

Introductory Lectures on Zen Training*

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I From the translator's Introduction

Since modern man, as Yasutani-roshi points out, lacks the faith and burning zeal of his predecessors in Zen, he needs a map which his mind can trust, charting his entire spiritual journey, before he can move ahead with confidence. For these reasons Harada-roshi, Yasutani-roshi's own master, devised a series of introductory lectures on Zen practice some forty years ago, and it is this material which forms the basis of these lectures by Yasutani-roshi.

These lectures are more than a compendium of instructions on the formal aspects of zazen, i.e., sitting, breathing, and concentration. They are an authoritative exposition of the five levels of Zen, of the aims and essentials of zazen, and of the all-important relation of zazen to enlightenment (*satori*). With them as map and compass the earnest seeker need not grope along hazardous bypaths of the occult, the psychic, or the superstitious, which waste time and often prove harmful, but can proceed directly along a carefully

charted course, secure in the knowledge of his ultimate goal.

Yasutani-roshi's emphasis on the religious aspect of Zen, that is, on faith as a prerequisite to enlightenment, may come as a surprise to Western readers accustomed to "intellectual images" of Zen by scholars devoid of Zen insight. This derives for the most part from the teachings of Dogen-zenji, one of the truly imposing religious personalities of Japanese history, who brought the doctrines of the Soto sect of Zen Buddhism from China to Japan.

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Although sitting is the foundation of zazen, it is not just any kind of sitting. Not only must the back be straight, the breathing properly regulated, and the mind concentrated beyond thought, but, according to Dogen, one must sit with a sense of dignity and grandeur, like a mountain or a giant pine, and with a feeling of gratitude toward the Buddha and the Patriarchs, who made manifest the Dharma. And we must be grateful for our human body, through which we have the opportunity to experience the reality of the

Dharma in all its profundity. This sense of dignity and gratitude, moreover, is not confined to sitting but must inform every activity, for insofar as each act issues from the Bodhi-mind it has the inherent purity and dignity of Buddhahood. This innate dignity of man is physiologically manifested in his erect back, since he alone of all creatures has this capacity to hold his spinal column vertical. An erect back is related to proper sitting in other important ways, which will be discussed at a later point...

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To help awaken us to this world of Buddha-nature, Zen masters employ yet another mode of zazen, namely, the chanting of *dharani*¹ and sutras. Now, a dharani has been described as “a more or less meaningless chain of words or names that is supposed to have a magical power in helping the one who is repeating it at some time of extremity.” As

¹ A dharani (Jap. *darani* 陀羅尼) is a type of ritual speech similar to a mantra. The word *dhāraṇī* derives from a Sanskrit root which means “to hold or maintain”.

phonetic transliterations of Sanskrit words, dharani have doubtlessly lost much of their profound meaning through the inevitable alteration of the original sounds. But as anyone who has recited them for any length of time knows, in their effect on the spirit they are anything but meaningless. When chanted with sincerity and zest they impress upon the heart and mind the names and virtues of Buddhas and Bodhisattvas enumerated in them, removing inner hindrances to zazen and fixing the heart in an attitude of reverence and devotion. But dharani are also a symbolic expression in sound and rhythm of the essential Truth of the universe lying beyond the realm of the discriminating intellect. To the degree that the discursive mind is held at bay during the voicing of dharani, they are valuable as another exercise in training the mind to cease clinging to dualistic modes of thought.

The intoning of sutras, while also a mode of zazen, fulfills yet a further purpose. Since they are the recorded words and sermons of the Buddha, sutras do in some degree make a direct appeal to the intel-

lect. Thus for those whose faith in the Buddha's Way is shallow the repeated chanting of sutras eventually leads to a measure of understanding, and this serves to strengthen faith in the truth of the Buddha's teachings. As faith grows, however, there is less need for chanting them.

In another sense sutra-chanting can be compared to an Oriental ink painting of, say, a pine tree in which most of the picture consists of white space. This empty space corresponds to the deeper levels of meaning of the sutras which the words adumbrate. Just as in the picture our minds are brought to a heightened awareness of the white space because of the tree, so through the reciting of the sutras we can be led to sense the reality lying beyond them, the Emptiness to which they point.

...

The uniqueness of *zazen* lies in this: that the mind is freed from bondage to *all* thought-forms, visions, objects, and imaginings, how ever sacred or elevating, and brought to a state of absolute emptiness,

from which alone it may one day perceive its own true nature, or the nature of the universe.

2 Theory and Practice of Zazen

What I am about to tell you is based upon the teaching of my revered teacher, Daiun² Harada-roshi. Although he himself was of the Soto sect, he was unable to find a truly accomplished master in that sect and so went to train first at Shogen-ji and then Nanzen-ji, two Rinzai monasteries. At Nanzen-ji he eventually grasped the inmost secret of Zen under the guidance of Dokutan-roshi, an outstanding master.

While it is undeniably true that one must undergo Zen training himself in order to comprehend the truth of Zen, Harada-roshi felt that the modern mind is so much more aware that for beginners

² A Zen name meaning “Great Cloud.”

lectures of this type could be meaningful as a preliminary to practice. He combined the best of each sect and established a unique method of teaching Zen. Nowhere in Japan will you find Zen teaching set forth so thoroughly and succinctly, so well suited to the temper of the modern mind, as at his monastery. Having been his disciple for some twenty years, I was enabled, thanks to his favor, to open my Mind's eye in some measure.

Before commencing his lectures Harada-roshi would preface them with advice on listening. His first point was that everyone should listen with their eyes open and upon him—in other words, with their whole being—because an impression received only through the hearing is rather shallow, akin to listening to the radio. His second point was that each person should listen to these lectures as though they were being given to oneself alone, as ideally they should be. Human nature is such that if two people listen, each feels only half responsible for understanding, and if ten people are listening each feels one's own responsibility to be but one tenth. However,

since there are so many of you and what I have to say is exactly the same for everybody, I have asked you to come as a group. You must nonetheless listen as though you were entirely alone and hold yourselves accountable for everything that is said.

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This discourse is divided into twelve parts, which will be covered in some eight lecture sessions. The first involves the rationale of *zazen* and direct methods of practice; the next, special precautions; and the following lectures, the particular problems arising from *zazen*, together with their solution. In point of fact, a knowledge of the theory or principles of *zazen* is not a prerequisite to practice. Students who train under an accomplished teacher will inevitably grasp this theory by degrees as their practice ripens. Modern students, however, being intellectually more sophisticated than their predecessors in Zen, will not follow instructions unreservedly; they must first know the reasons behind them. Therefore I feel obligated to deal with theoretical matters. The difficulty with the-

ory, however, is that it is endless. Buddhist scriptures, Buddhist doctrine, and Buddhist philosophy are no more than intellectual formulations of zazen, and zazen itself is their practical demonstration. From this vast field I will now abstract what is most essential for your practice.

We start with Buddha Shakyamuni.³ As I think you all know, he began with the path of asceticism, undergoing tortures and austerities which others before him had never attempted, including prolonged fasting. But he failed to attain enlightenment by these means and, half-dead from hunger and exhaustion, came to realize the futility of pursuing a course which could only terminate in death. So he drank the milk-rice that was offered him by a concerned country girl, gradually regained his health, and resolved to steer a middle course between self-torture and self-

³ The traditional Japanese term is *O-Shaka-sama*. It is both respectful and intimate. The *O* and *sama* are honorifics, and rather than attempt an arbitrary translation of them, I have followed the usual English rendering of this title.

indulgence. Thereafter he devoted himself exclusively to zazen for six years⁴ and eventually, on the morning of the eight of December, at the very instant when he glanced at the planet Venus gleaming in the eastern sky, he attained perfect enlightenment. All this we believe as historical truth.

