

RESOLVING THE MIND

BUDDHA'S ENLIGHTENMENT

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All people wish to be free from anxiety and forever live at ease, and to live in full possession of self-esteem with an unshakable belief in themselves. Moreover, man wants to be able to have full faith in himself, as well as in his fellow human beings, and to be steadfast, demonstrating boundless and unwavering resolve when determined to take on a task. Such a person should be able to function on a higher level, exhibiting fairness and good judgement.

We think for ourselves; we judge and decide; then we act on our own volition taking responsibility for our actions. As human beings, this is fundamental. It forms the basis of a healthy society whose character is grounded in mutual trust. However, as long as man's unique spiritual faculty--made up of abundant intelligence and sensitivity--remains his captor, man will suffer and go astray. The power of imagination will amplify his desires and appetites to their limit, inducing a variety of emotions and feelings from the diverse images visualized. Time and again man is tossed about by this mind. It means an existence full of anxiety and instability. At times, it seems man wants to curse himself and return to his primitive beginnings. It is entirely a matter of the mind oneself grooms; it is the shape and form of one's own world.

Until we breathe our last breath, we should at least be in possession of a pride, self-confidence, and a serenity worthy of a human being. Without these, life is worthless. Furthermore, we should reach a state of freedom and open-heartedness. Establishing the true self and attaining freedom are the ardent wish and the ideal of us all. Making this happen, we are no longer entangled by intellect and sentiment, and it is possible to lead a life in equilibrium. It is a matter of the mind, or heart, itself.

What kind of entity is this diverse, even complicated, mind or spirit of ours? What kind of process does it follow in its formation? These ought to be burning questions for us all. The theme here is man's true nature. Resolving this, all things are clarified. Becoming the above-mentioned is consistent with the theme, How to resolve the habits of the mind. How does one resolve at the source this matter of the mind?

Let us turn our attention to former times.

PRECEDING THE APPEARANCE OF THE DHARMA

Definitively resolving the mind became possible with the appearance of Shakyamuni Buddha. He was the sole heir of a mind-to-mind transmission from Ancient Buddha Kasho. It was a direct and intimate communication, like drinking a cup of water and knowing its coolness firsthand. Therefore, the origin of the ancestral lineage of Buddhism was Shakyamuni Buddha's Great Awakening under

Ancient Buddha Kasho.

Describing the dramatic moment as if I had witnessed it:

On top of Sacred Eagle Mountain Shakyamuni was expounding the Dharma. Undoubtedly it was a place of great scenic beauty and sanctity. As usual, Shakyamuni's Ten Great Disciples along with innumerable followers gathered like clouds. On that day Shakyamuni wanted to clarify the matter of a Dharma heir and at the same time express his feelings about the Dharma. Unlike any occasion previously, he began his sermon for the sake of finding an heir. He gently held up a lotus flower in his hand. Describing the figure in words, that is what appeared optically. But for the imperceivable mind which transcends phenomenon, Shakyamuni's entire body became the lotus flower. When the self disappears--when the gap, or interval is removed--things are just themselves, as they are. There is nothing other than the thing itself. So there was no Shakyamuni. When this fact is clearly comprehended, it stands to reason that one must consent to "the thing is simply the thing itself." But no one there on Sacred Eagle Mountain could grasp at all this fact. They all only wondered, What's this all about?

And it seems that the present situation here is no different from that time long ago.

However, there was a celebrated follower of Shakyamuni who saw through the mind/heart of his teacher and master. One person there, Makakasho Sonja, grasping it all broke into a smile. And when Shakyamuni saw this, he said:

My eye and treasure of the True Law is the awakening of the mysterious mind. True form is without form: This is the subtle entrance to the Dharma. Independent of words and letters, it is transmitted outside the scriptures. It now belongs to Makakasho Sonja.

What could be the meaning of this? What had occurred through Shakyamuni? Could something great have been discovered? What do you suppose was transmitted? What was Shakyamuni demonstrating by gently raising the flower? What was it that only Makakasho grasped? Why did he smile upon seeing the flower? And why didn't the others there understand?

The famous Buddhist phrase, "the twirling flower and a smile," points to this event. It was the beginning of the ancestral lineage on Buddhism. Namely, the Buddhadharm--the import or substance of Shakyamuni Buddha--was personally transmitted, not through words, but directly from mind to mind. Each succeeding ancestral patriarch verifying his predecessor, the succession has continued to the present. This is why all of those who have resolved the gap are referred to as ancestors. All others are only in the realm of explanation based on words. The uniqueness of the Zen sect lies here. It is a fundamental difference arising at the outset. Dogen Zenji wrote:

All the various buddhas are none other than the Buddha Shakyamuni himself. The Buddha Shakyamuni is nothing other than the fact that mind itself is buddha. When the buddhas of the past, present, and future realize enlightenment, they never fail to become the Buddha Shakyamuni. This is the meaning of the mind itself being buddha. Study this question carefully, for it is in this way that you can express your gratitude to the buddhas.

That great event occurring 2500 years ago was the beginning of this single transmission. It established the method of transmitting the true mind of Shakyamuni Buddha. The master verifies inherent objectivity that is grounded in real proof through personal experience. This verification--or Seal of Mind--which serves as a decree of the actualization of inherent objectivity is what zen is.

And, at the same time, it is the starting point of zen. Consequently, it is called the Great Matter's causal link. Zen is the "Universal Storehouse of the Buddhadharma" because it transmits every aspect of buddha as it is. This Mind of Shakyamuni is called the "Great Vehicle." On the other hand, the records of Shakyamuni's teaching and symbolic deeds soon became forms and intellectual study material to foster a moralistic religious order. This intellectual world is a philosophical and conceptional world that take on the forms of scholarship and the arts to make the flower of Buddhist culture bloom. Because this world has a limited effect in removing the gap to resolve the self, it is called the "Lesser Vehicle" of entering the Dharma.

The mind of the Great Vehicle began with Shakyamuni. After 27 generations in India it declined and disappeared. The Buddhadharma managed to be passed down to the 28th Patriarch, Bodhidharma. Through him it crossed to China where the patriarchal succession continued 6 more generations. Thereafter, great numbers of patriarchs appeared. It became the "Golden Age of Zen." Zen in China had a tremendous influence on Chinese thought, study, and politics. Zen flourished for more than 500 years there before it decayed. And Shakyamuni's Seal of Mind was transmitted to Japan through these many patriarchs of that Golden Age. Eventually, the living Great Vehicle in China extinguished.

The Buddhadharma has gradually moved east. This is the "Eastward Advance of the Dharma." In Japan the teaching of Buddha has overflowed into all aspects of life. In this present day of ours in the demise of the human race, it is truly hoped that the Dharma Gate of the Great Vehicle will be revived for the continuation of a sound and healthy human race.

The theme of riddles, or puzzling problems, beginning at the birth of the first patriarch--the matter of a "communication outside of words"--was the start of the treasure hunt for the Buddhadharma. Such riddles become a gateway to realizing the Dharma. These riddles were drawn from the speech and actions of the Chinese patriarchs and took the form of "public questions," or koans. This method of investigation became the main element of Zen practice called "koan zen." Perhaps koans served notice to intellectuals and scholars of Zen. It was a method that the patriarchs used regularly for checking their disciples.

Koans certainly did not originate in China, nor are they ignored by the Soto Sect which advocates shikan taza--simple, single-minded sitting. What do you do with a koan? What don't you do in shikan taza? Both are nothing more than a means or way. The master used these in accordance with the circumstances of the conceptualizing student. The only purpose is to remove the gap, or interval. Because sometimes the words and actions of masters of the past were difficult to comprehend, many of those events were recorded for history as public questions and used for reference in Zen practice. Some of the larger collections of these koans include The Blue Cliff Record, The Gateless Gate, and The Book of Equanimity. Furthermore, all the records of the patriarchs and masters of the past can be considered collections of koans. They are the crystallization of the ancients, and the tears of their efforts. They are the mind of Shakyamuni, and his blood. They are not intended for just anyone to utilize.

