

六祖壇經講話

The Platform Sutra of the Sixth Patriarch Teisho

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TABLE OF CONTENTS

The Platform Sutra

Chapter 6 On Repentance	3
Chapter 7 Temperament and Circumstances	31
Bhikkhu Fa Hai (Hokkai)	37
Bhikkhu Fa Ta (Hotatsu)	46
Bhikkhu Zhi Tong (Chi Tsu)	68
Bhikkhu Zhi Ch'ang (Chijo)	94
Bhikkhu Chih Tao (So Shido)	99
Bhikkhu Hsing Ssu (Seigen Gyoshi)	126
Bhikkhu Huai Rang (Nangaku Ejo)	129
Dhyana Master Xuan Jue (Yoka Genkaku)	133
Chih Huang (Shiko)	137
Fang Bian (Hoben)	147
Chapter 8 The Sudden School & the Gradual School	155
Zhi Cheng (Shasai)	153
Shen Hui (Jinne)	177



Sesshin

Osesshin, 2004-02, day one	3
day two	6
day three	10
day four	14
day five	17
day six	20
day seven	24
Osesshin, 2004-09, day one	31
day two	36
day three	42
day four	46
day five	51
day six	56
day seven	60

Osesshin, 2005-02, day one	68
day two	72
day three	77
day four	82
day five	86
day six	90
day seven	94
Osesshin, 2005-09, day one	99
day two	103
day three	107
day four	111
day five	116
day six	121
day seven	126
Osesshin, 2006-02, day one	132
day two	137
day three	141
day four	145
day five	151
day six	156
day seven	163
Osesshin, 2006-09, day one	166
day two	170
day three	173
day four	177
day five	182
day six	186
day seven	190

Table of Calligraphy

Do not think of good, Do not think of evil. ...	8
To let not a passing thought rise up is 'mind'	40
When our mind is deluded, the Lotus Sutra ...	61
The straightforward mind is the place of ...	74
this teaching of ours has first taken ...	116
"What is it that comes, how would it come?"...	126
It is not the wind moving; ...	149
When thoughts of externals ...	158
For the mind-ground to be without error ...	165
In this teaching, there is no impediment and ...	196

Romanized Japanese Titles

Fushi zen fushiaku shō yomo no toki ...	8
Honrai no shin menmoku	40
Kokoro mayoeba Hokke ni tenzerare ...	61
Kokoro satoreba Hoke o tenzu	61
Ichigyō zanmai wa, issai jō ni oite, gyōjūzaga, ...	74
Jūjō irai, Mu.en o shū to nasshi, ...	116
Nani mono ka inmoni kitaru, ...	126
Kore kaze ugoku ni arazu, ...	149
Soto sō o hanaruru o zen to nashi, ...	158
Shinchi hi naki wa jishō no kai ...	165
Soto issai zen'aku no kyōgai ni oite, ...	196



List of Kanji

不思善。不思惡。正與麼時。密在汝邊	8
無念念即正。有念念成邪	40
心迷法華轉。心悟轉法華	61
一行三昧者。於一切處行住坐臥。...	74
從上已來。無念為宗。無相為體。無住為本	116
什麼物 恁麼來。曰說似一物即不中	126
不是風動。不是旛動。不是心動。...	149
外離相為禪。內不亂為定	158
心地無非自性戒。心地無癡自性慧。...	165
外於一切善惡境涯。心念不起名為坐。...	196

Editor's Preface

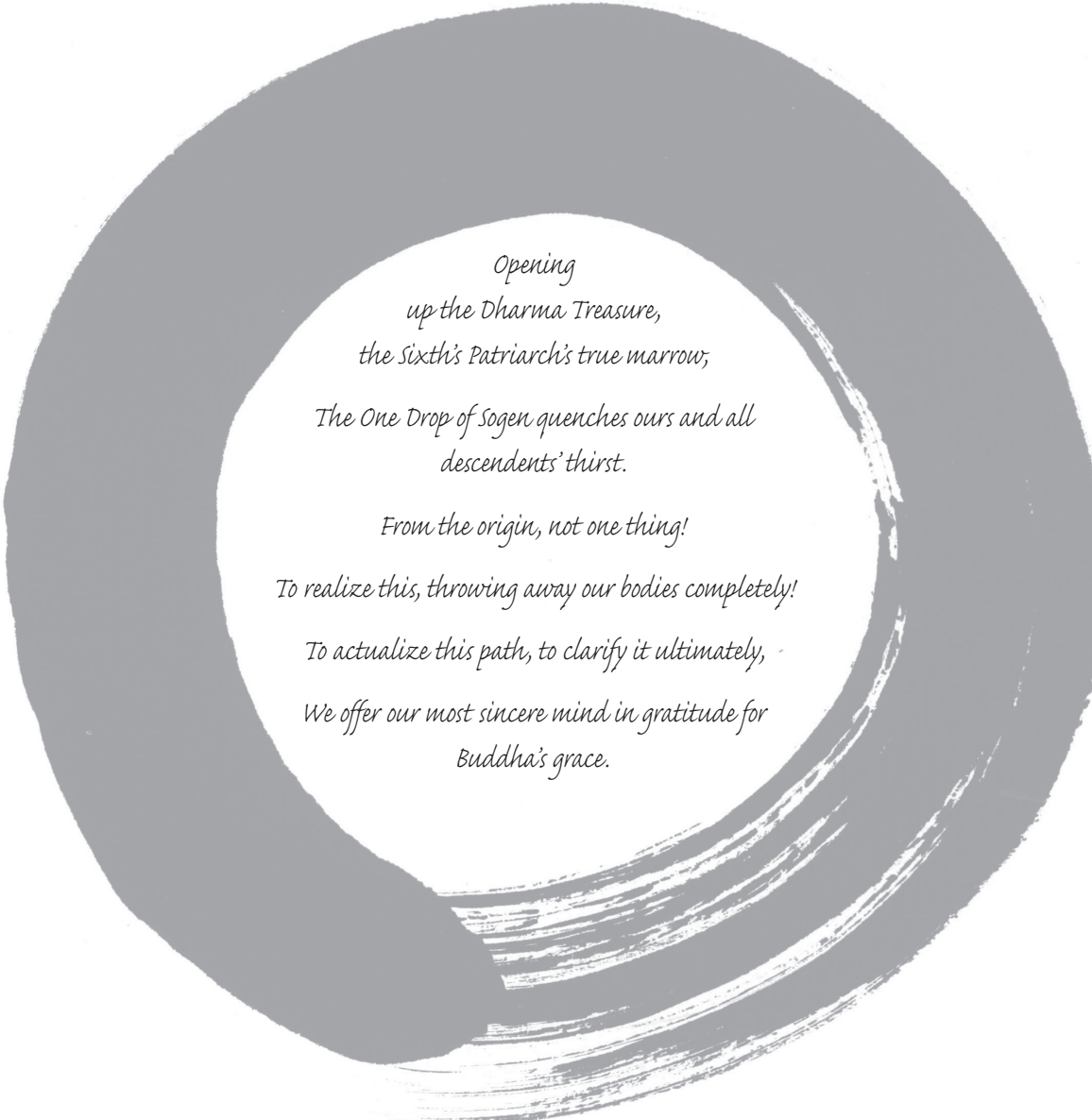
*This is Volume three of a three-volume series of teisho on **The Dharma Jewel of the Platform Sutra of the Sixth Patriarch**. The teisho were given by Harada Shodo-roshi at Tahoma Monastery [Tahoma-san Sogen-ji], Whidbey Island, WA, U.S.A. The teisho in this volume were given at the Osesshin from February 2004 through September 2006. The teisho is translated by Daichi Zenni.*

*The English translation of the text, Chapters Six through Eight in this volume, is from **The Sutra of Hui-neng**, translated by A. F. Price and Wong Mou-lam. A slightly different edition based on the same translation can be found online at:*

<http://www.sinc.sunysb.edu/Clubs/buddhism/huineng/content.htm>

A recent (2008) and invaluable translation by John McRae can be found online at:

https://www.bdkamerica.org/digital/dBET_T2008_PlatformSutra_2000.pdf



*Opening
up the Dharma Treasure,
the Sixth's Patriarch's true marrow;
The One Drop of Sogen quenches ours and all
descendents' thirst.
From the origin, not one thing!
To realize this, throwing away our bodies completely!
To actualize this path, to clarify it ultimately,
We offer our most sincere mind in gratitude for
Buddha's grace.*

*Opening the Teisho
on
the Platform Sutra of the Sixth Patriarch
September 2000*

Chapter 6 On Repentance

OSESSHIN, 2004-02, DAY ONE

Sutra: Once there was a big gathering of scholars and commoners from Kuang Chou, Shao Chou, and other places to wait upon the Patriarch to preach to them.

The Sixth Patriarch gathers many people together and teaches. People came from Koshu, Shoshen, and many other places. Scholars, common people and officials gathered. Some came from Koshu, some came from the North, even walking for three weeks to Nankan; all gathered to hear his teaching. People were coming to request him to teach, and he taught from the high seat to those gathered.

Sutra: Seeing this, the Patriarch mounted the pulpit and delivered the following address: "In Buddhism, we should start from our Essence of Mind."

You people have come here from so far away to hear the truth but it is not about learning about something; it is not a reaching for something external. You endeavor to understand it but see it only superficially, and this is insufficient. Because of this you are pulled around by what may come next, fooled by phenomena, and not seeing clearly to the source from where that came. Those who are coming here are not coming to hear information and knowledge but for the true essence—to experience this true essence which is called Buddha nature in Zen. We say, "to see true nature directly and become Buddha"—that free, fresh awareness of each moment. But from where is it born?

If we listen clearly to the wind blowing outside, in that there is no untruth to be found. There is only the sound of the wind. But we sit in pain and sleepiness, wondering if it's worth it, even wondering if there ever was something spiritual after all. Yet when all dualism and mental

understanding are removed, then that free, clear mind of awakening is revealed.

Sutra: At all times let us purify our own mind from one thought-moment to another, tread the Path by our own efforts, realize our own Dharmakaya, realize the Buddha in our own mind, and deliver ourselves by a personal observance of Sila; then your visit will not have been in vain.

From morning to night and night until morning, in all the twenty-four hours of the day, to let no gaps enter—this is our personal observance of Sila. That mind of holding onto nothing at all, to not insert any thoughts or dualistic perception at all! That is our true state of mind. A thought surfaces but we don't give it any attention; that mind exactly as it is is the most important. To do *ōsesshin*, what is this? In every single mind-moment to hold onto nothing at all, but to hear each sound simply, to see each thing without a wisp of judgment or attachment. This is the truth of *sesshin*, not to add on a single mind-moment to any initial perception. Yet even though we came all the way here to purify our mind, we ourselves soil that clear mind. To clarify our state of mind is our purpose, and to entertain all kinds of thoughts—that is not clarifying and purifying our mind, but cluttering it—and it matters.

Our *zazen* is always being accompanied by thoughts coming and going—about books we have read, about what someone said. These thoughts are always coming and going, but none of them actually soil the true mind. Letting go, letting go, becoming totally one with each moment, the many layers of mind peel away. With each mind-moment, to just be that mind-moment as it is, and when the next one comes, to be just *that* mind-moment. But we get wrapped up in these thoughts and the secondary and tertiary thoughts we bring in; we cover over that clear mind of awareness. All this gathering is useless. As the Sixth Patriarch says, we have to see our true mind. But we can't know that true

mind if we spend all our time thinking.

Clarify that mind of holding onto nothing at all! This is the natural state of mind of our true nature. Since we hold onto nothing we can reflect everything just as it is. "At all times let us purify our own mind from one thought-moment to another, tread the Path by our own efforts, realize our own Dharmakaya." If we realize this state of mind then we can see that we are born anew always, as each moment's perception. Seeing the bird, we become the bird, seeing the tree, we become the tree; we are born anew as each sight, and in each moment. With that we go forth anew, awakened within to the Sambhogakaya, and through that Samboghakaya to give to society.

As the Buddha was dying, his senior disciple, Ananda, asked who would be their teacher after his death. How should they practice without him? The Buddha answered that they should take refuge in themselves. Ananda had asked earnestly, and the Buddha answered that he should take refuge in himself, not in others.

Be lamps unto yourselves.

Be refuges unto yourselves.

Take yourself no external refuge.

Hold fast to the truth as a lamp.

Hold fast to the truth as a refuge.

Look not for a refuge in anyone besides yourselves.

What does that mean? It means to hold onto nothing whatsoever! Hearing the bird, there is just "Tweet, tweet." Seeing the flower, there is just the flower. But as soon as we hold onto anything—holding onto a thought, to a thing, to a person—we will be disappointed, moved around by our own baggage. Even if we are in despair, to not give any attention to mental understanding; if not that, then we live in a very superficial way. Do not be deceived by thinking that that's the way it is, but to hold onto nothing whatsoever! See with that eye which sees beyond profit and loss, good and bad!

Be a light unto yourself,
In the truth bear refuge,
Find the light in yourself.

All beings have this true mind of awareness from the origin. We have to awaken to this clear mind! It is for this that we have come here. So why are we deluded? We are deluded because we separate ourselves. Even in the midst of anger, to realize that state of mind of nothing separate. That clear mind hasn't gone away because of the anger; it's still right there. We realize it by letting in not a wisp of thought, not a gap, and in total oneness we are that clear mind. While you have all come here from so far, you must know that there is nothing to learn. No matter what a good thing you hear or read, it is of no worth. There is only this one moment: *totally* become one with it.

Sutra: "Now let us sit down in the Indian fashion, and I will give you the five kinds of Incense of the Dharmakaya. When they had sat down, the Patriarch continued: The first is the Sila Incense, which means that our mind is free from taints of misdeeds, evil jealousy, avarice, anger, and hatred."

Standing is so tiring! Please sit down with your legs crossed. The Sixth Patriarch in this way encouraged the room full of people to sit down and do zazen. First of everything, no matter what is said, is to clarify our mind so that it is free from judgments, jealousy, anger, and further delusions. It is the precepts that help us know how to work on these negative mind states. We all have so many problems. We have to do things we don't want to do, and be with people we don't want to be with; we have to be away from people we want to be with and not be able to do the things we want to do. When we go chasing after what we like and trying to get rid of what we don't like, we suffer. We can't just do whatever we want to, or we lose track of that inner fulcrum of life. We have to align our mind so that these many thoughts that come and go fade and we can realize our

true, clear mind. To open to the true value of life we do zazen. and that is the precepts. The precepts teach us how to live.

The precepts focus on three main areas. There are three precepts that deal with the body, four dealing with the mind, and three dealing with thoughts. These ten work on cleaning our actions, our speech and our mind. In our daily life we have to align ourselves; that is what the precepts are for. They teach us the appropriate ways to live. But it is not the form of the precepts but the actuality of this clear mind's functioning that is most important here. To always, in every mind-moment, cut it all away! That mind that is clarified, holding onto nothing at all—see it now!

The Sixth Patriarch is speaking here of the five kinds of incense of the Dharmakaya. This is not an offering of form, but with that clear mind we offer the truth.

Sutra: The second is the Samadhi Incense, which means that our mind is unperturbed in all circumstances, favorable or unfavorable.

Next is our samadhi. Increasing this is the most important fragrance of all. If we are not yet settled, that fragrance has not been offered. We have to realize that place where the Sixth Patriarch describes zazen as “not giving any ideas of good or bad to anything which we perceive externally and internally holding on to nothing at all.”

We are always pulled around by things; that is not the fragrance of the incense of samadhi. We can see many things, but if we are full and taut we will not see, hear, or feel things in a way that they pull us around. Life is limited, and we are conflicted and uncertain. This is why we seek the truth—the awakening to our greater mind, the liberation from our fixed ego view. This is a healthy person's way of being.

Sutra: Now I will give you the ‘formless’ Repentance which will expiate our sins committed in our present, past, and future lives, and purify our

karmas of thought, word and deed. Learned Audience, please follow me and repeat together what I say:

May we, disciples so and so, be always free from the taints of ignorance and delusion.

We repent of all our sins and evil deeds committed under delusion or in ignorance.

May they be expiated at once and may they never arise again.

May we be always free from the taints of arrogance and dishonesty (Asatya).

We repent of all our arrogant behavior and dishonest dealings in the past.

May they be expiated at once and may they never arise again.

May we be always free from the taints of envy and jealousy.

We repent of all our sins and evil deeds committed in an envious or jealous spirit.

May they be expiated at once and may they never arise again.

Perhaps, some say, we all go to hell anyway, so why should we bother? Isn't it conceited and irrelevant to be so concerned with ourselves? Since we're all going to be going to hell anyway, we may as well be enjoying ourselves. But to humbly work on our insufficiency is necessary. That repentance spoken of by the Sixth Patriarch is found in all religion. It is our opportunity to clarify this dark and heavy mind. Some people even break under the weight, but this is not true for all. Repentance is the entrance to this Path, this is true for most religions. But it has to be a true path. And saying this, the Sixth Patriarch gives us here the Formless Repentance.

Most religions offer a repentance of form, and this is why repentance sounds so heavy. For clarifying and purifying the mind, the Sixth Patriarch says, we have to offer incense—the incense of the precepts, the incense of samadhi, the incense of prajna. That truth of holding on to nothing at all and not staying in the Mu but to

let go of everything—this is the incense of the precepts. Next is the incense of samadhi: To always be objective in our mind, to always see clearly the actuality. This is our zazen; this is the incense of samadhi.

In the first day of sesshin we are still caught on so many thoughts of our life in the world, and while these are not so easy to let go of, some people can get simple right away. Roshi can see it in our faces. But our conscious awareness is always being pushed around by ideas we hold onto, by what is good, what is bad, what is being won, what is being lost. If we are able to let go of these, of all of the extra thinking they create, then our way of seeing and hearing and thinking becomes direct and we can become the thing we are perceiving. All of our senses, our awareness, can then perceive directly; they become free from the clutter of extraneous thoughts. As it says in the Kannon Sutra, we can see things exactly as they are when we are completely focused on each and every thing. This is not about comparing in a dualistic way, but to see and hear with nothing else inserted, and not with all the many ideas about what we see and hear and taste and touch.

OSESSHIN, 2004-02, DAY TWO

Sutra: The third is the Prajna Incense, which means that our mind is free from all impediments, that we constantly introspect our Essence of Mind with wisdom, that we refrain from doing all kinds of evil deeds, that although we do all kinds of good acts, yet we do not let our mind become attached to (the fruits) of such actions, and that we are respectful towards our superiors, considerate to our inferiors, and sympathetic to the destitute and the poor.

We can also see things in a huge wide perspective and not be pulled around by another's small-minded view. We have to not lose our huge, wide view and get caught in a narrow way on another

person's suffering. These words are from the Kannon Sutra about the offering of incense of prajna. As was said earlier, the offering of incense—the incense of the precepts, the incense of the fragrance of samadhi, the incense of the fragrance of prajna is in this: to hold onto nothing at all in our mind, with our senses then perceiving things exactly as they are. This is the basis of all religion.

Sutra: "The fourth is the Incense of Liberation, this means that our mind is in such an absolutely free state that it clings to nothing and concerns itself neither with good nor evil.

To not do bad things, to do good things. While it sounds so moralistic, this is actually about doing things spontaneously and naturally, not forcing ourselves to not do bad things and to do good things, but also not being hung up on the results when we do good things. To do things not because we are told we have to but because we can spontaneously feel that they need doing. We are respectful to our seniors because we are seeing in them where we will soon be. We honor that, and in that way they will with kindness guide those who are younger on the Path. To feel as if those people are an extension of ourselves and so we naturally care for them, this is prajna wisdom, and we offer it naturally and spontaneously and not in form.

No one likes to do things from being pressured by someone else, and we long to be liberated from that kind of pressure. After all, we have constant, natural pressure from sickness and from knowing our death is certainly coming. And there are these other pressures, too; the four major ones are to have to live with someone you can't stand; to have to separate from someone you love very much; to taste the pain of the ego filter; to seek and seek and never realize our goal. As long as we are human we have to live through sickness. And even if we have to live with someone we can't stand, we can see that it will

not be for fifty years. These are common sufferings that come with being a human, and we have to realize our serenity of mind by offering this incense of prajna. To see it in an objective way is how people who love each other can understand that people have to separate, and we need to see this clearly. From there, since there is such a thing as death, we hold precious our connection with people. If we see dying clearly and objectively, then in that there is liberation. So why are people then so restricted in life?

As Master Ummon Daishi also said, The world is vast and wide, so why at 4:20 a.m. do you come to the zendo and read a sutra? We are supposedly free, so why do we cross our painful legs and go through sutras and zazen and sanzen? This is exactly what Master Ummon is asking us. If we look at the deer in the garden and the birds in the sky, we see that they all move so free and unrestricted. So then, to sit and feel under such pressure! We are always feeling restricted by something. We think we need more money to do our life, but that is because we cling to money and are therefore ruled by it. We are even pulled around by an idea of a God, but in fact there is nothing that we have to have in order to *be* in our life, whether it is people, praise, or death; there is nothing we have to have, or else we lose the true value of Buddha nature. If we get stuck on anything, then that is not the Buddha nature. To be stuck on something is not the incense of prajna.

Sutra: The fifth is the Incense of Knowledge obtained on the Attainment of Liberation. When our mind clings to neither good nor evil we should take care not to let it dwell upon vacuity, or remain in a state of inertia.

Finally there is the incense of knowledge, but if we are conceited about that, that is not true liberation either, and for what have we done zazen, then? To not be caught on anything at all! Caught on nothing at all, neither can we be caught

on doing good things nor on the quietness of our mind. If we sit down on our quiet, clear mind and get self satisfied, that is not the point, and we get stagnant. People study and add on much knowledge and that can become further bondage and a burden if it's unnecessary and clutters our perceptions. Rather, to see and hear clearly and without obstruction. We have to dive into society with our freedom; this is our truth. If we deepen with our mind we see that we naturally become more compassionate. That is our Original Nature. We are not separated from each other. To become the eyes and see, to become the ears and hear—this is true wisdom. But we can't put any judgment in there.

True compassionate action is immediate and not something we do after being prodded by someone or told that we should do it. Our compassion moves wisely and naturally, like the combination of warmth and light from the sun. With this state of mind we enter society. We don't bring up our own understanding and depth, but rather we become the other person's state of mind completely. There is no me and no other person. No one helps and no one being helped. We see someone and we spontaneously move to help them, like a parent, although that is difficult to do. If we are without essence, we will be pulled around by their difficulties.

To realize this mind which we have always had is this wisdom. This is to realize that abundant wisdom which is already within. Eno Zenji puts it into terms of five incenses for people who don't know this wisdom yet. But it is all already in our minds. To not miss our opportunity to clarify that mind within and see how there is not one single speck to be held onto—this is of utmost importance!

At the very beginning when he was already awakened, the Sixth Patriarch goes to see the Fifth Patriarch, Master Goso Gunin Zenji. Later the Fifth Patriarch told Eno Zenji to leave as soon as possible and

run home to the south of China for the sake of the Dharma staying alive and well. At that time the Fifth Patriarch rowed him in a boat all the way to the other side of the river, and encouraged him to run away quickly. Yet one general, General Emmyo, caught up with him on the peak of Daiyu. The Sixth Patriarch had realized by then that he would be caught, so he had put the bowl and the robe on a rock, and he himself sat nearby in the grasses. When General Emmyo went for the robe and bowl he could not lift them up; they would not budge.

Monk Emmyo already knew himself that he had not realized the Dharma, so of course he couldn't pick them up. Emmyo then said to the Sixth Patriarch that he had practiced for a long time and yet he was unable to realize clear mind, and he asked the Sixth Patriarch for his teaching. The Sixth Patriarch responded to Emmyo, saying he should clear out everything he'd ever heard or learned or experienced, and then Emmyo let go of everything. The Sixth Patriarch said, "That place where there is no good and no bad, your true nature—where is that?" Hearing that, Emmyo was immediately awakened—here, all of the universe, right in this essence! To this, Emmyo awakened.

Sutra: Now I will give you the 'formless'

Repentance which will expiate our sins committed in our present, past, and future lives, and purify our karmas of thought, word and deed. Learned Audience, please follow me and repeat together what I say:

May we, disciples so and so, be always free from the taints of ignorance and delusion.

We repent of all our sins and evil deeds committed under delusion or in ignorance.

May they be expiated at once and may they never arise again.

May we be always free from the taints of arrogance and dishonesty (Asatya).

We repent of all our arrogant behavior

and dishonest dealings in the past.

May they be expiated at once and may they never arise again.

May we be always free from the taints of envy and jealousy.

We repent of all our sins and evil deeds committed in an envious or jealous spirit.

May they be expiated at once and may they never arise again.

The word "repentance" is found in both the Chinese and Indian languages: to offer everything to the heavens and earth, to vow to change one's behavior. These sufferings that humans carry, to become free from them! From the Flower Garland Sutra we have these words that everyone knows well: "From the limitless past we have brought forth thoughts and lived with perceptions in delusion."

We perceive the outside world with our senses, and we easily become attached to things. We see and we want to have; this is greed. This is the source of fear. Next, we don't like what we perceive. We hate it and we get angry. And finally, with our ego as a base, we get deluded. We also get caught on the ideas of good and bad, and with this we cannot see clearly and are deluded further. Greed, anger and ignorance—these have existed from the time of there being life.

In Christianity they have a confession. In

Do not think of good,

Do not think of evil.

At just such a time....

the secret is on your side

不 思 善
不 思 惡
正 與 麼 時
密 在 汝 邊

Fushi zen fushiaku shō yomo no toki
mitsu wa nanji gahen niari

不思善不思惡
正恁麼時密在汝處

Shintoism they have another variety of confession. We have the confession chant as well in Buddhism: “I repent, I repent! All those six senses and their impurities, I do now repent!” People who wrote these sutras sometimes wrote them with their own blood. Or they would go under waterfalls. But all of these are repentance utensils—ways of being repentant, and all of these are repentance in form.

Though we cannot know what we have done in the past, and thoughts coming forward at this time bring us pain, so we now repent. But if it is only repentance of form or some ascetic practice, that will not resolve it. Our mind has to become clarified or we will do it again; it will not have been resolved. This is why we have to have this formless repentance. Holding onto nothing, we return to our true nature; we can see from that truly seeing eye of that Bodhisattva Fugen who is the manifestation of awakened behavior. In the sutra it says that if we truly want to repent, then zazen is the best: to lose track of our body and let go of all of our thinking and fill the entire zendo with our true mind, fully. In doing this we are freed from any small self. To taste this state of mind—to sit to this point—this is the repentance without form.

We’ll still perceive and be aware—not a dead person—yet we are not cluttered by any ego stain at all. We can’t be in our heads; we have to die completely, and then it all moves easily. We can feel the energy; it moves in accordance with what is necessary like the natural world when, with just the arrival of the sun in the morning all things become visible and clear. As our eyes it is filling our eyes; everything fills them. Our ears are filled by everything around us, our nose is filled by everything around us, our mouth is filled by everything, all our senses are filled by everything around us.

We are always putting our preferences in the way. Our zazen has to be zazen that

clarifies and purifies our mind, not just zazen that increases extraneous thinking. This is the formless repentance that reveals our true, original, clear mind. It is not about observing precepts of form but about encountering that clear, true essence without a speck, that which is moved around by nothing. And then our way of living is spontaneously and naturally in alignment.

OSESSHIN, 2004/02, DAY THREE

Sutra: Learned Audience, this is what we call ‘Formless Chan Hui’ (repentance). Now what is the meaning of Chan and Hui (Ksamayati)? Chan refers to the repentance of past sins. To repent of all our past sins and evil deeds committed under delusion, ignorance, arrogance, dishonesty, jealousy, or envy, etc., so as to put an end to all of them is called Chan. Hui refers to that part of repentance concerning our future conduct. Having realized the nature of our transgression [we make a vow] that hereafter we will put an end to all kinds of evil committed under delusion, ignorance, arrogance, dishonesty, jealousy, or envy, and that we shall never sin again. This is Hui.

First the Sixth Patriarch tells of the five incenses to be offered, and then he speaks of repenting the faults of the past, future, and present. For humans in all religions, this dark accumulation from past misdeeds is addressed by repentance. But the way of repentance is different in each religion.

We have all heard how to look at things from what our parents have said to us. We are also influenced by our religion. And we are brought up repenting depending upon how we have been taught and influenced by these teachings and religions. In Christianity, for example, it is taught about an original sin—that humankind betrayed God, and that now makes us have to carry a heavy burden, causing such things as today’s Iraq War, Mad Cow Disease, and

ongoing destruction of the environment. Even if we do not agree with the belief of original sin, still we have done many things in the past. Because of our ignorance there are faults that humans cannot resolve. But what is important here is to dig to that source prior to good and bad.

That we shouldn't kill other human beings is a given as it was in past times. But there is also among creatures the evolutionary factor of survival of the fittest. Animals evolved from the simplest forms to birds, to reptiles, to humans and they have survived for millions of years—since the beginning of life—because of that survival of the fittest. And because of that, countless sins have been committed during that time as well. To see this directly is the work of people of religion—to repent and humbly offer the deepest review of our behavior and mistakes.

But today people not only do not repent, they also force their behavior on the world: the genetic modification of plants for food, the ongoing destruction of the environment, Mad Cow Disease where cows are being fed things they have never been inclined to eat; munching in the fresh fields is their normal inclination. Doing all these destructive things and saying that it is done to feed people or meet the demands of industry! We have brought this into being, but it is our children who will suffer. Humans are ignorant in their way of living. Yet resolving this—how will it come to be?

The Sixth Patriarch says our pure life energy has to be freed from the very root. Why do we even have to carry around an idea of an original sin? What was our nature prior to any of that? In the Buddhist Sūtras it is called absence of light; in the physical world where we are, we are only able to see the phenomena in front of our face due to this absence of light, to our deluded mind states. In that there is no sense of a past or a future influencing what we do; we think that if it works for

me right now, then that's the best choice.

Yet the Sixth Patriarch says that formless repentance can be realized and that this place of no light—our egoistic views which only recognize a small self's needs—is nevertheless itself, the Buddha nature. Of course that cannot be found through mere conceptual thoughts; we have to cut into that basic ignorance, not by relating to God, but to the truth. When the Rōshi was in the contemplative Catholic monastery, the monks who were in missionary calling would go to where there are no missionaries or diplomats, and there they would carry out their work—with their whole being, liberating through prayer. Yet even if we are active in this way, if we are not truly and deeply aware, the effect and the light will not be sufficient to stop the suffering. That deep ignorance which has caused mistaken behaviors—it is only the light which will realign with its wisdom that mistaken behavior. And it is the truth of Zen that cultivates this. The nature of deep ignorance as it is is also the Buddha nature—to dive into that with the wisdom and light and reveal the truth, bringing all into this huge, all-embracing awareness!

We all have these inconvenient physical bodies, we wish it could be a body that doesn't hurt after thirty minutes of zazen, that we don't have to get so sleepy, we don't have to get so hungry; we get sick and we catch cold. But with this inconvenient body we have to do so many things. We want to be useful for others even a little, so we go to the health club, using so much money for ourselves. We spend more to eat, and then for books and other things—so much we spend for ourselves. And then we die. Finally we have to let go of everything—yet that is how it is.

This melancholy, undependable body—this is the Dharma body! Our physical body decays, we are full of delusion, but this very mind and body are the Buddha nature. We carry the awareness of a past

and a present and of an environment; we are aware of all things. And that which is aware of everything going on is also our ego. There is an ego filter and so we divide ourselves and God, we divide ourselves and others, we divide ourselves and all things according to our own small, limited, egoistic view and become so confused. There is actually not one speck of anything there at all—so where in that can it be called the awakened wisdom? Never mind that narrow speck of an ego; that huge, timeless wisdom in all of us—call it God, call it Buddha, there is only one. That wisdom that gave birth to God and is the treasure of all people, what is that? To hold onto nothing at all, nothing whatsoever. It is not awareness with a string attached to it, such as ego or past, present or future. Every minute it is born anew. But our ego is so strong that it makes awareness into a slave of that ego. Let go of that! Originally there is no ego, and in the conditioned belief that there is one, that is where we get confused.

Sutra: On account of ignorance and delusion, common people do not realize that in repentance they have not only to feel sorry for their past sins but also to refrain from sinning in the future. Since they take no heed of their future conduct they commit new sins before the past are expiated. How can we call this ‘repentance’?

Of course we have made mistakes in the past, but we have to decide not to make the same mistakes again. The Sixth Patriarch’s formless repentance can sound conceptual if we stop at just repenting, but this repentance does not stop at berating ourselves for original sin. It goes deeper than that and sees that wisdom where all beings are one and works on the cultivation of that wisdom which is prior to ego, prior to deep ignorance. If we are not aware of this we will continue to repeat the same mistakes. To see this and to decide that we will not live from ego—this is where the meaning of the formless

repentance can be found. Today with the destruction of the environment and other misdeeds we have to see this clearly and do this differently with a very deep commitment. We all have impurities—even to stay alive we have to take the lives of other beings. We not only have to admit this, but we have to decide to do it differently.

At the beginning of the Sixth Patriarch’s sutra there was a conflict between Jinshu Josha and the Sixth Patriarch in their poems given to the Fifth Patriarch, Goso Gunin. Jinshu Josha had written about carefully wiping the mirror on the stand and had put his poem on the wall, and then the Sixth Patriarch had put his poem there, saying there was no mirror so where could dust alight?—revealing the truth of all humankind. Jinshu Josha was not mistaken, but he had only taken it half-way. Like our zazen, it was not completed yet. If we hold an idea of being cluttered we will always be attaching ourselves to an idea that we have some kind of dust. But as the Sixth Patriarch says, at the origin there is not one single thing. With that Mu, to cut it away completely! We don’t have to do it for a whole week—for this entire week—but for even one period of zazen to cut it completely!

We are always bringing forth thoughts about what we perceive—not only about now, but about things we perceived thirty years ago or things perceived even on the other side of the globe. We are continually caught on these scattered mind-moments, stuck on them like a tape loop. Someone speaks against us and we get stuck on that. And while we say that humans are splendid creatures, what is splendid when we are always doing things that are so distracted? “While being still alive, to die and die completely”! This continuing cutting is what does the true repentance. We cannot cut to that flow of clear mind-moments and so we do susokkan—but it has to be susokkan that is done with intensity. Even if it is hard and challenging, while we’re

here we have to *be* here and feel the freshness and revitalization of each and every breath done with total focus.

Some say, we can't breathe because we're all stuffed up and stuck. But we're all walking kinhin here in the zendo, so we are breathing just fine, all of us. To do that breath with focus, continually, until the most finely complex point can still be focused on; in this way we do each breath completely. This is one mind-moment, and we become clearer and more refreshed. This is the point of zazen; it is not about sitting in the zendo, sleeping for a little while. This is our repentance! It cannot be done casually. We have to exhale completely and totally. We cannot ask someone else to do this for us, or else it all becomes explanation. The Sixth Patriarch gives further words about envy and jealousy, but these are not so relevant. To cut completely is what is most important; to not stop midway. This is the formless repentance. And while this is being done, we have to keep that focus and intensity without a gap!

He offers the words for repentance as they are written here: "Repenting, repenting, with all of our six senses, to become purified and clarified. Zange, zange, rokon.." In that way we let go of all of our past karma; we let go of all of that past karma by extinguishing all of our extraneous thoughts, past, present and future. We offer this to God. We offer this one mind-moment—and with this offering to connect to that deep focus, to commit to not being pulled around by anything. We take responsibility; we do each and every breath completely, but not for self-satisfaction. Our susokkan, our samadhi of zazen, cannot be used as something that strengthens our ego. It has to be used for all beings.

To not repeat our mistakes—for this there is susokkan. Many people are giving apologies but not taking seriously their responsibility to not repeat the same

mistake twice. This is what is missing. If we do not take that responsibility, then it is impossible for us to know true repentance. The Sixth Patriarch tells us that more than just the past misdeeds, we must also take responsibility for our behavior even in the future. If we are vague in this, everything—all of it—becomes unclear.

Our repentance has to be for all beings or else it all ends in heaviness and there is never any true relief. We have to live in a way that is clear for all people. As the Sixth Patriarch says, this formless repentance is opening a path away from our profound ignorance. Neither does it end with just repentance. We cannot bring back a person that we have murdered, for example. The dead remain. We have done this deed and we have to take that responsibility. We repent deeply but we also have to actively express a commitment to do this differently. For this the Sixth Patriarch teaches us also how we should live, and that is to bring forth our deep, compassionate, bodhisattva mind and put our whole life into liberating all beings.

Sutra: Learned Audience, having repented of our sins we will take the following four All-embracing Vows:

"We vow to deliver an infinite number of sentient beings of our mind.

We vow to get rid of the innumerable defilements in our own mind.

We vow to learn the countless systems in Dharma of our Essence of Mind.

We vow to attain the Supreme Buddhahood of our Essence of Mind.

To see and live these vows as the greatest value in our lives in society, not just as being something that we do when we're sitting in a zendo or because we are ordained. The Buddha took rags and dyed them to wear as his clothes. Working in society, to also live humbly and eat sparingly and offer to others, not caught on fashionable clothes but living simply, giving the extra to others in need. This is a

way of living in repentance. Only a small handful can live an ordained life. But ordained or not, to make that vow our life, not living for oneself, but to live humbly for all people. This is our standard and our true way of living our repentance. And for remembering how to do this we have the Four Vows. Please actualize the zazen of repentance.

OSESSHIN, 2004-02, DAY FOUR

Sutra: Learned Audience, having repented of our sins we will take the following four All-embracing Vows:

“We vow to deliver an infinite number of sentient beings of our mind.

We vow to get rid of the innumerable defilements in our own mind.

We vow to learn the countless systems in Dharma of our Essence of Mind.

We vow to attain the Supreme Buddhahood of our Essence of Mind.

Having taught this formless repentance, next, the Four Vows are given. This way of offering incense—repenting and committing to the Four Vows—with these we align our whole life. The Sixth Patriarch says to first align our state of mind, and the formless repentance is first. To repent from the most profound depths of our mind—and then, with what state of mind should we live? This is a unique view of the Sixth Patriarch, his view on how to clarify—not to worship or be concerned with an external absolute, but to clarify our own mind. Humans are capable of reviewing our behavior; without doing that thoroughly, one cannot correct one’s behavior. Aligned behavior will not come forth.

We also learn to understand others from reviewing our own behavior. Today this is very unpopular. No one wants to experience any unpleasant states of mind. But today especially, in not reviewing our behavior, in being afraid of nothing, generally feeling that we deserve everything good we get, we lose a deep feeling

for others and only defend and protect ourselves with little concern for other people. Originally people were careful and meticulous with others as well. They saw the importance of this and also reviewed their behavior. Without this, people wouldn’t have thrown themselves into offering their lives to all beings. There was deep repentance in Christianity as well. If people did not review their behavior they would be caught on a narrow-minded, self-satisfied way of being. We review our behavior and see how incomplete we are, how full of desires we are. That is basic. But not only that—not only the knowing that we shouldn’t have done something, but then to live in a new way, not repeating that negative behavior.

We have the life of Shima Akihito, disliked by his teacher and schoolmates for his dark, slow personality. He was a victim of his bad qualities and was easily excited and resentful. Called a fool by his classmates, he then killed someone and was in prison for three, four, five years, repenting, and digging deeply within. He had felt so resentful, but he changed and he wanted to offer something to society. He wrote a poem which said,

Who will ever accept the eyes
Of a person condemned to death?

He wanted to do even one thing for someone. He thought if only someone would accept his eyes. But who would want the eyes of a murderer? In another poem he wrote:

If I’d had a mother,
Maybe I wouldn’t have killed someone.
I killed a precious mother.

He felt that because he hadn’t known his own mother—who died when he was young—and lacked love, he had killed the mother of two children. He deeply repented having done this. Another poem:

Because I killed someone
They insult my father.
He shops when no one else is around.

When he read a letter from his father

saying this, he could not sit or stand; he was so deeply sorry. Eight years later Shima Akihito was executed. The night before his execution he took all the money he had—which he had made from working in the prison—and he gave it to the family whose mother he had killed. He sent them all the money and said that he hoped that his death would somehow absolve what he had done. “I can’t work in society, so this is the best I can do,” he wrote. Then another poem:

Humans have this clear, bright mind.
I didn’t know!
And in the morning I will be executed.

He was so astonished at realizing this mind within himself. He who had been in deep ignorance and darkness and had killed someone—and yet he had realized this mind within himself. He asked that his book of very excellent poetry be published after his death so that someone else who was hopeless and dark might read his words and perhaps gain hope—saying that the constantly changing mind of thoughts must not be mistaken for what is real, that there is something deeper. He was too late in realizing this, but he wanted to tell people to know this deeper mind, to share this with people in society. It is not only about our personal state of mind. The parents of our parents, the parents of our parents’ parents, and their parents, our life is based on all of these lives as well. It cannot be resolved by mere lip-service repentance from our mouth. We have to take responsibility for all of it. And so we have the Four Vows, and actualize through them.

Sutra: Learned Audience, having repented of our sins we will take the following four All-embracing Vows:

We vow to deliver an infinite number of sentient beings of our mind.

We vow to get rid of the innumerable defilements in our own mind.

We vow to learn the countless systems in Dharma of our Essence of Mind.

We vow to attain the Supreme Buddhahood of our Essence of Mind.

Learned Audience, all of us have now declared that we vow to deliver an infinite number of sentient beings; but what does that mean?

Humans are all lonely. We are all individuals in solitude. Each of us has a very lonely facet. We instinctively want to defend and protect ourselves, even to the point of committing a crime. But from that deep loneliness also comes great wisdom. With that we realize that we are not a single, lone existence, but a great, all-embracing wisdom—from there we can see that we are not separated. And further, we want to offer this to society. This limited, incomplete being that we are—to offer it to that never-ending flow of human beings, making society our body, bringing forth endless creativity, and realizing those Four Bodhisattva Vows—those four all-embracing vows.

These vows are expressed in two ways: one is the greater vow and one is the personal vow. The greater vow is about being determined to offer our lives for all beings. But there is also the personal vow of doing that which we can each do best: playing an instrument, expressing our special talent—that which we feel we want to do more than anything. These two are not two separate things; they are two parts of the same. Each personal vow is of greatest importance, but here the Four Vows are expressing a greater vow. What we all need to do in society, we do through the Four Vows. These Four Vows are for all people and not just for Buddhists. They are for all humans and cannot be left unrealized.

Liberating all sentient beings is not just about humans, but about all insects, reptiles, vegetables, and even beings without form. Starting with beings who are sentient, all forms of life must be liberated. While having been born as humans, we still have not resolved our animal-like instincts, our greed, our anger,

our ignorance. We have a strong desire to stay alive. If someone takes a dog's food, that dog will bite the person even if it is the dog's master, or like a mother dog bites anyone who tries to take away her pups.

We have so many desires in our mind, always coming and going and confusing us. We vow to cut those which are not necessary. Our mind is so shallow in its wisdom; we have to clarify it so we can see clearly our true deep wisdom. We have to make correct efforts constantly. Most of the things that have been written and still existing about this came from philosophy and religion. And yet, we remain most ignorant because we don't work on it, always looking externally and not within. We have to look at this thoroughly.

There are many, many teachings throughout the world. In each there are some truths, but these teachings are often based on local needs and flavors. A satellite today goes around the world in one and a half hours, and as it travels it goes over people who are Buddhist, Muslims, Hindus, Christians, and Jews. We all live within five minutes of each other.

Sixty years ago Dr. Ambedkar of India, who is of the Dalit class, went to Columbia University and to the London School of Economics and became the First Law Minister of India and Chairman of the Constitution Drafting Committee. At this time India was struggling for independence and its burden were many. He fought to stop the belief in the caste system of the Hindu teaching in the Nanyu Hoten, by which the Dalits were believed to be so lowly; he clearly made the point that this could not be continued. He had studied all the religions when he was in college and decided that Buddhism was the most appropriate for this important and great work. Sixty-four years later he embraced Buddhism formally and took on the Path of the Buddha.

The sentient beings of society, if we truly

want to liberate them it will take our whole life to liberate 6.2 billion people, when even politicians cannot do that. We are still in conflict, we are still torturing each other twenty-five hundred years after the Buddha! Twenty-five hundred years after his awakening and his teachings! So people say, of what use are those vows, then, if we still can't do this? But the Sixth Patriarch demands that we look at the source of these problems, saying clearly that it is because we do not clarify our own state of mind that they continue. The Sixth Patriarch says we have to first liberate our own mind—not to ignore others, but to also work on ourselves. Because of our conditioning, first our own mind has to become peaceful. This is because there are 6.2 billion people to care for—one could call them all disadvantaged people of some sort or another. We have hospice work as well. While people try to help others, their own way of life can be very doubtful. How can we, without taking responsibility for ourselves, take responsibility for others? We cannot deceive the truth, or all of a person's difficulties will become a pressure on the people they are trying to help.

We have a saying, "All sentient beings are essentially Buddhas," but we can't be deceived by just taking it as a slogan or we will be ignoring the deluded sentient beings within. It isn't only about offering to society, but simultaneously clarifying our very own state of mind. Here comes the first of the Patriarch's Four Vows: "We vow to deliver an infinite number of sentient beings of our mind."

And next comes the second of the Sixth Patriarch's Four Vows: "We vow to get rid of the innumerable defilements in our own mind"—that suffering which we have carried for millions of years. We can't be vague about that.

And the third: "We vow to learn the countless systems in Dharma of our Essence of Mind." Today in Buddhism in

these 5048 sutras there are an enormous number of words—the various teachings and doctrines and precepts. Today’s scholars compare and study and philosophize and write about these things, but the Sixth Patriarch’s teachings are not about analyzing words and phrases. We don’t have that kind of spare time in our lives. Rather, with what state of mind do we perceive these words? And since all words come from mind, this mind has to be clear—the fourth of the Sixth Patriarch’s Four Vows: “We vow to attain the Supreme Buddhahood of our Essence of Mind.”

This does not mean that only Buddhism is absolute, but that relative comparisons are not the point—comparing which religion is right or wrong. Rather, in a round way seeing the truth in all of this and vowing to realize it and live it. At the beginning the Sixth Patriarch said that we should vow this, that the Buddha said this. But he also says, not that Buddhism or I can save anyone. In Buddhism it is not that we offer the vow to an absolute Buddha and therefore are saved. It doesn’t work like that. We all have to do it for ourselves—only *we* can do it for ourselves.

As the Buddha said, those without karmic affiliation are impossible to liberate. Even if Christ went to the cross to liberate us from original sin, that is not enough. We have to care first. We have to bend our ears and we ourselves do the work: “Yes, I was mistaken!” We have to do it, not just to think if we believe hard enough then we’ll be picked up by someone else who can save us. In this world we see how it works when the seeds are planted in the ground, then the rain and the sun come, and with the spring sun comes the blessing of water and warmth. The seeds sprout. And it may look like the sun brought forth the sprouts, but it was the seed that gave off the sprout, not the sun which only helped. Just because we prayed, we can’t think that is enough. The Buddha left out no one in that wisdom

of no difference between self and other, and he gave us the deep compassion, but he did not make sprouts happen. For example, in one who has no interest, they may feel criticized when urged to practice and that is beside the point. In caring for someone, we may become the person they are most unhappy to have around. So the more care we do, the more we have to clarify our mind. Sometimes we hold onto our own mind and become egoistic. We have to thus forget ourselves completely, making efforts to do just that. We all want to be the most adored and be with the one we adore the most, but we have to cut this away. We have to cut this away or it strengthens our ego and brings resentment and jealousy, and we can’t just leave that as it is.

Sutra: Learned Audience, all of us have now declared that we vow to deliver an infinite number of sentient beings; but what does that mean? It does not mean that I, Hui Neng, am going to deliver them. And who are these sentient beings within our mind? They are the delusive mind, the deceitful mind, the evil mind, and such like minds -- all these are sentient beings. Each of them has to deliver himself by means of his own Essence of Mind. Then the deliverance is genuine.

We each have to save ourselves; this is the only true liberation. For this we have to know the right view, the true insight, the mind’s clarity. And with that we liberate beings. So what is the right view? It cannot be relative truth, or a divided view. To not think anything at all—this is the true mind. To have integrity is also important in society. But no matter how we are praised or criticized, to not insert our own point or stance at all. People are missing this in the world today, caught in their small mind only. And for this we have zazen.

OSESSHIN, 2004-02, DAY FIVE

Sutra: Now, what does it mean to deliver oneself by one’s own Essence of Mind? It means the deliverance

of the ignorant, the delusive, and the vexatious beings within our own mind by means of Right Views.

As to the vow, 'We vow to get rid of the innumerable evil passions in the mind,' it refers to the substitution of our unreliable and illusive thinking faculty by the Prajna-Wisdom of our Essence of Mind.

No matter what our pain or suffering, to not be moved around by it or we are all suffocated in trying to preserve our ego and small mind. We all have melancholy, miserable and painful times. We have to sit to drink down everything that comes along, to actually walk that, or there is no resolution. People talk about kensho but kensho is not isolated; it requires deep samadhi energy. That kensho is not something we can do with a simple idea or concept.

People today are in endless conflict, and that will go nowhere. It doesn't matter what religions or what nationalities, it's all the same; we have so many desires stuffed in our minds. Those deluded sentient beings which keep appearing and surging forth, we have to liberate them with prajna wisdom. If a deluded mind comes, we have to correct it with our awakened wisdom—wisdom which can see the whole picture of confusion and malevolence. With the wisdom of clarity we liberate those deluded sentient beings of our own mind.

Before offering the Four Vows we have to realize our original mind. The Sixth Patriarch is not teaching some puritanical approach here, telling us not to see, not to hear, and not to feel things. He is not kidding around like this. To realize our original mind—it's not about deceiving ourselves. With this liberation of all suffering we ourselves are liberated. Our egos fade, our small-minded view fades. The other person's will also fade away. We don't even say anything, and the other's pain is comforted.

There is a teaching of the Buddha about

how some children are always begging for money for something when they go shopping with their mother. Since she doesn't want to have a big fuss in front of the others in the store, the mother needs to have wisdom. As the kids are so involved in what they want and making so much noise about it, the mother will say suddenly, "What is that beautiful sound over there?"—pointing their attention to some other, well-behaved child. This changes the children's focus suddenly. Some people take a walk. Some people listen to music or go to a movie or see a painting. Doing zazen is doing nothing per se, but as we do zazen we can also change our mind's direction. We change our frame of mind.

So what comes of this? Our desires are only transient wisps; they are always changing. And there is a greater wisdom than that: the wisdom of thinking of nothing at all. When we can realize this, we know that we can see when we are caught. When our zazen is still unripe we feel so restricted and uncomfortable, but as we do it longer and longer we feel it becoming comfortable. Like ice which is melting into water, we let go of those extraneous thoughts. Kensho cannot be realized when we are still caught on ego and extraneous thinking.

Sutra: As to the vow, 'We vow to learn countless systems of Dharmas,' there will be no true learning until we have seen face to face our Essence of Mind, and until we conform to the orthodox Dharma on all occasions.

We have to realize that state of mind of holding onto nothing at all. To touch this directly is kensho. The 5048 Buddhist sutras, all the religious and philosophical texts, become clear then, and we know they are born from that great clear mind. We can see this directly. First and foremost we have to separate from all that we try to grab hold of, to let all of it go. First we have to clarify our mind; we have to do this to help relieve suffering. For that state of mind we do zazen. But that isn't

the whole thing: How does that clear mind touch the world? From there we see the infinite activity of functioning and the wisdom that works through our senses and our limbs.

Sutra: Learned Audience, to take refuge in a true Buddha is to take refuge in our own Essence of Mind. He who does so should remove from his Essence of Mind the evil mind, the jealous mind, the flattering and crooked mind, egotism, deceit and falsehood, contemptuousness, snobbishness, fallacious views, arrogance, and all other evils that may arise at any time. To take refuge in oneself is to be constantly on the alert for our own mistakes, and to refrain from criticism of others' merits or faults. He who is humble and meek on all occasions and is polite to everybody has thoroughly realized his Essence of Mind, so thoroughly that his Path is free from further obstacles. This is the way to take refuge in oneself.

Finally the Sixth Patriarch says that it is not to only follow teachings, but to become humble. Not to think we are special because we are training or helping. We have to not make such differentiations but bring forth wisdom through forgetting ourselves completely; that wisdom will then be free from any personal stance. We say that then we can even stand on the head of the Vairocana Buddha while we prostrate to the feet of a three-year-old. We exhaustively clarify the truth, but also we bow to a three-year-old. We offer everything, and that is Buddhism.

To also let go of the ideas about wisdom. And neither to be caught on a heaven or a hell, delusion or enlightenment—to be concerned with none of these. We have to realize our true wisdom to this point, and that does not come forth from a vow that is only for our own self satisfaction. In Mahayana Buddhism it is the realization of this deep vow that is the essence. Vimalakirti is an example of the already enlightened mind. He was born as a layman, but when he was sick none of the Buddha's disciples—not even

the bodhisattvas, wanted to go see him because they had all encountered him previously and it had been embarrassing. Only Manjusri would go, and Manjusri asked Vimalakirti, "What is your sickness, Vimalakirti?" Vimalakirti answered, "In fact the source of this sickness is ignorance. And from that ignorance came love, and with that love I have become sick. I'm not sick, but because all beings are sick it manifests in my body. If all sickness is finished, my sickness is finished. If people are in pain and confusion, so I am in pain and confusion."

This vow to liberate all beings is the vow of the Mahayana. With no difference between self and others, this is a bodhisattva; the Sixth Patriarch is teaching of this. But if there is not such engagement, who liberates the suffering? The bodhisattvas open their own mind but don't sit down on that; they enter into the world of people and delusions. Because there is actual delusion there is actual sickness; if the delusion ends, the sickness ends. If there is not someone with a mind to do this it will never end. And the world is not so small that we can do it only for our small self. We don't do zazen for our small self, to just let go of our own suffering. We do zazen and let go of our own burdens and do a great cleaning; we do it because we believe in the pure, clear mind and because we don't want to leave our own prejudiced mind in society. We let go of ourselves completely so we can see this. We let go of our own narrow boundaries completely: Sentient beings are sick and so I am sick. Like parents of a child who is sick, the parents directly feel the sickness of their child.

But today there is such separation. We are asked if that actually works. We have the story of Dokyo Etan Zenji—Shoju Rojin, who went into the mountains at Shoju-an and later became the teacher of the great Zen master Hakuin. Dokyo Etan Zenji lived with his mother and he

went into the mountains each morning and returned each night. One day a guest came to see him, but because Dokyo Etan Zenji was not there the guest could only see his mother. Dokyo Etan could tell this, however, and he came back for this visitor. If a child hurts, the parent hurts. Where does that mind come forth from? Because the parent forgets itself completely, this is possible. We do Zen to realize this great compassion which is even beyond personal love. We can be cold and indifferent in life, but as a bodhisattva we have to know this warm compassionate place.

OSESSHIN, 2004-02, DAY SIX

Yesterday we did the Four Vows. In society there are numberless deluded and suffering beings and we feel deeply how we have to liberate them. So we offer our life and make a commitment to do that and simultaneously work on our own state of mind—letting go of our delusions and in each and every mind-moment aligning our desires and deluded mind. It doesn't happen all at once and so we work on it continually. We have to not be caught on words and phrases, but realize true wisdom. We can't be prejudiced and discriminate against people but to see all equally. If everyone has realized it this way, then the correct vows will be lived.

Sutra: We take 'Enlightenment' as our guide, because it is the culmination of both Punya (merit) and Prajna (wisdom). We take 'Orthodoxy' (Dharma) as our guide, because it is the best way to get rid of desire. We take 'Purity' as our guide, because it is the noblest quality of mankind.

We are all without refuge in society. We have no sense of where to find refuge; even our connection to God is so often now missing. So what should we respect and honor? What should we believe in? What should we take refuge in? Everyone is so vague on this, even in religions where, sadly, people only want to work

for the success of their religion. Our daily mind and way of life—how can we put it in order? We have to clarify the essence of what to believe in; honoring or offering everything is what is being referred to here.

We work in the world, but so many unsolvable problems arise that we suffer from burnout. People are suffering from it everywhere. Enso House (a home for end-of-life care) also has to be careful about this. Many people may want to use it, and while this is correct and important, if everything and everyone is blanketly accepted, the problem becomes so huge we can't keep up. When we see humans in pain we naturally want to do something for them. We see their pain but we lose track of their dignified character, their Buddha nature. This is the greatest source of burnout.

Sutra: Learned Audience, since all of you have taken the 'Threefold Guidance' I am going to speak to you on the Trikaya (three 'bodies') of the Buddha of our Essence of Mind, so that you can see these three bodies and realize clearly the Essence of Mind....

Learned Audience, our physical body may be likened unto an inn (i.e., a temporary abode), so we cannot take refuge there. Within our Essence of Mind these Trikaya of Buddha are to be found, and they are common to everybody.

Here the Sixth Patriarch is referring to taking refuge in the Buddha, the Dharma, and the Sangha; but this is not about the form of these three, this is not about worshiping something external. No matter what else, we have to awaken to our deepest wisdom within. All day we see, hear, and feel, and this wisdom is always open amidst all of it—always full, not cold and defensive but warm and embracing. We see what is born, but we have to see clearly from where it is born. We have to see where everything, where all things are coming forth. To awaken to this is true wisdom—our intrinsic wisdom. This is the

Buddha's wisdom, and awakening to that is to realize the abundant mind. The merit of the Buddha is awakened to as well, and with this our mind's activity and speech become round and kind. To awaken to this and to see it in all people—all 6.2 billion: all have the same basis of mind. Only because we don't realize it directly are we caught on the shadow. There is no one who is free from desires and attachments. But because these desires and attachments are so tightly held onto we lose our ability to see and perceive.

While humans have the highest level of feeling, we cannot be confused by this. We have a huge mind and also a great functioning of that mind which allows us to know what we see. Seeing someone in pain we want to help them, and since there is wisdom working there we can see clearly. This is the true Dharma—taking everything else out of the picture and seeing and accepting completely what there is. Our round, abundant wisdom is Buddha and it reflects the whole world; if we look at the manifestation of each thing, we can see the mind's Dharma. But we also have shadows of personal desires about taking care of these things we have to let go of them as soon as we find them, and then the desires are gone. This is the way it has to be. "In my mind there is a place so deep no pain nor joy can reach there," as the poem goes. But if we can't see clearly, like the way we are worked on in advertising in the media, we will be pulled around by our desires. With a purified mind we are free from that influence and deep confusion. Along with Sangha, these three are all the Formless Guidance. The truth of the Buddha, the Dharma and the Sangha is all right inside of us. And because we believe in them they become more and more clear. But we must not become confused and distracted.

Sutra: ...on no account should we accept Mara (the personification of evil) or any heretic as our guide. This we should testify to ourselves by constantly

appealing to the 'Three Gems' of our Essence of Mind, in which, Learned Audience, I advise you to take refuge.

The mind of evil wants to make everything its own, as opposed to pure mind or clear mind. Those ideologies and those religions for which you have to look outside of yourself for refuge—these are all heretical paths that take you away from yourself. We cannot be vague and floating around the surface; this is not a way of honoring and respecting the Buddha, the Dharma, the Sangha. If we are not careful we will be confused by religious ceremonies. It has to be the truly awakened mind. We have to let go of all such attachments and not be moved around by them. We have to testify to ourselves constantly, day in, day out, not being vague, not lacking clarity, giving it true focused attention. To make this clear is what is important.

The Three Gems—the Buddha, the Dharma, the Sangha—need a passionate commitment so we can truly take refuge in them. These are all right within us; if we see them as outside we miss something. We can see clearly, but because we add ourselves into that clear seeing we mistake our perceptions. To do whatever I can for someone and to do it for my own purposes are two very different things. We cannot add on a single thought. If we are moved around by these things it won't do.

We are creatures of habit. We do sesshin and zazen to free ourselves of such conditioning, so we can't be thinking of this and that and what we'll do when it's over, and waste one possible clear moment. To do the one week of sesshin vowing to not give attention to anything extraneous—not to any single thing that comes along—we can then change our habits. We can be like a brand new baby who has no conditioning. We have to do susokkan and koans and put our life on the line; it's not about taking refuge only. We ourselves have to give all of it each moment.

In Ryoan-ji we can see the stone basin

on which is written, “Only to know what is sufficient.” If we know this we know everything about Buddhism, and if we can let go of those manifold, myriad extra thoughts, the thoughts of lust, the thoughts of greed for food, for family, for sleep—then we can see clearly. Lust is most difficult to let go of, but all of them are difficult to let go of even though we know our clear mind holds onto nothing at all. What is most important is that we do not get confused by these desires; by thinking about them from morning ‘till night and from night until morning we become so burdened, so heavy. Waking up in the morning holding onto nothing at all, how great that feels! But some people seem to like to think and hold onto attached thoughts. Some people like to hold onto a lot of thoughts. If our mind is open and free of any thinking it won’t make mistaken thoughts, but if we put our own position into it, everything gets complicated. This is the mysterious path of the not-two. All day we see and hear and feel, but since we are part of an idea of “It’s me,” we form an egoistic view and try to pull things into our own personally inclined direction.

We have to see clearly and unobstructedly; we reflect what comes in front of our eyes and what we hear with our ears—that’s it! Not to consider all kinds of things that are not even present, but to receive it all as it changes and not get caught on what there was just before. From all of our senses we perceive countless things all day long; with the six senses we perceive the six dusts which then obstruct our clear sense perception. But it is our choice to pull these things along, so kindly and so sympathetically. Even when a person is no longer there, we drag along things about that person. Humans cannot live without loving, but when the person is gone we have to chop it, or else it’s called being moved around by it. To not be touched by the passions—like the lotus blooming in the mud, we are not self-absorbed in that

passion. And then our zazen can become truly prayer and we can actually take refuge within it.

Sutra: Ignorant persons take the Threefold Guidance day and night but do not understand it. If they say they take refuge in Buddha, do they know where he is? Yet if they cannot see Buddha, how can they take refuge in him?

Ignorant people only take refuge in the form of the Buddha, the Dharma, the Sangha. So where is this God or Buddha? Not seeing them, how can you take refuge in them, you say. How can we take refuge in something we cannot see? We talk about believing and having faith, but in what? We prostrate to a Buddha statue, but that is not knowing the true Buddha. Crushing the Taliban is not as terrifying as mistakenly worshipping a God who produces suicide bombers. Look at the form of Buddha for a short bit of a day, but if we hold onto a graven image or an idea of what that Buddha is, then we are moving blindly and in that there is no awakening of the true mind. In Christianity it says, “Not my way, but thine,” and “Through me, Christ lives.” We have eyes and ears just like the Buddha, and the Buddha’s hands are our hands and work. We have to awaken to our deepest mind and not to an ego or a concept of a God or a Buddha. Whenever we want to poison society we can just look through our concepts and our egoistic perception. This is not Buddhism.

To polish our wisdom to every degree possible we have to take refuge in the Buddha which is within. With all humankind we clarify this state of mind. Knowing suffering and misery directly, we see that there are so many even without food and medicine and lodging; they are on the verge of death because of this. We have to be deeply aware of this because others’ pain is our pain as well. It has to be in oneness with our mind, eyes, ears, and body. All of these are Buddha, and each and every movement is the Buddha

moving through us. If we are conceptual we are not encountering the true Buddha. We have to see with these same eyes and ears as the Buddha and patriarchs. How wonderful this is! This is not relating to things in a superficial way. We take refuge in this unobstructed, simple, clear mind.

In today's world where people have lost touch with any God, we are progressing technologically, scientifically; we say to love and believe in people but also to develop our ego strength, yet today we don't even know what that ego will do. We fall right back into the animals' struggle of survival of the fittest. We can't believe others or even ourselves. We can't return to the God we've thrown away, but the truth of that God, this is Zen: To throw away ego and ego filter and make ourselves empty, and with those eyes which are caught on nothing we simply see the world—with these eyes we receive the world completely. And then we can see that from the origin there is not one single thing. If we once let go of all of it—all of the ego confusion—we will naturally perceive how things truly are. Not to be in conflict, not to be suffering, not to get depressed—these things will be resolved naturally. We don't have to do them by force. If we realize Original mind we can see how everyone and everything is the same. As the Buddha said when he was first awakened, "How wondrous! How wondrous! All beings are endowed with the same bright, clear, mind to which I have just awakened! Only because of their attached desires and conceptual views are they unable to see!" We see that we are all united in this—that we all have the same true mind. And so of course we can believe in each other in the same way that the bodhisattva "Not Sitting on a Chair Bodhisattva"—Jofukyo Bodhisattva—all day long would be in the streets, bowing to everyone who came along, prostrating to them and saying to them, "In you I see a true Buddha." It is written that this was a past life of Shakyamuni Buddha, but in

fact it has to be how all people become—not judging and criticizing each other but awakening to our own clear mind and that of others as well, and deeply respecting each other. Then we and all religions will meet in oneness. We will no longer need the division between religions; we will all respect each other and respect each other's differences as well. This is the only way that humans will survive.

The Sixth Patriarch is guiding us in the doing of this, and saying how for this, awakening is of primary importance. In reading together his words we are not mentally studying phrases, explanations, or doctrines, but seeing how our minds' problems are the things we need to resolve most. What is our mind's true essence prior to ego? How is this realized? How is it expressed?

The Sixth Patriarch offers incense and teaches the Formless Repentance, the Four Vows, the Refuge in the Three Gems. This is not something exterior; this is not a Dharma outside of you. As Rinzai Zenji has taught, that state of mind—it's not an idea about it, it's not a form but the thing itself—this is meeting the Buddha nature within, without any preconceived notion, our mind, right there as it is, meeting the world through all of its senses. We truly meet the earth; this is the Dharma. We meet all existence, and this is the Dharma. In any era, in any place, this is the encounter beyond doubt. We have experience and we have knowledge, and while it is the same flower seen, the flavor of the seeing of it is different for each person. But if we perceive it from the root of the mind, all people perceive it in the same way. A flower is red; a pine is green. If humans' relationships are lived from this place there is no more preference or attachment to anything. We are sad, we are happy. And when we are sad we are totally sad; when we are happy we are totally happy. If our ego rises cut through it! Our pure mind is then there to know.

In a world of great conflict and challenge, how shall we live? To teach this is why Roshi has done teishos for nearly two hours each day and why he has come to Tahoma Monastery. And so we all have to put our lives on the line. The Sixth Patriarch gives the final resolution: To do zazen and realize that state of mind where we hold on to nothing at all. And with that, how do we encounter this world? When this mind functions correctly, how is it? This way of looking at things cannot be vague and it cannot be conceptual.

OSESSHIN, 2004-02, DAY SEVEN

Sutra: Now, what is the Pure Dharmakaya?

Our Essence of Mind is intrinsically pure; all things are only its manifestations, and good deeds and evil deeds are only the result of good thoughts and evil thoughts respectively. Thus, within the Essence of Mind all things (are intrinsically pure), like the azure of the sky and the radiance of the sun and the moon which, when obscured by passing clouds, may appear as if their brightness has been dimmed; but as soon as the clouds are blown away, brightness reappears and all objects are fully illuminated.

All of that which we have gathered—information, knowledge, conditioning—drop it all! Let go of all of it right now, and in this world of delusion, vow to live in that clear, purified mind. We do training for this, but we have to have the center point clear: As Hakuin puts it, “All sentient beings are essentially Buddhas”—no matter if it’s a thief or a liar or a murderer, it is a being who is essentially a Buddha. Each person has to take responsibility for their own great cleaning of mind and see where they were not yet awake. Then we see “that this very place is the land of lotuses, this very body is the body of the Buddha,” then we see it! This is what Frankie Parker awakened to. He was thrown into jail, into a solitary cell. Even worse, since he was such a hated criminal they didn’t even send him a Bible, didn’t even throw one into the cell

with him. But one day a guard tossed in a copy of the Dhammapada. He opened it and read in that book the words of an early sutra of a Buddha:

We are what we think, having become
what we thought, like the wheel that
follows the cart-pulling ox, sorrow
follows an evil thought.

We are what we think, having become
what we thought, like a shadow
faithfully following, joy follows a pure
thought.

And he suddenly saw it all. But this is very important: Where there is no vow, there is no truth.