The words the Buddha uttered involuntarily at this time are recorded variously in the Buddhist scriptures. According to the Kegon (Avatamsaka) sutra, at the moment of enlightenment he spontaneously cried out: “Wonder of wonders! Intrinsically all living beings are Buddhas, endowed with wisdom and virtue, but because people’s minds have become inverted through delusive thinking they fail to perceive this.” The first pronouncement of the Buddha seems to have been one of awe and astonishment. Yes, how truly marvelous that all human beings, whether clever or stupid, male or female, ugly or beautiful, are whole and complete just as they are.

⁴ Other accounts say six years elapsed from the time he left his home until his supreme enlightenment.

That is to say, the nature of every being is inherently without a flaw, perfect, no different from that of Amida or any other Buddha. This first declaration of Shakyamuni Buddha is also the ultimate conclusion of Buddhism. Yet human beings, restless and anxious, live half-crazed existences because their minds, heavily encrusted with delusion, are turned topsy-turvy. We need therefore to return to our original perfection, to see through the false image of ourselves as incomplete and sinful, and to wake up to our inherent purity and wholeness.

The most effective means by which to accomplish this is through *zazen*. Not only Shakyamuni Buddha himself but many of his disciples attained full awakening through *Zazen*. Moreover, during the 2,500 years since the Buddha's death innumerable devotees in India, China, and Japan have, by grasping this selfsame key, resolved for themselves the most fundamental question of all: What are life and death? Even in this day there are many who, having cast off worry and anxiety, have emancipated themselves through *zazen*.

Between a Nyorai (i.e. a supremely perfected Buddha) and us, who are ordinary, there is no difference as to substance. This “substance” can be likened to water. One of the salient characteristics of water is its conformability: when put into a round vessel it becomes round, when put into a square vessel it becomes square. We have this same adaptability, but as we live bound and fettered through ignorance of our true nature, we have forfeited this freedom. To pursue the metaphor, we can say that the mind of a Buddha is like water that is calm, deep and crystal clear, and upon which the “moon of truth” reflects fully and perfectly. The mind of the ordinary person, on the other hand, is like murky water, constantly being churned by the gales of delusive thought and no longer able to reflect the moon of truth. The moon nonetheless shines steadily upon the waves, but as the waters are roiled we are unable to see its reflection. Thus we lead lives that are frustrating and meaningless.

How can we fully illumine our life and personality with the moon of truth? We need first to purify this

water, to calm the surging waves by halting the winds of discursive thought. In other words, we must empty our minds of what the Kegon (Avatamsaka) sutra calls the “conceptual thought of the human being.” Most people place a high value on abstract thought, but Buddhism has clearly demonstrated that discriminative thinking lies at the root of delusion. I once heard someone say: “Thought is the sickness of the human mind.” From the Buddhist point of view this is quite true. To be sure, abstract thinking is useful when wisely employed—which is to say, when its nature and limitations are properly understood—but as long as human beings remain slaves to their intellect, fettered and controlled by it, they can well be called sick.

All thoughts, whether ennobling or debasing, are mutable and impermanent; they have a beginning and an end even as they are fleetingly with us, and this is as true of the thought of an era as of an individual. In Buddhism, thought is referred to as “the stream of life-and-death.” It is important in this connection to distinguish the role of transitory thoughts

from that of fixed concepts. Random ideas are relatively innocuous, but ideologies, beliefs, opinions, and points of view, not to mention the factual knowledge accumulated since birth (to which we attach ourselves), are the shadows which obscure the light of truth.

So long as the winds of thought continue to disturb the water of our Self-nature, we cannot distinguish truth from untruth. It is imperative, therefore, that these winds be stilled. Once they abate, the waves subside, the muddiness clears, and we perceive directly that the moon of truth has never ceased shining. The moment of such realization is *kensho*, i.e., enlightenment, the apprehension of the true substance of our Self-nature. Unlike moral and philosophical concepts, which are variable, true insight is imperishable. Now for the first time we can live with inner peace and dignity, free from perplexity and disquiet, and in harmony with our environment.

I have spoken to you briefly about these matters, but I hope I have succeed in conveying to you the importance of *zazen*. Let us now talk about practice.

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The first step is to select a quiet room in which to sit. Lay out a fairly soft mat or pad some three feet square, and on top of this place a small circular cushion measuring about one foot in diameter to sit on, or use a square cushion folded in two or even a folded or rolled-up blanket. Preferably one should not wear trousers or socks, since these interfere with the crossing of the legs and the placing of the feet. For a number of reasons it is best to sit in the full-lotus posture. To sit full-lotus you place the foot of the right leg over the thigh of the left and the foot of the left over the thigh of the right. The main point of this particular method of sitting is that by establishing a wide, solid base with the crossed legs and both knees touching the mat, you achieve repose and absolute stability. When the body is immobile, thoughts are not stirred into activity by physical movements and the mind is more easily quieted.

If you have difficulty sitting in the full-lotus posture because of the pain, sit half-lotus, which is done

by putting the foot of the left leg over the thigh of the right and the right leg under the left thigh. For those of you who are not accustomed to sitting cross-legged, even this position may not be easy to maintain. You will probably find it difficult to keep the two knees resting on the mat and will have to push one or both of them down again and again until they remain there. In both the half- and the full-lotus postures the uppermost foot can be reversed when the legs become tired.

For those who find both of these traditional zazen positions acutely uncomfortable, an alternative position is the traditional Japanese one of sitting on the heels and calves. This can be maintained for a longer time if a cushion is placed between the heels and the buttocks. One advantage of this posture is that the back can be kept erect easily. However, should all

of these positions prove too painful, you may use a chair.⁵

The next step is to rest the right hand in the lap, palm upward, and place the left hand, palm upward, on top of the right palm. Lightly touch the tips of the thumbs to each other so that a flattened circle is formed by the palms and thumbs. The right side of the body is the active side, the left the passive. Accordingly, during practice we quiet the active side by placing the left foot and left hand over the right members, as an aid in achieving the highest degree of tranquility. If you look at a figure of the Buddha, however, you will notice that the position of these members is just the reverse. The significance of this is that a Buddha, unlike the rest of us, is actively engaged in the task of liberation.

After you have crossed your legs, bend forward so as to thrust the buttocks out, then slowly bring

⁵ See section IX of *The Three Pillars of Zen* for sketches of all these postures, including one widely used in the South-east Asian Buddhist countries.

the trunk to an erect posture. The head should be straight; if looked at from the side, your ears should be in line with your shoulders and the tip of your nose in line with your navel. The body from the waist up should be weightless, free from pressure or strain.⁶ Keep the eyes open and the mouth closed. The tip of the tongue should lightly touch the back of the upper teeth. If you close your eyes you will fall into a dull and dreamy state. The gaze should be lowered without focusing on anything in particular, but be careful not to incline the head forward. Experience has shown that the mind is quietest, with the least fatigue or strain, when the eyes are in this lowered position.

The spinal column must be erect at all times. This admonition is important. When the body slumps, not only is undue pressure placed on the internal organs, interfering with their free functioning, but the vertebrae by impinging upon nerves may cause strains

⁶ The center of gravity of the body-mind should be about two inches below the navel.

of one kind or another. Since body and mind are one, any impairment of the physiological functions inevitably involves the mind and thus diminishes its clarity and one-pointedness, which are essential for effective concentration. From a purely psychological point of view, a ramrod erectness is as undesirable as a slouching position, for the one springs from unconscious pride and the other from abjectness, and since both are grounded in ego they are equally a hindrance to enlightenment.

Be careful to hold the head erect; if it inclines forward or backward or sideward, remaining there for an appreciable length of time a crick in the neck may result.

