

A Guide to *Susokukan* 数息観 Breath-counting Meditation in Zen

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1 Foreword

Susokukan (breath-counting meditation) is a method of exercising in Zazen to refine yourself, wherein you count your breaths gently. This method of self-observation (觀法 *kanpo*) has been employed in India from time immemorial as the ‘Pleasant path to Peace’ (安樂の法門 *Anraku no homon*). It was handed on to China with Buddhism and to Japan later on. Clearly, this method of physical as well as mental training has a long, three-part history. We can be almost certain that of the various sects there were no leaders who did not practice it in some form or other. It is clearly not Buddhism itself, but it worked so effectively that these leaders used it along with other ways for teaching Buddhism. In this pamphlet, I want to recommend it to you from my own experience. Let me start with its effects.

2 The Effects of *Susokukan*

I have heard people say that when you get angry, you should first silently count three before opening your mouth or raising a fist. There seems to be good sense in this saying, as most anger is not strong enough to continue longer than that. *Susokukan* breath counting is designed to free you from eternal slavery to your emotions and to keep your mind and body in a balanced state. Whenever you practice it, you will reach a state of great calmness, you will not be bothered by trivialities, and you will be able to make rapid decisions in response to events, which will help you to protect yourself in an emergency.

Let me give you some examples of the above. A friend of mine who worked for a company in Kitakyushu was in charge of the company baseball team. The team often represented the city in tournaments, but never won a final. From my own analysis, I attributed the lack of results to the team's naiveté, and I suggested that *susokukan* might work to focus their potential even in the tension of a tournament final. He had just enough experience of *susokukan* to understand my words and taught the team the technique during their training camp. That year they won the final. They owed the victory to many things, among which, however, *susokukan* was noted for its effectiveness.

Susokukan can also help those who suffer from insomnia. In general, it works extremely well as a result of the state of calmness which it produces. There are many causes for insomnia, and I cannot say that it will cure them all. However, for those who cannot sleep from the stress of daily life or as a result of overwork, *susokukan* is the best remedy. I could list a number of examples showing how effective it can be, but instead I will mention some cases where people cannot sleep in spite of *susokukan*. On closer questioning of these people, it is usually that they do not practice seriously enough or are half-hearted.

Mr. Koken Unosawa, a friend of mine, was associate president of a hospital in Shitaya, Tokyo. His usual treatment for insomnia was a dose of paradox: 'Most of us cannot help sleeping. Some of us spend half of our time asleep. You are one of a few lucky chaps who need not go to bed. I wish I could live like you.' He followed this with guidance in *susokukan* instead of sleeping pills. His paradox served as a useful hint to those who tried to sleep in vain. Unlike Mr. Unosawa, however, I would give them more orthodox advice, 'It is a pity you cannot sleep. Sleeplessness is a medical problem to be solved by specialists. Though I am not in a position to cure you, I will tell you how to keep yourself healthy even without enough sleep. Practice *susokukan*, the best way to achieve mental and physical integrity. When sleep does not come, do not try to force it, just start *susokukan*. Nightlong meditation is a hundred times better for your health than a fitful nightmare interspersed with deeper sleep. Try it and find yourself fit and refreshed tomorrow morning. If, by chance, sleep comes to you during meditation, don't resist it.' Many people who have followed my advice have come to thank me later. Dr. Gido Narazaki from Kokura, Kyushu would go further and say that *susokukan* can

cure various disorders including loss of appetite and constipation.

Another follower of mine from Hokkaido, Mr. Katei Hasegawa, was in a sanatorium with tuberculosis just after the last war. As in many sanatoria, the patients were encouraged to spend time composing short poems (*haiku* and *waka*) that requires only a pencil and paper. Mr. Hasegawa was no exception and composed poems. He devoted himself so deeply to it that his health actually became worse. He then gave up composing, but useless thoughts crowded his brain seeming to increase the further he kept himself away from *haiku*. Many of these thoughts centred on concern about his family which further worsened his health. He said 'My stubbornness would not allow me to return to Haiku composition, yet if this situation continued I was going to die. Then I recalled that you had once told me of *susokukan* as explained by Hakuin in *Yasen kanna*. As a last resort I decided to try it. Whether I survive or not, I will continue it as long as I can and rid myself of this morbid fear of death. Success came rapidly. Gradually I felt better and better, and this strengthened my belief in this method which helped me to meditate wholeheartedly. I confounded all the doctors by quickly recovering my health and leaving the hospital. I owe my present good health to your instruction in *susokukan*.'