It is often asked, “How can someone who holds onto nothing understand the pain in the world?” In Zen it is taught to not think about and to not hold onto anything—but then how can we resolve people’s pain without thinking? How can one who has nothing in mind possibly teach? Such questions are only a concept of something not mentally understandable; it has to be understood from experience. We see the pain, and with good will we want to help. We can’t sit still; we can’t sit by and watch it happen. We have ideas of good and bad, various states of mind, so we don’t settle. Clear out all the past ideas and thoughts completely and become a total fool and then we can do it, even in this busy society.

From morning till night, from night until morning that Mu is kept going! One Mu after the next, Mu is born, going on until we don’t know what is going on or what to do! This self control which we rely on to such a great extent in society today limits our mind’s functioning because we get caught on our own version of things. But we can’t close down these senses we’ve received from our parents; rather, they become purified to where we are not adding on the imperceptible experiences of our past and present. When we have no personal ideas and no caught places, then we are simply open to each person’s

experience. Through all of our senses we receive the pain of all people, and our unencumbered perception does not add on ideas. Instead we receive everything through these clarified senses.

The Buddha did not receive that morning star as a material thing; he received it as himself. He realized this deeply and directly after six years of ascetic training—it took him six years to cut away all of the shadows. He saw the star and said, “That isn’t anything at all; that’s a star and that’s me.” He directly perceived it. And when he saw that morning star, what was it that was enlightened?

What we offer to is not the physical body, on this we must be clear. We think we understand this, but it is the physical body that is the source of life and death. Our perception—our eyes, our ears, our awareness—all fade and are destroyed. These are not what we offer to; when the body is gone there is nothing to honor. That which was taught in Buddhism 2500 years ago is still alive here and now and will still be alive even when the planet is gone. People ask, how can we believe in what happens after we die? This is said from our mind of deep delusion, and because we are without faith we lose our path. As it says in the Bible, our body is a temple for good. The Buddha did not receive that morning star as a material thing, rather as himself, through those clarified senses. To return to that original clear mind is what we are here for! To do this deep faith has to be present.

People like to say to be natural is good—to eat when we feel like it, to sleep when we feel like it, to play when we feel like it. People like to say that this is Zen. But if this is Zen, the whole world will stay confused. Zen is not such a self-satisfying way of being. We have to walk beyond that to be wisdom manifesting. When we let go of all of our ideas of small self, then we are spontaneously endowed with these Three Bodies of Buddha. People are always

waking up and sleeping with the Buddha, but we are still looking the other way; we don’t succeed in leading this way of life of the Buddha. Everyone looks outside and makes external idols of people to read and listen to—and in doing this we leave our own sacred internal places.

The Buddha was born in this awakened mind. He did not imagine it or create it. No matter what wonderful Buddha we perceive, it is with our own awareness that we perceive it or it is not our absolute Buddha of no shape or form. This has to be seen clearly. Everyone’s awareness flashes on and off; the great source of this has to be realized. Where is that consciousness born forth from?

Those flowers and trees and many plants on the earth—infinite life is born there. Our awareness as well is a true source. So if we think bad things, bad things happen. If we think some bad idea, this is what upsets part of the world; our facial expression gets tense as well, and from that there are many reverberations.

Sutra: Our Essence of Mind is intrinsically pure; all things are only its manifestations, and good deeds and evil deeds are only the result of good thoughts and evil thoughts respectively. Thus, within the Essence of Mind all things (are intrinsically pure)...

With good deeds as well, like a stone thrown in a pond, the effect travels and reverberates. Actions in the world are not coincidental. Like those ripples in the pond,

We are what we think, having become what we thought, like the wheel that follows the cart-pulling ox, sorrow follows an evil thought. We are what we think, having become what we thought, like a shadow faithfully following a person, joy follows a pure thought.

But our true nature is beyond good and evil. It can give birth to good and evil, but how does one’s mind function? If we don’t

cut our ego we'll bring forth selfish thinking. But if we cut that egoistic thinking we'll bring forth a clear state of mind. This is what is being said here.

Sutra: Thus, within the Essence of Mind all things (are intrinsically pure), like the azure of the sky and the radiance of the sun and the moon which, when obscured by passing clouds, may appear as if their brightness has been dimmed; but as soon as the clouds are blown away, brightness reappears and all objects are fully illuminated.

We have wisps of good and wisps of bad. Even the most evil person might be kind toward their own children. No one is full of only bad thoughts, nor anyone full of only good thoughts. We cannot be pinned under those thoughts, darkly influenced by our past. That ego, that opinionatedness, that darkness, is like collecting dark clouds that come over the sky. If we go above that, what do we find? We find the sun and the moon which have been there since the beginning. They have in fact been shining the whole time but the murky clouds of ego were obscuring them. The clouds get blown away and then above and below are one and the same. All of the great religious people use this metaphor, and Eno Zenji also says it—how these clouds will never be totally gone. They disappear for awhile, but because we don't recognize our malevolence, our desires, they return.

Here Eno Zenji says we are not trying to get rid of all desires, but if we don't know that they are desires they just get us more and more confused. We have to see these thoughts and desires, and then we can recognize that there is a cloud. To do that we have to open everything up and see our true root directly. This is wisdom. When that wisdom is shining, everything is revealed and brilliant. Like the moon rising in the dark of night, our wisdom opens and everything is lit. But if we get caught on good and bad in people—if we get caught on their doings and judging

them and don't align ourselves, we will only be covering our own dark places. If we can encounter even a little wisdom, then we can see what is what. We have so much stuffed up in our mind and we think that is who we are!

When we are born, as Master Ikkyu puts it, "How sad. As the baby grows older it gathers up more stuff and gets further and further from Buddha." We have to see clearly that is not all of who we are, and if we realign our mind the wisdom will quickly come forth.

While we are born with this mind and it remains our source, we have so many thoughts about doing good and not doing evil; these are important, but they are only borrowed judgments. They are not the whole picture. It is not good news because we say we are good children. On what can we base that? People who do even serious crimes do not necessarily think they are doing bad things. What we think is bad, someone else may think is not bad. What we think is good, someone else might not think is good. So first and foremost we have to see from our true source. This is the most important aspect of being alive at all. It is not about saying "This religion is good, that religion is bad." We have to get rid of all of that.

In all the twenty-four hours of the day continuing getting rid of all that gathered information and realizing that place where there is no more dualism existing—this is when we can awaken to the true Buddha. Doing this is our most important work: To take that responsibility and clarify, to break through no matter what, to make this firm decision. Our awakening is what is most essential. There is no division between self and other, heavens and earth, and self, and to break through that conventional division and see from that place we have to die completely. This is our clear responsibility. If we can see this even a little, we can live our life seeing the most important value in things.

This is not about an external Buddha, but that which is within. We lose track of our body and lose track of our thinking—to completely do that. Several here are very close to that right now, but they are seeing still from too small a point of view. This has to be let go of so we can realize this clear mind directly, that deep life energy within. We have to look directly with our clear mind and simply let go of what we hold onto and are attached to by keeping that Mu going. By burning up everything with that Mu, by burning and burning and burning and burning, then without thinking about things we are brought back to a new life. We deepen this essence of mind without stopping and without giving it any gaps.

What is it that is alive and being expressed with that true mind? We have to see this. If we hold onto no thoughts at all we are truly empty. With no thought of seeing a heaven, with no thought of seeing or hearing at all, such a purified state of mind is our clear mind.

The mind of this present moment which is born with each moment's actualization and is not an imagined thought but which is truly at one with each moment is this mind-moment functioning.

In this infinitely transforming flow, if there is even one mind-moment which associates to a second mind-moment, and then to a third association after that, then we become full of ideas and concerns and we can't even sit still.

When our mind is dark, when we hold even one mind-moment of hate, when we are in the mind of ignorance, grumbling and complaining, then we are the realm of the jealous gods. The Six Realms are those of heaven, the jealous gods, humans, animals, hungry ghosts, and hell. It is all the same human mind, but transforming infinitely. Those who are without wisdom and full of ego give birth to confused and malevolent thoughts. If we are in that

mind-moment of creativity then we can make poetry or painting. Then we are in the world of heavenly beings. We all have to realize that world of nothing at all, to see it directly and awaken to that truth! For this we have to do that Mu twenty-four hours a day! That state of mind cannot be spoken of with the mouth, but when we realize it we are clear and our mind tastes of truth.

Sutra: What is the Perfect Sambhogakaya?

Let us take the illustration of a lamp. Even as the light of a lamp can break up darkness which has been there for a thousand years, so a spark of Wisdom can do away with ignorance which has lasted for ages. We need not bother about the past, for the past is gone and irrecoverable. What demands our attention is the future; so let our thoughts from moment to moment be clear and round, and let us see face to face our Essence of Mind.

Not stopping or stagnating on anything, then what comes through is all wisdom. If we have a hole that has been dark for tens of thousands of years, with one beam of light it becomes bright. We who have lived for so long in darkness, to bring this brightness of light and wisdom into that darkness. We can see clearly then, with nothing mixed in, and our senses perceive nothing of personal motivation at all. Our clear mind, how does it manifest? As Master Rinzi says, to add on no associations to our direct perceptions, and then to add on no third associations to that, that doing this has more value than ten years of pilgrimage.

What has already come forth, don't complain about it. Don't go on about it again and again and again. When you see it, just let it go! Don't add on any extra thoughts to it! Some people ask if that doesn't make a person who doesn't review their own faults and behavior or can't plan ahead. Repentance is being in this very moment completely. Because even if what we think was bad was good or the oppo-

site, we can't continue pulling it all around or we just strangle ourselves and keep ourselves from truly repenting. Plans are plans—they may happen or they may not happen even if they have been planned. To think things *must* happen is a big mistake. We have to not be caught on things that are half-baked but to be clear from one mind-moment to the next mind-moment. This is our *zazen*. Not to wonder about its meaning or non-meaning, but to die and come to life again in each breath! But because we hang onto it and carry it around we stay stuck. We have no time for that, nor for analyzing it. Life is bright and full in this very moment!

Sutra: Good and evil are opposite to each other, but their quintessence cannot be dualistic. This non-dualistic nature is called the true nature which can neither be contaminated by evil nor affected by good. This is what is called the *Sambhogakaya* of Buddha.

One single evil thought from our Essence of Mind will spoil the good merits accumulated in aeons of time, while a good thought from that same source can expiate all our sins, though they are as many as the grains of sand in the Ganges. To realize our own Essence of Mind from moment to moment without intermission until we attain Supreme Enlightenment, so that we are perpetually in a state of Right Mindfulness, is the *Sambhogakaya*.

There are good people and evil people in the world, and people who do both good and evil, some who are smart, some who are foolish—and all of them are endowed with a bright and clear mind from the origin. If we bring up good mind, we are expressing that; if we bring up bad mind, we are expressing that. If we are depending on none of these, then we are never separated from clear mind. We need to be in that state of mind where we are not grabbing onto things externally.

Soaked through by evil we fall into hell for 10,000 kalpas—our own deep darkness. But if we bring forth one good thought, that is all that is necessary to escape. Our

true mind is neither good nor bad. By which will it be dyed? If we are unaware we will be deluded. But if we awaken we will no longer be deluded. Will we awaken or not? This deep realization is most important.

To do this we have to continue without a gap to not hold onto anything at all. It is not about separating from society—it is about knowing each and every moment directly and to not be stopped by anything that we perceive. This is true in our life and our everyday work in the world. We cannot be mistaken about this. Even if you feel this is far removed, you have to meet this true Dharma body directly at least once—that is Eno's deep vow. We are all endowed with this true Dharma body from the origin.

This has all been said already, but since this is the form of a sutra, he then offers a poem which says to become those Buddhists ourselves.

Sutra: I have a 'Formless' stanza, the reciting and practicing of which will at once dispel the delusions and expiate the sins accumulated in numerous Kalpas. This is the stanza:--

People under delusion accumulate tainted merits but do not tread the Path.

They are under the impression that to accumulate merits and to tread the Path are one and the same thing.

Though their merits for alms-giving and offerings are infinite,

(They do not realize that) the ultimate source of sin lies in the three poisonous elements (i.e., greed, anger and illusion) within their own mind.

They expect to expiate their sins by accumulating merit

Without knowing that felicities obtained in future lives have nothing to do with the expiation of sins.

Why not get rid of the sin within our own mind, For this is true repentance (within our Essence of Mind)?

(A sinner) who realizes suddenly
what constitutes true repentance
according to the Mahayana School,
And who ceases from doing evil and
practices righteousness is free from sin.
A treader of the Path who keeps a constant
watch on his Essence of Mind
May be classified in the same group
as the various Buddhas.
Our Patriarchs transmitted no other
system of Law but this 'Sudden' one.
May all followers of it see face to
face their Essence of Mind and
be at once with the Buddhas.
If you are going to look for Dharmakaya
See it above Dharmalakṣaṇa (phenomena),
and then your Mind will be pure.
Exert yourself in order to see face to face
the Essence of Mind and relax not,
For death may come suddenly and put an
abrupt end to your earthly existence.
Those who understand the Mahayana
teaching and are thus able to
realize the Essence of Mind
Should reverently put their palms
together (as a sign of respect) and
fervently seek for the Dharmakaya.

Everyone! Don't do mistaken *zazen*!
People in the world are all falling apart,
and if we sit mistakenly we won't awaken.
If we are not careful we will plant mis-
taken seeds and increase evil. If we don't
awaken to our true nature, we won't be
able to plant good seeds. What is most
important is that we don't add on extra
thoughts nor bring forth a mind of good
and bad, and if we do, then see it and let
go of it.

This is not about one who practices for
their own future satisfaction, but one
who practices to offer everything—
everything!—to society. There are many
people suffering in the world. If you would
be freed from this, hold onto nothing and
have no ideas about yourself as good or
bad. Holding onto nothing at all is not

so easy. We really have to make a definite
commitment to doing that. But if you put
everything into it, you become it, and you
cut through completely.

To see this place directly! This is Eno's
deep vow—to cut through to our deepest
mind. For that we cannot let in any gaps.

Sutra: The Patriarch then added: "Learned
Audience, all of you should recite this
stanza and put it into practice. Should
you realize your Essence of Mind after
reciting it, you may consider yourself
to be always in my presence, though
actually you are a thousand miles away,
but should you be unable to do so,
then, though we are face to face, we
are really a thousand miles apart.

In that case, what is the use of taking the
trouble to come here from so far away?
Take good care of yourselves. Good-bye."

The whole assembly, after hearing what the
Patriarch had said, became enlightened.
In a very happy mood, they accepted
his teaching and put it into practice.

Please use this stanza for your everyday
practice. If you follow it honestly there will
be no confusion. If you follow these words
we are always together, but those who
look away will always be separated. If you
follow these words you must know that
you are giving your offering completely.
Those who were listening were enlight-
ened completely and full of joy.

Chapter 7

Temperament and Circumstances

OSESSHIN, 2004-09, DAY ONE

*Opening Poem**Sesshin solemnly opens; let us do our best.**The awakening of Original Mind knows no limits.**When inner stillness and wisdom are in balance,**True samadhi is attained.**Seven days pass like a single sitting.*

We now begin Chapter 7 of the Platform Sutra of the Sixth Patriarch: Temperament and Circumstances. The central teaching of prajna wisdom we have done, the review of behavior—repentance—as well, and now, temperament and circumstances.

Sutra: Upon the Patriarch's return to the village of Ts'ao Hou in Shao Chou from Huang Mei, where the Dharma had been transmitted to him, he was still an unknown figure,

Eno, who later became the Sixth Patriarch, met with Goso Gunin at Yellow Plum Mountain and has now returned to his homeland. He was born near Canton in the South, in a small town near Koshu. His father had been a local official, but there had been some incident and he was fired. Soon after that, he died. Eno and his mother were very poor—barely surviving. He would go into the mountains and find firewood on the forest floor and then sell that firewood in the town.

There were various homes to which he would always take wood, and at one of those homes where he sold the wood he heard a sutra being read from inside the house and could make out the words, "Abiding in no place, awakened mind arises." Our mind, which is empty, transforms in each and every second. But because of our ego and our opinions we get stuck on that which we perceive instead of being able to see it and feel it

directly, in accordance with its ongoing fluctuation. This is how it was written: Abiding in no place, awakened mind arises. These are words from the Diamond Sutra.

Eno asked the man of the house where he sold wood what that sutra had been, to which the man answered, "You are so young, and you're illiterate! You come from the back woods. How could you understand anything like words such as these from a sutra! Can you really understand this?" To which Eno replied, "Yes, I can."

The man said, "That's very interesting," and Eno replied, "Where can I hear more?" "At Yellow Plum Mountain, at the monastery of Master Goso Gunin. He is teaching the sutra from which these words come. You should go there and hear them and study them." Eno answered, "I'd like to go, but my mother needs to be taken care of, and I have to do that. I can't leave her by herself, and there's no way for me to board her." The man said, "No, you should go! Take this money. I give you this for your mother's support. You have to go and train with Master Goso Gunin."

That man was so kind, deeply kind, and so Eno arranged for his mother's care. Then he walked for one whole month to the Yangtze River and then on to the Yellow Plum Mountain where there were 700 monks in training with Master Goso Gunin.

There he was asked, "Where are you from?" by the master, and he answered that he was from the South, from an area near Koshu. He was then asked by the master, "What have you come here for?" and he answered, "To become a Buddha." The master said, "What?! Some mountain monkey from the south like you cannot possibly understand this teaching!" This was a common view at that time, not only the particular view of Master Goso Gunin; people of the north believed people of the

south were so ignorant and far behind them. But to this, Eno answered, “I may be from the south, but in the True nature there is no such thing as north, south, east and west.” Goso Gunin felt his answer deeply, and that it had come from a true place, but told him to go right away to the rice-pounding room. There he pounded rice hulls off rice for six months.

One day there was a poem that was being sung and chanted by many young monks, and as Eno was pounding rice he heard someone saying it:

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

Eno Zenji asked what that poem was that is being recited, and he was answered: how could a rice-pounding newbie like you possibly understand what such an advanced poem means? That is a poem, after all, by the top monk, Jishu Joza.” Eno asked, Who is that?

Eno was told that someone like you wouldn't know this, but the master of the monastery is about to step down and is choosing a successor. This is the poem of the top possibility—the head monk. Most likely he will become the next master of this temple. Eno responded by saying that's not the essence of satori in that poem; that's only the direction of how to go about getting there. You may know a direction, but you won't be enlightened by this poem. The other young monk was astonished, asking how do you know that? Eno says that he doesn't read the words, but the meaning is very clear. It's clear in the hearing of what's being said in that poem, that it's not from an enlightened state of mind; it's directions on how to get to one. When asked, Eno says that he can make a poem but that he can't write it down. If you would write it on the wall where the other poem is, then I can speak it. And they wrote this poem:

There is no bodhi tree,

Nor stand of a mirror bright.
Since all is void,
Where can dust alight?

It is said that our body is a tree for enlightenment. But that mind changes in every single instant. It is not a body that is getting enlightened—that body, which is so temporary. In our heads we may understand what we think it is, but a mental understanding is only ever a fragment. The truth of the universe is never a fragment. From the origin it is empty, and from there all things come forth. But Jinshu Josha's poem is not making this clear. From the origin there is not one single thing, and if we know this—and not from a preconceived idea about things—we cannot mistake and will see clearly where the essence is.

Eno spoke so clearly and confidently that the other monk was astonished at his clarity. He understood how it could not be mental wisdom that from the origin there is not a single thing—that this cannot be understood mentally only or it is just walking in the dark or living with no focus. We hold onto nothing, yet our focus works. In this very moment we perceive with that focus; we perceive all the myriad things: “Abiding nowhere, awakened mind arises.” It was to this that the Sixth Patriarch had awakened clearly upon hearing these words of the Diamond Sutra.

A mountain is a mountain and a river is a river; a dog is a dog, and one after the next, things appear. If we look for things and try to find them, it's like looking through a small glass, a tiny aperture. We won't see it because we are caught on our own preconceived notions of what we are looking for. Rather, everything we see—all of it—if we have no idea about any of it, we can see in every direction, completely and totally. To understand the mind this clearly you would have to have that experience.

All the monks saw Eno's poem and said

that this new monk's poem is much better than the other poem. With all the loud noise that was coming from the area where the poems were posted, Goso Gunin—the master—heard this. He felt something when he read it and pulled it down, stomped on it and erased the letters which were written in charcoal. Then he went back to his room. Everyone guessed it had been a terrible poem after all.

The Sixth Patriarch went back to the rice-pounding room, and soon after, Master Goso Gunin came by and said cryptically, "Is the rice hulled?" to which Eno answered, "Yes, but it has not yet been separated into grain and chaff." At this, Master Goso Gunin pounded three times on the mouth of the millstone. He had been asked about the rice—Eno's enlightenment—and Eno had answered that it had not yet been sifted into grain and chaff, that it had not been confirmed yet. Master Goso Gunin pounding three times on the millstone meant that Eno was to come at the third hour—when the bell rings three times at midnight.

At that the third hour, Eno went to the chambers of Master Goso Gunin. There, putting curtains on the windows so that people would not be aware of what was going on, he was given the teaching of the Diamond Sutra, in which was that line to which he had been awakened, "Abiding nowhere, awakened mind arises." After thoroughly giving that teaching of the whole Diamond Sutra to him, Eno was told to run away quickly. The transmission which had just been given to him would be coveted by people who were from the monastery and his life would be in danger.

Goso Gunin told Eno he should leave immediately, before those monks from the north found out what had happened, Master Goso Gunin rowed him across the wide Yangtze River in a rowboat. He rowed it himself. And Eno got off at the other side and went on. Master Goso

Gunin returned late that morning. He did not come to the teaching time. And when he was asked, he responded that his teaching was over, that it had been passed along. The monks knew immediately what had happened and they went chasing after Eno.

Eno ran night and day, night and day, to get as far away from the monastery as possible before the monks would find out and come chasing after him. He ran as far as he could and he reached Mount Daiurei in the south. This was very far from Yellow Plum Mountain. Eno had run as fast as he could, but a group from the monastery caught up with him. There was one monk named Enmyo. He had been a general in the army and also had trained wholeheartedly and very honestly. He climbed up Mount Daiurei to where Eno was hiding in the shadows. Eno had put the precious and coveted bowls and robe on a rock. Enmyo found the bowls and realized that he was unable to lift them off the rock where they were. Eno saw this and said, "You came for these; these bowls and this robe have been passed from one generation to the next from the time of Daruma Daishi, to Niso Eka Daishi, to Sanso Kanchi Zenji to Doshin DaiE Zenji and beyond to the Fifth Patriarch, Goso Gunin Zenji. But only if you have the true transmission from Goso Gunin Zenji of Yellow Plum Mountain will you be able to lift these. If you have not received this transmission they cannot be lifted." Enmyo was not stupid. He knew training, he knew about transmission. He knew that the state of mind had to be that to which transmission could be transmitted to. He turned to Eno and said, "Can't you clarify my mind? You have been transmitted to. I long to know the truth." "If you want to know this for yourself, then you will have to do it not for your small self but for the liberation of all beings. That is the only way it can possibly be known," replied Eno.

Enmyo could not pick up the bowl, he could not pick up the robe; even though he threw himself totally into it he could not pick them up. Enmyo then begged the Sixth Patriarch to please teach him.

Eno said, “This mind, before you had known anything to do with a north, a south, an east or west—this mind which you’ve had from before your parents were born—what about this?” The ki in Enmyo’s training had actually ripened and he was able to realize this at this question. Eno saw this: Enmyo understood. He’d deeply realized what he hadn’t been able to realize before. He bowed down and prostrated three times and he expressed this and said, “Is there really nothing else that you have received from Master Goso Gunin?” Eno said to him, “There is no thing. You express this Dharma only when you throw away everything totally and completely. From the origin there is not one single thing.” In this way Enmyo opened his clear mind. He had trained for many years but never had been able to realize this before. He said to Eno that this was his first breakthrough and he would ask Eno to be his teacher now, wouldn’t he please teach him and let him be his student? But Eno refused, saying, “We have these karmic affiliations, and you are karmically affiliated with Master Goso Gunin.” When Eno was about to leave, he told Enmyo to put this great vigor into his training, and to train with Master Goso Gunin for the sake of all beings.

Later, several of the monks that had been chasing Eno from Goso Gunin’s mountain came up the mountain of Daiyurei. They met Enmyo, who said that he had seen nothing, that Eno must have run in a different direction.

Sutra: Upon the Patriarch’s return to the village of Ts’ao Hou in Shao Chou from Huang Mei, where the Dharma had been transmitted to him, he was still an unknown figure, and it was a Confucian scholar named Liu

Chih-Lueh who gave him a warm welcome. Chih-Lueh happened to have an aunt named Wu Chin-Tsang who was a bhikkhuni (a female member of the Order), and used to recite the Maha Parinirvana Sutra.

After Eno and Enmyo had parted. Eno returned to the south and to a village on the mountain three hours from his home. He there met a scholar who welcomed him to live in his large house. This kind man also had an aunt, whose name was “Boundless Storage,” and she had a friend who was a nun. This nun, the friend of the aunt, had a deep understanding, especially of the Lotus Sutra—considered the king of sutras and given by the Buddha on Vulture Peak in his last years. The Yuikyo Gyo was the Buddha’s last sutra, and the one taught just prior to that was this Lotus Sutra. The aunt’s friend, the nun, did not understand the essence of the sutra, but only the scholarly context. And as Eno explained each section to her she could deeply understand one section after the next. The nun would continue asking about each part. She would ask how he could possibly know the meaning of these, not knowing the actual words. How could that be? To which Eno said, “You must not be caught on these words. It is not the words that are important, but the Buddha’s deep, profound experience that is expressed here in these words. You have to know that experience for yourself.” The nun was amazed and saw that he truly understood all of this, that he was deeply enlightened, and she told everyone.

Of course we also have to understand that we must first hear something, then we will be able to, through that hearing, come to know its depth—but only by the experience of it, not by a mental examination of it. It will be misunderstood if we limit it to mental examination only.

We can’t just do sitting and think we are understanding, either. We have to pull out all of those things that are preventing

us from knowing it through experience, from knowing it beyond ideas and our mental perceptions and our dualistic ways of looking at things. That is what this very sesshin is for. We all hold on to so many of this mental conceptualization, this dualistic perception! In our mind we are always being caught on this. We have to realize this place where we have swept away all of this!

We are always standing in awareness and in judgment; we are egoistic when we do that. We have to know that we do this because we are so linear, always thinking, “Can we really do this? Can this really be possible for us? Is there really any meaning to doing this sesshin?” For not letting anything else in we have to do this work until there is only the Mu that is left; everything else is swept away. It can only be that, where we have no more ideas about it or thoughts conceptualizing it! Whether we’re sitting, standing or walking, to keep that Mu going all the time, in this very moment, always! Then everything we do in our lives will all be realizing that Mu.

We hear that there is no such thing as what is “good” and what is “bad,” understanding something or not understanding it. No matter what comes along, we can see it; we can look directly within and know everything which pulls us off center. There is nothing which we have seen or heard that is obstructing this true essence. If we don’t see that, then it is all only seeing it as something external.

Our focus has got to be clear. This is not about words and ideas. The focus point becomes the focus point. We have to do this in a place like *ōsesshin* because in the world it is so hard to focus and keep it going. We borrow everyone’s support here. We borrow everyone’s living energy. We borrow everyone’s being together energy; and because we can all borrow this we can put it to use. And what we can’t do in our daily lives in society, we can do here.

We have no need to be thinking about anything here or deciding about anything here. To only touch that deepest life energy—for this we have come here! This is not about mentally examining these things, or else we get tossed and turned around by what is good and what is bad, what we’ve understood and what we have not yet understood.

We train together and are able to go beyond all of this mentation and thinking because of that. Our energy is supported, and we don’t then waste our energy by thinking and judging; but we have to go into this totally and without judgment! Judgment is what makes us so tired! Although sometimes we need it, we have to let go of it for this work. We have to see that there is something that only by letting go of will we be able to realize. For that we must not divide our awareness. See this aspect clearly. We get to the point where we don’t even know what it is that we are seeing or if we are seeing, we have no such division within us!

We cannot get caught on our own perceptions but have to go even prior to that to know that place in awareness and energy where we extend throughout and beyond the whole universe, so we become each and everything that we encounter: the moon, the flower, the rock—we become each and every one of them! Our *tanden* is full, surging. Each and every thing, all felt directly! This is the combination which is mentioned here of *samadhi* and wisdom. To become one with each thing is what is called *samadhi*, and the wisdom that comes forth from that one with which we become is the Mysterious Observing Wisdom. Things come forth not by thinking about them. We can’t hear that bird with our past experience; we cannot mistake this. We have to see this true mind directly, to perceive it as it actually is and hold it precious.

This nun we just read about was responsible for having a temple built for Eno. Still

his pursuers found him and burned down his temple.

He was called the second Daruma Daishi to come. He was told by his teacher, Master Goso Gunin, that he should go into the mountains and stay concealed for fifteen to twenty years because of the circumstances of that time. It is in these situations and in these conditions that changes come forth, and they have to be done at the right time.

OSESSHIN, 2004-09, DAY TWO

Eno Zenji returned to Hoshin in the south when he left Yellow Plum Mountain, as he was instructed by his master, and for fifteen years he lived secluded in the deepest mountains. In the same way that Daito Kokushi had been for twenty years in a group of beggars under a bridge in Kyoto, living and ripening in his state of mind, the Sixth Patriarch was also for fifteen years secluded in the rural mountains. The Sixth Patriarch was the first to stay in the spiritual womb in order to mature, doing the post-enlightenment training, the advanced practice. From satori our awareness has become realized, but it's not yet second nature, spontaneous and a matter of course. We have to ripen and ripen until the wisdom comes forth naturally and spontaneously, without trying, without self-conscious awareness. This ripening is necessary in every era, not just that of Goso Gunin Zenji, and Eno Zenji, or else we are too heady and our horizon is too narrow. For fifteen years the Sixth Patriarch worked continuously on his state of mind.

One day at a temple in Kōshū—Hoshō-ji—he heard there was to be a Dharma talk. He went there for that talk. It was a windy day, and two monks were arguing over whether the flag there was moving or the wind was moving. Neither would back down; both the monks were sure they were right. The one that said it was

the flag and the one that said it was the wind—each was positive he knew. The Sixth Patriarch couldn't hold it back and he said, "It's not the wind that's moving, it's not the flag that's moving, it's your mind that's moving." They both became suddenly chilled at the depth of the truth just revealed.

We are all looking at the world in the same way, thinking about circumstances, politics, everything going on. We have to put ourselves and how we fit into this picture aside. This whole world is a bright light of our mind. It is the mind's life energy that is there, flapping in the wind. The Buddha saw that morning star clearly, suddenly. It was still the same morning star that had been shining every morning and still shines every morning. But his intensely concentrated mind that saw this, saw it differently that morning. If we don't see this, then we will fall into a sentimental humanism.

The Sixth Patriarch was not putting down the monks when he said, "Your minds are moving," but telling the actual truth: the flag, the whole universe is in flux. But people around him were astounded when they heard this come out of him, and the priest of Hoshō-ji knew this must be the Sixth Patriarch, whom he knew had been secluded somewhere in the southern mountains. At this village the Shorin-ji Temple of Sokeisan Mountain, where the Sixth Patriarch taught, would later come forth. And it was this fellow mentioned here who welcomed the Sixth Patriarch and asked him about the words of the Kamuryō Jukkyō, "The mind as it is: the Buddha."

When Bodhidharma first came to China he was met by the emperor, and it was taught at that time that one must, in one's lifetime, read all of the 5,049 sutras, that that was a necessary thing for a Buddhist to do. At that time it was the great Fu Daishi who invented the sutra wheel library, which is a huge carousel-like

structure which can be turned and in which there are drawers in which you would put sutras. If you would turn that wheel once all the way around, it was said that you would accrue the same merit as having read all of the sutras.

Fu Daishi also wrote in his writings of Shinno no Mei that our mind is, as it is, the Buddha.

A monk once asked Master Joshu how it was possible for there to be a Buddha nature in him when he was always wandering around everywhere all over the place, aimlessly. The Buddha had said when he was awakened, “How wondrous! How wondrous! All beings, without exception, are endowed from the origin with this same bright, clear, mind to which I have just awakened! Only because of their deep attachments and their ongoing extraneous thinking are they unable to realize this.” This monk asked Joshu how could it be possible that somewhere in him there could be a clear mind, and Joshu answered, “Mu.” That mind which is gathered into oneness, undivided—that mind must first be realized. We are all already endowed with the wisdom of any of the ancients within us. But we are so involved with other things, external things, that we don’t even know that. What is this mind? What is this place in us which is the same as the Buddha? That question was asked.

Sutra: Bhikkhu Fa Hai, a native of Chu Kiang of Shao Chow, in his first interview with the Patriarch asked the meaning of the well-known saying, ‘What mind is, Buddha is.’ The Patriarch replied, “To let not a passing thought rise up is ‘mind’.

We have the six roots—the senses—and even if people are blind or deaf they can still receive the Truth as one huge whole. As Einstein has said, there are endless miracles in this world, but the greatest of all miracles is that we can understand. This is not just about using our eyes and our ears, but about doing it with all of

our senses, with our whole awareness. We have this capability. But because we have so much ego attachment we color the pure perception. And on top of that we put onto what we perceive our own personal ideas, filled up with our own position, our sense of what is good and bad, pretty or ugly. And with this we twist and deform what we perceive. Since they are mistakenly personal perceptions we all begin to see differently and fall into the, dualistic trap.

What the bhikkshu was asking was, Where is that mind and how can I get in touch with it? Our mind seems to have many strata. There is the way of looking at it as the Three Realms taught in Buddhism: the Realm of Desire, the Realm of Things, the Realm of Mind. People who see a flower in the garden and wonder how much that flower might cost or must somehow have this flower for themselves, wondering how they can get it—that’s the Realm of Desire. Or we see things as things—the Realm of Things. Or we perceive the phenomena and see it perhaps as an art object—the Realm of Mind. These three realms are all still caught on something as being in form, and are attached to material things and their form.

Eventually this world and all of the things in it will fade. And our life energy, that is the same for it. We may be well today, but tomorrow we don’t know how our health is going to be. We may encounter some accident, some terrible event. We can’t dwell on having a something or not having a something or we’ll surely become melancholy about it when we no longer have it. This place of not being attached to having and not being attached to not having: This is one of the central points of Zen.

Christ left a huge teaching, but wasn’t he nailed onto a cross? He was reborn, people say, and that’s why his teaching was true. But we all just imagine this rebirth; we have a physical view of it. We don’t

really understand its deeper truth. Who is it that was reborn?

Why don't we get reborn this very minute then? If we don't see this in our deepest zazen, we'll also be the ones asking, "Well, after all, didn't the Buddha die? And didn't Bodhidharma die?" We have to make it clear whether we are seeing this from the point of view of its being only true of a physical body, or of something beyond that physical body. We have to know this if we are to care for people who are dying, to see this directly allows us to know exactly what we are looking at.

When we are cluttered with ego-perception we maintain a mistaken point of view that we are born and that we die. This is only a confusion in our awareness. We are not born and we do not die, but we have to see this for ourselves. If you cannot perceive it directly, then Buddhism is lying. We each have to experience this for ourselves. What use is it to have after death something like a heaven, let alone a hell, making up gods and Buddhas? It has to be direct perception of that which is true.

Sutra: The Patriarch replied, "To let not a passing thought rise up is 'mind'. To let not the coming thought be annihilated is Buddha.

The Sixth Patriarch is teaching to not settle for mere concepts like what mind is or Buddha is, to not stop at the limits of these words. Not only mentally understanding, we have to know from our true and actual experience.

In the Mumonkan, the name of the first case is "Does the Dog Have Buddha nature?" Mumon Ekai Zenji, the master who compiled the Mumonkan, wrote in his introduction that we all live in a world following around forms. From an age of three we begin knowing about things and their having a meaning, and we begin to have a sense of a self. We begin learning knowledge, learning behavior; if we don't

learn these things we cannot function in our society. At age three we begin, and in a formative way we select, all the way through today. We cannot work without designing and thinking about things in this way. We also use this capability to see people in society. But there is more than that, and if we think that is all there is, it becomes a very big problem because we think we can only then be from ego, not from a true, deeply based place. That which is colored by ego is a very small, tiny fragment of it all, and if we see only from this we miss the big picture.

That which is gathered as we are educated are things we need to have to live skillfully in society—techniques. If we don't learn these proper manners, knowledge, conditioning, and ways of being, we may fall into great confusion. This is because with our small, limited view and perception we try to resolve and realize everything we see, and that is impossible. There are many miracles, things we cannot possibly understand. This is what Einstein is saying when he says that the greatest miracle is our understanding. That understanding is not limited to technical, rational and mental understanding. We cannot try to measure this with a limited ruler or a standard based on preconceived notions; we have to see, hear, and feel it directly. But because we have too much of a preconceived sense of things we prevent ourselves from experiencing our most direct perception. If we would but see, taste and hear directly. Instead our perception is so well shaped that we immediately clean it up, take it all into sight and estimate it all through our preconceived notions, Mistaken because of this again and again and again.

But as the Sixth Patriarch says, we all have that place where there is no preconceived notion at all. We first have to see and experience this place. The Buddha saw this after years of training. From where he had purified his awareness he directly

saw the morning star free of any color or any filter. We all have to first experience this direct perception from purity of mind, holding that central. And if we can perceive with that clarity of mind, even if we are encountering phenomena or form we still know that we were never born and never die—and know that we die today and are born today, we're born every year and we die every year. Our awareness is not lacquered hard with conditioning; it is born with the birth and death of every single breath, and yet its truest course never has been born and never dies.

We cannot perceive this with a mental knowing, but only by directly encountering it. Because we try to understand it mentally we drop that which is beyond birth and death into the level of dualistic perception. It can only be known from experiencing it.

Sutra: To let not a passing thought rise up is 'mind'. To let not the coming thought be annihilated is Buddha.

Here the Sixth Patriarch is saying to not give attention to anything but to what we are directly perceiving. Yet zazen is not about covering over our hearing and our feeling and our seeing. We have to let go of that way of perceiving with our conditioned thought. That isn't so easy as we've been gathering them for so long. For letting go of this we have sesshin.

We have so much we are continually following: news of the stockmarket, news of politics, news of fads and trends. We may think we'll fall behind if we take a week off and do sesshin. However this perseverance in sesshin does not take away that conditioning all at once. It has taken so long to gather all of this conditioning! We have to ask over and over and over, What is this? What is this?

What is this?—ongoingly. For most of us who are always used to looking outward we have to then face inward and look directly. With that, these eyes and ears which are usually full of this dualistic view will become clarified and purified. It all becomes one and we see that it has always been one. Our senses are not scattered or separate. We gather them all into this oneness and become that life energy which feels everything. If we continue this way, everything we saw dualistically we can now see directly. And we become completely absorbed into this oneness and everything we see and hear and do.

This cannot be done mentally; we have to let go of all of that which we have ever held onto, and then we become the bird's singing, and every encounter is new and clearly perceived, like a mirror. There is no dualistic filter there. Each thing is perceived closely and intimately and directly. And this way of holding onto nothing at all, adding in no small self. This is what mind is, this is what Buddha is. There is nothing there but it is not nihilistic. Just prior to new birth, each moment's clear point—this is the clear mind. And to perceive it with no thing in between—this is the Buddha. We are then in deepest wonder and amazement. This is the true Buddha.

We are always getting caught on our small self's perception of things. We have to let go of that and see this from our original and huge perspective. This is how things can be seen: We let go of everything in between.

Sutra: To let not a passing thought rise up is 'mind'. To let not the coming thought be annihilated is Buddha. To manifest all kinds of phenomena is 'mind'. To be free from all forms (i.e., to realize the unreality of phenomena) is Buddha.

The Sixth Patriarch continues with these words. All of life energy, this is mind and Buddha, and this is also the world where everything is in constant flux and

continuous change. Our awareness is also always changing, but because we are carrying around ideas and perceptions from our past we always want to hold on to something that was good and we never want to encounter again something that was difficult. However, our awareness is such that if something comes we perceive it, if it doesn't, we don't perceive it. Our true life energy cannot be deceived. This functioning of mind, if we perceive directly, our mind's clear perception picks it up, and when it is gone we have no more perception lingering at all. To see this and the mind as it is. When it is gone, to have nothing left at all—that is the Buddha.

We might think this would make things so confused, but it is in fact simple and clear. We can't get caught and confused by things. Our way is to see clearly, and that is the mind. To have nothing sticking and nothing left about what we see and perceive, that is the Buddha.

These are the Sixth Patriarch's words about what mind is, what Buddha is. We who are so deluded and so unclear, we have to know this truth directly. This does not mean to throw away what we already know, but to not be used by it. Our perception is only this one moment. To encounter this one moment directly, but then to let go of it, or we are carrying around extra material which we are always bringing into this new moment's true encounter and awareness. We cannot understand the eternal with a mental idea about it. We have to see that which has never been born and will never die—to see this world directly in each and every moment and know the truth of what brings that into creation and not merely conceptualize about it. Is this deep awareness or yesterday's deep awareness more true? We have to always be free of any previous awareness and be newly born in this very moment! If we hold this central, then no matter what horrifying and difficult circumstance might appear,

we encounter it not being moved around by it whatsoever. In this way we are able to deal with it with complete clarity and direct perception.

Zazen is not something we can do with our eyes closed as we perceive in our everyday life clearly and newly in every moment. If we are doing zazen in a habitual way we are always closing our eyes, and then we miss the liberation possibility there. This world which is always in flux, to understand its circumstances clearly we have to not close down and limit our perception. We have to see with our clear zazen, our susokkan, the doing of the koan. We do it like this, and we show the finishing-up exhalation. We exhale and cut it completely, right there. We have to do this very carefully, meticulously, and then our new energy is without fail born anew—or else we drown in the whirlpool of circumstances. Each and every breath we do, we hold precious. This is living zazen. If we actualize this, then we exhale to the very last point. Exhale to where there is only going to that final most point, and after that, carrying nothing. This is the Buddha.

If we close our eyes in our everyday life or in our zazen, or if we close our ears, then we are cutting away the possibilities. We suffocate with clouded-over senses. We cannot see what is really going on. This has to be understood. By sitting in zazen

*To let not a passing thought rise
up is 'mind'.*

*To let not the coming thought be
annihilated is Buddha.*

無念念即正
有念念成邪

Honrai no shin menmoku



we can see it clearly; we can see directly that this is the mind. To let nothing cling there: This is the Buddha and a clear mind. To further and further purify our perception—this is what we have to do in order to not be mistaken.

OSESSHIN, 2004-09, DAY THREE

Sutra: If I were to give you a full explanation, the topic could not be exhausted even if I took up the whole of one kalpa. So listen to my stanza:

The disciple Hokkai [Fa Hai] had asked Eno Zenji about Truth and Eno answers in this way.

In the sutra it says what mind is, what Buddha is. Nangaku Ejo Zenji was the Zen master of the person who later became the great Master Baso Doitsu Zenji, and it is Baso Doitsu Zenji who so commonly used these words, “What mind is, Buddha is.” His whole life he used them to teach. There was a monk being talked about who was doing zazen in the mountains. The rumor circulated that he was a very advanced monk. Nangaku Ejo Zenji went to see who it was up in those mountains doing zazen. He found the person who would later be named Baso Doitsu Zenji and would become his student.

When Ejo Zenji arrived the monk was actually doing zazen, Ejo asked him why he was sitting there in the mountains, and he was given the answer, “I’m sitting here to become a Buddha and to realize the truth of the Buddha’s awakening.” “Oh?” said Nangaku Zenji, “Can that be done by doing zazen?” Baso Doitsu didn’t get it. He didn’t know what Nangaku Zenji meant.

Nangaku Ejo picked up a stone and a piece of tile and he sat down in front of where Baso Doitsu was sitting. Nangaku Ejo started rubbing them together, Baso Doitsu said to him, “What are you doing?” and Nangaku Ejo said, “Oh, I thought I would polish this tile with this stone and

make it into a mirror.” Baso Doitsu said, “You can’t do that. It doesn’t work like that.” And Nangaku Ejo said, “Nor can you sit down with a mind full of extraneous thinking and make it into a Buddha.” He hit his most sore point. Baso Doitsu was stunned, and he said, “Well, then what should I do?” to which Nangaku Ejo Zenji said to him, “If you have a cart and you have a horse and you want it to move, do you hit the cart or do you hit the horse?”

Finally, the monk got it. To awaken to the truth of the Buddha sitting zazen with a head full of thoughts is not effective. Those thoughts have to be let go of. The truth has to be directly realized. The truth is clarified in that mind of nothing held onto whatsoever. To just close our eyes and senses and think that is zazen—this is a big mistake. Letting go all of our connections to things that are external and freeing up all of our concerns within, we free ourselves from all of the ideas we hold onto and the events around us.

Just sitting in a zazen posture, shutting down our senses and closing our eyes, will be useless. We have to give no attention to any thoughts that come up in our mind at all. And then whatever we do that is zazen. We have to do sesshin and sit for hours only because we are so unskillful at stopping that attention to extraneous thoughts. So we have to learn how to cut them by doing zazen.

The Sixth Patriarch is teaching so carefully here because no one can begin to even imagine a mind which is not full of thinking. We think that having all those thoughts is our responsibility. But those preconceived ideas just twist and color what we perceive. We have memory but we don’t give any attention to it at all. We let go of anything that comes along. If we could do this in our daily life we wouldn’t have to do zazen. But because we can’t do that we do zazen. To let go of it all, that is the mind. To perceive directly with nothing inserted in between, that is the

Buddha.

For this Buddha mind to be realized all day long, to see and feel only what is in front of us—that is the mind. And to not add on any extra ideas to what we perceive, that is Buddha. The Sixth Patriarch clarifies this place of not holding on to anything at all. Holding on to nothing at all is the mind as it is. Holding on to nothing at all and inserting nothing into it at all is the Buddha as it is. To know this pure one-mindedness that hears the bird's song and then lets go of that. There's no idea or profiting there, of grabbing a thought or letting go of the thought. Just as it is, this is the mind, this is Buddha.

The Sixth Patriarch then says,

Sutra: Listen to my stanza:

Prajna is 'What mind is', Samadhi
is 'What Buddha is'.

In practicing Prajna and Samadhi, let
each keep pace with the other;

Then our thoughts will be pure.

This teaching can be understood

Only through the habit of practice.

We do zazen and forget our surroundings and are not caught on anything in our mind. This is samadhi. Some say that we develop samadhi and by doing that, we can realize satori. But this holds onto them as two separated, individual worlds; this is a divisive way of looking at it.

"Prajna is 'What mind is', Samadhi is 'What Buddha is.'" Our eyes, ears, nose, mouth, all of our feelings—our six senses—these are our natural way of being. Of course all people don't have all of these capabilities—some people can't see or hear—but all of us can catch perceptions, and this is wisdom, or prajna. We hear the dog bark, we hear the bell ringing. We see the flower, or we feel the warmth of the sunshine. This is prajna, or wisdom. If we see a flower, it's a flower. If we hear a bird, it's a bird. We are not attached to the flower or the bird. We see and hear clearly, without any attachment

to them, and that is samadhi. Not being attached, we see and hear the best. If we put in thoughts and attached ideas, we may see them still, but we don't see them directly or clearly. To add nothing onto what we perceive is wisdom. To see directly is samadhi; these are not two separate things. But where there is nothing clouding our perceptions, then we can clearly see, hear, and smell. That is samadhi wisdom.

There is no confusion there at all in samadhi. As someone driving a car we have the ability to see the whole, wide picture all around us, and then we can drive well. But if we get caught on some particular idea, some particular thing that's in our vision or we start thinking about something that happened at home before we got in the car, then we get attached to those thoughts and we're liable to have an accident. To be driving with that whole picture, caught on nothing whatsoever; that is samadhi. It has to be perception with our whole body and being, not just one sense or another, then to have nothing inserted there at all, is prajna. This is what the Sixth Patriarch is saying.

It all sounds so obvious because we work with it all the time in our daily life in our every day comings and goings. But because it is half-baked we are not truly seeing and we are not hearing directly, only superficially, halfway, or shallowly. We are more careful when we are driving, but in general we are always perceiving without our whole, total, perception. We do zazen to be able to realize what we have a hard time realizing in our daily life by being totally focused and attentive. In this way we perceive exactly and directly what we encounter. This is wisdom, and this is mind as it is. And where there is nothing there being pulled along, we see and let it go naturally.

Sutra: In practicing Prajna and Samadhi,
let each keep pace with the other.

It is not that wisdom comes from doing

zazen. Zazen is just a practice to align our mind. If we should sit and only entertain lots of thinking, we'll just get tired and exhausted after a week of thinking so much during the week of zazen. We go to work on the Monday and by Friday we are exhausted because we are so bad at doing this. We think Monday to Friday is all our own responsibility. No wonder we feel so tired. But in fact, all that we have to do—all that we are responsible for—is this one instant. We can make a list, a note, if we are worried about forgetting something, but only giving in to this one instant. We get so tired because we dwelling on and talking about and thinking about what other people are doing and what they said and what happened. We start off the day feeling so full of vigor and with a clear mind, get up and go to work, and we end up exhausted from thinking so much all day.

To not have the thoughts clinging, or we will get so much work on our plate from just thinking about it and how much we have to do, that it makes us tired already. We only have to think about and do one thing at a time—only that which we are doing this very moment. Just doing the cooking. Just doing zazen. Just doing one thing only. That is all that has to be done any time.

People who are caregivers are taking care of something, and at the beginning are wholehearted; they throw themselves totally into it. But especially for family members who might be taking care of someone, we don't know when it will end. We could even find ourselves wishing someone would hurry up and die and get it over with—and then think we are so terrible for thinking things like that. We get tired because we think of how long we may have to be doing this. It's because we project about how long it might take that that idea makes us so tired.

Sutra: Then our thoughts will be pure.

This teaching can be understood Only

through the 'habit of practice'.

We mistakenly think there is something in the heavens to be grateful or thankful for, that something wonderful will happen when in fact it is about actually using our mind correctly and as it is. This is what the Buddha Dharma is.

We read so many books and think lots of ideas about doing these things. But actually, not having any such idea is better—not having such difficult thoughts about Buddhism to complicate things, but rather to directly and straightforwardly perceive each thing in each moment, not in a secondary and removed way, or else it becomes complex and obstructed.

Sutra: This teaching can be understood

Only through the 'habit of practice'.

Samadhi functions, but inherently it does not become. The orthodox teaching is to practice Prajna as well as Samadhi.

If we think about our functioning as we function, then we get confused. Rather, to see and hear with our whole body and being. If it is only with our eyes that we see, it is incomplete. We can see with every bit of ourselves. And don't get stuck on anything at all. We first can encounter directly; we can see truthfully. Yet it is not about not thinking, just not adding on ideas and things and thinking about those, but to just see, and leave it at just seeing. Just hear, and leave it at just hearing. Just feel, and leave it at just feeling.

Being told this, we then make our consciousness hard and tense, and attempt and intend to do this. We make our eyes fuzzy and try to invent this way of being where we're not adding anything in, and that makes us more foggy in how we perceive after all. This makes our zazen even more and more removed. We have such a custom of getting stuck on things and holding on to what we want to think about—a habit of saying "What is this, what is that."

We cannot let go of our focus, or else it is

not zazen. We cannot stagnate and darken our mind. But if we can look directly, if we can look precisely then we will see what is, we will realize what is there, and we will perceive what is there. We have to pour ourselves into our zazen, and for this we have *susokkan*. Liberating our ears, liberating our eyes we can continue directly perceiving. Cutting through the flow and continuing with the *Mu*, we always are keeping the *Mu* going: Whether it's standing, that's the *Mu*, whether it's sitting, that's the *Mu*.

Zazen is very mysterious. Just putting our legs up and sitting, we become full and taut. Our body is made like this. As [the *roshi*] says often to beginners: Our eyes are just a pipe, our ears are just a pipe, our mouth is just a pipe, our nose is just a pipe, our body is just a pipe. The outside and the inside are naturally connected and always flowing between them, so we are naturally balanced. But our ideas about things and our mental processes throw this balance off. For people who are just beginning, deepening the *susokkan* breath, exhaling and not trying to make anything difficult happen, not trying to make anything happen at all. Our belly becomes flat as the exhalation is completely done—about 30 seconds for the exhalation and then naturally a 30-second inhalation—and this is just done by doing it.

Because our eyes are a pipe, our ears are a pipe, we don't have to try to understand something; it comes right to us. It comes right to where we are, and if we don't obstruct it with thoughts, it all happens naturally. With thinking comes resistance; otherwise we just sit and we naturally become full and taut; from within we become full and taut. There is nothing to try to make happen. We simply do each breath completely. If we try to get full and taut quickly then we get stuck.

That is *samadhi* and wisdom working together, because that is our original way

of being. To return to this we do zazen. We should enjoy our zazen. We may worry about the leg pain, but any experienced sitter can say that that pain can just be a part of it, and you won't die from it. Our body and breath are stuck and we have to return to its natural way and then use it in our everyday life.

If we do *sesshin* and then return to our everyday life and then let go of our alignment, we have wasted that *sesshin*. Rather take that *sesshin* and what we realize in it and then work on it creatively. As *Hakuin* has said: to work on that zazen in action. In our daily life, use it in all the noisiness, in every single encounter, in the most challenging situation, and then see how the full tautness actually works in each of those situations, see if we can sustain that full tautness—if the balloon suddenly goes flat or not. Even in the *zendo*, if we start thinking a lot it goes flat. Our full tautness disappears.

Sutra: After hearing what the Patriarch had said, *Fa Hai* was at once enlightened. He praised the Patriarch with the following stanza:

"What mind is, Buddha is' is true indeed!
But I humiliate myself by not understanding it.
Now I know the principal cause of *Prajna* and *Samadhi*,
Both of which I shall practice to set me free from all forms."

I have understood well what you have said. I thought that it was something to study. Now I see well that there is no difference between Buddha and my mind, and if I let go of the thinking, I see, hear and feel the same as the Buddha. I was carrying around such twisted preconceived notions that changed everything. I was thinking I was worthless and putting myself down or putting myself up. But now I see the capability I have had from the origin that I have ignored and twisted. I now have seen this clearly and well.

I see that what we see, hear and feel all

stick onto us, and we think we need to hold onto it all, that this is our responsibility. But now I have understood: The point is to let go of it.

This complex world, we're always saying about things how they are ugly or beautiful or good or bad or bring us profit or loss. But when we see directly, there is no division between self and other and no sense of me having a possession of something. One doesn't see a flower with eyes that try to possess it, so when we aren't looking at it we can easily let go of it. There are not so many things in this world; I have seen this one thing.

We think the world is so difficult; now I see it as simple: one thing to perceive and one thing to let go of. And not living tomorrow, but right here and right now. To not be stuck on anything whatsoever is our true responsibility. I have seen this clearly.

In this way the Sixth Patriarch is teaching how our mind actually is. To let go of our preconceived notions and see things directly—while the world changes always, to let each thing go and not hold onto it. This is what we can see now when our mind is aligned. Of course this is the way it always is and always has been, but we have to see how to use this. We each have to use this, to look well at how our body actually is and how our breathing actually is and how our awareness actually is. If we even just pick something heavy up, our body can twist; we have to realign it. And as we do many things we get busy; our mind gets in a hurry. Or we add in emotions, and then our breath can easily get busy and fast. We may even make a big mistake because of that busy breath; we can't see clearly.

Especially as to our mind, we are born from nothing at all. At times in our life we encounter great challenges and we have to deal with them. If we don't realize it we will suffocate from that. To directly

perceive and have nothing lingering—that clear, fresh feeling that comes from our zazen. We align our body and our breathing and our mind. In every situation we can use this. Zazen is not some almighty practice that by doing it means we can do anything. We still can't play the piano without starting at the beginning, or suddenly get good at some difficult sport from doing zazen. Rather, to use this and to see what we have done in our zazen and put it to use in everything that we do. For this we have sesshin.

OSESSHIN, 2004-09, DAY FOUR

Sutra: *Bhikkhu Fa Ta*, a native of Hung Chou, who joined the Order at the early age of seven, used to recite the Saddharma Pundarika (Lotus of the Good Law) Sutra. When he came to pay homage to the Patriarch, he failed to lower his head to the ground.

Finishing the story from yesterday of Hokkai, we have the story today of Hotatsu [Fa Ta]. Hoshu [Hung Chou] was a place famous for its excellent, beautiful, scenery. Hotatsu was ordained at seven years old, and at that time, reading sutras was considered very important. Today we read sutras, but zazen is considered most important because with it we realize the direct experience of this clear mind. However, practice of deeply reading and contemplating sutras was emphasized at this earlier period of history. The Zen theme is that first we have work samadhi, second, zazen samadhi, and third is sutra reading samadhi, and in this way we deepen our state of mind. But in this previous era it was the sutra reading practice that was emphasized. This monk was already familiar with the Lotus Sutra, it is written.

Hotatsu had read well the Lotus Sutra. When Eno came forth he also met a nun, Mujin-ni, who was said to have similarly realized the Lotus Sutra. Hotatsu came to meet the Sixth Patriarch, but when he did,

he did not lower his head to the ground. Lowering one's head all the way to the ground in prostration was a custom from the time of the Buddha in India, as we prostrate here at the morning sutra service and the evening sutra service after zazen. A prostration is receiving the Buddha's feet, which is his teaching. We bow in gratitude for this blessing of truth, with our elbows, knees and forehead touching the ground; in some countries the whole body touches the ground. This is not for an intellectual reason only, but that in the very doing of this prostration we become empty-minded and clear. This is not a bow to an absolute other; this is not a worshiping gesture. What we manifest in doing this prostration is empty, clear mind. If not that clear state of mind, it is not a true prostration. It is about not bowing to an other in a dualistic, divided state of mind of a self and other. We sit zazen and we are able to realize this clear mind—or else we are always divided in mind, and this is what brings us confusion. Hotatsu did a prostration but he did not lower his head. Some people cannot do that for physical reasons, but you can see that when that is the case.

Sutra: For his abbreviated courtesy the Patriarch reproved him, saying, "If you object to lower your head to the ground, would it not be better to do away with salutation entirely? There must be something in your mind that makes you so puffed up. Tell me what you do in your daily exercise."

You have not yet thrown yourself away completely; you are still full of ego, Enō said to the monk. The other day when Rōshi was in India there was a precept receiving ceremony, which is preceded by a prostration ceremony. As it is said in the previous chapters of this text when we were talking about repentance and reviewing our behavior, we have four errors we make with our mouth, three with our body, and three with our mind. We make many errors with our bodies:

being violent, murdering someone, injuring others, hurting someone's feelings or stealing. And then with our mouth: lying, speaking badly of others, being hypocritical, saying one thing to someone and something different to someone else, or flattering someone. And then there are those three of mind: of greed, anger, and always grumbling and complaining—all of these swirling around in us. We make these mistakes from being in an unclear state of mind. So if we bring our mind to clarity, that takes care of it.

For doing this we have to be able to see this unclear behavior, review it, and do repentance. One way of doing this is to repeat the Buddha's name for aligning the mind that makes this error. We do prostrations to clarify our body's errors. To repent those errors of greed, anger, ignorance and grumbling, we prostrate over and over and over and over and over. Our head then naturally touches the ground, our mind becomes empty and clear. This actuality of clarifying the mind, experiencing this clear mind directly as in zazen—we do it with our whole body also, our whole body and being. And then we pray with every single bit of our whole body. Sitting ten to twelve hours, of course that actuality of clear mind will be manifested. Our clogged-up ego crud and attachments are loosened and our mind is washed cleaner.

But Hotatsu's head didn't touch the ground. The Sixth Patriarch told him that's because your ego is smack in your way. You are still so full of yourself. You won't be able to hear the truth with a mind like that.

Sutra: Tell me what you do in your daily exercise.

The Sixth Patriarch then changed the direction of his words. He asked the monk what practice he was doing—an interesting way of questioning him. In this world we have its actuality of things which we perceive, and we have

our senses with which we perceive this actuality. We see a mountain, "It's a mountain." We see a flower, "Oh, it's a red flower." We hear a sound, "Oh, it's a bird singing." And if we see this flower we then want to pick this flower, to break off a branch and put it in our room and act on our awareness of "this is a flower." We have an action coming from an awareness and a way of combining these elements of perception. From 2500 years ago, Buddhism has had a huge body of psychological teachings, seeing all of this objectively and thoroughly. We do zazen and this perception and functioning is realized. What we see and our seeing of it are matched perfectly. And as we sit we see that what we are doing and what is being done are one and the same in our awareness. We become one complete whole, with no sense of even doing something. In this way we realize this state of mind described in the Heart Sutra. And in this way the Sixth Patriarch asks him, "Tell me, what do you do in your daily exercise?"

Sutra: Recite the Saddharma Pundarika Sutra," replied Fa Ta. "I have read the whole text three thousand times." "Had you grasped the meaning of the Sutra," remarked the Patriarch, "you would not have assumed such a lofty bearing, even if you had read it ten thousand times. Had you grasped it, you would be treading the same Path as mine. What you have accomplished has already made you conceited, and moreover, you do not seem to realize that this is wrong.

Hotatsu answered that as his practice he'd recite the Lotus Sutra. The Sixth Patriarch had seen it clearly; he called it as it was. The Lotus Sutra is considered the king of all sutras. It is a huge sutra and takes a long time to read, so to read it 3000 times is an endeavor that would take ten years straight. But nothing escapes the eyes of the Sixth Patriarch, not because of being suspicious of things but because of being empty and clear. In the same way, one can hear someone's sanzen bell ringing and

know their state of mind.

Sutra: "Had you grasped the meaning of the Sutra," remarked the Patriarch, "you would not have assumed such a lofty bearing, even if you had read it ten thousand times."

You said you read it 3000 times, which would take ten solid years. But even if you read it 10,000 times, do you think that's enough, that you've done it enough times that you've learned enough from it? That is ego. In the same way as sitting in zazen and thinking of it as meaningless, or holding onto thoughts—this is also ego. You are carrying around how much you have done, but not even noticing that you are doing that.

One inch of sitting is one inch of Buddha, one inch after another, piling it up. If we sit for one period of zazen we let go of our extraneous thinking, although in fact we often have more intruding of thoughts when we do zazen, more thoughts trying to come along. But we can become more full and taut by doing that zazen. And by doing this we can bring forth more time of not holding on to those thoughts. We become truly clear and open. We experience this directly, and there we can know true zazen. If we sit and only experience melancholy, then that is just ego.

In Buddhism there is reading sutras, but that is just a form of letting go of the ego attachment. In society we don't let go of our ego even if we do good things for other people sometimes. You can see this, you can detect it easily. We do good things for others but the things we do leave ego traces. We have to let go of our small self and ego. People say, How can we do good things if we don't have an ego? That is because they have not seen clearly that what is suffering is one's self. We want to appear to do something good for someone else, and that can be a big burden for other people. Someone who may be weak and vulnerable may need help, but if it is given egoistically, a big pressure is felt. We have

to correct this.

Hotatsu read that sutra 3000 times but his ego did not decrease at all. If you can forget yourself completely and read the sutra with an empty mind, how clear and refreshed you feel all the time!

Sutra: The Patriarch then asked for his name, and upon being told that his name was Fa Ta (meaning Understanding the Law), he remarked, “Your name is Fa Ta, but you have not yet understood the Law.” He concluded by uttering another stanza: Your name is Fa Ta. Diligently and steadily you recite the Sutra. Lip repetition of the text goes by the pronunciation only,”

The Sixth Patriarch again changed the subject and he asked his name. The young monk replied that it was Hotatsu. “That’s a fine name, but you haven’t realized the Law at all.”

Sutra: Your name is Fa Ta. Diligently and steadily you recite the Sutra. Lip repetition of the text goes by the pronunciation only...”

You’ve read it. You’ve read the sutras, but only with your lips. That is like a frog licking the grasses, or a cicado on a tree going ‘Nee-nee-gee-gee.’ That is not truly reading the sutra.

Sutra: But he whose mind is enlightened by grasping the meaning is a Bodhisattva indeed!

The Sixth Patriarch is reprimanding Hotatsu, not with ego but with a very parental mind. It is as Dogen, who has given us the teaching, “To study the Way is to study the self; to study the self is to forget the self; to forget the self is to be enlightened by all things; to be enlightened by all things is to remove the barrier between self and other.” To forget oneself, to let go of oneself—this seems so difficult, like committing suicide. But that is because we see the world from our tiny body’s perspective, as one 6.3 billionth of a whole picture. Instead, we should see with our body that is 6.3 billion times as big as that: the great mind we have of knowing

the pain of all people—not trying to sell out this single, limited body with its ego, or else we just increase our ego on and on. To forget ourselves we have to make efforts; we have to do zazen. We throw everything we have and are into working in society for all beings and then we let go of that, just as we exhale completely and cut away any lingering dregs. And then we exhale again, and again cut away any lingering dregs. And as we become able to do this, our egoistic thoughts are spontaneously let go of. “To study the Way is to study the self; to study the self is to forget the self; to forget the self is to be enlightened by all things.”

But it cannot be intoxicated zazen. It has to be zazen based on that whole being of all society in every single breath, or else it all only becomes conceptual. And then we suddenly see it. We feel so much gratitude! We’re deeply thankful: Everyone is sitting for me! Everyone is making all those meals for me, and everyone is helping me let go of what I keep holding onto! “To be enlightened by all things is to remove the barrier between self and other.” And as we sit we further realize the person we disliked so much—that is me! We feel that, and we know directly how it is all connected in this way.

Sutra: Your name is Fa Ta, but you have not yet understood the Law.” He concluded by uttering another stanza:

On account of conditions which
may be traced to our past lives
I will explain this to you.
If you only believe that Buddha
speaks no words,
Then the Lotus will blossom
in your mouth.

The Sixth Patriarch says to him, “You have to see this; this is your own responsibility. Since you have this karmic affiliation I will then teach you.”

The Buddha taught this Lotus Sutra for seven years but the truth he couldn’t teach with words. And because everyone

was only getting it mentally, he took the flower sent down from the heavens by the heavenly god Bonten, and he held it out silently. When he held the flower out, everyone was silent and confused and didn't know what was going on. Only Kasho Sonja smiled; he could realize just what the Buddha was expressing, where there is nothing to say. But since we are living things that want to understand, and that is our culture and our usual way, we have to be careful that we are not slaves of words and concepts. To clarify and purify our mind we have to not just do it mentally, or if someone else puts us down and we get upset we realize we were not so clear and pure after all. But if we can see how the complaining person should be seen as someone who has not yet understood, then to not get back at them and get angry and with critical thoughts. We can't join them on their own level.

Sutra: If you only believe that
Buddha speaks no words,

Then the Lotus will blossom in your mouth.
“Tell me, what is hurting you? What are you upset about? I want to help you out.” Because we are empty in mind we can hear: The person is sad, miserable from circumstances and situations. This does not mean that we ourselves should not also experience pain and sadness either, but these then become still again. A parent loses a child, or if a dear one dies—that is terribly painful. But it is not a splendid thing to stay sad for our whole life because of that. To be sad completely, in accordance with the situation.

Sutra: If you only believe that
Buddha speaks no words,

Then the Lotus will blossom
in your mouth.

Hearing this, Hotatsu apologized and said that he was so sorry, and that because of his ego he could not have learned the truth in the Lotus Sutra even though he read it.

In the Lotus Sutra it also teaches of

Jōfukyo Bodhisattva. Jōfukyo Bodhisattva would go through the town and to every single person that he encountered, he would prostrate and say, “I have the deepest respect for you. You are one who without fail will become a buddha.” And he would prostrate to each person. Prostrating was his practice. He would prostrate to everyone who came by, and some would hate that he was doing that and spit on him or beat him with a stick, yet he would continue prostrating and saying, “I have the greatest, deepest respect for you. You are one who will become a buddha.” This is said to be Buddha's past life, but in fact, it was a prophesy for how we have to become in the future.

We humans who can't believe in each other any longer are living hell. “Why should I respect him if he doesn't respect me?!” The Buddha says a world cannot be saved if people do not believe in each other. And this world has to see this clearly, and we have to first make ourselves lower. “That person is prostrating to ME; I have to become the person who is respected in that way.” Of course it is easier to drop a bomb—simpler, maybe. Harder to do it the right way. Jōfukyo Bodhisattva is teaching the religion of the future, and how we have to become. We see this and it is clear.

Hotatsu read the Lotus Sutra 3000 times and didn't see this; he didn't get it. It came late, but now he's understood.