When you have established a correct posture, take a deep breath, hold it momentarily, then exhale slowly and quietly. Repeat this two or three times, always breathing through the nose. After that breathe naturally. When you have accustomed yourself to this routine, one deep breath at the beginning will suffice. After that, breathe naturally without trying to manipulate your breath. Now bend the body first to

the right as far as it will go, then to the left, about seven or eight times, in large arcs to begin with, then smaller ones until the trunk naturally comes to rest at center.

You are now ready to concentrate your mind. There are many good methods of concentration bequeathed to us by our predecessors in Zen. The easiest for beginners is counting incoming and outgoing breaths. The value of this particular exercise lies in the fact that all reasoning is excluded and the discriminative mind put at rest. Thus the waves of thought are stilled and a gradual one-pointedness of mind achieved. To start with, count both inhalations and exhalations. When you inhale concentrate on “one”; when you exhale, on “two” and so on, up to ten. Then you return to “one” and once more count up to ten, continuing as before. If you lose the count, return to “one.” It is as simple as that.

As I have previously pointed out, fleeting thoughts which naturally fluctuate in the mind are not in themselves an impediment. This unfortunately is not commonly recognized. Even among Japanese who

have been practicing Zen for five years or more there are many who misunderstand Zen practice to be a stopping of consciousness. There is indeed a kind of zazen that aims at doing just this,⁷ but it is not the traditional zazen of Zen Buddhism. You must realize that no matter how intently you count your breaths you will still perceive what is in your line of vision, since your eyes are open, and you will hear the normal sounds about you, as your ears are not plugged. And since your brain likewise is not asleep, various thought forms will dart about in your mind. Now, they will not hamper or diminish the effectiveness of zazen unless, evaluating them as “good,” you cling to them or, deciding they are “bad,” you try to check or eliminate them. You must not regard any perceptions or sensations as an obstruction to zazen, nor should you pursue any of them. I emphasize this. “Pursuit” simply means that in the act of seeing, your gaze lingers on objects; in the course of hearing, your attention dwells on sounds; and in the process

⁷ Shojo Zen, see [below](#).

of thinking, your mind adheres to ideas. If you allow yourself to be distracted in such ways, your concentration on the counting of your breaths will be impeded. To recapitulate: let random thoughts arise and vanish as they will, do not dally with them and do not try to expel them, but merely concentrate all your energy on counting the inhalations and exhalations of your breath.

In terminating a period of sitting do not arise abruptly, but begin by rocking from side to side, first in small swings, then in large ones, for about half a dozen times. You will observe that your movements in this exercise are the reverse of those you engage in when you begin zazen. Rise slowly and quietly walk around with the others in what is called *kinhin* 経行, a walking form of zazen.

Kinjin is performed by placing the right fist, with thumb inside on the chest and covering it with the left palm while holding both elbows at right angles. Keep the arms in a straight line and the body erect, with the eyes resting upon a point about two yards in front of the feet. At the same time continue to

count inhalations and exhalations as you walk slowly around the room. Begin walking with the left foot and walk in such a way that the foot sinks into the floor, first the heel and then the toes. Walk calmly and steadily, with poise and dignity. The walking must not be done absentmindedly, and the mind must be taut as you concentrate on the counting. It is advisable to practice walking this way for at least five minutes after each sitting period of twenty to thirty minutes.

You are to think of this walking as zazen in motion. Rinzai and Soto differ considerably in their way of doing kinhin. In Rinzai the walking is brisk and energetic, while in traditional Soto it is slow and leisurely; in fact, upon each breath you step forward only six inches or so. My own teacher, Harada-roshi, advocated a gait somewhere between these two and that is the method we have been practicing here. Further, the Rinzai sect cups the left hand on top of the right whereas in the orthodox Soto the right hand is placed on top. Harada roshi felt that the Rinzai method of putting the left hand uppermost was more desirable

and so he adopted it into his own teaching. Now even though this walking relieves the stiffness in your legs, such relief is to be regarded as a mere by-product and not the main object of kinhin. Accordingly, those of you who are counting your breaths should continue during kinhin, and those of you who are working on a koan should carry on with it.

This ends the first lecture. Continue to count your breaths as have instructed until you come before me again.

3 Precautions to Observe in Zazen

In this second lecture I am going to change your breathing exercise slightly. This morning I told you to count “one” as you inhale and “two” as you exhaled. Hereafter I want you to count “one” only on the exhalation, so that one full breath (inhalation and exhalation) will be “one.” Don’t bother counting the inhalations; just count “one,” “two,” “three,” and so forth, on the exhalation.

It is advisable to do zazen facing a wall, a curtain, or the like. Don't sit too far from the wall nor with your nose up against it; the ideal distance is from two to three feet. Likewise, don't sit where you have a sweeping view, for it is distracting, or where you look out on a pleasant landscape, which will tempt you to leave off zazen in order to admire it. In this connection, remember that although your eyes are open you are not actually trying to see. For all these reasons it is wisest to sit facing a wall. However, if you happen to be doing zazen formally in a Rinzai temple, you will have no choice but to sit facing others, as this is the established custom in that sect.

In the beginning, if possible, select a room that is quiet as well as clean and tidy, one which you can regard as special. It may be asked whether it is satisfactory to do zazen on a bed so long as the room is clean and free from noise. For the ordinary healthy person the answer is no; there are any number of reasons why it is difficult to keep the mind in proper tension on a bed. A bedridden person, of course, has no choice.

You will probably find that natural sounds, like those of insects or birds or running water, will not disturb you, neither will the rhythmic ticking of a clock nor the purring of a motor. Sudden noises, however, like the roar of a jet, are jarring. But rhythmic sounds you can make use of. One student of mine actually attained enlightenment by utilizing the sound of the steady threshing of rice while he was doing zazen. The most objectionable sounds are those of human voices, either heard directly or over the radio or television. When you start zazen, therefore, find a room which is distant from such sounds. When your sitting has ripened, however, no noises will disturb you.

Besides keeping your room clean and orderly you should decorate it with flowers and burn incense since these, by conveying a sense of the pure and the holy, make it easier for you to relate yourself to zazen and thus to calm and unify your mind more quickly. Wear simple, comfortable clothing that will give you a feeling of dignity and purity. In the evening it is better not to wear night clothes, but if it is hot and a ques-

tion of either doing zazen in pajamas or not doing it at all, by all means wear the pajamas. But make yourself clean and tidy.

The room ought not to be too light or too dark. You can put up a dark curtain if it is too light, or you can use a small electric bulb if it is night. The effect of a dark room is the same as closing your eyes: it dulls everything. The best condition is a sort of twilight. Remember Buddhist zazen does not aim at rendering the mind inactive but at quieting and unifying it in the midst of activity.

A room with plenty of fresh air, that is neither too hot in summer nor too cold in winter, is ideal. Punishing the body is not the purpose of zazen, so it is unnecessary to struggle with extremes of heat or cold. Experience has shown, however, that one can do better zazen where one feels slightly cool; too hot a room tends to make one sleepy. As your ardor for zazen deepens, you will naturally become unconcerned about cold or heat. Nevertheless, it is wise to take care of your health.

Next let us discuss the best time for zazen. For

the eager and determined any time of day and all seasons of the year are equally good. But for those who have jobs or professions the best time is either morning or evening, or better still, both. Try to sit every morning preferably before breakfast, and just before going to bed at night. But if you can sit only once—and you should sit at least once a day—you will have to consider the relative merits of morning and evening. Each has its advantages and disadvantages. If you find that either morning or evening is equally good and you ask which I recommend (because you can sit only once a day), I would say the morning, for the following reasons: no visitors come early in the morning, whereas in the evening you are likely to be interrupted. Also, morning—at any rate in the city—is much quieter than evening since fewer cars are on the streets. Furthermore, because in the morning you are rested and somewhat hungry, you are in good condition for zazen, whereas in the evening, when you are tired and have had your meal, you are likely to be duller. Since it is difficult to do zazen on a full stomach, it is better not to sit immediately after a meal

when you are a beginner. Before a meal, however, zazen can be practiced to good advantage. As your zeal grows it won't matter when you sit, before, after, or during a meal.