The theme of Dogen Zenji's words:

Buddha Shakyamuni is nothing other than the fact that the mind itself is buddha. When the buddhas of the past, present, and future realize enlightenment, they never fail to become the Buddha Shakyamuni. This is the meaning of the mind itself being buddha. Study this question carefully, for it is in this way that you can express your gratitude to the buddhas.

is an unmistakably clear koan. Plainly, it is the Buddhadharma and the mind of Shakyamuni. The koan is zen practice; it is shikan taza in itself--which, as it is, clarifies itself.

Advancing eastward and having reached Japan, 770 years have already past. It is a sign of the coming extinction of the Buddhadharma when there is no longer anybody yearning for the ancient teachings. This is both frightening and sad.

WHAT DID SHAKYAMUNI BUDDHA TRANSMIT?

Shakyamuni was the son of the prince of Magadha, a large country located in what is now India. He enjoyed many pleasures. But his intellectual growth and expansion fueled his doubts and suffering day by day. The living Buddha had already matured enough that his thoughts were turning inward. Usually one's interests turn outward to externals for pleasure and enjoyment. The response to external stimulation through the doors of perception and the senses is immediate. But from birth Shakyamuni had gone past the stage of external stimulation. In other words, his conception of external stimuli was not founded in personal interests. His fate or reason for living was that each event that took place in his life manifested as a problem. They were the problems of birth, old age, sickness, and death. His view of a festive scene full of beautiful dancers and smiling faces was, "What's the sense of all this? Another day is quickly passing. I'm not amused by it all. Wasting my time at this only piles a sense of futility on top of my suffering." And when the young Shakyamuni looked at flowers blooming in spring, he thought, "Yes, they are beautiful now, but soon they will rot away and look detestable.....people get carried away by seeing a beautiful flower, and deceive themselves all the more by putting on a showy banquet."

Shakyamuni had a beautiful wife of a noble family and one son Ragora. But still he would muse, "Man's life is governed by fate and evolution. In youth we are beautiful and lively. Why does man fall into sickness, become old, and finally die? Neither my parents, wife, child, nor myself can avoid this. How did this severe law of reality come about?" The more he investigated his misery through study and philosophy the more he suffered.

What happened was that his world of pleasure arising from influences on the coarse or lower human response functions was at an end. It is said that Shakyamuni made 8000 journeys to the ordinary world of man. Making this many trips to the regular world he came to the conclusion that no matter how much one indulges in pleasure, the result is sorrow and grief and the realization of the futility of it all. All things and affairs of the phenomenal world eventually decay and uselessly die. Through personal experience Shakyamuni firmly grasped this reality, both conceptually and philosophically. If one's sentiment is moved by deep intellectual understanding and metaphysics--and a feeling for transiency, pathos, and nihilism--then one's decision-making processes are going to lead in a certain direction. All of his human qualities--including empathy, responsibility, and wisdom--had been refined and polished through his 8000 crossings into the world of man. He certainly understood his family's tugs and pleas for more love and attention, but there was something else that had unyieldingly seized him. He had already transcended the self-centered world and reached the absolute, which was his universal Great Doubt. This Great Doubt is what made the man Shakyamuni a Buddha.

This Great Doubt was rooted in the utter futility of all relationships with the common world of

humanity. This included his worldly position as king, his castle and possessions, and his home and family. Here his suffering reached its ultimate limit. Finally, greeting his fate, he cut off all worldly relations and threw away his castle. He was nineteen. [Other sources state his age at 29. But this is doubtful because he would have been middle-aged in those days.]

Prepared even to die, he left his castle with six companions in order to resolve the Great Matter. His sights were on the other shore. This was truly an example of Bodaishin, the Mind that seeks the Way. What could stand in his path! Know that Bodaishin itself is the life of the buddhas and patriarchs.

Although this happened over 2500 years ago, all of time is but time itself. What a heartbreaking situation. Whenever I think about this, I shed countless tears in reverence. He truly embraced the Way. We should forever be grateful. Exalted is the World-Honored One Shakyamuni Buddha!

Like all celebrated ascetics, utterly discarding his body he immediately began his practice. He forgot about food and sleep and wished to experience any and all agonies. He was taught that in order to resolve the Great Doubt he must undergo severe ascetic practice. He endured ordeal after ordeal, but his mental functions would not come to a stop. Unfortunately, he practiced terribly hard refusing his doubts time or space to arise, and endured suffering as nobody else had ever done. But when off guard, they immediately appeared again; his doubts and suffering were the same as before he left the castle. Perceptively he came to realize the limits of religious austerities: physical disciplines have no relation with solving the Great Doubt. They would not bring him to his goal. He thought, Study is of no benefit to me. His practice of austerities lasted five years. Clearly, cleanly, and simply braking from ascetic practices, he felt refreshed. But fundamentally his doubts and usual mental condition still had not been resolved in the least. When perception based on the self begins functioning, even without clear cause one becomes confused. And doubts in the form of denial (What's the sense in doing such religious practices?) will arise. But this seems natural. The person who possessed more zeal than anyone else had exhausted all latent physical strength, as well.

He left ascetic life and set out for human habitation. His body had been tortured by the elements, and he was dangerously underweight. Finally he came to a roadside. A farm girl passing by offered him milk. It was a mysterious event. Reverently taking the milk to his lips, he at once was taken back by his state of mind. ("What could this feeling be?") The taste of the delicious milk, his joy, gratitude, and deep emotion all began flooding him. It left him speechless. That instant his suffering heart caused by the Great Doubt had been cut off. He had never experienced anything like it before. He was full and satisfied. He had failed to notice this heart before. It didn't exist during his ascetic practices. It was his first such experience. He had touched upon the beginning of a new world. [Still, where could that refreshed, satisfied feeling have arisen from? What is this thing called the self? And how can he resolve his original doubts?]

Here Shakyamuni noticed the mysterious workings of the mind: "What is the make up of this mind that makes me suffer, and feel delight alike? Even if one wrestles with the question of his own death, isn't it a matter of the mind itself?" These doubts intensified. And investigating the mind like this is the beginning of zen. His practice until this time had been unfocused. Instantaneously things arose in the mind then disappeared. Things excited the mind, which the mind then amplified. Examining this happening, he realized the unlimited depth and power of the mind itself. And this is where he started focusing his attention. In introspection, he realized that punishing one's body will not temper or toughen the mind, and ascetic practices will not resolve his doubts.

In a river he cleansed his body and refreshed his mind, then regaining his dignity he began to sit under a tree. He tried neither to halt nor restrict the functioning mind. Thoughts and ideas were flowing from morning until night. Thoughts and images of everything imaginable continued to rise, shaking the foundations of his senses. He simply sat, unmoved. And the more he sat, the more helpless he became. He continued like this for many days buried in the emptiness of the mind.

Before long, his attention was totally drawn by fluttering thoughts of when, where, and how these mental phenomenon arise. Shakyamuni's good sense to investigate--totally devoid of any methodology--the mind indicates his incisive reasoning power. The probable reason for this is he had collected, intensified, and deduced all mental appearances that came to him. Then, scientifically and logically he completely revised them. His conclusion was that these things didn't come from outside, but appear from within oneself. The only way to resolve one's doubts was to thoroughly investigate the root of this. And this must occur in the realm of the immediate and utter present, the instant before any and all working of the mind arises. And Shakyamuni thought here must be the origin of the universe, of all things.

His steering was on course. But how does one do nothing? Without utilizing any means, how do you clarify this world of the present instant--one's present mind?

Shakyamuni's investigation had been thorough up to this stage. But as sagacious as he was, from here he was completely helpless--helpless because the present moment exists prior to consciousness. By the time one becomes aware of something, it is already in the past. It has assumed a form; and it is the traces of the form that we apprehend. That is, the present moment is an empty world in absolute time (i.e., no time, no space) where the intellect does not reach, because it is the domain transcending all existence. The cognitive function itself is a qualified and perverted abstraction of the absolute world of no-time and no-space. Therefore it can never embrace the present moment. Shakyamuni was able to probe this far intellectually. A victim by personal experience, he thoroughly observed the functioning mental faculties. He had pushed the intellect to its limit.