Sutra: Having heard this stanza, Fa Ta became remorseful and apologized to the Patriarch. He added, “Hereafter, I will be humble and polite on all occasions.

As I do not quite understand the meaning of the Sutra I recite, I am doubtful as to its proper interpretation. With your profound knowledge and high wisdom, will you kindly give me a short explanation?” The Patriarch replied, “Fa Ta, the Law is quite clear; it is only your mind that is not clear.

“The Sutra is free from doubtful passages;

it is only your mind that makes them doubtful. In reciting the Sutra, do you know its principal object?"

Hotatsu finally admits that he doesn't understand what the Lotus Sutra means at all. "I can tell your wisdom is huge and deep," he says to the Patriarch, "not a wisdom from mental interpretation. Please teach me from this wisdom." This time Hotatsu asks seriously. The Sixth Patriarch answers, "It is your mind that is not clear, not the sutra that is not clear. You say that you realize this, but what is its essential point?" is what he is asking. And Hotatsu says that he really hasn't been able to understand that yet. "You've been reciting it for ten years and you still don't know its central point? I cannot read the words," said the Sixth Patriarch, "but I can tell you the meaning. And as he had said to Mujin-ni, though he could not read the Nirvana Sutra's words, which was first anyway: the awakening, or the sutra? The sutra is the culture; the awakening experience is the same in every era and in all ten directions—the same today as for the Buddha. To realize that mind is what is important. Everyone is too deceived by words and phrases when we put those first and don't deepen our state of mind directly. It is not that we shouldn't read, but that we shouldn't be deceived by what we read. We have all read books, but we have to know this place directly. We do this one week of *ōsesshin*. We have to come here and hear the resonation of all 6.3 billion people. To gather it all into this one mind is what this *sesshin* is for. So many religions and cultures and languages, but what is it that unites all of them? If we add on mental understanding, we always get into division and individual views. But prior to that mental understanding we can feel it directly. To once actually experience the place where there is no discrimination, no differences at all, with our simple, open mind, and then we can know clearly these Four Great Wisdoms: the Great,

Perfect Mirror Wisdom, with which all of the 6.3 billion people are endowed. Like that huge, great sky before there was ever any judgment: This is the Great, Perfect Mirror Wisdom. And then from there comes the Universal Nature Wisdom: We see beyond any differences—the eyes that see all as one and equal, the direct perception that comes prior to seeing any differences, where there's no difference between good health and bad health, rich or poor—to see this one equal mind before any awareness comes forth at all, where everyone exists equally. Which then brings us to the Mysterious, Observing Wisdom: Next we put a spotlight on each and every one. How is **this** person suffering? In what way? What flower is this? What grass is that? What bird is this? With each one in its own way we can mysteriously observe all of its differences. And finally, the Perfecting of Action Wisdom: Knowing these differences, perceiving them, we then, to whatever comes to us, respond immediately. We know exactly how to respond to whatever comes with our eyes, our body and our hands—all of these functionings. The Perfecting of Action Wisdom. And we can function with a high quality. We know these four Wisdoms: the Great, Perfect Mirror Wisdom, the Universal Nature Wisdom, the Mysterious Observing Wisdom, the Perfecting of Action Wisdom. We polish these four Wisdoms with *zazen*. It's not about becoming dark, but about becoming more and more full of light, and to know these Four Wisdoms limitlessly we have *zazen*.

OSESSHIN, 2004-09, DAY FIVE

The monk Hotatsu didn't do full prostrations to the Sixth Patriarch, and the Sixth Patriarch reprimanded him that he was not thorough enough and that he did not touch his head all the way to the floor. Hotatsu had been so conceited about having read the Lotus Sutra 3000 times that it could be seen even in his behavior

how high on himself he was. The Sixth Patriarch said that if he had really read it he would not be able to be conceited and proud of himself. As we sit zazen we free ourselves from extraneous thinking. We realize our living mind. It is not that we are proud of how much effort we've made and how long we've been doing zazen; that will make us murky, not clear. Our mind will be murky from sitting then, and not clarified.

Hotatsu realized the truth in what the Sixth Patriarch had said to him. And he said that while he'd read the Lotus Sutra for ten years it was only form that he had read, not the essence. He asked the Sixth Patriarch to teach him the true essence of the sutra. With this, the Sixth Patriarch said, "I have had no education, and can't read the sutra's words, but I know the essence. The Buddha's teaching is to honestly and truly awaken to this truth. Just reading some words does not mean we clarify our mind and realize the truth in actuality."

Sutra: Fa Ta recited the Sutra, but when he came to the chapter entitled 'Parables' the Patriarch stopped him, saying, "The keynote of this Sutra is to set forth the aim and object of a Buddha's incarnation in this world."

Then Hotatsu began to read the Lotus Sutra in a loud voice. He began with the central section which is titled, "Parables." We know the Parable of the Prodigal Son who left from the wealthy father's home and became a beggar, but one day he returns, begging right in front of his father's house. Ever since he had left, his father has suffered every single day, waiting for some day for his son to return. And on this day he recognized this beggar as his very own son. But the beggar was shocked. Unfamiliar with his father's house by then, when he was approached he asked to be let go, that he hadn't done anything wrong. He knew nothing of this house, nothing of this master. So then

servants instead let him in by the back door, inviting him in for a little food, and telling him they could give him a good job dumping toilets for his food and board. He did not know it was the same house because it was around the back. But he went in, did outside jobs for a long time, then later, he was invited inside the house to do inside jobs. Three or five years passed, and finally he could do all the work of the house. The father was ageing and nearing death, and he wanted to tell the son and everyone else around that this was his actual son. He told them how the son had forgotten his home, but there was a birthmark which he could prove to them the son had, and they could know that it was one and the same. And that from then on the son would take over, and after the father's death he would be in charge.

We are all this lost son, the beggar. We've forgotten our deepest inner riches and always look around outside for external satisfaction. Our habit is to do this, and we lose track of what is within. But when the Buddha says we are all children of the Buddha, we all realize this true nature, are endowed with it.

When they had read a few of the parables, they came to a particular one, and the Sixth Patriarch told Hotatsu wait! I realize the deepest meaning is right here. This is about the Buddhas coming into this world and why they come. But people are always misunderstanding this. When you are ignorant you are a sentient being, and when we awaken, 6.3 billion humans are all one Buddha. The Buddha came into this world 'to open the eyes to the sight of enlightenment knowledge, to show the sight of enlightenment knowledge, to be firmly established in the enlightenment knowledge.' And then we can realize the truth and know what wisdom is—and with that wisdom we manifest it in our everyday life. This is the truth of the Buddha."

Sutra: Though parables and illustrations are

numerous in this book, none of them goes beyond this pivotal point. Now, what is that object? What is that aim? The Sutra says, 'It is for a sole object, a sole aim, verily a lofty object and a lofty aim that the Buddha appears in this world.' Now that sole object, that sole aim, that lofty object, that lofty aim referred to is the 'sight' of Buddha-Knowledge.

This wisdom is not coincidental. It was not for the Buddha's own self-satisfaction that each and every one realize that wisdom with which we are all endowed, that wisdom which is equal in all people. This is not only about humans, but about all beings and creatures, even the rocks, and the flowers. Without wisdom, flowers couldn't bloom. All existence has wisdom, but only humans can awaken to that wisdom. Pigs and dogs and horses have wisdom but cannot realize it. But humans can awaken to it, and this gives us a huge responsibility—this is not a wisdom to use this world however we feel like it. This wisdom is taught, and the mind is awakened to; people can then live from this wisdom. It is in this Lotus Sutra which is taught in this way, but this is all parables and metaphors, so how can we actualize it?

Sutra: The word 'Buddha' is equivalent to 'Enlightenment', which may be dealt with (as in the Sutra) under four heads:

- To open the eyes for the sight of Enlightenment-knowledge.
- To show the sight of Enlightenment-knowledge.
- To awake to the sight of Enlightenment knowledge.
- To be firmly established in the Enlightenment-knowledge."

This is the central message.

Hakuin Zenji misunderstood this Lotus Sutra for many years—Hakuin Zenji, who is said to be one person in 500 years. Today's Zen could even be called Hakuin Zen because all of the lines have faded away but Hakuin's. Even so, he almost misunderstood this sutra. According

to Master Torei, who wrote Hakuin's biography, Hakuin was awakened at age seventeen, and then from that time on, with Dokyo Etan Zenji he deepened his Dharma awakening. Later, with the inner viewer Naikan way, he thoroughly realized his inner process. At age sixteen Hakuin read the Lotus Sutra just up to the parables section and was disenchanted and said that if this was the King of Sutras—of all sutras, this was its nickname—it was a big mistake. And he never picked it up again until one day when he was already 42 years old. Torei writes of Hakuin that at age 42 he had almost completed his training.

One day when he was in his own home and picked up the Lotus Sutra—on this day this sutra which was taught by the Buddha at his most mature time—he once again opened it up. It was on a late Autumn evening. In the remaining sunlight of the day, on the porch on this fall evening it was chilly. A cricket was singing from under the porch in a delicate voice. Hakuin was reading the Lotus Sutra and he finally got it. He understood.

At age sixteen he could not have understood yet. It is said that he cried out in a loud voice at this time of reading it again, at the huge vow of the Buddha to liberate all beings. He awakened to this and was deeply moved by the Buddha's magnanimous mind of this huge vow. And from then on it was said that Hakuin lived in a way of expressing this which he realized from this sutra reading. He had opened his sutra reading eye. He was not casually addressing others, but with the deepest wisdom he encountered each and every person until he died at the age of 84 on the 10th of December. From the age of 42 to the age of 84 he used this constantly. This is how it was described by Torei.

What is the most important thing we have all been born to do? To realize this true wisdom. And that is not something we have to receive from doing training; we

all already have it. But we think and talk about how this person is good, that one is bad. We don't awaken to this wisdom because we only try to satisfy our small selves. We have to see that all beings have this Great Wisdom, and to realize this is our one greatest reason for being born—not to indulge in egoistic perceptions and opinions but to realize this true wisdom.

Sutra: “Common people attach themselves to objects without; and within, they fall into the wrong idea of ‘vacuity’. But everyone is confused by what they perceive as outside. There is no such dualism in truth as ugly and beautiful, beloved or hated. That is only a matter of form, but we all get caught on that. While saying there is nothing at all and that is Buddha, we then get confused by some idea about “nothing at all”—externally confused by things of form, internally confused by ideas of nothingness. But none of these are to do with true wisdom.

Sutra: When they are able to free themselves from attachment to objects when in contact with objects, and to free themselves from the fallacious view of annihilation on the doctrine of ‘Void’ they will be free from delusions within and from illusions without.

What is it that is Buddha? That is wisdom. It is written clearly here. As Hakuin Zenji has said, “Realizing the form of no form as form, whether going or returning we cannot be any place else. Realizing the thought of no-thought, whether singing or dancing we are the voice of the Dharma.” Or as was said in the previous sutra, to not be caught on various forms. We each have many forms but these are all only phenomena, and none of these are the actual truth. These phenomena are the source of our confusion. We see the cherry tree. We imagine it will bloom in the Spring. Then we see it in bloom, the pink buds darken; they become the beautiful flowers. And then the flowers fall and the new green leaves come brightly. But these are all cherry tree. The leaves change colors; they fall off and the chill winds

blow them away. The trunk and branches are left; these are also still a cherry tree. But the preparation for the next season has already begun, bringing the moisture up through the trunk from the roots. And because it is always flowing, again the Spring breeze blows and the flowers bloom. People take the flowers only and call that a cherry tree, but the whole year is necessary, along with the moistening of the earth. And this whole cycle, this whole picture, is Buddha nature.

We can't say it's all Buddha nature except for that one person we really don't like at all. All of it together is Buddha nature. And this is Buddha's wisdom.

We all try to put the conclusion first, which is incorrect. It all has to be with this whole picture seen clearly and as one. Then we can see our life energy—to see all of these strata without any “I” or ego. The whole year is the cherry tree; we have to see this whole picture. We have eyes and ears; we can see all things and hear them and feel them and think about them, and this is something to be hugely, gratefully thankful for. There is no need to put ourselves down. Still, we cannot be confused by these perceptions, by what we see, hear, and feel. It is in accordance with all of these that we exist, yet we cannot be confused about these perceptions. Rather, to see from this wisdom—to see and hear and feel, and then let all of that go.

Sutra: When they are able to free themselves from attachment to objects when in contact with objects, and to free themselves from the fallacious view of annihilation on the doctrine of ‘Void’ they will be free from delusions within and from illusions without.

In the Buddha Dharma there is no certain teaching that says it has to be like this and it has to be like that, in the 5048 sutras, all of their millions of words. This is not because there are so many different teachings—there is only one truth—but to teach that one truth to so many different

people. As it is said, a sutra is likened to a finger which points at the moon so we can see where the moon is. But once we see that moon there is no reason to keep that finger and put it up on the wall and decorate with it. There is another example—how in order to cross to the other side of a roaring stream we need a wooden raft. Thanks to that raft, and only because we have it are we able to cross over, does not mean we will carry the raft with us year after year for the rest of our whole life.

So what is most important then? It is to awaken to the True nature. And for that all of the Buddhas have come into this world.

Our mind is not something that can be said to be like this or that. As it was written earlier, “mind, as it is”—our perceptions directly perceiving all sights and sounds and without any preconceived notion at all. “Buddha” is to have nothing remaining when we perceive. Every phenomenon is perceived and then let go of completely. We touch this truth directly and then see how simple it is—and wonder how we could have missed this. Then we come to realize that our mind is always flowing. Over a boulder, over a tree root, but the river just keeps continuing to flow. If it keeps flowing it stays fresh and clear. If it stops and goes into a pool, it can become stagnant—the water rots. It is the same with our state of mind: If we get caught and stuck on thinking one thing over and over again we get stagnant and our state of mind rots. We think people are suffering, but in fact at the origin there is nothing wrong with anybody. We have thoughts and our mind stagnates; we become troubled from that; that is the real problem. This is what puts us into some kind of a difficult state of mind. We are always thinking. We do need to think for some things, but we have to let go of this extraneous thinking because we so often get caught on all of these thoughts. In fact we don’t need so much thinking

at all. That we think so much is what our problem is, and what we have to see clearly and let go of.

Sutra: He who understands this and whose mind is thus enlightened in an instant is said to have opened his eyes for the sight of Buddha knowledge.

When we see, we think we see the world with our eyes, but actually it is not our physical eyes but our whole body which is seeing. And actually it is the world seeing the world. Hearing, seeing, understanding, knowing: Each of these is not separate. We think we see but it is just superficial. We think we hear but it is just superficial. Our awareness is even more complex. Crowded with preconceived notions, we confuse ourselves. We have to clear away all of that. In that fresh clarity of no preconceived notions and not being caught on any thoughts whatsoever, this is said to have opened the eyes to the sight of Buddha knowledge.

Sutra: The word ‘Buddha’ is equivalent to ‘Enlightenment’, which may be dealt with (as in the Sutra) under four heads:

So where, then, is the Buddha? In Buddhism there are no graven images. We have Buddha statues to help remind people not yet awakened. We have to know the way of things clearly or we will invent things as we like them to be and call that the Dharma Law. There is the Law of the Dharma, and like there is a law in every country, there’s only a need for any of these laws because people cannot live correctly without them. It is the same with Buddha statues. Buddha’s name means “the Awakened One,” and if we awaken, then our enlightenment is the Buddha’s Wisdom. Our mind is what has to awaken.

First we awaken our eye of wisdom, and then we see things as they really are. Next, we live within this natural wisdom. This is most difficult because people always think that the way they see things is this natural wisdom and they want to live in that way. This has to be clarified for all people to be

coming from the same essence.

This is how it has to be worked with. And in this way the Sixth Patriarch explains it.

OSESSHIN, 2004-09, DAY SIX

As said yesterday, the Sixth Patriarch told Hotatsu that he had read that Lotus Sutra 3000 times but without understanding its true essence at all. He said he would teach its essence if Hotatsu would just read aloud, because the Sixth Patriarch couldn't read. Hotatsu comes to the section on Parables and suddenly the Sixth Patriarch stops him and says to him that right here is what this sutra is all about.

There are these four gates:

Sutra: To open the eyes for the sight of Enlightenment-knowledge.

To show the sight of
Enlightenment-knowledge.

To awake to the sight of
Enlightenment knowledge.

To be firmly established in the
Enlightenment-knowledge.

When the Buddha awakened at seeing the morning star, he said without even thinking about it, how wondrous! How wondrous! All beings without exception are endowed from the origin with the same bright, clear mind to which I have just awakened! I've just awakened to that mind, and that took six years. But that's not how I got that mind. It was always there, unawakened to, tossed and turned by phenomena, and I was blind to it. This which we are all born with.

In Buddhism we clarify that Buddha wisdom we are born with. But since we are all so busy being thankful for what we see, hear, feel, taste, and smell, we are devoted to our phenomenal perceptions and leave aside our true nature. This true nature is the mind to which the Buddha awakened. The word "Buddha" actually means, "one who awakens." We all have that same exact wisdom, and there are four steps

given here to the awakening to it.

First we have to awaken the deeply seeing eye that sees prior to and beyond dualism: To open the eyes for the sight of Enlightenment knowledge.

If we open that mind we know that we have seeing prior to any dualism. As Dogen has put it, to study the Way is to study the self; to study the self is to forget the self; to forget the self is to be enlightened by all things; to be enlightened by all things is to remove the barrier between self and other. To forget the self is not to become a fool—someone who takes no responsibility. It's to let go of the dualistic seeing that sees oneself and the flower, for example, as separate. Hearing the insect's sound, one and the same I become the insect.

Or as Daito Kokushi has put it, the rain-drops falling from the eaves—not hearing it with the ears but with the whole universe; then there is no doubt: Drip, drop, drip, drop. The truth that is one with the heavens and earth! As Dogen has said, to be enlightened by all things is to remove the barrier between self and other. No separation between the raindrops and I, the morning star and I. No more division, no more ideas about humanism. We see someone suffering, and we cannot help but give them help because we feel their suffering as if it's our own. It's natural. We see everyone as ourselves.

"The billows form: the blessed form of the body of Kannon-sama." "The blowing of a sound is the teaching of the Buddha." Every day, living in this connected state of mind!

Sutra: To open the eyes for the sight of Enlightenment knowledge. To show the sight of Enlightenment knowledge. To awake to the sight of Enlightenment knowledge. To be firmly established in the Enlightenment knowledge.

If we are able to open this mind, we see this truth is everywhere, rolling all around

us. But because we are clouded over we cannot see this. To let go of this dualistic thinking and not increase our egoistic attachments but to live in that awareness that does not dualistically divide things. In chapter five of this Platform Sutra, it says, “Zazen is to be without obstruction anywhere, to arouse no thought of good or bad in any outer situation. And then to realize inwardly the immutability of Original Nature.” [See calligraphy, p. 174. Also, volume 2 p. 68] This is not to close down our senses, but to perceive without any preconceived notions added on.

This is very difficult. But if we do zazen we return to our original mind which is without any dualism. Then everything we perceive touches us very deeply. As Bankei Zenji has said, the only thing our parents gave us was this innocent, clear, Unborn Mind. You all came here to hear my talk, said Bankei Zenji. You listen with the usual discriminating mind, but that does not mean that your true nature is not operating simultaneously, always. For example, although you came here to hear my Dharma talk, if a dog barks outside, you hear it whether you expected to or planned to hear a dog barking or not. That is your Unborn Mind perceiving. That is your true nature. If we hear “bow-wow” and think, that’s a dog, that is dualistic. Just hearing “bow-wow” is direct perception. Adding on a thought of it’s a dog is dualistic perception. Our dualistic perception is confused often with what is considered enlightened knowledge. We can see that our enlightened knowledge is not outside of us.

Hotatsu was reading the Lotus Sutra dualistically, not with a wholehearted, clarified mind. If we read it like that it will not be heard nor will it be understood clearly. “You should not misinterpret the text and come to the conclusion that Buddha knowledge is something special to Buddha and not common to us all because you happen to find in a sutra this passage:

“To open the eyes for the sight of Enlightenment knowledge. To show the sight of Enlightenment knowledge,” and so on. We cannot think that if we read a sutra we will have some supernatural powers suddenly; that is again dualistic. People think that because it’s Buddha wisdom we cannot possibly understand it.

Sutra: Such a misinterpretation would amount to slandering Buddha and blaspheming the Sutra.

The Buddha, all the patriarchs, came into this world just in order to awaken all beings. But if you yourself refuse it and put yourself down, saying, that’s not possible for me, how foolish! There is nothing to the Buddha’s teaching and his arriving in this world other than awakening all beings. Each and every person has the capability to awaken, already has the awakened mind within, and this is what we have been born for: to awaken to this. To say we can, and see this clearly, he’s telling us, and to receive it. Then it is as if we see that we are already endowed with this awakened mind and then we ask, “Why do we have to again awaken to it?”

Sutra: Such a misinterpretation would amount to slandering Buddha and blaspheming the Sutra. Since he is a Buddha, he is already in possession of this Enlightenment-knowledge and there is no occasion for himself to open his eyes for it. You should therefore accept the interpretation that Buddha knowledge is the Buddha knowledge of your own mind and not that of any other Buddha.

Being infatuated by sense-objects, and thereby shutting themselves from their own light, all sentient beings, tormented by outer circumstances and inner vexations, act voluntarily as slaves to their own desires.

Someone who drinks enough sake to take a shower in it and then is told that he will get liver cancer and says, no, I’m not going to get liver cancer is in a similar situation. People today, so influenced by toxins and environmental burden can

get liver and kidney cancer without even drinking enough sake to take a shower in. But the Sixth Patriarch is saying, see the truth sublime in the Lotus Sutra that is not affected by anything dualistic. For example, to do this we read the Lotus Sutra, and then we awaken with that Lotus Sutra. We go to bed with the Lotus Sutra, we stand with the Lotus Sutra, we sit with it, we work with it. Everything we do from morning till night we do in the deep absorption of that Lotus Sutra because the Lotus Sutra becomes the samadhi. Just as Ekai Roshi has said in the Mumonkan how we become one with every single one of our 360 smallest joints, each one of the 84,000 hair pores, to become one and the same with that continuing absorption in the Lotus Sutra or the Mu. Everything you see, hear and feel becomes one with that. Becoming each and every thing completely, that Mu is everything we encounter.

We borrow this vessel of a sesshin and return to that very one truth of the heavens and earth. Doing this is the most direct way to experience what the Sixth Patriarch is saying here and to extinguish all of the emotions and limited attachments we hold onto. People will immediately respond and say, “Shall we stop feeling anything then? Throw away all our emotions?” It is not about that, but to have no egoistic slant in our emotions—liking and disliking. To know this place where there is no more sense of an inside or an outside whatever, and because our mind can see this clearly, we can know how this is.

We are not doing zazen in order to become something special, but to see without any dualism. If we do zazen and let go of this dualism, then we will naturally see from our awakened mind. We all have this Enlightenment knowledge; there is nothing but that. We are originally free from dualism and attachment, and if we put away that dualism we can see clearly.

We have eyes of mentally understanding things, and we also have the eyes of clearly awakened wisdom. To see beyond our mental understanding, with what do we grasp that capability? To hear the “bow-wow” not just with the ability of our ears, but prior to that—that which uses the eyes to see the scenery, that which uses the nose to smell the fragrances, that which works through the mouth to know the taste, that which works through the awareness to know various things. The base of all of this is only one. Which is first: Buddha nature or the perception? Buddha nature is prior to the perception.

But we put ourselves down; we say we are worthless, or that there are so many more interesting things in the external world. We put that first and put aside the clarification of our true nature.

Sutra: Being infatuated by sense-objects, and thereby shutting themselves from their own light, all sentient beings, tormented by outer circumstances and inner vexations, act voluntarily as slaves to their own desires. Seeing this, our Lord Buddha had to rise from his Samadhi in order to exhort them with earnest preaching of various kinds to suppress their desires and to refrain from seeking happiness from without, so that they might become the equals of Buddha.

But everyone puts aside that clear awareness and runs around busily in the external world. No matter what great book or excellent movie or marvelous scenery, we still don’t understand. We just know superficially what it was that we saw, we know superficially what it was that we read; we see the external and never look within at that place which is doing the seeing and the reading. This is the place where we have to be able to see clearly that no matter what hideous thing we encounter, it is still only one moment’s seeing or hearing. No matter what beautiful thing we encounter, that is also only one moment’s scenery. No matter what horrifying thing happens to us, as

Rinzai puts it: “In fire, without burning, in water, without drowning.” People read this and think there is something special or supernatural or magical to understand or to happen to us or to realize, but since we are empty from the origin there is nothing to burn up, nothing to drown. However, because we identify mistakenly with the phenomena of this physical body, we get confused. We get excited at everything that happens to us externally, and absorbed in that. And then we forget this all-embracing, huge, magnanimous mind that we are, and instead are used as slaves by that small self.

Sutra: Seeing this, our Lord Buddha had to rise from his Samadhi in order to exhort them with earnest preaching of various kinds to suppress their desires and to refrain from seeking happiness from without, so that they might become the equals of Buddha.

The Buddha, hearing this, had to say, stop scurrying around in that small minded mind set! We are always blaming someone else for what goes wrong for us, or asking God to save us somehow. And we look at all the bad things in the world and then we are sure there will never be a solution. Instead of making that self-conscious awareness our master we have to awaken to that clear mind that has always been within. We have to see, to open the eyes to the sight of Enlightenment knowledge. Why don't we see that we are doing this all ourselves with our own dualistic perceptions? This clear mind is not something that will come to us from elsewhere; it is already within each of us, but we have to clarify it with our own open eyes. That is our own responsibility. As Hakuin Zenji says, just become one straight line in doing this and only this. He is not talking about using force and shoving, but that we should not give any attention to anything that is dualistic—letting go of a dualistic point of view by doing our zazen in one straight line until we realize the place prior to any dualism. This is not in the

sutras but it is in the patriarchs' records of how they did it. And as the Sixth Patriarch said, only stand and have kensho, not a separated samadhi practice.

We have to let go of the mistaken things; those we will know for ourselves. And then we can experience it directly. To throw away what has to be thrown away just has to be done. We can't say, “I'm sorry, I can't understand because I don't understand”; we have to make the efforts to do it or it won't work. Whether sitting or standing or walking, to be always clarifying it. Whether it's the Mu or the susokkan or the koan, as soon as the dualistic thoughts come in we give no attention to them at all. To do it not with our heads but with our whole body, our entire being, until inside and outside become one and the same. We can see how all of our dualistic conditioning and habitualization then falls away, and finally it is our Original Mind only that is all that's left.

But people are afraid to lose their ego. They're afraid of what will happen if their ego isn't there. They say, “Who will take responsibility for things then?” Society is our whole body and our very own being, so naturally we'll take responsibility for it. We have been given this precious opportunity to sit for five to six days already; our dualistic habituations have at least been diluted and we can walk and move with less self-conscious awareness. We see that it was not all relative and dualistic after all. We suddenly can see clearly. Our body which has been experiencing this will, like a stamp which imprints perfectly, be affected by all of this, and that experience will be deeply engraved in our mind and we have that deep awakening. Zen is honest. Everyone can have this experience. The flavor may be different for each person but the central experience is always one and the same, and there is nothing more joyful and more wonderful in the world than this.

In our mind, that wisdom which is engraved and imprinted has no name. But if we get confused and uncomfortable we want to find it. We have to find it. We seek for it, and then it becomes clear how those meandering, unnecessary thoughts are gone. Like drinking water ourselves to find out how water tastes, from our own experience of truth we experience this great joy. And we can see then that there never was any obstruction. People are so busy grumbling and complaining and not noticing that we want to tell everyone, anyone, how it is true, so true that we all have it! It's not about learning it from someone or getting it from someplace else, but to awaken to it. This greatest of all joys—if all people awake to it, then each and everyone can know this great joy. That is the Buddha Dharma.

Sutra: I advise people constantly to open their eyes for the Buddha knowledge within their mind. But in their perversity they commit sins under delusion and ignorance; they are kind in words, but wicked in mind; should they rectify their heart, so that wisdom arises perpetually, the mind would be under introspection, and evil doing replaced by the practice of good; then they would initiate themselves into the Buddha knowledge.

In this world there are many moralistic teachings of “Don’t do bad things, do do good things” but if we don’t realize the truly awakened mind, we will stay caught on the moralistic teachings of these good and bad things and good and bad people. This keeps us deluded. There is nothing more vague and unawakened as calling others “good” or “bad.” To do good things and not even think about doing them and to not do bad things—we naturally will behave this way from our awakened state of mind. It doesn’t happen in a partial, fragmented way.

Someone said there are two people inside each of us, one who sees things in an idealistic way, and one who sees ourselves realistically. But if we ask which is our true

nature we can’t know unless we let go of our physically limited small self and see that true self. Because we can’t see that, we mistakenly think that what is perceiving that from a small self point of view is who we are. We have to remember to open the eyes to the sight of Enlightenment knowledge and to know then that that all-embracing wisdom is who we really are. We still, then, see, hear, feel, taste, and know, and good things are still good and bad things are still bad, but not as seen from a small self, personal point of view of good and bad, but rather, seeing what is good and bad from a larger point of view. What is good is still good, what is bad is still bad, but if we add our own personal positions and say from that, “This is good and that is bad,” that is narrow and limited. If we see from that small point of view, then that is opening the eyes of common people knowledge only. To see the whole, to see the entire picture is to open the eyes to the sight of Enlightenment knowledge.

OSESSHIN, 2004-09, DAY SEVEN

Sutra: I advise people constantly to open their eyes for the Buddha knowledge within their mind. But in their perversity they commit sins under delusion and ignorance; they are kind in words, but wicked in mind; you should therefore from moment to moment open your eyes, not for ‘common people knowledge’ but for Buddha knowledge, which is supramundane, while the former is worldly. On the other hand, if you stick to the concept that mere recitation (of the Sutra) as a daily exercise is good enough, then you are infatuated like the yak by its own tail.

Here the Sixth Patriarch says these words to Hotatsu: You should open to the Buddha knowledge, but because we are so caught on our own emotions, attached to them, we get stuck on our own common people knowledge instead. It is about how our mind is in an everyday way, what view we see from. We read the Heart Sutra

every day but it isn't just reading it; it has to be seen from a point of view of Buddha knowledge. In our every day life as well, we have to live in the Buddha knowledge. We most of all have to not see in a dualistic way. Seeing in a dualistic, relative way, this is the common people knowledge.

We live in a context of space and time, but it is about how we see this. Because we see it in a relative way, in a dualistic way, we are used by it. As Master Joshu has said, you are all used by the twenty-four hours of the day but I use them. The same with space, because we are used by it as well. As Dogen put it simply, existence equals time. No existence can live separated from time, and this time—if we look at it in its usual way as in, what time is it? It's one o'clock—that is seeing it from the point of view of common knowledge. Dogen Zenji says there are three kinds of time: first, there is the usual common way of sensing time flowing from past to present, the way we think of a flower blooming and then falling and then green leaves coming to a tree. As people are born and they get old and they get sick and they die, this is the common perception of time as flowing from past to present.

And then there is the way of looking at time as past, present and future. Here is time flowing from future to present. We have a vision, we have hope, ideals. We want to build a house. We study and make a plan and every day we make efforts and one day the building is coming closer and closer. We work hard to meet that. This is the future coming to the present.

But there is another, living time—this is the present moment moving into the present moment. We can't name this, or it's already gone by. This is the world of continuing, clear, mind-moments. This is the essence of shikantaza. But it has to be a living shikantaza, not the common people knowledge but the Buddha knowledge version of it.

Then if we look at it from the version of space, from an ego point of view we think there is a thing perceived and a perceiver. But in fact they are not separate, and zazen teaches us very well that everything we perceive, everything that touches our senses, is our body. The whole world is our body. If we see like this there is no confusion.

If we awaken to the Buddha knowledge there is no death. But if we perceive from the time-and-space view of common people knowledge, then we cannot see that truth.

Sutra: I advise people constantly to open their eyes for the Buddha knowledge within their mind. But in their perversity they commit sins under delusion and ignorance; they are kind in words, but wicked in mind; you should therefore from moment to moment open your eyes, not for 'Common people knowledge' but for Buddha knowledge, which is supramundane, while the former is worldly. On the other hand, if you stick to the concept that mere recitation (of the Sutra) as a daily exercise is good enough, then you are infatuated like the yak by its own tail.

The Sixth Patriarch gives his explanation and then says this to Hotatsu, you are so proud that you read the Lotus Sutra 3000 times, but what you read was its form, not its truth or essence. You've only read it with your common people knowledge

*When our mind is deluded, the
Lotus Sutra 'turns us round'.
With an enlightened mind we
'turn round' the Lotus Sutra.*

心迷法華轉
心悟轉法華

Kokoro mayoeba Hokke ni tenzerare
Kokoro satoreba Hoke o tenzu

心
建
法
華
轉

心
悟
轉
法
華



and yet you think and act like you've understood it completely. This is like that fine, excellent, yak that is in love with its own wonderful tail.

"I've done training this long. I've realized this many koans and passed them"—where is there any truth in that? "Every day I've made these many efforts in doing zazen"—where is there any meaning in that? It is all self-conscious awareness, supplies for ego, and nothing to do with realizing the clarified mind.

Sutra: Fa Ta then said, "If that is so, we have only to know the meaning of the Sutra and there would be no necessity for us to recite it. Is that right, Sir?"

Hotatsu says these words, "I understand now. I had misunderstood how superficial my understanding was, and I shouldn't have read it; that would have been better."

Sutra: "There is nothing wrong in the Sutra," replied the Patriarch, "so that you should refrain from reciting it. Whether sutra-reciting will enlighten you or not, or benefit you or not, all depends on yourself."

Don't put your own faults away up on the shelf. It is not about the sutra—the sutra's fault—that it is not read clearly by you; that is your own responsibility.

Some people do zazen and when it doesn't get deep enough, they complain that it's the fault of the zazen.

Sutra: He who recites the Sutra with the tongue and puts its teaching into actual practice with his mind 'turns round' the Sutra. He who recites it without putting it into practice is 'turned round' by the Sutra.

Because you read it with a murky mind you cannot understand it clearly. This is not the fault of the sutra—or the zazen which you blame because your head is so full of thoughts. Even while you are reading the sutra you at least forget everything, and this is its truth. You encounter the world—it's real; you let go of that and everything is gone. The living Lotus Sutra

is like this. You may chant it with your mouth but if your head is full of many things, that is not the fault of the sutra.

People say today's world is so dark and challenging, but that is because of our way of seeing it. To not be used by external things—by money, by sake—but to use them, and then these things can become tools for a healthy, productive way.

These are famous words: when our mind is under delusion, the Saddharma Pundarika Sutra 'turns us round'. With an enlightened mind we 'turn round' the Sutra instead. This can be about any sutra; it doesn't have to be about the Lotus Sutra. It can be about fame; fame can be an ingredient of delusion, so can money or liquor. Delusion can have many ingredients. Even knowledge, or life and death, all of these can be ingredients for delusion. But if our mind is clear, then fame or liquor or money or knowledge or life or death—all of these are fine if we are not moved around by them. We do zazen to realize this true master which is not moved around by anything. But this true master is not a thing; rather, it's a state of mind. We enter this when we forget everything.

Sutra: To recite the Sutra for a considerable time without knowing its principal object Indicates that you are a stranger to its meaning.

Hotatsu, you said you read it 3000 times, but that was just being tangled up by it. To know this true essence! "To open the eyes for the sight of Enlightenment knowledge. To show the sight of Enlightenment knowledge. To awake to the sight of Enlightenment knowledge. To be firmly established in the Enlightenment knowledge." This truth of the Lotus Sutra—this is not common people knowledge, but is that Buddha knowledge, free from any dualism—to live in that state of mind where there is nothing perceived in a dualistic way whatsoever!

Sutra: The correct way to recite the

Sutra is without holding any arbitrary belief; otherwise, it is wrong. He who is above 'affirmative' and 'negative' rides permanently in the White Bullock Cart (the Vehicle of Buddha).

To read it holding onto no belief; if we hold onto anything, that is misguided mind-moments. As Shidō Munan Zenji has said, to live with an idea of small self inserted is to be a living hell realm being. To live free from any idea of a small self, of a small self-conscious awareness—that is a living Buddha. To not have any idea of ego in mind, but to know the world as oneself, not to think of our ego as something separated, for that is what causes confusion.

We try to put ourselves first; this is always concealed in our saying it was something which we were doing for society. We have to clean that out. When we work in absorption we need no self-conscious awareness at all; we give everything to what we're doing. But we have a front and a back. One side has ego being involved, one side always says it is doing what is good for society.

We have to cultivate our depth and our clearly seeing eye to be able to see the world clearly. We cannot conceal an ego shadow in there, either. For this we do zazen—to let go of that idea that we are so adorable and precious. In society as well, we always think that we are right and make complaints based on how right we are. This is where our ego shows up. Through zazen we see how complex and muddled we are about these things. We shave it away and shave it away and shave it away, and in doing that, without even thinking about it we can recognize our truth within—that truth we each have within and have never been separated from. But because we always cherish our small self we cannot see that wisdom. We always blame our sore legs on our zazen.

Sutra: Having heard this stanza, Fa Ta was enlightened and moved to tears. "It is quite true," he exclaimed, "that

heretofore I was unable to 'turn round' the Sutra. It was rather the Sutra that 'turned' me round." He then raised another point. "The Sutra says, 'From Sravakas (disciples) up to Bodhisattvas, even if they were to speculate with combined efforts they would be unable to comprehend the Buddha knowledge.' But you, Sir, give me to understand that if an ordinary man realizes his own mind, he is said to have attained the Buddha knowledge."

For the first time, Hotatsu truly understood, and wept tears, saying now he understood, and that he'd been being read by the sutra and not been reading it. He returned to his Original Mind and then said, but I still have a doubt in my mind about the Lotus Sutra's contents. Could you please teach me? The direct disciples, the arhats who heard all the Buddha's teachings—the Eightfold Path, the Twelve Karmic Connections—they were immediately enlightened. But it says in the Lotus Sutra that even though they were awakened in this way, they were still unable to understand the Buddha knowledge truth and wisdom. What does this mean? You just said that common people knowledge could be replaced by the enlightenment knowledge if people would see their clear mind. Yet it says there that awakened arhats and bodhisattvas—the direct disciples of the Buddha—could not know this Buddha enlightenment wisdom. Where is that Buddha wisdom in me, and how is it possible?

This is a very good and obvious question.

Sutra: But you, Sir, give me to understand that if an ordinary man realizes his own mind, he is said to have attained the Buddha knowledge. I am afraid, Sir, that with the exception of those gifted with superior mental dispositions, others may doubt your remark. Furthermore, three kinds of Carts are mentioned in the Sutra, namely, Carts yoked with goats (i.e., the vehicle of Sravakas), Carts yoked with deers (the vehicle of Pratyeka Buddhas), and Carts yoked with bullocks (the vehicle of Bodhisattvas).

How are these to be distinguished from the White Bullock Carts?

He continues: you said we could all awaken to our own truth. Then why can't the arahats see it? And then he continued about the three carts. We need to read the Lotus Sutra to know this story in the Expedient Means Chapter about a very rich man in India who lived in a big, extended family home with many generations living together. One day he saw some smoke and he knew there was a fire in the house. It was an old house. He was about to escape; he ran outside. But he remembered that there were many, many children playing in the house, and he had to save them, so he went inside again to rescue them. But since they didn't know the danger of fire and to flee from it, they didn't even look up from their toys when he called out that it was a fire and they should hurry and get out. The fire was burning further and further and he knew he had to do something. There was a problem: if there were just two or three children he could have picked them up, but there were many, many children, and so he spontaneously called out, come outside quickly and see! There are sheep pulling carts and deer pulling carts and cows pulling carts! And the kids all got up in excitement to go see the carts and ran out just as the timbers fell and the house caved in. But there were no carts. There were no sheep carts, no deer carts, no cow carts; the old man had deceived them to save their lives. While there had been no sheep carts and deer carts and cow carts, he had given them instead a huge, white bullock cart. This is taught in the Expedient Means section of the Lotus Sutra.

The sheep cart represents the cart which is the awakening by hearing the Buddha's teaching on the Eightfold Path—hearing that and becoming aware of that possibility. The deer cart is that of hearing the Buddha's teaching of the Twelve Links of Cause and Effect. The third—the cow

cart—is the bodhisattva teaching, the practice of the Six Paramitas. Those were the cow, the deer, and the sheep carts. But the Buddha's true vow was not about only awakening those who heard and realized in these ways, but in fact was that all humankind should be awakened—a great, huge, white bullock cart. And this truth of the Buddha—here, Hotatsu is asking—what about this truth?

Sutra: The Patriarch replied, "The Sutra is quite plain on this point; it is you who misunderstand it. The reason why Sravakas, Pratyeka Buddhas and Bodhisattvas cannot comprehend the Buddha knowledge is because they speculate on it. They may combine their efforts to speculate, but the more they speculate, the farther they are from the truth. It was to ordinary men, not to other Buddhas, that Buddha Gautama preached this Sutra. As for those who cannot accept the doctrine he expounded, he let them leave the assembly. You do not seem to know that since we are already riding in the White Bullock Cart (the vehicle of Buddhas), there is no necessity for us to go out to look for the other three vehicles.

It is very clear; where is there any confusion at all? You can't see this by mental understanding; you cannot try to understand it mentally. It cannot be understood in a dualistic, mental way anyway. With a dualistic view—which is limited by time and space—this cannot be comprehended; it has to be a wisdom beyond that. This is the Buddha's wisdom. But we can't measure this with our ordinary ruler. The more we imagine and speculate, the further we stray from the truth. The Buddha's teaching during forty-nine years was to show ignorant people the way to satori, not to try to enlighten them; they have to do that themselves.

Sutra: To open the eyes for the sight of Enlightenment knowledge. To show the sight of Enlightenment knowledge. To awake to the sight of Enlightenment knowledge. To be firmly established in the Enlightenment knowledge.

As it says in the Lotus Sutra, the sentient beings awaken to the enlightenment knowledge because they are already endowed with this wisdom from the origin and so they can realize this wisdom. As it also says in the Lotus Sutra Kasho Sonja gave a teaching, a talk about the story of the Prodigal Son—the son who had returned to his father's home as a beggar—how important this was that the father had to remember the child in order for this story to happen. The father had tried many ways to help this child understand that he was a child of that house, like the Buddha. For example, “You are all people who are errant and full of mistakes, always making difficult decisions and making mistakes in how we go about them. You must do repentance and remember.” This was the first teaching, the teaching of the sheep cart.

Then there is the teaching that life is suffering because we gather and accumulate, that because we gather and accumulate we suffer. To let go of that we must follow the path of the Eightfold truth. This was the deer cart. The deer cart was that we see the morning, we see the sun, the moon, the stars, the flowers and the things of nature, and we become them. The willow—this is the blessed form of Kannon-sama. The stream's babblings—this is the tongue of the stream speaking the Buddha's truth sermon.

Third, we have that of the cow carts: the teaching of the bodhisattva, that we are born to liberate all people in the whole world.

And finally, the rich man said to his son, you are the child of a Buddha. They all became very annoyed, angry, saying not to deceive them, please! They got up from their seats and they left. People who are not yet karmically ripened, you can't do anything about that if they cannot believe. The rich man lied to the children about the three carts but instead gave them the great white bullock cart of truth. The three

varieties of the people training in the first cart metaphors, those people were trying to understand mentally when they were already from the beginning riding in that white bullock cart anyway. This is our Buddha nature out there, right as it is. Buddha nature says it's cold when it's cold. It says, “Good morning” when it's morning and it says “Ouch” when it hurts. It says when it's sad, it says when it's happy. It is Buddha nature, all of that, but we put it aside and look for something special instead.

Sutra: Moreover, the Sutra tells you plainly that there is only the Buddha Vehicle, and that there are no other vehicles, such as the second or the third. It is for the sake of this sole vehicle that Buddha had to preach to us with innumerable skilful devices, using various reasons and arguments, parables and illustrations, etc.

There is only one truth from the origin, and this is made clear. Huge numbers of words were spoken by the Buddha in his lifetime to bring people to this way of liberation and for no other purpose at all.

Sutra: Why can you not understand that the other three vehicles are makeshifts, for the past only; while the sole vehicle, the Buddha Vehicle, is the ultimate, meant for the present?

There is a process to the opening of our mind. Just saying in words that we all have the Buddha nature is not sufficient. If we don't let go of our narrow ego view our Buddha nature cannot be seen; it cannot be seen from that egoistic view. We have to shave it away, shave it away, shave it away; our ego view is obstructing our clear, Buddha wisdom view, and this is what the Buddha taught us how to do. Then when we are able to realize this we can see it directly.

Sutra: “The Sutra teaches you to dispense with the makeshifts and to resort to the ultimate. Having resorted to the ultimate, you will find that even the name ‘ultimate’ disappears. You should appreciate that you are the sole

owner of these valuables and they are entirely subject to your disposal.”

Because we are so confused we have to learn to return to this place of not a speck of anything in all the heavens and earth. We can see also that we don't need to create anything. To realize this mind of nothing at all is the Buddha, and we are able to see this directly.

Sutra: When you are free from the arbitrary conception that they are the father's, or the son's, or that they are at so and so's disposal, you may be said to have learned the right way to recite the Sutra.

All of these are things that are already our own—do we have to ask if it is alright to see? Do we have to ask if it is alright to hear? Do we have to ask if it is ok to taste? Do we have to ask if it is ok to smell and feel? We feel this great gratitude towards our parents; thanks to them we are able to see. Thanks to them we are able to hear. Thanks to them we are able to taste and touch and feel. Thanks to our mother and father we can know all of these things. Who goes around thinking like that? Do we go around thinking, “My eyes are seeing so well right now; they work so hard. My ears are hearing so well right now; they work so hard. My nose is smelling so much right now; it works so hard. My thoughts, they are doing so well right now; they work so hard.” There is no need to consider these things in what we do and know so naturally.

Sutra: In that case from kalpa to kalpa the Sutra will be in your hand, and from morning to night you will be reciting the Sutra all the time.

Our capabilities and abilities are naturally operating. For what do we need to stop our minds on thoughts about them? To not stop at all, and to not bring in thinking; this is to read the Lotus Sutra. We have never separated from this sutra. From the very moment we were born, from morning into night we are always reading the Lotus Sutra. From birth until

death and through life after life we are always reading the Lotus Sutra, yet never have we had to think about it.

The Sixth Patriarch taught Hotatsu like this about the way of using sutras—this, the way of enlightenment knowledge—to never separate from it or it is all only empty reasoning. As we read this Platform Sutra together we are seeing how to live in its way of living in the truth. The patriarchs taught us how to live this, not just to hear it with our ears but to forget our body and not add in any dualism. We can clarify this deeply. This is an honest essence.

The Sixth Patriarch said clearly,
There is no bodhi tree,
nor stand of a mirror bright.
Since all is void,
where can the dust alight?

But the truth that there is not one thing from the origin, what does this mean? What is it that Zen believes in? If it is not a god, then is it only ego that is left? No god, no ego, no ego filter—this we have to experience clearly or we'll be continuously living without true wisdom. The Sixth Patriarch is saying that we have to see clearly in order to believe. This is its true substance, to realize this. And when we give rise to ego, to realize that and to correct and align that.

Of course, just because we hear it and know we should do that doesn't mean that it's an easy thing to do or that we can always do it. We have had these challenging habits for such a long time. We live in a complicated world. But we also are endowed with this clear wisdom—to remember that, and to review that, and to correct it when we start seeing in a way of common people wisdom instead of the Buddha wisdom. The Sixth Patriarch has shown us this way.

In the Olympics no one would run the marathon if there wasn't a goal to run for. Or in playing baseball or in playing soccer.

We have to every day consider how we live, and look at it carefully—and enjoy that we are not yet sufficient. We all want to awaken immediately, right now, but it is about our perseverance. And while knowing we are all equal—according to law, for example, it says we are all equal—are we really all equal? There are men, there are women, there are old people, there are young people, there are healthy people, there are unhealthy people. We can't ignore these differences. We have to see those differences clearly as well, and from our long lost past we also have many influences. So some can awaken quickly and some take longer. This is no reason to be conceited or to put oneself down, but rather, to see one's own circumstances clearly and remember that the true essence is within, not outside in the external world of differences. To see correctly, and again and again align and correct—to polish this more and more and more: this is a person of perseverance. To keep that central point important, always.

That is difficult, and so we again look to the external world; we keep looking outward. But within us—within each of us—we all know, and we all do have an eye of clearly seeing truth that embraces all beings. It does not yell out that it is the eye of truth, so we again fall into the common people view and look to things external. Because we cannot see, because the light of Buddha nature which is always shining there is not announcing itself, still we keep looking at the shadow of that ego instead.

We can't stop at that. This great light is always shining forth from within us, so we cannot put ourselves down. Instead, we have to continue to polish and polish and hold this precious; without even thinking about it we will suddenly realize it. The true source does not announce itself as a true source, so it cannot be seen and it cannot be heard that way. Yet we can see whether or not what we are seeing from is common people wisdom view or the

Buddha wisdom view.

So what do we believe and what do we use our life for? That is up to each of us individually. To not just look at human's shadow, this is the Buddha Dharma. In this way the Sixth Patriarch looks at the Lotus Sutra from the Zen perspective and teaches it. We are all able to use this to liberate others, yet neither can we be caught on that particular view only. Today's religions bring suffering and conflict because they are so caught on their own formal systems and rituals, their systems of belief and institutions. A religion is always for joy and deepest trust. The religious way of bringing trust has now been lost, and the truth and the way of religion is causing more conflict. This is true of culture as well. We have to see this clearly; we have to ask, What is the truth? It has to be joyful and bring deepest trust. We are all born as one being of 6.3 billion and it can't be our own small, self-centered joy. How can every person know that joy? We have to have that kind of deep belief and trust. What confusion there is, is brought about by this egoistic filter and this personal preference; it confuses and misleads humankind. Please take this deep teaching of the Sixth Patriarch's Platform Sutra and bring it into society.

OSESSHIN, 2005-02, DAY ONE

*Opening Poem:
Through appropriate teachings to suit
the moment,
Causes and conditions come to
fruition
And the Four Wisdoms shine like the
radiant full moon.
The true teachings of the Sixth
Patriarch become a sharp sword.
Maintaining true awareness, we cut
off the diamond horde!*

Sutra: *Bhikkhu Zhi Tong*, a native of Shao Chou of An Feng had read the Lankavatara Sutra a thousand

times, but he could not understand the meaning of Trikaya and the four Prajnas. Thereupon, he called on the Patriarch for an interpretation.

Today, this monk Chi Tsu of Ambo is talked about. He had read the Lankavatara Sutra one thousand times. In monasteries everywhere these sutras are taught. In them a part of the Buddha's teaching is about the Three Bodies of Buddha [Tri-kaya] and the Four Wisdoms [Prajnas], and this monk came to the Sixth Patriarch to ask him about these, to ask the Sixth Patriarch to explain to him about the Three Bodies and the Four Wisdoms.

While Bodhidharma is said to have come empty-handed to China, he did not simply sit facing a wall. His teaching was plainly expressed in his writings; he left clear teachings for his students: To see our true nature directly and become Buddha. Of course these are not the Buddha's words exactly, but of those who came later and wrote down what he would have said.

The Three Bodies—these are expressed in Christianity by the Trinity. In Buddhism we have the Three Bodies as the Dharmakaya, the Sambhogakaya, the Nirmanakaya. The Four Wisdoms can be put into one word, "Buddha," but as a single word it has no essence. The Buddha's Great Wisdoms, from where were they born forth? One way this is answered, putting it rather simply, is that the Dharmakaya—which is Buddha as the essence of the universe—manifests a great vow to liberate all sentient beings. The manifestation of that vow is the Sambhogakaya, and in order to fulfill that huge vow that all beings be liberated, the physical Buddha—the Nirmanakaya—came into existence. But from where did this great vow come forth?

Because this whole universe was from the origin pure—was from the origin Buddha—the universe gave birth to a vow to liberate all beings, and this was expressed as Amida Nyorai—the Sambhogakaya—

that was then expressed in flesh as Shakyamuni Buddha—the Nirmanakaya, the essence of truth. This is putting it in a very simple way.

This huge universe is always giving birth to planets, galaxies, the oceans of atoms and molecules that are always becoming things and then dissolving back into atoms and molecules. In this way all things come into existence and then once again return to an ocean of atoms and molecules. This universe as it is, is the Buddha. And just as a galaxy is born, a vow to liberate all beings can be born; the historical Buddha was born forth from that. This universe as it is the pure Dharma body of the Vairocana Buddha. If you go to Japan you can see in Nara the Great Buddha which was made more than ten-some meters tall in order to represent the hugeness of the whole universe as the pure Dharma body of the Vairocana Buddha—pure because it is beyond any dualistic differentiation. But since it is the whole universe it has no function; it is simply the basic thing as it is.

If we put it into a Buddhist framework, the whole universe in deepest samadhi is the Vairocana Buddha. Sitting firmly in deepest samadhi, from there one mind-moment-vow comes forth. There is a huge difference in this mind-moment if it is a mind-moment of ego and attachment. But being a mind-moment coming from samadhi there is no ego there. It comes forth, this mind-moment-vow, in accordance with what is necessary and with no ego involved, only to fulfill what needs doing; this is the Sambhogagaya. If the whole universe is always in deepest samadhi, this is the one mind-moment-vow that comes forth from that samadhi, and this is the undifferentiated Sambhogagaya.

If this one mind-moment vow is the Sambhogagaya, it is not a mind-moment to glorify ourselves for doing something good. For example, so many talk about world peace but how many really function

with everything for that and offer their whole life to realizing world peace? This and the doing of this is the Nirmanakaya—the Buddha's offering of his own life, leaving behind and throwing away his fame, position, adored wife, darling child, family, people, and country, giving it all up completely to clarify this Path—all of his whole Path offered to liberating all beings. This is not about a Buddha separate from each of us, either, but about what we are all doing here.

The basis of the Buddha is these Four Great Wisdoms. The first is the Perfect Mirror Wisdom. The entire universe is a great, perfect, mirror. This wisdom is that which singularly reflects everything exactly as is. This boundless universe's immeasurable mirror—we all have this wisdom within us; it is not about a separate Buddha. This great space which has been explored by science, all of it is right within our very own mind. All of the intimately close galaxies, the far galaxies, the furthest clouds of stars—the further we discover, the more our mind expands, like the computer's functioning as well. We know this Perfect Mirror Wisdom.

Thus the Perfect Mirror Wisdom is our mind's base substance. There is no physical mentation here nor is there any ego; these are all born forth from here, from this great source. For what do we do zazen? To realize this source directly in our experience, we sit. Yet if we stay conceptual or keep judging things good or bad or feel good about an experience we're having or bad about an experience not continuing, that is because we have not yet touched the actual source yet. Like a Pacific breeze making shallow waves on the surface of the ocean, these have no effect on the ocean's deepest bottom. We do zazen to experience deeply that which is prior to judgment, prior to ideas about and ideas which concern something good or bad.

The second of the Four Wisdoms is the

Universal Nature Wisdom. Because we always sustain a position of a self, we are unable to see everything as truly equal. But if we look at how a newborn baby perceives, of course it has its genetic makeup but it has no preconceived notions of perception. Our adult mind becomes purified like that and then we are able to perceive directly without differentiation and judgment entering into what we perceive. We can see everything directly, prior to any influence from perceptions and mental judgments, ideas of good or bad. This perceiving directly is the Universal Nature Wisdom. This wisdom sees a tall mountain or a small rock in exactly the same way, prior to any concern of whether something is big or small or red or green; it simply directly perceives it prior to any judgment. When we do zazen and purify our mind we can realize this state of mind where there's no labeling of things or people or seeing of things in a relative way in any way that we can fall into discrimination. We are free from being swayed.

Perceiving the world only equally, we clearly see one way but we miss the intrinsic differences of each and every thing: a particular character of a flower, a particular way of being of a tree. Each and every person and thing has a story, an individual nature. Not to see this with a judging, discriminative eye, but to put a spotlight on each thing's particular detail, like science examining precisely the world of microns. This is the world of the Mysterious Observing Wisdom. There can be no mental operations allowed in here, or it is not the Mysterious Observing Wisdom. There are many kinds of people, races, histories, cultures. If we only give our own version of a flavor to our perceptions, then we cannot call it the Mysterious Observing Wisdom.

The fourth of the Wisdoms is the Perfecting of Action Wisdom. Our eyes see and our ears hear, our hands create things, our

feet carry us; we all have these capabilities and can use them without anyone ever teaching us how. No baby who is not visually handicapped has to be taught by a mother how to see, nor does a baby who is not auditorially handicapped have to be taught by its mother how to hear—or taste, or to feel with its body or to have its hands grab at things or to have its feet carry it. We never have to be given lessons in these things; we are born with the knowledge of how to use these things. This is the Perfecting of Action Wisdom. We say this is a matter of course, but if we live and feel, perceive, walk, and create from a position of a small self with an ego filter involved, that is not the Perfecting of Action Wisdom. This has to be free from any concepts or ideas coming from mental perceptions.

The Sixth Patriarch has truly given us this great simple teaching through which all of the five thousand forty-eight sutras' lessons can be embraced. He was called uneducated, yet he gave these great teachings—which we have to be able to realize and not just understand with our heads. We have parts which need knowledge and have parts which require having no knowledge; sometimes knowledge can obstruct our experiencing. Yet to have this great wisdom is necessary and most helpful to realize the deep meaning of many experiences, as the patriarchs have instructed us. Or even when there are efforts made, our training does not move more deeply.

If we look at science's point of view to see this, when we are born we have a mind which is still prior to perceiving in a divided way of the six senses. This would be called the Perfect Mirror Wisdom. We have past data but cannot use it yet. Around sixteen months old a baby can understand the difference in what is one. At the beginning, a baby picks up one thing and then the next thing comes by and it puts that thing down—puts the

last one down and then picks up the next thing. Puts that down and picks up another. Each thing which it's holding is holding its attention, which is equal. This is the understanding of one, when it is said that God gives rain equally to the good and the evil, or the Great Vow of Amida does not choose whether it liberates a young person or old person, a smart person or a stupid person—the Universal Nature Wisdom, this world where everything is equal.

When we are twenty-three months old we begin to perceive from an egoistic filter. We then can choose what we want. We have preferences; we want this, we don't want that. A world of differentiation is born. But also our world of scholarly inquiry comes from here, our ability to understand all things comes from here, and also, the wanting to improve. But it is knowing all of these differences that also begins to make the world so difficult and conflictual.

So where did this world of one go? It is always still right within us, as we see another suffering and feel it as our own. We hear about the tsunami in Sumatra and the huge numbers of people who have suffered and died and we want to go there right away and do something to help. All of this is within the world of perceiving things as one. We want to improve, yet we make so many rules and make things so rigid and difficult. We need the world of two or of differences, but we can't look at it from the egoistic point of view of preference and fear. For doing this, for letting go of this rigid view we have to do zazen.

Even if we do zazen we can't sustain a head full of ideas, moving around all of the time, thinking this and that. Rather, we see what a mysterious body we have, with legs that bend upward and fingers with all of these joints; what curious tools we've been given! We eat with no practice—food enters our mouth and goes down our esophagus into our stomach,

gets sent to where it's supposed to go to be separated into what we absorb and what we don't absorb. What amazing, mysterious functioning our body has! We have to experience this and not just hang out in our busy heads full of thinking and miss being thankful for this mysterious functioning. We sit; we put our tendons and muscles in a certain way, we feel the replenishment of our ki and feel the spaciousness at our back. This is the Mysterious Observing Wisdom. "What is *this*? What is *this*?" We feel the pain and breathe into it. We receive each and every thing as our own. We realize that that pain in our legs is me. We straighten our spine and feel our head pierce into the sky.

We don't sit pointlessly; we experience and become able to read and know our own body. We polish this, the Mysterious Observing Wisdom, and when our body becomes able to perceive from here we can see the zendo as one huge whole—to the very essence of it, the whole zendo as one: the Perfecting of Action Wisdom. Then it is no longer one's own personal body: We have swallowed everything and returned again to that Universal Perfect Mirror Wisdom. Even one who is so absorbed wholly in mental functioning can realize this. One breath after the next, digging within, we are then able to experience this depth. And if we don't know ourselves this well, then how can we understand and use well something or someone else? To understand this world is not about knowledge, but about experiencing it directly. This is the truth of our zazen.

Our important opportunity: Here we have it at this *ōsesshin*! Each person has put aside this very important time and arranged to have this chance; we cannot waste it, but rather, to take this opportunity to see within so deeply! If we lose sight of what is within we lose sight of the whole world. Not to be caught on our own individual self but to calmly and clearly see what it is that reflects everything.

Doing zazen, looking deeply, it cannot be without awakening. Our experience has to be manifested. Our body is not someone else's and we don't have to ask someone else. Although there are some things we have to ask a doctor for, there are so many things we know for ourself. Not to always be depending on someone else but to clarify it for ourselves and know the truth from doing this—to see one's own essence as if it were right on the palm of one's hand! There is no *kensho* from just analyzing with our head and dividing body and mind conceptually. Even if we would see something clearly that way we would not be able to make use of it. It is our zazen that allows us to see clearly and return to our basics.

OSESSHIN, 2005-02, DAY TWO

Sutra: "As to the Three Bodies," explained the Patriarch, "the pure Dharmakaya is your (essential) nature;"

Responding to the question about the Three Dharma Bodies and the Four Wisdoms referred to in the Ryogon Sutra which the monk had asked about, the Sixth Patriarch meticulously explains in detail. He is saying that it is not some bodies elsewhere, but our own pure mind which this refers to. The pure Dharma Body is our purified state of mind. As Rinzai Zenji has said it, the clean, pure light in a moment of your mind is the Dharma Body, prior to even one thought arising.

All day long we have wisps of thoughts: that we're so cold, that our legs hurt, can I really make it through another day like this? Where are these thoughts born forth from? Do you know their source? As the twenty-fourth patriarch from the Buddha, Manura Sonja, has said, the mind is always in transformation in its various surroundings, and how it transforms is always changing and mysterious. As we act in accordance with that flow, manifesting our true nature, there is no special

intention or functioning present. This is a healthy state of mind. It meets each situation and encounters it appropriately. We feel the chill of the brisk morning, we feel the warming sun of the midday. Flowers bloom, birds are singing. Mind is always changing as we perceive those birds, the flowers, the trees. Our mind changes with each. What is it that is doing that seeing? What is it that is hearing? We have to dig into that depth. This is *zazen*.

It is not about just sitting on our cushions wasting time; we don't want to waste a precious moment! Each moment is new. Our mind is always different, everything is always fresh. Right here, right now, we see each moment's actuality, not concerned about a yesterday or worrying about a tomorrow—overheating our heads and wasting our precious energy. We see, we hear, and as we act in accordance with that flow, manifesting our true nature, there is no special intention or special functioning present. Then we realize it is not something over there that we are perceiving, but it is that which perceives. We have to separate from society to be able to come to grips with this because in society we are always concerned with an other—a person over there. “He's bad, she's wrong,” “They shouldn't act like that,” “It has to be done like this.” We carry around way too many impurities. We get clogged up in our mind to where we don't know what to do. So we leave our actual life in society and come here for a week to see more clearly and directly.

But if we sit here with a head full of thoughts we may as well be back in society. We'd have a traffic accident if we walked around on the road this full of thinking, or drove like this. So we can't sit here and think so much, or it's just ridiculous. Each thing that comes forth, each wisp of a thought, we do not give it any attention, but instead, see clearly. That which is seeing, what is it? That which is hearing, what is it? We're not looking for

some idea about these questions and their answers or it makes even more thoughts. For doing this we use the breathing, the *susokkan* to directly perceive that which is prior to all that thinking. To perceive that which sees, to perceive that which is hearing—the wide open eyes, the wide open ears, the wide open body's feeling. At first the senses all seem to be separate, but then we experience how they all act as one. The koans lead us to this. We do the *Mu* until even if we leave it all alone, it does us. It keeps going. We focus, and not concerned with any place else, we sit, focused. In accordance with the flow, our true nature manifests. Hearing, seeing, understanding, knowing—each of these is not separate.

Our senses are all rolled into one whole, and more and more, while we have a body we have no awareness of it. Our state of mind is truly clear. No more thoughts can appear. We continue. It fills us from the top of our heads to the bottom of our feet and all of our senses are focused and concentrated; soon we lose track of our physical body, our thoughts, our senses, our perceptions—until we gather everything into this one whole. And then nothing is even left to say, “I understand,”—nor is there an “I” to understand.

Sutra: “As to the Three Bodies,” explained the Patriarch, “the pure Dharmakaya is your (essential) nature;”

This true base of that which Rinzai says is the clean, pure light in a moment of your mind—this does not mean that there is some kind of a pure light somewhere. This meaning of purity is that there is no distinction able to be held, such as extraneous thinking or dualistic notions or the meaning of this kind of “pure” Dharma Body. The true body of Buddha is this, yet we cannot misunderstand this. It cannot be produced intentionally; it has to be the direct experience of it or there will be no rebirth realized. Only when total

extinction is experienced can true creativity occur. To clarify this we have all of the Buddha Dharma. This is why Zen has even been called the Buddha Mind Sect.

What about this great doubt? In what can we believe? Here there can only be experience. Without throwing everything into this we will be introducing mistaken behavior into society. We have to see what it is that sees and what it is that hears directly. Buddhism puts everything into realizing this—Joshu's koan of the Mu, for example. But still it is unfortunate how many realize that Mu intellectually only, not with truly, deeply, experiencing it. Putting that famous koan's case aside, in Master Mumon Ekai's comment immediately preceding that koan in the Mumonkan, we have in writing the very exact process—the way to realize this true experience, telling how to do it very precisely.

We are all capable of judging and thinking, and thanks to this we are also able to produce and invent. But how often do we have to step on someone else's happiness in order to procure our own happiness and good fortune? Our truest joy's source is to clarify this true, deep root, and not to stop halfway. For 6.3 billion people to know this truest joy—this is what our zazen is for.

Master Mumon Ekai, from his very own experience, teaches us exactly what has to be done. First of everything, every person in training has to realize that absolute faith. With every single one of our 360 smallest joints, our 84,000 hair pores, to give rise to that great doubt. To not approach it with rational examination but to put your life on the line, your whole mind becoming it completely to where standing is Mu and sitting is Mu and that which sees is Mu and that which hears is Mu and that which tastes is Mu and that which smells is Mu and that which feels is Mu, that which grabs with the hands is Mu, that which walks with the feet is

Mu. In this way, with no gaps, continuing onward, our physical body still feels hot, but that also is Mu, feels cold and that is Mu, feels hurt and that is Mu, feels sleepy and that is Mu. In this way we return each and every perception to that Mu, and that brings everything we do into this one great flow to where no matter what we do, it is all always continuing. Otherwise our thoughts bring this to become like a kite whose string is cut, scattering any old where.

No matter what thoughts or mind movements or perceptions, we continue. It can't be allowed to stop. We can't let it fade away when we look outside. All of our perceptions have to be focused, from morning till nighttime, from nighttime till morning, without stopping, without allowing in any gaps. Continuing always—all one continuous life energy, the life energy of Mu. We have to first experience this, gathering it all into one, our first, most basic step.