How long should you do zazen at one sitting? There is no general rule, for it varies according to the degree of one's eagerness as well as the maturity of one's practice. For novices a shorter time is better. If you sit devotedly five minutes a day for a month or two, you will want to increase your sitting to ten or more minutes as your ardor grows. When you are able to sit with your mind taut for, say, thirty minutes without pain or discomfort, you will come to appreciate the feeling of tranquility and well-being induced by zazen and will want to practice regularly. For these reasons I recommend that beginners sit for shorter periods of time. On the other hand, should you force yourself from the beginning to sit for longer periods, the pain in your legs may well become unbearable before you acquire a calm mind. Thus you will quickly tire of zazen, feeling it to be a waste of time, or you will always be watching the clock. In the

end you will come to dislike zazen and stop sitting altogether. This is what frequently happens. Now even though you sit for only ten minutes or so each day, you can compensate for this briefness by concentrating intensely on the counting of each breath, thus increasing its effectiveness. You must not count absentmindedly or mechanically, as though it were a duty.

In spite of your being able to sit for an hour or more with a feeling of exquisite serenity, it is wise to limit your sitting to periods of about thirty or forty minutes each. Ordinarily it is not advisable to do zazen longer than this at one sitting, since the mind cannot sustain its vigor and tautness and the value of the sitting decreases. Whether one realizes it or not, a gradual diminution of the mind's concentrative intensity takes place. For this reason it is better to alternate a thirty- or forty- minute period of sitting with a round of walking zazen. Following this pattern, one can do zazen for a full day or even a week with good results. The longer zazen continues, however, the more time should be spent in walking

zazen. In fact, one might advantageously add periods of manual labor to this routine, as has been done in the zen temple since olden times. Needless to say, you must keep your mind in a state of clear awareness during such manual labor and not allow it to become lax or dull.

A word about food. It is better to eat no more than eighty percent of our capacity. A Japanese proverb has it that eight parts of a full stomach sustain the man; the other two sustain the doctor. The *Zazen Yojinki* (Precautions to Observe in Zazen), compiled about 650 years ago, says you should eat two-thirds of your capacity. It further says that you should choose nourishing vegetables—of course meat eating is not in the tradition of Buddhism and it was taboo when the *Yojinki* was written—such as mountain potatoes, sesame, sour plums, black beans, mushrooms, and the root of the lotus; and it also recommends various kinds of seaweed, which are highly nutritious and leave an alkaline residue in the body. Now, I am no authority on vitamins and minerals and calories, but it is a fact that most people today eat a diet which

creates too much acid in the blood, and a great offender in this respect is meat. Eat more vegetables of the kind mentioned, which are alkalinic in their effect. In ancient days there was a *yang-yin* diet. The *yang* was the alkaline and the *yin* the acid, and the old books cautioned that a diet ought not be either too *yang* or too *yin*. This is substantially what I have just told you.

There comes a point in your sitting when insights about yourself will flash into your mind. For example, relationships that previously were incomprehensible will suddenly be clarified and difficult personal problems abruptly solved. If you don't jot down things that you want to remember, this could bother you and so interfere with your concentration. For this reason when you are sitting by yourself you may want to keep a pencil and notebook next to you.

4 Illusory Visions and Sensations

This is the third lecture. Before I begin I will assign you a new way of concentration. Instead of counting

your exhalations, as heretofore, count “one” on the first inhalation, “two” on the next inhalation, and so on, up to ten. This is more difficult than counting on the exhalation, because all mental and physical activity is performed on the exhaled breath. For instance, just before pouncing, animals take a breath. This principle is well known in kendo fencing and judo fighting, where one is taught that by carefully observing his opponent’s breathing his attack can be anticipated. While this exercise is difficult, you must try to practice it as another means of concentrating your mind. Until you come before me again you are to concentrate on counting the inhalations of your breath, not audibly but in the mind only.

Makyo 魔境 are the phenomena—visions, hallucinations, fantasies, revelations, illusory sensations—which one practicing *zazen* is apt to experience at a particular stage in his sitting. *Ma* means “devil” and *kyo* “the objective world.” Hence *makyo* are the disturbing or “diabolical” phenomena which appear to one during *zazen*. These phenomena are not inher-

ently bad. They become a serious obstacle to practice only if one is ignorant of their true nature and is ensnared by them.

The word *makyo* is used in both a general and a specific sense. Broadly speaking, the entire life of the ordinary person is nothing but a makyo. Even such Bodhisattvas as Monju and Kannon, highly developed though they are, still have about them traces of makyo; otherwise they would be supreme Buddhas, completely free of makyo. One who becomes attached to what he or she realizes through satori is also still lingering in the world of makyo. So you see, there are makyo even after enlightenment, but we shall not enter into that aspect of the subject in these lectures.

In the specific sense, the number of makyo which can appear are in fact unlimited, varying according to the personality and temperament of the sitter. In the Ryogon (Surangama) sutra the Buddha warns of fifty different kinds, but of course he is referring only to the commonest. If you attend a sesshin of from five to seven days' duration and apply yourself assidu-

ously, on the third day you are likely to experience makyo of varying degrees of intensity. Besides those which involve the vision there are numerous makyo which relate to the sense of touch, smell, or hearing, or which sometimes cause the body suddenly to move from side to side or forward and backward or to lean to one side or to seem to sink or rise. Not infrequently words burst forth uncontrollably or, more rarely, one imagines he is smelling a particularly fragrant perfume. There are even cases where without conscious awareness one writes down things which turn out to be prophetically true.

Very common are visual hallucinations. You are doing zazen with your eyes open when suddenly the ridges of the straw matting in front of you seem to be heaving up and down like waves. Or without warning everything may go white before your eyes, or black. A knot in the wood of a door may suddenly appear as a beast or demon or angel. One disciple of mine often used to see visions of masks—demons masks or jesters' masks. I asked him whether he had ever had any particular experience of masks, and it turned

out that he had seen them at festival in Kyushu when he was a child. Another man I knew was extremely troubled in his practice by visions of Buddha and his disciples walking around him reciting sutras, and was only able to dispel the hallucination by jumping into a tank of ice-cold water for two or three minutes.

Many makyo involve the hearing. One may hear the sound of piano or loud noises, such as an explosion (which is heard by no one else), and actually jump. One disciple of mine always used to hear the sound of a bamboo flute while doing zazen. He had learned to play the bamboo flute many years before, but had long since given it up, yet always the sound came to him when he was sitting.

In the *Zazen Yojinki* we find the following about makyo: “The body may feel hot or cold or glass-like or hard or heavy or light. This happens because the breath is not well harmonized with the mind, and needs to be carefully regulated.” It then goes on to say: “One may experience the sensation of sinking or floating, or may alternately feel hazy and sharply alert. The disciple may develop the faculty

of seeing through solid objects as though they were transparent, or he may experience his own body as a translucent substance. He may see Buddhas and Bodhisattvas. Penetrating insights may suddenly come to him, or passages of sutras which were particularly difficult to understand may suddenly become luminously clear to him. All these abnormal visions and sensations are merely the symptoms of an impairment arising from a maladjustment of the mind with the breath.”