Mr. Hasegawa is now an energetic schoolmaster. His is a typical case of the effectiveness of *susokukan*. The practice helps to bring about an unperturbed state of mind which makes self-healing possible. Though it is effective, it would be unbalanced not to mention the dangers of misuse. Medical opinion should still be followed, and *susokukan* done in addition to this. This is not a cure all.

The benefits of *susokukan* are not limited to tranquility and health. *Susokukan-sammai* (transcendental concentration) will make all kinds of things work out better, including your job. The word *sammai* 三昧 is used frequently in Japanese to refer to the concentration achieved when doing things proficiently, like playing the game of Go (*Go-sammai*), or when reading intently (*dokusho-sammai*). It is from Sanskrit—*Samadhi*—and it used to be pronounced *sammadai* or *sammaji* when written in Chinese characters, while the meaning was translated as *jo* (stillness) or *shoju* (the state of unfettered acceptance). It literally means the state of mind which is firmly concentrated on a something and is free from any outer influence. Though *sammai* has a deeper meaning, I will not explain

it until I refer to *yoriki* (定力 the power out of *jo*) or *doriki* (道力 a similar power), as, at this moment, further explanation might confuse the whole picture on such a subtle subject. So, for the moment take it as the usual *sammai*, as is used in *Go-sammai*.

When you are absorbed in the game of Go, you are unaware of passing time, of temperature, of appetite, and finally of anything. You are the game of Go itself. We usually call such a state of mind *Go-sammai*. *Dokusho-sammai* is the same state but in relation to a different activity—reading. It comes only when you are reading something interesting, that is to say, you cannot enter *sammai* state when you are not interested in matters you are engaged in, and that is why few are in such a state when reading set reading material in schools. I might draw your attention here to the possibility of utilizing *sammai* in education in order that a serious student may develop his own ability in subjects he instinctively dislikes. In actual practice, daily training of a student in *susokukan* surely develops his *sammai* power and eventually allows him to master any subject by means of natural and easy concentration on reading. I can say all this from my own experience in a teaching career of twenty-five years with mostly successful experiments.

My success in those experiments was only natural, in view of the fact that most students sit down in lecture halls, open their books, but they do not really study. It is too much to say that all of them are half-hearted in their studies, but, owing to the absence of *sammai* power, most of them cannot concentrate themselves upon a given subject and a half of their attention is somewhat distracted. Their potential ability could be developed more efficiently, by the introduction of *sammai* training into the educational system.

A wise man said, ‘Unless your mind is fixed directly on the subject at hand, you neither see what you try to look at, nor hear what you try to listen to.’ Certainly, we cannot call someone who is supposed to study a student just because he sits down for a long time in front of his reading desk. If you develop this power which oozes out of *sammai*, you will become ready for immediate concentration on a subject, whatever the conditions of your circumstances may be. When ‘the mind is directly fixed on a subject,’ you can mobilize whatever you have in yourself, you can read most efficiently, and as a matter of course, you can think most lucidly and you cannot fail to improve the standard of

your work.

It may sound boring talking so much about reading. *Sammai* not only helps those who read but also those who want to improve their work in daily life. It is especially useful when you are in noisy surroundings and engaged in a job which is susceptible to environmental influences. An Osaka stockbroker whom I have long been acquainted with always says that, with exercise in *susokukan*, he never loses money on the stock market. In a game, impatience is taboo. If I make this secret open and many impatience-free players appear, I would be sued by pinball house owners for the obstruction of their business (in Japan, pinball is a multi-million dollar industry).