We gather our essence like this but it quickly becomes lax, gaps enter and we

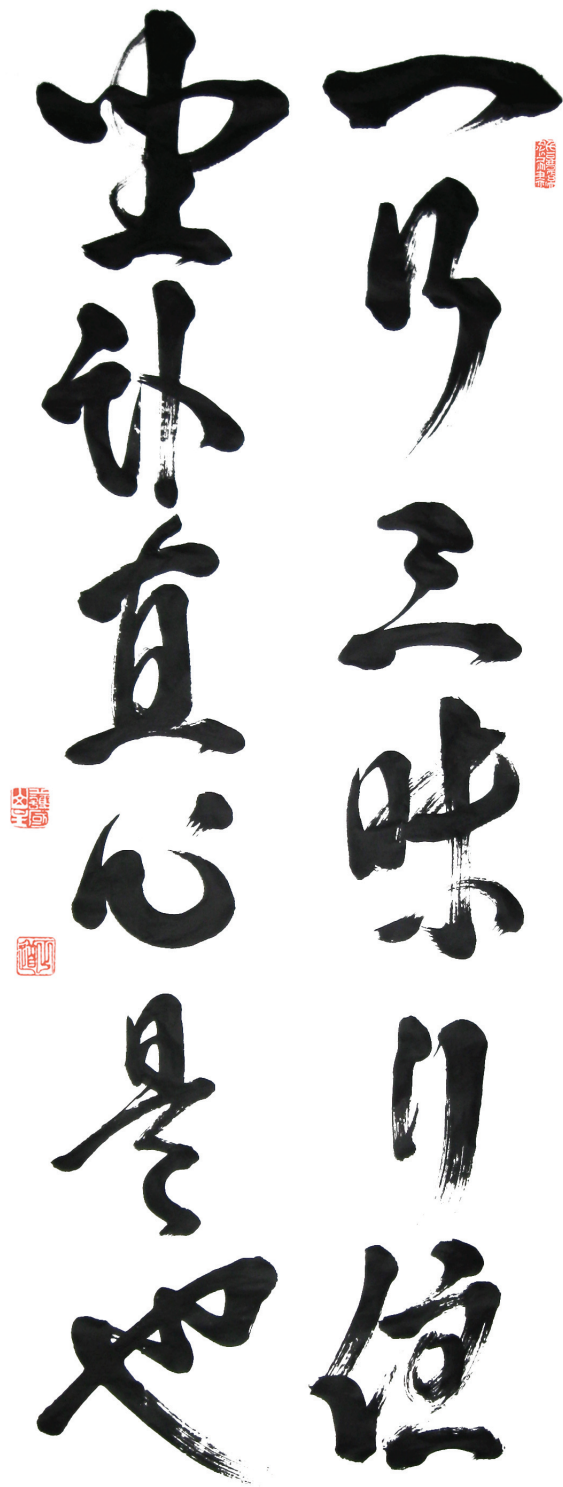
*The straightforward mind is the
place of enlightenment,
the straightforward mind is the
Pure Land.*

*Don't allow your mind become
crooked merely speaking of
straightforwardness with your
mouth!*

一行三昧者
於一切處行住坐臥
常行一直心是也

Ichigyō zanmai wa, issai jō ni oite,
gyōjūzaga, tsune ni ichijikishin o gyōzu,
kore nari

一以三昧日恒
坐外直心是也



are again all scattered. We have to renew that motivation—our decision, our firm determination to do it no matter what it takes! As Master Hakuin said, that mind of *straightforward bravery*! We have to realize that Mu no matter what, but not by being satisfied with some rational understanding of it! That's like standing outside the gate, unable to enter.

Mu is best because it is the same whether it's in Japanese, English, German, French—no matter what, it's Mu. Some people may say they don't want to do that, they don't want to do it using it as Mu, and that is contrary and rebellious. We have to do it till where we stand and don't even know we are standing, we sit and don't even know we are sitting. We enter samadhi—that is what is most important here, but not as a mental understanding of samadhi. Told to stand, we can barely stand, but our essence is full and taut. We have to know this state of mind intently.

Some people say that letting go of themselves is very scary. We sit and many strange things may happen, the nature of the deep layers we are working with. We feel our hands as if they were swelling up and becoming huge. We suddenly feel enormous; we feel suddenly very tiny. These kinds of makyo, to not be afraid of them, to not stop at them but to continue. To really, really do it completely we have to keep it going all the time, and we can't do it in a half-baked way.

This way of doing it in one straight line: Master Mumon Ekai says to do it in all the twenty-four hours of the day. To not get caught on a something to be or a nihilistic point of view. If we continue letting go of our previous education, our conditioning and all of our caught places in all of the twenty-four hours of the day, then without fail we will come out to this place where we no longer know any difference between inside and outside. We continue this and it becomes as if we have a red hot iron ball in our mouth; we can't spit it out and we

can't swallow it down. What that means is to not divide it into two, to not divide it into a two of what sees and what is being seen, a two of what hears and what is being heard, what tastes and what is being tasted. It is not that we are not seeing, hearing, tasting, and feeling, but to not divide what is perceiving and that which is being perceived. It sounds simple but it is not so easy to do completely.

Master Mumon Ekai further says from clear experience—this is most important—that we have to do it to where we have deep faith in what is done. Today so many say they can feel and see what others cannot see and feel—they make prophecies, for example, depending on something special and something deep. But this is being countered here; Zen does not recognize this as clarity. If we have not realized this actual experience of the true root, making prophecies will only bring us to a limit; we will not know how to go beyond this line in our essence, and so our practice becomes unfulfilled and the prophecies become old. We can easily deceive others and we will have hampered our own deepening understanding. Even from the place where we have a sort of dropping away we have to continue further; we cannot stop there. We have to become like a fool, like an idiot, not even able to make prophecies—just a stupid idiot who seems so completely out of it yet with a very clear, transparent place. It can't be told, though, and this is what they are saying here.

We have to drop all of our ideas of having understood anything, and become like an idiot. But that is still not the whole thing. What will be the exact touchstone? Something we hear, something we see—when suddenly where there was nothing at all we realize this great joy? The heavens tremble, the earth shakes; we extend throughout all of the heavens and earth and there is no egoistic “I” remaining there at all. “Heavens and earth” will

not leave it at that, either; it confirms it. It is beyond doubt. What wonder, what amazement! We jump up and down in amazement and joy and we know that that is it: I am truly alive! There is not a something separate, alive. It is spreading throughout the whole universe, piercing through everything! We feel everything around us as our very own life energy: We see the sun shining, we hear the birds singing—all of it we feel deeply and know it as our very own life energy. But there is no way to reach this rationally, and there are no words that can really say it, such as “The heavens and earth become our body.” We *are* that. We become the seasons, and each hour of the day is who we are. There is no explanation needed here. To experience this is to know the truth of the Dharma bodies; this is true experience. It is presented here for us very carefully. Here there is no way we could cover it rationally or mentally. Becoming everything is its manifestation, and we are all right smack in the very middle of this already. “How wondrous! How wondrous! All beings are from the origin endowed with this very same bright, clear mind to which I have at this moment awakened!”—the words of the Buddha at his enlightenment. “This is not just something I have just made happen”—he knew it. “It was always there. But I have now pierced through all of that thinking, all of those deluded ideas.”

It took the Buddha six years to do that. Master Ummon heard the taiko drum and he was deeply enlightened. Master Bukkokokuji of Kamakura took six years, but once we experience this we affect the whole of humankind. It holds this kind of ki energy and intensity. We have to believe and experience how this is within each and every one of us; we are all endowed with it from the origin, how all sentient beings are in fact Buddhas. This is not being said just to placate us.

All living existence going through the

Darwinian evolutions, all of this life energy will be received and it cannot help but be responded to. We talk of love for all humankind, but only when this is deeply and directly experienced can we know and live from there. This is already within each and every one of us; all of our true natures are calling us to awaken to this instead of living in this dualistic mental delusion. Where is there anything to fear and to be concerned about and to be confused about? If [the roshi] speaks from his own experience, he can say that everything we perceive from this moment on is simplified. There is no more need to be dualistic or approach things mentally.

There are many religions. Some teach of God, but there is only one truth and we all have to return to that. Only returning to this state of mind can we know that absolute God and know this truth. Today there are so few realizing this beyond any dualistic ideas, but for all of us to experience this pure, direct truth and join hands—this is the only true way to world peace. When [the roshi] was at the contemplative monasteries he sat with people there and even taught zazen. To join together and support each other—only here is the truth possible for all people, not dividing it into religious division but to see this truth directly. And only then, the all-embracing God beyond all concepts can be realized directly. We each have to make the efforts to know this truth.

OSESSHIN, 2005-02, DAY THREE

Sutra: ...the pure Dharmakaya is
your (essential) nature; the perfect
Sambhogakaya is your wisdom;

Of the Three Bodies, it was said how the first, the Dharmakaya, is our pure nature and the second, the Sambhogakaya, is our perfect wisdom. In the T'ang Dynasty there was a monk named Kyogen Chikan Zenji. It was to him that the line of Issan Reiyu was eventually transmitted. Hyakujo Ekai Zenji, his first teacher, died.

And since Hyakujo had been the original teacher of Kyogen, Kyogen's training was then continued by his older brother, Issan Reiyu; after Hyakujo's death he practiced under him. When Kyogen Chikan Zenji went first to Issan Reiyu, Kyogen was already known for his brilliance; he was a top notch philosopher. Since Issan Reiyu knew this about Kyogen, he said when he came, "If you come here with all of that book learning, that is not what Zen takes refuge in. It is necessary that you do not depend on any of that. I will give you a question, but if you answer it with what you've heard from someone else and what you've read from books, that will all be useless. Prior to coming out of your mother's womb, before you knew north from south or east from west or any direction at all, give me one phrase of that!" Before you were born! When we are born we are already influenced by genes and parents' prenatal input. All of that information is useless and irrelevant concerning before you were born—that face before you even had been imagined by your parents!

Master Issan would give Kyogen no attention for his answers that were borrowed from others or from book learning. Finally Kyogen ran out of answers and asked Issan for the answer. But Issan said, "I can tell you the answer; that's no problem. But then it's *my* one phrase before parents' birth. It has to be *your* phrase."

No matter how much Kyogen tried, he could not come up with this one phrase without it being something borrowed from elsewhere. He had no way to grab hold of it. He had never felt so hopeless. He had always been the one who had been the top-rated, most respected, top hope of the whole sangha, and here he was not acknowledged for one or even half of an answer. He really saw how useless everything he had ever learned had been.

He decided he would have to leave Master Issan and that he would now never go into

the world again. Yet even though he left, this question would not leave him: "the one phrase prior to knowing north, south, east and west." Not someone else's words, but your very own truth. He left Master Issan but his questioning continued anew.

In the olden days at the time of the Sixth Patriarch he had had a disciple, Nanyu Eichō Kokushi, who had even taught the Emperor, he was such a great teacher. Nanyu Eichō Kokushi had never left the mountain for forty years, even though the previous emperor had come and asked him to, until finally he did teach the Emperor Shikushō and the Emperor Daisō. Kyogen decided to clean the grave of this great teacher and take care of it every day. But even while he was doing that, all day long this question kept coming to him.

Every day while clearing, Kyogen would be in samadhi and would be one with the cleaning, but simultaneously always asking the question, "What am I?" Not looking for an answer from books, not from others, but from himself, he deepened profoundly into this question which was driving him in one straight line. All he had to ever do, deep in those mountains, was to clean the graveyard. One day he went out and dumped the gathered rubble into the bamboo grove. A tile fragment hit a green bamboo with a bright, clear sound and he was deeply awakened. "So *that* was it!" He was dancing for joy; that question he'd been wanting to know the answer to for so long, he had realized it!

He was filled with joy and wonder. He cleaned his body, offered incense and faced Issan's mountain to do a prostration in gratitude to him, thinking how thankful he was that Issan Reiyu had bullied him so much and never told him the answer. Because if he had told him the answer he never would have known the joy of that day. Kyogen wrote a poem: "The ka-ching of the tile hitting the bamboo: With it all education and past experience are swept

away. New awareness is born, not from practice or education but from that life energy hearing it from life energy. Such deep wonder! Such joy!” Master Issan confirmed his experience.

Zen is about nothing else but understanding this. When all attached ideas are dropped away there is only this clear mind. We no longer go through layers of ideas and ideas about ideas to perceive; we now perceive directly. This is Zen. “...The perfect Sambhogakaya is your wisdom”—this directly perceived wisdom.

Our mutual true nature prior to self-conscious awareness—before our awareness is born, this truth is our clear nature. The base of this uses our ears, our eyes, our nose, and our mouth, and the wall between our inside and our outside falls away. We realize this truth directly, like Kyogen hearing that sound piercing through everything, true awareness born forth from here. Awareness becoming true awareness, and from there becoming trees and stars and moon and flowers—all of the 10,000 things that fill the whole universe. This which is prior to any self-conscious awareness, this is our true base, and through our six senses touches the world and becomes our deep wisdom. It is not imagined or borrowed.

When we touch that true base, this is the wisdom of the Sambhogakaya; as when Master Tozan was asked, “What is the Buddha’s ultimate truth?” he answered, “Three pounds of flax.” Was he perhaps measuring flax when he was asked? This is the same question to which Master Ummon answered, “A dried shitstick.” In front of us the flowers are blooming, the sun is shining, the birds are singing. The wisdom which we receive, all of this is our own awareness, and not a wisdom from reading and learning someone else’s teaching. This is the perfect Sambhogakaya, and it must be experienced to be known.

Sutra: ...and myriad Nirmanakayas are your actions.

The Sixth Patriarch continues. Usually it is said that Shakyamuni is the myriad Nirmanakayas, but here the Sixth Patriarch said it this way. Master Rinzai says it as, “In this five-foot lump of red flesh there is a true person of no rank, coming and going in and out of the orifices all the time. If you have not seen it yet, see it now!” Everyone has this physical body with blood circulating through it. We function with it. Our eyes see, our ears hear, our hands grip. We create and produce things. Our feet carry us. Those six senses, as they are, become the myriad Nirmanakayas of our actions. We all have the capability of seeing and hearing, but we are always adding on ideas and judgments and preferences to those perceptions, adding those to what we perceive. Instead of that, to see directly and not be caught in any way on what we perceive. The birds singing, the raindrops plopping—we hear it and add nothing to it. Nothing remains.

But usually we have remnants following; this is not the pure functioning. Our pure wisdom and function, which arrives from our senses, is without preference—myriad Nirmanakayas in action. And because we don’t get caught on them, they pass and we are born anew. Always new. Always fresh, we perceive this world. Hearing, we hear birds, coughing, foot sounds, and with all of our other senses as well we are not stopped or stuck anywhere. This is our true human functioning. Even if the Buddha is who is seeing it, a red flower is red and a green tree is green. The ability to see directly is the same for everyone, but if we add on our ideas and preconceived notions and preferences, it all varies. The capability to perceive is the same for everyone. “The myriad Nirmanakayas are your actions.”

Sutra: If you deal with these Three Bodies apart from the Essence of Mind, there would be ‘bodies without wisdom’.

Very important words. If we don’t realize

this Buddha mind within, and only look at things through mental understanding, leaving the root source of the Mu aside, then we lose track and destroy that wisdom and the myriad functions. If we leave this and look at others we see how we can divide into dualism so easily. To not do zazen dividing into our ideas and dualistic perceptions.

People say they don't want to sit because it hurts so much. Then the concepts come between and there is no pure perception there, no wisdom is born. To realize that true source and see the wisdom and capability of what is doing the perceiving and what is perceived being one, or else we lose our true wisdom. Realizing that true source we then bring the capability of our six senses and our wisdom to everyone in society. The Sixth Patriarch truly says it with no waste, in such a way that we can see that everyone can do it because there is no one who is not endowed with this capability.

Sutra: If you realize that these Three Bodies have no positive essence of their own (because they are only the properties of the Essence of Mind) you attain the Bodhi of the four Prajnas. Listen to my stanza:

If we think that there is something that is a Dharmakaya, a Nirmanakaya, a Sambhogakaya in this world, then our concepts are just mental concepts. But if they are clarified within, then the four Wisdoms begin to move. The experience and true capability manifests as these four Wisdoms. Human's absolute faith and affirmation are clarified here. What we have to hold precious in this world is not what we receive from the external, the outside world, but that which we realize within.

Sutra: The Three Bodies are inherent in our Essence of Mind,
By development of which the four Prajnas are manifested.
Thus, without shutting your eyes and your ears to keep away

from the external world
You may reach Buddhahood directly.
Now that I have made this plain to you
Believe it firmly, and you will be
free from delusions forever.

If we thoroughly realize our essence of mind then we know this place where the true mind is always in flux, how it transforms is always mysterious. We are always blaming things on something bad outside of ourselves—the society, the system. But if we dig into it we can see that we have to awaken to how we are within, as well. We cannot protect and defend ourselves, or we make more and more problems for ourselves. All that we perceive, we have to take responsibility for within—all of the joy and the pain of society. We have not a speck of anything to leave behind in our mind. We can see that which is not moved around by anything at all, then. Our mind's true base can have no stain given to it. We have to see this very clearly, as in the Jodo Sect where they teach that even if someone has murdered others, if there is one pure moment of clear insight, it is all removed. Our hateful feelings, if we touch our deepest clear mind we can see how these all are just mistaken perceptions. Of course it does not take away the responsibility for doing those things; that has to be taken care of. But no matter what, our true base is never injured or changed. There is a very big source of deep love and compassion for all beings. Without realizing our true base we may have a personally warm feeling for other beings but it will eventually reach its limit. We have to know this true base directly. If from there the wisdom comes forth, then no matter what we are doing—even if we fall into deep despair—we can always go beyond it, for there is wisdom there to support and guide us. And with this wisdom with which we are all endowed, it becomes clarified and manifested. We can see how for all humans, creating and giving birth to all of this is what our essence is from the origin. This is how the Sixth Patriarch

teaches us.

We are all the absolute Dharmakaya, the absolute Nirmanakaya, the absolute Sambhogakaya; we are all endowed with all of these. We have to clarify these within and then see this clearly. If not, then we are encountering ego, not the Three Bodies. The Three Bodies encountered is the truth. What *is* a human's truth? We cannot see it conceptually. We are all able to use our abilities of seeing, hearing and feeling. Only when we realize these Three Bodies directly can we know the Four Wisdoms.

For this we have to review our behavior and see within clearly. And with these eyes we also see the pain and misery of everyone in the world with our own eyes and ears, and we ourselves can then liberate. It cannot be done in a conceptual way, but only by using our whole body and being's capabilities. This is our truth.

"You may reach Buddhahood directly"—how mysterious! A deluded, mistaken human has the Buddha truth right within us, and can liberate the whole of all beings! From this we have to go beyond all body and being and clarify the Three Bodies, and then simultaneously the Four Wisdoms move. How mysterious!

Sutra: Thus, without shutting your eyes and your ears to keep away from the external world

You may reach Buddhahood directly.

Now that I have made this plain to you
Believe it firmly, and you will be
free from delusions forever.

Follow not those who seek
Enlightenment from without;

These people talk about Bodhi all the
time (but they never find it).

"Don't look aside; look closely at what I have said to you, and don't stop with just reading it but put it to use and you will see that you can use it eternally and never be deluded again." If you think Buddha is outside of you, you just might think you'll

be overlooked by Buddha. But knowing it is inside, then if we can realize our true nature clearly we have no more need to be confused. And if we see this directly we will not be deluded.

Sutra: Follow not those who seek
Enlightenment from without;

These people talk about Bodhi all the
time (but they never find it).

There are many who think they can find virtues externally. They run around, thankful for this, thankful for that, not knowing what is so precious is right within them. When will they settle this? We have to see this clearly. I am a human; Buddha was a human. I'm a person; Buddha was a person and Bodhidharma was a person. Why, then, why do I not have so much wisdom as they did? Why am I seeming so incomplete? It is not about discarding our worth. It is only because our wisdom is still shallow that we feel incomplete.

We have to deepen that wisdom and see that who sees: What is it? That who hears: What is it? That who speaks: What is it? That who sleeps: What is it? That actuality which is alive, right here—to dig into it! To see that which is happy: What is it? That which sad, to be able to realize this! To put your life on the line for that is what is most important—and don't do it with your head. With every single one of the 360 smallest joints, the 84,000 hair pores, with everything we are we throw ourselves into that Mu. Whether we're standing, it's Mu, whether we're walking, it's Mu, whether we're sitting, it's that Mu—not as a concept in our heads but as we directly perceive it. This is not done by separating from everything in the world. The whole world will all dive right into us. To not divide our awareness but to dig into its source, and without fail we will experience these Three Bodies directly, become them. Without fail, they will function and we will receive the world as myriad functioning. The Sixth Patriarch

teaches us the living Three Bodies of the Buddha and the Four Wisdoms.

OSESSHIN, 2005-02, DAY FOUR

Sutra: “May I know something about the four Prajnas?” asked Chih Tung. “If you understand the Three Bodies,” replied the Patriarch, “you should understand the four Prajnas as well; so your question is unnecessary.”

First the monk had asked about the Three Bodies, and this was carefully explained. But the Four Wisdoms are then asked about. The Sixth Patriarch has said prior to any divided awareness, before any dualistic division, that is the pure Dharmakaya. Then to encounter the external world and to transform into oneness with it, this is perfect wisdom, and this is the Samboghakaya. With all of our senses we are functioning fully, and this is the Nirmanakaya. These are all to be known only from experience and cannot be understood from concepts; this is understood.

These Three Bodies cannot be separated from our daily life, and that wisdom is the Four Wisdoms. If you do not experience these Three Bodies and only mentally understand them, this is only intellectual. Without experience it is not wisdom but is ignorance. The experience being clarified is what is important. Without that experience it cannot be the Three Bodies nor can it be the Four Wisdoms.

Sutra: The Patriarch then uttered another stanza:

The Mirror-like Wisdom is pure by nature.
The Equality Wisdom frees the
mind from all impediments.
The All-Discerning Wisdom sees
things intuitively without going
through the process of reasoning.
The All-Performing Wisdom has
the same characteristics as
the Mirror-like Wisdom.

Next he gives a poem without going into mentally limited explanation and begin-

ning with “the Mirror-like Wisdom is pure by nature.” The mirror as the whole universe—as is often offered in Zen as an enso, or circle—this is not from India but from China, where the heavens are representated as something round and the ground or earth as something square. The heavens, so boundless, a circle with no circumference and no periphery, no edge—everything is embraced, settled and included here, so it is like a mirror. This expansiveness is all included here and infinite being is its essence—huge, without any dualism. Because it is all one, everything is included there. So all you can say about it is that it is huge and all-embracing and everything is in here. This is the root source of Mu. The Sixth Patriarch begins with this.

We are given a chance to do zazen. If we clear away our extraneous thinking, then we can let go of our conditioning and how it affects everything we encounter. Everything we meet, we follow around and keep sticking to it. We have all lost the knowing of the source of this, and so we think “That is good,” “This is bad.” But these thoughts, they increase exponentially and we don’t know what is what. The Chinese character for “confusion” is a character like a cross, like a crossroads with some dots that express being at a crossroads with no idea which way to go, unable to see or know which is the best way to turn. We have no problem if we just go straight ahead. But when there are so many unknown choices of which way to go next we are stopped and stuck in our tracks. We don’t know who to believe or what to decide from. And today we read so many books we don’t know which is better—which information is more trustworthy. In zazen we decide against all the choices—not right, not left, not up, not down; we just dig in right under our own feet.

In society we often have to choose: right or left? But in zazen we don’t. We dig

within and let go of all of our piled-up mental understanding. We may look like a fool or an idiot, but we are thoroughly receiving this very moment, here and now. Because we don't do this we get caught by all the things reflected in the mirror that move us around: self, other, ego. Instead, to just be in this very moment; settle into the right now, right here. We become that and are no longer confused by what's coming into our senses. We receive the sounds coming in our ears exactly as they are, without adding thoughts to them. We receive the sights exactly as they actually are, and this is the Mirror-like Wisdom which is pure by nature. When we realize this place, while we thought that we were just a tiny bump in this universe we find out that in fact we are the source of the creation of everything in this whole universe—the source of all awareness. A garbage-picking hobo or a president are all the same, relevant to this point; no matter what chair they are sitting in, each is the master of the whole universe.

Everyone only sees what is external because we live so externally. If we live more internally it is easy to see beyond stuck ideas of what is good and what is bad. There was a philosopher named Diogenes who was a great philosopher. But he had no home, no settled house. He lived in a barrel and rolled it to wherever he wanted to go and then lived in the barrel wherever he wanted to. He was full of wisdom but he needed no books because he found all the wisdom he used right inside of himself. King Alexander was dependent upon him. He would ask him for help on all kinds of matters, and Diogenes would help him so much and it would be such accurate wisdom. In gratitude, King Alexander said, "You live in this barrel; this must be very inconvenient. Please tell me—just anything: What can I give to you? I will have anything provided for you that you request." Diogenes said, "There is just one thing I would sincerely like to ask." The king said, "Yes! What?

Anything!" And Diogenes said, "Would you please get out of my light."

In this way, in each person's mind there is a whole universe, but this does not say, "I am the universe." This is all equal for every single person and has nothing to do with someone's intellect; there is no such discrimination there. Master Bankei said in his explanation of the Heart Sutra that there are lines speaking of no birth, no death, nothing missing, nothing extra—and that this is our original truth. Our mind is like a mirror that from the origin holds onto nothing at all. Because there is nothing there we hold onto nothing, and that's why we can reflect whatever comes along. If an image leaves it doesn't mean the mirror has disappeared, but that it has no original substance of its own. Even if a filthy thing is reflected, the mirror does not get dirty. And if a beautiful thing is reflected the mirror does not suddenly become beautiful. It does not get bigger because it reflects a mountain or an ocean. It always simply reflects. There is nothing at all there, and the mirror itself does not change at all. No birth, no death, no increase, no decrease, nothing extra, nothing missing, pure from the origin. Yet that which is reflected is what we all mistakenly think we are. If we correct our conditioning, nothing will be held onto whatsoever, and in that there will be no more confusion.

If there are one thousand bodies of water, one thousand moons will be reflected in them. One thousand miles of no clouds, one thousand miles of heavenly sky—from the origin our mind is pure, empty. But because of the phenomena we perceive, we get confused about what is real. No matter what kind of criminal, it is only a crime performed relative to phenomena; the mind itself remains pure, but in mistaken confusion a crime has been committed. If that clear mind is awakened to, there is no more confusion. Of course the crime, even if it is phenomena, is still a crime, and that

responsibility is there.

It is said that Amida Nyorai Buddha has come into this world to awaken us all to this basic clear mind. If that clear mind is not awakened to, there is no liberation possible, but if that mind is awakened to there is no need to be saved by someone else. If we can deeply establish our inner root, then if there are one thousand bodies of water, one thousand moons are reflected. We do zazen; we do not hold onto anything—a state of mind of no waves at all. Then the moon can be reflected in every single body of water. This is not a question of the quality of the water, but of its essence. Even if it is muddy water, if it is without any waves the moon can reflect in it perfectly. But even if it is the best purified water, if there are many waves in it, the moon cannot be reflected there. If it is without waves, all of the 10,000 things are correctly reflected—our true source, our true base. There is no fear or dualism there. It can receive everything exactly as it is.

The Buddha said, “Be a lamp unto yourself; be a refuge unto yourself. Take refuge in the Dharma, don’t take refuge in others.” And at another time, the Buddha was known to have said, “To see me is to see the Dharma.” He told his disciples, “Take refuge in the Dharma”—that truth which is exactly the same for all people. But this true nature has to be awakened to. Everyone has this capability, but not if you pile up thoughts. When you let those go, the Dharma, the Buddha, are right there. This is the law of all humankind. This is where the truth is, the Dharmakaya, one and the same with the Great Mirror-like Wisdom.

Sutra: The Equality Wisdom frees the mind from all impediments.

Without preconceived notions or ego filter we see everything as equal. When we take away our ego there is nothing profitable in the world. We can just perceive everything with our five senses without

any judgment of whether or not whatever is perceived is good or bad. So whatever comes forth, we are not confused. We are open and simple with it. These eyes that are so few millimeters in size can see Mt. Rainier, a whole ocean, and they can see the tiny buds on a branch that are just about to burst into bloom in the Spring air. These eyes don’t say things are small or big; they don’t say Mt. Rainier is big and a bud is small. Everything is seen as healthy. And when we do zazen we return to this clear perception. People are always judging themselves and others as clever or stupid. But if we return to our clear perception it’s irrelevant if a person is a rich person, a poor person, an old person, a child, whether they are intelligent or not intelligent. We are all the same; there is no confusion here.

Yet it is not that we are without feeling about things. People who are in pain, we can feel how they are in pain. People who are miserable, we can feel them in misery. And those who are suffering, we can feel their suffering, too. We perceive them exactly as they are but we are not emotionally moved around. Our original mind is healthy exactly as it is. We all have this mind when we do let go of those preconceived notions from which we are always being moved along. Our clearly seeing eyes are then opened. There are the words of how Amida Nyorai when liberating people in the world does not limit who is being liberated, whether it’s rich or poor or young or old, smart or stupid. This is the Equality Wisdom which frees the mind from all impediments. This wisdom has to be awakened to. We realize the Dharmakaya and the Mirror-like Wisdom and then that naturally moves into the Equality Wisdom.

Sutra: The All-Discerning Wisdom sees things intuitively without going through the process of reasoning.

This All-Discerning Wisdom sees precisely—and not only seeing, but hearing,

smelling and tasting. There cannot be any preconceived ideas or thoughts here, or mistaken ideas will come into play. This is not a wisdom we practice to have happen to us. We are all endowed with it from the origin. We all, from the very beginning, have this within. Einstein said that in the universe there are infinite mysteries, but among them all, the most mysterious is that human beings can understand. And this wisdom potential of all beings continues throughout all the generations. This wisdom stratum is most important for all of us, but it can be obstructed by so many ideas and thoughts that we pile up. We all, in fact, because we have this wisdom stratum, can invent and create. This is the actual functioning of our mind, not from education which we have received after our birth, but prior to this. It is not something we are taught; it is with this that we receive what we are taught. For example, what human minds can be told and understand you can tell a dog about human morals, but he can't really follow them. Nor, no matter how evolved a monkey is that you tell about human morals, he can't follow it either.

Sutra: The All-Performing Wisdom has the same characteristics as the Mirror-like Wisdom.

The fourth Wisdom has the functioning of the eyes seeing or the ears hearing, the functioning of the nose smelling, the functioning of the mouth tasting, the functioning of the hands holding things and the feet walking. These functions of the senses are the All-Performing Wisdom, which has the same characteristics as the Mirror-like Wisdom. This Wisdom is not something we get from training; it has always been there. We don't have to be taught how to nurse on our mother's milk. When our nose touches the air we know to breathe it in. We take food into our mouth, naturally mix it with saliva and swallow it; we naturally know how to do this. We have ten fingers, and bending them at their joints we can do so

many things with them—and the same with our feet. This is irrelevant to social wisdom and social ability.

Of course there are people without some physical abilities, but our deeper truth of being alive covers all of that. It is most sad if we only use our abilities for ourselves. How sad it is that society is without everyone using their abilities for everyone else. We all have these abilities equally and we can't twist them. But to use them for all people is what is most important.

It is important for all of us is to experience these Three Bodies. When we first know the experience, then the wisdom moves freely. We are all endowed with these Three Bodies, but if our ego gets in the way, then the Dharmakaya, the Nirmanakaya, and the Samboghakaya get changed to something intellectual. To realize the Great Mirror-like Wisdom we have to once dig deeply within and settle to where there is nothing remaining. To dive into this world and hold no dualistic notions, we have to let go of ourselves completely. Then there is nothing at all to be hanging onto. To know this place of the Mirror-like Wisdom, the koan of Mu is particularly excellent for clarification and dropping of all dualism. Everything that we see and hear and smell and taste and touch—all of it becomes Mu, and our whole mind and world are settled into this Mu. There is no way we can pull around anything at all. If we do it to this point without fail the rebirth will occur. "What is the Buddha?" "Three pounds of flax." "What is the Buddha?" "A dried shitstick." Flowers, trees and mountains are all being. Nothing to choose among or decide against. We have to see this with our own experience.

At the place of Master Hyakujo Ekai Zenji there was a disciple—his attendant, Issan Reiyu. It was a very cold day and the hibachi had gone out. Master Hyakujo told Reiyu to find even a single live ember. But even though Reiyu tried very hard to look through all of the ashes, there

was not one single ember left. So Master Hyakujo said, "Give me those metal sticks," and he looked meticulously, going through the ashes again and again until he found the tiniest ember still alive—the size of a match tip. He held it right out in front of the nose of Attendant Reiyu, and at that moment Reiyu was deeply enlightened.

Sutra: "The All-Discerning Wisdom sees things intuitively without going through the process of reasoning." The All-Performing Wisdom has the same characteristics as the Mirror-like Wisdom."

In this, the perception and the function happen simultaneously. But everything has to be let go of completely or this true wisdom cannot be known. We polish the All-Discerning Wisdom which sees things intuitively without going through the process of reasoning, and then we know this All-Performing Wisdom. We move and our true function from God moves naturally. We are having to polish this, always feeling how this is never sufficient, no, not sufficient yet. Whether it's sportspersons or artists or performers, in the same way we are all having to polish continually this All-Discerning Wisdom which sees things intuitively. And then, to hold out a hand to others, to liberate them—a hand that is precise and warmly caring in its activities. We have to be able to see this thoroughly and realize it exactly, from experience. Please, do not be lax in your efforts.

OSESSHIN, 2005-02, DAY FIVE

Dogen Zenji went to China to Mount Tendozan, where he met the Zen master Nyozo Zenji and completely awakened and returned to Japan. Then, in a place near Kyoto—Fukakusan, a temple called Kosho-ji—for the first time, he taught the truth, an offering of the Buddha's teaching. His opening words of that first teaching were that he had gone to China to Tendozan, and when he went there he found no words, no Buddha. He had gone there with empty hands and he returned with

empty hands. He only saw that the sun rises in the East and the moon sets sort of in the West, the rooster crows when the dawns come, and there are three years between leap years. "I trained in China for a short time"—he said it as if it had all been brief and casual. He mentioned this, and that he met a teacher there on Mount Tendozan and realized very thoroughly that the eyes are horizontal above the nose, which is vertical, and only about this he could never be deceived. "What excellent enlightenment or advanced teaching did I bring back? Nothing like that. I went empty-handed and returned empty-handed. There was no verbal teaching or Dharma. In fact there was nothing at all even like that. Only this: that the sun rises in the East and the moon sets pretty much to the West; the rooster crows when the dawn breaks, and there are three years between leap years. Only this." If there is anything named a Buddha Dharma, that is mistaken. But if the Buddha even appeared or not, the Dharma does not change; the Law always applies.

We have scientific research that discovers laws of material things of form that apply to each and every thing. These scientific laws always apply; they do not vary no matter where they're being applied. Whether it's in Asia, Europe, America, one plus one equals two. Wherever you apply them they are the same. Dogen Zenji's Dharma is that law of mind; as Rinzai Zenji has also put it, the true Dharma has no form, yet it extends in all ten directions. Scientific law is the law of material form; the Dharma is the law of mind. The true Dharma has no form; it cannot be written about, it cannot be explained. We can point to it with a helpful finger but the mind cannot be identified or put into writing. This is the true marrow of the Buddha Dharma.

In the Buddha's religion—Buddhism—the Buddha Dharma and the Buddha's Way sound similar; they sound the same but

they are very different. The Buddha's Path is our daily way to live, in our actions, how we carry our mind all day long. In each and every day, how do we live our life? This is the Buddha's Path, the Buddha's Way. But Buddhism is a teaching; it has a moral aspect, and this may necessarily change with culture and with era. Still, no matter what, there is one unchanging law and this is called the Buddha Dharma—the law of mind. While it has no form it extends into ten directions. The Buddha realized this Dharma, the law of mind, and in it saw that nothing stays the same. Everything is in flux. There is nothing which is permanent. There is truth of material forms which can be taught, but the Buddha Dharma has to be learned by living it. This teaching of the Three Bodies and the Four Wisdoms are Buddhist truths.

There is nothing as challenging and impossible to understand as our mind. From before Christ we were filing events there; from being plankton to reptiles and birds, all through Darwin's evolution and becoming mammals we've been filing all the data of each and every moment. It is impossible to even comprehend what is in this deep storehouse. And then there is the future there as well. This storehouse is called the collective unconscious; it is also called the all-embracing storehouse consciousness, or the mind's king. From when we arrived on earth through the ages of the survival of the fittest, all of the times doing who knows what actions—all of it is filed in the mind.

When we encounter this world we do this through the five windows of our senses: our seeing, our hearing, our smelling, our tasting, our touching—these are our entrance to, our windows into the world. These five windows decide and judge with an awareness which is just behind them, just behind these senses. We perceive through these windows and decide, with that awareness which is at the root of the

senses, if it is a flower, if it is a bird. The sixth consciousness is where the data of all things remain, and we grasp these things through this awareness.

The sixth awareness has its source in the collective unconscious but it is not directly connected to it. In between there is the seventh, or ego-awareness—the seventh consciousness. We perceive with our senses and then we decide and judge from the root of those, and then that information is brought to the mind source. What brings it there is this seventh consciousness. This is a transmitter system to the collective unconscious, but this transmitting, this ego-awareness has got a tilt to it. It starts to move around all on its own and be independent.

To put it in a simpler way to understand, the collective unconscious is the president of the company, the senses are the windows, and that which comes in through those windows then the vice president makes decisions about them and tells the secretary. The secretary, whose job it is to go to the president and report on what the vice president has decided, well, the secretary, instead of repeating it to the president exactly as it is, the secretary does what it feels like with the information and sometimes reports only what it feels like reporting and doesn't tell the whole story. And that confuses everyone.

This is for us the important place that we have to look at carefully. Why doesn't the secretary get it straight? We have to look at our own instincts. The ego-consciousness has an interest, a self-interest in its own needs from way long ago because of our instincts. And so it makes up these ideas of profit and loss and discrimination, and this is what gets things confused.

Eno Zenji has said it here, showing he has a thorough awareness of Buddhist psychology:

Sutra: The first five vijñanas (consciousness dependent respectively upon the five

sense organs) and the Alayavijnana (Storehouse of Universal consciousness) are 'transmuted' to Prajna in the Buddha stage; while the klista-manovijnana (soiled-mind consciousness or self-consciousness) and the manovijnana (thinking consciousness), are transmuted in the Bodhisattva stage.

These are transmuted, it says. The actuality of this world—the mountain is high, the flower is red—these actualities cannot be twisted or put on tilt. These come clearly from the functions of the five senses. And things from the past that are stored in the collective unconscious have already happened, if they have, and cannot be changed. But the self-conscious awareness consciousness and the ego-consciousness are able to affect and put a spin on things which they are perceiving and which they are transmitting between levels of awareness. In this way we also have the implements of the Three Bodies and the Four Wisdoms.

The Dharmakaya itself is that Great Mirror Wisdom, so why, if we are Buddha from the origin, do these confusions arise in the first place? This is because of the sixth and seventh consciousnesses—those of the self-conscious awareness and ego-awareness. Whether or not they have actually been transmitted, our ego as center of interest or our offering everything to society as our center, where are these actually different or the same?

Why do we do zazen? We have to see this; this is important. Hakuin Zenji says it very clearly in the Song of Zazen: "How vast and wide, the unobstructed sky of samadhi! How bright and clear, the perfect moonlight of the Fourfold Wisdom! At this moment, what more need we seek?" At the beginning of the sutra he says, "All sentient beings are essentially Buddhas." So why does ego get brought into it in the first place? We have to know this.

Hakuin also says, "If on reflecting within ourselves we directly realize self-nature,

giving proof to the truth that self-nature is no-nature, we will have gone far beyond idle speculation and the gate of the oneness of cause and effect is thereby opened." We get caught on this idea that there is an "I" and that a "me" exists, when actually there is no such thing as an "I" or a "me," there is only data. There is no such thing as a limited ego, but we take it on as who we are—mistakenly—when all there is, in fact, is true nature. So we have to clarify this, and for this we do zazen.

"If on reflecting within ourselves we directly realize self-nature, giving proof to the truth that self-nature is no-nature"—while thinking that we are an ego, by mistake we get to this place where we seem to be an ego when actually, "How vast and wide the unobstructed sky of samadhi! How bright and clear the perfect moonlight of the Fourfold Wisdom! At this moment, what more need we seek?" Use these senses with no ego included, and then return to the true connecting of consciousness levels. For this we do zazen.

We are mind from the origin; we are this true nature. The collective consciousness holds all of the data, and if we clarify our awareness we can see clearly how our mind is actually a mirror and that in fact our awareness is just this mirror without any murkiness and preferences and attachment, and it reflects everything exactly as it is. If it reflects love and hate and joy, then it becomes love and hate and joy. We realize that it is all reflection and that this Great Mirror Mind is that collective consciousness.

Sutra: The first five vijñanas (consciousness dependent respectively upon the five sense organs) and the Alayavijnana (Storehouse of Universal consciousness) are 'transmuted' to Prajna in the Buddha stage; while the klista-manovijnana (soiled-mind consciousness or self-consciousness) and the manovijnana (thinking consciousness), are transmuted in the Bodhisattva stage.

These so called ‘transmutations of vijnana’ are only changes of appellations and not a change of substance.

We see that this consciousness is just as it is. But because we get caught on our ideas about things and our attachments to things, we don’t reflect them as we perceive them and as they truthfully are. Instead, we color them. This collective consciousness is the same as the Dharmakaya or the Great Mirror Wisdom, yet if there is still darkness there we stay insecure. And in the darkness we worry that people are trying to get to us when actually it is the light—the light that comes from the Great Mirror Wisdom. This is what zazen is for—to bring this light on. There are not two separate, divided worlds, one of lightness and one of darkness. When we are in the darkness, the light of the Dharmakaya still shines, and it’s not that something changes but that the light comes to show us what it always was.

We do zazen to not be thinking anything extra. We then realize that we are this Great Mirror-like Mind. What we use is that data of the collective consciousness, but will it be used in a mind that is brightly lit, or dark and suspicious? This is the difference. If we don’t use it for ourselves and we do use it for others, that makes the bright light. This is what Hakuin Zenji writes when he says, “How vast and wide the unobstructed sky of samadhi! How bright and clear the perfect moonlight of the Fourfold Wisdom.”

We are not making the collective consciousness become the Dharmakaya; in zazen we see that it was always the same thing. To think that the clouds make the moon go away is in error; when the clouds go, the same bright moon has always been there and a huge sky appears. It is not that the ego can make the light disappear; when the clouds are gone, the bright light is apparent. As it is said in the poems of Cold Mountain, “My awakened mind is

like the bright Autumn moon that lights the whole world. And that light pierces to the very bottom of the stream but I can’t tell anyone of it because if I say it, it’s only words.” For each of us, please experience it!

When we are suspicious and full of swirling murkiness in our mind, that ego-awareness can be changed. With the Universal Nature Wisdom we take our ego filter’s functioning and transmute it into the wisdom that we can then give everything to all beings and not just make it our own narrow, ego-idea that has made us suspicious and swirling and murky. Then we can see this become the Mysterious Observing Wisdom—that while putting others as our emphasis we can then see what they really need most, and function in accordance with that seeing. The five senses all function then to give life to the Perfecting of Wisdom activity.

In our mind, the light pours into the collective consciousness through the ego that was covering it before. When that light pours through, the Perfect Mirror Wisdom is revealed—the Dharmakaya. And if that ego functioning of the ego consciousness is transmuted, it becomes the wisdom that can then liberate all beings. It changes the Sambhogakaya, and all of our actions and senses then become the source of liberation for all beings. We are then the Perfection of Action Wisdom—the Nirmanakaya. There the ignorant mind then reveals it has been the Buddha nature all along and we see that it was just the clouds that covered over our ability to liberate others. It was always there from the origin. In this way the Sixth Patriarch teaches us here. He is saying the deluded mind is our mind and the clear mind is also our mind; they are not two separate minds. It is only a matter of a slightly different view.

But even though we say the Buddha nature we cannot get caught on names or on naming the various consciousnesses.

Nor is there any such thing as a thing to be found such as a Buddha somewhere and an ignorant person somewhere else; these are only the slightest changes of mind. This is what Dogen Zenji was saying when he said that when he was in China he met a teacher and realized very thoroughly that the eyes are horizontal above the nose, which is vertical, and that only about that he could never be deceived. What excellent enlightenment or advanced teaching did he bring back? Nothing like that. He went empty-handed and returned empty-handed. There was no verbal teaching or Dharma. There was nothing at all except the sun did rise in the East and the moon sets pretty much to the West, the rooster crows when the dawn breaks, and there are three years between leap years. In this way he saw it there. It sounds a little philosophical, but our zazen is much more simple: only to sweep away those clouds and not be moved around by anything. We have to put everything into doing that completely! Even if Dogen said it was done casually or it sounds that way, it was given everything to let go of those stuck places that we are still carrying around. Everything thinks there is some special thing to find, though. Dogen said it very clearly: There are no words and no Dharma to find there. We have to let go of that ego filter.

Here, what we have to see clearly is how to do our zazen correctly. We are not sitting here to become something. We have continually thought and thought and thought, and piled up all these thoughts—piled up so much! Where one mind-moment occurs, we let go of it. Nothing difficult to do; it is clear to begin with from the origin. It is from the origin that we are this clarified mind. But it is not always so easy to let go. We then use the breath or Mu. If we think or hope to get something, we make ourselves heavy. To sit each sitting, to sit each day! Here, on this fifth day we enter a clear, bright state of mind and we see that there was nothing else to add.

Please do clear and bright zazen, and don't be mistaken about this!

OSESSHIN, 2005-02, DAY SIX

Sutra: When you are able to free yourself entirely from attachment to sense-objects at the time these so-called 'transmutations' take place, you will forever abide in the repeatedly-arising Naga (dragon) Samadhi.

In this way the Sixth Patriarch teaches of the Three Bodies and the Four Wisdoms—the Dharmakaya, the Sambhogakaya, the Nirmanakaya, the Perfect Mirror Wisdom, the Universal Nature Wisdom, the Mysterious Observing Wisdom, the Perfecting of Action Wisdom—teaching that these are different ways of expressing the same thing. Our five senses are windows to encounter the external world; then there are the awarenesses that note and judge what we perceive. That is the sixth consciousness. The seventh consciousness is our ego awareness. The eighth, where everything we experience is always recorded, is the collective consciousness. So it is different for each person, yet we all have a capability of mind that is common to all of us as well. This seventh awareness—the ego awareness—works between the sixth and the eighth consciousnesses. This consciousness is what gets us confused. Originally we see everything equally, but our ego awareness came into play and we began to strongly think of ourselves as a limited, isolated existence.

Up to twenty-three months of age we are not so confused by all of this. But then we begin to perceive and think in terms of self and others, profit and loss, preferences. And while we still want to help others, our ego's position stays firm. We think this is our social responsibility, but this ego awareness obstructs us from truly helping all beings equally. Its small, limited view and version of things increases and interrupts a greater world peace. The seventh awareness—the ego

awareness—is stilled by zazen. We align our breath; we become calm over our over-excited thoughts and return to our original nature. This is zazen.

If we let go of this idea of a small self we can know this Perfect Mirror Wisdom. We know it because we are *it* from the origin. We return to this original state of mind and then that ego awareness returns to seeing things as equal, not preferred, and the sixth awareness changes to the Mysterious Observing Wisdom. The fifth level of awareness then becomes the Perfecting of Action Wisdom and our nature returns from ego to where it can become the Dharmakaya, the Sambhogakaya, the Nirmanakaya, and we switch from being self-centered to returning to putting all beings in society as our primary priority and focus. We realize all things as equal yet see them exactly as they are individually as well—clearly and without preference, though. We function with this perfectly and appropriately operating activity. This is the Perfecting of Action Wisdom.

If we are caught and attached, these stuck places can then be released. As it says in the Diamond Sutra, “Residing in no place, awakened mind arises.” And so it is like a mirror. There is nothing stagnating there; it is always changing and fresh. This is the Naga Samadhi written about here.

Three hundred years ago there was a way of Zen called the Unborn nature Zen that was taught by Master Bankei. He said there was actually only this Unborn Buddha nature. We received this and only this from our parents; everything else we stuck on later. “As proof,” he said, “you all came here to hear me talk. But if you hear the dog barking outside, even though you didn’t come here to hear a dog barking, you hear it anyway. This is because we are born with this mirror-like nature that perceives everything naturally and equally. Nothing stays in a mirror when the object is gone. Without birth, without death,

there is nothing soiled, nothing clean, nothing increasing, nothing decreasing. A beautiful thing is reflected but the mirror doesn’t become beautiful. A dog poop is reflected but the mirror doesn’t become dirty, nor does it become heavier when it reflects something heavy, or light if it reflects something light. Our mind, similarly, does not increase or decrease. Before it reflects something it is empty of anything. Empty of anything, our mind is like this mirror, and that is its true nature.

Scientists analyzing human behavior talk about conditioned reflexes. But scientists rely on their observations of things of form and cells that can be seen and they cannot go beyond that limit to describe things that are not visible. Why *do* we have such a great love and compassion for all beings? This they cannot measure nor can they explain. This is why religion comes into the picture. No matter how much we analyze genes, we cannot find where the compassion for all beings comes forth. It is not just from education. So this is where we need religion.

We stand, we sit, we lie down, but what *is* that that is doing that? We are not like some Pinocchio being moved around by a puppeteer. But we do go beyond our small self, and even can sacrifice ourselves for others or for society. We won’t find this place by analysis. It is not a matter of form that can be discovered by scientists. But if we let go of our limited view in a huge, spacious way, we can see more clearly. Scientists talk about conditioned reflexes, but if we let go of that observation and see it from a huger point of view, we can function beyond that limited ego. Without that there will be no true world peace.

We see things, we hear things, we taste things, we feel things and it appears there is a “me” doing that seeing, hearing, tasting and feeling, because since age three we relate to that perspective. We put on eyeglasses that make us think “I” see something, “I” hear something, “I” taste

something—that there is such a thing as a “me” that is doing that. But it doesn’t need such a name; it is a given capability. What appears, we reflect naturally, no matter what appears. This is true. It is all received exactly as is. If we add on a “me” or an “I” we perceive it as coming from there, but in fact we have had this compassion which is our natural capability, from the origin. We don’t need to call it a name. Who *is* compassionate? We can call it Buddha or God, but if we look for God or Buddha in a place coming from profit or for our preferred purposes, however, we turn them into devils. We have to see this clearly or we can’t see God correctly.

Our ego awareness is something that from the origin did not even exist. We cannot do zazen for egoistic reasons; we sit to return to our true root. Originally we don’t have to do zazen because we come already aligned. Nangaku Ejo’s disciple, Baso Doitsu, would always be sitting zazen on his teacher’s mountain, and he became famous because he was always sitting. One day, Nangaku Ejo Zenji came to see his disciple who was sitting zazen and asked him, “What are you sitting for?” Baso replied, “Yes! I am clarifying my mind to realize the mind of Buddha.”

Hearing this, Ejo sat down, picked up a tile in front of him—in front of Baso—and started scratching at it with a stone. And Baso asked him, since he was sitting right in front of him, what he was doing. He said, “I am polishing this tile and I’m going to make it into a mirror.” Baso said, “That’s ridiculous! A tile is a tile, it’s not a mirror.”

“Is that right? Then if we sit we’ll realize satori?” That landed heavily on Baso. He said, “You said something big there! Should we not do any zazen then?” “No, it’s not that. But if you want a cart to move, do you whip the cart or do you whip the horse?” And for the first time, Baso got it—how it was the mind that had to be worked on, not the body.

We sit to let go of our caught places and to realize that original, joyful, huge mind; we don’t become something else. We see a bird, and that is me. We see a mountain and that is me. It hurts and it’s painful and that is me. We feel joyful and that is me. We don’t have to name what we’re hearing and feeling and seeing, we just become it. When the bell rings, we sit. When the gong goes, we go to eat. There is nothing more than that. “Today, zazen didn’t go so well”—nothing to worry about there, either. We have to be able to do this in this way, or even if we sit for ten years we will not resolve it.

When we hear this we think we might as well just sit comfortably then, and relax. But it’s not that, either—or else if someone said we should kill ourselves we’d just say, “Well, that’s fine, too.” But that is because we’re comfortable and not really life-on-the-line, that we could say that. We have to let go of the stuck places that we ourselves have gotten stuck on. It’s not society that got us stuck on them nor is it nature that stuck them on us. That makes what it is that got stuck, ourselves. We want to become as we *really* are and so we sit. We have to do this great cleaning of all that is stuck and cluttered inside. This is a huge job. We can see this clearly if we look at how people are in society. We have to do this and take the responsibility for it very seriously. We are not looking for a something to become, but to do it so thoroughly and wholeheartedly that we cannot even know if we are standing or sitting or walking. Because we are all so controlling—we all the time have to control everything—that’s why we can’t let go to that point. But now that it is the sixth day of course there are many here who are in that state of mind, fairly out of it.

We have to drop everything—our social connections, our ideas of control. Everybody says that is scary and feels suicidal and so we fail to let go of all our controlling self habits. But do you prefer to live

in this narrow, limited, rigid way instead? Not everyone finds it so easy, but for even some to realize this, or we cannot know this huge mind. This is the Naga Samadhi which is written about here, and the time for doing that is right now.

In Zen the most important point is to completely cut through that root of self-conscious awareness; this is the central work of Zen. When in the olden days they said to die completely, this is what they meant. Whether it's for three minutes or even for one minute, this is what is most important. We don't have to do it, keep at it, for a whole lifetime; just to experience this and we change from the root. If we do not, we stay with this narrow-minded misery. To use the *susokkan*, to use the *koan*, to cut through to that root of self-conscious awareness. One minute or even thirty seconds—if we truly slash through to the very bottom, our whole way of being changes right then. Even for thirty seconds to see from that ego-free place, this is to return to our Original Home. We all have a deep passion for doing that; we can't be afraid. We have been living, thinking that our conditioning is what is most important. What a huge mistake! Religion is to let go of all of that and return to the way of God.

During the East-West Spiritual Exchange [the *roshi*] was staying in a Benedictine contemplative monastery, and then following that there was an excellent symposium at the Vatican where Father Tornini—a Benedictine monk—was asked why, when there was family love and friends' love he would leave that behind. He said he found those also important, but he was filled with God's love. This is very important. Even in this one *sesshin*, this is possible to realize. We have to do it because we can't leave it undone. Whether we will be able to do it or not, we have to go for it. In Zen we have to do it daily and always, bringing our mind into that great oneness: To see this very clearly!

Sutra: (Upon hearing this), Chih Tung realized suddenly the Prajna of his Essence of Mind and submitted the following stanza to the Patriarch:

Intrinsically, the three Bodies are within our Essence of Mind.

When our mind is enlightened the four Prajnas will appear therein.

When Bodies and Prajnas absolutely identify with each other we shall be able to respond (in accordance with their temperaments and dispositions) to the appeals of all beings, no matter what forms they may assume.

To start by seeking for Tri-kaya and the four Prajnas is to take an entirely wrong course (for being inherent in us they are to be realized and not to be sought).

To try to 'grasp' or 'confine' them is to go against their intrinsic nature.

The monk came to know that these Four Wisdoms—the Perfect Mirror Wisdom, the Universal Nature Wisdom, the Mysterious Observing Wisdom, the Perfecting of Action Wisdom—are our original state of mind, not something to find externally. He then wrote a poem: "Vairocana Buddha is not somewhere else. Our very mind as it is, is the Dharmakaya, the Sambhogakaya, the Nirmanakaya, and it becomes these wisdoms: the Perfect Mirror Wisdom, the Universal Nature Wisdom, the Mysterious Observing Wisdom, the Perfecting of Action Wisdom." When our mind is silenced we see from the origin that Perfect Mirror Wisdom. With that we can see mountains and rivers and all things as equal. And then we can know that Mysterious Observing Wisdom and see that it is right inside of us and it perceives everything and how it has to be done as well. And that how we also have in us this Perfecting of Action Wisdom so that we know, whatever needs to be done, no matter how challenging and difficult it is, we can do it.

These Three Bodies and Four Wisdoms are our true base. Many names, but the

same mind, which expresses as very many different things: a mirror, a perception of things as equal and as its functioning in every encounter. It can also appear as the Dharmakaya, the Sambhogakaya, or the Nirmanakaya. This is our truth and we have to see it within from our own experience.

If we look at how things are in society we can see all the many needs. We don't come to have these Wisdoms from training; we have always been endowed with them. If we are always holding important our zazen, we do not need to hold onto their names and their definitions. They will all be revealed freely and expressed as they are necessary.

Sutra: Through you, Sir, I am now able to grasp the profundity of their meaning, And henceforth I may discard forever their false and arbitrary names.

Thanks to the Sixth Patriarch I have now been able to see this clearly. He thanked him sincerely and said that the subtlety of this profundity still had to be polished as a jewel which has been mined and then has to be polished and refined. Then it will become the life energy of all beings. To awaken to, and then polish this wisdom for all beings.

How to use this wisdom is what koans teach us. These Four Wisdoms are clarified by these koans. But above everything else, first we have to realize this Perfect Mirror Wisdom and know the functioning of the Dharmakaya. We polish this Wisdom of the Perfect Mirror Wisdom with that koan of Joshu's Mu. The Universal Nature Wisdom we polish with Tozan's koan of the three pounds of flax. And the Mysterious Observing Wisdom we polish with Hyakujo's koan of the fox. Finally, the Perfecting of Action Wisdom is polished with the koan of Shuzan's Shippei. The various expressions of the ancients' wisdom we polish with these koans. The basis of all of this has to be held precious to be able to see what exactly can be done

for the liberation of all beings. We have to make these efforts from the basics up.

OSESSHIN, 2005-02, DAY SEVEN

Sutra: *Bhikkhu Zhi Ch'ang*, a native of Kuei Ch'i of Hsin Chou, joined the Order in his childhood, and was very zealous in his efforts to realize the Essence of Mind. One day, he came to pay homage to the Patriarch, and was asked by the latter whence and why he came. "I have recently been to the White Cliff Mountain in Hung Chou," replied he, "to interview the Master Ta T'ung, who was good enough to teach me how to realize the Essence of Mind and thereby attain Buddhahood. But as I still have some doubts, I have travelled far to pay you respect. Will you kindly clear them up for me, Sir."

'What instruction did he give you?' asked the Patriarch.

After staying there for three months without being given any instruction, and being zealous for the Dharma, I went alone to his chamber one night and asked him what was my Essence of Mind. 'Do you see the illimitable void?' he asked. 'Yes, I do,' I replied. Then he asked me whether the void had any particular form, and when I said that the void is formless and therefore cannot have any particular form, he said, 'Your Essence of Mind is like the void. To realize that nothing can be seen is right seeing.

'To realize that nothing is knowable is true knowledge. To realize that it is neither green nor yellow, neither long nor short, that it is pure by nature, that its quintessence is perfect and clear, is to realize the Essence of Mind and thereby attain Buddhahood, which is also called the Buddha-knowledge.' As I do not quite understand his teaching, will you please enlighten me, Sir.

"How did Master Daitso teach you? What did you not understand?" The monk answered, "After being there for three months I had not received any teaching at all. Being determined and committed, I became frustrated and went to the

master's chamber one night and asked, 'What is the essence of my mind? It is said that to realize our true mind directly and see within, we become Buddha. What is my truth?' Master Daitso said to me, 'Do you see the illimitable void, the expanse of the whole universe?' I said, 'Yes, of course, I see it.' He said, 'Is there a form there?' I answered, 'Of course, it has no form.' He said, 'Then there is no form of the universe, and the same is true of your essence.'"

Sutra: To realize that nothing is knowable is true knowledge. To realize that it is neither green nor yellow, neither long nor short, that it is pure by nature, that its quintessence is perfect and clear, is to realize the Essence of Mind and thereby attain Buddhahood, which is also called the Buddha-knowledge.

To realize that is to know your true self. If there is no shape there is no way to grasp it. This is true wisdom. "To understand this is true kensho.' I do not quite understand all of this. Please teach me more exactly," the monk asked.

Sutra: "His teaching indicates," said the Patriarch, "that he still retains the arbitrary concepts of views and knowledge, and this explains why he fails to make it clear to you."

What Master Daitso said is not mistaken but it is still coming from mental understanding, and this is not correct. If you try to understand from mentally, that is only relative understanding. Where there is someone to do the understanding, there is no clarity and freshness. Please listen to this poem that I have written.

Sutra: Listen to my stanza:

To realize that nothing can be seen
but to retain the concept of
'invisibility' Is like the surface of the
sun obscured by passing clouds."

To say there is no form is still in the relative realm of to have a form and to not have a form, and this is only perception with mental ideas. It is not the true

experience of it, which is beyond having and not having.

Sutra: To realize that nothing is knowable but to retain the concept of 'unknowability' May be likened to a clear sky disfigured by a lightning flash.
To let these arbitrary concepts rise spontaneously in your mind
Indicates that you have misidentified the Essence of Mind, and that you have not yet found the skillful means to realize it.

To hold onto and carry around an idea of things being not knowable is a big burden. A concept of an unknowability is still only a shadow of the experience of that. Ideas, definitions of emptiness, are still remaining as traces there. If there is nothing, how could there be traces?

Sutra: To let these arbitrary concepts rise spontaneously in your mind Indicates that you have misidentified the Essence of Mind, and that you have not yet found the skilful means to realize it.

If you realize for one moment that these arbitrary concepts are wrong,
Your own spiritual light will shine forth permanently.

If we take ideas for the actuality it is like seeing a shadow and thinking that shadow is the object. Break through that idea of nothing at all! Pierce through that which tries to understand it! Riku Taifu came to Master Nansen with some words of Jo Hoshi, who was a famous man in China before Daruma Daishi and who had written the famous work called the Hōzōron. Riku Taifu excitedly brought these words to Nansen which he thought were words of great enlightenment: "Heaven and earth are of one root; all things and I are the same." Riku Taifu brought these words to Master Nansen and was sure they were true words of enlightenment, and Master Nansen pointed at a peony that was blooming in the garden. It was just that time of year. And he said, "People today see this flower as if in a dream.

Do you actually look at this flower and think to yourself, 'Heaven and earth are of one root; all things and I are one and the same'? Do you really look at flowers, thinking about that? That's ridiculous!" There is no liberation in doing that. Better to just read a book in the university library. Why? Even if we can see this, there is no true experience in those words in only knowing them.

If we don't put a door and windows in a house, it will only be a box with no air circulating. Only when there are doors and windows can it function as a house. We have to open the door to go in and out, but if we leave it wide open in the winter it will be chilly. There are many kinds of windows, but the window is not defined by the frame but of the empty space it surrounds. The same is true of a door. Most important in windows and doors is their space. Yet we cannot call them their space. We can only describe them by their frame though they are not their frame. Because they are space we can see the stars through the windows, and feel the warm Spring breeze. The flowers are blooming outside; we can tell that. The Fall leaves blow in sometimes, and even snow blows in. Because anything can blow in, sometimes we close them, but anything can come through: the wind, the scenery. So they are windows and doors because of the space.

Nowadays there are doors that only open if you have a certain name and push a certain button, but that is not because it is a door. Only human's ideas of protection make that not the nature of a door and a window. A door and a window let things in and out freely. The same is true of Buddha nature. It doesn't happen just because we call it "Buddha nature."

Our eyes can see everything: That is eyes. This is because they are empty and void. If there is an injury to our eye, we cannot see, or it gets obstructed. Our ears do not only hear what we like. There are no pref-

erences in what comes into our ears and our senses alone. Our awareness makes the preferences. Our original capability we received from our parents is emptiness and being void, but our awareness gets in our way so we can't see and hear things just exactly as they are. The mental notions interrupt. As Rinzai says, "In this five-foot lump of red flesh there is a true person of no rank, always coming in and out of the orifices. As our eyes it becomes seeing, as our ears it becomes hearing, as our nose it becomes smelling, as our mouth it becomes tasting. As our hands it becomes holding things, as our feet it becomes walking." But when we hear of this true person of no rank, we imagine that there is some special something there. There is no special something like this; it is only that which is unobstructed, coming and going freely.

In the Buddha Dharma emptiness and void are taught. So what are the 6.3 billion people? We have to see this clearly. Without seeing this we get confused. What is uniting all of these people? Whether it is in the old times or nowadays, old people, young people, Europeans, Asians, Americans, this is true beyond all locality and culture and differences; we have to awaken to that basic, unifying factor of all beings, and we have to know emptiness and void to see this. What is it that we are all equally endowed with? No matter what sutra, it always ends with the words that mean the splendid, all-equal, human truth is awakened to—that which all beings are endowed with, that to which the Buddha awakened. Our mind's opening is aided by this to realize this true value of all beings. At the Buddha's awakening he said, "How wondrous! How wondrous! All beings are without exception endowed with the same clear, bright mind to which I have just awakened." When the Buddha was first awakened he said first of everything that he did not get this mind from doing training. He had always had it, but had just been able to awaken to it. And that all

humans have the same wisdom and love within. This is extremely radical.

When it is dark we are insecure and in fear. But when the sun comes up we can see the mountains, we can see the animals; one by one their shapes appear and become clarified. This is like the relief of our anxiety from not knowing—our ignorance disappears as the light comes. We can see directly what exists, not only by a mental, relative understanding but by a direct perception. This is wisdom.

Our mutual wisdom is like the sun rising in the sky. We have to know it in its truest sense. The sun is not only endowed with the quality of light, but also of warmth. The sun rises and the small buds and sprouts come to life. Wisdom is love that cultivates all things, bringing great joy to all creatures. This is the actual wisdom; we love everything like our own child. Here we thought there was only this small, narrow, “I,” but through knowing the void and emptiness we see all existence, and in that, discover the meaning of our true life. This cannot be done by mental, rational understanding. As Daruma Daishi has said, to let go of all connections to the external, to let go of all concerns within, and when we are like a tall, firm, wall, then we are truly at one with the Path. “To cut off all external connections”—to put away those layers of egoism. It is we who have made this earth so polluted and destroyed our natural resources irresponsibly, leaving nothing for our descendants but ruin and pollution.

Hearing it this way we feel like we sort of get it, we sort of understand. But sort of understanding will not resolve our fear and our resentment and our hatred, our bitter feelings, or we would all already be at peace because everybody sort of understands it. From the times of Socrates and Confucius, the Buddha, Christ, they have taught the same thing, so why are we still so much in conflict? Because we cannot resolve it with a mental perception.

Zen is not about such a mental idea; there is no true liberation in that. As Master Ryokan said, when we are in crisis to become totally in crisis; when we are sick, being sick is fine, in crisis, crisis is fine, in death, death is fine. So when the Sumatran tsunami suddenly kills 200,000 people, can we really say this? When we see something like this we see what a huge, bitter hatred we carry around with us, and why. Religion does not seem to help that. To see this clearly, and not only perceive it conceptually. [The roshi] hopes the sesshin can be used by everybody for letting go of those concepts and seeing directly.

Of course we have Daruma Daishi's words to let go of all connections to the external world and to let go of all concerns within—to break through any differences between “inside” and “outside.” It will not all be suddenly resolved by doing this, but if we don't work at this it will only get worse. It is not about mentally seeking emptiness and void, but for all of us to see clearly, or sesshin would not have any meaning. We put aside our many responsibilities to come here and sit, rubbing sleepy eyes, rubbing painful legs, because we have seen that this must not get any worse. We have vowed that. The Sixth Patriarch is saying how this can only be done if we take it out of the world of the conceptual and make it real.

Sutra: Having heard this Chih Ch'ang at once felt that his mind was enlightened.

Thereupon, he submitted the following stanza to the Patriarch:

To allow the concepts of invisibility and
unknowability to rise in the mind
Is to seek Bodhi without freeing oneself
from the concepts of phenomena.
He who is puffed up by the slightest
impression, ‘I am now enlightened,’
Is no better than he was
when under delusion.
Had I not put myself at the
feet of the Patriarch
I should have been bewildered without

knowing the right way to go.

Hearing this, Chijo (Zhi Ch'ang) understood that there is only this truth: seeing, hearing, walking, standing—and it cannot be blind activity either. Being not at all attached to anything within, we snip away all of our extra thoughts and opinions. Chijo had said, “To allow the concepts of invisibility and unknowability to rise in the mind is to seek Bodhi without freeing oneself from the concepts of phenomena.” And if we say that there is any idea that we have understood it, then it is also conceptual. We have to directly perceive this without any bit of mental understanding inserted.

Sutra: If I had not asked you this I would have been deluded for my whole life. I was just piling up delusion on delusion, but now, right here, I find I have no existence at all.

In this way Chijo expressed his deep gratitude to the Sixth Patriarch.

Sutra: One day, Zhi Ch'ang asked the Patriarch, “Buddha preached the doctrine of ‘Three Vehicles’ and also that of a ‘Supreme Vehicle’. As I do not understand this, will you please explain?”

“I have another question,” said Chijo. “Here we are, taught that we should do it all in one straight line, that there is only one thing to do, and to do it continually. And yet here we have the doctrine of Three Vehicles and also that of a Supreme Vehicle. How should I understand this?”