Other religions and sects place great store by experiences which involve visions of God or deities or hearing heavenly voices, performing miracles, receiving divine messages, or becoming purified through various rites and drugs. In the Nichiren sect, for example, devotees loudly and repeatedly invoke the name of the Lotus sutra, to the accompaniment of vigorous body movements, and feel they have thereby purged themselves of their defilements. In varying degree these practices induce a feeling of well-being, yet from the Zen point of view all are abnormal states

devoid of true religious significance and therefore only makyo.

What is the essential nature of these disturbing phenomena we call makyo? They are temporary mental states which arise during zazen when your ability to concentrate has developed to a certain point and your practice is beginning to ripen. When the thought-waves that wax and wane on the surface of the mind are partially calmed, residual elements of past experiences “lodged” in the deeper levels of consciousness bob up sporadically to the surface of the mind, conveying the feeling of a greater or expanded reality. Makyo, accordingly, are a mixture of the real and the unreal, not unlike ordinary dreams. Just as dreams are usually not remembered by a person in deep sleep but only when one is half asleep and half awake, so makyo do not come to those in deep concentration or samadhi. Never be tempted into thinking that these phenomena are real or that the visions themselves have any meaning. To have a beautiful vision of a Buddha does not mean that you are any nearer becoming one yourself, any more

than a dream of being a millionaire means that you are any richer when you awake. Therefore there is no reason to feel elated about such makyo. And similarly, whatever horrible monsters may appear to you, there is no cause whatever for alarm. Above all, do not allow yourself to be enticed by visions of the Buddha or of gods blessing you or communicating a divine message, or by makyo involving prophecies which turn out to be true. This is to squander your energies in the foolish pursuit of the inconsequential.

But such visions are certainly a sign that you are at a crucial point in your sitting and that if you exert yourself to the utmost, you can surely experience kensho. Tradition states that even Shakyamuni Buddha just before his own awakening experienced innumerable makyo, which he termed “obstructing devils.” Whenever makyo appear, simply ignore them and continue sitting with all your might.

5 The Five Varieties of Zen

I shall now enumerate the different kinds of Zen. Unless you learn to distinguish between them, you are likely to err on decisive points such as whether or not satori is indispensable in Zen, whether Zen involves the complete absence of discursive thought, and the like. The truth is that among the many types of Zen there are some which are profound and some shallow, some that lead to enlightenment and some that do not. It is said that during the time of the Buddha there were ninety or ninety-five schools of philosophy or religion in existence. Each school had its particular mode of Zen, and each was slightly different from the others.

All great religions embrace some measure of Zen, since religion needs prayer and prayer needs concentration of mind. The teaching of Confucius and Mencius, of Lao-tzu and Chuang-tzu, all these have their own elements of Zen. Indeed, Zen is spread over many different activities of life, such as the tea ceremony, Noh, kendo, judo. In Japan, starting with

the Meiji Restoration, less than a hundred years ago and continuing up to the present, there have sprung up a number of teachings and disciplines with elements of Zen in them. Among others I recall Okada's System of Tranquil Sitting and Emma's Method of Mind and Body Cultivation. Recently one Tempu Nakamura has been zealously advocating a form of Indian Yoga Zen. All these different methods of concentration, almost limitless in number, come under the broad heading of Zen. Rather than try to specify them all, I am going to discuss the five main divisions of Zen as classified by Keiho-zenji, one of the early Zen masters in China, whose categories, I feel, are still valid and useful. Outwardly these five kinds of Zen scarcely differ. There may be slight variations in the way the legs are crossed, the hands folded, or the breathing regulated, but common to all are three basic elements: an erect sitting posture, correct control of breathing, and concentration (unification) of mind. Beginners need to bear in mind, however, that in the *substance* and *purpose* of these various types there are distinct differences. These differences are

crucial to you when you come before me individually to state your aspiration, for they will enable you to define your goal clearly the better that I may assign you the practice appropriate to it.

① The first of these types we call *bompu* 凡夫, or “ordinary,” Zen as opposed to the other four, each of which can be thought of as a special kind of Zen suitable for the particular aims of different individuals. Bompu Zen, being free from any philosophic or religious content, is for anybody and everybody. It is a Zen practiced purely in the belief that it can improve both physical and mental health. Since it can almost certainly have no ill effects, anyone can undertake it, whatever religious beliefs they happen to hold or if they hold none at all. Bompu Zen is bound to eliminate sickness of a psychosomatic nature and to improve the health generally.

Through the practice of bompu Zen you learn to concentrate and control your mind. It never occurs to most people to try to control their minds, and unfortunately this basic training is left out of contemporary education, not being part of what is

called the acquisition of knowledge. Yet without it what we learn is difficult to retain because we learn it improperly, wasting much energy in the process. Indeed, we are virtually crippled unless we know how to restrain our thoughts and concentrate our minds. Furthermore, by practicing this very excellent mode of mind training you will find yourself increasingly able to resist temptations to which you had previously succumbed, and to sever attachments which had long held you in bondage. An enrichment of personality and a strengthening of character inevitably follow since the three basic elements of mind—that is, intellect, feeling, and will—develop harmoniously. The quietist sitting practiced in Confucianism seems to have stressed mainly these effects of mind concentration. However, the fact remains that bompū Zen, although far more beneficial for the cultivation of the mind than the reading of countless books on ethics and philosophy, is unable to resolve the fundamental problem of human existence and one's relation to the universe. Why? Because it cannot pierce the ordin-

ary man's basic delusion of himself as distinctly other than the universe.

② The second of the five kinds of Zen is called *gedo* 外道. *Gedo* means literally "an outside way" and so implies, from the Buddhist point of view, teachings other than Buddhist. Here we have a Zen related to religion and philosophy but yet not a Buddhist Zen. Hindu yoga, the quietist sitting of Confucianism, contemplation practices in Christianity, all these belong to the category of *gedo* Zen.

Another feature of *gedo* Zen is that it is often practiced in order to cultivate various supranormal powers or skills, or to master certain arts beyond the reach of the ordinary person. A good example of this is Tempu Nakamura, the man whom I mentioned earlier. It is reported that he can make people act without himself moving a muscle or saying a word. The aim of the Emma Method is to accomplish such feats as walking barefooted on sharp sword blades or staring at sparrows so that they become paralyzed. All these miraculous exploits are brought about through the cultivation of *yoriki*, the particular strength of

power which comes with the strenuous practice of mind concentration, and of which I shall speak later in greater detail. Here I will simply remind you that a Zen which aims solely at the cultivation of joriki for such ends is not a Buddhist Zen.

Another object for which gedo Zen is practiced is rebirth in various heavens. Certain sects, we know, practice Zen in order to be reborn in heaven. This is not the object of Zen Buddhism. While Zen Buddhists do not quarrel with the idea of various strata of heaven and the belief that one may be reborn into these realms through the performance of ten kinds of meritorious deeds, they themselves do not crave rebirth in heaven. Conditions there are altogether too pleasant and comfortable and one can all too easily be lured from zazen. Besides, when one's merit in heaven expires one can very well land in hell. Zen Buddhists therefore believe it preferable to be born into the human world and to practice zazen with the aim of ultimately becoming a Buddha.

I will stop here and at the next lecture conclude the five types of Zen.

I have now discussed with you the first two kinds of Zen, namely, bompū and gedō. Before going on to the next three types I am going to give you another method of concentration: experiencing the breath. For the time being stop counting your breaths and instead concentrate intently on following your inhalations and exhalations, trying to experience them clearly. You are to carry on this exercise until you come before me again.

③ The third type of zen is *shōjo* 小乘, literally meaning “small vehicle.” This is the vehicle or teaching that is to take you from one state of mind (delusion) to another (enlightenment). This small vehicle is so named because it is designed to accommodate only one’s self. You can perhaps compare it to a bicycle. The large vehicle (Mahayana), on the other hand, is more like a car or bus: it takes on others as well. Hence *shōjo* is a Zen which looks only to one’s own peace of mind.