I have often heard of the sudden awakening of artists and warriors to masterliness, and I take it for granted in the light of *sammai* power. As some of you know well, the famous Buddhist swordsman Teshu Yamaoka meditated on the koan 'the Five Fold Truth' of Rev. Tosan (the Tosan *Goi*, enlightened himself out through it and founded his new school of swordsmanship, 'Mutoryu' (無刀流 no-sword school). You can see the same line of training of swordsmen in the Metropolitan Police Board, as is conducted by Mr. Toko Ogawa, an eighth-dan instructor. He always encourages young people to sit and meditate so as to develop their *sammai* power, which always finds its right place in the course of artist training, both civil and combative.

Apart from all the subtlety, you may undertake *susokukan* when you need to orient yourself. When it so happens that you will have to wait long for somebody to come, without anything to read or to pass time on, you could take the opportunity to practice *susokukan*. Neither boredom nor irritation will find their place in your mind. Not only would you not waste time, you would even feel the shortness of time for meditation. If the time is long enough to take up a subject to ponder upon, take the opportunity to think deeply over a single matter, if any, for which you have been looking for solution. Probably you are in better position than usual to approach it.

In the case of a waiting room, the longest time you would be likely to spend would be more or less half a day and, if you did not undertake *susokukan*, hopelessly undesirable things would not be expected. But if one were in prison, that would be another story.

I had an intimate friend who was once a mayor of a city in Chugoku. He experienced life in a solitary cell of prison as a suspect, in connection with an election for local

politics. He was so lucky that, before all this fell upon him, he had Zen training in our Samgha. He told me later that during the life in the solitary cell at prison, *susokukan* was of such help to him, that he was able to maintain his efforts to live up to his own principles.

At first, he thought about the unfairness of others and shortcomings of the institution all day long; so much so that he felt he would become insane. I can imagine, from his character, how he felt under the circumstances. After a while, suddenly he was awakened by his own thoughts, 'Now looking at this all wrong. I must not waste this time that I have been given in this way.' He chose *susokukan* as a thing he could and should do wholeheartedly in the cell. Later he said to me, 'After composing myself in *susokukan*, I came to my feet as if I were in a Dojo where I could look deep through life. To me, moonlit night there was no less beauty than anywhere else. All this is no sour grapes.'

There are plenty of examples of this type, and I am sure you will be able to add more of them for yourself if you follow the method I give below.

3 The Method of Zazen

As was said earlier, *susokukan* is the act of counting one's own breaths, while he or she sits in Zazen manner. Let me start by explaining Zazen. A concise explanation of the traditional method set for Zazen is given in the books *Zazengi*, *Zazenmei*, *Zazenshin*, and so forth. Now I will tell you simple and reasonable way to do it which comes from my own experience, which will be easier for you to practice. First of all, as to 'where and when'. Find a calm and clean place, that is an ideal; but I in no way rule out usual bedrooms and drawing rooms as the case may be. Any place should be calmer early in the morning; so rise early and set to it. A beginner is more a creature of circumstances than a seasoned practitioner; so it is best to try it in the early morning hours.

However, it sometimes depends upon the state of your family and of your occupation, whether you can do it in the morning or not. The minimum requirement is a tidy place without much noise. We usually bum an incense stick when we sit, so as to sit more comfortably. Incense sticks give out a relaxing odor and help us maintain an atmosphere of peace, and besides, help us measure the time spent in meditation, as has been said from days of old, 'sit an incense stick's burning.'

You may postpone this exercise in the following cases: when very tired, very sleepy,

very hungry or after a meal. If you have an anal ailment, you should not do Zazen an extended period. As to what to wear, your clothes should be loose-fitting without tight buttons and cords. It is most important for you to be able to sit in comfort.

After finding an adequate place and time, you need a futon (a Japanese cushion to sit on). You need two ordinary flat, thick cushions. First place one cushion on the floor, double the other cushion in two and put it on the former, then seat yourself on the folded cushion. In the case of the ordinary cross-legged form of sitting, unless you bend your back and lean forward, you may tumble over backwards.

The cushion lying under the buttocks will shift the weight of upper half of your body forwards and you can stabilize your whole body. Therefore the height of the second cushion is to be suitably adjusted to each sitter.