But there was no way he could have understood that the intellectual function of recognition was the cause of the gap, or separation, and the seed of man's confusion. Hence, he could not have realize that throwing away the gap was the decisive means to resolving his Great Doubt. Even so, by the time he had come to see that mind was the world of the present moment and outside our reach, his emotional functions raising feelings of severe self-persecution and suffering caused by the Great Doubt had subsided. He had begun to focus directly on his problem. He had attained a profound serenity from his exhaustive intellectual examination of the mind. He had managed an exhaustive abstract theory on the source of his restlessness--the intellectual friction caused by the Great Doubt. It had now become a matter of a personal relationship with one's senses, perceptions, and consciousness. The world of the senses and cognition is the real, phenomenal world; and due to sense stimulation thoughts endlessly arise. Sagacious Shakyamuni couldn't avoid dealing with this reality.

The senses and perception are real. They are functions of the phenomenal world. Written in the Heart Sutra, Buddha explains to his follower Shariputra:

The six sense organs [eyes, ears, nose, tongue, body, and mind] function according to the six sense objects [form, sound, smell, taste, touch, and phenomenon].

The sense functions and our body exist together in equilibrium, but the sense objects merely appear instantaneously. Opening your eyes everything appears optically as it is. Closing them everything vanishes. It is a fact that nothing remains in the eye. Looking in another direction and

opening them again, a whole new world momentarily appears. All actions of the senses are completed instantaneously; moreover, completely and utterly disappear. This reality of existing-without-existing is dependent merely on causes or circumstances arising due to momentary phenomenon. Shakyamuni was easily able to comprehend and resolve this through personal experience. You can see how extensively he probed into the relationship between phenomenon and the mind. Afterward, he was able to give positive proof that all things in the cosmos functioned naturally and independently, without flaw nor want. He revealed this transcendental state as mu: nothingness.

Clarifying his doubt this far, he was about to make a great discovery: the six sense organs function according to the six sense objects, which appear due to sense stimulation. But he was to make the precise discover that these faculties and their actions are one reality, and pure, which precede the intellectual, conceptual world of thought. One understands if something is hot or cold the moment it is touched. In short, he discovered that it is the ultimate in candidness, absolutely without need of discrimination or any other intellectual functions. Things are just as they are. It is impossible to determine how long it took him to get this far. Groping in the dark as he was refining his investigation and repeating his actual observations, a considerable period of time was probably needed.

This important discovery kept him on the direct path toward genuine religious training. He concluded that being "taken in," or deceived by the eyes and ears, the mind cannot then make the clear distinction between the reality of the present moment and the cognitive, conceptional world of the intellect. This identified why his religious investigation had come to an impasse.

He soliloquized:

Is there anything not real? If so, show me. How can you show what doesn't exist?! Moreover, reality is the present moment. It cannot be found outside of the utter present. And if this is so, then it must be that conceptional words, reasoning, imaginations and such, don't exist; or rather, they are adulterated, sullied forms--illegitimate interventions. If this untainted world of the present moment is grounded, it should likewise effect the working of the mind because reality is the present moment; and mind is its operation at that moment. Then, reaction to stimulation of the six senses is instinctive and impulsive, free of any manipulative chain of relationships. And the six senses momentarily arise as sense objects, then are finished. All things arise instantaneously. This in itself is proof of their total independence. Suffering simply arises because of entangling elements of some kind; the mind isn't dwelling completely in the moment, and is not the pure mind. Not knowing the true world of utterly dwelling in the moment, the happenings of the mind are temporary imaginings.

The real, perfect world of the present moment is the realm of eternity! What, then, is the present moment? It is the total existence of the cosmos, as it is. It is also the functioning of the senses, as they are. But if one acknowledges this fact, conceptional thought arises and that untainted world will be lost. So even acknowledging or recognizing this reality, the truth is lost. I see, here is the true world of the present moment. And if I don't immediately begin cultivating the habit of keeping the present moment always right in front of me, I'll never grasp the world of the present moment. What obstructs us is habitual thinking. We must endeavor to soon realize this and quickly get rid of the habit. Completely ridding ourselves of this habit should clarify the world of the present moment. It seems there's no other reality than this; and outside reality, nothing exists.

For sure, the fact is that right now I'm thinking. But by the time I perceive this reality, the moment and the reality are already over. This means the mental function that recognizes reality--cognition itself--is also a hindrance. So we must utterly throw away knowing.

Finally, now I understand how to proceed: cut off and throw away everything that arises.

Throw away utterly everything, even throwing away itself. Accomplishing this, everything from the past will be cut off and the present moment--now--will become clear. Then everything arising in the mind will be clear. All of my suffering and doubts can be resolved in the present moment.

This miraculous methodology of practical application was established in deep consideration based on constant observation, personal experience, and trial-and-error. It could never have been merely something he hit upon. It probably required two or three years. He was now able to proceed without doubt to thoroughly observe and polish his practice. Accordingly, this solidified his resolve and strengthened his confidence in genuine, pragmatic religious endeavor.

This is when the struggle began. In the coming days it was solely a battle with arising miscellaneous thoughts. The struggle is the same for anyone trying to continuously dwell in the present moment without the gap. But because he was Shakyamuni, his was no common endeavor or disposition; it was no ordinary doubt that gripped him. Naturally he poured his entire being into it. Acquired habits become forms that make up our nature. So when we lose the present moment, we lose sight of ourselves. The fierceness of transience washes away all.

The real world is this concrete world itself. It is a wondrous, baffling world entwined in infinite time and potential (causal conditions). Its true form is always as it is now. There's nothing other than that. One tries to keep and protect the present self, not being carried off by thoughts and passions. But it is really impossible to do before personally experiencing that world outside of self-consciousness previous to cognition. At first Shakyamuni was just like you and I are, always losing sight of himself, his present self.

Before long, the form and figure of random thoughts became clear to him, and he began to see the meaning of discarding them. He became able to arrest conceptual thinking and diffused, scattered thoughts. And his absentminded inattentiveness and ineptitude diminished. In other words, it started to be possible for him to view his mental workings like they were projected on a screen. In that alone, he was able to quickly and clearly recognize when he lost view of his condition in the present moment. Day and night he was fighting random, worldly thoughts and endeavored to return to the present moment whenever he lost himself. Just knowing what it was exactly that he was struggling against meant that he was able to cleanly discard it.

The result of his lengthy efforts was the ability to more quickly become aware of random thinking. And soon he could discern the instant the mind engaged, and even the commencement of the act of discarding itself. At long last, he was able to instantly cut off any activity of the mind as soon as it appeared.

His practice became so much easier and increasingly intriguing when he realized that he could at his willing discard and overcome the conceptualization and the scattered, diffused thinking that had been plaguing him. He was now able to take a deep breath in comfort. He now knew the serenity of his existence and sensed its preciousness and nobleness. I should say, he remembers some of the heart's joys. He had finally been released from the lifelong curse of suffering.

What happened was he understood the world of the very present--this very moment--before conceptualization begins, where nothing arises. It is the world of empty space where nothing exists. Because there is no gap, there is no opening for habits and scattered thinking to arise. He realized it was a world free of calamity. It was our original nature. It is the beginning instant of mind, where the mind functions. And he had the decisive realization that since there is nothing, there is nothing to do. He arrived at the revelation that perceiving a self actively participating in an action was the

functioning ego itself. He knew things that exist are simply appearances in nature due to cause and effect. It amazed him. Forms and sounds appear to the eyes and ears. They have neither significance nor reason nor cause. They nobly, simply, utterly appear, as they are. It is their form and appearance before ego arises. He clearly understood the true form of nature, and the natural form of things.

He was finally able to distinguish between reality, or truth, and the world of thought; that it is possible to detach the objectivity of the phenomenal, concrete world from the internal world of conception and sentiment. Being capable of doing this, he discovered that being able to leave random thoughts alone--not to recognize or get involved with them--the subsequent or following moment or instant would neatly extinguish, or lapse. Since he saw that conceptualization was nothing more than an instantaneous working, arising random thoughts no longer became a problem to him. Kanchi Sosan, the Third Chinese Patriarch said, "Don't seek Truth; just simply give up opinions." And Yoka Daishi, a disciple of the Sixth Chinese Patriarch, admonished, "Without seeking Truth, get ride of delusive thinking." Arrive at the point where you can leave everything alone--as it is, without turning to conception or sentiment. In the end, the natural conclusion lies at the source of conception and sentiment: the immovable world of the present moment. This is why this thesis was written--to be put into practice.

