or out, completely at rest mentally and physically. At first you concentrate on your breathing, on your exhales, finally bringing your mind and body, heart lungs stomach hands mouth eyes legs arms pain pleasure thought and attitudes together into one thought, one intention, one non-thinking, one concentration penetrating ambivalence into an intimacy with our extended being. Our internal divisions will dissolve in the purity of this still sitting.

It takes time and yet sitting also creates time because you sleep less — dreaming has come into your conscious meditation and finally been subsumed into your daily life as part of each act no longer divorced from an unconscious life (the content of most thinking is censored dreaming). Sitting creates time because your thinking begins to correspond with the possible, and you begin to act with precision and without ambivalence through the possible to what you have not yet thought of. When you live without ambivalence most of your sicknesses disappear. But we should be careful not to fill up this new fresh time with more responsibilities in a way which again prevents us from sitting.

To sit long helps us physically to sit well. After every one day sitting and seven day sesshin you will notice a marked improvement in your ability to sit still, but we can learn to sit well physically from short periods of sitting. What sitting long encounters, intensifies, and even exacerbates and confronts us with is the topography of our mental and emotional life, our moral attitudes, confusion, and resistance. Suzuki-roshi used to say kids can never leave a still pond alone. Impatience and discomfort cease to be physical and become emotional and moral aspects of your habits and character. Trying to sit still for a long period of time deeply interrupts and questions, so that we can see very clearly the currents, assumptions, habits, and hopes of life.

Culture, Buddhism are mysteries given to us by our ancestors that we may know our own mystery, know what we take for granted, almost like we take air for granted and then pollute, and miss the point of even breathing. Buddhism, culture, our body and mind are instruments that we play, instructions that we learn to speak. The secret is that you have to trust, you have to abandon yourself to your instrument. But to begin we need an image, a concept, a vision, an object. So we have created Zen so that you can trust something. If you do not trust zazen you can not let go into your practice. At some point you have to existentially, conclusively trust zazen. So Zen and zazen, given their existence, are as unprogrammed as possible, as close as a concept of form can be to you so that trusting zazen, even for the beginning student, is virtually identical with trusting yourself. As insight and decision or will are necessary to sit down, faith or trust, willingness is necessary to sit still. We have to learn to leave a still pond alone.

Eventually this developing faith and trust in yourself will allow you to sit still and be able to look at, see, and accept the particular person you are. In this way our

mental and emotional life become as stable and precise as the physical world. Time and space are your own objects of expression. Insight becomes the ability to act on your own life. And then with repeated and long sitting the topography of our habits and mental, moral, and emotional life can become the topic of our foreground concentration. When you make your life your own, the lives of others become accessible to you and so the stories from our lineage of Zen teachers can finally become pointed and pivotal aspects of the topography of your own life. And the characteristics, problems, and fundamental nature of our particular life become our own koan. We call this the genjo koan.

The process or technique of this practice I call turning a question or a statement. You take something from your life or from Buddhism, a sutra or a koan, that has become a wall, something you cannot penetrate, perhaps like "This very mind is Buddha!" or "How do I accept my friend?" or "What is this world in front of my face?" or "Why do we practice if we are already enlightened?" or "What could the Prajna Paramita Sutra possibly mean by, 'without thought coverings', or 'unsupported anywhere, without a basis'." Then with the knowledge that there is a solution even if it is only the nature of mind or thinking itself, you proceed to repeat, ask, and turn the statement or question, each word of it, over and over, certainly every time you remember it, until the statement or question is identical with every situation you are in, with every object in front of you, and equal to your own strength. You continue until your life is not separate from this turning, until you are being turned. This is foreground concentration becoming background concentration again, becoming all-ground concentration.

Tozan was asked, "What is Buddha?" He answered, "Three pounds of flax." This is the perfectly stable world of all-ground concentration.

Pao Che was asked, "The nature of the wind is constant and reaches everywhere. Why are you fanning yourself?" He responded, "You have understood the constancy of the wind, but you do not yet understand that it reaches everywhere." The monk asked, "What is the meaning of its reaching everywhere?" Pao Che went on fanning himself. This monk asked very refined or sophisticated questions, questions that we can see, or at least Pao Che could see that the monk had been turning for a long time until only the kernel remained. The chaff and husk of extraneous aspects or questions he could answer himself are gone. With this kernel bright and present in his mind he took a good opportunity to ask, "Why if we are already enlightened do we need to practice?" Dogen said, "The wind of Buddhism ripens the gold of the earth and the sweet milk of the long river."

You may use T.S. Eliot's line, "The stillness of the Chinese vase, still moving perpetually in stillness."

After not having seen his teacher for some time, Basho, the famous haiku poet, was asked, "What have you understood?" Basho answered, "After the rain the moss is so clean!" You can imagine how bright green it must have been. But Butcho, his teacher, asked immediately, "What about before the moss?" As Mumon-roshi points out, Butcho never would have accepted some easy to say and to-think-you-understand generalization like emptiness, or a state where nothing is to be found. Basho responded, "Frog jump-in, watersound."

These became the last two lines of his most famous haiku. He completed it that evening with his friends:

Old pond
Frog jump-in
Watersound.

Butcho wrote a calligraphy in acknowledgement that said: "An attainment of enlightenment through utter concentration, and an utter concentration for the sake of enlightenment."

Layman P'ang said that Zen practice was, "Difficult, difficult like trying to spread sesame seeds on each leaf of a tree!" You will find it that difficult. But then his wife said, "Easy, easy like touching my toe to the ground. The Patriarch's mind on the tip of every grassblade."

Ejo was enlightened during a lecture when he heard Dogen say, "A single hair pierces myriad holes." All run through with one skewer!

The poet Yang Wan Li wrote:

Standing by the stream waiting for the moon to rise;
But knowing how impatient I am, the moon takes its time.
Tired of waiting, I return to my study and close the door.
The moon leaps over a thousand peaks.

ABSOLUTE
REALITY, *namely,*
how much can I do right now
about life in this place? I
am it, all of this living
AND *this place and what*
I'm doing is called

TRANSFORMATION
IRRADIATION
BASE METAL BECOMES
GOLD

-PHILIP WHALEN