When you feel most stable, the height is just suitable for you. Do not this matter lightly as the cushion height is decisively important for the right posture in Zazen. It is shown by the fact that most of those who take training in Zazen have their own cushions. Now prepare yourself to feel as if you were a five-storied pagoda (the Gorin-no-To) rising from the cushion. Then swing the upper half of your body slowly, back and forth, right and left, for more stability.

There are two methods of cross-legged sitting; one is *kekkaфуza* (full-lotus) and the other *hankafuza* (half-lotus). The former is the method in which you draw your right foot on to the left thigh, and then draw up your left foot on to the right thigh. it is the regular posture, but it sometimes gives pain to those who have fat bodies or short legs. In such cases, Hankafuza is acceptable. The Hankafuza posture is formed when you draw up either foot onto the opposite thigh. In this posture, the upper half of your body is apt to lean sideways and you will have to leave the stabilizing job to the foot lying underneath. In either posture, the important point is to make a regular triangle with the three points, the two kneecaps and coccyx. The triangle has a downward slope to the front and, in this posture, when you straighten your spine, the perpendicular line to the floor from the center of gravity of the upper half of the body naturally falls on the center of the triangle thus gives the sense of stability I referred to before. When you do not feel this sense of stability in the Zazen posture, the perpendicular line I mentioned above falls on at the wrong point. If so, you should not hesitate to adjust

the height of the cushion under the buttocks, because if you fail in this, you will also fail to do Zazen long enough for its effect to be felt. One of the worst results could be the uncontrollable swaying of your trunk during Zazen due to an unbalanced state of muscles or something of that nature. There has been many schools of so-called Seizaho (Meditative posture), but the reason why most of them have not become popular is the absence of balance in the form of sitting. The right posture I explained above is justified from both physical and physiological viewpoints, if you follow the method strictly, you can sit for a long time without fatigue, and you can, if you to want, even sleep while you are thus sitting, with a support under your chin.

After the foundation is thus set, you should deal with your hands. You put one hand upon the other, palms up, and let the tips of both thumbs touch each other, and you will look as if you were forming an oval with both hands, when seen from the front. The hands are then placed on the lap with both elbows kept slightly away from the body and with the shoulders kept free from tension. Then you straighten your spine and pull in your chin a little, when you feel that the end of your nose and your navel are lying on the same line perpendicular to the floor.

To the general instruction 'Keep your eyelids half shut,' I have an objection. I say that you need not shut your eyes in any way and that the only thing for you to do is cast down the line of vision naturally so as to see the area about one meter before you. The general instruction tells you how you ought to look, not how to look like that. Here is a funny story about that.

In the country, village youths got together for *susokukan* training. After the course was over, the leader asked the trainees what they were most impressed by. A young man said, 'It was most difficult and most impressive to keep my eyes half open.' The surprised leader asked him the reason and found, to his further surprise, that the young man was trying to sit with one eye open. Be that as it may, the choice of words in instruction is of such importance that a quotation from any book should be done after thoroughly reading between the lines.

When we gaze at anything for a long time, we are apt to become dull in mind. That is why the word *hangan* (half opened eyes) has been in use, to warn people not to be excessively watchful. The core of the thing is that you must not shut your eyes. In the

beginning, one is likely to think that the shut eyes will help the concentration of mind, but, in fact, you will fall into blunt stillness and will not be able to practice vivid and effective *susokukan*. You should keep your mouth closed and breathe naturally through your nostrils. Probably you have heard of deep breathing or abdominal breathing being recommended as of importance. That is another wrong way of instruction. If it is natural for you to breathe deep, long breaths, of course there is no harm in it. However, you should not force your breathing, but just breathe. Zazen is called the 'Pleasant Path to Truth' because you can thereby follow the unfettered flow of nature. Neither is there any need to purposely gathering strength in the abdomen. The worst thing to do would be gathering strength in the region of stomach. In spite of all this, we often find books that tell us 'to gather the strength of the whole system and concentrate it in the abdomen.' This oft repeated saying is grammatically misleading. If the strength were gathered naturally in the abdomen, and only then, you would be sitting in the right way—following nature.