Truly the one who resolved this unexplored world of the mind and thoroughly investigated this decisive method was indeed Shakyamuni Buddha.

However, this was not the conclusion. Exhausting his efforts he was able to purify and simplify the mind. But beneath his effort still remained an ever-thin layer of the mind. Consequently, becoming negligent he was capable of losing himself. The accumulation of cultivated habits--giving rise to the gap which is the source of delusion--was soberly still alive. This Buddha-to-be, who harshly experienced and observed this fact to later thoroughly comprehend it, was not to be satisfied by a shallow understanding of it. Without an outright grasp of this, there would have been neither a Shakyamuni Buddha nor the Buddhadharma [the teaching of Buddha]. He was convinced as a result of personal experience and observation that he had reached the secret of religious practice: if you just completely discard everything arising in the mind, there you will find salvation and the fundamental resolution.

From then on, he increasingly forgot about food and sleep. Everyday he was absorbed only in throwing away everything. Regardless of good or bad, he discarded everything by utterly disregarding it. Or, rather, he constantly persevered to completely ignore everything. Random thoughts will exhaust themselves and die; consequently, he solely absorbed himself in leaving them alone. He managed to get to where sensation almost ceased. His face was totally without expression.

What the world calls "tranquility" is where the senses have become quiet. Then intellectual functioning naturally becomes still, and one's responses become extremely slow. One's condition becomes quiet and stately. Any number of people have experienced this. The result is that one can see himself exceedingly clearly. And, at the same time, one experiences the deep serenity of mind and body assimilating, becoming one. He, too, actually experienced this.

But that kind of tranquility is completely different. The makeup of the mind itself changes completely. Throwing away means unity and one-dimensionality. Utterly throwing away everything means becoming like a baby. It is the world before the mind takes shape. How difficult it is for a clever person to become a fool, an idiot. Those who have tried soon understand. It is awful hard. The phenomenon of conceptualizing stimulates one thought after another. Breaking this chain and discarding it means cutting this invisible, incredible fast linking of thoughts. Furthermore, if one

doesn't continue doing this until the adversary exhausts or consumes itself, the result will not be attained.

Explaining religious practice, or shugyo, one boldly speaks about conceptional and mental phenomenon of the mind in constricting technological and scientific terms. But if you are earnestly endeavoring, at first it is like doing martial arts. Discarding random thinking is like fighting a ghost that steals your presence of mind. At first, in the fight to remove the gap it is so insufferable that you think you may go mad. After a while, it becomes unnecessary to use any strength of your own at all. This is real strength and is where religious practice is conducted. Without relying on the power of the self, it is then possible to simply become the thing itself.

Before long, one comes to realize what the world of emptiness is and gradually learns to preserve that world, not falling into an opening where thought can arise. Body and mind begin to settle into one. Time is no longer long or short. Serenely, one simply, solely does zazen. No longer does the gap exist. Once you have reached this far, there is nothing left to maintain or preserve. One's body immediately takes on a sense of transparency, purity, and lightness. All of one's own actions are rich and clear without assuming the least bit of significance. And one notices his awareness of this is continuous. Having vividly grasped all mental phenomenon, both mind and body are settled within the field of the intellect. One is not willfully set adrift.

Shakyamuni utterly became his senses and perception, but even his awareness of this fact disappeared because he had become one with his circumstances. Walking, sitting, eating, or sleeping--whatever affairs he was involved in--no longer concerned him. He was able to simply, solely, just do things. His senses and perception had taken over his ego-self, and nothing was left of his personal self. In other words, seeing and hearing began and ended with the simple activity itself. He had almost come to the utter end of his investigation.

The effort needed to engage or raise mental phenomenon was vanishing. He was escaping from the world of attained knowledge and information, a world where words and concepts merge to form thought. He was becoming intimate with the source, the world of the present moment, separating from the concerns of a consciousness confined by the past. It was a dropping off process. The ego-self was dispersing, and all concerns were disappearing.

Zen Master Hakuin said that if one reaches this point, "Having ripped away both heaven and earth undoubtedly is Great Enlightenment." Hakuin's words ring true.

The result of long years of investigation resulted in oneness with nature, the universe. Shakyamuni completely forgot the self, became utterly captivated by the universe. Absolutely everything disappeared, vanished. Removing the gap, everyone, likewise, becomes such. In the state transcending both space and time, one loses all track of time.

Having forgotten and separated from both mind and body, naturally he transcended all perception. When mind and body have fallen away and nothing remains, an arising sound simply transilluminates the body with nothing remaining. If the eye picks up form or color, there is no viewer to deal with it; and no subsequent function operates. The borderline between consciousness and reality is clearly established. Or, rather, it is the function or operation of utterly casting off [everything].

Zen Master Dogen used the word non-thinking. It means that one's condition will never again be scattered or left adrift in thought, conceptualization, or consciousness. This message is called

"mind-and-body dropped off," "no-self," "nothingness," or "emptiness." It is complete, or true emptiness. The expression "In selflessness, there is no room for the self to arise" is the power of those who have given personal testament of the real world. It is not a formula based on theory. Samadhi is imperceivable. Such things as time, of course, do not exist. Shakyamuni became utterly pure function and was absorbed right into the center of the cosmos. Shakyamuni, the man, altogether died.

But Shakyamuni in his present state was just like a dead-wood tree, like the rocks or clouds. Of course, this is the state of having forgotten the ego. And one time this state must be plunged into, or the habitual mind cannot be discarded. From within the gap where thought centered on personal opinion arises, one is dazzled by the truth of "the twirling flower and a smile." This falling indicates the final goal hasn't been reached. The purpose of shugyo is to discard the habitual mind. It is for this reason we do zazen.

In the still of early-morning zazen he slowly opened his eyes, and the morning star entered his sight. At that instant, due to the condition of, or link provided by seeing the star, Shakyamuni returned to the True Self. The gap had dissolved and dropped away. Dying the Great Death, he was reborn with Great Life. "Eureka! Eureka!" he exclaimed. His momentous Great Doubt had in that instant been completely clarified. How clear was the world of truth! "Everything has always been fine just the way it is. There never was any problem."

He suffered the pain of throwing away his castle, wife, honor, and fortune--all the precious things of the regular world--and the agony of his Great Doubt. Then through perseverance and diligence he resolved everything.

It was like he had just awakened from a dream. He exclaimed: "All beings, sentient and insentient, together attain the Way." "Mountains, rivers, the grasses, and trees: all realize buddha." "All things are originally gifted with their full endowment and true nature." The sound of his voice pierced to the bottom of hell through the bowels of demons and spirits alike. And it illuminated the three realms of existence--past, present, and future.

This was all due the link, or connection provided by seeing the morning star. It was the birth of Shakyamuni Buddha and the advent of the "Age of the Buddhadharma." It proclaimed the message of Enlightenment and the appearance of the Dharma. On the eighth of December some 2500 years ago the morning star started to shine through the morning fog. Truly a precious and noble event.

The grandeur of the faculty and function, as they are, of nature and the cosmos became apparent for the first time. Confirming the mysterious true nature of the universe, you realize that this supposed ego, or the existence of a self, was but a phantom; that nothing exists outside the functional relationships of nature; and that these, too, are constantly undergoing constant change and have no fixed form or their own, i.e., existing, without existing. This realm is the realization that only constant change exists. Things simply, momentarily take form at that point in space and time, then immediately vanish.