Here we have a Zen which is Buddhist but a Zen not in accord with the Buddha’s highest teaching. It is rather an expedient Zen for those unable to grasp

the innermost meaning of the Buddha's enlightenment; i.e., that existence is an inseparable whole, each one of us embracing the cosmos in its totality. This being true, it follows that we cannot attain genuine peace of mind merely by seeking our own salvation while remaining indifferent to the welfare of others.

There are those, however—and some of you listening to me now may be among them—who simply cannot bring themselves to believe in the reality of such a world. No matter how often they are taught that the relative world of distinctions and opposites to which they cling is illusory, the product of their mistaken views, they cannot but believe otherwise. To such people the world can only seem inherently evil, full of sin and strife and suffering, of killing and being killed, and in their despair they long to escape from it. Indeed, death seems even preferable to life. The most unbearable sin of all is the taking of life in any form and under any circumstances, since this condemns them to interminable suffering incarnated as beasts or demons in countless future existences ow-

ing to the inexorable law of karma. So mere death is not the end. Hence what they are seeking is a way of avoiding rebirth, a method of dying without being reborn.

Shojo Zen provides the answer to this need. It has as its aim the stopping of all thoughts so that the mind becomes a complete blank and enters into a state called *mushinjo* 無心狀, a condition in which all the sense functions have been eliminated and the faculty of consciousness suspended. With practice this power can be cultivated by anyone. In case there is no wish to die one can enter this trance-like state for a limited period—say an hour or two or one or two days—or one can remain in it indefinitely, in which event death follows naturally and painlessly, without—and this is most important—rebirth. This entire process of death without rebirth is set forth in great detail in a Buddhist philosophical work called the *Kusharon*.

④ The fourth classification is called *daijo* 大乘, great vehicle (Mahayana) Zen, and this is a truly Buddhist Zen, for it has as its central purpose *kensho*-

godo, that is, seeing into your essential nature and realizing the Way in your daily life. For those able to comprehend the import of the Buddha's own enlightenment experience and with a desire to break through their own illusory view of the universe and experience absolute, undifferentiated Reality, the Buddha taught this mode of Zen. Buddhism is essentially a religion of enlightenment. The Buddha after his own supreme awakening spent some fifty years teaching people how they might themselves realize their Self-nature. His methods have been transmitted from master to disciple right down to the present day. So it can be said that a Zen which ignores or denies or belittles enlightenment is not true daijo Buddhist Zen.

In the practice of daijo Zen your aim in the beginning is to awaken to your True-nature, but upon enlightenment you realize that zazen is more than a means to enlightenment—it is the actualization of your True-nature. In this type of Zen, which has as its object satori-awakening, it is easy to mistakenly regard zazen as but a means. A wise teacher, how-

ever, will point out from the onset that *zazen* is in fact the actualization of the innate Buddha-nature and not merely a technique for achieving enlightenment. If *zazen* were no more than such a technique, it would follow that after *satori* *zazen* would be unnecessary. But as Dogen-zenji himself pointed out, precisely the reverse is true; the more deeply you experience *satori*, the more you perceive the need for practice.

⑤ *Saijojo* 上乘 Zen, the last of the five types, is the highest vehicle, the culmination and crown of Buddhist Zen. This Zen was practiced by the Buddhas of the past—namely, Shakyamuni and Amida—and the expression of Absolute Life, life in its purest form. It is the *zazen* which Dogen-zenji chiefly advocated and it involves no struggle for *satori* or any other object. We call it *shikan-taza*, and of this I shall speak in greater detail in a subsequent lecture.

In this highest practice, means and end coalesce. Daijo Zen and *saijojo* Zen are, in point of fact, complementary. The Rinzai sect placed *daijo* uppermost and *saijojo* beneath, whereas the Soto sect does the re-

verse. In *saijojo*, when rightly practiced, you sit in the firm conviction that *zazen* is the actualization of your undefiled True-nature, *and at the same time you sit in complete faith that the day will come when, exclaiming, "Oh, this is it!" you will unmistakably realize this True-nature.* Therefore you need not self-consciously strive for enlightenment.

Today many in the Soto sect hold that since we are all innately Buddhas, *satori* is unnecessary. Such an egregious error reduces *shikan-taza*, which properly is the highest form of sitting, to nothing more than *bompu Zen*, the first of the five types.

This completes my account of the five varieties of Zen, but unless I now tell you about the three objectives of *zazen* my presentation of these five types, especially the last two, will be incomplete.

6 The Three Aims of Zazen

The aims of *zazen* are three: (1) development of the power of concentration (*joriki* 定力), (2) *satori*-awakening (*kensho-godo* 見性悟道), and (3) actualiz-

ation of the Supreme Way in our daily lives (*mujodo no taigen* 無上道之體現). These three form an inseparable unity, but for purposes of discussion I am obliged to deal with them individually.

Joriki, the first of these, is the power or strength which arises when the mind has been unified and brought to one-pointedness in *zazen* concentration. This is more than the ability to concentrate in the usual sense of the word. It is a dynamic power which, once mobilized, enables us even in the most sudden and unexpected situations to act instantly, without pausing to collect our wits, and in a manner wholly appropriate to the circumstances. Those who have developed *joriki* are no longer slaves to their passions. More fully in command of both themselves and the circumstances of their lives, such people are able to move with real freedom and equanimity. The cultivation of certain supranormal powers is also made possible by *joriki*, as is the state in which the mind becomes like clear, still water.

The first two of the five kinds of Zen I have spoken about depend entirely on *joriki*. Now, although the

power of joriki can be endlessly enlarged through regular practice, it will recede and eventually vanish if we neglect zazen. And while it is true that many extraordinary powers flow from joriki, nevertheless through it alone we cannot cut the roots of our illusory view of the world. Mere strength of concentration is not enough for the highest types of Zen; concomitantly there must be satori-awakening. In a little-known document handed down by Master Sekito Kisen, the founder of one of the early Zen sects, the following appears: "In our sect, realization of the Buddha-nature, and not mere devotion or strength of concentration, is paramount."

The second of these aims is kensho-godo, seeing into your True nature and at the same time seeing into the ultimate nature of the universe and "all the ten thousand things" in it. It is the sudden realization that "I have been complete and perfect from the very beginning. How wonderful, how miraculous!" If it is true kensho, its substance will always be the same for whoever experiences it, whether that one be the Buddha Shakyamuni, the Buddha Amida, or any

one of you gathered in this temple. But this does not mean that we can all experience kensho to the same degree, for in the clarity, the depth and the completeness of the experience there are great differences. As an illustration, imagine a person blind from birth who gradually begins to recover his sight. At first he can see very vaguely and darkly and only objects close to him. Then as his sight improves he is able to distinguish things a yard or so away, then objects at ten yards, then at a hundred yards, until finally he can recognize anything up to a thousand yards. At each of these stages the phenomenal world he is seeing is the same, but the differences in the clarity and accuracy of his view of that world are as great as those between snow and charcoal. So it is with the differences in clarity and depth of our experiences of kensho.

The last of the three objectives is *mujodo no taigen*, the actualization of the Supreme Way throughout our entire being and our daily activities. At this point we do not distinguish the end from the means. Saijojo, which I have spoken of as the fifth and highest

of the five types of Zen, corresponds to this stage. When you sit earnestly and egolessly in accordance with the instructions of a competent teacher—with your mind fully conscious yet as free of thought as a pure white sheet of paper is unmarred by a blemish—there is an unfoldment of your intrinsically pure Buddha-nature whether you have had satori or not. But what must be emphasized here is that only with true awakening do you directly apprehend the truth of your Buddha-nature and perceive that saijojo, the purest type of Zen, is no different from that practiced by all Buddhas.