In Zazen you need to pay attention to only two things, the right posture, mentioned above, and *Susoku-sammai*, treated in the following passages. In the right posture, stability is always there, as it is something central.

When you have secured stability, the right posture is half done. So, you might, in your daily life, try to learn how to get it, wherever you may be—sitting in a chair, lying in a sick-bed and so on. In this way, you will eventually be able to meditate as you do in Zazen, regardless of the posture you are in. I know of some Zen-minded people, who, as they belong to the fair sex, do not feel like sitting cross-legged, They may sit square on their legs. In this posture too, however, they are advised to put the second cushion folded into adequate height under the buttocks (between the feet) and keep both knees a bit away from each other for stability. But this is not a normal Zen posture, mark you, and I am sure those women will also find more comfort in the normal way of sitting, as is observed by Zen nuns.

So much will be about your posture in Zazen, and you are now counting your own breaths.

4 The Order of Practice in *Susokukan*

First, I will tell you what the mental attitude should be before you begin *susokukan*: don't think that here is a being only a few meters high resting on a little cushion; have pride that there sits a stately master of universe on this cushion—with the whole of heaven and earth under your buttocks. Now that you are ready to sit to *susokukan*, you make a *gassho* (by pressing your palms together), mark off all you were so far with, put your hands back into a meditative position and start counting your natural breaths in your mind.

You put an inhalation together with the following exhalation and count one 'Wa-n', and keep on counting two 'Tu-' in the same way. Before going into detail, I must tell you that the method I am going to tell you is the most effective one judging from our experiences; however, those who have already been happy with another fashion or notation of counting should continue it. What I strongly recommend here is one thing only and that is the division of the whole training course into three. We divide the course as follows: the first course (counting one to hundred), the second course (counting one to ten) and the final course (virtually no counting). No one will tell you, if you learn the art all alone, which course you are to take, but you may decide your own course by yourself according to your own maturity in this art, so that you can keep on doing it. Unless you can say that are on the proper course for you, you will probably discontinue the training before you can appreciate the real effect of *susokukan*, in other words, before you master the final course. Of course you can achieve those effects which I explained through the second course, but if you, by following the examples in the first part of this lecture, from the first want to know why this method is called the Pleasant Path to Truth, you will have to train yourself until you can 'count breaths without counting.' I will try to tell you about this in more detail later on.

In the first course, *susokukan* is done just as mentioned before: count 'Wa-' in the first inhalation and '-n' in the first exhalation, a breath in and out making one. The second breath is 'Tw- o'; the third 'Thre-e' and so on. When you count the thirteenth, you count in the inhalation 'Thir-' and finish in the exhalation '-teen', so with the twentieth, you count 'Twen-' in the inhalation and finish '-ty' in the exhalation. Coming to the one hundredth, you start with 'Hund-' in the inhalation and finish with '-red' in

the exhalation.

After one hundred you count one again and enter the second round of one hundred. The whole thing seems to be so easy that you may say you can have it done straight away. You could be right, were it not for the three requisites which make *susokukan* an outstanding art of self-training. The division of the whole course into three, which I mentioned above, is based upon the degree of one's fulfillment of those requisites, three unpredictable ones. The three requisites are,

1. Do not miscount your breaths,

(勘定を間違えないこと)

2. Do not let anything distract you

(雑念を交えないこと) and,

3. As soon as you fail in the above two, restart from one.

(以上二条件に反したら1に戻すこと)

When put in writing, they are as simple as that. When you really want to perform in line with them, you will immediately find it strenuous. The first requisite simply means that your counting should be correct and continual, the second one that your mind should be in such a state that nothing except breath counting finds its way into your thoughts. Now, you have sound, visual and auditory senses, and naturally you will see and hear things and sounds around you. Nevertheless the reaction of mind to them shall be 'to see without leaving a trace of seeing and to hear without leaving a trace of hearing'; thus the mind keeps itself unfettered, despite the presence of things that are cast on the mind.