Because it is a functional relationship, no distinction exists between subject and object. The inevitable appearance of self and other (other people or things) is natural; this is due to the manifold differences in the circumstances or conditions under which things arise or take shape. There is nothing more to the self-and-other relationship. Things arise due to cause-and-effect: neither self nor other have any fixed- or self-nature. All else is nothing short of the realm of imagination. Once you have removed the gap or interval, this becomes clear. If the gap is not disposed of, this is impossible to understand. It is the same as a cicada, who for the first time can freely navigate the heavens only

after shedding his shell. The shell is only a single layer, but the difference is as great as heaven and earth. Shakyamuni danced around in delight and shouted in jubilation. You can sense the freedom he experienced.

Through personal experience one testifies to discarding the gap. This is the message of the Dharma, and its lifeblood. Removing delusion and realizing Great Enlightenment is to clarify the border between: past and present; dream and reality; and function (reality) and conception (pretense). Realizing each moment is perfect and complete is clarifying these borders. This is enlightenment.

Because we don't understand the truth, we are confused by the fixed perception of concepts and definitions of such things as existence and non-existence, which then raises in consciousness the relative world of self-and-other. One discovers that these are nothing more than imagined constructs of the intellect. Removing the gap clarifies the world of self-and-other as one, not separate. When one acknowledges the existence of something, a subject-object point of view already arises. Shakyamuni realized this was an illusion of the intellect and sentiment arising due to the gap; and removing the gap, perfect peace would be found in its place.

Why did Shakyamuni suffer so greatly while living in his palace? Because of his unsurpassed intellect and sensitivity. He possessed great insight and judgement, and had a wonderful imagination which amplified his negative emotions and feelings to the extreme. But this was a necessary condition for the man who made 8000 voyages to the regular world to resolve the Great Doubt.

Gay dancing may look beautiful, feel wonderful and refreshing, and seem most satisfying. But Shakyamuni was different. He would think of the lives of those dancing, their birth and death. And he thought how such beautiful women would eventually grow old, bent, wrinkled, and willful. The image of death is most unpleasant. It was no mystery that he felt the futility of uncertainty, dread, and oppression. He had held a deep-seated doubt about the phenomenal world, and suffered for it because it actually is the real world. His intention was never to rid himself of the problem by diluting it, or by distracting himself. He met the problem head on and resolved his doubt at the source of his suffering.

Animals haven't the slightest concept of death: the intellectual capacity doesn't exist. They simply live according to circumstances. Their lives are exceedingly simple and frank; in the province of Nature not even peace exists. The only reason for wars and suffering is because man is tossed about by his intellect and senses. As long as man can't recognize his stupidity, the intellect doesn't sublimate in wisdom. All people are endowed with the same faculties and functions. It is a waste if we don't awaken to taste this wisdom for ourselves. If Shakyamuni had faced his problem frankly--without reasoning or logic--he would never have needlessly anguished. When he was absolved of the cursed gap, at the same time the mechanism of suffering was also clarified. He would no longer suffer again. We all owe a great debt of gratitude to the light of the world where ultimate peace can be found.

When he utterly discarded the perception or acknowledgement of a personal self, he realized he himself had always been one with nature, with truth; and his nature was, from the start, nature's form. "The same origin as the universe; one with all creation." In the natural order of things: there are no concerns or attachments; no good or bad; no self or other; and no delusion or enlightenment. Shakyamuni gave unshakable proof that all things manifested, fell away, and perished within the fundament of the present moment.

One time he utterly died and, becoming like a deadwood tree or rock, was resurrected to the world transcending ego/self. A deadwood tree or a rock is nature itself. This is the framework and

fabric of spiritual salvation which transcends all attachments to self and other. Because of its faculty and function, naturally its character is completely different. This is the profound and precious reason for his Great Awakening. If anyone should doubt this, let it be known that doubt is due personal ignorance and blindness. Whether a monk or lay person, one's entire daily life is merely pure and simple function, as it is. It cannot be grasped nor perceived.

The Seal of Mind, born of six years of sitting under the Bodhi tree, is the message of forgetting the ego/self. "Dying the Great Death, being Reborn with Great Vitality." This has been since long ago the purpose of zazen practice. As Zen Master Dogen exclaimed:

Everyone is fully endowed with the Dharma. But without shugyo, it does not manifest; without actual proof, it does not become your own.

Another master of old said: Practice is real practice. Awakening is real awakening.

In this way, the Mind Seal has been passed down. It has been through the mind that seeks the Way and proper sitting.

Shakyamuni Buddha's raising the lotus flower was so clear and concise that Makakasho merely smiled. That was all he could do, it was so apparent. Practically speaking, it was simply a smile of understanding, consent, and admiration. Then, why did Shakyamuni pick up and display the flower? why did it have to be a flower? and, how did that become the circumstances or connection to Great Enlightenment?

In ancient China a great teacher, Gutei, lived who had truly removed all hindrances of the mind. When a seeker of the Way would inquire about the way, he would only raise his finger. No matter what the question might be, his one and only reply was his raised finger. Another renowned Chinese Buddha, Joshu, would reply, "The oak tree in the garden." There happened to be an oak tree in the garden that he replied, that is it. Zen Master Ummon would say, "A shit stick." And Tokusan's reply was to dish out thirty blows with his rod.

There was no great meaning in Shakyamuni's action. In order to make sure of frankness or apparentness, just exhibit frankness as it is. There happened to be a flower at hand that by chance he raised it. It was the same with Ummon's shit stick and Gutei's holding up a finger. The words themselves Ummon dangled from his mouth was frankness itself. There was no meaning in the word itself. Thirty blows is thirty blows; the reality of the pain is frankness itself. There was nothing more--or less--to it. It was the thing itself. One can only clarify frankness by removing the gap. This is why "twirling the flower and a smile" is the ultimate link for enlightenment to happen.

Makakasho had already cultivated or mastered the gap where the habitual mind arises, becoming a man of the Way. And he consented to and assimilated with Shakyamuni's frankness as it was. Shakyamuni was already aware of this and was delighted. Far from being uncertain and unclear, the message of frankness is absolute and total. Internalized evidence becomes an extremely objective reality. But a person who doesn't know this world or domain is not in possession of this objectivity or reality. He doesn't even see that it is outside the realm of understanding.

In short, nothing special was transmitted. Shakyamuni only wanted to convey that this great matter, the Dharma, is a realization based on actual experience of clarifying everything by resolving the gap whereby all things dissolve away. Buddhism is transmitted through the actual evidence of personally experiencing the emptiness of all things. In this way, the Mind of Buddha--as it is--is

conveyed.

It was necessary for Shakyamuni to establish in a dignified way for all to see the existence of Makakasho as truly a man who has attained the Way.

My eye and treasure of the True Law is the awakening of the mysterious mind. True form is without form: This is the subtle entrance to the Dharma. Independent of words and letters, it is transmitted outside the scriptures. It now belongs to Makakasho Sonja.

Thus was testimony given and a heir established.

Zazen practitioners should feel the gravity of this transmission and truly practice to remove the gap. Without reawakening the mind of Makakasho, we cannot be considered children of the Dharma. This should be the goal of religious practice. Becoming a person of the Way, we should then illuminate the path leading to a healthy, wholesome world and happiness for all mankind. This is truly called showing gratitude to the buddhas and patriarchs.

Is the plenitude we are experiencing today really a blessing? or tragedy? The outcome will be decided in the hearts of each one of us.

[The word "frankness" I've used often in this text. Other than how it is described above, no other meaning can be given to it. It is itself--pure, without additives. This is the world of buddha and the Buddhadharma (Law). It is by nature the resolution and the gap removed. The message of Nirvana is call frankness.]

THE FIRST CHINESE PATRIARCH: BODHIDHARMA

What Shakyamuni expounded that day of Sacred Eagle Mountain was testimony of the Mind Seal. Ananda became Makakasho's heir, and the lineage of the single transmission spread across 28 generations to the 28th Indian patriarch, Bodhidharma, who crossing over to China became the first patriarch there.

Bodhidharma was the third son of a king in what now is India. His teacher was Hannyatara. Outshining his teacher's Mind Seal, he set out for China at his teacher's request because there was fear that the True Dharma would parish in India since few people were truly seeking the mind of the Greater Vehicle [What was the reason for this? simply because of the greatness of the Dharma]. If the Dharma were to perish, people would no longer know the path to salvation. He arrived in Koshu, a part of China, three years after leaving India by boat. It is said that it was a difficult journey. He was already over 120 years old when he arrived in China about 1500 years ago.