The practice of Buddhist Zen should embrace all three of these objectives, for they are interrelated. There is, for instance, an essential connection between joriki and kensho. Kensho is “the wisdom naturally associated with joriki,” which is the power arising from concentration. Joriki is connected with kensho in yet another way. Many people may never be able to reach kensho unless they have first cultivated a certain amount of joriki, for otherwise they may find themselves too restless, too nervous and un-

easy to persevere with their zazen. Moreover, unless fortified by joriki, a single experience of kensho will have no appreciable effect on your life and will fade into a mere memory. For although through the experience of kensho you have apprehended the underlying unity of the cosmos with your Mind's eye, without joriki you are unable to act with the total force of your being on what your inner vision has revealed to you.

Likewise there is an interconnection between kensho and the third of these aims, *mujodo no taigen*. Kensho when manifested in all your actions is *mujodo no taigen*. With perfect enlightenment (*anuttara samyak-sambodhi*) we apprehend that our conception of the world as dual and antithetical is false, and upon this realization the world of Oneness, of true harmony and peace, is revealed.

The Rinzai sect tends to make satori-awakening the final aim of sitting and skims over joriki and *mujodo no taigen*. Thus the need for continued practice after enlightenment is minimized, and koan study since it is unsupported by zazen and scarcely re-

lated to daily life becomes essentially an intellectual game instead of a means by which to amplify and strengthen enlightenment.

On the other hand, while the practice advocated in the official quarters of the Soto sect today stresses *mujodo no taigen*, in effect amounts to little more than the accumulation of joriki, which, as I pointed out earlier, “leaks” or recedes and ultimately disappear unless *zazen* is carried on regularly. The contention of the Soto sect nowadays that *kensho* is unnecessary and that one need do no more than carry on daily activities with the Mind of the Buddha is specious for without *kensho* you can never really know what this Buddha mind is.

These imbalances in both sects⁸ in recent times

⁸ For a poetic description of the differences between Rinzaï and Soto, the following from an unpublished manuscript of the late Nyogen Senzaki may be of interest: “Among Zen students it is said that ‘Rinzaï’s teaching is like the frost of the late autumn, making one shiver, while the teaching of Soto is like the spring breeze which caresses the flower helping it to bloom.’ There is another saying: ‘Rinzaï’s teaching

have, unfortunately, impaired the quality of Zen teaching.

This concludes the discussion of the three aims of zazen.

7 Individual Instruction

Continue to practice the exercise I gave you last time, namely, concentrating on your incoming and outgoing breaths and endeavoring to experience each breath clearly.

This lecture will deal with *dokusan* 独参 (individual instruction which is the time allotted for bringing all problems pertaining the practice before the roshi in private. This tradition of individual teaching started with the honored Shakyamuni himself and has continued unbroken until today. We know

is like a brave general who moves a regiment without delay, while the Soto teaching is like a farmer taking care of a rice field, one stalk after another, patiently.”

this because one of the great masters of Tendai, Chisha-daishi, in his systematization of all the sutras under Eight Teachings and Five Periods, lists the Secret Teaching, which corresponds to dokusan.

Without this individual guidance we cannot say that our practice of zazen is authentic. Unfortunately, since the Meiji period, nearly a hundred years ago, dokusan has virtually died out in the Soto sect, continuing only in the Rinzai tradition. If we compare zazen to a journey on which some start rapidly and then slow down, others begin slowly and later accelerate their pace, some find one phase of the journey more hazardous than another, and all carry different burdens of luggage (that is, preconceived ideas), we can begin to understand why individual guidance in dokusan cannot be dispensed with.

It may be asked why it is necessary to keep dokusan secret. Since nothing immoral is involved, why can it not be open and in public? First of all, since we are ordinary people, with ego, in the presence of others we are inclined to make ourselves out to be better than we are. We cannot bare our souls and stand naked, as

it were. Likewise we hesitate to speak the whole truth for fear of being laughed at. Or if the roshi scolds us, using harsh language, we become more concerned with the effect of this on others than in listening to him open-mindedly.

There is yet another reason for privacy in dokusan. After your first experience of kensho you move from koan to koan as your understanding deepens, and were others to be present when you demonstrated these koans, listening to the master's replies, they might think, "Oh, so that's the answer!" without fully understanding the import of the koan. Obviously this would hurt their practice, for instead of coming to their own realization and presenting it to the master, they would remember that this was an acceptable answer but that was not, and thus, to their own detriment, their koan practice would degenerate to mere intellection. For these reasons you should remain silent when asked about a koan which the questioner has not yet passed. Irresponsible talk may lead to other harmful consequences. Rumors may spread that one is savagely beaten in dokusan,

for example, giving Zen an undeservedly bad name. Therefore do not discuss your koans with anybody, not even your best friends or members of your family.

It is precisely this violation of the secrecy which formerly surrounded the koan system that has brought about a steady deterioration in Rinzai teaching. What I am about to say does not apply to lay people, who are generally serious in their practice. But in the monasteries, where there are monks who resent the entire training, being there in the first place only to serve the period required to inherit the resident priesthood of a temple, this problem becomes serious. In monasteries where the discipline is faulty an older monk will often say to a younger one: "What koan are you working on?" When told the older one will say: "Do you understand it?" "No." "All right, I will tell you the answer," the older monk says, "and you buy me some cake in return." An accomplished teacher can tell whether the answer is authentic or not, but if for some reason he himself becomes lukewarm, he may accept an answer which is

not the monk's own. This practice may not be particularly harmful if such a monk spends only two or three years at a monastery before becoming the resident priest of a temple, as his duties there will not require his evaluating another's kensho. But it can happen that there is no opening when he completes this minimal training, so that he may remain at the monastery for perhaps eight or ten years, going through the entire koan system with answers which are not his own. Finally, as is the custom in the Rinzai sect when one completes all the koans, one receives the title of teacher. In this way one with no real understanding becomes "qualified" to guide others. This insidious practice is undermining Zen teaching. Soto scholars studying Zen academically justifiably attack the koan system on just these grounds.

The next point concerns what questions are appropriate during dokusan. All questions should relate to problems growing directly out of your practice. This naturally excludes personal problems. You may feel that the privacy of dokusan offers an excellent opportunity for the discussion of personal or theor-

etical matters, but you must bear in mind that there are others waiting and that if you take up problems other than those of your practice, you are hindering them. Properly, you may ask about your stomach, for instance, if it is growling, or about your teeth hurting so that you cannot eat, or about visions you may be experiencing. You should not, however, ask about Buddhist doctrine or comparative philosophy or the difference between one sutra and another. You may ask anything so long as it arises directly out of your practice.

The procedure for a new student is to make a monetary offering to the roshi before taking dokusan. Why, it may be asked, all this formality? Dokusan, it cannot be emphasized too strongly, is not a frivolous matter. While everyone is free to practice zazen and to listen to the roshi's commentary at sesshin, the essential character of dokusan is the forming of a karmic bond between teacher and disciple, the significance of which is deep in Buddhism. Dokusan therefore is not to be taken lightly. Moreover, since what passes between the teacher and the student in

dokusan concerns problems of a deep and ultimate nature, only the truth must be spoken between them. Very often in public meetings one hesitates to say things which might offend others, but this is not so in dokusan, where the absolute truth must always prevail. For these reasons the proprieties which establish this relationship are not to be slighted.