Sutra: The Patriarch replied, “(In trying to understand these), you should introspect your own mind and act independently of things and phenomena. The distinction of these four vehicles does not exist in the Dharma itself but in the differentiation of people’s minds. To see, to hear, and to recite the sutra is the small vehicle. To know the Dharma and to understand its meaning is the middle vehicle. To put the Dharma into actual practice is the great vehicle. To understand thoroughly all Dharmas, to have absorbed them completely, to be free from all attachments, to be above

phenomena, and to be in possession of nothing, is the Supreme Vehicle.”

There is nothing other than the clarification of your own truth. Why do you look away from that? There is only one truth, but of people there are various kinds. Some have to see it to believe; some receive and realize it directly. There is no difference in the Dharma, only in the people perceiving it. Some even hear the words from the Buddha’s own mouth. In the same way there are, in going to school, elementary schools, junior high schools, high schools, universities, graduate schools, but they have to be attended in order. There are some who read and hear and know the Dharma from that. There are some who practice the vow of the Mahayana. In order to realize this truth we have to see that all beings have clear nature. That is all there is. That is the most important bottom line. For realizing this there are many ways to come to it. This is what is meant by the Supreme Vehicle. There are many entrances, but if we get caught on anything, on any aspect of the truth, it is far from the truth.

To realize this truth and manifest compassion and true wisdom, and when doing something for others that is good, to not stop and get stuck at that, either. That makes the world difficult also. While doing what we think is good we make shadows, and make heaviness for others—the one helping and the one being helped. We don’t realize what heaviness we have produced for the person we are helping. We have to make sure this is not being done for our own self-satisfaction; we have to see the equal value of all beings. To not be seeing others as weak or compromised but to just be doing it. This is true whether it works well or not—to just have done it and feel good about that whether people are speaking well about us or speaking poorly of us; this doesn’t matter. To let go of ourselves completely and totally.

When we see it like this we see that we

have to first let go of all of our caught places completely to awaken to our true nature directly and not be caught on any ideas about things and to see all humankind directly. To not see that we are such a splendid person after all—this is already extra. We have to see how we are all one and the same state of mind that the Buddha awakened to, as Jofukyo Bodhisattva, written about in the Lotus Sutra did. He would bow and prostrate to every single person that he met, saying, “I have nothing against you; you are truly a Buddha.” People would hear this and be prostrated to and they would spit on him and throw stones at him. This is said to be a past life of the Buddha, but in fact, this is the form of the future, where we are all seeing this in each other. To be able to unconditionally bow and prostrate to all people: This is what true zazen is.

Sutra: “To understand thoroughly all Dharmas, to have absorbed them completely, to be free from all attachments, to be above phenomena, and to be in possession of nothing, is the Supreme Vehicle. “Since the word ‘yana’ (vehicle) implies ‘motion’ (i.e., putting into practice), argument on this point is quite unnecessary. All depends on self-practice, so you need not ask me any more. (But I may remind you that) at all times the Essence of Mind is in a state of ‘Thusness’.” Chih Ch’ang made obeisance and thanked the Patriarch.

Henceforth, he acted as his attendant until the death of the Master.

Finally the Sixth Patriarch concludes with this—that love and wisdom that embrace all beings is what we are. We have to each realize this. Our Original Nature is to embrace everyone and everything. This is Buddha nature, and to actualize this is human’s responsibility. We don’t need to ask someone else about this, the Sixth Patriarch says, but you have to realize it yourself. And remember always that we are not yet sufficient, not yet sufficient, and continue from morning till night and from night until morning, standing, sit-

ting, walking. Whatever you’re doing, your Buddha nature will manifest. This is the Supreme Vehicle. To realize this always; just this, at any time—all the time—is the life of the Buddha. Chijo was deeply, deeply grateful, and from that time on he never left the side of the Sixth Patriarch.

OSESSHIN, 2005-09, DAY ONE

Opening Poem

Who within is the supreme Dharma vessel?

Enter the mysterious gate of true, eternal Nirvana

For this week of deep training, as of old;

Clearly see Self-nature, thereby requiting our unrepayable obligation to the Ancestors!

Today we have the section about the monk Shido.

Sutra: *Bhikkhu Chih Tao*, a native of Nan Hai of Kwang Tung, came to the Patriarch for instruction, saying, “Since I joined the Order I have read the Maha Parinirvana Sutra for more than ten years, but I have not yet grasped its main idea. Will you please teach me?” “Which part of it do you not understand?” asked the Patriarch.

This is the section on So Shido, a native of Nankai of Kosshu. There are two states with the same name of Kosshu in China. Their meanings are different; one means “wide state.” From here came the Sixth Patriarch. Shido asked, “Since I joined the Order I have read the Mahaparinirvana Sutra for more than ten years but have not grasped its main idea. Will you please teach me? I have until today been so thankful for this Sutra.”

It is generally thought that this was the Buddha’s last sutra, but the Yuikyo was in fact the Buddha’s last sutra. For ten years this monk says that he’s been studying this sutra and has some serious questions. “What are your questions?” the Patriarch then asks.

Sutra: “Which part of it do you not understand?” asked the Patriarch.

“It is about this part, Sir, that I am doubtful: ‘All things are impermanent, and so they belong to the Dharma of becoming and cessation (i.e., Samskrita Dharma). When both becoming and cessation cease to operate, the bliss of perfect rest and cessation of changes (i.e., Nirvana) arises.’” “What makes you doubt?” asked the Patriarch.

Shido then asks his question. These are famous lines from the Mahaparinirvana Sutra: “All things are impermanent and so they belong to the Dharma of becoming and cessation. When both becoming and cessation cease to operate, the bliss of Perfect Rest and Cessation of Changes (i.e., Nirvana) arises.”

Sesan Doji was a monk in old India, said to be a previous incarnation of the Buddha. His last name means “child” and he received that name because his mind of training was pure and clear a child. He offered his mind completely to the Path; he sought the profound truth above everything else. One day an ogre, Rasetsu, came along and was chanting and this young monk heard him chant “All things are impermanent, and so they belong to the Dharma of becoming and cessation.” There is nothing permanent in this world. When Sesan Doji heard the ogre he knew that he had realized to a point, but while realizing that everything was in constant change there must also be something eternal or else it would be too melancholy and there would be nothing to believe in. So he said to the ogre Rasetsu, “There must be more to that song; songs have four lines and you’re only singing the first two. Please tell me those last lines. I want hear those—the truth is concealed in those lines.” The ogre Rasetsu said “I have not had any human flesh for days and I’m so hungry! I’m so hungry I can’t even open my mouth to give those last verses! I’m just too weak and tired.” So Sesan Doji said, “I don’t need this physical body I

only need to know that truth in those last lines. Tell me those two lines and then you can have my body.”

‘When both becoming and cessation cease to operate the bliss of Perfect Rest and Cessation of Changes arises.’ In humans there are dualistic thoughts and because of those dualistic thoughts we suffer. Because we hold an awareness of life and death being separate—two separate things, that is why we are so insecure. But if that life-energy of being alive is just that as it is then that dying energy is only also just that as it is. These are examples of all kinds of dualistic possibilities of which there are so many: good and bad; gain and loss; winning and losing. But the actuality is not that there is something good relative to something bad, or some kind of profit which is relative to some kind of loss. There is only the very thing itself, experienced totally and wholly. And that goes far beyond that dualistic separation which our rational mind perceives. But people think that this is only logic or words because we cannot put it into words, yet we try to and when we try to our mind gets confused. That place of being untwisted, of not turned around by anything, there is where we meet the truth. To see it clearly and respond simultaneously; the difference between perceiving it dualistically and perceiving it directly is like the difference between heaven and earth. This is the simultaneous response verses the dualistic response.

Hearing the song’s last two lines, Seson Doji saw clearly. “When both becoming and cessation cease to operate the bliss of Perfect Rest and cessation of Changes arises.” This is all about what takes place in our mind in accordance with how we perceive things and this is how we have to respond. It has to be direct—and that decides how the state of our mind is. Ogre Rasetsu sang those last two lines and Seson Doji knew that he had to give his body now, so first he cut his finger off

and with the blood of his cut finger he wrote down all of the lines of the song so that monks to come would know this truth that he had understood. And then he threw his whole body into the open, waiting mouth of the Ogre Rasetsu. But just as he did that, suddenly, the Taishaku god came down from the heavens and took him up to the heavens of Taishaku because he'd been such a clear and pure person of training. He'd just been being tested. By this we can see that the bliss of perfect rest is beyond all relative and dualistic and perceptions, and it is there we find the eternal joy.

So, the Sixth Patriarch said to him, "Which part of it do you not understand?"

Sutra: All beings have two bodies—the physical body and the Dharmakaya," replied Chih Tao. "The former is impermanent; it exists and dies. The latter is permanent; it knows not and feels not. Now the Sutra says, 'When both becoming and cessation cease to operate, the bliss of perfect rest and cessation of changes arises.' I do not know which body ceases to exist and which body enjoys the bliss. It cannot be the physical body that enjoys, because when it dies the four material elements (i.e., earth, water, fire and air) will disintegrate, and disintegration is pure suffering, the very opposite of bliss. If it is the Dharmakaya that ceases to exist, it would be in the same state as 'inanimate' objects, such as grass, trees, stones etc.; who will then be the enjoyer?

These famous words are from the Mahaparinirvana Sutra. All sentient beings are thought to have two kinds of bodies: one which is born and dies, which eats and gets sick and which gets compromised in its actions by old age. There is also the Dharma Body—the eternal body. The physical body rots away but the Dharma Body is said to be eternal. Every day we eat and move and have emotions but that which is beyond doing that while doing that—the universal person—what is that?

As Rinzai expresses it, The true Dharma has no form but extends in all ten directions. The physical body has birth and has death. It is changing all the time; it is constantly in flux; its not the same for two seconds. From birth on it has life, it has death. Its cells are being made anew, but in our Buddha nature nothing changes. A child's clear nature is not small while an adult's clear nature is big. It doesn't come like that. It never changes, it has no space, it has no time. It is beyond any mental implications or explanation.

Sutra: 'When both Becoming and Cessation cease to operate, the bliss of perfect rest and cessation of changes arises.' This is the Dharma Body, but this I do not understand. Does the Dharma body receive this bliss or does the physical body?

There is no one who is happy about their body dying so why does it say there is bliss and perfect rest? I understand if it is the Dharma body for there are not physical functions to perceive but then what body experiences this bliss? In this way he asked about his confusion.

This monk was trying to understand these questions mentally. This is what obstructs us in our daily life as well. In either case we have to see this clearly.

Master Taizui was once asked by a monk, When the world comes to its end, then at that time will all things that exist also have death? When this world is completely destroyed and finished will we be destroyed along with it? Master Taizui answered, Of course we finish with it. Doing zazen we become able to get through anything no matter how difficult it is, not moved around no matter what comes along. There are people who can really sit deeply in their zazen, sitting deep in their core, yet Master Taizui is saying they will all finish at this time.

I understand the clear mind is not hooked into a physical body so then why if the physical body dies does the clear mind

have to go with it? Why is it like that? Master Taizui then answered, It goes in accordance with it! You go with it. Then we have to ask why do we bother to sit in such pain and restrictedness and go through so many difficult tasks? Why do we do training? Why bother if we're going, too, when the world gets destroyed? If we see this mentally it makes us shallow and we can only become melancholy. This monk Shido had read the Mahaparinirvana Sutra for ten to twelve years and he had to ask this question.

Doing zazen it all becomes clear, but then we begin to wonder for what are we sitting if we're going, too, when the world gets destroyed? At the beginning of doing zazen we feel good and we stick with it; we're looking for something. And then if we understand the deeper mind we can become free, if we are looking at this honestly. But then we think, for what are we doing this? If we die this is going to have no point. We begin to think of zazen as something worthless. But we can't do it in such a meaningless frame of reference.

Takuan Zenji wrote to the Lord Yagyū of Tagima in letters, which were later named "The Unfettered Mind." He was writing about people who are nothing but dead people who are still breathing, because they are stuck again and again and again, Takuan Zenji writes that one has to grasp living Zen that cannot grasp at anything. It is like holding a sword which must not be stopped nor reside anywhere. Our mind as well cannot be stopped or reside anywhere or get stuck. To always be flowing, not stagnant; and then it becomes clear what our zazen must be like. If we are only focusing on the floor in front of us then we lose track of what is alive every other place in the huge view. If we are only focusing on ideas of good and bad then we lose that huge perspective. For our mind to be surging through the whole zendo in every single corner—it has to be like this state of mind. Or no matter how much we

sit we'll be impeded by thoughts and our fixed ideas about things. We cannot be stopped by these ideas and thoughts or it does not become true zazen. It has to be beyond time, beyond place. And it is not that we can go through zazen carrying something around in our head, or we'll get stopped, trapped, and stagnant right there. Because we sit in a safe, secure, zendo it is like this, but if we were to be actually facing a drawn sword and not in a safe and secure environment, then what?

To not be in such a narrow mind, we have to be able to see how to move before the other even thinks to move. We are not, in this small, fifty-year life, just something which is caught in a perspective of just being alive for that short amount of time. Rather, what is that life energy we directly perceive in zazen? Because the monk Shido invents this problem and this question himself he is not knowing what he already knows and gets stuck in a small perspective. True Zen is not like this.

Sutra: "You are a son of Buddha, (a bhikkhu)," said the Patriarch, "so why do you adopt the fallacious views of Eternalism and Annihilationism held by the heretics, and criticize the teaching of the Supreme Vehicle? "

Here the Sixth Patriarch responds to this monk. Everyone gets confused by impermanence and wonders about zazen's meaning. If we get stuck on this idea and the thoughts that come up about Zen it is very sad, while right there is the very place for piercing through the physical body. We are there in the zendo, sitting on our tabuton; we can get rid of all that dualism. We sit because it is the only way we are going to pierce through it all. We have to do this kind of zazen, to pour ourselves into the heavens leaving out not one single bit of anything! We let go of all of it; every single last bit or it is not true living zazen and we are crushed by our myriad thoughts.

We have to sit with everyone of our 360

smallest joints our 84,000 hair pores!
 From the top of our head to the bottoms
 of our feet that whole universe fills our
 bodies. We do it to this furthest reach
 with every single moment done quietly, or
 we will become vulnerable to all kinds of
 obstructions. If we don't do living zazen
 there is no meaning to doing it; it cannot
 be some kind of zazen which is dualistic
 and full of thoughts and extraneous think-
 ing in a useless direction.

OSESSHIN, 2005-09, DAY TWO

The monk Shido had read and studied the words of the Parinirvana Sutra and brought his doubts to the Sixth Patriarch:

Sutra: "Which part of it do you not understand?" asked the Patriarch. "It is about this part, Sir, that I am doubtful: 'All things are impermanent, and so they belong to the Dharma of becoming and cessation (i.e., Samskrita Dharma). When both becoming and cessation cease to operate, the bliss of perfect rest and cessation of changes (i.e., Nirvana) arises.'

These are famous words from the Nirvana Sutra. If there were no changing at all then everything would be a statue. But we plant seeds and the seeds grow; they get bigger, they flower then bear fruits and vegetables. Everything flows and changes. A newborn baby at one or two kilos becomes an adult of sixty or seventy kilos. A forty-centimeter baby—even that is a big baby—grows to an adult who becomes one and a half or two meters tall. We each have this capability along with our own personal capabilities; otherwise the world would be full of people who are all staying as babies. If there is something that does not change it is the True Law of how everything changes. We all get caught on the changing forms, on that which is in flux, and we think they are absolute. If we see the truth and realize it we see that everything is phenomena, that all things are impermanent so they belong to the Dharma of becoming and cessation. "When both becoming and cessation cease

to operate the bliss of perfect rest and cessation of changes arises."

We are all free from delusion if we can realize this. Then we are not caught on dualistic ideas of good and bad. All people are sometimes good and sometimes bad—even a terrifying thief can be someone's beloved father. If we put labels on people of their being good people or bad people we're not seeing the whole picture. We have to have the eye to see clearly what is phenomena. Then we can taste it's flavour as it is. These words are what is written in the Nirvana Sutra. The monk asked the Sixth Patriarch, who expounded it to him and asked "Where is your doubt? This is the verified experience and truth of the Buddha."

Sutra: All beings have two bodies - the physical body and the Dharmakaya," replied Chih Tao. "The former is impermanent; it exists and dies. The latter is permanent; it knows not and feels not. Now the Sutra says, 'When both becoming and cessation cease to operate, the bliss of perfect rest and cessation of changes arises.' I do not know which body ceases to exist and which body enjoys the bliss. It cannot be the physical body that enjoys, because when it dies the four material elements (i.e., earth, water, fire and air) will disintegrate, and disintegration is pure suffering, the very opposite of bliss. If it is the Dharmakaya that ceases to exist, it would be in the same state as 'inanimate' objects, such as grass, trees, stones etc.; who will then be the enjoyer?

The Buddha is said to have said that the Dharma body is eternal but our physical body—any physical thing—will lose its form, even the big boulder in the garden. We will all be gone and so will all things that exist in form. Our life something short—fifty to a hundred years. It is said that an artist's works and productions are immortal; while the person who created the works is no longer alive the works the artist made still express their aliveness. But the Dharma body is not limited to

these kinds of truths and creations. The Dharma body is, to put it another way, a great huge open space. The planets are born within this great space all will also eventually fade away.

We study many things. We read. We understand that the Dharma body does not decay so it cannot become enlightened. My question is “All things are impermanent...When both Becoming and Cessation cease to operate, the bliss of perfect rest and cessation of changes arises. I do not know which body ceases to exist and which body enjoys the bliss. What is it that ceases to exist?” What is it that knows this bliss? No one dies and is happy about that, and how can a Dharma body experience bliss and joy? The monk has mentally understood the Buddha’s teaching and divided it in this dualistic rational way into two separate bodies, the physical body and the Dharma body. And not only this monk but scholars as well—anyone who is doing it with their heads. Didn’t the Buddha die, didn’t Bodhidharma die, and the Patriarchs, didn’t they all die? So, why don’t we just enjoy our life, they say, and wait until the final part to have bliss? Why don’t we do our life in a blissful way right now? It is people like this who do Zen to feel better, to have a more happy home, or so that their work will go well, or to improve their personality. We have to see clearly through this and into what is really being looked at.

Sutra: Moreover, Dharma-nature is the quintessence of ‘becoming and cessation’, which manifests as the five skandhas (rupa, vedana, samjna, samskara and vijnana). That is to say, with one quintessence there are five functions. The process of ‘becoming and cessation’ is everlasting. When function or operation arises from the quintessence, it becomes; when the operation or function is absorbed back into the quintessence, it ceases to exist. If reincarnation is admitted, there would be no ‘cessation of changes’, as in the case of sentient beings. If reincarnation is out of the

question, then things will remain forever in a state of lifeless quintessence, like inanimate objects. If this is so, then under the limitations and restrictions of Nirvana even existence will be impossible to all beings; what enjoyment could there be?

The monk continues saying how he has yet another doubt. The five skandhas described in the Heart Sutra, of our perceptions of the world and our five senses and our awareness at the roots of those perceptions, simply perceive. Then we think “this is a flower,” “this is a bird,” and from that perception we begin an activity. We move—move to cut the flower and put it in our room, for example. We move and have various experiences and this is called being alive. Buddhism has also a psychological aspect. So where does our perception and our memory come from? Take the ocean: When the wind blows the waves arise and the ocean moves; when the wind stops, all of those waves return to being just water. Waves are just temporary but the quality of the water is consistent and continues. Or as master Rinzai has said, originally there is one great light and it divides into six rays. Those rays manifest as these perceptions, and in the eyes it becomes all those things we see, in the ears all the sounds we hear, in the nose the hundred fragrances, and in the mouth the tastes; it becomes our awareness. At the origin there is one bright light; it divides into six rays and those rays give light to every situation and this is how master Rinzai expresses it.

When we die then are cremated and return to ash, or we are buried and return to the earth, in the same way the waves return to the full ocean water. But, says this monk. “My question is about this: ‘If reincarnation is out of the question then things will remain forever in a state of lifeless quintessence like inanimate objects.’”

Sutra: If reincarnation is admitted, there would be no ‘cessation of changes’, as in the case of sentient beings. If reincarnation is out of the question,

then things will remain forever in a state of lifeless quintessence, like inanimate objects. If this is so, then under the limitations and restrictions of Nirvana even existence will be impossible to all beings; what enjoyment could there be?" If this is so, then under the limitations and restrictions of Nirvana even existence will be impossible to all beings; what enjoyment could there be?

We'll be stuck eternally in voidness and emptiness and where is the bliss in this? This is Shido's question. He's been everywhere seeking the answer to this question and he finally comes to the Sixth Patriarch and asks what is it that is being extinguished, and what or where is the body that experiences bliss. And then he further says,

Sutra: When function or operation arises from the quintessence, it becomes; when the operation or function is absorbed back into the quintessence,

If we return to the source doesn't it go against the experience of this bliss? Because he is asking all of these questions from his head he is finding the answers so hard to understand. He brings these questions and his mental ideas of them to the Sixth Patriarch seeking to solve his doubt.

Long after the time of the Sixth Patriarch, in the Sung era in China there was a Zen master named Hosō Kōen Zenji, who gave this question, telling of a story in the state of Kōshū near the Yangtse river: There was a rich man named Choitsu. Choitsu had two daughters; the youngest daughter died at an early age, and the oldest daughter, Seijo, a very beautiful daughter who was also brilliant, had a cousin named Ochu. They played so beautifully together all the time that everyone commented about it, and even her father said they were so harmonious that they would be a great pair for marriage. But when she was old enough to be promised in marriage, many people came to propose to her and she was given to a very bright, up and

coming, official of the state. Seijo was very unhappy about this, she told her father that he had promised that she could marry Ochu. Ochu couldn't stand to watch this happening, he left by boat, going down river so he wouldn't have to look at it. But that evening when he was traveling down river he heard a voice call out from the banks of the river—calling his very name when he knew no one in the neighbourhood. He went ashore and it was Seijo. Together they went upstream to the source of the river, a place called Shoku. They lived there for three years having a child, but after this time, Seijo became sad and melancholy and weakened. Her husband asked her if something was wrong, if she were sick or something. But she said no, it was because she'd left her father and never asked permission to get married and now she was just wondering if he was ok or not, was he sick or well. And her husband said, "I've been thinking about him also for I never asked permission to marry you; we just eloped." They decided they'd go back and apologize to her father; after all they now had a child and he wouldn't turn them down; instead he would forgive them. So they got on a boat to go to Kōshū and see her father.

As the two returned to Kōshū together they thought that since they didn't know how her father was doing, first Ochu would go and see how things were in the household. He went, seeing the same high walls and water outside the house. Upon arriving he asked to see the master, who came out and was surprised and happy to see him, asking him where had he been, what had happened since he'd not seen him for so long. Ochu replied that he'd come to apologize for taking away his daughter. The father looked surprised and said, "What are you talking about? She's asleep in the back room! I've been taking care of her ever since she became sick when the talk of marriage began. You must be talking about someone else, someone who looked like her?" Ochu

said, "It couldn't be that; I know what your daughter looks like." Then he said that he'd go and bring back the true daughter so the father could see what he was talking about. The daughter came hurriedly, so glad to be seeing her father again. And strangely, for the first time in three years the daughter who had been bedridden, asleep, unable to walk, suddenly stood up and began walking as Seijo approached the front door. When the two saw each other, they smiled and embraced and became one.

Goso Hoen Zenji raised this story as a koan, asking, "This one who had the child, is she the true Seijo? This one who was sleeping in the back room for three years, was she the true Seijo? Which one was it?" Goso Hoen Zenji brings in this story for the assembly. We cannot deceive this ego; we all have it and we have a hard time letting go of it. Yet this is what gives us this uncomfortable, insecure feeling, imagining this, imagining that, making up things that don't exist. We cannot ever eat our meals thoroughly, we are anxious, we are like a molted cicada shell. If we do not know this true essence we are always walking around without our feet truly on the ground, never knowing what is true, never knowing what is really going on, never able to rest, always insecure, shaky, a little irritable, agitated, unable to awaken to our true mind. We are pulled around by our wandering, gathered, dualistic perceptions.

At the time of Goso Hoen Zenji this was true and today it is even more true. Goso Hoen Zenji gave us this question for us to be able to see this clearly. This life without our feet on the ground, there is no meaning in it. What is it that is alive? What is it that sits here? What is it that is hearing this talking? What is it that is living? We have to not separate our awareness into two; that comes because we are never seeing truthfully what is within, and this is the result of not seeing that clearly

We all have our concepts of training but there is nothing there to realize. Zazen is not about dividing our awareness into two, into ideas of profit and loss, gaining and losing. Those are the phenomena used in society. Maybe Seijo had had a child, but wan and unstable she was melancholy, lounging in the back room. If we do not realize that true mind we'll be moved around like this. Zazen is not about doing it in our head, but this place where our mind and body become one. As the Sixth Patriarch has said, in our ideas about things to not add on anything to do with good and bad. Our awareness is always thinking "I am this," "I am that," but we have to not give any energy to that kind of awareness, no attention to those kinds of thoughts—to not even attempt to understand these mentally. We have zazen to do this.

When we are beginners we have to work on our breath, our posture, and see how it is doing to let go of all of those obstructions. But these are only for that amount of time. What it means to be doing it with all the 360 smallest joints, 84,000 pores, as Mumon Ekai Roshi tells us, is to tenaciously and kindly give everything we have to not doing it dualistically—or else we can't see our life energy. If we think we can perceive it in a relative way it's a big mistake. It has to be touched directly in the primary, that which is prior to any awareness. That "I" that does the Mu, and the Mu, they cannot be separate. They have to become one total whole. The sitting body and the practice being done are one body and mind in each and every mind-moment. We don't chop them and isolate them or pull them apart. We have to continue and continue in one straight line all the way to oneness. Then we realize that state of mind where no matter what is coming to us we do not get confused and moved around by it. From the bottoms of our feet we are totally in oneness, becoming it completely. This cannot be done mentally.

We eventually lose track of any separation of what is doing it and what is being done. But we have to actualize this, to do it to that point or it is not real. It is not the fault of the teaching if we don't do it to that point, just like it is not the fault of the sun if a blind person cannot see the sun; it doesn't mean that the sun isn't shining. But for us to have eyes and ears and not use them completely, we can't give in to our own wish to compromise. It is not about doing it for a long time but about doing it with a firm decision, with an intensity of commitment to do it right now in this very session. If we don't do that and fulfill it, that is our own problem. If we make this decision firmly it doesn't matter what comes up; no matter what comes up we can move through it. We of course are not going to be doing this same thing forever. At school there are the results of tests or report cards in grades, but here we have no such thing; we have only this continuing.

The Buddha was not something special; he was a human. Bodhidharma was human also, and yet they were able to realize this because of their firm, unerring determination. We are no different, but we have to do it completely. We have to do it—we have to do it or we get stuck forever in a divided separateness.

Both Hakuin and Joshu said, if you think I am lying about doing this completely and realizing this then cut off my head and bring it to me. We think, “How could we do that, if they are dead and their head is cut off?” But, they are alive, they are here, they are in this room. We have to see this. Even if one's physical eyes are open we still have to open our spiritual eyes. There is nothing mysterious in the Buddha Dharma.

OSESSHIN, 2005-09, DAY THREE

Sutra: You are a son of Buddha, (a bhikkhu),” said the Patriarch, “so why do you adopt the fallacious views of Eternalism and Annihilationism held by the heretics, and criticize the

teaching of the Supreme Vehicle?

The Sixth Patriarch answered the monk about his doubts. The monk had spoken in this way:

Sutra: It is about this part, Sir, that I am doubtful: ‘All things are impermanent, and so they belong to the Dharma of becoming and cessation (i.e., Samskrita Dharma). When both becoming and cessation cease to operate, the bliss of perfect rest and cessation of changes (i.e., Nirvana) arises.’

All things are impermanent. If we are born, then we die. We change all the time, in every single instant. And there is a Dharma body as well that we cannot separate from impermanence in this physical body. “This, I understand,” spoke the monk. “But to say that this body disappears and then there is bliss, what does that mean? What is there to enjoy and know bliss if our physical body is extinguished?” As it says, the world of seeing and the world of hearing and the world of speaking, the worlds of smelling and tasting, the world of being aware, and all of our memories, if there is a Dharma body, it must be these things. So where is there anything to experience bliss?

As waves of ocean water rise up in the wind and when the wind dies down the waves are gone, in this way the physical body arises in karmic affiliation and then finishes when that is finished. So, what is it that dies? This is what Shido asked the Sixth Patriarch, who then answered him:

Sutra: “You are a son of Buddha, (a bhikkhu),” said the Patriarch, “so why do you adopt the fallacious views of Eternalism and Annihilationism held by the heretics, and criticize the teaching of the Supreme Vehicle?”

A heretic is one who is on the path “outside” the Buddha's Path. Buddhism is to awaken to our Buddha nature, our clarified mind. It is not for looking around in our head for some god or for some perfect way to be or for some kind of a

pure land. Nor is it to look externally for something to rely on; that is the way of the heretics, the external path. There are two ways of looking at what happens to us: One is that we die and everything is completely finished; the other is that there is an eternal soul which lives forever. The Buddha was against both of these views, saying they darkened the Truth. He would never touch this question even when asked about it. Once a monk came to him and said, "Are we to pray for a good future rebirth?" But the Buddha would not answer him. Another time the same monk came back and brought up the question in a different way and again the Buddha did not answer. The monk was determined that he would ask one more time and if still the Buddha didn't answer then it would mean that the Buddha had no understanding of this question and he would give up his belief in his teaching. So, he went and asked one more time. The third time the Buddha said, "If a person is hit by a poison arrow do you first try to research what kind of poison it was on this arrow? Do you first try to research that, to find out what was used on the arrow? Or, do you, immediately, as soon as possible, take the arrow out because the person could die any instant from this poisoned arrow?" The monk replied that, of course, you take the arrow out right away; before anything else you take out the arrow. You don't investigate the kind of poison first. To which the Buddha answered, "I am right now giving everything to people who are dealing with this actual moment and this problem. When the clear awakening to this very moment is realized this question you bring will also be seen clearly."

These two ways of seeing things—either that we die and then are completely gone or that we live eternally in the form of an eternal soul—both of these come forth from an egoistic view. The majority of people have no idea where we will go after we die. The conflict in this world, the wars, the struggles, why do they occur?

They occur because of things that have happened in many past lives of many people on this planet. If we believe that life is all finished at death it takes none of this into consideration. If we think we are finished at death then all of our questions, our responsibilities would never arise. And if we think there is eternal life we also slide away from responsibility; we have no passion for settling these deep questions such as from where our true nature comes forth. Almost all people are in this state of mind and this is why the Buddha did not offer an explanation to these questions.

Sutra: Your argument implies that apart from the physical body there is a Law body (Dharmakaya); and that 'perfect rest' and 'cessation of changes' may be sought apart from 'becoming and cessation'.

To say there is a physical body and a Dharma body, I'll go along with that. But you cannot say that they exist separately; that is not the Buddha's awakening. If you really want to know this Truth, why do you try to do it with words in your head? The Buddha's teaching in every single case is all from his experience, from the actual experience of the eternal Truth. That is why that actual experience is important. The Buddha's teaching of awakening to the Buddha nature, this is the Dharma body. You cannot leave aside the experiencing of it; because you haven't yet experienced it, that is why you can't see it clearly. When your body is gone what is there? Buddha nature can only be known by experience, it cannot be realized through a mental attempt.

Dogen Zenji, in the Shobogenzo, says about this that in Buddhism there is no life and death. To realize the Buddha in this body it has to be from an experience not from a partial view. If we realize the Buddha in this body then we can realize that eternal life. Life is one temporary form and death is one temporary form; these are not absolute things. To know the experience! It has to be the actual

experience of it or we are looking for a Buddha somewhere else outside. But we look externally, looking everywhere. It is as if we are gathering ingredients to keep ourselves always confused. As we do zazen we move when our legs hurt, but no matter how much we try and move we can't find a position where they stop hurting. Our tired, beaten body—we move and it still doesn't help. We are alive now and then we are going to die—this is a mistaken view. To be alive is what we call it, but that is only because we think of it in a context with a past and future. Right here! It has to be right here and right now! If we have a deep experience of it, who can see it differently? For example, if we have a big, white daikon radish, who could eat that whole daikon? But from the leaves at one end of the daikon to the tip, that whole thing is called daikon. Even if we eat a leaf or the tiny tip furthest from the leaves, all of that is still referred to as daikon. In the same way, we do not live separately from the context of the whole. We cannot see anything clearly when we isolate it from that context of the whole, nor can we take the isolated matter of death itself; it has to be also in context. There is always a past and always a future. Because there are circumstances we are alive; if we die it is the whole universe dying or it is not of any use! It is the universe that dies and it is the whole universe that lives! Here we have this inner truth of the Buddha Dharma. All of our emotions as well, if we take them in isolation then we cannot truly see. We live and we live completely, we die and we die completely! Not to be always looking for some way to keep living, but to know and see from those clearly seeing eyes that are able to see the entire, the whole picture. With our physical body because there is no deep awakening we cannot see this. This infinite universe, how many countless births and deaths it has been through? Today's life energy has been again and again and again repeated for billions of years. We can't

leave that view out or how can we clearly see this question directly? It is all one awakening to Buddha nature.

We exhale completely with our life-energy which is beyond living and dying, or it cannot be realized directly. Always new, always new, and again always new—to realize this! But as soon as we see it as a “this” it is no longer clear because we are looking at it as a mental image. No such dualism can possibly enter here. We cannot measure with words; we can only throw ourselves right smack into the middle of it. To throw away even the universe! Then we borrow the Buddha's arms, the Buddha's legs, the Buddha's whole body, and realize this moment, this right-now moment with everything, totally. With everything we are we see this Truth directly, not by speaking about it, doing or not doing something, or getting into despair. These ways will only produce individual delusion. Here it is said very clearly how we can only realize this by becoming it directly, through our experience, as Dogen teaches us.

Sutra: Your argument implies that apart from the physical body there is a Law body (Dharmakaya); and that ‘perfect rest’ and ‘cessation of changes’ may be sought apart from ‘becoming and cessation’.

Further, from the statement, ‘Nirvana is everlasting joy,’ you infer that there must be somebody to play the part of the enjoyer. Now it is exactly these fallacious views that make people crave for sensate existence and indulge in worldly pleasure.

The Sixth Patriarch says that it is not about some extinguishing where there is no birth and no death. But without jumping right into it and experiencing it, where is there any real meaning to mentally understanding this? We can't play soccer or do activities without diving into them. As any sports person or artist knows and can agree, we have to again and again, with our whole body and being, continue doing it many, many times. Then we can

go beyond the mental understanding of it. This is how and this is why sports people know the great amount of practice that we must do in cultivating this. As another example, the same applies to the piano player. It cannot be done with a simple, slight amount of effort. It is a question of whether we have actually burst beyond life and death or not.

There is no way we can do this only by using our heads. That is why we have to do it here (at sesshin), or we will be pushed and pulled around every single day of our lives. Our zazen is dying practice. People in the world are always doing living practice. As the Sixth Patriarch has said, "Only realize kensho! Do not work on trying to improve the samadhi." We have to work and crush and tear that layer of mind, that veil, totally—or how can we know this completely and directly? Only when we have the clear experience, right there can we know it! And if we don't realize that, then we will not be able to jump into the very midst of our life and directly perceive it. Whether we are working or whatever we are doing, we have to dive into the very middle of it! This is where our true purification comes forth. And we have to use our whole body in the doing of this.

Every single one of the 360 smallest joints, the 84,000 hair pores, from the top of our heads to the bottom of our feet—we have to do it with total determination! If we add in any dualism to that then we immediately separate from this one Truth. We cannot loosen our grip or let down our efforts or we will waste this precious time where we have been able to gather here. This is why it is said that we cannot fall into any ideas of it being annihilative or of having something when it comes to the Buddha nature. If we do, we will not know east from west; we'll be so confused with the mental ideas tangled in this and be pulled around by all sorts of circumstances and situations. We have to clear out everything—all of it—and then

we don't even know what is me and what is the zendo. If we carry thoughts around we are like a flaccid balloon; we have to be a full, taut balloon. There is no true life circulating in a flaccid balloon. If we are full and taut then we send clear energy throughout the whole zendo, and if not like that, then why would we even bother doing this and working so hard? We have to be able to give it everything! We fight our pain, we fight our tiredness, but that life-energy is filling us, filling the heavens and earth—we can directly experience it! When Dogen offers his whole being he is not giving up but instead he is putting everything into it, into the whole picture. If dualism is inserted then it is all lost.

Sutra: ... from the statement, 'Nirvana is everlasting joy,' you infer that there must be somebody to play the part of the enjoyer.

But it has been said:

Sutra: All things are impermanent, and so they belong to the Dharma of becoming and cessation (i.e., Samskrita Dharma). When both becoming and cessation cease to operate, the bliss of perfect rest and cessation of changes (i.e., Nirvana) arises.

And this cannot be seen without dying completely. If not that, then there is just the mental picture that will only be dualistic and not the true Buddha Dharma.

There is a story from China about a red dog and a white dog. In China there were only red dogs and white dogs. The red dogs were very common but the white dogs were very few because the white dogs were the dogs that after one more lifetime would be reborn as a human being. And the red dog was saying to the white dog, "Oh, how fortunate you are! After one more birth you're going to be born as a human being!" But the white dog said, "Actually, I'm a little bit worried about that." The red dog said, "Why would you be worried about that? You're going to be born as a human being in your next life!"

And the white dog said, “Well, you know I really love the taste of dog shit. I love to eat it. Do you think I can do that still when I’m a human?”

When we think we can imagine what the joy of cessation is like it is like these dogs talking. We complain about the pain and the challenges of zazen, of how restricted we feel, and we wonder why the Buddha even bothered. But when we can open that eye that sees from a place where there is no obstruction, and know that state of mind of the Buddha when he said that all of these three realms were his home, all of the people in them his children we know why. If we look at this from our dualistic “I” we cannot truly perceive. Today, zazen is so frequently done with a dualistic state that this mind of the Buddha is not able to be understood. But if we honestly keep going, even through our legs are hurting, being so sleepy, feeling so restricted—if we just continue, continue gathering it, then our body that has hurt so much, felt so restricted will become a huge wide-open state of mind. Is that physical pleasure? Where what had been so important was an awareness of profit and loss, now that bliss of cessation where there are no limits can be experienced and the body becomes a whole, free realization where there is nothing to be afraid of or conceited about. There is a huge state of mind that comes only from this experience.

Sutra: Now it is exactly these fallacious views that make people crave for sensate existence and indulge in worldly pleasure.

If we get caught on there being a someone to enjoy it, that is when we become confused and deluded. It is in this way that the Sixth Patriarch teaches Shido.

Our physical body is truly something inconvenient; just a little thing and it starts hurting, some little thing and our emotions are bothered. We have to go beyond that till we are not caught on some small emotional view but one that perceives from the view of the whole universe. Or

who will liberate the whole world? It is not about complaining and grumbling. We have to be able to requite this great blessing. Realized people of the Way did not have some special ability so that is why they became like that; they just didn’t quit until they’d realized it. And if we don’t do it that way then that is just too sad. Knowing the whole universe as our own body—we all have this, we all are this—from this we all know the whole universe as our home, as our family. If we always look at society then we naturally become like this. It is true because it is true. So it is about where we regularly keep our minds, where we regularly hold our minds, and where we regularly keep our existence. As soon as a person opens their mouth we know this immediately.

OSESSHIN, 2005-09, DAY FOUR

Sutra: Your argument implies that apart from the physical body there is a Law body (Dharmakaya); and that ‘perfect rest’ and ‘cessation of changes’ may be sought apart from ‘becoming and cessation’.

Here the Sixth Patriarch says to Shido to think about this clearly, that scholars may propose that there are two separate things—a physical body and a Dharma body—but the Buddha, who speaks of his true experience, may say something different.

Ryuju Sonja spoke the true philosophy of the Buddha’s teaching and experience. Those five thousand forty-eight sutras were already acknowledged in the T’ang dynasty: the sutras, the precepts, and the doctrine. But to see what is true in each era and to explain it, more and more words were added on in order to make it clear what these three baskets of the Buddha’s teaching were trying to say. So, from that time 1300 years ago to now there are over ten thousand, the Buddha’s teaching having been added to just to explain what this body of knowledge was trying to say.

It was the very teaching of the Buddha that it was experience, not words, that was necessary, but we need the words to guide people to that experience. For this reason Bodhidharma came all the way to China, where there were already plenty of words being taught but the guidance for the experience was not available. Bodhidharma himself said it: “this truth, beyond words and phrases.”

Scholars play around with words, and because of this Hakuin wrote in the Song of Zazen that these empty words of explanation, these imagined phrases, should not be followed because they are an individual's interpretation. One can see a square as a triangle or a triangle as a square if one looks from the right angle, but these distorted perceptions cannot be indulged in. They are wasted arguments, useless discussions. We have to separate from that empty interpretation and instead encounter that Dharma body. The Dharma body that we encounter through our experience is not something which is separate from our physical body. People of wisdom can see this very clearly, and it is through their very experience of this that we separate who has wisdom from who has not.

People who do not know this from experience may think this is something melancholy. Yet the Buddha's truth has been transmitted not through words but through experience, from the Buddha continuing down through all of the patriarchs. The very life energy that is transmitted is beyond mere words, beyond interpretation, this life energy is infinite. We will not be able to find that truth in words; words are so easily misleading.

Sutra: Now it is exactly these fallacious views that make people crave for sensate existence and indulge in worldly pleasure. It is for these people, the victims of ignorance, who identify the union of five skandhas as the ‘self’, and regard all other things as ‘not-self’ (literally, outer sense objects); who crave for individual

existence and have an aversion to death;’

When we do zazen our legs hurt, we get confused and deluded and that is because we are accustomed to thinking our body is actual and our thoughts something absolute. Babies don't think like that until around the age of three when we start thinking we must have this, we must have that. Originally we have no such attachment to what we think. Later on, we think that suffering is our own. We may mentally know that it is not but we think phenomena are real and have substance and that we are victims of some terrible circumstances that make us suffer so much. This is what humans learn to believe. People mistakenly think that Buddhism is “chilly” and removed, that it doesn't want to help people since it says that everything is all phenomena anyway. So why bother helping?

Anyone who has read the Vimalakirti Sutra can see clearly that it is not this way. Vimalakirti says “I am sick because people in the world are sick.” He is sick on behalf of everyone; he is sick but he is dry and clear about the sickness. When the visitors come, he says, “Do you know that you are going to die? Do you know where humankind is bound for?” Vimalakirti is supposed to be sick but he is not down about his sickness at all; he is teaching from that sickness. Humans really like to see things as how they would like them to be. But because people believe they are absolute and not phenomena—because they take this body for something absolute—because of this, people suffer.

If we really want to liberate society we have to awaken to this world of phenomena and see how society is not sick but the phenomena we believe in make us seem sick. We always think that we are under the influence of some terrible phenomenon and are sick because of that. But originally all is empty and so we can't get caught on these phenomena. We suffer because we don't know, because we haven't

awakened to this experience of this true nature, and so instead we mistake phenomena for what is real. Because we do not realize and awaken to our true nature we are deceived by phenomena.

To guide people to see that all is originally empty, that even a murderer has no injury to his true, clear nature is why the Buddha taught. We have to review our behavior in terms of that true nature. Even Frankie Parker [a murderer who has since been executed] is an example of this. Having read the Dhammapada as a convicted murderer in prison he realized that we are all from emptiness and that our ideas that we are real make us have desires and get us confused. They sap our energy and then we truly end up hating and suffering. Even if we do what is good we still get confused by thinking that phenomena are real.

We have these words from the Diamond Sutra that tell us that all of this is a dream, a bubble, a phantasm, a drop of dew, a flash of lightning—that all are only moments of existence and then gone. People hear this and they say, “Oh, this is so melancholy! We want to have lasting satisfaction, lasting fulfillment!” People look for joy but all of that looking is hollow because things are always going to end. We don’t know the true base, the Original Nature, and so we imagine there is something great we should be chasing after. The Buddha has said very clearly that it is only that attachment that is making us suffer.

Sutra: ...who drift about in the whirlpool of life and death without realizing the hollowness of mundane existence, which is only a dream or an illusion; who commit themselves to unnecessary suffering by binding themselves to the wheel of re-birth; who mistake the state of everlasting joy of Nirvana for a mode of suffering, and who are always after sensual pleasure; it is for these people that the compassionate Buddha preached the real bliss of Nirvana.

The Buddha taught how we all revolve

around and around the Six Realms, from hell realms to heavenly beings, then again falling into hell realms, the realm of the hungry ghosts who no matter how much they receive are still hungry and greedy, the world of animals, that of the asuras or angry gods, the world of humans, “Oh, how could I have done that, I’m so sorry!”—trying to repent and repair. The hate invented by humans is the worst of everything. Hate can put people into bondage for hundreds of years. Even people of the same race can torture each other. Even while thinking we have to extinguish that prejudice, it still goes on. The Buddha saw this stratum of human behaviour and this is why he realized Original Nature.

Sutra: ...who mistake the state of everlasting joy of Nirvana for a mode of suffering, and who are always after sensual pleasure; it is for these people that the compassionate Buddha preached the real bliss of Nirvana.

Maybe we had parents who believed this and shared it, but the Buddha knew it would never be finished and what we have to realize is that we can’t just increase hate. We have to purify this state of mind and see that humans are not made up of hatefulness. We are huge in mind and we are like a great mirror where we don’t see things through ideas but instead see as if we have just been born. Then to speak from a serene, clear mind, or whatever we see, hear, feel, taste and think we get attached to it. We have to let go of all of it, every last bit of it! We have to liberate all of it—the Buddha taught this. But we all worry. “What if I can’t hear any good music anymore? What if I can’t feel any pleasure anymore?” This may be true, but it’s fine if we can see without being getting attached to what we see, fine if we can hear without being attached to what we hear, fine if we can feel without being attached to what we feel, fine if we can have thoughts and ideas without being attached to them. This is the true

human, to experience all of that without attachment to it. But we are not so simple; if we were, we wouldn't still be hating and working just for our own benefit and doing things that make others so unhappy. We say anything with our mouth, but the truth is different. We have to see the truth of this clearly or we just keep piling up mistake after mistake.

Sutra: ...it is for these people that the compassionate Buddha preached the real bliss of Nirvana.

To make this truth clear the Buddha taught it. The wisdom within this is the Dharma. He said to his disciple Ananda, "Look at that light within, look to the true Dharma. Don't look to external things, but instead look to this truth, awaken to it." We have not been taught to keep the Buddha's word alive but rather, to keep his deep experience and wisdom awake and alive. The wisdom of heaven and earth is our own body. There is not one thing to hold onto inside. We call it the borrowed name of 'Buddha nature' and we do zazen to realize this. It is actually samadhi which is the truth of Buddhism, not those thoughts and feelings that are always coming and going, popping in and out of our heads. If we do zazen and these don't go it is not the fault of the zazen.

We let go of our thinking—to do this we use susokkan until we grasp the entrance to samadhi; then the koans and the truth of the Buddhas and patriarchs are used also. Our base is samadhi: standing samadhi, sitting samadhi, even walking samadhi. Phenomena change around us but we don't get involved in thinking this is good or this is bad. There's no need to do that whatsoever—just continuing that Mu over and over and over again. From within ourselves in every single mind-moment, with our whole body and being, to dig right into it! We dig and dig and dig, and we give it no gaps until we are no longer even tracking our body or our thoughts. Our state of mind is more

and more quiet and clear, as the waves on the ocean calming—no more thoughts of "I can do it," "I can't do it," "It's going to work," "It's not going to work." We cultivate over and over this state of mind which cannot be grasped externally. Those feelings, thoughts, and perceptions—we receive the truth because there is nothing possible to be held onto at all. This is not a foggy, flaccid, nothing-at-all version of having nothing in mind, nor is it a nest of busy thinking. We don't even know what is going on and cannot actually see anything clearly. We think we are seeing and hearing correctly but if we look at it, even if we think we are correct we are way far off. Only if we see that there is really nothing at all—if we let go of that ego—then we can hear things just as they are, see things just as they are, know things just as they are. We are one with the heavens and earth! To see this truthfully or we just create more and more mistaken views. If we did not hold on to so much and so many ideas, so many mistakes, it would come clearly to us, right to us.

Samadhi is also of this same nature. We have to be able to enter it deeply to see clearly and to not mistake intoxication for this. With intoxication we make ideas of what is good and what is bad. A typhoon comes—a natural phenomena—and also human perils. There are great dangers. But the more we are troubled with things like these the more we also lose track. To lose track of our clarity is what makes us so confused. To align this we have to see that these dangers are still not something to be attached to. Also, to not be attached to this physical body. When things are completely confused we have to let go of all of that extraneous thinking, just like tearing open our feelings and stuck places; then we can see how we are totally pure and uninjured in our deepest mind. Because we are so miserable and pitiful when we are attached, the Buddha saw this clearly and taught us the way out of it. In Zen, in Buddha Dharma, we are revitalized by our

zazen.

A situation may be challenging but if we see from that place of someone just born, then limitless wisdom comes forth. This is how the truth works. This wisdom is what cultivates society. But when we get emotional and caught we cannot manifest that wisdom and we see things mistakenly. The Buddha Dharma teaches us the way of returning to a truthful way of living, to not be afraid but to bring forth the wisdom needed today. Humans have this deep mysterious capability, this will, this hugeness, this depth. To experience these we have to realize samadhi. To do that means we have to let go of what we were grasping for or we'll get used by the very tool that we are. This is why we sit zazen.

Actually, what is most difficult for all of us is not the pain of others but our own physical and emotional pain. Yet to be deceived by that gets us nowhere. Instead, to come out above those clouds where that clear moonlight has always been shining! But when we are struggling with emotional pain we cannot stand it. We can't sit still, we can't sit down, we can't stand up. When we feel such strong pain we get desperate. It is not about just enduring it, but with our huge, wide-open, cultivated mind we drink it all down with that Mu, with that susokkan—and mysteriously, the more we use those the better we get at it.

From the top of our heads to the bottoms of our feet we bring it all together into oneness until we forget our body and our thoughts completely. And as we experience it we know this depth. Zazen is not about running away from it but facing it with a breath that is like our very last breath ever. It cannot be unclear, thinking we understand it—maybe we get it, maybe we don't. Rather, it has to be done with every one of our 360 smallest joints, our 84,000 hair pores, as Mumon Ekai has taught us in his excellent way. To not be caught on having it or not having it. It becomes like a red-hot iron

ball that we can't swallow it down, we can't spit it out. We have to keep going in all the twenty-four hours of the day, letting go of all our previous conditioning, our education, our knowledge until we come to this place where we can't even tell a difference between an inside or an outside—this place where it's like a person who can't speak—a mute person trying to tell their dream. We realize our whole tautness until we pierce right through this experience! We shake the heavens and the earth trembles; we walk hand in hand with the Buddhas and patriarchs and enter the world in the joy of samadhi! This is not an emotional joy, but an eternal joy of being not moved around no matter what. This truth, we can come to realize this. It is not a game of words. It's about not giving in to thinking maybe it can be done, maybe it can't. Rather, we have to give everything to it with our whole life energy! We can realize this, as Ryokan-san has said in his poetry:

When there is a crisis, a crisis is fine
When there is sickness, sickness is fine
When there is death, death is fine

This is not a raw, fatalistic acceptance of these things, a giving in to crisis, sickness and death. But rather, when we find ourselves in this place of crisis we throw ourselves into it, giving everything to it, realizing that acceptance but doing it with a complete realization of how we can participate in it! When we are sick we are determined that we will not let that sickness get us down. In the matter of life and death it is only a matter of phenomena.

Some say why should we bother doing all this anyway since we are going to die? Our awakening is not about one person's experience only. Because the Buddha realized this awakening and passed it on to Ananda and Mahakasyapa, it has been kept alive through to today. But without actually experiencing this deep truth we just finish a life with a little bit of emotional and physical experience, some

satisfaction—and this is just too pitiful. It is not that it is out of our reach, but we have to realize that if we stay so indulgent and fixed in our emotions and our desires then we just can't find it. It is not that it is not there; it is, but our faith is just too insufficient.

For all us: this which is most intimate to us, this physical body, we can't run away from it. When it's hurting we can't run from that. We cannot be unskillful in how we use this body; we have to become skillful. How should we use it? To realize how to use this body and not be used by it, this is Zen and this is the Buddha Dharma.

OSESSHIN, 2005-09, DAY FIVE

Sutra: At any one moment, Nirvana has neither the phenomenon of becoming, nor that of cessation, nor even the ceasing of operation of becoming and cessation. It is the manifestation of 'perfect rest and cessation of changes', but at the time of manifestation there is not even a concept of manifestation; so it is called the 'everlasting joy' which has neither enjoyer nor non-enjoyer.

The Buddha is saying that because we mistake phenomena for something real, we suffer. Sitting is not just about the form of zazen; if we sit with a head full of thinking that comes and goes all the time, that is delusion. The same can be said of our general daily frame of mind—thinking about how we did this and how we did that, what that person said and what is going on—concerned about what we've done and again and again in our head during zazen. Instead, we should receive what comes to us; from here our truth comes. As Dogen Zenji has said, that which we chase after is delusion. Things come to us; we receive that, and the eye that sees that never moves. Or else our mind is always clinging to external things and we get deluded. Nirvana is that deeply seeing eye that only comes from deep experience.

As the Sixth Patriarch says in chapter 5, "On Zazen," "za" is to not give rise to any ideas about good or bad relative to the things we experience. This is the "za" of zazen. Then, if we are not caught on these judgments, things come clearly to us. What is good, what is bad—we don't have to think about this or chase after things. If we cling and chase we get caught on what we cling to and chase after. Someone gets angry and we get pulled into their anger; if they speak roughly we end up getting excited right along with them and affected by that anger. No matter what way the person comes to us, that is theirs.

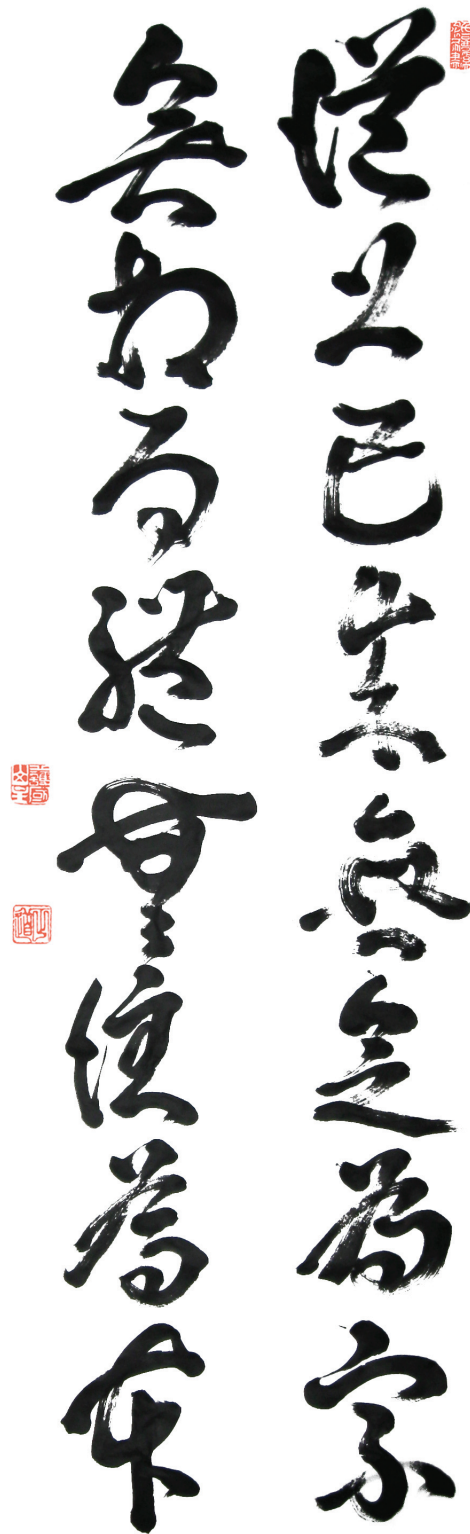
The Sixth Patriarch continues: As for the "zen" of zazen, no matter what comes up within, to not be moved around by it. Whether we are praised or blamed, whether we are accused or approved of, none of that is to be caught on. None of that dualistic view should we be caught on. If we realize this deep state of mind, then even if someone comes to us with fear we are not moved around by it. Whether they are terribly angry at us or coming from their place of fear, we don't

*this teaching of ours has first taken
non-thought as its central doctrine,
the formless as its essence,
and
nonabiding as its base*

從上已來
無念為宗
無相為體
無住為本

Jūjō irai, muten o shū to nasshi, musō o
tai to nashi, mujū o moto to nasu

從之已矣
無為而終
身復為本



have to be moved around by that. And if someone is coming to us full of thanks and praise over something we've done, we don't have to have our heads turned around by that, either. We simply receive things exactly as they are no matter what comes.

In the Heart Sutra it talks about deep Prajna—the deep wisdom, as Shido Munan Zenji puts it, to lose track of our body completely. This is the deep wisdom. Zazen is to throw ourselves away totally, or as Dogen Zenji has also said, to realize the Way of Buddha is to study ourselves; what it means to study ourselves is to forget ourself completely; to forget ourselves completely means to be reflected back by all others and all things. But that does not mean to search for an idea about nothing at all where we lose ourselves. Because we look around for something like that we get caught on that idea, we get tired in our zazen, we get rigid, our legs hurt. But if we think we realize a place of nothing at all, this will also not be true zazen.

As Dogen says, dive into it completely, lose yourself in it completely! Dive into the pain in your legs, dive into that suffering you feel! Don't divide your awareness into two! This is what it means to study yourself—to realize the Buddha's Way is to study yourself. To study yourself is to forget yourself completely. To forget yourself completely is to be reflected back by all people and all things. If we dive into that then we are completely one with our pain and our hurting—not divided, not separated, not in a relative state to what we are experiencing. If it's not free from dualism, it is not Buddhism.

In Zen when we are sad, the whole world is completely sad. We dive into it. When we are happy, the whole world is complete happiness. Feel that pain straight on, face it directly without running away from it! That is true zazen. This is why beginners burn, so hot. They burn completely

because they don't know what is coming next; there is only this one moment, ever, for them. People who have a lot of experience and know what is coming next can calculate and plan and have a harder time being totally present in this very moment.

Sutra: 'All things are impermanent, and so they belong to the Dharma of becoming and cessation (i.e., Samskrita Dharma). When both becoming and cessation cease to operate, the bliss of Perfect Rest and Cessation of Changes (i.e., Nirvana) arises.'

Many religions offer something to be thankful for, something external to be thankful for. This is not the point. There are, among human beings, murderers and thieves; this body we're born with is instinctually desirous. We have to awaken to the actuality of our clear mind and our truly splendid character. Otherwise it will not be known, even though we are endowed with it. We feel this restrictedness of zazen but if you look at it carefully that is not so bad as being desperate and angry. We have to use our body for doing this; we have to use our breathing, our mind, all of it wisely. As it says in the Zazengi, we align our body, we align our breathing, we align our mind, we realize the world where the body, the breathing and the mind are one becoming. We who are of such strong ego, who always put ourselves in the middle of everything, can then become the hugeness of this whole universe. We have to become that. We see then how we have no need of that ego at all.

We do zazen, we align our breathing, our body and our mind. With all our of 360 smallest joints, 84,000 hair pores we dive into that zazen, not separating our mind and body, not dividing our mind into two, into a dualistic point of view. We bring it all into oneness and we become that Mu. Then as we continue, the past experience, the collective knowledge, the conditioning, all fall away and we are just here, as is.

We come and participate in sesshin to let go of all of that explanation, of being a “me,” and to see and perceive directly. We become each thing because we are not in any way separate from this world; we are each and every thing. Every single thing we pass by and we touch is who we are. The floor is my body, the face of the person sitting across the room from me is my face! When I walk, all of what I see is my face! This all comes from deepening our zazen. We feel that our eyes are being sucked into the floor when we sit but because we are told that it’s time to stand up for kinhin, we have to get up. So we stand. We’re told to walk and we walk, but it is as if our eyes are stuck on the floor. We receive this state of mind.

In the words of Dogen, there are several kinds of time. There is our usual perception of time—a time moving from a past through a present to a future. Then there is a time that is realized when we talk about our vow and our planning, which is time moving from the future toward the present. But the true life energy is only found in the kind of time that pierces through now and now to now. Life energy is right there and is actualized in that; that is our zazen.

We dig into right now, right now. While there is time there is no time, and here is where we find the Buddha’s life energy, Daruma Daishi’s life energy, because all of that is this very moment’s life energy. We dig into it all—the past, the present, the future—the life energy of this whole universe.

The joy of Nirvana is not a feeling of a joy designed in our heads, nor a joy from doing our work well. This world is not so simple, we are still getting pulled into ideas of profit and loss, and so we do zazen. “In all the boundless realms of space not a single hair can be inserted. From the infinite past to the measureless future we are never separated from this very moment.” This whole world right

smack in front of me is my body! We receive it all—the present, the past, the future. All of it is my energy, the subtle flavour of zazen, the joy of Nirvana.

Sutra: There is no such thing as
‘one quintessence and five
functions’ (as you allege).

There is no being born, there is no dying. We become aware of a birth and a death because we separate from the actuality. Here our true life energy is ongoing without any awareness of being that ongoingness because we have become it completely. This is not about the awareness of it but about the being of it—and this is not about understanding it mentally. When Master Dairyo was asked by a monk about eternal life [Mumonkan, case 77], he answered with a poem:

The mountain flowers bloom like a
brocade;
The surging stream flows as if blue
with indigo.

Because this cannot be understood mentally he did not give a mental answer: That which sees and that which is being seen are one and the same. The very moment when the flower falls is eternal. The flowing river is not about mental understanding but about ongoing being. This small physical body of about 170cm becomes the whole universe because there is no separation there; there is only the essence of experiencing. “The world and I are one and the same.” In this there is no way to drag in any shadow. This universe transforms infinitely, so there will always be immeasurable, ongoing life energy. This is not a mental idea.

As the Sixth Patriarch has said, from the origin all is empty. There is not a speck of anything anywhere. When it manifests it is there, when it is gone nothing remains. There is nothing to drag along. The Sixth Patriarch says to see whatever is there and not be moved around by it. We see within and are not moved around by that because there is nothing to see there and

so nothing to be moved around by. And so in Zen it is only taught to become it. We are taught always to become everything completely, to become it totally. Zazen: become it completely! Eating the food: become it completely! Doing the work, we become that completely! In doing this we add on no extra ideas of what “I” am doing and what “I” am saying.

The Sutras we read slowly for beginners, but there is a natural faster speed when we are more experienced, just as is true for everybody’s work. There everyone has a speed where the work is going in it’s most natural way after we have learned what it is we are to do. Things should be done at their natural speed. We work on our zazen and there is a natural flow. Our state of mind in its natural flow has no extra mind-moments, no form, and no place of abiding. To have no extra mind-moments means that everything that we encounter, we meet it without adding any extra ideas onto our perception of it. It is our direct perception only. We meet a bird and it’s only a bird. We encounter a flower and it’s only a flower. Each thing is only exactly as it is. In doing our work, we do it but there is no sense of working. We have this body, but even when we are working using the body we lose track of any sense or awareness of a body being what is doing that work. This world is always changing, always transforming, so that means for us only one thing: to be ongoingly newborn. This is our most healthy state. Then to be without abiding; we don’t stop and get stuck on anything. We don’t become stagnant in our awareness, in our state of mind—but neither is there any sense of cessation. If we can’t feel what needs to be done when we’re working and we have to stop and be told what’s next, that’s a sign that our zazen isn’t being done right. It comes right to us; what has to be done arrives where we are. Of course, some things we have to learn how to do first, but we can’t be caught and stuck in that, either. When we pull things

along we get overexcited; when we don’t pull them along we are settled and can see clearly. The same is true of our zazen. In the beginning we hurt so much because we push so hard; we’re trying so hard, pushing our body into certain positions, forcing it. But if we sit for a number of days we lose that fear of how it is going to feel and we begin to know the place where we can let go of that.

Sutra: When both becoming and cessation cease to operate, the bliss of perfect rest and cessation of changes (i.e., Nirvana) arises.’

The poet Masaoka Shiki wrote this poem on his death bed:

The hichima gourd flower is blooming
The mucous is all stuffed up
Is this the Buddha?

Seeing it directly, we might wonder when he is writing this if he is dividing it up, separating from the experience. But that is the difference between someone who is seeing this through the experience of becoming it completely or not. Like this monk Shido who is asking this question of the Sixth Patriarch, their levels of understanding are very different. There are some parts that can be understood mentally but many more that cannot be reached by that mental understanding. A human’s pain and suffering are terrible—anyone knows that—but there is also that cessation.

Sutra: When both becoming and cessation cease to operate, the bliss of perfect rest and cessation of changes (i.e., Nirvana) arises.

The monk Shido asks the Sixth Patriarch what bliss could be experienced. It is not a mental idea, that bliss. When we become quiet we have the spaciousness to receive. When we are in pain and hurting it feels like a hell realm, but when that is over we feel the great open feeling of sitting on our cushions and not bustling around in society. We are taken to meals which appear before us, we are settled, we are not afraid. We’re not caught on anything then.

Is it the physical body that is experiencing this bliss? Eventually that physical body is going to be dead. The Dharma body has no senses, so how can it enjoy this bliss? It's not as if we don't have a body, but just like a mirror it reflects a fire and is not burned by it. If we start reacting strongly to everything we are reflecting, however, then we are thrown into hell.

See that it is all phenomena, even if it's something actual, and don't be pulled around by things like that. There has to be a full tautness or we'll be pulled around and moved by things. There are mental expressions of this—for example, that our mind is the ocean and the waves on it are our ideas and cravings. But it is not about enduring this terribly. It is about whether or not we are caught on these things. The essence has to be full and taut.

When the Dharma body manifests as the physical body through karmic affiliation, this is eternal life—this is what the monk is proposing. The physical body swallowed down by the Dharma body—how about that? When everything is gone—all of our feelings, everything—then how will it be? Buddhism is not about this kind of extinctionism; and it is not about being separated into a physical body and a Dharma body. The universe is who we are, and while having a physical body, to know that infinite life of the universe, yet not to drop a single individual thing. Dogen Zenji calls this experience shikantaza. It is also called “continuous clear mind-moments.” To live wholly in that ongoing life energy is not about shutting down our eyes and ears, but to see that all things are also doing zazen; this is the truth of shikantaza. This is how we become one with the whole universe. This how continuing clear mind-moments operate. In the same way, realizing this we deepen our zazen. We experience this continuous clear mind-moment and realize the life energy is who we are—forgetting ourselves completely in it. This is also shikantaza. Not a

mental design of a shikantaza, this is the place where we find that “both Becoming and Cessation cease to operate, the bliss of perfect rest and cessation of changes arises.” As Hakuin Zenji says in his Song of Zazen, we do zazen and without even thinking about it we lose track of our body completely, we lose track of our thinking completely. This is not a thinking about doing that. We dive into our work and our life and we manifest it in our everyday work as well, not wasting it by scattering it all over the place. We have to use our experience carefully; if we don't, we go against the teachings of the Buddhas and patriarchs. It is not about analyzing this mentally.

OSESSHIN, 2005-09, DAY SIX

We have had these lines from the Nirvana Sutra that the monk is asking about:

Sutra: It is about this part, Sir, that I am doubtful: ‘All things are impermanent, and so they belong to the Dharma of becoming and cessation (i.e., Samskrita Dharma). When both becoming and cessation cease to operate, the bliss of perfect rest and cessation of changes (i.e., Nirvana) arises.’

Next, the Sixth Patriarch offers a gatha. The sutra-writing rules prescribe that a section needs a gatha to gather it together:

Sutra: The Supreme Maha Parinirvana
Is perfect, permanent, calm,
and illuminating.
Common people and ignorant
ones miscall it death,
While heretics hold arbitrarily
that it is annihilation.
Those who belong to the Sravaka Vehicle
or the Pratyeka Buddha Vehicle
Regard it as ‘Non-action’.

Here is written the true security of mind—a very important part of the Nirvana Sutra and which is being asked about by a monk. The monk has understood it with his rational mind but he's not really “got it” yet. It is zazen that takes this body

full of desires, instincts and thoughts, and sitting it, the Buddha mind manifests. We have eyes and ears and hands and legs and feelings not to have them as superficial senses only, but with them to realize that Buddha nature.