Not avoiding being theoretical, I should say that you are supposed not to bear second thoughts on what comes upon you. For instance, if a mosquito were to pass buzzing just an inch before your eyes, you should leave it as it is. You should not think that the mosquito was a striped one which would prick you and give a good itch, or that that one was not anopheles which conveys malaria, and everything else of this sort.

Keep on counting your breaths, without entertaining a second thought that will entail a third, fourth and endless thoughts until you are far away from yourself drifting in the midst of memory and imagination.

Among the three requisites, the second one is the hardest, you will soon notice. As for the third one, it should be observed with honesty and with decisiveness. In other words, even if you have taken much pains to count to as many as eighty or ninety, you should discontinue the present counting and start again counting from one, whenever the necessity arises—or any second thought comes. How many of those who are in the first course could practice *susokukan* perfectly, if they try to follow the requisites conscientiously? Most probably none; and if there are any, he should have classified himself into the second course instead of the first.

Now facing an undeniable fact that a beginner can hardly do the first course of *susokukan* perfectly, I must make allowances for the performance; otherwise, they will grow in self-abhorrence and may cease to continue the eventually fruitful art of *susokukan*. The allowances are made to such an extent, and not further, that you can continue breath-counting in such cases as you wrongly count fifty in the place of seventy or you a thought comes to mind, owing to pains in the legs, that you will stop sitting after finishing the present round of one hundred breaths. In any case, you should follow a graded allowance system of your own as makes generous allowance for the first hundred, less generous ones for the second hundred and narrow allowances for the last hundred. With all these allowances, you will still find it difficult to count from one to hundred, and to repeat it three times. I advise a beginner not to overstrain himself and to stop *susokukan* when an incense stick has completely burned, irrespective of the achievement. Do it slowly and steadily, in view of the fact that scarcely any people succeeded in doing it to perfection in six months or one year.

I cannot forget the advice of Mrs. Rojo, wife of the former Vice-Chancellor of Tohoku Imperial University. She later mastered the highest course of Zen training, succeeded Rev. Zuigan, the Zen master, and at the age of eighty-eight (as of 1954) still keeps on practicing meditation for two incense sticks' burning daily. Her advice was given to me when I was reading in High School; she said, 'Mr. Tatsuta, observe the rule of sitting for an incense stick's burning daily. One day without Zazen is a step toward the ruinous end, but slow and steady practice counts in the end. When something makes you busy, cut a stick into halves or even quarters, pick up one and burn it while sitting. That makes one stick as well.' I did it exactly as she said. I am ever thankful to the lady

because it is due to her advice that I could continue my practice to this day. Hence, I say to you too, 'Do it slowly but steadily.'

An ordinary incense stick is twenty-two centimeters long and burns, without flame, about forty-four minutes, during that time one can, without failure, count from one to three hundred and thirty. By this, I am not setting a definite standard, but giving you what I gathered from experiences, not from physiology. You can rise thirty to forty minutes earlier every morning, with a little bit of effort, to spend that much time in *Zazen*. Once accustomed, you will not be happy without morning meditation.

Right in this period of self-training, you will come to be conscious of the effect of meditation; at the same time, however, you will have to pay more attention to how to get the *sammai* power. The reason is that your breath-counting has by then been made into a custom and you can easily keep on counting your breaths side by side with another stream of thoughts in your mind. Remember, you can grow the *sammai* power, only by doing justice to each of the three requisites. Once in a while, you may so check that no other thoughts can flow into you, by, for instance, means of counting from hundred to one the other way round. Confidence in your ability in performing the first course of *susokukan* is the condition to enter the second course. The second course wherein you only count one to ten could be much simpler, if the same allowances as those in the first course were made. Mind you, in the second course, the three requisites work in their fullness. I do not think you are apt to miscount the breaths, but I do think perfect freedom from intervening thoughts is the hardest of the hard. The faintest thoughts other than breath-counting is now ruled out. Supposing lightning has struck the ground in front of you, you are not supposed to have any thoughts on it, to say nothing of the case of a mosquito passing before your eyes. We rarely find a man with such a *sammai* power as is expected in the perfect practice of the second course. As a matter of fact, your strenuous effort in the second course of *susokukan* will eventually bear the fruits of such a splendid a power of *sammai*.