In China, Buddhist temples had already been established throughout the country, and intellectual Buddhism (Buddhist thought and culture) was at its height. The mechanical explanation of Buddhism was well understood, but the real thing had not yet arrived. It had been rumored that a true man of the Dharma (in the name of Bodhidharma) had come. It probably would have been possible to form a large religious order in very little time.

Bodhidharma was invited to the castle of the emperor Butei, who called himself "Emperor of

the Buddha-mind." But Bodhidharma, seeing that Butei was but an ordinary man in relation to the Dharma, fled the castle. [This was for the sake of the Dharma.] He then entered Shorin-ji, where he found the largest gathering of brilliant minds and a center of Buddhist research and sutra translation.

BODHIDHARMA'S THOUGHT.

"The Buddhadharma cannot be found in words. If an exceptional person does not appear, the Dharma cannot be transmitted. This is how it is conveyed." Because he had actually become such a person, Bodhidharma knew how rare the person who could accept the Dharma directly into his heart. He himself sat for nine years facing a wall, only sitting. Dropping off body and mind, both delusion and enlightenment had disappeared. When people came to hear Bodhidharma's teaching, for those dependent on words and letters he offered nothing to hold on to.

Finally a man of the Dharma had appeared in China after many years of futility. It was the man who sat facing a wall for nine years. It was the outset of winter. Even being beseeched, he sat immovable, just doing zazen --forgetting even zazen itself.

His champion was standing outside waiting. He was a Confucianist scholar, a prodigy who had mastered the theory of the Dharma, who only wanted to receive the teaching from Bodhidharma. The sun set and it became cold. It started to snow. The final ordeal had come. In the middle of the snow, he stood unmoving. The snow was now hip-deep and dawn started to break. A seeker of the Way must be steadfast in this way.

Bodhidharma took a look at the pitiful sight and said, "What do you search for standing in the snow?" He said, "I would like to hear the Dharma's compassionate teaching so that it could disseminate widely.

Bodhidharma said, "The various buddhas of the past devoted themselves earnestly. They practiced what was difficult to practice, and endured what was difficult to endure. One cannot be shallow, small-minded, proud, or complacent." The scholar listened to the motherly advice which Bodhidharma said only once. Then the scholar took out a knife and cut off his arm at the elbow, and displayed it to Bodhidharma who deeply consented. He took the scholar as a disciple. The disciple's name was Eka, to be the second Chinese patriarch.

Not having resolved his problem, Eka was still deep in confusion. He entreated his teacher, "I have not yet found peace of mind. Please grant me peace of mind."

Bodhidharma replied, "Bring me your mind and I will show you peace."

Eka, "I cannot grasp it."

Bodhidharma then said, "Then I have shown you peace of mind."

Eka regarded the mind as something fixed that existed. Such a thing exists nowhere. It would be fine just to understand this fact. Eka saw that the mind of suffering didn't exist in a particular place. Here the final conclusion had been reached. The peace he attained was from the bottom of his heart. A fool among the foolish. The crystallization of the Way-seeking mind. For someone who is wholeheartedly seeking the Way, there is no space or time to rely on things. It is truth itself, reality itself. This is the true mind that seeks the Way; it is the everyday mind. It is frankness. It is the destination. It is called the Buddhadharma. It is called enlightenment. And that person is called Buddha. Really believe that everything is full and complete as it is, then practice. Not looking back, there will be no separation or gap. The main principle of our sect is thorough practice and the attainment of truth within truth. This is an example that, really throwing away this body in search of a resolution to the mind, anyone can accomplish it. When the ego and buddha really meet face to face, it will be the ultimate event of one's life.

Eka's fresh blood in the scarlet snow is a symbol of Bodaishin. Life is short. In your time of death, don't fall into confusion. Why don't you think a little about this armless man standing in the snow. This was the birth of the second Chinese patriarch, Taiso Eka. With great difficulty the true transmission has been passed down from Shakyamuni who sat for six years, through Bodhidharma's nine years of facing the wall, to one-armed Taiso Eka. That fresh blood in the snow and Shakyamuni's tears of blood are the tradition that has continued through the tears and toil for Awakening. The tradition has been conveyed for 28 generations in India, 23 generations in China, and then passed on to Japan. Who is willing to carry on?

ZEN MASTER EIHEI DOGEN

In 1224 Dogen at the age of 23 left Japan for China in search of a true teacher. His quest continued for three years before finding Master Nyojo, the 51st patriarch, under whom Dogen closely studied. Receiving Nyojo's Seal of Mind he returned home to Japan in 1227. Five years later he founded the zen monastery Kosho-ji in Uji, near Kyoto, becoming the founder of Japan's Soto Zen sect and spreading the lineage of Nyojo.

Here the gifted monk Koun Ejo appeared. Through great toil and diligence he was able to transmit the message of the mysterious mind of Nirvana. In his treatise, Zuimonki, Ejo writes:

In the second year of Katei (A.D.1236) on the evening of the last day of the twelfth month, Master Dogen appointed me [Ejo Zenji], to be shuso [head monk] of Kosho-ji. After an informal speech Dogen asked me as the shuso to take up the whisk and give a lecture for the first time. I was the first shuso of Kosho-ji.

In his short speech Master Dogen brought up the matter of the transmission of the Buddhadharma in this lineage.

"The First Patriarch came from the West and stayed at Shorin Temple. He sat facing the wall waiting for someone to whom to transmit the Dharma and anticipating the time when the Dharma would spread. In December of a certain year Eka came to practice under him. The First Patriarch knew that he was a vessel of the Supreme Vehicle, so he taught and guided him; both the Dharma and the robe were transmitted. Their descendants spread throughout the country and the True Dharma has prevailed down to the present day.

"I have appointed a shuso for the first time at this monastery. Today I have asked him to take up the whisk and give a lecture. Do not worry about the small number in this sangha [the community of monks]. Ejo, do not mind that you are a beginner. On Funyo Mountain there were only six or seven people; at Yakusan there were only less than ten. Nevertheless, all of them practiced the Way of the buddhas and patriarchs. They called this 'the flourishing of the monasteries.'

Ponder the fact that someone realized the Way by the sound of bamboo; that another clarified the mind at the sight of peach blossoms. How could it be possible to differentiate smart bamboo trees from dull ones, or deluded ones from enlightened ones? How could there be shallow or deep, wise or stupid, among flowers? The flowers bloom every year, nevertheless, not everyone attains enlightenment by viewing them. Stones often strike bamboo, still not everyone who hears the sound clarifies the Way. Only through the virtue of long study and continuous practice with the assistance of diligent effort in the Way does one realize the Way or clarify the mind. This did not occur because the sound of bamboo was especially wonderful, nor because the color of peach blossoms was particularly profound. Although the sound of bamboo is marvelous, it does not sound of itself; it cries out with the help of a piece of tile. Although the color of peach blossoms is beautiful of themselves;

they open with the help of the spring breeze.

The condition of practicing the Way is also like this. This Way is inherent in each of us; still, our gaining the Way depends upon the help of fellow practitioners. Though each person is brilliant, still, our practicing the Way needs the power of other people in the sangha. Therefore, unifying your mind and concentrating your aspiration, practice and seek the Way together. A jewel becomes a vessel by polishing it; a human being becomes benevolent and wise by refining it. What jewel glitters from its inception? Who is brilliant from the outset? You must polish and refine. So, do not demean yourselves, and do not relax in your practice of the Way.

An ancient said, 'Do not spend your time in vain.' Now I ask you, does time stop though you hold it dear? Or does it continue even though you lament? You must know that it is not time that passes in vain; it is the person who spends it in vain. This means that human beings, just the same as time, have to devote themselves to the practice of the Way instead of spending their time in vain.