With sutras or mantras or zazen, to become it. Chanting the Buddha's name "Namu Amida Butsu," we become it and then we let go of the thoughts. Working on Mu, we let go of the thoughts about Mu, thoughts about our koans, thoughts about whatever we're practicing. In the beginning we need the words and the thoughts to get us going, to put our intention into it. But it can't be realized with just mental understanding. We repeat and repeat and repeat—we merge with it, it becomes us. We go beyond the physical body to where there is no more room for mental operation. It surges through us, it flows over and goes out into the whole universe! We deepen our zazen. We experience the continuous clear mind-moments; this is the samadhi of Mu. We become the direct perception of things, and can see and hear directly. In that we can see that from the beginning our eyes and ears perceive with no effort. Our thoughts fade away and we directly perceive this huge, abundant life energy which is not mental, which is not something rational. It sings as the bird, it blooms as the flower! It is beyond any dualistic idea of an "I" and it becomes equal in all beings, all existences. We put the ore into the furnace and everything burns out but the iron or the pure gold, the impurities all melted away. This is zazen.

Sutra: The Supreme Maha
Parinirvana Is perfect, permanent,
calm, and illuminating.

We can see—we borrow these eyes and these ears. Even if we were to borrow the eyes and ears of the Buddha and Bodhidharma we would see in the same way. "The willow tree is green, the flower is red." "The willow—the beloved

form of Kuan Yin, the flowing stream is the tongue teaching the sermon of the Buddha." These words are taken from the Zen Phrases. As Dogen Zenji said, "In the spring we have the flowers, in the summer we have the meadowlark, in the fall we have the bright moon, in the winter we have the chill, cold snow." All of these are direct perceptions from the true source, not Dogen's mental ideas about something. He's using the culture in making the poem, probably in the moment of this direct perception. This is like Mumon Ekai Zenji's quoting of Nansen, "Everyday mind is the Path." We can see this mentally as well. But Dogen was saying it with this cultural, poetic point of how in the spring we have the flowers, in the summer we have the meadowlark song, in the autumn we have the moon's bright light and in the winter the chill, cold snow—using the culture while coming from his original, true mind. He was not saying it like, "Look, this is how the Buddha nature works."

Sutra: The Supreme Maha Parinirvana
Is perfect, permanent, calm,
and illuminating. Ignorant
people miscall it death,...

People in the dojo sit in yaza, often tired from the day's work in the zendo, worn out. But in the night in the dark sky feeling their zazen fully, they come to life again. There are many ways to do training. For the Roshi, he goes to bed right after the last sutra at night, then gets up very early after a few hours of sleep, when his state of mind is fresh. We have to have a deep determination and vow to do this. If we don't have that determination, we indulge in extra sleep that we don't really need and we just see our precious life being wasted around us. We have to guard and care for this. Doing yaza, everyone, one after the next leaves and goes inside. But to keep sitting, never knowing what truth we might encounter, what deep experience waits! It cannot be moved around our own circumstances and

situations.

The individual senses do not all perceive separately; everything that we perceive is perceived in one whole: All the mountains and rivers are reflected within this mirror. As we continue working on it we are seeing something beyond form—the mountains and rivers are right within us. The scenery is our eyes, our eyes are the scenery. There is no mental understanding of this necessary or possible. The whole universe is spilling over with it! Our usual life is full of thoughts coming and going. Is that ok? Is that so bad? But because of it we don't know that abundant great, huge, mind. We have to become each thing itself or we live our whole life moved around by things that are external. It doesn't matter if we are praised or blamed; we have to realize that huge, clear mind.

The President, the Congressperson, do they know this huge mind? Even if you are in their high position, if you don't know this true mind you cannot know the true perception. This experience has to be present for any and every religious person—or what kind of life is it? Eno Zenji is pointing to this and letting us see it clearly. When we awaken to this experience, then who will be pulled around by profit and loss? Who will be worrying about what they will be doing tomorrow?

Sutra: While heretics hold arbitrarily that it is annihilation.

Heretics are people who are considered to be intellectual and caught on external things. The world is not one of annihilation.

Sutra: Those who belong to the Sravaka Vehicle or the Pratyeka Buddha Vehicle regard it as 'Non-action'. All these are mere intellectual speculations,

And form the basis of the sixty-two fallacious views.

Since they are mere fictitious names invented for the occasion

They have nothing to do with

the Absolute Truth.

All of these teachings which sound so splendid when spoken with flapping lips, to not be caught on them, no matter how excellent a teacher is speaking them. No matter how much we appreciate a verbal teaching it is still only a doctrine in words and phrases. The words and phrases themselves cannot be the truth, no matter what excellent sutra they are written in. We have to realize it with our own experience or it is not the actual truth. To not be caught on the view of an eternal soul or that there is nothing else after death—both of these are merely mental ideas and there is no truth in this.

Some of the other paths prefer to awaken themselves only; they say that to have a perfectly clear mind and stop there is what is most important. But what about extinguishing the flames of greed, anger, and ignorance of all people, to where there are no more remnants in anyone? People who don't understand anything about it, if they hold just to this limited belief, they will not be able to work in society. It is just fine to never get angry or to not be greedy or ignorant, but we have to become one with the whole world, and on behalf of that to become angry for all beings' injustice and see what wisdom we can bring forth from there.

"This is good," "That person is a good person," or, "They did a terrible thing,"—we complain so easily about other people! But to do what we can to correct it—with our best wisdom we can draw it out of others. Everyone is endowed with this wisdom, all people have it from the origin. Parents know that children want the things they want, and they want them right now. But parents have to guide the children's wisdom to be greater and be clearer, or who will liberate them? The heretics will say that there is only annihilation necessary, but this is not the true teaching of the Mahaparinirvana Sutra.

Sutra: All these are mere

intellectual speculations,
And form the basis of the sixty-
two fallacious views.
Since they are mere fictitious names
invented for the occasion
They have nothing to do with
the Absolute Truth.

To speak intellectually—even excellently—
does not teach the true point. Everybody
has to still keep working further until they
can see that true point directly. We read
this and see how clearly that is the truth.

Sutra: Only those of super-eminent mind
Can understand thoroughly what Nirvana is,
And take up the attitude of neither
attachment nor indifference towards it.

They know that the five skandhas
And the so-called 'ego' arising from
the union of these skandhas,
Together with all external objects and forms

And the various phenomena
of sound and voice

Are equally unreal, like a
dream or an illusion.

They make no discrimination between
a sage and an ordinary man.

Nor do they have any arbitrary
concept on Nirvana.

They are above 'affirmation' and 'negation'
and they break the barrier of the
past, the present, and the future.

Humans have this sense of an actual
existence, of an ego. We perceive a flower;
we receive that and next we imagine what
we will do with that and we begin to move
in a direction. We have the five aggregates
and their input, and we bring in ideas of
what is very good and what is very helpful.
The same is true of the company boss, of
people of all different colors. People who
are seeing in this way are all the same, and
everything of the ego comes forth from
that. Yet we can hear who is speaking
even if we cannot see their skin color. All

people are equal in their functioning, even
if they think, act, and behave differently.
We are all equal in this one way. We see
this, we see that, but in fact all of these
things we see are like a dream, like a
bubble, like a drop of dew, like a phantom,
like the lightning in a summer storm. To
not be following after these!

Sutra: They use their sense organs,
when occasion requires,

But the concept of 'Using' does not arise.

They may particularize on all sorts of things,

But the concept of 'Particularization'
does not arise.

We have to realize this Truth directly—
that which comes from nothing at all yet
functions as seeing in our eyes, as hearing
in our ears, as smelling in our noses, as
tasting in our mouth, as moving in our
body, as holding things in our hands,
as walking in our feet. But instead, our
functioning is not free from dualism, and
like the bottom of a big barrel which is
full of wet, rotting leaves—added to that is
bearcat, ferret, and raccoon shit, and all of
these together are fermenting and becom-
ing methane gas. That is what our ego is
like. From there we move and from there
we function. There is nothing so terrify-
ing as the human mind and the way the
human ego works. It can be used in a good
way to bring life to all things, but instead
we bring prejudice, we bring selfish wishes
for our own personal profit, we bring hate.

Here we are, all built alike, equal, endowed
with this clear mind and this excellent
perception, but we use that for defending
and protecting our own egoistic views and
ideas. Everyone wants to be free, but they
don't realize their chains of bondage come
from within; they are always blaming
external things. Their restrictiveness is
always thought to be happening because
of someone else or something else,
something external. We don't know that
our bondage is not about external libera-
tion, that it is about liberating ourselves

within. As Shido Munan Zenji has said, “While being still alive, to die, and die completely!” We have to take all of these bonds of ego off; from all over our being we have to loosen them or we will kill for what we hate. The most terrifying things are not outside of us but inside of us. We all think we are suffering more than anyone else but we don’t see that that is coming right from inside of us. We blame it on this thing or on that person. In Buddhism, this central point is made very clear: It is happening inside.

The Buddha himself, until he was eighty years old travelled everywhere teaching everyone. Everywhere he went was to teach people to let go of that ego, and that that physical body is only temporary. You’ll all be shriveled up and wrinkled very soon! How can you depend on a body like that? Let go of those desires! See what is there prior to those desires—something so huge, so abundant, this great all embracing Truth! When we awaken to this Truth we so clearly wonder, for what was I wasting all my precious time? But hurrying around for those things without realizing this true mind within, we see that this is what we have to do and it’s too late. This is how the Sixth Patriarch is teaching us.

Sutra: Even during the cataclysmic
fire at the end of a kalpa,

when ocean-beds are burnt dry,

Or during the blowing of the
catastrophic wind

when one mountain topples on another,

The real and everlasting bliss of ‘perfect
rest’ and ‘cessation of changes’

Of Nirvana remains in the same
state and changes not.

Here I am trying to describe to you
something which is ineffable

So that you may get rid of
your fallacious views.

But if you do not interpret my words literally

You may perhaps learn a wee bit
of the meaning of Nirvana!

No matter what excellent doctrine we
offer, finally this fire and the catastrophic
winds will blow. This is the traditional
Buddhist view. While quickly decaying,
are you truly realizing that which is
eternal?

The hichima gourd flower blooms
The mucous is all stuffed up
Is this the Buddha?

And here we have the poetizing about the
morning crow by Yamaoka Tesshu as he
was dying of stomach cancer:

Tightening my abdomen
Against the pain-----
The caw of a morning crow.

Or that of the carpenter at Saidaiji, saying
death has been taken away:

Taken away by Amida Buddha, death
is gone
and now all I have left is this joy
“Namu Amida Butsu”

These are not plain words but words
deeply soaked in truth of experience.

Sutra: The real and everlasting bliss
of ‘Perfect Rest’ and ‘Cessation of
Changes’ Of Nirvana remains in
the same state and changes not.

The Buddha left home at age twenty-nine,
so blessed with things and material pos-
sessions and situations that he was lacking
nothing and was the envy of others. He
left all of it behind. At the age of thirty-five
he was deeply awakened and realized how
“Nirvana remains in the same state and
changes not”—this eternal mind. Until the
age of eighty he taught it everywhere he
went, until finally at Kushinagara, never
even returning to his own home state, he
died.

Where did this activity come forth from?
Where did this realization have its source?
Daruma Daishi as well, coming to China
at that elderly age, taking three years to get
there—his activity, where did that come
forth from? Or Hakuin Zenji, whose

letters and paintings are like a bomb exploding, who as a child was known to be terrified of Hell. Where did those countless works come forth from? All of this of activity came forth from the same place,

Sutra: The real and everlasting bliss of 'Perfect Rest' and 'Cessation of Changes' Of Nirvana remains in the same state and changes not.

Or as Ikkyu Zenji said, "Falling in love at first sight with the Buddha nature, I can't forget this face for anything,"—a very Ikkyu-like poem. This as well, coming from "The real and everlasting bliss of 'Perfect Rest' and 'Cessation of Changes.'"

People say why do this if we are all going to die anyway; why should we bother? Yet within our minds we all long to become settled in this way and feel that we are missing something. We all have this sense of, Isn't there something we are supposed to be doing, something else? Why, when we have so much do we feel as if something is still missing? This is not about mental ideas about this subject, it is because our True Nature longs for us to realize it.

The idea that I could not do that—that is what stops us and puts a lid on us! The Buddha is not teaching about something that is not the same for all people, Because we don't realize this we get caught on the lesser joy of phenomena that are like fragile bubbles popping on the surface of a pond and we don't seek that actual source. The Sixth Patriarch is teaching this very kindly to the monk.

Sutra: Here I am trying to describe to you something which is ineffable

So that you may get rid of
your fallacious views.

But if you do not interpret my words literally

You may perhaps learn a wee bit
of the meaning of Nirvana!

Having heard this stanza, Chih Tao was highly enlightened. In a rapturous mood, he made obeisance and departed.

Here I am telling you something so ineffable that you can't stop at only hearing it, it has to be experienced! And if you experience it, then all of the Buddha's teachings are understood within that. The monk Shido understood for the first time and he was able to see this place of true joy.

OSESSHIN, 2005-09, DAY SEVEN

Sutra: *Bhikkhu Hsing Ssu*, a Dhyana Master, was born at An Cheng of Chi Chou of a Liu family. Upon hearing that the preaching of the Patriarch had enlightened a great number of people, he at once came to Ts'ao Ch'i to tender him homage, and ask him this question:

Now we have, from today, the teachings of the life of Seigen Gyoshi. It was Seigen Gyoshi and Nangaku Ejo whose streams from the Sixth Patriarch were most widely and deeply spread. Because of these two great teachers, Zen flourished in the T'ang dynasty the most of any time in Chinese history; these two were the source. Under them the Sixth Patriarch's teaching spread far and wide and then was continued by their very great disciples, Sekito Kisen and Baso Doitsu, who carried it even further. It was also the era that was responsible for this being possible. That Buddhism which had been for so long a matter for scholars was now actualized. But even in periods of great political strife, since Zen

*"What is it that comes, how would
it come?"*

*"To say that it is a thing is off the
mark"*

什麼物 怎麼來
曰說似一物即不中

Nani mono ka inmoni kitaru. Iwaku,
setsuji ichimotsu soku fuchū

什惡物恁麼來
飲食，物即不中

deals directly with that large question of life and death, it flourished in even more challenging times. In a time when other Buddhist sects were being crushed, Zen was flourishing. When the capital was falling, people couldn't follow those scholars and wait for kalpas to realize how to free themselves from their deep insecurity. They wanted a teaching for right now in their immediate challenges, for their present state of mind. Zen does not need a large temple's geomancy-correct area with many buildings. It can use them but it doesn't require them. Zen is about that teaching beyond words and phrases.

In an era when the world cannot be depended upon, Zen offers a truth which can be. At the time of the Sixth Patriarch, there were challenges between the great leaders of the day and it was at this very time that Seigen Gyoshi and Nangaku Ejo came forth.

Gyoshi Zenji was born in Kishu, near where Ummon came forth from, in an area called Kosho. In Kishu was Sokei Mountain, and the Sixth Patriarch had a deep karmic affiliation to the mountain; he came there and was teaching the truth of sudden enlightenment. This truth spread far, and even from somewhere as far away as Kishu came Gyoshi Zenji to ask about this. Seigen Gyoshi came to the place of the Sixth Patriarch and he immediately asked him:

Sutra: What should a learner direct his mind to, so that his attainment cannot be rated by the (usual) 'stages of progress'?

He came to the Sixth Patriarch and said that he did not want to go through the Fifty-two Ranks that were usually given and passed through in order to realize true nature. He wanted to do it immediately. At that time scholars said that people had to do these fifty-two levels in order and it might take many lifetimes to realize true nature—following the precepts, studying exhaustively the rules and the texts, and then finally becoming a Buddha.

The higher classes were encouraged to study and to do this and were told they would some day become a Buddha if they followed these ranks.

But in a time of strife, with your family dying, with your house being burned, with war everywhere and you could be killed at any time, you don't feel like waiting those many lifetimes. What can you do right now? Seigen Gyoshi said, "These fifty-two levels, I can't wait for those." He wanted something that would be immediate, and he immediately asked this question when he met the Sixth Patriarch.

Nangaku Ejo Zenji, Baso Doitsu Zenji, Hyakujo Ekai Zenji, Obaku Kiun Zenji, Rinzai Gigen Zenji—there were several great masters at that time. It was the fifth of these, Rinzai Gigen Zenji, who taught, "In this five-foot lump of red flesh there is a true person of no rank, coming and going always, in and out of these orifices." His temple was burned down three times. He had to change locations and training places, and in the very midst of all of this he taught this truth.

Rinzai's teaching of this five-foot lump of red flesh in which there was a true person of no rank coming and going always—there are women, men, rich people, poor people, old people, young people. There are differences like these but still within that there is one truth that is not touched by these differences, by none of these ranks. There is one true character of this in each of us, but because we don't realize it we are always thinking we are not good enough and losing confidence. While in our eyes it is seeing mountains, the sun, the moon, where is there any rank in that seeing? In our ears it is always perceiving and becoming the sounds of the bell ringing and the birds singing; where is there a rank in that hearing? In our smelling—the perceiving of the many fragrances of the flowers—where is there any rank in that smelling? In our tasting the many flavours—sweet, spicy—and in feeling hot

and cold, is there any rank in any of those? This is all the Buddha, free from any rank or any ideas about those words here, those words there. In words we learn there is a rank, but does a rank hear a dog barking, “bow-wow”? Of course we are healthy or not healthy—there can be a rank in that, a level in how healthy we are, but not in hot or cold. Nor in this five foot lump of red flesh into which a true person of no rank is always coming and going, when we realize that true life energy which has gone beyond those rankings.

But everyone is poisoned by the poison of ego perception and ideas. “I want this.” “I want that.” “That is pretty, that is ugly.” To be happy and sad, that is direct perception, but to add onto that, “I like this,” “I like that,” “I want this,” “I don’t want it” and have preferences, that is making ranks. Rinzai taught this and earlier Seigen Gyoshi is asking the same question to the Sixth Patriarch.

Sutra: “What work have you been doing?” asked the Patriarch. “Even the Noble Truths taught by various Buddhas I have not anything to do with,” replied Hsing Ssu. “What stage of progress are you in?” asked the Patriarch. “What stage of progress can there be, when I refuse to have anything to do with even the Noble Truths?” he retorted. His repartee commanded the great respect of the Patriarch who made him leader of the assembly. One day the Patriarch told him that he should propagate the Law in his own district, so that the teaching might not come to an end. Thereupon he returned to Ch’ing Yuan Mountain in his native district. The Dharma having been transmitted to him, he spread it widely and thus perpetuated the teaching of his Master.

Upon his death, the posthumous title ‘Dhyana Master Hung Chi’ was conferred on him.

The Sixth Patriarch then says, “What have you been doing up until today? What rank have you been in until now?” Seigen Gyoshi answers that he has been

in the ultimate truth. This is the same as the question Emperor Wu asked to Bodhidharma when he arrived in China. The Emperor asked, “What is that ultimate truth?” There is no ranking in this, just as there is no difference or ranking between enlightened and ignorant human beings. To sweep all of that away is the true, ultimate truth.

When we have dived into God—one becoming, becoming one—we can perhaps understand this. In Daruma Daishi’s answer to Emperor Wu of “nothing sacred, only emptiness,” we have this, in the first case of the Blue Cliff Records. Daruma Daishi was not moved around by any of that, and Seigen Gyoshi was the same: “I have no such ultimate Truth to be attached to.” Seigen Gyoshi was coming to have his state of mind tested and confirmed; his question was not one that required an answer. He has no doubt here; he is not expressing that. Seigen Gyoshi is coming from his deeply awakened state of mind. The Sixth Patriarch saw this clearly and he asked him to teach the monks in his assembly; immediately, Seigen Gyoshi became the head monk at the Sixth Patriarch’s dojo. Was it after a few days or was it after a few months, Seigen Gyoshi was called in by the Sixth Patriarch, who told him he should be in society teaching and spreading the truth. And he gave him transmission. Seigen Gyoshi returned to his home area of Kishu to the Seigen Mountain, to the temple of Jōgō-ji, and raised the monks there. Koshi Zenji was his posthumous name.

Sutra: Bhikkhu Huai Rang, a Dhyana Master, was born of a Tu family in Chin Chou. Upon his first visit to ‘National Teacher’ Hui An of Sung-Shan Mountain, he was directed by the latter to go to Ts’ao Ch’i to interview the Patriarch. Upon his arrival, and after the usual salutation, he was asked by the Patriarch whence he came. “From Sung Shan,” replied he. “What thing is it (that comes)? How did it come?” asked the Patriarch. “To say that it is similar to a

certain thing is wrong," he retorted.

Nangaku Ejo Zenji was in Ankoku-ji with National Teacher Shuzan; he was training with the National Teacher, who told him that instead of being with him, he should be training with the Sixth Patriarch in order to have his true awakening. Nangaku Ejo Zenji then went to the mountain of the Sixth Patriarch, who asked him, "Where are you from?" He replied, "I am from the place of Shuzan An-Kokushi and he told me to come here for training." The Sixth Patriarch responded, "Is that so? Well, maybe he told you to come in accordance to his instructions, but what is it that heard those instructions and what brought you here? You're not some messenger boy who only came because you were told to. What is it that heard him telling that to you? What is it that brought you here?"

When he was asked what it was that brought him there, he was stuck. He bumped into a wall. He said, "Well, I'm a person of training..." and the Sixth Patriarch said, "That is form. What is it that brought you here?" "Well, it was my mind." "Where is that mind?" "My mind? Well, my name is Ejo." "That's a name."

And no matter what he said, it was not accepted. For eight years it was not accepted. Before Nangaku Ejo arrived he had already studied a lot; he did not arrive without a background. He was not one who didn't know what was going on. And yet, when asked about the true root of it all he had no answer.

Finally, he was completely out of confidence. He knew he'd mentally understood what he was, but still he would be angry if he was insulted, he'd be glad if he was praised. He was still moved around, so he knew that it was not that. He was still a slave even though thinking he was in charge. He had many thoughts and ideas piled up, but would these go as he wished? Of course not. And it's all the more so

as we get older if things don't go as we'd hoped and wanted them to. Our friends die and we are shown how our time left is probably getting shorter. In the morning we wake up and our body is not so easy as it once was. But there is nothing we can do about it, as everybody dies anyway—we think. If that is the case, then what have we lived for? For what is this truth? What is beyond this gate? We have to know this, and for this we have Zen.

Nangaku Ejo for eight years had to continue interrogating himself, asking again and again what is it that sees, what is it that hears, what is it that smells, what is it that tastes, what is it that feels. He questioned deeply for eight years and finally he understood: That which cannot be spoken about, that is what has come here! He had crushed the bones and plucked out the marrow. He had shaved it all away, and for the first time Nangaku Ejo went beyond time to where there is no birth and no death. He went beyond space where there is no big and no small, where there is nothing there at all, yet it uses our hands and legs and mouth and eyes. We use it freely, but if we have to grasp it there is nothing to grab—that very source of our being alive.

Sutra: "Is it attainable by training?" asked the Patriarch. "It is not impossible to attain it by training; but it is quite impossible to pollute it," he replied.

The Sixth Patriarch asked if one has to train to know this—can know it only by training. He was putting on the finishing touches with this question to Nangaku Ejo. It does not have to do with training, but, as Dogen Zenji talks about in the Bendowa from his own experience, if we all already have Buddha nature why do we have to do training? Why are we pushing around other people if we're already endowed with Buddha nature? Why are we abusing them, even killing them? If we all have Buddha nature, how can we do these things? Dogen Zenji

searched everywhere for this answer but no one could tell him in a way that he could understand clearly. Finally, he went to Tendozan Mountain in China where Nyoyo Zenji was the one to help him see this place where body and mind fell away completely.

Dogen realized the experience of the Buddha and he said on return that he had gone to China empty-handed and he had returned empty-handed—that there was no Dharma to be found there. He was only there a short time—five or six years—but he knew for one thing for certain: that the eyes were horizontal on the face and below them the nose was vertical. No one, no matter what they said, could convince him otherwise. In exactly this way no matter what they said, he was sure—and this is not so because of having done training. As the Buddha exclaimed at his awakening, “How wonderful! How wonderful! All beings are endowed with the same clear mind to which I have just awakened! All beings without exception are endowed with the same clear mind to which I have just awakened.”

We all have the same deep mind from birth. We don’t receive something or receive this clear mind because we awaken, but we awaken to the fact that we have always had it—all of us. Nangaku Ejo didn’t understand this at the beginning of when he was being questioned—that we realize this clear mind and then we know that it has always been within us and are never confused again. Seeing that true mind directly once, we see that. If we don’t see it, it is like we are living in a murky dream, unable to see clearly, but once we have realized it we don’t have to be confused no matter what comes along. I realize, said Dogen Zenji, the two eyes are horizontal on the face and below them the nose is vertical, and no matter what anyone says otherwise they can’t convince me differently.

Sutra: Thereupon, the Patriarch exclaimed,

“It is exactly this unpolluted thing that all Buddhas take good care of. It is so for you, and it is so for me as well.”

The Sixth Patriarch then said, yet it is just like that, and no matter what anyone says it cannot be damaged—even if someone threatens to kill us. We can kill something of shape, but not something with no form. Our awakened true mind we have just scooped up, from there it is given to many people, if many people are awakened from there. The truth I have scooped up, is the same truth you have now scooped up from the same source and so is also true for the Buddha and Nangaku Ejo received the transmission.

Sutra: Patriarch Prajnatara of India foretold that under your feet a colt would rush forth and trample on the people of the whole world. I need not interpret this oracle too soon, as the answer should be found within your mind.

Being thereby enlightened, Huai Jang realized intuitively what the Patriarch had said. Henceforth, he became his attendant for a period of fifteen years; and day by day his knowledge of Buddhism got deeper and deeper. Afterwards, he made his home in Nan Yueh where he spread widely the teaching of the Patriarch. Upon his death, the posthumous title, “Dhyana Master Ta Hui (Great Wisdom) was conferred on him by imperial edict.

Daruma Daishi’s teacher, Hannyatara Sonja, said there would a descendent that would be the one that would rush forth and trample on the people of the whole world, and it was this descendent Nangaku Ejo which the Sixth Patriarch told would be one of his disciples. “This is not of so much importance to stress, however,” he said, and he told him to raise his disciples well and not to be in a hurry with them. He transmitted the Dharma to him. For fifteen years Nangaku Ejo stayed with the Sixth Patriarch, continuing his training. Later he went to the place of Nangaku where he had a temple, and there

the Dharma flourished. It was from Seigen Gyoshi, Nangaku Ejo, down to Baso Doitsu Zenji, then his disciple Hyakujo Ekai Zenji, Obaku Kiun Zenji, down to Rinzai Kigen Zenji who took the Dharma and so strongly spread it throughout all of China. In this way he was able to realize his deep enlightenment and the Sixth Patriarch passed on the transmission to these strong descendents.

Next we have the story of Yokadaishi, the author of the Song of Enlightenment: "Have you not see the true man of the way of the Tao, not caught on thoughts, nor trying to get rid of them?" Giving rise to ideas of wanting and not wanting, and liking and not liking—all of this is also Buddha nature. Buddha nature is not something separate from all of these desires, but if we stop and get caught on those desires that is where the problem is.

It is a matter of course to love all people and if we see them meaninglessly killed it is a huge waste and a terrible thing to see. We cannot make all things our own personal possessions, yet there is no Buddha nature without desires and ideas. We have to see clearly what people are doing. To suffer is Buddha nature; to be liberated from suffering is also Buddha nature. Because our mind is not awakened, we get confused about this and we even go to the point of killing people. This physical body is so transient and it's also very inconvenient. We eat and we have to go to the toilet; we hold our breath for not so long and we die. Why do we get caught on such a transient thing? And why don't we work with this fragile, short lived body that can even become this clarified mind and with that to liberate all beings? We talk about the Dharma body and the physical body, but have we awakened to this true wisdom yet or not? Have we seen that there is no essence at all in liking and disliking? If we do see this then we can only work on living for all beings' liberation and not to live for this temporary fragile body.

There is one body, that is all we can say to anyone, and everyone returns to this one body.

We deludedly think we are all something separate, but to see this clearly! That is all we really need to do, and then the whole world becomes our eyes, our ears, our nose, our awareness. We do zazen, we do the Mu, the susokkan, not to get dark but to become brighter and lighter. "There is no ice without water," yet we can't let go of ourselves. That's how we become so sick. That's like being ice. But ice and water, both of them are the same thing; they are both H₂O. That lump of ego—we have to melt it and melt it and melt it and go to the furthest edge of the universe! It becomes then seeing in our eyes, hearing in our ears; we can see all the things there are, we can hear all the wonderful sounds. But one little thought of "I am most important" and we get stuck again. Let the sufferer melt away, let the ideas of "I can't go on" melt away. If we melt in this way we are all one and the same Buddha. The home of all of us is one and the same, and if we don't see this we'll all end up going different places. People who are deluded don't go straight. But we have to go home, and we have to be honest to go there.

OSESSHIN, 2006-02, DAY ONE

*Poem for the opening of Teisho for
this sesshin:*

*For the sake of the Dharma we have
gathered together
to strive with all our effort
Unless we die the Great Death, when
will we be able to rest?
Samadhi, itself the greatest Sutra
Coming or going, may we recite it
Drinking deeply of the inexhaustible
stream of Zen*

Today we have the ninth segment of the seventh chapter of the Sixth Patriarch's Platform Sutra. We have read previously of the people who are karmically deeply connected to the Sixth Patriarch, of Nangaku Ejo, of Seigen Joshi, and today we have Yoka Genkaku. Yoka Genkaku is most famous for the "Song of Enlightenment", which people of training read deeply during the course of their practice.

Sutra: *Dhyana Master Xuan Jue* of Yong Jia was born of a Dai family in Wen Zhou. As a youth, he studied Sutras and Shastras and was well-versed in the teaching of Samatha (inhibition or quietude) and Vipasyana (contemplation or discernment) of the Tian Tai School.

When Yoka Genkaku Zenji (Xuan Jue) was young, he studied the sutras, the precepts, and the doctrines that teach how to understand and live according to the Buddha's meaning. At that time there were already huge numbers of sutras translated and available. The translations of Genjo and Kumaranju made it possible for Sanzo Hoshi, Yoka Genkaku, and others to study them.

At that time, people interested in Buddhism would become scholars, and they would intellectually study the ways of Buddhism. But that never was sufficient. As Rinzaï Zenji has said, this is nothing but reading the instructions on the medicine bottle when trying to cure a sickness. T'ien T'ai's "Maka Shikan" (Great Concentration and Insight), which was based on the Lotus Sutra, taught how all people are to be liberated. This is the Buddha's teaching of his later years.

At the beginning the Buddha taught the Flower Garland Sutra, but it was too advanced for anyone to follow, so he taught the Agon Sutra where he made it elementary, saying to not do bad things but to do good things. Next he taught the Hodo Sutra where he emphasized that it is not about liberating our own selves only but about serving all people and

with that mind bringing all beings' minds into awakening. The Vimalakirti Sutra is within the Hodo Sutra. We next have the Prajna Sutra and then finally the Lotus Sutra and the Nirvana Sutra. Within these teachings everything about the liberation of all beings was completely taught.

The founder of the Tendai (Tian T'ai) sect, Tendai Chisha Daishi, teaches the ways of practice in the Maka Shikan. Yoka Daishi learned this and incorporated it into everything he wrote and taught. Later, Hakuin Zenji thoroughly worked on this same way of training.

"Maka" means that great, all-embracing, hugeness; "Shikan" is the samadhi of direct perception and wisdom. We have the six paramitas, the practices of deepest wisdom, beginning with that of charity, of observing the precepts, patience, not saying and doing whatever we feel like but rather to realize our goal and hold on to it with deep endurance and perseverance; and then there is good effort, to not stop and actually complete our deepest resolution. In this way we learn to let go of our small minded views, not seeing things personally but perceiving things exactly as they are. Next we have the paramita of samadhi where we let go of all division between self and others. By doing these we know this direct all-embracing perception of deepest samadhi. This is the practice of the Maka Shikan. We do a great cleaning of our mind and from that clarified mind we then see directly. What we judged before as good or bad we now can see just as it is. We see it not from our own personal opinion but from direct perception. It has to be like this or it is not true zazen. This is the doctrine of the Maka Shikan, and this is what Yoka Daishi emphasized and taught.

Sutra: Through the reading of the Vimalakirti Nirveda Sutra he realized intuitively the mystery of his own mind.

One day while reading the Vimalakirti Sutra he deeply saw the essential meaning

and was awakened. The Vimalakirti Sutra was written as the story about a layman Vimalakirti, who was so deeply awakened that even the arhats held him in great respect and kept a respectful distance. Almost all the Buddha's top disciples, the arhats, and the bodhisattvas had been reprimanded at some point by Vimalakirti.

When someone like Vimalakirti became ill, it was the custom at that time for all of the politicians and officials in his area to call on him. Vimalakirti used this occasion to teach each of them about the transience of life, of money, of fame, asking if they really knew what the true meaning of life was? All the visitors left confused and frustrated. For this reason, all of the Buddha's top disciples refused to visit Vimalakirti when he was sick. Only Manjusri Bodhisattva, the Bodhisattva of Wisdom, would go to see Vimalakirti at the Buddha's request. Their exchange is the Vimalakirti Sutra.

The mysterious way of the not-two, where two disappears and becomes one: there is the Truth. There we clearly see that an ignorant person is in fact a Buddha. In the Sutra, many disciples tell their experiences of the not-two, and finally Manjusri says to them, "you can't speak the truth; nothing about this place of the not-two, this mysterious not-two which becomes one, remains truthful once words are expressing it. When you put it into words it always becomes two. But having said this, Manjusri had also fallen into the duality of words. Only Vimalakirti remained silent. Always realizing the truth and teaching the truth, this great silence was his way of expressing it. It was said that Vimalakirti's silence was like a hundred thunder roars. In reading about this, Yoka Daishi was deeply awakened.

Sutra: A disciple of the Sixth Patriarch by the name of Xuan Ce happened to pay him a visit. During the course of a long discussion, Xuan Ce noticed that the utterance of his friend agreed virtually with the sayings of the various

Patriarchs. Thereupon he asked, "May I know the name of your teacher who transmitted the Dharma to you?"

"I had teachers to instruct me," replied Xuan Jue, "when I studied the Sutras and the Shastras. But afterwards it was through the reading of the Vimalakirti Nirdeśa Sutra that I realized the significance of the Buddha Mind; and in this respect I have not yet had any teacher to verify and confirm my knowledge."

"Before the time of Bhismagarjitavarā Raja Buddha," Xuan Ce remarked, "it was possible (to dispense with the service of a teacher); but since that time, he who attains enlightenment without the aid and the confirmation of a teacher is a natural heretic."

Gensaku met Yoka Daishi while traveling, and he was amazed at Yoka Daishi's deep wisdom, and how his words were so authentic. He asked him who his teacher was. To this Yoka Daishi answered, I have no teacher; while reading the Vimalakirti Sutra I was somehow awakened, forgetting my body, my thoughts, my ideas about anything at all. From that time on, the words that came out of my mouth just became like this, but no one has confirmed it.

Hearing this, Gensaku said that from the time of Eon Nobutsu, who preceded Shakyamuni Buddha and was the first great Buddha who realized that this whole universe is the vow to liberate all beings, there was no need to have a confirmation, but since the time of Shakyamuni Buddha down through the 28 patriarchs to Daruma Daishi and following that, the Dharma has been transmitted and confirmed. It may feel right and good to you personally, but there has to be a confirmation, it has to be directly perceived as a true understanding.

Sutra: "Will you, Sir, kindly act as my testifier," asked Xuan Jue.

"My words carry no weight," replied his friend, "but in Cao Xi there is the Sixth Patriarch, to whom visitors in great

numbers come from all directions with the common object of having the Dharma transmitted to them. Should you wish to go there I shall be pleased to accompany you.

Yoka Daishi agreed that it should be confirmed by one who knows, and he asked Gensaku to confirm it for him. Gensaku said that he could not confirm it but without mistake his teacher, Eno Zenji the Sixth Patriarch, could confirm his experience. At Sokeizan many people of training gathered to learn the truth from the Sixth Patriarch, and Yoka Daishi agreed to go and learn the truth from him.

Sutra: In due course they arrived at Cao Xi and interviewed the Patriarch. Having circumambulated the Patriarch thrice, Xuan Jue stood still (i.e., without making obeisance to the Master) with the Khakkharam (the Buddhist staff) in his hand.

In accordance with correct greetings since the time of the Buddha in India, he did three circumambulations to honor the Patriarch, but following that Yoka Daishi just stood there holding his traveling staff, which goes against all expectations of good manners. He just stood there with that staff as if the two were equal.

Sutra: (For his discourtesy), the Patriarch made the following remark: "As a Sramana (Buddhist monk) is the embodiment of three thousand moral precepts and eighty thousand minor disciplinary rules, I wonder where you come from and what makes you so conceited."

The Sixth Patriarch said to him that while he appeared to be a student of Buddhism, didn't he know the correct way of entering sanzen? The way of no waste that shaves away all ego attachment? I can't see that humility in your behavior. Why are you so rude? There is no way to realize the true Buddha Dharma with behavior like that, said the Patriarch.

Sutra: "The question of incessant rebirths is a momentous one," replied he, "and

as death may come at any moment (I have no time to waste on ceremony)."

It is not about prostrating to me, said the Sixth Patriarch, but about prostrating to the Dharma body; you have to let go of that personal body and realize this Dharma body directly, or the Buddha Dharma will never be clear. To this Yoka Daishi responded, I understand that, but if this is truly the Dharma body, the physical body will decay and be gone. We have only received this physical body in order to realize this true Dharma body, and for doing that which is the sole purpose of our being alive we have no time to waste. I have no time to stand on ceremony.

Sutra: "Why do you not realize the principle of 'Birthlessness', and thus solve the problem of transiency in life?" the Patriarch retorted.

Are you still wandering around in that place of birth and death? Why do you not realize that place beyond birth and death where there is no birth and no death, asked the Patriarch.

Sutra: Thereupon Xuan Jue remarked, "To realize the Essence of Mind is to be free from rebirths; and once this problem is solved, the question of transiency no longer exists."

"Yes, it is true that life and death are only in the mind; 'abiding nowhere, awakened mind arises.'"

These are the very words to which the Sixth Patriarch had been awakened. Although there is no fixed place, when there is an ego located because of memory, conditioning, and habits we get heavy and burdened in our mind. And because of this we have to do a great cleaning and then there is no longer any problem with transiency.

The subject and object become one and the same. Then what is there that needs to see about mind-moments being born or not-born? There is only the whole universe known directly as love, or call it 'God'. There is only this present moment,

not even any sense of a past or a future, if we could talk about it at all. To live in this moment and encounter whatever comes without any sense of being a someone who is doing an encountering of another person or a flower or a thing. This is the deepest compassion. This is the truth we meet in each and every instant. Here, truest love can circulate. It is not a cold, removed dharma, this is the True Buddha.

Sutra: "That is so, that is so,"
the Patriarch agreed.

At this stage, Xuan Jue gave in and made obeisance in full ceremony.

After a short while he bid
the Patriarch adieu.

"You are going away too quickly,
aren't you?" asked the Patriarch.

"How can there be 'quickness' when motion intrinsically exists not?" he retorted.

Here the Sixth Patriarch confirms him, Yoka Daishi put out his prostration mat, prostrated, thanked him, and went to leave. Truly succinct and dry! "But are you leaving so soon," the Sixth Patriarch says? "I am not moving at all," says Yoka Daishi, "there is no arriving or leaving happening, only the filling of the whole universe. In this there is nothing like a later or a sooner."

Sutra: "Who knows that motion exists not?" asked the Patriarch.

"I hope you, Sir, will not
particularize," he observed.

The Patriarch commended him for his thorough grasp of the notion of 'Birthlessness'. But Xuan Jue remarked, Is there a 'notion' in 'Birthlessness'?

Without a notion, who can particularize?
asked the Patriarch in turn.

That which particularizes is not
a notion, he replied.

The Sixth Patriarch tests him here, "so who knows that no motion exists?" Yoka Daishi says, I have no sense about that. You're the one who brought it up! I am

only reflecting you like a mirror. The Sixth Patriarch was deeply satisfied that it was not only lip service to mental words of truth but it had been clearly understood. 'You are truly beyond birth in your understanding,' Yoka Daishi responds, now you are bringing up things like birthlessness. Why do you bring this up when there is no concern with that?

Sutra: "Without a notion, who can
particularize?" asked the Patriarch
in turn. "That which particularizes is
not a notion," replied Xuan Jue.

To put this into other words, we have only the Unborn Mind. In the words of Bankei Zenji, all that we have received from our parents is this unborn mind. While we are gathered here, we might hear a dog barking. We didn't come to this room expecting to hear a dog barking. What is it that hears that without any expectation? That is our Buddha Mind. We turn that clear mind into a hellish mind with our expectations, extra ideas and thoughts. These are all supplies for going to hell. Don't be mistaken about this. Bankei Zenji taught it simply and clearly: to see this, to realize it, we do training so our mind can become quiet.

When we hear the gong for meals we naturally just move; we hear the clappers and we naturally sit. When it's time for cleaning we naturally begin cleaning. But because of ideas that we get caught on, it becomes difficult to keep that clarity of mind. When we get caught, we get fearful and we get resistant, Realizing that place which is not fearful and resistant - this is the subtle flavor of zazen. People will say that being so simple-minded, we will be deceived by other people, that one has to think about whether to do it this way or that way or things won't go well. We have to see beyond this: you are not only a single personal being but an all embracing huge being, and this depends on how we hold our mind, on clinging to nothing. We can say that, but if we have something

we're carrying there, didn't we intend to come into this room, or why else why would we have come here?

So why did Daruma Daishi go to China? What for? If he had an intention in doing that, then he could not have saved even himself. It would be like an ambitious business man, and we have nothing to learn from someone like that.

Sutra: "Without a notion, who can particularize?" asked the Patriarch in turn.

"That which particularizes is not a notion," replied Xuan Jue.

This is hard to perceive mentally. Only through experience can it be understood, like the experience of an expert sports person or an artist.

We have the poem:

Playing the shamisen, not with the
hands,
But play it with the heart,
Play it without playing, then the mind
is quiet.

Beyond experience, beyond ideas, beyond expectations, we passionately want everyone to hear this beautiful music of the shamisen; we have a true, deep desire that it should be heard. Beyond mental ideas, beyond mental intention, it is the same with Darumi Daishi: his deep, passionate vow is what moved him. His engine was this deep love for all people or else he never would have gone. It was not blind movement. This is important to see clearly.

Sutra: "Well said!" exclaimed the Patriarch. He then asked Xuan Jue to delay his departure and spend a night there. Henceforth Xuan Jue was known to his contemporaries as the 'enlightened one who had spent a night with the Patriarch'.

Afterwards, he wrote the famous work, 'A Song on Spiritual Attainment', which circulates widely.

The Sixth Patriarch confirmed him, deeply and continually, and asked him to stay

even for just one night. Later Yoka Daishi wrote the "Song of Enlightenment" which is among the required readings for all people of training. It is included among the four great works along with "On Believing in Mind" by the third Patriarch, "The Ten Oxherding Pictures" by Kakuan Zenji, and the Zazengi which was originally written by Hyakujo Zenji.

In this same way, here on our first day of osesshin, that life energy of one mind-moment, of one breath, to not let it spill out or leak away. From the top of the head to the bottoms of the feet, to do it with every single bit of our being, with our whole awareness and clarity of mind and body. Exhale to where there is not one speck of anything remaining whatsoever. People who have sat for many years, and people who are just beginning to sit: - each and every period, sit it completely with nothing remaining. In all of our activities throughout the whole day, live this truly. In this way we can make use of it when we return to our everyday life and bring it to life in everything that we do.

OSESSHIN, 2006-02, DAY TWO

This section is about a monk named Shiko. He was never as famous as many others, not famous enough to be recorded, but he is referred to as a bhikshu. First he trained with Goso Gunin Zenji, the Fifth Patriarch, which makes him a brother-disciple of the Sixth Patriarch. He had realized samadhi; it cannot be the Buddha Dharma without this realization, this experience of samadhi. But the essence of this has to be examined well, or we can be greatly mistaken. Perhaps Shiko thought that he had had the same state of mind as the Buddha.

Sutra: *Chih Huang*, a follower of the Dhyana School, after his consultation with the Fifth Patriarch as to the progress of his work, considered himself as having attained samadhi, and for twenty years he confined himself in a small temple and

kept up the position all the time. Hsuan Ts'e, a disciple of the Sixth Patriarch, on a meditation journey to the northern bank, heard about him and called at his temple.

Daito Kokushi for twenty years lived in the daytime among the beggars who lived under the Gojo Bridge in Kyoto, while every night he would do zazen all night long in the Higashiyama area. Then there was Kanzan Egen Zenji, who lived in a small village in Ibuka, and went and did all kinds of errands for the farm people living there. He was very convenient for all of them and would do whatever they needed done. Daito Kokushi was asked on his deathbed to whom they should ask about the Dharma when he was gone, and he said, "Egen." They finally found him up in the countryside in Ibuka—they hadn't known where he was—and called him back. When the farmers came to call back their convenient handyman, they were all surprised. In the village they'd been using this person for doing whatever they'd wanted him to do for eight years—and now they realized he was a teacher of great depth. They hadn't even asked him once for a Dharma teaching.

Sutra: It was heard that Chih Huang was in the land of Kasaku and they went to find him. "What are you doing here?" asked Hsuan Ts'e. "I am abiding in samadhi," replied his friend Ko. "Abiding in samadhi, did you say?" observed Hsuan Ts'e. "I wish to know whether you are doing it consciously or unconsciously."

The local people knew of someone living nearby for twenty years, a very advanced person. Gensaku (Hsuan Ts'e) asked around and found out where he was. When he met Shiko (Chih Huang), Gensaku asked what he was doing. It was obvious what he was doing, but this was a testing question. Of course he could see, but he had to make sure.

Nangaku Ejo Zenji visited Baso Doitsu Zenji when he was sitting in the mountain doing zazen. Nangaku Ejo asked Baso Doitsu what he was doing. This has to be

checked to make sure it's not just someone who is skillful at doing zazen and looking good in its technique. The Sixth Patriarch had said it very clearly, that to realize Awakening is the point. The point is not just to sit in samadhi. There are many more who have realized deep awakening in samu [daily work] or otherwise not in the position of sitting. Sitting is not the final goal; to awaken is the point. He asked Baso Doitsu, "What are you doing there?" And Baso Doitsu said, "You can see, can't you? You can see for yourself that I'm sitting here to realize kensho. At this, Nangaku picked up a tile and sat down right in front of Baso Doitsu and he started scratching at the tile with a rock. Baso Doitsu said to him, "What are you doing there?" Nangaku said, "I'm making a mirror. I'm going to polish this tile and make it into a mirror." Baso said, "That's impossible. Anyone knows that you can't make a mirror by scratching a tile with a stone!" To this, Nangaku said, "Well where is that any different from sitting your body down and trying to make it become a Buddha?" Baso said, "Then if that's not how it works, what should I do?" And Nangaku said, "Look, if you have a cart and you have a horse and you want it to move, do you beat the cart or do you beat the horse?" To this, Baso said, "Obviously, you don't beat the cart, you beat the horse if you want it to move!" And Nangaku said, "Well, why isn't it the same? How are you going to realize your state of mind by putting all that emphasis on what your body is doing?"

Sutra: "'Abiding in samadhi?" said Hsuan Ts'e. 'I wish to know if you are doing it consciously or unconsciously. For if you are doing it unconsciously it would mean that it is possible for all inanimate objects such as earthenware, stones, trees, and weeds to attain samadhi. On the other hand, if you are doing it consciously, then all animate objects or sentient beings would be in samadhi also...."

Gensaku said, "What are you doing?" Shiko (Chih Huang) said, "I am abiding

in samadhi.” “If you are abiding in samadhi, can you also leave samadhi then?” Gensaku continued. “Is samadhi something you can enter and then leave? Well then, let me ask you this: Are you entering samadhi knowingly or without knowing it? If you say it is without knowing it, then the mountains and rivers and flowers are all in samadhi constantly and so are you from the origin. It’s natural to be there. Do you need to know that in order to enter it? If you say you plan to enter it, then that can also be done by pigs and horses and dogs and cats. Are you trying to become a cat?”

Sutra: “When I am in samadhi,” observed Chih Huang, “I know neither consciousness nor unconsciousness.” “If that is the case,” said Hsuan Ts’e, “it is perpetual samadhi; in which state there is neither abiding nor leaving. That state which you can abide in or leave off is not the great Samadhi.”

“I am not thinking that ‘Now I will enter samadhi, nor am I thinking that I will not. For twenty years, without thinking like that I’ve been sitting in samadhi.” To which Gensaku said, “Then isn’t the Original State of Mind Samadhi? If there is no entering or leaving it, that is only a temporary state.”

There are many kinds of samadhi. There is fishing samadhi, there is chess samadhi, there is sports samadhi, there is artist samadhi, there is martial arts samadhi. This is to do something with deepest absorption and forget oneself. Like Oigen Herrigel writes about in the book *Zen and Archery*: forgetting one’s own body and thoughts, to enter samadhi with an object as we do in the practice of kyudo. People focus on things—they can be artists, musicians, dancers—there are many like this. This kind of becoming one with your activity has its own value. But then, wouldn’t doing things like that have us become just like the Buddha’s Awakening? For that state of mind we could just go fishing or dance or paint. What Gensaku was saying was that it can’t be a temporary

samadhi. It has to be the samadhi of the whole universe!

Shiko (Chih Huang) thought about this for a long time, and finally he asked him who his Dharma teacher was. Gensaku responded that his teacher, the Sixth Patriarch, was from the same teacher as Shiko’s, Goso Gunin Zenji. Shiko then asked, “How does he define dhyana and samadhi? I want to ask how the Sixth Patriarch sees it.” Gensaku told him to go and see him.

As Rinzai has said, From the origin there is one clear Light. Divided, it becomes six rays, the six senses, perfectly serene, this huge and all-embracing, great Mind! As the poet Kanzan [Cold Mountain] says poetically, “My mind is like the Autumn moon.” My clarified state of mind is of perfect transparency and brightness. People are always caught on the words, whether something is good or bad, whether it should be done like this or like that. We are always thinking and thinking and thinking, like the waves on a lake. But when these waves cease, the whole lake is truly still and transparent. “My mind is like the autumn moon.” This is not like the humid, hazy sky of Summer and the moon that is reflected in that, but those high, clear, transparent, Autumn skies, empty of everything, and the Autumn moon which is shining there—shining on everything! Everything in the world is held within that—everything, including liking and disliking, good or bad, ideas of benefit or not. All of those are held within that, yet not caught on it. Or like in the *Blue Cliff Records*, Case 100, expressed by Master Hairyo, “that moon which reflects in every single branch of the coral.” That Autumn moon lighting up the whole sky: each person’s deepest Mind! The moonlight pierces to the very bottom of the still pool, yet it is not about the scenery being described but about becoming this state of mind there. Each and every one has to know this for themselves, to be able to realize it and

experience it! As Master Mumon, who wrote the Mumonkan, said, “In all of the twenty-four hours we continue, dropping away all of our previous conditioning”—the information we’ve learned, all of our habits—until we continue to where it is no longer possible to divide between an inside and an outside; we cannot know the difference. We don’t even know where “I” ends and the world begins. Even if we try to say it with words, it’s impossible. It can only be realized by each person directly. To know this from experiencing it, and then we will all be astonished, amazed at what we have realized! The heavens shake, the earth trembles—we all have this state of mind, and each must awaken to it! The point is not for our own singular mind that we realize this, but that whole, all-embracing Mind that goes beyond loving and hating, suffering and joy, and takes in all things. Realizing this, we hear the gong and we know it’s time to eat; we hear the bell and we know it’s time for sanzen. It’s not about zazen which is sitting crouched in the dark, but simultaneously, with the gong, the bell, and the birds chirping, we become each thing completely! This is not something we have to think about to become, but simultaneously as we perceive it we become it totally. The zendo becomes our body. This is our mind’s truest root.

Sutra: “According to his teaching, the Dharmakaya is perfect and serene, it’s quintessence and its function are in a state of Thusness. The five skandhas are intrinsically void and the six sense objects are nonexistent....There is neither abiding or leaving in samadhi. There is neither quietude nor perturbation. The nature of dhyana is non-abiding, so we should get above the state of abiding in the calmness of dhyana.”

Here it is written rather scholastically, but it is that place where we become like a mirror which reflects just what comes to it precisely, and that only. This is called “pure reception.” We are always adding on thoughts to things which we perceive, and this is not pure reception. We are so

conditioned. Having so many preconceived notions, we do not even believe in our own potential anymore. We see things and we are no longer in deep wonder. The Buddha saw the morning star and awakened. Why don’t we see it? It’s up there in the Eastern sky every morning, but even looking at it, do we awaken? Why not?

Kyogen heard that stone hitting the bamboo—that little piece of tile hitting the bamboo and the clank it made—and he broke through. And when Master Hakuin was a monk he heard the morning bell of the temple ringing. When he heard that, he was enlightened. It’s only because we are stuffed up with so many preconceived notions that prevent us from perceiving purely and directly. We’re always bringing in various emotions to what we perceive. Practice is not about a technique, but about letting go of *everything*. It’s about perceiving everything exactly as it is—and this is pure perception.

In Zen we have the teaching of “continuing, clear, mind-moments”—to always

be right here, right now with what is smack in front of our face. Because we are not like this, we miss things, we make mistakes. It is to this that the Sixth Patriarch is saying, “The five skandhas are intrinsically void and the six sense objects are nonexistent. The Dharmakaya is perfect and serene. Its quintessence and its function are in a state of Thusness.” To realize this place and then continue with this part of samadhi: “The five skandhas are intrinsically void and the six sense objects are nonexistent.”

Samadhi is to perceive purely, without any obstruction, like the mirror. A mirror reflects precisely, but then when the object is gone it is gone completely. It lets it go totally. There is no image remaining when the object is gone. When the perception is finished, the object is nowhere to be seen. But we hold onto this perception, and because we bring various thoughts and

emotions into this perception even when the object is gone, we get murky. We have to let go of all of that completely.

Sutra: The five skandhas are intrinsically void and the six sense objects are nonexistent.

We have the faculty of perceiving. This perceiving faculty is divided into many parts, depending upon which part of the perception we are talking about. There is that which perceives and then there is the root of that, the gates of that. But the point of this is not to mentally consider it, but to experience it completely. Our state of mind, as Rinzai says—and he says it so carefully—is to not add on any second or third mind-moments. When we directly perceive, do not add any emotions or thoughts to what we perceive but only directly perceive it and stop there, then we are clear. We always want to add on to what we perceive instead of being clear in each mind-moment and continuing in that clarity. There's nothing being said as difficult as "Don't see and don't hear and don't feel." But as we perceive directly in each mind-moment, do not add on thoughts to that which we perceive. We need essence to do this. This essence we get from doing zazen. To become that place where the body and the mind are one and the same—this is the place where "Its quintessence and its function are in a state of Thusness."

If we are settled deeply with what we do, we become what we see and we become what we hear totally. Our zazen should also reach hard to enable us to become like this, and then our state of mind is—whether it's before, after, or in the middle of-- always in Now. To always encounter things in this way and to not stick on things that are not even there—this is zazen's advanced place. To know the true Buddha Dharma—we cannot realize this kindness of the Buddha without knowing continuous, clear, mind-moments.

Sutra: There is neither abiding nor leaving in samadhi. There is neither quietude

nor perturbation. The nature of dhyana is non-abiding, so we should get above this state of abiding in the calmness of dhyana. The nature of dhyana is uncreated, so we should get above the notion of creating a state of dhyana. The state of mind can be likened unto space, but it is infinite and so it is without the limitation of the latter. There is no entering or leaving samadhi, or we will be separating ourselves from the great sky.

If we have this whole great sky as our body, then where is there to come to or to go to? We are born from samadhi. To see, to hear, to feel—all of these are also in samadhi. This is the way our mind moves and is. We cannot allow it to stagnate, though. As the Sixth Patriarch has said, there is no "I," no form. Where we are is always flowing like clear water. While being in a mind-moment, to not have any sense that we are in such a thing called a mind-moment, but to work and be in one straight line. That which we are encountering in every instant—to know the thing itself, then to know that place of no stopping where we are able to be like that water which flows by in a river, going past great boulders, going past huge tree roots—to flow right by them. No matter what, we keep on flowing. It's only when we get stopped that we get murky and confused and stagnant. Not being stopped is to know that serenity in each moment.

We conceive of an idea of quiet, but this is only an idea of quiet and is not truly quiet. It is only quiet if we can let go of all of that perception and become the thing itself. Our mind is like that huge sky; there is not some thing that we have to do or to become. But because our mind becomes confused and flaccid we have to do zazen. Someone will always ask, "Then if we don't think and we don't bring in ideas, who will liberate everyone?" Even that idea of having a huge, sky-like mind is extra and has to be let go of!

Sutra: Upon being asked whence he came, he told the Patriarch in detail of the conversation that he had had with Gensaku.

In this way we read about Shiko and Gensaku, whose teaching enabled Shiko to correct his twenty years of mistaken zazen, his narrow view of samadhi. He apologized as soon as he understood, and went straight to see the Sixth Patriarch. The Sixth Patriarch asked him where he had come from, and Shiko explained how he had been with Goso Gunin, the Fifth Patriarch, and how his samadhi had been honored by many people, but how he had mistakenly stayed satisfied with a narrow form of samadhi for his own sake instead of liberating others with it. He told the Sixth Patriarch that the Sixth Patriarch's disciple, Gensaku, had corrected that misunderstanding, and then he asked the Sixth Patriarch to teach him correctly. The Sixth Patriarch said that it is exactly as Gensaku has said:

Sutra: Let your mind be in a state such as that of the illimitable void but do not attach it to the idea of vacuity. Let it function freely. Whether you are in activity or at rest, let your mind abide nowhere.

When I hear what you are saying right now," the Sixth Patriarch said to Shiko, "There's a very advanced awareness that you have realized, but you have been mistaken in being caught and attached to it. As it says in the Diamond Sutra, to not be caught on the mind of the past, the mind of the future, nor on the mind of the present." If we get caught on anything at all we stagnate and our mind cannot function freely then. Our mind is flowing always, one moment to the next. We're always being distracted by extraneous thinking; to ignore it and return to the original Mind, not thinking that we should not see or not hear, not smell, not perceive—that is not the point of this. We should be naturally and freely able to become morning when it is morning, afternoon

when it is afternoon, night when it is night; we become the winter when the winter comes, we become the spring when the spring comes, the summer when the summer comes, and the autumn when the autumn comes. When we are hungry we eat. When we are tired we sleep. This is our natural way of mind.

Sutra: Forget the discrimination between a sage and an ordinary man. Ignore the distinction of subject and object. Let the Essence of Mind and all phenomenal objects be in a state of Thusness. Then you will be in samadhi all the time.

You worked on this for twenty years, so that has been well realized, but to think that if you are not in a place of emptiness this is not samadhi—that is your caught place. "O great Mind, it is impossible to measure the height of the heavens, yet the Mind is above the heavens. It is impossible to measure the thickness of the earth, yet the Mind is below the earth. The sun and the moon shine with a great radiance, yet the Mind is the source of that radiance. Within the Mind the four seasons open in their sequence. Within the Mind the sun and the moon move. Oh great Mind!" You cannot ignore the hugeness of the functioning of this great Mind. This Mind, it is not nothing at all; it is infinitely full, constantly manifesting! If we think otherwise then we have handicapped ourselves. As our eyes it sees, as our ears it hears, as our nose it smells, as our mouth it tastes, as our body it moves. To see this clearly is to know our truth. But everybody gets attached to a wandering, attached version of mind which clings to ideas about things that are transient. Neither can we get caught on an idea about nothingness; this is also a great mistake.

We have so many habits we get conditioned into. While this doesn't affect our clear Mind in any way, it can confuse us. Those thoughts we have all day long—some are about things that actually exist and so many are not. Thoughts that arise simultaneously with an object

or an occasion or a thing that needs doing—those thoughts leave when that thing is completed. But others don't. We are hungry, we get out food and we eat it. But if we keep thinking about that, on and on and on.... We only need to think about what is here, right now, but instead we get pulled around thinking about all kinds of things. We have to clear this all out. We sit zazen for doing just this; in our mind we have to do a great cleaning. This is what zazen is for. We sit and we are able to realize this place which is free from all of that extraneous thinking. We learn to let go of what we don't need to be thinking of. Our mind is working correctly when after a moment is finished we let it go and don't stick to it.

In the letters of Master Takuan to the kendo master Yagyū Tajimonokami, there is a collection called *The Unfettered Mind*, where Master Takuan writes to him about the way of the Mind. People often talk about the Immovable Mind, and this is what he writes about. But this is not to be confused with being immovable or unmovable like a rock in the garden or something else in nature that never seems to be active. It means to not be stopped by anything—no pause, no stagnation anywhere, or we lose track of that clear, original Mind. The mind stops at nothing. If it does, we have a great gap—and right there our extraneous thinking comes creeping in. We lose our connection to the clear Mind then. We can't stop our mind; stopping it is not the point. We can't attempt to keep our mind focused at the tip of the sword or at the opponent's hand or at his face. That is too narrow. To allow the mind to flow unobstructed requires practice, and it requires being full and taut, both in body and in mind. We cannot be moved around by other people. When we hold on to nothing at all we'll not be pushed and pulled around by other people. As Dharuma-Daishi has said, "To let go of all connections to the external world and to put away all concerns within.

When we are in this clear state of mind we are at one with the Way and like a tall firm wall."

We do zazen to see how to not be moved around by external things all the time. At the beginning we have to exhale meticulously, exhaling everything, exhaling completely, letting go of all of it. If we inhale and exhale completely we are able to become free of that extraneous thinking. But if we add in extra thoughts or give it more force, then we are liable to get caught in our diaphragm. If we are not caught on anything at all we can exhale completely—eight seconds if we are new at it, 20 to 30 seconds for an exhalation as it grows. We are able to breathe slowly; we exhale completely and our inhalation comes in on its own. We don't have to do it. As we exhale completely it comes in naturally of itself. And so we can know what this state of mind is which is clear and fresh in every moment. Otherwise if we force it, then the top half of our body feels constricted and our mind gets clogged. To breathe in this way is the very first step. We breathe and we become clear. We know that state of mind that is fresh in every moment. This fresh feeling surges throughout our whole body and we feel free.

But if we get caught on something, then we are unliberated. We have to let go of that, and then we become free and liberated. We can see this easily from someone's posture—how stuck they are. The back must not be fuzzy and slouched; it has to be the same as it is in martial arts where the back is very distinct and straight—and then we are open and free. This is what zazen allows us to know. Takuan teaches this to Yagyū Tajimonokami, and this is the way to be in martial arts as well. It is not about being in a hurry or being impatient; it is about seeing clearly, and so we must not close our eyes. If we close our eyes we cannot realize this state of mind in action.

So what does it mean, to become like the huge sky, to not be caught on or chasing after anything? As the great Zen master Dogen Zenji has said, when we go chasing after things, trying to get something, that is always delusion. When we allow whatever it is to come right to us, that is enlightenment. If we open our minds we can see behind us very clearly. We have to see all around us. People of martial arts have to see behind them or they would be killed in battle. Of course this all has to be practiced from the technique angle as well. But if we don't keep this correct state of mind, then the practice of technique alone will not work. We push away this clear, huge Mind if we don't realize this.

In stillness is Zen, in motion is Zen. No matter what we do, all of our activities are Zen. The zazen of the Patriarchs is not just sitting still; it's in standing and walking, sitting down. All of it is zazen. To continue and let go of our caught places and our habituation—this is Zen.

In our zazen, carefully letting go with each breath, we become full and taut—more so the second day than the first, more so the third day than the second. But if we push and force our efforts it doesn't work that way. We have to not give attention to the myriad thoughts that come.

It is not about trying to stop our feelings and our perceptions. When we see, we see. When we hear, we hear. Of course, we are from our clear nature always seeing and knowing that good things are good and bad things are bad. But if we try to grasp hold of those good things we get confused; if we try to avoid those bad things we also get confused. First we have to be able to see clearly, and this clear seeing needs cultivation. Through zazen we can do this. With our concentration we work to not divide our awareness. We keep the top half of our body light and our lower half full and sturdy. We don't hurry, we don't push and force, but simply and fastidiously we do one breath after the next, not trying to

not see or not hear—nothing like that to stick onto it. Our state of mind becomes fuller and more taut; our perception becomes more clear, more correct. Like a flaccid balloon which, blowing it up one breath after the next, becomes fuller and tauter—as it is blown up, constantly becoming more full and more taut. We also, after three days, become more and more full and taut in our zazen. In the words of Master Mumon Ekai, “All of the bones of those 360 smallest joints, all of the cells of those 84,000 hair pores are brought together in doing this.” They're all poured into it, and our mind becomes truly clear and quiet in the doing of this. We continue it in all the 24 hours of the day, and then this full tautness fills our body. And not only that, but it fills the whole zendo—and from there moves out to fill the whole universe! This is real, and this is the state of mind of the Buddha when he saw the morning star and was enlightened. It is not about forcing something, but to naturally become so full and taut that we are like a balloon that will burst when the tiniest pin pricks it. We never know when or where that will happen, but at some point we'll be touched deeply and we'll see with new and clearly seeing eyes. This experience is what the Buddha Dharma is based on.

When our mind is purified of extraneous thoughts and free of any idea of holding onto anything, then we can see in the same way as the Buddha how a flower is red and a willow is green. We see with the same state of mind.

Sutra: ...Forget the discrimination between a sage and an ordinary man...

There is nothing to hold onto, such as the idea that we are an ordinary person or that we are a sage. We don't even need any idea of a “me” or an “I.”

Sutra: Let the essence of mind and of all phenomenal objects be in a state of Thusness. Then you will be in samadhi all the time.

It is occurring always and naturally. Hearing this, Shiko was deeply awakened. He had been sitting like a tree or a rock, thinking that was deep zazen. Even Daito Kokushi himself has said that for thirty years he also had been stuck in this deep hole of being sure that there was nothing at all. How many get stuck there? This is not the state of mind of the Buddhas and the patriarchs, and Daito said himself that he would not be deceived again. To be stuck in that way is a mistake. Nor should we be moved around by unnecessary thinking; this is most sad. Neither should we think that we should not hear, see or feel; we have to see this clearly as well.

For all of us who do zazen this is a very important section. How easily we make up something in our heads and try to become that, try to make that happen. Rather than meticulously doing one correct step at a time meticulously, we try to produce what we imagine it should be like. We try to imitate a more advanced person's way of doing a breath. Instead, we should just to become an empty pipe that joins the air outside of our body with the air inside of our body. It is this simple. Keeping the top half of the body light and the bottom half sturdy, we sit with our lower back carefully tucked in. We begin with *susokkan*—abdominal breathing, then *tanden* breathing—and when that is full and taut it becomes usable. We need to work on this thoroughly, with a true teacher, so we become that state of mind where we “let go of all connections to the outside, let go of all concerns within, and our mind becomes like a tall, firm wall.” Then we are deeply on the Way. When we are full and taut like this we won't need to get caught and stuck on things which then make us move blindly. To cultivate our state of mind and realize this full tautness is the same as liberating our state of mind. This is how the Sixth Patriarch has correctly taught us.

Sutra: A Bhikkhu once asked the Patriarch what sort of man could obtain the keynote of the teaching of Huang Mei (the Fifth Patriarch). “He who understands the Buddha Dharma can get it,” replied the Patriarch.