You remember my words about the right place and right hours of the day to practice *susokukan*. The advice is meant for beginners who are vulnerable to things surrounding them. Now that you have developed enough *sammai* power through the second course, the state of things around you has nothing to do with your *susokukan*, as is told in

the *waka* (poem) of Rev. Daito: 'Sit and meditate at fourth or fifth street; Townsmen are to me like trees in deep forests.' Having trained yourself this much, you will find your *sammai* power to be applicable to every field of your life. With this power you will be able to deal with a precise job of work under noisy or discursive circumstances, to cope with adversity with cool, decisive judgment and with humor and to acquire an accomplishment in military arts or in artistic performances.

Finally, as to the third course, I must tell you first that the course will not be mastered by simply practicing *susokukan*, even by doing so as long as twenty years or a generation. Time to be spent does not count here; only the depth of devotion counts. The words 'Slowly and steadily' are said as a guidance to those who are in the first and second courses, not to those in the third course, to whom I say, 'Do it with zeal and urgency.'

There is a famous Zen saying, 'To the brave, Truth comes in an eyes' twinkling; to the timid, trillions of years pass before awakening.' Digressive ways of meditation lasting for generations will not do, while attentive *Zazen* will minimize the time to be spent in passing through the path. Those who have advanced into the third course have the privilege, neither social nor personal but of mankind, of course, to utter with full confidence that this life as he lives is so worthy of living that he will so live and can advise others to live like he does. My wish is that as many of you, my audience, as possible may train yourselves to the third course, if you do *susokukan* at all. In the third course, you are not cognizant of breath, not, therefore, counting breaths but just leave all this to oblivion. Simultaneously, you are in *susokukan* state and not in anyway in trance. So you forget everything in the way set forth in Rev. Ikkyu's *waka*, 'Commit to memory and you will forget; Leave to oblivion and you never forget.' In our Zen words, we say, 'Idea to Idea, be Right in Truth; Step after Step, be Right on Path,' and mean that nothing can stand in the way of your limpid mind and that you cannot go astray wherever you may go, after such an accomplishment. Accomplishment such as that of a Zen-man, who has been trained in a Zen master's dojo, has completed the whole koan course and, on the top of it, has undertaken an enthusiastic post enlightenment practice.

A few words about Zen, at this point may help your understanding. To my followers I always say 'Sitting at least an incense-stick's burning a day is a must in Zen.' Encour-

aging them to do this by these words does not only refer to the meditation over the koan (Zen subject given by his Zen master) but also to *susokukan*. The meditation over the koan as mental training will open and strengthen your *dogen* (道眼 *dharmā* sight), but will not develop your *doriki* (道力 *dharmā* power). In the latter's absence, a Zen-man character will not be formed. The Zen system works with the aim of formation of a man who will live his life with such a confidence that he can tell himself and others, 'I am here in the right way of Being,' and in training thereof a follower in a Zen School will turn each and every idea occurring to him right in to Truth, and will walk along the Path with the steady and vigorous steps of a real Being. I must warn those who are only keen on koan meditation and are apt to neglect *susokukan* as the right *kanpo* to develop *dharmā* power. Remember the words of Rev. Seen, late President of Engakuji School, '*susokukan* is the first step as well as the final destination of Zazen.' He did not mean, mind you, that *susokukan* is all. As I said before, koan meditation can open your Eye but cannot develop your Power. I must add to it that *susokukan* will develop your Power but will not open your Eye. Without *dharmā* sight, you would be like a mariner without a compass. Only by undergoing the whole system of Zen training and by enlightening yourself, would you be able to recognize the Life of the Cosmos, the nature of all beings and the origin of the Path. To make certain, I say to you again: for a Zen-man, *susokukan* is a lifetime must. To top it, further means are ready in the Zen System, and they are meant for those who are after the real meaning of life. No matter whether you are in or out of a school of Zen, carefully note what I said.

[SOME PAGES ABOUT KINHIN AND OTHER PRACTICES FOLLOW IN [THE ORIGINAL](#)]

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