"Thus, put your minds together in studying and practicing. It is not easy to uphold the Dharma by myself. The Way the buddhas and patriarchs have practiced has always been like this. There were many who attained the Way by following the teaching of the Tathagata, but there were some who ascertained the Way through Ananda. Shuso, you must not depreciate yourself saying that you are not a vessel of the Dharma. Give a lecture to your fellow practitioners on the story of Tozan's three pounds of flax.

Dogen got down from his seat, the drum was struck again, and the shuso took the whisk. This was the first 'taking the whisk' at Kosho-ji. I was 39 years old.**

Dogen was probably about 35 or 36 at the time, two years younger than his disciple Ejo.

When Dogen was three years old, he lost his father and eight when his mother died. At thirteen he entered the renowned temple Hiezan, and at fourteen formally became a monk. He was intimately acquainted with life's impermanence, and was an unparalleled genius. And he possessed an uncommon spirit for religious practice and study. He studied in detail everything he could at Hiezan. He reread the sutras three times but couldn't resolve his Great Doubt:

Shakyamuni Buddha said that all creatures in the three worlds are naturally and fully endowed with the Dharma. Why, then, did all the buddhas and patriarchs have to undergo religious practice?

If everyone, as they are, from the start is already buddha, why did all the patriarchs of the three worlds (past, present, and future) wholeheartedly do shugyo to awaken? Wasn't there a contradiction in what Shakyamuni said? Which one is the truth? What is the purpose of shugyo? What does one awaken to by doing practice?

Dogen had a complete mastery of the philosophy of Buddhism, but the discrepancy between the teaching of Buddha and the actions of the patriarchs confounded him. When he asked the high priests of Hiezan, he still didn't understand. Finally, he asked all of the eminent scholars and religious heads in Kyoto. But he was still unsatisfied. Finally, he obtained an invitation to meet Master Eisai, the first person to transmit zen in Japan. From Eisai he realized the formidability of zen practice. After Eisai's death, Dogen continued to study under Myozen, Eisai's disciple. At the age of about 23 he went to China to seek the Dharma. For three years he searched in vain for a teacher in China. Finally, giving up he returned to his ship.

An old monk came to the ship to buy a few Japanese mushrooms. Dogen must have felt something noble about that resolute old monk, for after talking with him Dogen abandoned his plans to return to Japan. He heard that on Mt. Tendo there lived a bright-eyed master named Nyojo. With delight, Dogen set out with the old monk for Mt. Tendo. Dogen had finally found a place to devote

himself to serious practice.

For Dogen, encountering Nyojo gave him a certain peace of mind, but his doubt still laid unresolved. His mind was still in anguish. He understood all there was to understand, but deep in his heart he felt unsatisfied and helpless.

One summer day he encountered the old monk who had come to the ship, drying mushrooms in the scorching heat with his back bent in old age. He looked in pain. Dogen ran up to him and said, "Venerable monk, it is a pity that you should do this. Allow me to call a younger monk to do the work." But the old monk's Bodaishin was still strong. He resolutely glared at Dogen saying: "Others are not me. I heard that you came to China for the purpose of the Great Way. You should thoroughly investigate the self. The moment you looked at me you were already looking the other way deluding yourself. Losing sight of oneself by worrying about others is foolish. You don't understand the significance of seeing. Without engaging the self, just look. That is what shugyo is. You can't see that I am simply doing this, so don't say foolish things. Another person's practice is their own business."

Not understanding the meaning of the old monk's words, naively Dogen again said, "Why not just wait until the sun goes down a bit?" His kindness was worldly. When you don't understand, there's not much that can be done for you. The old monk should have picked up his cane and beaten Dogen until he did understand. Worldly kindness will destroy the Way; anger and harshness are great compassion for the Greater Vehicle.

The old monk continued, "You are half-hearted. For this, the Dharma will perish. Don't wait for a certain time." Shugyo is the present moment. If you don't even understand when worldly thoughts are arising, then you don't know what shugyo is. And you don't even know where to look. How pitiful. When are you going to begin to practice? There's nothing outside of now.

To resolve the mind, the gap must be removed. To do this, the key is to set your eyes on the present moment. It means that our whole lives--our existence--and our practice is now, occurring just as it is. Disregarding this, we squander our lives.

So, in principle how should we breathe?
Stand face to face with the breathing and investigate it.

What is walking?
Take each step as the really first step and investigate and probe that single step as it is.

How do you eat a morsel of food?
By actually doing and investigating--really investigating what a single bite is.

How do you really see? or hear? or taste?

You mustn't lose even a single instant because unconscious or absentminded action is meaningless. When one's mind isn't one with--is separate from--one's actions, it is no different than being a simple animal. As master Mumon Ekai wrote: "It is like the ghosts and spirits bobbing amongst the bushes and trees; you have no idea of what you are actually doing." [At this time, Mumon still had not yet arrived at being able to investigate the present moment and was still being tossed around by his senses and perceptions. His show of kindness was still worldly.]

Dogen had put himself in hot water twice. His roar once seemed to ring true, but that was gone

now. One begins to think, Where?

When a person throws himself entirely into shugo, there is only one place to go: a shugyo dojo [training center]. The reason Dogen still hadn't yet brought his doubt to a conclusion was because he wasn't focused on the present moment where the ego dwells. Later, he was able to offer the kind counsel "The study of Buddhism is the study of the self" because he personally recognized that the cause of losing sight of oneself was due to reasoning arising first. He saw that one must never lose one's grasp of the present moment, where the six senses actually do function; that losing sight of one's present self, one merely becomes a creature of habit. Our practice is to break those habits. Doing this, all discrimination and right-and-wrong disappear because dropping off of body and mind is clarified.

Dogen had finally realized the gravity of his brazen defiance of the old monk's remarks. Without knowing it, his method of practice had been clarified. He was deeply grateful for the old monk's piercing remarks. Now his course--to maintain the present moment--was set.

One day in the meditation hall of the monastery, the monk sitting beside Dogen was nodding sleepily during zazen. Master Nyojo seeing this said,

Soldiers give their lives guarding the country night and day. Farmers work hard from morning until night raising their crops. Monks feed and clothe themselves due to the efforts of others. It is a monk's duty to do shugyo and sit wholeheartedly. How can you sleep!

Saying this Nyojo struck the monk with his stick out of pure love of the Dharma. From the sound of the impact, Dogen, dropping off body, utterly discarded the ego/self. The gap falling away, he was truly reborn. This trifling event which astonished him was the message of the accomplishment of "The eye and treasure of the True Dharma." It was the announcement of finally completely all his shugyo and resolving his great doubt, to obtain the Mind Seal of salvation. Then going to Master Nyojo's room, Dogen received his acknowledgement and approval.

This event brought him no particular joy, for what was there to be joyful about?

On the morning Dogen left China, he said, "The Buddhadharma doesn't exist in the least. Only have a flexible mind. I only know that the eyes lay horizontal and the nose stands vertical."

His eyes and ears and mind were the same as before, and the world of the senses and perception didn't change. Only everything in nature was the very thing itself, just as it is. When the gap is removed, all concerns vanish and all is in ultimate peace. This is truly the Buddhadharma. Those who don't know this just don't know. This matter is outside words, cannot be explained with words, so there is nothing remaining to say. It is all a matter of practicing as if your head were on fire (as if your life depended on it).

AWAKENING TO THE TRUE WORLD

When is suffering and delusion? When is one deceived by thinking? When is joy? or sorrow?

The answer to these simple questions is, Now. It is your present condition. The present is ever-present. Tomorrow or next year, or a 100 million years hence, all are nothing but that present instant. Everything of the past and future are but conceptual and imagined constructs. Results naturally arise according to causes. This is the future. As long as there is a present, there will be a future. In

now is both cause and effect. You must know that detaching from the present, both past and future disappear.

When does suffering arise? or concerns? When is the resolution to these?

It can only be in the present moment: The resolution in the absolute world of no beginning and no end.

Is there anything outside of now?

Seeing, hearing, tasting, thinking, feeling cold or hungry or dissatisfaction or discontent: all are the present reality. They are circumstances: phenomenon arising due to relationships and conditions. There is nothing that is permanent, unchanging. Consequently, due to relationships and conditions, things are free to change into any form. Flowing water permeates anywhere.