Continuing with the final part about the people who had deep karmic affiliation with the Sixth Patriarch once a monk came and asked about the truth of the teaching of Goso Gunin o Yellow Plum mountain. When the Sixth Patriarch had arrived at Yellow Plum mountain there were 750 people training there. The top person at the time was Jinshu Josha who eventually went to the capital and received the support of the top political person Sokuten Buko and was honored by many at that time. For the Sixth Patriarch, Eno, and Jin Shu Joza and others, there were also some who were transmitted to by the Fifth Patriarch. This monk was asking who had received the truest teaching of Goso Gunin Zenji. This is not something personal, this is about that continual truth that was transmitted from Bodhidharma to Niso Ekai Daishi, to Sanso Kanchi Zenji. The bowls and robe are only a symbol, these that were given to the Sixth Patriarch by Goso Gunin, he had been told to take them and go to the south and stay in hiding or else who would have been certainly turned against and the Dharma would be in danger. To reappear after ripening in hiding until the big fuss quieted and then come forth, because bowls and robes have an ability to deceive so many people because they are of form, from now on he should not pass them onto anyone else for this reason. Goso Gunin the Fifth Patriarch said in his last words to Eno the Sixth Patriarch that he wanted him to no longer pass these on for that reason.

Jinshu Josha was not given the robe and bowls, it was given to Eno Zenji, so that is where the true mind had been transmitted, but there has to be the actual essence of that not just the symbolization of it through objects. This is what this bhikkhu was questioning.

It has to be the same in each persons mind, but we are so influenced by external things.

The Buddha's mind was so purified like the waves on the water brought up by the wind our thoughts are only of any given moment always changing in flux, what we thought was good yesterday we dislike today. We are always changing if we are different in mind that the Buddha it wouldn't do. Even if the superficial waves are different the deep bottom of the water is not moved around by anything. It is this bottom to which we have to awaken, that which gives birth to those waves. Goso Gunin Zenji and Bodhidharma's mind were the same in the basic root. Here the bhikkhu is asking what Goso Gunin and Bodhidharma received, if they are one and the same and to whom has it been passed on. It has to be a clear mind, free from any impurities for this we do zazen. Not to become something else but to touch directly that mind of the Buddha and Dharma Daishi.

Sutra: "Have you, Sir, got it then?" asked the Bhikkhu. "I do not understand the Buddha Dharma," was his reply.

Then the bhikkhu asked another way, have you sir got it then? This bhikkhu asked a truly rude question. But if the Sixth Patriarch had said that he had received it, not as he did say, 'he who understands the Buddha Dharma can get it', that is not the teaching of the Heart sutra where it says clearly that there is no attainment, yet if he says that he did not receive it then that is even a bigger problem, therefore he answers, 'I do not understand the Buddha Dharma.'

The Sixth Patriarch does not say he did not receive it, he says he does not understand it. It is not about dharma knowledge we are talking here, but about the deep awareness of it.

Koyo Nojo was asked, Daitso Chiso Butsu, this is the first Buddha who came yet was never awakened. A kalpa is the amount of time it takes for a huge boulder of immense measurements to be worn away by the feathered sleeve tip of a heavenly being who comes down to dance near the boulder once a year. A kalpa is how long it takes to wear the boulder away completely and this was ten of these kalpas we are talking

about here. In the Lotus sutra this is taught that during these ten kalpas Daitso Chiso Butsu did zazen for all of those kalpas and yet was never awakened, how is this possible? To this Koyo Nojo answers, he didn't get enlightened because he didn't get enlightened. [Mumonkan, case 9]

The monk had been imagining that Daitso Chiso Butsu must have been enlightened sitting for that many kalpas, we all imagine something just like this, we think that if we sit, especially for a long time that we will eventually get awakened. An ignorant person will then become a Buddha. This is a concept! We will never get awakened with concepts, but Daitso Chiso Butsu is in fact all of us, all of us are already awakened from the origin. We give rise to deluded thoughts and cloud that. Why would someone who is already enlightened, need to be enlightened? Because we make a division like that between who is enlightened and who is not enlightened. Daitso Chiso Butsu does not exist somewhere, but if we receive the world right in front of us completely, the person right in front of us, without dividing it into a secondary, no division into self and other, attained and unattained, subject or object then we can see clearly and when we divide it into saying me and this person then we are already falling into the secondary.

As Rinza Zenji has said, of our true mind free of any mistaken mind-moments, we are the clean pure light in a moment of the mind, the undifferentiated light in a moment of the mind, the indiscriminating light in a moment of the mind, free of any mistaken mind-moments we are then full of radiant light, the Buddha mind.

In our everyday life if we do not make extraneous wasted thoughts that is zazen, and then we lose track of our small personal self.

As Mumon Ekai has said, we acknowledge Daruma Daishi's wisdom but not his knowing, it's not about a knowing that this is, the Buddha Dharma is not about a mental idea or a mental knowing of something but is about deep wisdom. That is what the Buddha Dharma is.

We encounter this flower and become this

flower, the Buddha nature becomes the buddha nature, always shining brilliantly as a flower, as the bird, this is the wisdom of prajna. The Buddha did not see the morning star from a mental place, he became it completely, he became completely one with it, this is wisdom. Daruma Daishi's wisdom we allow but not his knowledge, Daruma Daishi spent everyday all day in that state of mind, free from unnecessary thoughts, or he would have been worried that he couldn't speak chinese, that he was already a 140 years old, that would his health really hold out or not, it is the actualization of the true root that has to be realized. It is not about a mental perception but also this profound love which is referred to as compassion it is this which moved Daruma Daishi, not for Daruma Daishi's own satisfaction and his fame but from his deep love for all people. In this way the Sixth Patriarch has said, I do not understand the Buddha Dharma. We all think we are working so hard receiving no results, no rewards, we have to see how the Buddha Dharma melts and unravels this twisted mind. We can see how no one has anything but that deepest root to rely on. There is not something we have to do to become a Buddha. We have never not been one, to know this beyond a doubt is the Buddha Dharma. We acknowledge Daruma Daishi's wisdom but not his mental knowing.

There is a koan about 'what is it that the three worlds of Buddhas cannot know, when the raccoons and bear-cats know it so well?' This is close to Dogen's first urgent impulse to do training, which came from his question, 'why if humans are already awakened, are already Buddha's then why do we have to do training to awaken?' This is where this koan comes in, 'what is it that the three worlds of Buddha's cannot know when the raccoons and bear-cats already know it well?' If we are caught then we cannot realize it, if we realize it then there is nothing to be attained.

Sutra: One day the Patriarch wanted to wash the robe which he had inherited, but could find no good stream for the purpose. Thereupon he walked to a place about five miles from the rear of

the monastery, where he noticed that plants and trees grew profusely and the environment gave an air of good omen. He shook his staff (which makes a tinkling noise, as rings are attached to the top of it) and stuck it in the ground. Immediately water spurted out and before long a pool was formed.

While he was kneeling down on a rock to wash the robe, a Bhikkhu suddenly appeared before him and tendered him homage.

"My name is **Fang Bian**," said he, "and I am a native of Sichuan. When I was in South India I met Patriarch Bodhidharma, who instructed me to return to China. 'The Womb of the Orthodox Dharma,' said he, 'together with the robe which I inherited from Mahakasyapa have now been transmitted to the Sixth Patriarch, who is now in Cao Xi of Shao Zhou. Go there to have a look at them and to pay your respect to the Patriarch.' After a long voyage, I have arrived. May I see the robe and begging bowl you inherited?"

Having shown him the two relics, the Patriarch asked him what line of work he was taking up. "I am pretty good at sculptural work," replied he. "Let me see some of your work then," demanded the Patriarch.

Fang Bian was confounded at the time, but after a few days he was able to complete a life-like statue of the Patriarch, about seven inches high, a masterpiece of sculpture.

(Upon seeing the statue), the Patriarch laughed and said to Fang Bian, "You know something about the nature of sculptural work, but you do not seem to know the nature of Buddha." He then stretched forth his hand to rub the crown of Fang Bian (the Buddhist way of blessing) and declared, "You shall forever be a 'field of merit' for human and celestial beings.

After the Sixth Patriarch shows him the robe and bowl he asks what he does? I do sculpture replied Hoben (Fang Bian), the Sixth Patriarch said then make a sculpture of my form, In a few days he had skillfully completed a statue, he showed the Sixth

Patriarch the image, it looked just like him. The Sixth Patriarch laughed and said you are good at carving the appearance but without the essence there is no meaning to it. If the essence is not there then the value of being alive is not expressed there. He patted Hoben on head and told him to make efforts to understand this essence.

Sutra: In addition, the Patriarch rewarded his service with a robe, which Fang Bian divided into three parts, one for dressing the statue, one for himself, and one for burying in the ground after covering it up with palm leaves. (When the burial took place) he took a vow to the effect that by the time the robe was exhumed he would be reincarnated as the abbot of the monastery, and also that he would undertake to renovate the shrine and the building.

Then at this time he then gave the robe to Hoben, since it would cause conflict from now on as he had been told. Hoben divided into three pieces, one for dressing the statue, one for himself and one for burying in the ground. He later made a temple there and as he had vowed it was a temple of great activity. 300 years later when they dug to find this they discovered this piece of robe still buried in the palm leaves.

Sutra: A Bhikkhu quoted the following Gatha (stanza) composed by Dhyana Master Wo Lun:--

Wo Lun has ways and means To insulate the mind from all thoughts. When circumstances do not react on the mind The Bodhi tree (symbol of wisdom) will grow steadily.

Hearing this, the Patriarch said, "This stanza indicates that the composer of it has not yet fully realized the Essence of Mind. To put its teaching into practice (would gain no liberation), but bind oneself more tightly." Thereupon, he showed the Bhikkhu the following stanza of his own:--

Hui Neng has no ways and means
To insulate the mind from all thoughts.
Circumstances often react on my mind;
And I wonder how can the
Bodhi tree grow?

A monk came to the Sixth Patriarch with a poem by master Gorin saying he had a question, the monk said that the poem by Gorin says he had nothing in his mind at all, no more confusing thoughts, that his mind would get wider and more magnanimous, every day he felt that. The monk brought this poem to the Sixth Patriarch to show it to him, this was like Jinshu Josha's poem and the Sixth Patriarch had the same reaction. Saying that this was not a completely awakened expression yet. Master Gorin says he has no more thoughts but the Sixth Patriarch says he has lots of thoughts, he has thoughts coming and going all day long, or else why do we have eyes if we aren't seeing with them, why do we have ears if we aren't hearing with them, why do we have a nose if we aren't smelling with it, why do we have feelings?

We see the flower and we see it as beautiful, we see things good as good, we see things bad as bad, sometimes happy, sometimes sad. This is the truth of our mind, there is no form to the mind. How can this possibly grow? There is nothing to rely on in the mind, humans greatest value is found in being completely in each second. Totally! Because we get caught on the things that pass through our mind and this is where the problems arise. We are always clear and free and alive in our mind. This is the truth. The Patriarch gave this poem:

Sutra:

Hui Neng has no ways and means
To insulate the mind from all thoughts.
Circumstances often react on my mind;
And I wonder how can the
Bodhi tree grow?

The Sixth Patriarch said in his definition of zazen, to externally be bringing forth no thoughts to what we perceive and to internally be unmoved by anything at all within. We live in a world of dualism of good and bad, but to run away where would we go? Better to encounter it in this spirit, to externally be bringing forth no thoughts to whatever we perceive and to be unmoved by

anything within. To respond to things just as it is not by trying to reshape and remake them by thinking about them. Because we hold onto something within our mind gets caught. When there is not one single thing held onto at all, this is the mind's truest base. To not hold onto anything this is the truth. This holding onto nothing, this is to be right here, right now.

This doesn't go so easily and so we do *susokkan*, we do the koan of 'mu', we let go of all of those ideas that are extra, we do this 'mu'. It is not about becoming something to do this 'mu' but to become each moment exactly as it is. To externally be bringing forth no thoughts, to what we perceive, and to internally be unmoved by anything within. See and taste the flavor of this very clearly.

*It is not the wind moving;
it is not the flag moving;
it is not the mind moving.
Where will you see
the Patriarch?*

不是風動
不是旛動
不是心動
甚處見祖師

Kore kaze ugoku ni arazu,
kore hata ugoku ni arazu,
kore kokoro ugoku ni arazu.
Izure no tokoro ni ka soshi o min

不是風動 不是幡動



不是心動 也有見祖師



Chapter 8 The Sudden School & the Gradual School

OSESSHIN, 2006-02, DAY FIVE

Sutra: While the Patriarch was living in Bao Lin Monastery, the Grand Master Shen Xiu was preaching in Yu Quan Monastery of Jing Nan. At that time the two Schools, that of Hui Neng of the South and Shen Xiu of the North, flourished side by side. As the two Schools were distinguished from each other by the names "Sudden" (the South) and "Gradual" (the North), the question which sect they should follow baffled certain Buddhist scholars (of that time).

The Sixth Patriarch resided at Horin temple (Bao Lin Monastery), on Sokei mountain in Kosho (near Hong Kong). Jinshu Josha (Shen Xiu) had gone to Choan, the capital, where he was supported by the Emperor and taught the Dharma at nearby Gyokusenji temple (Yu Quan Monastery). Both were successors of the Fifth Patriarch, transmitted to by him, but they were completely opposite in their approaches.

It had been fifteen years since Eno left Yellow Plum mountain to ripen in the sacred womb, doing his post-enlightenment training. In each footstep, each hand motion the Dharma is given life. It has to be thoroughly practiced as well as realized. Seven hundred monks or more were being taught by Jinshu Josha near the capital, supported by the Emperor.

As monks it was these two who had disagreed about the flag and the wind. It was the Sixth Patriarch who resolved that disagreement; that was the occasion when the Sixth Patriarch was discovered and became ordained. Now, as teachers, they still had contrasting styles of teaching that became known as the Sudden and the Gradual schools.

The Sixth Patriarch was welcomed by many who had trained and done scholastic work and found it far from satisfactory. They gathered around him, welcoming the

chance to actually experience the Truth and not just study about it. Many people also gathered around Jinshu Josha, often for his fame and favor with the Emperor. These two were called the one from the South and the one from the North. They both raised many disciples but their ways of training were completely opposite. The Sixth Patriarch in the South would teach, 'abiding nowhere, awakened mind arises'. If there is any preconceived notion at all, the mind gets stopped and we lose our clear flowing functioning. The teaching of Jinshu Josha was like the poem he had written: 'our body is the bodhi-tree, our mind a mirror bright, carefully we wipe them hour by hour, and let no dust alight.' He taught that we have to be cleaning our mind constantly.

The North and South versions of Zen were separated in this way. People who trained with one of them often conflicted with those who trained with the other, not for reasons of Truth but because they felt that the teacher they were training with had to be the superior one.

Sutra: (Seeing this), the Patriarch addressed the assembly as follows: "So far as the Dharma is concerned, there can be only one School. (If a distinction exists) it exists in the fact that the founder of one school is a northern man, while the other is a Southerner. While there is only one Dharma, some disciples realize it more quickly than others. The reason why the names 'Sudden' and 'Gradual' are given is that some disciples are superior to others in mental dispositions. So far as the Dharma is concerned, the distinction of 'Sudden' and 'Gradual' does not exist."

In response to the arguing, the Sixth Patriarch said to them that there is no north or south in the Dharma. The Buddha taught that there is only the one clearly seeing eye with which all people are endowed from the origin. At various times the Buddha taught in different ways: the Four Noble Truths, the Eightfold Path, the Lotus sutra, the Nirvana sutra. But he always taught that all people are essentially Buddhas,

and he made no divisions or differentiations. The divisions between vehicles was made Mu later, after the Buddha died, and the division between sudden and gradual is an example of that.

'Abiding nowhere, awakened mind arises.' Hearing this, some might say, does that mean we can do whatever we think up? Whatever should occur to us is fine to do? Can it be that irresponsible?....And to only follow the form of the Precepts, where is the point in that? If that was the only point, then Buddhism would be caught on forms and words, with no true realization. People would argue about the words of the two different schools in this way. People were frequently caught on these words and forms; if that was where it stayed, the Buddha Dharma would become superficial.

Yet each person has a unique character. Some people can realize it directly and right away, while others are full of ideas and take a long time. But anyone who continues and keeps the efforts going honestly will realize it without fail. There are the famous stories of Seppo and Ganto, dharma brothers who trained under master Tokusan. Ganto was younger but enlightened earlier, Seppo was older, but took a long time. Seppo was always saying that he was without merit and that is why his enlightenment was taking such a long time. So he worked hard and constantly did the work that no one else wanted to do. Wherever he went he would do the job of Tenzo. This was not for twenty or thirty people but for 1,500 to 2,000 people. Doing the rice cooking wherever he went, he had no time for sitting zazen. When he had a spare moment, he repaired things or cleaned the toilets. Seppo was awakened Mu later in life than Ganto. Although it took him a long time, his dharma line continued whereas Ganto's did not. Following Seppo came the great masters Ummon and Hogen. This shows clearly how to awaken suddenly or quickly as

Ganto did may seem like the better way to do it, but that is not necessarily the case. His line did not continue, whereas Seppo, who took a long time and did it slowly, had a meticulousness that reaped long-lasting results.

Sutra: (In spite of what the Patriarch had said,) the followers of Shen Xiu used to criticize the Patriarch. They discredited him by saying that as he was illiterate he could not distinguish himself in any respect.

People would say that in Zen, which has no form, how could there be such division? The Buddha had taught that all people are endowed with Buddha nature. yet because people have varying capabilities, some can dive right in like Heishiro of Ehara who had never even heard the words of the Buddha before. He was a wealthy man who had donated the money for building the statue of Fudo MyoO near the waterfall at Yoshiwara. At the opening celebration of the unveiling of the statue he was sitting near the waterfall as the guest of honor. He noticed that bubbles were created as the water fell over the falls and hit the river. These bubbles went downstream on the water and popped. Some of them would break after a meter, some would break after two meters. Some would go for twenty meters, but without fail all of those bubbles would break. He realized that this was just like people: some people would die as children after a short time in life, some in their teenage years, some in their twenties or thirties, but everyone without fail dies.

Suddenly he felt that this was about himself as well. And he realized that he couldn't stay there any longer. He awoke to the fact that he had no idea why he had been alive, what he had been born for, and what was coming for him. He was so uncomfortable that he had to quickly leave. On his way home he heard a sutra being read, the Tokusuiyogyo. It said that if we truly put our life on the line we can realize the Buddha nature in

one instant. This requires one thing only: straight-forward bravery. Having heard this, he hurried home and locked himself in the guest bath where no one would interrupt him. He had had no instruction, but he spontaneously began to cut away all extraneous thoughts. He had never heard of this before, but he just didn't stop. He lost track of everything. At dawn he heard a bird chirping, but he couldn't locate his own body. His eyes were as if they were sucked into the floor. So mysterious, what was going on! He continued for two more nights and days, and then the scenery suddenly changed; everything he saw was shining and radiant. He went to see his local priest about this, but he could not instruct him. So he went to master Hakuin who understood what had happened to him and confirmed his deep awakening.

This man knew nothing about Buddhism, but he broke through in three nights and three days of consistent effort. Those who know a lot about it have more ideas, hesitations, and doubts. If we divide it into thoughts about it and the doing of it, then we are not able to see it through clearly to the end. It has to be done in one straight line without stopping.

Many of the disciples of Jinshu Josha criticized and spoke poorly of the Sixth Patriarch, saying that since he had only been with Goso Gunin for eight months and always in the rice-pounding room he was not truly awakened after all. It only worked because he was teaching in the outback of the southern mountains. If he were to come to Peking where the true scholars were, they would grill him and he wouldn't know what to say.

Sutra: Shen Xiu himself, on the other hand, admitted that he was inferior to the Patriarch, that the Patriarch attained wisdom without the aid of a teacher, and that he understood thoroughly the teaching of the Mahayana School. "Moreover," he added, "my teacher, the Fifth Patriarch, would not have transmitted to him the robe and the

bowl without good cause. I regret that, owing to the patronage of the state, which I by no means deserve, I am unable to travel far to receive instructions from him personally. (But) you men should go to Cao Xi to consult him."

Jinshu Josha was not caught on what they were saying or else he would not have been well supported by the Emperor. Of course he was a person of depth and understanding. He corrected his disciples, telling them that they did not know what they were talking about. Eno had been awakened before he'd even arrived at Yellow Plum mountain when he heard the words from the Diamond Sutra, 'abiding nowhere, awakened mind arises.' Here we spend years studying the various teachings of Buddhism before we realize it, but Eno naturally realized it without any studying and awakened to the Buddha's True Mind. Jinshu Josha also said that Goso Gunin had transmitted to Eno and not to me, and the Fifth Patriarch knew very well what he was doing. If I were not needed here to teach the emperor, I would go myself and learn from the Sixth Patriarch. This is a melancholy point for me. Don't think that you are going to get awakened just because you are training here; go to him and realize your true nature.

Sutra: One day he said to his disciple, **Zhi Cheng**, "You are intelligent and bright. On my behalf, you may go to Cao Xi to attend the lectures there. Try your best to remember what you learn, so that upon your return you may repeat it to me."

Acting on his teacher's instruction, Zhi Cheng went to Cao Xi. Without telling whence he came he joined the crowd there to call on the Patriarch.

In accordance with his teacher's request, Shisai (Zhi Cheng) went to the Patriarch's monastery and joined the assembly, but the Sixth Patriarch could tell he was not the usual monk by the way he walked, the way he moved. The Sixth Patriarch could see clearly that he had been training for a long time. A person whose mind

is awakened to the Dharma can see this easily.

Sutra: Someone has hidden himself here to plagiarize my lecture," said the Patriarch to the assembly. Thereupon, Zhi Cheng came out, made obeisance, and told the Patriarch what his mission was.

The Sixth Patriarch said out loud that there was someone there who had come to steal the Dharma. Shisai had not come of his own accord to do that; he made his presence public and said who he was and where he had come from.

Sutra: You come from Yu Quan Monastery, do you?" asked the Patriarch. "You must be a spy."

"No, I am not," replied Zhi Cheng. "Why not?" asked the Patriarch.

"If I had not told you," said Zhi Cheng, "I would be a spy. Since I have told you all about it, I am not."

You have come on an order from Jinshu Josha to spy, so you are not coming here to learn the Dharma of your own accord, inquired the Sixth Patriarch. No, that is not true; I told you who I am and from where I have come because I wanted to be here learning what you are teaching, was Shisai's reply. Well then if you honestly want to learn, then tell us how you have been taught up until now.

Sutra: "He tells us to meditate on purity, to keep up the sitting position all the time and not to lie down," replied Zhi Cheng.

Shisai told the Sixth Patriarch what he had been taught. The Sixth Patriarch responded, 'abiding nowhere, awakened mind arises.' To try to stop a mind in order to purify it is going against the always naturally changing mind. To try to make it do something will only make it sick; our mind has to always be free. That way of practicing is like trying to keep a cow out of a neighbor's field by keeping it on a harness all the time. Nor is returning to our wild nature satori; that would be like a dog that goes to everybody's house begging. If

we bring our mind into oneness there is nothing that cannot be accomplished. We have to train it. Our mind is full of things like snakes and beasts; if we let our mind go in any direction we do know where it will end up. We have to see clearly that we are not doing zazen to become a good person or just to change a mind full of unpleasant things. That is doing zazen because we are told to, because we need to change in some way.

Then the Sixth Patriarch said to listen to his poem.

Sutra: "To meditate on purity," said the Patriarch, "is an infirmity and not Dhyana. To restrict oneself to the sitting position all the time is unprofitable. Listen to my stanza:--

A living man sits and does not
lie down (all the time),
While a dead man lies down
and does not sit.

On this physical body of ours
Why should we impose the task of sitting?


He is talking about not being caught on a form. We are sitting zazen only while we are alive and not after we die. The point is, we have to liberate our clear mind. The point is not to force our behavior to be done in a certain way, or we'll be used by our physical body our whole life. We'll be used by our distracted mind our whole

*When thoughts of externals
do not arise in the mind
that is za (sitting)
Inside to be undisturbed,
to be unmoving
that is zen (dhyana)*

外離相為禪
內不亂為定

Soto sō o hanaruru o zen to nashi, uchi
midarezaru o jō to nasu

外 内
不 亂
之 福



life. The correct way is to not stop our mind anywhere on anything; this is our mind's truest clearest nature. Or to say that we shouldn't hear, see, or feel - it's in doing that hearing, seeing, and feeling that we find our awakening.

As Daito Kokushi has said, to see with our ears, to hear with our eyes: then there is no doubt about the sound of the raindrop coming down from the eaves. Or, in all the boundless realms of space, not a single hair can be inserted, from the endless past to the limitless future, we are never separated from this very moment. That which is right in front of us, right here, right now, this is our true awakening.

We have to know this place that is free of any caught mind-moment just as the Sixth Patriarch has taught it. In this place there are no mind-moments to be polluted by; it is free of any attachment to form; there is no perception of a personal 'I'; the mind is never located or stagnant but always flowing like the river. Where we are empty of and free from any form of mind does not mean to not hear and not speak and not feel. It means in doing them to be aligned correctly, to use these ears we have as they are, without so many thoughts gathered around them; to use the eyes we have as they are, without so many ideas about things gathered around them. To not be full of extraneous thoughts, but to see and hear things exactly as they are, adding on nothing, being located nowhere, being caught or stuck on no thing and no place.

Sutra: Making obeisance a second time, Zhi Cheng remarked, "Though I have studied Buddhism for nine years under the Grand Master Shen Xiu, my mind has not yet been awakened for enlightenment. But as soon as you speak to me my mind is enlightened."

Shisai received the teaching and was deeply impressed, saying that he had been training with Jinshu Josha for nine years, but just hearing these words he was finally able to realize a deep awakening.

In our life we easily become caught by and attached to certain thoughts and ideas. So we come to zazen to let go of those caught and attached places. Nevertheless, liberation is not a casual freedom from thinking too Mu. It has to be a liberation of both outside and inside. Letting go of attachments within is the more difficult of the two. To not add on imagined and extraneous thoughts at all! To enable us to be liberated completely, we have the practices of *susokkan* and koans. It is easy to make the mistake of focusing only on external attachments. Then we may get liberated externally but we will be adding on extra 'things' within. We have to work on that with great care and attention.

OSESSHIN, 2006-02, DAY SIX

Sutra: As the question of incessant rebirths is a momentous one, please take pity on me and give me further instruction.

Shisai had been practicing with Jinshu Josha for many years and now came to the Sixth Patriarch to learn his dharma. The Sixth Patriarch asked what training they were doing at Jinshu Josha's and when Shisai told him about how they were doing constant *samadhi* training, Eno responded that it is not bad to hold onto *samadhi* like that but we must not crush our true essence.

For beginners in the *sanzen* room there is first the practice of *susokkan*, then the first koan such as 'the sound of one hand', or 'mu-- does a dog have Buddha nature'; then come further koans to train us to let go of our body and thoughts completely.

When Joshu was asked by the monk if a dog has Buddha nature, Joshu answered 'mu'. Mumon Ekai Zenji cautions us to not fall into nihilism nor into blind confirmation, rather to continue with all of our 360 smallest joints, our 84,000 hair pores, from morning until night, from night until morning, without pausing. We

do this 'mu' constantly and continually. At the beginning, the 'mu' is done mentally. We have to keep going back to it by using our dualistic thinking, but as we continue doing the Mu with no gaps it soaks through us and then we are being done by the Mu not vice-versa. We hear the sanzen bell and run to sanzen; there we are told, 'it is not through yet'; we have to know that place where our body and thoughts disappear completely. We return to the zendo, keeping that Mu going. We endure the keisaku blows of the top monks, Mu continuing, keeping it going.

In society we excuse each others' egoistic views, but not here, not in the zendo. We have to endure the painful legs and the back pain; we think our body will fall apart or that it will explode, but we stand, we sit, we walk. We feel the full tautness increasing. We see and hear, not always trying to maintain some quiet place, but to have no lingering notions connected to any perception. We are reprimanded by the senior people. We get told by the Roshi in sanzen that we aren't doing it right. But we just continue, we can't run away, so we only continue. In society we could escape, but here there is no place for that. And everything that we ever learned from any book about Zen is totally useless and beside the point. There is just this Mu continuing in one straight line. We don't even know anymore if we are working hard or if the zendo is pulling us along. We even see the Mu in our dreams; we sleep and we see the Mu. It has to be done to this degree.

Then without even thinking about it, all of our ideas and opinions suddenly fall away. This is what the zendo is like. It is not a place for pleasing each other and for social niceties. It is to lose everything, to let go of everything. Without this we won't be able to touch that actual true base. It may seem that the zendo is an uncompassionate place. But the ways of the zendo are the most expedient for doing it

in the shortest possible time. If Zen were to disappear from the world, there'd be no place for doing this. Being a beginner is the best: uncertain of what is going to happen tomorrow or in the future makes us brave and straight forward. This is how the Sixth Patriarch outlines the path on sudden enlightenment. But there could be no difference between sudden and gradual. True nature's awakening has to be the same for all.

Right now, here, everyone feels thoroughly confused, I'm sure. Uncertain of what is going on, what they are doing here, why they are doing what, or how! This is a very important part of this path. We lose track of everything. We lose track of all of it, and then suddenly the heavens tremble, the earth shakes, we don't even know what is doing it. It's impossible to understand this mentally. But then we feel this sense that the heavens and earth are being extended through us completely. This is the essence of the Sixth Patriarch's deep teaching. As he has said, 'from the origin there is not one single thing.' This is the subtle flavor of zazen.

Shisai said, 'As the question of incessant rebirths is a momentous one, please take pity on me and give me further instruction.' He realized he'd been doing it all superficially up until now, and he thanks the Sixth Patriarch for the opportunity to have heard the true teaching.

The wooden han in the zendo is sounded to remind us that our life is constantly slipping through our fingers, every second, every instant. What is important in this life anyway? Is it making money, becoming famous, becoming intelligent? Our life is constantly passing us by. How long will we be able to hear this teaching of the Truth?

As it says in the Dhammapada, how rare it is to receive a birth as a human in this world of life and death, and we have now received this. How rare it is to encounter

the true teaching, and we have now encountered this opportunity. How rare it is to know a person who can teach us in the truest way, and we have now received this chance.

How rare it is to receive a birth as a human being in this world of life and death. We are born only once, millions of years ago; we have then come through countless versions of being born--as a reptile, a bird, a mammal, from there to a human. From a parent to a child, from a parent to a child, continuing over and over, and finally, now, we have come to an opportunity where we can know this true teaching. How rare it is to encounter this true teaching, and we have now encountered it. To hear this direct teaching of the Buddha's Dharma that all beings are endowed with this huge true nature. So full of ideas that keep us wandering here and there, we would never have noticed it. But now we can go within, directly realize this true nature, and become Buddha. This is not imagined or conceptualized. We can actually experience it.

Sutra: "I understand," said the Patriarch, "that your teacher gives his disciples instructions on Sila (disciplinary rules), Dhyana (meditation), and Prajna (Wisdom). Please tell me how he defines these terms."

"According to his teaching," replied Zhi Cheng, "to refrain from all evil actions is Sila, to practice whatever is good is Prajna, and to purify one's own mind is Dhyana. This is the way he teaches us. May I know your system?"

These three are considered the basic teachings: to live correctly we need Precepts; to have our mind aligned we need Samadhi; and to proceed in the most profound way we need Wisdom (Prajna). Our individual perceptions and ideas of what we experience are different, one from another. These three are necessary for training people to be able to live our lives in a correct way every day. This is how Shisai answered

about how he was being taught.

As Jinshu Josha expressed in his poem, 'our body is the bodhi tree, our mind a mirror bright, carefully we wipe them hour by hour, and let no dust alight.' Don't do bad things, your clear mind will be obscured. Do do good things, this is wisdom, and best to do a bit more to purify your own mind. To live in this way always is how Shisai had learned from master Jinshu Josha. He asked the Sixth Patriarch, how do you teach? I would like to know this.

Sutra: "If I tell you," said the Patriarch, "that I have a system of Law to transmit to others, I am cheating you. What I do to my disciples is to liberate them from their own bondage with such devices as the case may need. To use a name which is nothing but a makeshift, this (state of liberation) may be called Samadhi. The way your master teaches Sila, Dhyana, and Prajna is wonderful; but my exposition is different."

The Sixth Patriarch answers that he has no such rules and tangles: why do you have to take precepts from someone else, do meditation because you're told to, and learn about wisdom? From the origin all is empty; where is there any place for a speck of anything to stick? That is just obscuring the already clear mind. There is only to believe in this great, clear mind. If we are right here and right now as we work and move and live all day long, then we can see that we are all clear and we are in samadhi from the origin. We don't have to think about 'should I do this or that'. If we were to think first and then take a single step, think first and then do each hand motion, we would be severely handicapped.

In our eyes it is called seeing, in our ears it is called hearing, in our nose it is called smelling, in our mouth it is called tasting and speaking, in our hands it is called holding and in our feet it is called carrying. All day long we do it without a single shadow, we live in this samadhi.

As we use our eyes we forget our eyes, as we use our ears we forget our ears, in using our nose we aren't thinking about our nose, using our mouth we forget about having a mouth. But if we stop and get caught on a thought that just will not quit, that is sickness, that is stagnation, that is attachment. We have to let go of all of that, and we don't need to have some kind of triangle of things to do in order to let it go.

Just now you have said that to refrain from all evil actions is the Precepts, to practice whatever is good is wisdom, and to purify one's own mind is samadhi (meditation), but:

Sutra: "How can it be different, Sir," asked Zhi Cheng, "when there is only one form of Sila, Dhyana and Prajna?"

"The teaching of your master," replied the Patriarch, "is for the followers of the Mahayana School, while mine is for those of the Supreme School. The fact that some realize the Dharma more quickly and deeply than others accounts for the difference in the interpretation."

It is all Buddhism, the Sixth Patriarch tells Shisai, but what Jinshu Josha is speaking about precepts, meditation and wisdom and what I am speaking about are different entrances. To reach some other bank by practicing and liberating others is the Mahayana way of looking at this. My teaching is that of the Supreme School: there is only to awaken. This world is dark, and to liberate others we have to make great efforts to take away this darkness. That approach is fine, but night does not disappear because day has come. When the sun comes up the darkness dissipates everywhere. From the origin there was always only light.

We talk about doing volunteer work and things that are good for people, now. From olden times those things were a matter of course, everyone would help each other in that way. We have to know clearly from where the true functioning comes forth.

Sutra: "You may listen, and see if my

instruction is the same as his. In expounding the Law, I do not deviate from the authority of the Essence of Mind (i.e., I speak what I realize intuitively). To speak otherwise would indicate that the expositor's Essence of Mind is under obscurization and that he can touch the phenomenal side of the Law only. The true teaching of Sila, Dhyana and Prajna should be based on the principle that the function of all things derives from the Essence of Mind."

If we have some idea in mind that we have to do good things and should not do bad things, then we get stuck in a very narrow frame. We then cannot see and hear clearly, we cannot know great amazement and wonder, we lose the brilliance and radiance of our mind.

The Sixth Patriarch has a poem, please see it clearly, and where the difference is from Jinshu Josha's teaching.

Sutra: Listen to my stanza:--

To free the mind from all impurity is the Sila of the Essence of Mind.

To free the mind from all ignorance is the Prajna of the Essence of Mind.

To free the mind from all disturbance is the Dhyana of the Essence of Mind.

Neither increasing nor decreasing, oneself adamant (Vajra Diamond, symbolizes the Essence of Mind); 'Coming' and 'going' are different phases of Samadhi."

Having heard this, Zhi Cheng apologized (for having asked a foolish question) and thanked the Patriarch for his instruction.

There is only one true essence, that of Buddha nature. Bankei Zenji has said that all we have received from our parents is an Unborn mind. About that saying he teaches: you have all come here to hear me speak, but if a dog barks you all hear that dog barking. Even though you did not come here planning to hear a dog, you still hear it. This is the Buddha nature. The eyes of the Buddha are the same eyes

心地無此自性戒
心地無癆自性慧
心地會乱自性定



with which you are seeing. It is not an idea about 'I see like this, I hear like this.' We have to focus clearly and then we can see that there is nothing to be caught on, our mind is this way from the origin.

Our focus has to be on our essence, not on a concept of doing good and not doing bad. It is one path to obey that triangle of precepts, meditation and wisdom, but we have to know the essence directly and clearly. Realize there is only this. We don't have to try to be quiet; we are from the origin already this quietness. This true nature, when it is moving it is naturally observing precepts. When it is not moving it is naturally in a state of samadhi. We all can experience and express this without fear. To know that essence is to know Buddha nature.

The four great wisdoms, first the Great, Perfect Mirror Wisdom; the Universal Nature Wisdom; the Mysterious Observing Wisdom; and the Perfecting of Action Wisdom. Even though they are slightly philosophical, if we let go of this small self we can see these clearly. First, we see the world with all of its creations and how we have manifested it all, without a speck of anything in our heart whatsoever. We are aligned without anything to be seeing or holding on to. But if we have even a wisp of a thought we get distracted and lose that clarity. We move in a mistaken way.

When we can let go of any ideas of good and bad, that is the deep wisdom of our true essence and this, as it is, is samadhi.

We make efforts to do good things and think we are getting somewhere, but that has nothing to do with our true essence. From the origin we have nothing on our mind whatsoever. As it says in the Heart Sutra, without birth, without death, without increase, without decrease, without purity, without impurity. Our mind may become quieter with less thinking from doing zazen; not a bad thing. But our true essence has nothing to do with any of that.

*For the mind-ground to be without
error is the morality of the
self-nature.*

*For the mind-ground to be without
stupidity is the wisdom of the
self-nature.*

*For the mind-ground to be without
disruption is the meditation of the
self-nature.*

心地無非自性戒
心地無癡自性慧
心地無亂自性定

Shinchi hi naki wa jishō no kai
Shinchi chi naki wa jishō no e
Shinchi ran naki wa jishō no jō

‘Coming and going are different phases of Samadhi;’ in our true essence there is no coming or going or moving anywhere. We easily get caught on this. From the limitless past to the boundless future we are never moved at all.

Apparently we are born and we die on top of that. It doesn’t affect our true nature whatsoever. Being deluded or confused, being awakened or not has no effect on our true nature. We must first realize our true nature. We have been born for doing this. Because we don’t know our true nature we feel confused and think that is who we are. If we first know this true nature, then we can see that that extraneous thinking has no effect on anything whatsoever.

Shisai heard the poem of the Sixth Patriarch and thanked him from his deepest mind. He gave him a poem in return.

Sutra: Having heard this, Zhi Cheng apologized (for having asked a foolish question) and thanked the Patriarch for his instruction. He then submitted the following stanza:

The ‘Self’ is nothing but a phantasm
created by the union of five Skandhas,
And a phantasm can have nothing
to do with absolute reality.

To hold that there is a Tathata (Suchness)
for us to aim at or to return to

Is another example of ‘Impure Dharma’.

The Sixth Patriarch heard Shisai’s poem and received and acknowledged it.

We think that there is a world, we think that we move in this world, but these are all only phenomena and have no truth. We are not doing the same thing forever, we are not seeing the same thing forever. If we try to plan for something to continue forever, we make a big mistake. We can think that it has to be this way or that, but that has nothing to do with how true nature is.

As Hakuin Zenji’s Song of Zazen teaches:
Even those who have sat zazen only

once will see all karma erased.

Nowhere will they find evil paths, and the pure land will not be far away. If we listen even once with open heart to this truth, then praise it and gladly embrace it, how much more so then if on reflecting within ourselves we directly realize self-nature, giving proof to the truth that self-nature is no-nature. We will have gone far beyond idle speculation. The gate of the oneness of cause and effect is thereby opened, and not two, not three, straight ahead runs the way.

Idle speculation: nothing we can plan on or decide on. People are always living an idea about life, which is something they are inventing. Evil people are also Buddhas, and people who are good are not always good. If a good person gives rise to one extraneous mind-moment, then they are already being deceived. No matter what, all people come forth from the clarity of true nature. Eventually, they will realize this. Without carrying around a me or an ‘I’, we simply receive the ringing of the bell, and from nothing at all we see everything. As Shido Munan Zenji has said, to hold onto a self and carry it in its heaviness is to manifest a living hell realm. While to be born in accordance with what is necessary carrying no idea of a self is the way of the Buddha. ‘

Realizing the form of no-form as form,
whether going or returning we cannot
be anywhere else.

We let go of an idea of a self and simply move in accordance with whatever is necessary.

Realizing the thought of no-thought as
thought, whether singing or dancing,
we are the voice of the Dharma.

In every mind-moment, every single one, not pulling along anything from the past. Only that which is received and is necessary this very moment. That newly born truth in each moment is the true essence manifesting.

OSESSHIN, 2006-02, DAY SEVEN

The Sixth Patriarch is saying that the precepts, meditation, and wisdom that Jinshu Josha teaches are moral and ethical teachings and that our clear Mind is already of that nature intrinsically. To be right here and now in what is smack in front of us, this is the same thing as precepts, meditation, and wisdom. To think it is something from the outside is mistaken.

Since olden times people who were not very perseverant would be taught to not do bad things, to do good things, and to clarify their mind. The Buddha taught that as a way to satori, but that is not the teaching of satori itself. In the Lotus Sutra it is told that we have this true Wisdom from the origin but we are like that son of a rich man standing in front of his own house and not even knowing it, not even recognizing his own father's face even as his father is standing nearby. Wise people of the inferior type are like this. The rich man tells the servants to call his son. But this son is a beggar now and is afraid to come see this rich man whom he doesn't know is his father. He says he's done nothing wrong, so why should he be calling him? The father then uses expedient means, offering him a job dumping the toilets and says he will give him food three times a day. For the beggar, who never knows where his next meal is coming from, this is a great opportunity and he accepts it. Next the father has him do work in the garden and then decorating in the house, greeting guests, and finally doing the house's books. Only when the father is very old does he tell everyone that actually the man is his own, true son who strayed from home at a young age and did not know any longer where his house was or who his father was. He says he's going to give all of his inheritance to this son. We are all endowed with this clear nature from the origin. Each person is the Buddha's true child, and everything in this

world is our inner legacy. In our eyes it is called seeing, in our nose it is called smelling, in our ears it is called hearing, in our mouth it is called speaking, in our body it is called feeling. We can see everything in the world with our eyes, feel everything in the world with our body.

Everyone can feel their responsibility, too. But instead, we underestimate ourselves, not yet able to take the treasures out of the storehouse. If we simply awaken deeply to how from the origin there is not one thing—this is the Precepts. Our senses perceive, our body feels, our awareness catches it and thus the world is experienced. To have nothing in mind—nothing we hold onto—that becomes the myriad things. This is the first of the Four Wisdoms: the Great, Perfect Mirror Wisdom. The Samboghakaya is the undifferentiated light in a moment of our mind, where we experience each and every thing equally and with no discrimination. We become the bell and manifest the bell; we become the flower and manifest the flower. There is no distinction between these things at all. This is the Universal Nature Wisdom. These then move further and express as the Mysterious Observing Wisdom and the Perfecting of Action Wisdom, thus making all four Great Wisdoms.

When these Wisdoms settle into place, they are called samadhi. When they are in functioning they are the Four Wisdoms; settled, they again become samadhi. All of the ethics and morals in this world are our true Wisdom functioning—so says the Sixth Patriarch.

Buddha taught bodhi and nirvana, but those were just aids to help us realize this samadhi. To extinguish the flames of greed, to extinguish the flames of ignorance, to extinguish the flames of anger—this is nirvana. But nirvana was only set up to juxtapose against greed, ignorance and anger as a way to see those places. If we were not caught on those things we would realize samadhi. He

proposed a nirvana and brought up a bodhi because people are still stuck on an idea that there are people of enlightened nature and people of ignorant nature. “He who has realized the essence of Mind may dispense with such doctrines as bodhi, nirvana and knowledge of emancipation.”

Because we are caught on our own ideas we cannot see other people or other things around us, but if we let go of those personal ideas and desires and the thought that we are suffering so much, then we can see other things more clearly and move accordingly. This is knowledge of emancipation. We can then see this clear mind with which all people are endowed. Even those we think of as vicious and malicious—we can see that they are also endowed with this clear Buddha nature. Our true nature itself is the Path of Awakening. If we realize this true nature we want to naturally and spontaneously work for all people to be able to know this as well.

Sutra: Only those who do not possess a single system of Law can formulate all systems of Law, and only those who can understand the meaning (of this paradox) may use such terms.

When we follow one line of a Path’s teaching we can easily be prejudiced against others, and our minds are not clear. Obstructed by an idea that we have already understood so deeply, we are not able to see this world clearly. The Sixth Patriarch was awakened to these words: “Abiding in no place, Awakened Mind arises.” Just as when we are newly born, we see the world clearly, with nothing added on to it. Then we can actually see how it is and from there know how to act accordingly. This is not to stand on an idea of “You must do something in a certain way,” which is the Precepts, you must meditate a certain way, you must have a certain kind of wisdom. We have to return to that mind when we were just born. And not just sitting in the zendo, but when

we are seeing and hearing and feeling, to always be clarifying and purifying without sandwiching in any extraneous ideas at all, no matter what we’re doing. This is zazen.

It makes no difference what we name these ways of realizing it. The true essence that the Buddha taught—we have to live it in every action, each motion! People in society will say that it has to be done this way or that way. But who decided that? That which changes with every era, each locale? The same with gods and Buddhas. Arguing over this causes wars. What god is, what ethics are—these are always changing. These ideas are born in specific regions; they’re correct for specific people in specific locales. An idea of god from a completely different era won’t be useful today.

We have to fill the heavens and earth in everything we do—in our sitting, in our standing, in our walking, we fill the heavens and earth, carrying the whole of civilization right with us in everything we do, everywhere we go—not hiding, concealed in some dark corner, but brightly revealed in all the eight directions! If we walk, if we cook, we do it in this way, too. There is no further need than this: to become it completely. Then we will no longer have to ask if it is meaningful or not.

People who have truly realized kensho will not move and act aimlessly. Their actions are the heavens and earth acting. The heavens and earth do not sit and stand and walk with no meaning. They don’t come and go with no point. The problem is in our daily life. Are we really not wasting our life and acting aimlessly? As Master Unmon has said, “This world is so huge and wide, so why do we put on our robes and our kesa at the sound of the bell?” If we say it is just because someone planned it that way, that is becoming a slave. Because we want to do it that way—that is an explanation. How do we hold our mind? Where do we set

our sights? We have to see this clearly, or we fall into explanation. Being caught on rules, our mind's true character will be wasted. Today people are all caught in this narrow way.

Whether they speak or are still, whether they appear in the zendo or are doing samu, they are always coming forth from free, clear nature. This is the heavens and earth brilliantly shining, right where they are, through them. We are not that because we hang onto our own small, egoistic thoughts.

Our clear mind—this huge, magnanimous state of mind with which we are born! At about three years of age our ego-awareness firms up, and we begin to gather all kinds of dualistic information. We have a poem by Ikkyu about before that time, which says we get further and further away as we get older; how sad! We leave behind being Buddha! We are born with this total, uproarious laughter and crying, accepting our parents taking care of us completely as a matter of course. We have been born with this state of mind. But we go to school, we get educated, we take on this point of view and of course we have responsibilities and capabilities. But that does not mean that we should get choked and caught on what we learn. We have a responsibility to express and make use of our capabilities. The Sixth Patriarch is not saying we don't need any intelligence or education or capabilities, but that we should not be used by them. All of the skills we have, we should put them to use.

Sutra: ...when we introspect our mind from moment to moment with Prajna, and when we do not cling to things and phenomenal objects we are free and liberated.

In our true nature there is no idea of "I will take this" or "I will not take that." We have no judging mind-moments so we do not discriminate between systems. We do zazen; our legs hurt, we feel restricted. To be without a decided system is to be free,

to be unattached to something like this.

Maso Kushiki was a modern haiku master who had tuberculosis. In its last stage his breathing was being stopped by phlegm, and yet he continued to write and teach his disciples.

The hichima gourd flower blooms,
the mucous is clogged up and stuck—
Is this the Buddha?

Around June is when the gourd flower is blooming. The phlegm was rolling around and around and he was shouting so loud in pain that the whole neighborhood could hear him. "The gourd flower blooms, the mucous is clogged up and stuck—is this the Buddha?" He wrote this at that moment, and then he died. But he was not caught on this sickness or this pain. Even though he suffered, throughout the heavens and earth his suffering raged, yet he had a clearly seeing eye that could take it all in. And with that huge awareness he wrote this poem.

We can see the world with our physical eye but we can also see beyond this. It is not so simple to think about how our physical eyes work, it is not so simple to understand this. We have to come from our most settled place. While having this physical body, we have this most clearly seeing eye which sees beyond a casual version of things—a sharply seeing eye that can see the essence and not just the concepts.

We have to see and be in our True nature, without decoration and with nothing else being relied on. Our truth is in each and every moment, to have each mind-moment be clear, and to be clear continuously! If we have any awareness of a sesshin being for a week or how long it's been, that is already an obstruction. What is most important is being in this very moment. We dive into each moment with everything we are, and at first there is so much mixed in. But one after the next we discard all of it. With every one of our 360 smallest joints and our 84,000 hair pores

we bring this Great Doubt into all parts of our body, into our whole awareness, into our whole being! With our entire being and body we become one, total Mu! One after the next we continue; we do each one meticulously. The challenge is to not let in any cracks or gaps whatsoever. This is the trick: to not allow in any gaps at all. We keep it firmly in our tanden so we don't let go of our ki at any time. The Roshi is often asked, "Do we have to continue like this forever? To which Roshi answers, "There, that's already a gap!"

We do it for a week and we feel this free, huge feeling. Asked what to do about it at night Roshi says, "Figure it out for yourself." People don't need to be told what to do, they just do it wholeheartedly—they go for it. Someone can bring you water, but you're the one who has to drink it. Doing it each and every moment—*every* moment—then this is suddenly Enlightenment. Where is there anything gradual in that? But we have to *do* it to actualize it.

Someone says they just can't do it. But it is our very own Buddha nature; we have to be kind with that and actualize it.

OSESSHIN, 2006-09, DAY ONE

Opening Poem,

*We commence this period of training
with serious intent,
seeking the mind of the Sixth
Patriarch—*

*No form, no abode, from the very
beginning, not a single thing!
In this clear, bright, autumn weather
let us drop
all dullness and delusion,
The week passing like a single sitting!*

We are now working on chapter eight of the Platform Sutra of the Sixth Patriarch, the section on Sudden Enlightenment. This section is about sudden awakening, and yet not everyone can realize this so easily. To do this we have to cut away

everything we don't need—and cut it away completely. In that one moment we are then awakened, and so it is called "sudden enlightenment." We who do training are like those who climb a mountain; we climb and we climb and we climb, only concentrating on our climbing. Then we are finally able to see the huge, all-embracing, immense view from the top of the mountain. The Buddha Dharma is not narrow; it is not restricted to only one way to get to the top of that mountain. There are those who feel this work has to be done slowly in order to become complete and there are those who experience the sudden way as the only true way. Either way, we have to put everyone and everything in our lives aside and go for it with our life on the line!

We are all endowed with this True nature. Not one is missing it! Yet we have to awaken to this wisdom. For each person this awakening has to be done, and then we can realize this place of sudden enlightenment. To make this possible we have to make the efforts that allow it to happen. People in the world don't often have such an opportunity to do this, but we have to do it and be very careful—because if we don't do it thoroughly, to its most conclusive point, we will again and again be caught on our small-minded opinions. You cannot scoop out a huge ocean with a small spoon. If we are not spacious inside, then we can only see our own small-minded opinions. We have to let go of those—each and every one of them—and then we know that we are this Mind of the whole universe; we are lived through by that. That is the realization of the heart of the Buddha Dharma. The whole range of creativity requiring our efforts, this is what is necessary—to be creative and put everything into these efforts. It all must be kept going until it concludes successfully.

Sutra: Bhikkhu Zhi Che, whose secular name was Zhang Xing Chang, was a native of Kiangxi. As a young man,

he was fond of chivalric exploits.

Today's teisho is about Shitetsu, a disciple of the Sixth Patriarch. When he was young he was famous for being the kind of young person who has so much power and strength that he can do anything. Everyone said his power would be able to conquer the world.

Eno Zenji, who was to become the Sixth Patriarch, was the one who was ordered to leave the Fifth Patriarch's temple when he received the transmission from Goso Gunin, the Fifth Patriarch—to go to the South because he was in danger from those who had come from the North and would not want him taking the transmission. He returned to Koshu, "the wide state."

At that time there were 700 disciples at the place of the Fifth Patriarch, and Sokuten Bukko, the emperor at the time, had given the Fifth Patriarch his approval and asked for his teaching. Under the Fifth Patriarch was one strong, top disciple named Jinshu Josha, who had come from the North; he was considered to be the one who would keep the teaching of the Fifth Patriarch alive. But the Fifth Patriarch gave the transmission to Eno, telling him to take it to the South because the others were liable to go after him so his life was in peril.

We cannot be full of small-minded opinions and ego. We have to let go of that filter of preconceived notions. It is not about strength or about places in geography. Rather, it is because of this filter that we cannot see the truth and put into it ideas about places. Thus we stuck in our attached way of seeing. Because of this situation the Sixth Patriarch left when the Fifth Patriarch told him to go and to not come forth until the times were ready.

Sokuten Bukko in the North had given his support to Jinshu Josha and was proud of praising him and calling him the one who would become the Sixth Patriarch when Goso Gunin died. So while they

had all heard of the fact, were aware of the fact that Eno had gone to the South after receiving transmission from the Fifth Patriarch, they wanted to insure that their man in the North, Jinshu Josha, would be the one who would carry on the line of the Fifth Patriarch. They hired a strong gangster to go and kill Eno in the South. How idiotic!

Sutra: Since the two Dhyana Schools, Hui Neng of the South and Shen Xiu of the North, flourished side by side, a strong sectarian feeling ran high on the part of the disciples, in spite of the tolerant spirit shown by the two masters, who hardly knew what egotism was. Calling their own teacher, Shen Xiu, the Sixth Patriarch on no better authority than their own, the followers of the Northern School were jealous of the rightful owner of that title whose claim, supported by the inherited robe, was too well known to be ignored. (So in order to get rid of the rival teacher) they sent Zhang Xing Chang (who was then a layman) to murder the Patriarch.

Of course Eno could know that this gangster was coming with what is referred to in the text as his "supernatural powers." If our mind is clear, we can see and perceive especially sharply. The powers that are often mentioned are those in which we can see something which is far away, we can hear something that is far away, we can know things we wouldn't usually be able to know, and we know when things have happened in the past and what will happen in the future; we know about others' states of mind and what they are thinking, and without stepping on the ground we are able to walk on water and in the air. Our mind is clear and free of any and all ideas and delusions in this state of mind. Here, Eno was able to know all of these things, and within them to know that this person was coming and what his intention was—why he was coming and how he might kill him in the future. This is about not being caught on anything but to perceive with our senses exactly as things are. Today as

well, people want to have special powers, but what is really most important is that we don't see with twisted ideas and that we don't hold onto our own personal benefit in that which we see. We cannot see beyond the material and the personally beneficial because we only want to see what we are interested in, and not to see precisely what is going on, precisely who is coming. Because our personal wants filter our experience we cannot see widely or precisely.

We have to clearly perceive what is going on and respond accordingly, appropriately. This is zazen and this is Zen's subtle flavor. We can feel if someone wants to harm or help us; this is nothing special. It's a matter of fact, too that we can feel everything in this wide open field—this is the subtle flavor of doing zazen.

Sutra: With his psychic power of mind-reading the Patriarch was able to know of the plot beforehand. Making ready for the coming of the murderer, he put ten taels by the side of his own seat. Gyosho, the murderer, duly arrived, and one evening entered the patriarch's room to carry out the murder. With outstretched neck the patriarch waited for the fatal blow.

He put ten taels—these were for that era a lot of money—by his seat for the gangster. There was an attendant there for almost all the day long, but just as he went to rest the gangster entered and was about to murder Eno when Eno stuck out his neck. Eno stuck out his head in preparation.

Sutra: With outstretched neck the patriarch waited for the fatal blow. Thrice did he cut, but not a single wound was thereby inflicted!

Gyosho tried to cut Eno three times but he couldn't kill him. The person who put this sutra book together expressed it in this way as a legend. Actually, the state of mind that was most influential here was not that of Eno, but of Gyosho. We also have the case of the general, Emyo, who was with the Fifth Patriarch, and when Eno left to

hurriedly go to the South having been given the robe and the bowl by the Fifth Patriarch, was determined to take them away from him. So he followed Eno. At Mount Daiyurei they were finally able to encounter each other. Emyo wanted the bowl and this robe so much! But for one like Emyo, who had a deep state of mind, he could go beyond not receiving those objects, and through this intense hunt he was able to realize his True nature. He could not take the bowls and robes. This was different from this gangster trying to murder Eno. Three times he tried to kill him, but completely unsuccessfully. We have to see how this works from the state of mind in which things are done. We have to see the truth in this.

Sutra: The Patriarch then addressed him as follows:

"A straight sword is not crooked,
While a crooked one is not straight.
I owe you money only;
But life I do not owe."

The surprise was too great for Zhang; he fell into a swoon and did not revive for a considerable time. Remorseful and penitent, [Gyosho] asked for mercy and volunteered to join the order at once. Handing him the money, the patriarch said, "You had better not remain here, lest my followers should do you harm. Come to see me in disguise some other time, and I will take good care of you."

As directed, he ran away the same night. "Three times you couldn't kill me. That was because your sword got caught on what you have already done, which is keeping your mind from being clear." This was the particular expression of the Sixth Patriarch, to put out money even though the person who came was not a thief but a murderer. He had seen that because of past deeds having to do with being a thief, Gyosho had become how he was now. The Sixth Patriarch said to him, "You are not a murderer, but perhaps you became one because of what you did not receive at some time. Now you can receive it. We

cannot know this for sure because it is something that has come from a past life.” This is how the Sixth Patriarch responded to this person who had tried to kill him. Gyosho felt he had been seen through completely, and was so terrified that he fell over into a swoon. People think their minds cannot be seen through.

He came back to awareness, and having seen what a huge thing he had done, he apologized and was confused. He had been told to kill the Sixth Patriarch, whom he had never even seen before. And the Sixth Patriarch had said to him to take this money and conceal that mistake. Then the Sixth Patriarch said that in the future he would become his disciple—but if he did that right away he would be in great danger, so to do it after he had gone away for awhile. The Sixth Patriarch knew that if the disciples around him knew that Gyosho was going become a disciple with them after this experience, then they would be against it. So he said, “Take this money, buy clothes with it, come back as a true monk, and I will be waiting for you.”

Sutra: “Come to see me in disguise some other time, and I will take good care of you.” As directed, he ran away the same night. Subsequently, he joined the order and, when fully ordained, proved himself to be a very diligent monk.

“I will be waiting for you...” The Sixth Patriarch could see into the future and read others clearly. Later the monk was ordained, and when he was about to become committed to a certain teacher, he returned to see the him.

Sutra: One day, recollecting what the Patriarch had said, he took the long journey to see him and to tender him homage. “Why do you come so late?” asked the patriarch. “I have been thinking of you all the time.” “Since that day you so graciously pardoned my crime,” he said, “I have become a monk and have studied Buddhism diligently. Yet I find it difficult to requite you adequately unless I can show my gratitude by spreading the law for

the deliverance of sentient beings.”

He came in front of the Sixth Patriarch and was ready to do the training now. He who had been in the direction of a murderer had now changed his way of living. But to return grace is not about just a conceptualization of it; he had to put his life on the line. To do that he had to give everything he was. You cannot do this unless you have practiced and really seen what is necessary to repay this deepest grace.

Gyosho said—when he was asked what had taken him so long—that he had been preparing hard for this day of returning to the Sixth Patriarch, to be able to do it in such a way, with the ordination and the proper robes, as to repay his Dharma debt to him. And so for these reasons he had returned after some time.

Sutra: “Since that day you so graciously pardoned my crime,” said Zhang,, “I have become a monk and have studied Buddhism diligently. Yet I find it difficult to requite you adequately unless I can show my gratitude by spreading the law for the deliverance of sentient beings. In studying the Mahaparinirvana-sutra, which I read very often, I cannot understand the meaning of ‘eternal’ and ‘not eternal.’ Will you, Sir, kindly give me a short explanation.”

This section is preceded by a further explanation of this person Gyosho.

We are not doing training because we are told to or are punished if we don’t do it. If it’s done that way it doesn’t work. We have to know ourselves why we are purifying and polishing. From our deep internal place we have to know, from this place which tells us that no matter what, we have to do this because we can see that this is the one thing that really matters. It is not about doing a certain thing in order to gain something or to repay something; it is to realize and clarify that state of mind because we just can’t not do it. We have to do this. And before we can see how to do

it clearly, we have to do intense zazen and train for that. We have to feel that we must realize this and that this is the Dharma, or it will not work; we have to become that wisdom with which we are all endowed. To have it and not realize it is like throwing away planted seeds that would still be growing. And it is not about our own personal satisfaction or good fortune; we are doing this for all of humankind. This is the way it has to be done.

We live in a society where we are such automatic beings, always going for our own self-satisfaction. We have to then bring great determination to our own seeing and realize what it is that we have to go beyond—to see this clearly and not stay stuck on those things that prevent us from knowing this huge, great and immense state of mind. These eternal things we are all endowed with, but we gather such ideas of our own small self's good fortune; in society people are always working for their own personal benefit. We have to let go and vow to let go completely of all of these things—and then we can realize this Essence and know the place where all of us are living in clearest purity.

OSESSHIN, 2006-09, DAY TWO

Sutra: “In studying the Mahaparinirvana-sutra, which I read very often, I cannot understand the meaning of ‘eternal’ and ‘not eternal.’ Will you, sir, kindly give me a short explanation?”

Shitetsu (this was Gyosho's ordination name) spoke to the Sixth Patriarch, whom he had previously come to murder at the request of a disciple of Jinshu Josha. Later he apologized, was self-reflective, and decided to go on and become ordained.

In the order of the sutras that the Buddha taught, there was first the Flower Garland Sutra, then the Agon Sutra, the Hodo Sutra, the Prajna Sutra, the Lotus Sutra, and then the Nirvana Sutra, which was

the one before his final sutra, the Yuikyo-gyo. [“Gyo” means “sutra” in Japanese.] The Lotus Sutra is called the “king of all sutras.” Following that teaching, he taught the Nirvana Sutra as the summary of all of his sutras. Then the final words which he gave to his disciples at Kushinagara where he died are the Yuikyo-gyo. Throughout the time between this Nirvana Sutra and the Yuikyo-gyo he was teaching this sutra. Here Shitetsu brings in one phrase in that Sutra that bothers him, having been taught that all things will always be changing—moving things as well as things that don't move—eternal things and not-eternal things. Within that we find the Buddha nature, that unmoving Truth. But Shitetsu cannot grasp this. “What is it that is not changing?” he is asking. We name it “serenity” or “Buddha nature,” but what is it really? “Will you, sir, kindly give me a short explanation?” Here he is, having come and having committed to being ordained, and now, this question must be answered.

The Sixth Patriarch said that he had never been to school nor learned to read, but he knew the mind of the Buddha very well. At Vulture Peak where the Buddha had transmitted to Makakasho Sonja (Mahakasyapa) he had not given him some thing. Nor did Kasho Sonja receive a “something.” They both simply exchanged the truth. “I don't have scholastic training,” said the Sixth Patriarch, “but I have clear understanding and the exact same state of mind of Makakasho. The sutras were gathered and offered a long time after the exact teaching of the Buddha. Those exact words tell it but are not the truth itself.”

Sutra: “According to this sutra,” he said, “the Buddha nature is eternal, while meritorious and demeritorious dharmas, including the bodhichitta, are not eternal. As you hold otherwise, is this not a contradiction? Your explanation has now intensified my doubts and perplexities.”

The Buddha nature is not moving; all things in existence are always changing

and moving. If we do things with ideas of good and bad, we are always in motion, among things changing from one facet of 'good' to another facet of 'bad' and back again. We have to see that everything in a human's mind is always changing—and you, Teacher, are saying this is all eternal. How should I receive this? I am confused even more deeply, and to the root.

Sutra: "On one occasion," replied the patriarch, "I had a nun, Mujinzo, recite to me the whole book of the Mahaparinirvana sutra, so that I could explain it to her. Every word and every meaning I explained on that occasion agreed with the text. As to the explanation I give you now, it likewise differs not from the text."

"As my capacity for understanding is a poor one," observed Zhi Chi, "will you kindly explain to me more fully and more clearly?"

The Sixth Patriarch responded that there had been a nun named Mujinzo who had asked him to explain to her the Nirvana Sutra. Even though he had no study and no background he taught it to her line by line. As we read it we see the direction it has to be gone in, clearly. If we read the sutra only with mental perception we will always get confused by it.

Sutra: "As my capacity for understanding is a poor one," observed Zhi Chi, "will you kindly explain to me more fully and more clearly?"

"But I am not an advanced scholar, nor am I awakened; I just need to learn more, and I long to become awakened." This what Shitetsu was saying.

Sutra: "Don't you understand?" said the patriarch. "If Buddha nature is eternal, it would be of no use to talk about meritorious and demeritorious dharmas; and until the end of a kalpa no one would arouse the bodhichitta. Therefore, when I say 'not eternal' it is exactly what Lord Buddha meant for 'truly eternal.'"

What do you think Buddha nature is? Can it be shown? If it is always changing we

cannot show it. A human is born, becomes an infant, a toddler, a child, a teenager, a young adult, an adult and an older person. So which of these stages is the Buddha nature? If we say the flowers bloom in Spring, in Summer they fall, and the trees become full of thick leaves. And then in Autumn those leaves fall. So which of these is the Buddha nature: the flowers or the leaves? If we say Buddha nature never changes, then which of these various stages is the Buddha nature? We are born and we spend a whole life resenting and being resented, and then we die. All of that is Buddha nature! The Spring changing from flowers to leaves, the Summer to Autumn change of leaves—all of it is Buddha nature! You cannot say it is not changing. But this cannot be realized conceptually. It has to be realized and awakened to.

Everything in an era is changing, as does everything in our mind. So evil in the mind changes to good. But evil as well as good, they are both Buddha nature; it is not just good things that are Buddha nature. Everything is always changing, new, and progressing. So, if we ask why is there evil, it is because people want to hold back those changes from happening—wanting to hold onto what we have now, wanting to have more than we have now. Everything is always changing, nor is there anything that is not within all the changes; there is only that which is called the Buddha nature. There is no way of realizing this Buddha nature by a conceptual understanding.

We cannot label this person "good" and this person "bad." Some people get in great despair, even commit suicide, because they feel they're such a bad person. Yet how many times do people go through great changes? Things that have been a source of despair change, and things become clearer. It is this that the Sixth Patriarch is teaching, how there is a murderer right in front of him who now

wants to become an ordained monk. This is Buddha nature.

Everything is always changing and not stagnant. This is the truth, but it cannot be just imagined. We have to become that eye that can see this clearly—to see and become one with that which is always changing and moving. So what is that unmoving, clearly seeing eye, you will ask? Where is there such an eye like that? To ask that is the view of the ignorant one. Or to ask what is eternal and what is not, such as the question that Shitetsu was asking—that is also mental. It was either Zuigan or Suibi who was asked the question by a monk: “When the world will finally be destroyed, and all things of form will come to an end—at that time, what about the Buddha nature? Will that not last?” To which the master said, “It will decay.” The monk was astonished. Here we are, training and doing all this hard work to realize that which will not decay! “But then where do we go with that world? Will we go along with it?” The master answered, “We are in accordance with it.” The monk was so perplexed by this that he traveled many tens of kilometers away and asked Master Tosu. When Master Tosu heard of the conversation the monk had had with the other master, he said, also in great astonishment, “An ancient Buddha has emerged! What are you doing running here? Why don’t you go back there and train with him?!” And the monk quickly returned, but as soon as he returned he found out that that master had died. He thought then that since he’d spoken about it with Master Tosu he’d go back to him—he would have a karmic affiliation and continue his training with him—and when he got there, he found out that he, too, had died. “Going in accordance with, it will also decay and be destroyed.” He had not understood that he had to become that eye that could clearly see this and realize it—not to consider these questions conceptually, thinking about a heaven or a paradise, or like today imagining a god

that is inspiring terrorists. We have to be able to see directly with that clearly seeing eye and go beyond all of these things. It was this clearly seeing eye that was leading the Sixth Patriarch’s answer. We have to know this clearly seeing eye or we’ll be mistaken.

If we read the sutra like this—saying that nothing is dependable—then we see that everything that is changing. And if we follow that to where that everything-changing began and wonder such things as how many times has the Milky Way been born and destroyed since the “Big Bang”—since this birth of the universe and the life on this very planet, how much life energy has been born, evolved and died again and again and again—in this way we can see how life energy continues. So if it is not eternal, then how does it continue like this? What is the system?