All things happen or arise due to the vicissitudes of transiency. Transiency is the working of now and the life of the universe. All things are but the design of the vicissitudes of the present moment. The present is the form of all living phenomenon of the universe. This absolute present is the zenith of purity and simplicity. It means all things are, in the moment, simply and purely how they are. No matter what the form or aspect it may be, everything is simply now, as it is. In now, there is no past or future. This is the world of Nirvana and the realized message called enlightenment.

This world of no before and after, of the thing itself, as it is, is also called no-mind. It is the world pure and free of all intellect, reasoning, or concerns. In order to awaken, openly and simply assimilate with your present condition now. Just penetrate the present moment now. When things just are, then you have become now.

Existing without existing is the condition of now, of thusness (things as they are), free of the gap. It is dropped-off body and mind. To awaken, using any means just utterly become now. When you personally know the message, it is enlightenment. Zazen is the practice to attain this. Zazen is just zazen. There is no natural or fundamental law more frank and open than this.

In short, the main point of zazen is transcending even zazen itself. This message is the eternal hope and light. It is salvation and the heart of Buddha, and his rebirth. And we are already that person. This great truth is the Buddhadharma. It is called the Buddha Way to salvation.

All things have a principal element, and shugyo does, too. It is that somebody quickly, certainly, and easily accomplish the goal. To awaken, one puts away scattered thinking, cuts off random thoughts, and continually endeavors to return to the present moment. This is how one first endeavors. Of course, everyone's perseverance, belief, and concentration vary. But their development all runs the same course. People's sufferings and progress will depend on the manifold habits they have formed. But the mechanism for personally getting hold of the mind is the same for all, as is the mechanism for actually removing the gap to become that frank and open person. The decisive factor is to thoroughly investigate the mind until the fundamental and profound Great Doubt arises. One must not, in the meantime, arbitrarily attach a definition or form to the Dharma, Enlightenment, or Zen.

There are two important factors in shugyo. First, just sit. Second, ask your teacher or master about the Dharma in detail. Listen to what he says, give it thoughtful consideration, and revise and improve on your understanding; then have your teacher check your understanding. If any doubts or problems remain, then be sure to inquire about them. Don't be mistaken about your understanding of the theory of the Dharma. Confirm your understanding, then without a particle of doubt put his teaching into continual, actual practice.

THE PROCESS OF RELIGIOUS PRACTICE

1. Enlightenment is attaining the Buddhadharmā and the mind of Buddha. To do shugyo, throw away your various desires. Vow resolutely to the buddhas and to yourself to attain the True Way. Show great reverence and affection to all the past teachers, and place chief importance on finding a true teacher.

2. When you meet a true teacher, just believe in what he teaches and solely put it into practice.

3. Continuously throwing away random thinking, keep and maintain each single breath. Due to the power of accumulated past habits, one loses sight of the present self. At this time, effort above and beyond the power of acquired habits is needed. Doing this is most excruciating.

4. When sitting zazen, after each breath sway your body once left and right. This cuts off random thoughts, relieves stressful leaning, improves the natural energy flow of both body and mind, and arrests sleepiness.

5. When you begin to differentiate moments of thinking and the real world, it becomes easier to bring oneself back to the present. Unnecessary strain is no longer needed. The suffering in sitting ceases. Seeing the border between the actual world and thought, zazen instantly becomes enjoyable.

6. Before long, scatteredness is resolved. And one no longer follows thoughts even if they arise, leaving things as they are. Around this time, you will come to understand when thoughts and consciousness begin to arise. Then you begin to know the source itself of cutting off thought, where nothing exists. Then zazen becomes inspiring. And in all your daily activities it is possible to continually be conscious of each moment. The mind eventually stops moving arbitrarily. But it is still necessary to stay on guard, not allowing the mind to be stolen by the senses and perceptions, because random thoughts do continue to rise.

7. Then you come to attain thoughtless thought and the realm of no before and after. You come to understand your original nature, confirming that one must do absolutely nothing. Doing something means perceiving a self and thus defiling the Dharma. One comes to see this. It is the world of thusness, the one-dimensional world of serenity and equality. From here, one merely penetrates. Real practice is just the present moment. Sentiments quieten, but it is a tranquility far beyond outward appearance. It is the world of the senses and perception as they are. You come to understand what enlightenment is, what one's present condition previous to thought and words is. All doubt disappears. The words of the past masters become vividly clear. [Unaware, this can stimulate an intellectual satisfaction, therefore reading should be avoided.]

8. You actually penetrate into selflessness, penetrate the thing itself and reach emptiness. It is a moment of great joy and delight. Removing the gap, you confirm that the gap itself was imagined. It is Nirvana and enlightenment, the true present. It is a world where past is cut off and concerns no longer arise. It is a world where all the faculties in which we are naturally endowed simply function according to conditions and circumstances. Because the mind is instantaneously functioning according to conditions of the immediate and utter present, there is nothing that exists. The moment comes when you decisively become that world, realizing the message of "Form is void; void is form." The real meaning of as-it-is becomes yours. It is the first time you deal frankly with the true self. You no longer dwell in the regular world where the self remains unclear.

9. Now begins shugyo after enlightenment. With enlightenment itself comes exceptional conviction and strength. By acknowledging enlightenment, it becomes a hindrance. Now is the practice of throwing away even enlightenment. Perceiving random thoughts or perceiving enlightenment are both delusion. If nothing exists, one can become anything according to circumstances. This is true freedom. To throw away enlightenment, whatever you do, just do it. Really throw away everything, even the Dharma, enlightenment, and Buddha. Really simply doing everything, unwaveringly dwelling in the present.

10. When enlightenment and the Dharma drop off, this is the great accomplishment: Great Enlightenment. Great Truth is void of what is considered to be truth and not truth. Here one reaches the sphere of activity of Shakyamuni Buddha, the shining light of the world of "In all of heaven and earth, I alone am the world-honored one," giving ourselves up to the everlasting profoundness of existence to realize the joy and dignity of life-and-death; and empowered with boundless freedom and peace of mind, saving others and the world. Everyone who realized this world for themselves tempered and polished suchness. National Teacher Daio said, "Throwing away the buddhas and patriarchs, do not disregard shugyo." Profoundly enlightened, he utterly threw that away, too, and refined where there was nothing to refine. Going utterly beyond words, he forgot about words and never even opened his mouth. Not even Buddha himself could find him. But, for sure, Buddha honored him.

A gorgeous stage is essential for true endeavor. This is because results befittingly accompany their causes. Forasmuch as the revered teachings do exist, if you really do it now, anyone can be saved. The Dharma permeating the Dharma, truth fostering truth, mind penetrating mind: all are due to the Way. Thus, we practice the Way for the sake of the Way. This is Bodaishin, the mind that seeks the Way.

Man is a creature who loves and values truth. His conviction in, and ideal of the utter sanctity of human life lies in the accessible ability to repent and reform. Man's core is, in all respects, his mind and spirit, which, in turn, are centered in the True Mind, the Supreme Mind, and compassion, together with self-reflection, repentance, ideals, and endurance. It is the mind without deception or treachery, possessing a dignity which values, above all, the Dharma.

Others are not me,
Do not wait;
Time passes quicker than an arrow,
Fate strikes like lightning.

At this time when all people of the world earnestly pray for world peace and happiness, we should all heed these pleas of the patriarch. We should hasten the rebirth of the patriarchs. Where are we going to find such a person?

POSTSCRIPT

This text is created from the urgent plea that the patriarchs be resurrected. The important point is to simply investigate the mind. Time is short. Politicians are a primary factor in society's ruin. They and their shameless companions make a vulgar exhibition of their greed for money, and the mass media recounts this to the public. A map and compass are needed to determine truth in order to go beyond this sphere of activity. How can it be settled?

Particularly today, all issues of education concern the security of peace for mankind and a sound and healthy continuation of our species. This is a crucial problem.

But despite this situation.....

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** Koun Ejo Zenji, *Shobogenzo-Zuimonki*, trans. Shohaku Okamura (Kyoto, Japan: Kyoto Soto-Zen Center, 1987), 141-145.