Everything is always dying and being reborn endlessly. But this is not “not eternal.” What, then, makes all that happen? We can’t just say that what is in front of us is just a phenomenon and that’s all there is to it. All things are endlessly reborn, becoming new and finishing and again becoming new—again becoming freshly born. If we get caught on what happens, then we are forever turned around. In this world we are always grasping at events without seeing that which is moving through all of those things, without seeing it in its larger context. We have to see how it is in each moment transient, but at the same time it appears eternal. It is not “not eternal.” We cannot encompass the truth with a conceptual perception about this. Within those transient phenomena are found the eternal direction; within the eternal we find the transient embraced. Only by seeing the whole thing can we go beyond this contradiction. The Buddha-dharma is that clearly seeing eye.

We have to look at this world within its own ongoing changes, or else we will just get caught on that which is transient.

We have to see that when the Buddha is teaching that the Buddha Dharma is eternal or not eternal, it cannot be looked at conceptually. If we grasp for it conceptually we will not see the whole picture where each and every thing in each moment is born completely perfect. It is with sharply seeing eyes like this that we have to see, or we will fall into conceptualizing. We cannot be moved around at all, but see that that which is endlessly being born freshly in each moment is also that which is eternal. As it says in the Heart Sutra, “that which is form is emptiness; that which is emptiness is form.” We have to see this sharply in its most real sense or we will fall into conception and be played with by the ideas about it instead of seeing the thing itself.

In doing zazen, most people do a mental version of it, looking for some unusual powers or state of mind. But zazen is not that. Rather, not to be pulled around by our senses but to become aware of that larger power that lives through us. This is why we sit—to let go of that attached state of mind. We cannot do zazen by being caught externally or by being intoxicated internally. If we are not caught by what is in our head and don’t try to put a lid on everything we see and hear and feel—if we do not give extra attention to what we are feeling and thinking but do our breath constantly – we will build up a full tautness and be able to see through to the true Life energy in each and every thing and moment. And so we use all the help we can to not give away our attention. Also not to become caught mentally on what is within, for there is no end to that. To not be pulled around by anything at all, or our zazen will not realize the place which it can become, where as we ripen we end up seeking nothing at all and have nothing within. We return to that transparent, clear state of mind—and this is where our eyes and our ears and our nose and our mouth—all of our senses—are able to perceive everything directly. And

we see this world in a wide, fully open way and don’t get stuck and caught on every little detail happening. We accept this world in this all-embracing, transparent way. Simultaneously we have to awaken to this all-seeing eye, and with this eye to perceive the way for each and every thing to best evolve. And to see the Life energy in each bird’s song, and in each blade of grass. In each blade of grass we see the whole universe manifesting—not imagining this, but seeing directly, or we get caught again on an idea of eternal and not eternal. That deep, immovable Wisdom that goes to the very root of it all, is to see how as everything changes, that is the very expression of the eternal truth. To awaken to the deeply seeing eye that can perceive in this way is what the Sixth Patriarch is teaching us.

OSESSHIN, 2006-09, DAY THREE

Shitetsu Zenji read the Nirvana Sutra and was having a hard time understanding about the eternal and the non-eternal. “If Buddha nature is in everything without exception and everything is always changing, then don’t we have to see the Buddha nature as eternal? Where in my body, which decays, can such an eternal thing be found?” He is questioning. “Please teach me,” he asks the Sixth Patriarch, “in a simple and easy to understand way. When I read it in the sutra it doesn’t make any sense.” To this, Eno said, “We are emotionally oriented beings; we go from happy to sad to miserable to suffering to joyful, and these are not eternal. Buddha nature is eternal.” Then Shitetsu says, “I’m so confused! I don’t know how to look at this, how to go beyond my confusion.” The Sixth Patriarch said, “I am not lying to you and I’m not talking haphazardly. I cannot read or write, but I can see and know the truth.” Shitetsu said, “I have not realized satori like you; my mind is narrow and limited. So what should I believe in? What should I do?”

The Sixth Patriarch said, “Listen carefully to what I say. Our body is always changing. The parts of our body today are not going to be that way tomorrow; the billions of cells that make us up are constantly sloughing off and being replaced by new ones. Like a child who is first an infant, then a toddler, then a teenager and then a young adult, or like the seasons, which go from Spring to Summer to Autumn to Winter—which of those is the Buddha nature? Is a child the Buddha nature when it is an infant, or when it is a teenager? Is the Spring the Buddha nature, or the Fall the Buddha nature? Or do we say it is something someplace else? Within those changes we have to find the eternal. This cannot be done mentally; we cannot mentally understand this, but only with our own experience. In each and every encounter, to be solidly in that moment—but simultaneously to be in the eternal. Seeing those as moments while being one with that which is transient and always in flux, and yet at the same time to be solidly grounded in the eternal. That which we liked yesterday—today we don’t like it anymore. Always changing, going from happy to sad—but where is the root of all of this? This place of not a single speck of an idea about anything, and yet this world is always changing.

So where does this world come forth from? That mind where there is not one single thing from the origin, where could anything possibly stick to that? To be happy and sad and miserable and joyful—to experience these but to not be caught and stuck on the objects of those experiences. Rather, to see the world as transient while seeing each thing with no separation from every other thing. We do zazen, we get sleepy, our legs hurt, but where is that all coming from? That place of not one single thing, not one speck; not twisting and pushing a mind to make up something, but a world where there is nothing to be held onto at all. To hear the birds and see the flowers. We see

something and it makes us happy; we see someone who is happy and we’re as happy as that person, is as if it is our own child we are happy for. We see someone who is sad, and we are sad for that person as if it was our own child we were sad for. But not with some idea about it. Rather coming from a place of not holding on to anything personal; not sticking or clinging to any idea; not being pulled around by anything—that’s how we could become that person’s happiness or sadness. Not even to be pulled around by the Buddha’s words. In everything, to see this clearly: that from the origin there is not one single thing. So where can anything stick and cling?

Nor is it about a concept of things being empty. Each and every moment is the eternal, and the Buddha nature is the not eternal. It’s just the opposite. The Sixth Patriarch explained it to him meticulously.

Next the Sixth Patriarch says, “In the Buddha-dharma there is nothing to teach whatsoever. We call this ‘good,’ we call that ‘not good,’ but this judging is not the point of using words. Words are for the teaching of the truth. People who are always in a hurry, to tell them to slow down, to look more carefully. For those who are taking their time too Mu, to remind them that this short life will soon be over. But it is not to be taking the Buddha’s teaching for its details, but for the deeper teaching within those details.” To see from that very eye of enlightenment. An unawakened person or a heretic will place value on something which is external, or some idea of a soul. They remain conceptual and play with ideas of what is eternal. We have to break through that attachment to those concepts about how all is only transient and that shallow version of a deeper understanding. The Buddha had taught this.

To think that possessions and education are anything at all, or what is valuable, and get stuck on that idea—that has

no relevance. To see Buddha nature as becoming other people's sadness or joy, not stopping at putting a lid on our senses and our perceptions—we have to see this closely, also, or we will all just be pulled around by the Buddha's words.

Sutra: Because ordinary people and heretics believe in heretical eternalism— they believe in the eternity of the soul and of the world—and because aspirants to arhatship mistake the eternity of nirvana as something not eternal, eight upside-down notions arise.

These eight upside-down notions are mentioned at the end of the Heart Sutra. To think this world will always be here and so it is eternal, to think that life is for enjoying and so we gather and become attached to things, to hold an idea that we will always have this body—or, since we may not always have this body we should enjoy it as Mu as possible right now... the Buddha is not saying anything that small. We think that there is an egoistic “I” or a “me” that is real and actual and lasting, but that is only something which we have come to believe after age three. Newborn babies do not come into this world with the idea of themselves being a small, limited ego.

Or we think we are too meaningless to be on this planet, that we're just terrible individuals, and get disgusted with ourselves. Caught on all the differences and all the exterior ways of looking at things, we cannot see. This is the ignorant person. We have to see that all of it—every thing that is—is transient and changing. There is no such thing as an ongoing “I” or “me,” but only something in flux and transient. To let go of that hardened idea of an “I” by throwing oneself away and throwing everything into working for society. In this world, everything is beautiful when it is new, but everything changes. We get wrinkled, we get creaky—but we have to see the eternal within this. In this way, the Sixth Patriarch is teaching.

Sutra: These are the four upside-down views of the ignorant person. To liberate from these, the Buddha taught that this world was transient and changing always, and to look directly at that changing world without looking away from it.

To those people caught on that transiency the Buddha would say, “It's eternal.” People who say it is all only suffering and we must do ascetic training to free ourselves from that—to those of the Smaller Vehicle the Buddha taught of Buddha nature so exquisite that even Ikyu-san poetized, saying, “Once we meet that Buddha nature even just once, we are in love forever, only wanting to die completely every single day. Free from any bit of delusion whatsoever, how joyful is this great experience! I look so forward to dying completely tonight, and again as well.” We get caught tightly on our narrow-minded suffering. And for that the Buddha's teaches, can't you see this joy of the Buddha nature? To see and feel this great responsibility for all things, all events, or we will get stuck in that very narrow mind. “Oh great Mind, it is impossible to measure the height of the heavens, yet the Mind is above the heavens. It is impossible to measure the thickness of the earth, yet the Mind is below the earth. The sun and the moon shine with a great radiance, yet the Mind is the source of that radiance. Within the Mind, the four seasons open in their sequence. Within the Mind, the sun and the moon move. Oh great Mind!” That true awakening of all beings, not stuck on some individual person's awakening only! If our eye from which we see is perceiving clearly, then we will not stop at our own personal awakening. Nor will we be caught on a narrow idea of our own personal suffering, but we will know that we are those soaring mountains, the shining stars, the sun's rays. Why do we ruin this world and injure it with Freon gas and dioxins, with that small mind that turns our back on the responsibility which is ours, saying that this world is not going to last anyway, and

we won't be here for so long? Not to see it with that narrow mind. You can't leave it at that, says the Buddha.

Sutra: In order to refute these one-sided views, Lord Buddha preached in the Mahaparinirvana Sutra the ultimate doctrine of Buddha's teaching. That is true eternity, true happiness, true self and true purity.

The Buddha taught the truth in the Lotus Sutra for eight years. And then there was the Nirvana Sutra taught at Kushinagara. This is the most complete sutra, piercing through and crushing those eight upside-down views and expressing that true self, the true purity, the true eternity, and the true happiness. In this sutra it is expressed by the Buddha in his most ripened Essence that being born in this world is the truest joy of all. It seems like the four upside-down views of the ignorant put forth once again, but this is completely different because it has been seen from a more huge and all-inclusive place. Not thinking that only we are pure and clear but that all beings' awakening to this original purity and clarity is what is most important. In all eras, that truly seeing eye of the Dharma awakened to: Open that eye, and awaken to that Life energy which is surging through all beings, and know that huge joy along with all beings, that huge responsibility which is the true nature! Until all beings are liberated, we cannot stop. This is the true construction of the Buddha land, and this is not something which is passing. We all have to see this and complete it together, to bow to each other, to believe in each other. "I respect you deeply; I see your Buddha nature." To discover this pure clarity in each person and to take each person's hand and together to work on this, doing gassho to everyone. This is the true teaching of the Nirvana Sutra, not being caught on some small, individual-minded view.

Sutra: In following slavishly the wording of the sutra you have ignored the text. In assuming that what perishes

is non eternal and that what is fixed and immutable is eternal, you have misinterpreted Lord Buddha's dying instruction which is perfect, profound and complete. You may read the sutra a thousand times but you will get no benefit out of it.

Finally he says to Shitetsu that he cannot be caught on the small-minded version of reading the Buddha's words, but to awaken to the truth of what is said in them. To awaken and not be stuck on the words, but to comprehend the deeper meaning there. If told Buddha nature is eternal, to not be caught on a concept of what is eternal. The Buddha nature, which is born in the clear Mind of every person—it is not a god that is creating the world but that we are bringing forth that world from our Mind. No matter what a terrible world or a wonderful world, it is all from the doings of our Mind.

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

Not to be moved around by any of the words, but to experience it. And then to let go and see what is behind those words. That Mind which gives birth in each and every second, that which never ceases: If we can realize that, that is the eternal, not a phenomenon, that which we consider to be non eternal. We can't be moved around by these words; we have to see the deepest meaning in them, and to know that place that the sutra is speaking about. Because this is such a deep sutra it is a very hard one to explain, but if we can open our deeply and truly seeing Eye, then there is no greater truth than this. The Sixth Patriarch says this to correct the mistake of Shitetsu and also of everyone else's mistaken seeing.

Sutra: All of a sudden Zhang awoke to

full enlightenment, and submitted the following stanza to the patriarch:

In order to refute the bigoted
view of non-eternity,
Lord Buddha preached the eternal nature.
He who does not know that such
preaching is only a skillful device
May be likened to the child who picks
up pebbles and calls them gems...

Here he uses his name before the ordination. Gyosho, who had come to murder the Sixth Patriarch, had a deep doubt, had expressed it, and now had awakened. Even if people are of a deep darkness, if it transforms it can become a deep good. If our mind awakens, we can illuminate all beings.

Gyosho expressed his state of mind with a poem offered to the Sixth Patriarch. The small-minded say that everything is transient, so the Buddha says it is eternal. It is not about something understood in the head, but rather, this is an expedient means to liberate others. You have to know the expedient means or it is like a child enjoying the pebbles on the bottom of the stream. As this, we play with the Buddha's words, not their inner truth.

Sutra: Zhang continued:

Without effort on my part the
Buddha nature manifests itself.
This is due neither to the
instruction of my teacher
Nor to any attainments of my own.

Up until now I've suffered and struggled with ascetic training with no results, yet now in meeting you and your teaching, I am awakened. I've become one with each and every thing in this whole world!

In all the boundless realm of space, in the separation between self and others not a single hair can be inserted. From the limitless past to the immediate present we have never separated from this very moment. All of the seasons, all of the times of the day, are right in this very moment where there is nothing but this absolute truth.

In the spring we become one with the flowers, in the summer we become one with the breeze, in the autumn we become one with the moon, and in the winter, we become one with the snow. We transform with each of these. We transform with the morning, the afternoon, and the night, and in this way we know this Buddha nature directly. Only in this knowing can the Buddha nature be found—not in concepts in our mind. That living activity is all that there is.

Sutra: This is due neither to the instruction of my teacher nor to any attainments of my own.

But neither did I receive this from you nor with any attainment of my own; it was always there, from the origin. Until now I was caught on various concepts of getting something, of getting somewhere. But now I have realized the truth itself.

Sutra: "You have now thoroughly realized the essence of mind," commended the patriarch. "And hereafter you should name yourself Shitetsu, 'to realize thoroughly.'" Shitetsu thanked the patriarch, made obeisance and departed.

You have realized this, and now your name will be "To Realize Thoroughly." The one who came to murder him, he was then brought to awakening with the Sixth Patriarch's teaching.

OSESSHIN, 2006-09, DAY FOUR

Sutra: A thirteen-year-old boy named **Shen Hui**, who was born of a Gao family of Xiang Yang, came from Yu Quan Monastery to tender homage to the Patriarch.

A young man thirteen years old, named Jinne, came to meet the Sixth Patriarch, and later became one of his transmitted-to disciples, Katak Jinne. While famous are Nangaku Ejo Zenji and Seigen Gyoshi Zenji for being advanced and superior transmitted-to disciples of the Sixth Patriarch, it is Katak Jinne who made the Sixth Patriarch's teaching widespread.

The Southern School, or School of Sudden Enlightenment, was spread and named that because of the efforts of Katakū Jinne. Katakū Jinne was the one who declared that the Sixth Patriarch's teaching of Southern Buddhism was the true Dharma. He said that this was the true Zen and that the Northern School was heretical. But not only saying it, he was himself a great scholar and person of practice as well. Following him four generations later came Keiho Shumitsu who gathered the Sugyōroku and was also a representative person of deep training and great study.

Sutra: "My learned friend," said the Patriarch, "it must be hard for you to undertake such a long journey. But can you tell me what is the 'fundamental principle'?"

As the Fifth Patriarch had asked Eno when he arrived on Yellow Plum Mountain, "What are you here for?" He asked him for what had he come. All the way from the South he had come to this place so far away. And the Sixth Patriarch, Eno, had answered, "I am here to awaken to clear, original nature. For this I have come. I have been born as a human, and to come here to complete this and to know the true nature is why I have come."

Sutra: "But can you tell me what is the 'fundamental principle'? If you can, you know the owner (i.e., the Essence of Mind). Try to say something, please."

He asked the thirteen-year-old, "Have you seen it yet? You have to see it!" Even though he was only thirteen years old, the Sixth Patriarch did not make a fool of him or look down on him, but treated him as an equal.

For what do we live in this world? What are we seeking? After all, besides this what is there? For what are we born? What is it that is alive here? What is it that sees? What is it that hears, what is it that smells? What is it that tastes? If you understand that, the True Master will be clear. We have to know what sees, what

hears, what tastes, or we will be pulled around by another. And if we do know it, it is possible to kill and to give life freely for all people's awakening. What is it that does that seeing? What is it that does that hearing? What is it that does that tasting? What is it that suffers? What is it that understands? Try to say something, please, and I will see it for you, the Sixth Patriarch says to him, in his great kindness.

Sutra: "Non-attachment is the fundamental principle, and to know the owner is to realize (the Essence of Mind)," replied Shen Hui.

To be always free and not caught anywhere—the True Master is not stopped at all. To know, as the Sixth Patriarch has taught us, that place of no mind-moments that are polluted at all. To not let a single mind-moment be seen casually—this is the teaching of the Buddha. Further, the Sixth Patriarch has taught, to be free of mind-moments is to not stop and stay on any perception, but to continually be one with each and every encounter. Our mind moves in transformation with this whole world. In moving, our mind becomes morning, it becomes noon, it becomes night. If there is a something good that makes us happy we feel that also. This is being at one with the actuality of the whole world. We may or may not have scholastic training, but it is not about that. To forget ourselves completely in the work that we are doing is what it is about.

Next, the Sixth Patriarch says to have no particular form of a "I"—this is the place where our mind is not stopped by anything that we encounter. We are not being held back or stagnant. As has been said, "Abiding in no place, Awakened Mind arises." Our mind is healthy if we are not being stopped and caught by the ghosts of the many things. This is the teaching of the Sixth Patriarch.

We all have a body. We have a history. And we live with this vessel. When we are young with a young person's state of mind,

we have an appearance of a young person. We have an appearance of a healthy person, or an appearance of a sick person. But while this is expressed and manifested, we are still unable to see the whole of what a person is. We see a child and think that is what a person is. It appears that we have many different selves, with our different moods and feelings. We have to not be caught on these various appearances. That will only lead us to Mu confusion. Instead, to see beyond that confusion and be able to see how our eyes see and our ears hear. Not putting a lid on that. We can perceive so many different things that it may get us confused in our mind. But if we get used to seeing this one True Person, then we can live from a settled place.

We know this truth through our ears and through our eyes. We know what is true and we know that it is not something outside of ourselves. This is the place of no form—to not be stuck or caught on anything. We are able to see what is right in front of us, knowing that it is a phenomenon while still being able to see that as a form and not be caught on that form. It has to be like this or it is not true zazen.

The world is always changing. Now, we could feel that this is something which is melancholy, but in fact we have to see it from a higher state of mind—beyond being caught on each and every phenomenon, to see it as a while thing. We pierce through to this huge truth. We experience it, not negating and saying that there is no such thing and that these appearances are not real. Instead, we realize the essence of all of them. It is not about thinking it is this or that and making up thoughts about what it is and isn't. We are so absorbed in the phenomena as we work in the world, we don't even have so many thoughts because the phenomena are so absorbing. But to sit zazen and let go of all those phenomena and then think so many thoughts is a big mistake. To not be caught on the phenomena at all; to not be pulled

around by our thoughts, either. Our mind is free. It's not caught on thoughts, it's not caught on our position and thinking about that, it's not caught on aches and pains. We encounter everything and we let go of everything. The Sixth Patriarch gives his definition of zazen: "To externally be bringing forth no thoughts to what we perceive. To internally be unmoved by anything within." To realize this is the subtle flavor of zazen. To not be caught on the phenomena is living Zen.

This young monk gave a truly advanced answer, but he could not fool the Sixth Patriarch. He knew that this was not coming from Jinne's own experience. He said, "This novice is fit for nothing but to talk loosely," and he reproved him. He had seen clearly that while what he said was an advanced truth, it had not come from his own experience.

Sutra: Thereupon Shen Hui asked the Patriarch, "In your meditation, Sir, do you see (your Essence of Mind) or not?"

Then Jinne said this to the Sixth Patriarch, in response to having been corrected. Have you seen your True nature? Or, to put it clearly, have you experienced kensho? How can you see your true Self? How can awareness seeing awareness be simply expressed? We lose our body and mind, so how can we encounter our true Mind? With what do we realize True nature?" He put it this way and asked the Sixth Patriarch.

The Blue Cliff Record case 96, teaches from the Surangama Sutra. In the Surangama Sutra the Buddha is teaching Ananda, and here he asks him, "Ananda, when I am in samadhi, can you see this samadhi? If I am in samadhi of course I am separated from all perceptions and thoughts. Can you see that? If you say you see it, it couldn't be the actuality which you have seen, but only seeing me doing the form of zazen." Yet if there is nothing to do, then where is there any reason to sit? In this way, Jinne is coming from

mental understanding, which is why the Sixth Patriarch responds to him as he did.

All of us do zazen, but not to become intoxicated or be unawakened. Yet neither do we do it to rely on something. With all of the 360 smallest joints, the 84,000 hair pores, as Mumon Ekai says in the first case of the Mumonkan, we give it all we have. And it cannot be done mentally. If we sit mentally, even for one whole week, it will get us nowhere. As Mumon Ekai continues, to not fall into a view of nihilism, or say that there is a something. We have to be aware of this place of being stuck on thinking we shouldn't see and shouldn't hear. So how do we go beyond this? We have to be able to see that this is a place where we have to continue to its ultimate point. We cannot stop at being half-baked. It has to be life on the line, going beyond our self-centered awareness. We have to be able to let go of every bit of the external world—let go of it completely—or we are only sitting around passing away our time, and we will never be able to throw all of it away. To throw away everything! For that, it has to be beyond anything conceptual.

To gather it all into one and keep going with that in one straight line. We have to become that one straight line! We have to do it in a way, as Mumon Ekai has said, where we don't rely on anything and we don't waste our time. We have to dive into that free Life energy, expressed just as it is. And to do that we have to not add anything at all onto it. When we can realize this state of mind, we know that place where there is no self and no other. And so who is there seeing? Nor is it intoxication. But a person who lets go of all of it will experience that place which is bright and revealed. To pierce through all of the heavens and earth, not just for the satisfaction of a small self. That is not the teaching of the Buddha.

Sutra: Striking him three blows with his staff, the patriarch asked him whether he felt pain or not...

With his staff he hit Jinne three times. Later on, historically, it was Rinzai who gave a great shout, and Tokusan who gave blows on this same occasion. But maybe it was the Sixth Patriarch who did this for the first time with this occasion. The Sixth Patriarch was ahead of all of them because he would not deceive the truth even to a thirteen-year-old. He asks him if he feels it painful or not. For him, saying this is the same as asking, "Can you see my samadhi?" and the same as the thirteen-year-old asking him if he has Essence in his zazen.

Sutra: Striking him three blows with his staff, the patriarch asked him whether he felt pain or not, and he said "Painful and not painful." "I see and I see not," retorted the patriarch. "How is it that you see and see not?"

Jinne responds, painful and not painful: the physical pain, while going beyond it. The truth is not about the phenomena, nor is it about the hurting or not hurting. So Jinne is correct. If dying is dualistic, it cannot be directly perceived. We all can do this, but not with two of us. It has to be one single person. Here is where we can see if we are caught on our body or not. We have to see this as we pull along the body. Of course wisdom stays right along with this physical body, and because we have a body we can experience this clear Mind. It cannot be mentally understood. We have to be able to not pull around that form and shape.

Jinne had answered, "Painful and not painful," just as samadhi can be seen and not be seen. One facet of it can be seen, another cannot. For example, we can analyse water in many different ways. But we cannot know the place of tasting it from any investigation; each person has to experience that for themselves. And this cannot be found in a book. It has to be the actual experience. As the Sixth Patriarch says, "I see and I see not." This can only be known by one who has experienced it—not through mental understanding.

Sutra: “How is it that you see and see not?” asked Jinne. “What I see is my own faults,” replied the patriarch. “What I do not see is the good, the evil, the merit, the demerit of others.”

That seeing and not seeing, well, that is what Jinne asked about. Because he was coming from a mental place, the Sixth Patriarch answers, “What I see is my own faults; what I do not see is the good, the evil, the merit, the demerit of others”—completely off the point of what Jinne is asking him. Why does he answer in that way? Here Kotaku Jinne cannot follow along with him at all. Why does the Sixth Patriarch put it in that framework? He is saying to him, you’ve fallen into this dualistic perspective, now figure it out for yourself. It was because he kept saying things which were not his own realizations that the Sixth Patriarch put it in this way—that he has to know it from his own experience, for himself, or else it will continue always to be far, far from the truth.

Sutra: Now tell me what you mean by painful and not painful. If you feel no pain, you will be as a piece of wood or stone. On the other hand, should you feel pain, and anger or hatred is thereby aroused, you will be in the same position as an ordinary man.

You said it is painful and not painful. If you said it is not painful, then you are being like the trees and the plants, and how can that become awakened? And if you say that you do feel it is painful, then that will engender anger and resentment, and you’ll be like a person who is ignorant. Earlier you asked me if I have realized Essence or not. This is a mental question only because you have not realized it yourself. If you had realized it yourself you would have had no reason to ask this question of me. Like a rich person who has plenty of money doesn’t need to take away someone else’s, we don’t need that from another person. This is a blindly seeing point of view.

Sutra: “On the other hand, should you feel pain, and anger or hatred is thereby aroused, you will be in the same position as an ordinary man. The seeing and not seeing referred to are a pair of opposites, while painful and not painful belong to conditioned dharma which becomes and ceases. Without having realized your own Essence of mind, you dare to hoodwink others.” Jinne apologized, made obeisance, and thanked the patriarch for his instruction.

You have to put your life on the line for this, or it will stay as it is now, only an ego-filter. Why do you waste your life in this way? Hearing this, Jinne apologized, and prostrated to him.

It is not only about Katakū Jinne. We all have this same place, thinking that mental debate about something, about it all, has meaning. This was called “empty debating” by the Buddha. Not having resolved the question of life and death for ourselves, we talk and discuss and debate about it. As it is written about in Hakuin Zenji’s Song of Zazen, where he calls it “idle speculation,” to instead, keep going non-stop, without a break, asking “What is it!? What is it?! What is it?!” Or else we are wasting our precious time. To keep that question going no matter what we are doing! To do it to the point where it becomes what is seeing and what is being seen, what is hearing and what is being heard, what is smelling and what is being smelled—all melted into one and merged completely to where we cannot even know whether it is we who are sitting in the zendo or if it is the zendo that is sitting. We have to let go of every single one of our mental concepts. They have to melt and fade away. Then we realize that life energy that fills our ears and fills our eyes and does the hearing and does the seeing, and then we know its deepest root, which is set in as deep as it can go. We know this not from our head but from our experience. There is not a single thing in this whole world, but we have to know this with our own true experience. And

then we can see directly what it is that feels, what it is that perceives—that we don't have to move at all—it comes right to us. If we don't perceive it and we don't experience it in this way, then it is still all about someone else and something else.

OSESSHIN, 2006-09, DAY FIVE

At only thirteen years of age, young Jinne travelled far to Sokeizan, the mountain of the Sixth Patriarch, a long distance from Rokusen, the mountain where he lived. When he came, the Sixth Patriarch asked him for what he'd come from so far away. Young Jinne responded, "Our True nature is without location. I have seen this." But to the Sixth Patriarch's eyes he was speaking only from a mental understanding, from an idea of the doctrine, not from his own personal experience of this state of mind. Then the thirteen-year-old turned and asked the Sixth Patriarch, "Have you seen the Essence?" We have an awareness that sees externally, and we turn this awareness within to see deeply. To divide our awareness into two is most common, dividing what sees from what is seen, dividing what thinks from what is thought about. We talk about loving all humankind, but if there is a division there, we are always coming from our own personal position, not melted into oneness with all humankind—which is the only way we can truly love it. This is a big burden, to be divided and to be separated. It makes us have to work hard and often doesn't go well because the other person doesn't get it, and it ends up being a bigger burden.

We have to once realize this true root of all of our awareness, to clarify it to this most profound point. This is why we have to sit to where we touch this place from where all awareness comes forth. Our usual position in the world is to do what pleases and impresses other people. But this is the opposite. We cut all of our ideas and all of our judgment, all of our self-centered awareness—this just can't keep up at this

point—to where we find that we don't even know if we are sleeping or awake or standing or sitting. Cutting away all of the dualistic awareness. Working on this when we're living in the world is difficult. People with no positions or thoughts would be useless in society—they would be problematic. But coming here, everyone supports you.

We have to do this to where self-conscious awareness cuts away all self-conscious awareness and we lose that sense of small self completely. This is what is called the Great Death, the ancient teaching to kill yourself and kill yourself by throwing away everything. Then what is left is the true nature. The patriarchs all struggled for this. Even though people of old were less complex perhaps, still it was hard to chase out all of those ghosts of lingering self-conscious awareness. But without going on and getting bent out of shape by how hard it is, feeling how twisted we are and how difficult it is, we have to continue no matter how hard it seems, until we have no clue to what is going on. We lose track of our body, we lose track of the zendo, we have no idea of where we are; we cut through that self-conscious awareness to touch the base of all consciousness. And then from there, for the very first time, we can know what we actually are. There is a huge difference between one who has done this and one who has not.

And neither can we be stuck on the dregs of only thinking that we know. We have to gouge it out from its very root, and then it is irreversible. A deep awakening occurs. This is like leaving an imprint of a stamp on something—a certain confirmation. Jinne had not yet realized this. This is why the Sixth Patriarch is reprimanding Jinne, and Jinne admitted this and apologized.

Sutra: Addressing him again, the patriarch said, "If you are under delusion and cannot realize your Essence of Mind you should seek the advice of a pious and learned friend. When your mind is enlightened you will know the Essence

of Mind and then you may tread the Path the right way. Now you are under delusion, and you do not know your Essence of Mind. And yet you dare to ask if I know my Essence of Mind or not."

Next the Sixth Patriarch says to him that he is still deluded and covered over with darkness. He needs to find a true friend and realize kensho. A true teacher. Buddhism is to see clearly that true nature, directly. As the Buddha taught, we have to be a lamp unto ourselves, find our refuge in the Dharma. He taught to not look externally for that refuge, to not look externally for that Dharma, to not go outside of ourselves to find the truth. You will find the refuge in the Dharma. This is not possible if we do it by looking for it in the small, personal self. We have to go to what is beyond dualism, to the true Dharma. And only from there we can know that true Law—this Law which applies to everyone beyond any kind of culture or history or nationality. It is true for all beings. If we are thinking that we are separate from the heavens and earth, this is a mistake. The true Law says the true Dharma has no form and yet it goes in all ten directions. It cannot be a personal matter; it has to be the state of mind prior to all self-conscious awareness.

This is the Buddha-dharma. It's not learning about and memorizing a lot of things; that is Buddhist theory. We have to be able to see as the Buddha did, that we have to make something within ourselves this place of refuge, something which is true within. Not to look outside, not to seek the Dharma externally. He said this many times and said it clearly. He was not talking about mental understanding. Even for the Buddha it took six long years of ascetic training and letting go of everything before he realized this true, clear Mind and said, "How wondrous! How wondrous! All beings are endowed from the origin with the exact same clear Mind to which I have just awakened!" It was always there, but it was covered over

by the self-conscious awareness. If we can cut that, then we see that everyone is endowed with this same all-embracing awareness, with this same exact mind. Not only for humans but also for animals; but it is humans that can understand this. If we don't know this, our whole life is only gossip and meaningless living. Isn't that too pitiful and pathetic? And so the Sixth Patriarch is telling Jinne to find a good Zen friend.

We are doing zazen to realize our True nature, to experience kensho. If we play around with thoughts such as where is there any such thing as the Buddha nature here in this physical body, we stay handicapped our whole life. The Sixth Patriarch was a very superior case. At a young age he heard the words, "Abiding in no place, awakened Mind arises," and just hearing that he was deeply awakened. But in his time in his era it was a very different and simple way of life. All day long was like zazen: sitting, moving, everything that was done. We can't just do it while being on the cushion; that is too immature. So why did the Sixth Patriarch realize it without even sitting?

In that era where there were no planes and trains and cars, everyone walked everywhere. The flowers, the birds, the trees, the rocks were all his zendo. Today we have all kinds of computers, so many electric appliances, we naturally become more conceptual. We even have to ask someone else to analyze our mind for us. This is like kindergarten. We can't even see our own mind? To do this is zazen, and if we can't do this meticulously we all stay stuck on concepts. And so we have to sit, but sit with care and intensity. Zazen is to not add on any ideas of good or bad to anything that we perceive externally and to not be moved around by anything at all within. First, we have to see our own body clearly. Next we have to not give attention to any thoughts or ideas—not to ignore them but to not give them any attention

or focus. Originally we hear because something has resounded. But now we are so lost and lonely that we wish there was something resounding that we could please hear or listen to. Maybe we can call this our wish to evolve further, but it is also being a slave to wanting something to hear. For true independence we have to be able to be free from everything, but we cannot go and hide on some mountainside to do this. We have to do it in a way that is true and honest in everyday zazen. We are always clinging to unnecessary thoughts that bubble and simmer like methane gas, stagnating and clogging us up. Those thoughts that have piled up and clogged us up in our mind, that we have collected and held onto—these keep our mind from perceiving clearly and freshly. We can't just continue to build these up. To be able to let go of all of this is our zazen.

Here we ask, how can we realize this true root, this original nature? We learn zazen; we learn the posture, the way of our mind. But for mind and body to become one, we have to not be moved around and be a slave to our self-conscious awareness, to let our awareness do whatever it wants to or be scattered in every direction. The Lotus Sutra and the Nirvana Sutra and the Yuikyo Sutra—in each of these the Buddha has taught how to be in mind and body. As a text for people of training, Master Mumon Ekai, in the first case of the Mumonkan about Joshu's koan of "Mu," has left for us a clear instruction from his own experience—not from a mental idea about it. He says, if we bring our mind into oneness then there is nothing we cannot realize. But first we must bring all of our 360 smallest joints, our 84,000 hair pores, into this one great doubt until we are burning with this great doubt. These directions are most important. Mumon Ekai used the koan as well to gather it all into oneness, and he is teaching us precisely how to do that. Becoming the "Mu" whether we are walking or moving should be in the state of mind of

everything gathered into oneness from the top of our heads to the bottoms of our feet. He's telling us to actually become that, and not to get caught on our own ideas of nihilism or achieving something, but to stay with this actuality. To not do it in our head, but with our hands and our feet and our whole body and being.

This is the fifth day now of this osesshin; we should be doing it with every part of our body and being. If we are full and taut then everyone around us as well will feel this full tautness and will become fuller and tauter because of it. The same with our sadness. If we get sad it also affects people. If we are sharp, everyone around us becomes sharper. As Mumon Ekai says, for us to do this with everything we have. This is because Mumon Ekai himself went through this, suffered through it, did it, experienced it. This state of mind—that we have to resolve this or we cannot go on! We can't do anything else until we have actually resolved this question.

But our self-conscious awareness is vicious. And we get to see how really strong this viciousness is when we try to do this. We have to have a really strong, intense desire and commitment—a decision made to not back down, that we will take this to its most complete resolution. We continue doing it. It has to be done like fish scales; so the water can't get under the fish's skin the scales are overlapping. In the same way, our breath and each and every mind-moment, we do it like this, thoroughly, without any space or gap that the thoughts can come pouring in. The place where this is done is at the very end of the breath. We have to carefully and tenaciously complete each breath. It is the motivation of our senses that is usually driving us and leading us to do things. But here that motivation of our senses has to be cut. And the motivation of our decision to complete this is what has to drive us and bring us into its intensity. This is done with one breath in which we cut com-

pletely. And then our head becomes like a vacuum where nothing else could possibly enter it. To the very final point. We exhale completely, totally, to this final point, and continuing breathe on breathe, thoughts cannot enter and we are in samadhi. Everything is done from this point of view. Everything gathers and becomes one.

Samadhi is not something we do with our heads. It is so sharp that when we are in a state of samadhi we cannot see and hear anything else; we cannot see and hear anything else because there is nothing extra possible that could enter there. Every single thing that we are seeing and experiencing, we are giving our attention to in that moment. And then when that moment is over, everything is totally gone. If we are holding onto any bit of anything we perceive, that is not samadhi. We only perceive what is essential and necessary, and nothing else, when we are in samadhi. Doing this we more and more develop the state of mind of samadhi. There is no attention to anything else. Only that great space of heavens and earth is present. Then we continue doing this during all the twenty-four hours of the day, from morning until night and from night until morning; we let go of every single other thing. We are not caught on anything. We are not caught on any of our learned information, our education, or the ideas that we've been colored by. We all think we have learned things and that those things are so important, but we have to once let go of all of that.

There is no difference now between ourselves and the zendo; there is no seeing a difference between ourselves and the zendo, nor awareness even of them being different. Only that Mu which continues relentlessly, only that Mu continues. We settle on this one point only. Finally this one point also goes or we will not be able to be totally reborn, as Mumon Ekai Zenji says it.

We become like a person who can't speak,

like a mute person who has seen a dream but cannot tell it to anyone. All of our newly seen things are impossible for us to express because our fresh, new awareness has not yet come forth. As Mumon Ekai Zenji says, then the earth trembles and the heavens shake, as if a full, taut balloon which was filled to exploding has suddenly burst. We take a cup and fill it with single drops of water until putting in one last drop makes the whole thing spill over. And when that happens we are walking hand in hand with the Buddha and patriarchs, seeing eye-to-eye with the Buddha and patriarchs. And with this we meet the Buddha and we kill the Buddha; we meet the patriarchs and we kill the patriarchs. This is the way Mumon Ekai Zenji speaks of it.

This is not about doing something which is material in any way, but about how we have to not give our attention to anything else: how we know here that this is the true diamond inside. When we have realized this diamond inside, we don't need any other kind of diamond. It is like counting somebody else's money at the bank, then. We have everything we have ever needed. We have to realize that for ourselves, though! Even if we have awareness, if it isn't backed up by this real experience and actualization of awakening, it's like having a hundred-dollar bill that has no value because it's not backed by true gold. When that experience has occurred each and every word we speak is actual and saying things exactly as they are. Every thing we do is affected by this.

The Sixth Patriarch says first of all, kensho is most important. First we must realize this. And then we will know the Dharma and we can realize that in each day's training from then on.

Sutra: Addressing him again the patriarch said, "If you are under delusion and cannot realize your essence of mind, you should seek the advice of a pious and learned friend. When your mind is enlightened you will know the Essence

of Mind, and then you may tread the Path the right way. Now you are under delusion and do not know your Essence of Mind, yet you dare to ask whether I know my Essence of Mind or not. If I do, I realize it myself. But the fact that I know it cannot help you from being under delusion. Similarly, if you know your Essence of Mind, your knowing would be of no use to me. Instead of asking others, why not see it for yourself and know it for yourself?" Making obeisance more than a hundred times, Shen Hui again expressed regret and asked the patriarch to forgive him. Henceforth, he worked diligently as the patriarch's attendant.

The Sixth Patriarch told Jinne thoroughly, I can see clearly that you are not yet awakened from what you say, such as asking me, "Do you see Essence or not". Any awakening of mine cannot open your clearly seeing eye. My eye of kensho—if I open it my functioning comes forth from there. But for you who have not yet awakened, asking about my experience has no meaning. You have to realize it with your own efforts. And then it is not mine, it is yours. I can only say if it is truly awakening or not. Without taking your own responsibility, why do you ask about someone else's? It is all your own narrow-minded, self-conscious perception. He said it to him this clearly. Jinne then confessed his mistake and prostrated one hundred times to purify his state of mind, and he apologized. From then on he became the attendant of the Sixth Patriarch, and later in his life also become a famous teacher.

In this way the Sixth Patriarch says that we have to actually do it with every footstep, meticulously, and not caught on concepts. And if we continue in this way we will build it up, and of its own it will bring us to true awakening, to the root of all consciousness. We will know that joy—the greatest joy that is. I pray deeply that you do not relax in your efforts.

Sutra: Addressing the assembly one day the patriarch said, "I have an article that has no head, no tail, no name nor appellation, no front and no back. Do any of you know it?"

One day the Sixth Patriarch, as if asking a riddle of the assembly, said these words. There is something that I know of that has no head, no tail. It cannot be put into words. It has no spine and no back and no front. Have you ever awakened to this True nature?" From ancient times this is called the Dharma body. Daruma Daishi called it, "only emptiness, nothing sacred," or "don't know." Do you know this Original nature? It was still not so far from the time of Daruma Daishi to the Sixth Patriarch's time, so there was still a flavor of India remaining in his teaching. This direct way of grasping was still very present and alive. Later, Master Rinzai put it even more clearly in his teaching about the five-foot lump of red flesh. In this five-foot lump of red flesh there is a True Person of No Rank, always coming in and going out of the orifices¹. In everyone's physical body there is something that is not our eyes, that is not our ears, that is not our nose, that is not our mouth, that is not our feeling body. And yet it uses our eyes to make all this world's variations; it uses our ears to perceive all the world's sounds; with our nose it smells all the various fragrances; with our mouth it tastes the countless flavors, and with our body it feels the hot and feels the cold. It directly and precisely perceives all of these things; there is nothing that cannot be touched by our consciousness. It infinitely manifests this world. This True Person of No Rank, that which has no form, no experience, and is not caught on anything in the whole world—Rinzai used the word "person," calling this a True Person, while at the time of the Sixth Patriarch it was still referred to as "wisdom"—an article that has no head, no tail, no name nor appellation, no front and no back." But if we call it something such as a True Person

of No Rank, it is already mistaken. We have the poem of Jinshu Josha, saying,

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

And the Sixth Patriarch said, “Aha! This is not a deeply realized person’s poem—only seeing the form. This will keep him chained his whole life. Our truth is not something that limited.” And he offered this poem:

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

This is about satori. We have to let go of that idea of understanding and no understanding, and go beyond that physical body. It is not that we have no body, but that the body comes later. We first have to awake to that great, all-embracing, huge Mind—that wisdom that manifested as one cell and in our mother’s uterus grew to billions of cells. Our wisdom is infinite, yet we are also in the physical form. We get caught on an egoistic idea of thinking we are only this physical form, not aware of what came before, not knowing this great functioning with this true inner Master. And so we are caught on the idea of thinking of ourselves as only a physical body. Jinshu Josha writes that our body is like a Bodhi tree, but that is only once again putting ourself in the center of everything. “I reflect the world. My body is a Bodhi tree.” Our body only expresses our ability. We touch a flower, and become a flower; we see a mountain and become a mountain. We know a river and we become the river. We are never separated from those things in the first place. Our mind is not a bright mirror; our mind is simply brightness—and that is already saying too Mu. From the origin there is not one single thing. There cannot be a single thing. This is the great truth revealed by the Sixth Patriarch in its actuality.

The Buddha taught the Lotus Sutra. The truth that unites all humans that was taught in that sutra. He taught how all the Buddhas have come into this world to show the truth, to open us to the truth, to manifest this truth, and to make it possible to realize this truth. Because we think with our heads we are limited by only that ability. We instead have to open totally to this greater truth, which we then awaken to—not some gossiping idea of idols and devils, but the actuality of the truth. Then everything that we encounter becomes the truth and becomes that actuality. This is the truth of Buddhism. Still, people still yearn for something to be thankful to. And finally, at the end of teaching that sutra when the 84,000 bodhisattvas were all present, the Buddha held out a single flower. But because people only see in partiality, nobody got it. Kasho Sonja, one of the Buddha’s disciples, smiled. But it wasn’t because he got something. If there was a something to get, then it is not the Buddha Dharma. Nor was there nothing to get, or nothing gotten, either. It is not a something that can be described. This is not a man or a disciple that can be described in that way, who did a thing called “getting it.” It was just the universe recognizing the universe. “I have the true Dharma eye, the marvelous Mind of nirvana, the true form of the formless, and the subtle Dharma gate independent of words and transmitted beyond doctrine.” The Buddha did not put out that flower only because something couldn’t be said. Of course, putting out that flower is already something extra. But thanks to that flower, the other recognized it. This is the same as the Sixth Patriarch saying, “I have an article that has no head, no tail, no name nor appellation, no front and no back”

A very similar story of Konton was given by Chuang Tzu: In the middle of the universe lived Konton. To the north there was the God of the North, and to the south there was the God of the South, and

because it was so far for each of them to go to visit each other, they would meet at the center of the universe, at the place of Konton. Whenever they met, Konton was always so very kind and hospitable and they wanted to thank him in some way for this great kindness because they visited him so many times. They thought about it and decided that since Konton had no eyes and no ears and no nose and no mouth—he was totally naked of any senses at all—he couldn't experience any of the infinite pleasures of the world. So they would give him eyes, ears, a nose, and a mouth. And so they gave him eyes, they gave him ears, they gave him a nose, and they gave him a mouth—and immediately Konton died. Everyone is looking for joy externally, not knowing that the truest joy is within. Everyone thinks it is external because they are seeing things only partiality and not seeing the truest source.

We are all stuck on and moved around by our own personal position. Prior to that, at the source of that, is something we have never seen: our true Master. But because we have never encountered it we are always saying, "This person is good. That person is bad." Nangaku Ejo came to the place of the Sixth Patriarch, as we read about earlier. The Sixth Patriarch said to Nangaku Ejo, "What has come here?" Though it was so obvious what had come there, Nangaku Ejo knew that the Sixth Patriarch was asking him for the profound meaning, the deeper answer, not the obvious one. The Sixth Patriarch could see and hear, so he knew that version of the answer. So what had come there? Never answering that most important question, we all put it aside. Looking at the external goods and bads, seeing it in the partial version, we do not address the truly important meaning. Nangaku Ejo knew the Sixth Patriarch was asking the most important question, and he worked on that answer for eight years before he could come up with the true expression of it. He threw away everything—his position, his

ego-identity, his eyes and ears, until he knew clearly what it is that he could bring. "I have an article that has no head, no tail, no name nor appellation, no front and no back. Do you all know what that is?" It took Nangaku Ejo eight years, ripping off the skin, piercing through the flesh, crushing the bones and tearing out the marrow, until he knew beyond his personal position and dualistic, relative view of things and could answer—as the whole universe he could answer—with full tautness, "That which cannot be named has come here." This is not a quiz, think that and we'll stay stuck in this small container. What Ejo was showing could be clearly seen by the Sixth Patriarch.

There was a movie a long time ago, entitled 'Mask'. I didn't see this movie, but I imagined it was about how we all hide behind a mask of a face trying to be a certain kind of person that we think we should be. Thinking we need this, thinking we should go here and there, we get conceited if we learn something and get a complex if we don't know something everybody else knows. We think we are the ugliest of all, and we bully ourselves. We think we are the best of all good people, and then we think we are the most evil of all people. We have to drop all of that. In order to go beyond that, though, we have to be awakened to what really is behind that mask. And that is doing zazen.

We are given this chance to do zazen so we can drop all of that. We have to negate everything—all of it. For this we have the Mu of Joshu. But neither can it only be stopping at negation; at that ultimate point of negation it turns to the ultimate confirmation. But first we have to cut and throw away any idea of understanding something or not understanding something. Doing the Mu when we stand or sit, when we see or we hear, cutting everything away until we don't even know who we are. We cannot compromise and

do this in a half-baked way. We have to do it to where we strip away everything that is our own personal self, or else it all creeps back in again. We cultivate and cultivate and cultivate, and then we are able to know how to cut completely. From there comes the greatest joy of complete confirmation.

People all settle for external satisfaction, but in Buddhism it is about that true Mind that embraces everything. To realize this we have to cut away everything, like the silkworm that eats the mulberry leaves and stays in the cocoon as this caterpillar—at that point not able to see and not able to hear, dark in its cocoon cultivating, and gathering the energy to burst forth and become a silk moth. This caterpillar in the cocoon, which then bursts forth as the moth, comes into the world totally full of energy. This is the whole universe expressing itself as this silk moth. This is not a small, personal achievement but the manifestation of the heavens and earth! We all have this within us, and this is kensho, and this is Zen. The Sixth Patriarch is teaching us this so that each of us can awaken.

Sutra: Stepping out from the crowd, Shen Hui replied, “It is the source of all buddhas, and the Buddha nature of Shen Hui.” “I have told you already that it is without name and appellation, and yet you call it ‘source of buddhas’ and ‘Buddha nature,’” reproved the patriarch. “Even if you confine yourself in a mat shed for further study, you’ll be a zazen teacher of secondhand knowledge—only knowledge from books and verbal authority instead of knowledge obtained intuitively.”

Hearing the words of the Sixth Patriarch Jinne came forth and said these words. He didn’t get it at all. The Sixth Patriarch said, “I have told you already that it is without name and appellation. Listen to what I am saying—that you cannot put a name on it! You cannot call it ‘kensho’ and you cannot call it ‘Buddha nature.’ It is prior to all of

that. Why do you try to name it! You may end up in a small hermitage, but you will not be able to liberate people. To know this and to realize it are two different things.”

The Sixth Patriarch is the Buddha-dharma of experience. As he has said, to realize kensho cannot be something in our head, but something we have to experience. It cannot be a wispy glimpse of something. This is not it, the Sixth Patriarch is telling us. It has to be with our feet on the ground, and it has to soak into and through us. In this way the Sixth Patriarch has taught us that “abiding nowhere, awakened Mind arises.” It was on hearing these words that he was deeply awakened.

So why, then, did he go to the Fifth Patriarch’s place at Yellow Plum Mountain? This was the most honest place of the Sixth Patriarch. He could not leave open at the possibility of it being a mental understanding only. It took many months for him to walk to Yellow Plum Mountain. The whole time he was working on his full tautness. Like Hakuin Zenji who was doing Muji—the koan of Mu—when he had gone to the middle part of Japan where there was a huge gathering of monks who did zazen together. It was that era when everyone walked, and after that gathering of monks he was walking back from central Japan to his temple in Shizuoka. He was walking, and that whole time he was working on that Muji. During that whole time he continued and continued, walking, keeping his focus. He kept that Mu going ceaselessly. He didn’t even know that he had passed the castle of Himeji—an exquisitely beautiful and famous castle. He kept going until he reached the shores of Akashi, where there was a boat that would take him home to Shizuoka. He also, on this trip, carried all of his friend’s packages because his friend did not feel well. So when he came to the shore of Akashi where the boat left from, he was completely exhausted. He

knew it would take him another month if he walked from there, and so he took advantage of having a boat that would go from Akashi to Shizuoka. Immediately when he got on the boat he fell asleep. But when he awoke he was startled to look around and see they were still at the port of Akashi, but everybody was covered with Mu and dirt and water. He asked the oarsman why they hadn't left from Akashi yet. The oarsman got furious at him and said, "You idiot! We have just gotten back, barely making it, from a huge typhoon! Everyone here risked their life and are just glad to be alive!" At this Hakuin bowed in gratitude to the oarsman, in gratitude for still having his life. And when he returned to practice he dove in even more deeply, and with that, was enlightened.

Our ego does not get cut away so easily. We have to not take our focus off that life energy. It is not something we can do looking so cool and placid on our sitting cushions. To stay with it takes everything we have. We have to not follow around our extraneous thinking and ideas; we can lose it all in one moment of distraction. Just like opening the mouth of a balloon, all the air goes out. Anyone who has experienced this knows this very well for themselves. However, even in one sesshin, if we keep this focus diligently, then we can reach a place where we know something we haven't realized before. This is about the truth and the efforts of doing this.

OSESSHIN, 2006-09, DAY SEVEN

Sutra: Seeing that many questions were put to him in bad faith by followers of various schools, and that a great number of such questioners had gathered around him, the patriarch addressed them out of compassion as follows: "A treader of the Path should do away with all thoughts, good as well as evil ones. It is merely as an expedient that the Essence of Mind is so called. It cannot really be named by any name."

Many people would come to the Sixth Patriarch, some honest, some even coming to murder him. Eventually he had to say that people who were coming should come empty-minded only. Of course not to come with evil thoughts, but also not to come with good thoughts either, just empty-mindedness—empty-mindedness in one straight line, like the tree in the garden. To come because one has to follow the Path no matter what; one has to because we can't sit still or stand up if we don't. Different things may go well—our work, our finances, our relationships—and these good thoughts may seem fine and important. But as for the Path, these are all beside the point.

And some would come with resentment or hostility. That is even prior to any possibility that they could open their true Mind. When we are thinking about me and mine, I understand, I don't understand, that is not the true nature. We all hold on to extra thoughts, thinking that they are so important, when they are in fact just mirages. A truly seeking mind sees this clearly. But we are tugged in this way. This has to be understood clearly. People think that they have to have this one most important thought. Outside of Peking in the wintertime, in temperatures of minus 20 or 30 degrees (Celsius), Eka-daishi stood in the snow all night long. Daruma-Daishi didn't even turn and notice him until the dawn, at which time he said to him, "What did you come here for?" Eka-Daishi said, "I came because I'm seeking the Dharma." Daruma-Daishi answered that a person with a conceited, self-centered, low-minded point of view could never do this Path. A person who does not have a vow greater than that, someone who is only narrow-minded would not even be able to begin, that he would eventually end up stuck on dualism because that's where he would be coming from. Niso Eka had exhaustively studied but he could not realize the ultimate point which he had been seeking and knew

he had to find, no matter what. It is said that Eka daishi expressed his sincere and deepest commitment by cutting off his arm at the elbow.

The true Dharma has no form, and yet it extends in all directions. The Buddha Dharma is a law for all beings. We cannot expect to realize it superficially.

Sutra: "It is merely as an expedient that the Essence of Mind is so called. It cannot really be named by any name."

There are many ways to live this life. We have a home, we have children, we have work, profit and loss, and many thoughts about all of this. Also, we all have a deep, profound Wisdom in our mind. All people, all existence has a whole, clear Mind. It is given the name, "Dharma body." But the Sixth Patriarch says that even that name is irrelevant, that it cannot be named. We have senses and we have a body; we encounter the world with all of these. Nevertheless, in the Heart Sutra it says, "No eyes, no ears, no nose, no tongue, no body, no mind."

The person who would become Master Tozan, when he was only age seven, had deep doubts about this—why it would say "no eyes, no ears, no nose,—and he asked his parent priest why, if we have all these senses, that the Heart Sutra writes that there are no eyes, no ears, no nose. This parent priest was so astonished that he sent young Tozan to a superior teacher. That which has no name or head or tail or back or front—we only divide it all into two because we see relatively. The true source has no such division. In our eyes it becomes seeing, in our nose it becomes smelling, in our mouth it becomes tasting, and in our hands it becomes carrying, and in our feet it becomes walking.

The Buddha saw, and when he saw a willow he saw it green; when he saw a flower he saw it red, when he heard a dog it was barking. This was all the exact same as us. But the Buddha had no addition

of mind-moments before or after each perception, and in this there is a huge difference. Is it coming from ego, or is it coming from a clear, empty mind? Our true Mind is without any thoughts, either preceding or following any mind-moment. Our zazen has to be the same. Then, when told to focus and not look away, we don't follow after other, fleeting thoughts. We have to be able to do this without any following or preceding thoughts.

We are so accustomed to wandering around blindly within our thoughts, aimlessly, like a dog running around wildly without any leash on it. If we catch it and put a leash on it, it feels so uncomfortable, so restricted, so bound. We work on our breath and makes it a little more regular, but we also feel how rigid it is to always have to work on that breath and focus on it. Of course at the beginning we have to do it, and with a strong intention. But we keep practicing and eventually, like the rope around the bull or the cow, we can let it go and it no longer strays; it's been trained. We have to keep only to the present moment, this very moment, and not allow in anything else at all. When we can actually let go of all these preceding and following mind-moments, then the rope can be let go of. Then we can know this which is called resurrection. For this, though, we have to be very creative and make efforts, and we have to wait for the ripening like we do when we plant vegetable seeds in the garden. We can't hurry them up; they have to ripen in their own time. The seeds grow; we continue. And suddenly it all becomes perfectly clear.

We have the poem of Jinshu Josha, who said,

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

But this was half way. This is still not the thorough ripening; it is not untrue, but it is not the whole thing. But we cannot

become caught on these thoughts, and we cannot become conceptual about them. We have to actually do it.

Our mind's actuality is that the true Dharma has no form and yet it extends throughout the ten directions. It pierces through and beyond good and evil. Just as we say that in our ears it is hearing, in our hands it is holding, in our eyes it is seeing, it is not that we shut down those perceptions. We open all of them. We see clearly what is right and wrong, and we see it precisely. This is also our Buddha nature, but it does not get stuck there. It doesn't stagnate there. Our true nature keeps flowing, or else it gets stagnant. As Hakuin has said, we have to really directly experience this true nature.

This is not an idea; it actually goes through our eyes, our ears, our nose and our mouth. We touch something and directly we encounter it. And then we are seeing clearly. It is here that the Sixth Patriarch has said that while recognizing good and evil we do not stop there. We do not pick and choose or we lose track of our clear nature and end up moving blindly.

But it doesn't all align at once. It doesn't all happen at the same time. We begin, and it becomes more and more clear, and more and more pure. We have to do it ongoingly.

Sutra: "This non-dual nature is called the true nature, upon which all Dharma systems of teachings are based."

But we are in a world of relativity. We have to not be caught on that relativity or on any idea of human love or any idea that is fabricated. We have to return to that very Source of the mind and express that truth. In the sutras it says to realize completely excellent awakening. But it has to be that which is true and actual, not an imagined one.

We have to let go of all of our caught habits. As the Sixth Patriarch has said, zazen is to bring forth no thoughts

*In this teaching, there is no
impediment and no hindrance.*

*Externally, for the mind to refrain
from activating thoughts with
regard to all the good and bad
realms is called 'seated' (zuo).*

*Internally, to see the
motionlessness of the self-nature is
called 'meditation' (chan).*

外於一切善惡境涯
心念不起名為坐
內見自性不動名為禪

Soto issai zen'aku no kyōgai ni oite,
shinnen okosazaru o, nazukete za to
nasu. Uchi jishō o mite dōzearu o,
nazukete za to nasu

心於一切善惡境
心念不起名為坐
內念不生不動
名為禪

of good and bad to what we perceive externally, and internally to be unmoved by anything in our mind whatsoever. Our mind opens, all minds that exist open, and this is the Dharma—opening to all minds and being free from any cloud of delusion whatsoever. All of them matched perfectly. This is what is called the Dharmabody. This is, as Rinzai puts it, the “clean, pure light in a moment of our mind.” It is also the great bright Mirror Mind and it is the all-embracing functioning of Kwan Yin, of Kannon—a mirror which is completely clear and totally bright. That which is empty of anything is what can reflect perfectly. We have to be able to see this, and in accordance we will realize that very truth.

In the olden days people lived Mu more locally and were defending their local area. This defensive small-mindedness is what taught us to look at things in such a narrowly protective way. We have to learn again to become wide open, completely huge, where there is nothing at all left remaining in our mind. We can match perfectly with anything we encounter when this is the case. The moon shines for me, yet at that same time we don't have any sense that there is a “me” that the moon is shining for. The mountains soar for me, and yet we don't identify a small self that is having a mountain soar for it—with no awareness of that merging. And then our true nature can be born. From nothing at all, awareness is born: a whole universe, the flowers, the birds that we hear—one after the next, the things are born for all of our senses. We have no sense that we are even feeling these things. In this way we become the great sound of the big bell, we become the garden flower—but with no second thought at all, only the direct perception and one single mind-moment.

This is a very precise mind, and we have to be able to open to it. It takes effort, but still, we are all endowed with this clear,

huge, round, bright Mirror Mind which functions with the mysterious awareness of seeing clearly. This is the mysterious, precise perception of our deeper Wisdom: To be able to see each and every thing exactly as it is; to have the clarity of mind to be able to know that, like a doctor who gives one person stomach medicine for a stomach ache and knows to give another person cold medicine when they have a cold. This kind of precision, is not only for perceiving the differences, but knowing what to do perfectly for each and every difference while at the same time seeing the whole thing as one. This is the functioning in each and every encounter. As our focus touches something, our Wisdom spontaneously and mysteriously opens, and then we operate appropriately. This is the third great Wisdom. This is how our mind is constructed.

But if we have some dull need from egoistic thought, some lingering idea of profit or loss, that is dualism entering, and then these Wisdoms can't work. That is the bottom line. This is how humankind is. Our clear Mind is like a huge, bright, clear, mirror—that True Person of No Rank, this is our true nature. And this is what the Sixth Patriarch is saying here: “This nondual nature is called the true nature, upon which all Dharma systems of teachings are based.”

Sutra: “This nondual nature is called the true nature, upon which all Dharma systems of teachings are based. One should realize the Essence of Mind as soon as one hears of it.” Upon hearing this everyone made obeisance and asked the patriarch to allow them to be his disciples.

We are offered this opportunity to do zazen. As the Sixth Patriarch has taught, zazen is to externally be bringing forth no thoughts of good and bad to what we perceive, and to internally be unmoved by anything at all within. There is so much gossip about all things in the world today, about Buddha, about a god. But it cannot

be imaginary—ideas about what God might be like. Rather, to see precisely, in such a way that we are not pulled around by anything that we see. Rather, to hear precisely, in such a way that we are not pulled around by anything that we hear. We may be settled here in this one week, but if we go home and are deeply confused and don't find this place where we are settled, then there is no point to it. When we eat we have to only eat. And when we do sutras to only do sutras. When we sit, to only sit, without any conceptualization added on or imagination inserted at all. We come to this state of mind where we hold onto nothing, and then that clarity actually functions— not just in the zendo, but twenty-four hours in the day, in everything that we do.

We have been doing this here for one straight week. We perceive fully but we must not add on any ideas to what we perceive: to do what we do completely, to perceive it all clearly, to hear it all clearly without some idea that we are doing it for a certain reason. We have pain, and it hurts. We become that pain completely. This is the most effective way to deal with it. Then when we work we can become everything we do in work completely, as well. It is not about covering over our thoughts but to be giving ourselves totally to everything we do. For this we are doing this one week of osesshin.

People are so often caught on a dualistic concept. But instead, to be right where we are—not chasing after something elsewhere. No matter what a hideous or what a wonderful thing comes forth, to see all of it as the phenomena which it is, and not be caught on it. To be that nondualistic place. No matter if we are praised or insulted, to not get caught on either of those at all because we hold nothing that could care about that. This is what is called Unexcelled Perfect Enlightenment.

Sutra: “This nondual nature is called the true nature, upon which all Dharma

systems of teachings are based. One should realize the Essence of Mind as soon as one hears of it.” Upon hearing this everyone made obeisance and asked the patriarch to allow them to be his disciples. In this way, everyone present was fulfilled and realized this excellence.

The roshi then offered this closing poem:

*With sudden breakthrough and
continued practice, the ancestral
gate opens,
This sutra directly shows how to
penetrate the deep Source.
Reading and chanting, one week has
passed,
Maintaining true awareness, we repay
our debt to the Buddha.*



Index

A

Abiding in no place. *See* Abiding nowhere
abiding nowhere 135, 151, 153, 154, 189
Ambedkar 16
Ananda 4, 114, 115, 179

B

Bankei Zenji 57, 136, 159
Baso Doitsu Zenji 42, 128, 131, 138
Bhikkhu Chih Tao 99
Bhikkhu Fa Hai 37
Bhikkhu Fa Ta 46
Bhikkhu Hsing Ssu 126
Bhikkhu Huai Rang 129
Bhikkhu Zhi Ch'ang 94
Bhikkhu Zhi Tong 68
Blue Cliff Record 179

C

Chih Huang 137
Chijo. *See* Bhikkhu Zhi Ch'ang
Chi Tsu. *See* Bhikkhu Zhi Tong
Choitsu 105
Christ 17, 22, 37, 87, 97
Christian 17
Christianity 8, 10, 14, 22, 69
Chuang Tzu 187

D

Dairyo 119
Daito Kokushi 138
Daitsu Chiso Butsu 146
Daiyu 8
Daruma Daishi 33, 36, 95,
97, 119, 125, 129, 131
Dhammapada 24, 113
Dharmakaya 51, 68, 69, 70, 72,
81, 82, 87, 88, 90, 93, 94, 163
dhyana 5, 6, 13, 31, 35, 43, 45, 46, 58, 59,
69, 76, 78, 88, 89, 110, 114, 115, 122,
156, 158, 159, 161, 163, 179, 180, 185
Dhyana Master Xuan Jue 133
Diamond Sutra 31, 32, 33,
82, 91, 113, 142, 153
Dogen Zenji 61, 86, 89, 108, 116,
118, 121, 122, 130, 131, 144
Dokyo Etan Zenji 19

E

Emmyo 8

F

Fang Bian 147
Four Wisdoms 51, 68, 69, 70, 72,
81, 82, 87, 88, 90, 93, 94, 163
Frankie Parker 24, 113

H

Hakuin 19, 24, 45, 53, 54, 59, 74,
88, 89, 107, 112, 121, 125
hichima gourd flower 120, 125
Hoben. *See* Fang Bian
Hokkai. *See* Bhikkhu Fa Hai
Hotatsu. *See* Bhikkhu Fa Ta

I

Ikkyu Zenji 126

J

Jinne. *See* Shen Hui
Jinshu Josha 12, 32, 145, 148
Joshu 12, 13, 21, 40, 45, 59, 73, 93,
114, 115, 132, 145, 149, 156

K

Kasho Sonja 50, 66
Konton 187, 188
Kyogen 77, 78, 79, 140

M

Maka Shikan 133
Masaoka Shiki 120
Maso Kushiki 165
mind-moment 51, 68, 69, 70, 72,
81, 82, 87, 88, 90, 93, 94, 163
mind-moments 12, 61, 64, 120, 121, 122,
135, 140, 141, 146, 156, 165, 178, 191
Mumon Ekai Zenji 38, 122, 156, 185
Mumonkan 38, 58, 74, 140, 146, 180, 184

N

Nangaku Ejo 42, 92, 126, 128,
130, 131, 133, 138, 177, 188
Nangaku Ejo Zenji 138

Nirmanakaya 51, 68, 69, 70, 72,
81, 82, 87, 88, 90, 93, 94, 163

P

Prodigal Son 52, 66

R

Rasetsu 100, 101
red dog and a white dog 110
Rinzai Zenji 23, 72, 86, 133, 146
Ryoan-ji 21

S

samadhi 5, 6, 13, 31, 35, 43, 45, 46, 58,
59, 69, 76, 78, 88, 89, 110, 114, 115, 122,
156, 158, 159, 161, 163, 179, 180, 185
Samadhi 5, 43, 44, 45, 58, 59, 90,
91, 92, 114, 158, 159, 162, 185
Sambhogyakaya 51, 68, 69, 70, 72,
81, 82, 87, 88, 90, 93, 94, 163
Seigen Gyoshi 126, 128, 129, 131
Seijo 105, 106
Sesan Doji 100
Shen Hui 177
Shido Munan Zenji 118, 124
Shiko. *See* Chih Huang
Shima Akihito 14, 15
Shisai. *See* Zhi Cheng
Shitetsu Zenji 173
Six Realms 27, 113
Song of Enlightenment 132, 133, 137
Song of Zazen 88, 112, 121
susokkan 12, 13, 21, 40, 45,
59, 73, 93, 114, 115

T

Takuan 102, 143
The Unfettered Mind 102, 143
Three Bodies 25, 69, 72, 73, 77, 79,
80, 81, 82, 85, 87, 88, 90, 93
Three Realms 37

U

Ummon Daishi 7
Unborn mind 57, 136, 159
Universal Nature Wisdom 51,
70, 71, 89, 90, 93, 94

V

Vimalakirti Sutra 112

X

Xuan Jue. *See* Yoka Genkaku Zenji

Y

Yagyu Tajimonokami 143
Yoka Genkaku Zenji 133

Z

Zhi Cheng 31, 32, 33, 91, 113, 142, 153