It is proper to wear ceremonial dress to dokusan, but as this is not insisted upon nowadays you may wear anything which is presentable. When dokusan is announced take a position in line behind the bell outside the *zazen* hall. When your turn comes and you hear my hand-bell, strike the bell in front of you twice and come to this room. You should not come dashing in, as that would cause confusion and you would not be in a frame of mind to benefit from dokusan. Neither should you saunter in, for there are others waiting. It was the custom originally to make three prostrations at the threshold, three in front of the teacher, and then three more at the doorway when you left, but this has now been abbreviated

to three prostrations altogether, one at each of the places mentioned.

In making your prostrations you should touch the tatami mat with your forehead, your hands extended in front of your head, palms upward. Then, bending your arms at the elbows, raise your hand palms upward, several inches above your head. This gesture of receiving the feet, the lowliest members of the Buddha's body, symbolizes humility and the grateful acceptance into your life of the Way of the Buddha. Unless you have submerged your ego, you cannot do this. Bear in mind that the roshi is not simply a deputy of the Buddha but actually stands in his place. In making these prostrations you are in fact paying respect to the Buddha just as though he himself were sitting there, and to the Dharma.

Next take a position about a foot in front of me and announce the nature of your practice. Simply say, "I am counting my breaths," "I am doing Mu," or "I am practicing shikan-taza." Make any questions you have brief and to the point. Should I have anything to say to you, I will say it after you have finished. But do

not come in and waste time wondering what to talk about; remember, others are waiting to see me. My ringing of this bell is your signal to bow down and leave. After that if you should remember something, you will have to bring it up at the following dokusan, because the next person will already be coming in.

This concludes the fifth lecture.

8 *Shikan-taza* 只管打坐

Up to now you have been concentrating on your breaths, trying to experience vividly the inhaled breath as only inhaled breath and the exhaled breath as only exhaled breath. Next I want you to try shikan-taza, which I will shortly describe in detail. It is neither usual nor desirable to change so quickly from these different exercises, but I have followed this course in order to give you a taste of the different modes of concentration. After these introductory lectures are completed and you come before me singly, I will assign you a practice corresponding to the nature

of your aspiration as well as to the degree of your determination.

This lecture will deal with shikan-taza. *Shikan* 只管 means “nothing but” or “just,” while *ta* 打 means “to hit” and *za* 坐 “to sit.” So shikan-taza is a practice in which the mind is intensely involved in just sitting. In this type of zazen it is all too easy for the mind, which is not supported by such aids in counting the breath or by a koan, to become distracted. The correct temper of mind therefore becomes doubly important. In shikan-taza the mind must be unhurried yet at the same time firmly planted or massively composed, like Mount Fuji let us say. But it must also be alert, stretched, like a taut bowstring. So shikan-taza is a heightened state of concentrated awareness wherein one is neither tense nor hurried, and certainly never slack. It is the mind of somebody facing death. Let us imagine that you are engaged in a duel of swordsmanship of the kind that used to take place in ancient Japan. As you face your opponent you are unceasingly watchful, set, ready. Were you to re-

lax your vigilance even momentarily, you would be cut down instantly. A crowd gathers to see the fight. Since you are not blind you see them from the corner of your eye, and since you are not deaf you hear them. But not for an instant is your mind captured by these sense impressions.

This state cannot be maintained for long—in fact, you ought not to do shikan-taza for more than half an hour at a sitting. After thirty minutes get up and walk around in kinhin and then resume your sitting. If you are truly doing shikan-taza, in half an hour you will be sweating, even in winter in an unheated room, because of the heat generated by this intense concentration. When you sit for too long your mind loses its vigor, your body tires, and your efforts are less rewarding than if you had restricted your sitting to thirty-minute periods.

Compared with an unskilled swordsman a master uses his sword effortlessly. But this was not always the case, for there was a time when he had to strain himself to the utmost, owing to his imperfect technique, to preserve his life. It is no different with

shikan-taza. In the beginning tension is unavoidable, but with experience this tense zazen ripens into relaxed yet fully attentive sitting. And just as a master swordsman in an emergency unsheathes his sword effortlessly and attacks single-mindedly, just so the shikan-taza adept sits without strain, alert and mindful. But do not for one minute imagine that such sitting can be achieved without long and dedicated practice. This concludes the talk on shikan-taza.

9 The Parable of Enyadatta

In the last half of this lecture I will take up the tale of Enyadatta which comes from the Ryogon (Surangama) sutra.⁹ This is an exceptionally fine parable that will, if you reflect carefully upon it, clarify many abstruse points of Buddhism.

This event is said to have occurred at the time of

⁹ In the journey from India to Japan, Vajradatta, the half-demented villager mentioned in the sutra, was mysteriously transformed into the beautiful maiden Enyadatta.

the Buddha. Whether it is true or legendary I cannot say. In any case, Enyadatta was a beautiful maiden who enjoyed nothing more than gazing at herself in the mirror each morning. One day when she looked into her mirror she found no head reflected there. Why not on this particular morning the sutra does not state. At any rate, the shock was so great that she became frantic, rushing around demanding to know who had taken her head. “Who has my head? Where is my head? I shall die if I don’t find it!” she cried. Though everyone told her, “Don’t be silly, your head is on your shoulders where it has always been,” she refused to believe it. “No, it isn’t! No, it isn’t! Somebody must have taken it!” she shouted, continuing her frenzied search. At length her friends, believing her mad, dragged her home and tied her to a pillar to prevent her harming herself.

The being bound can be compared to undertaking zazen. With the immobilization of the body the mind achieves a measure of tranquility. And while it is still distracted, as Enyadatta’s mind was in the belief that

she had no head, yet the body is now prevented from scattering its energies.

Slowly her close friends persuaded her that she had always had her head and gradually she came to half believe it. Her subconscious mind began to accept the fact that perhaps she was deluded in thinking she had lost her head.

Enyadatta's receiving the reassurance of her friends can be equated with hearing the roshi's commentaries (*teisho* 提唱). Initially these are difficult to understand, but listening to them attentively, every word sinking into your subconscious, you reach the point where you begin to think: "Is that really true?... I wonder... Yes, it must be."

Suddenly one of her friends gave her a terrific clout on the head, upon which, in pain and shock, she yelled "Ouch!" "*That's your head! There it is!*" her friend exclaimed, and immediately Enyadatta saw that she had deluded herself into thinking she had lost her head when in fact she had always had it.

In the same way, clouting in *zazen* is of the utmost value. To be jolted physically by the *kyosaku* stick or

verbally by a perceptive teacher at the right time—if it is too early, it is ineffective—can bring about Self-realization. Not only is the *kyosaku* valuable for spurring you on, but when you have reached a decisive stage in you *zazen* a hard whack can precipitate your mind into an awareness of its true nature—in other words, enlightenment.

When this happened to Enyadatta she was so elated that she rushed around exclaiming: “Oh, I’ve got it! I have my head after all! I’m so happy!”

This is the rapture of *kensho*. If the experience is genuine, you cannot sleep for two or three nights out of joy. Nevertheless, it is a half-mad state. To be overjoyed at finding a head you had from the very first is, to say the least, queer. Nor is it less odd to rejoice at the discovery of your Essential-nature, which you have never been without. The ecstasy is genuine enough, but your state of mind cannot be called natural until you have fully disabused yourself of the notions, “I have become enlightened.” Mark this point well, for it is often misunderstood.

As her joy subsided, Enyadatta recovered from her

half-mad state. So it is with satori. When your delirium of delight recedes, taking with it all thoughts of realization, you settle into a truly natural life and there is nothing queer about it. Until you reach this point, however, it is impossible to live in harmony with your environment or to continue on a course of true spiritual practice.

I shall now point out more specifically the significance of the first part of the story. Since most people are indifferent to enlightenment, they are ignorant of the possibility of such an experience. They are like Enyadatta when she was unconscious of her head as such. This “head,” of course, corresponds to the Buddha-nature, to our innate perfection. That they even have a Buddha-nature never occurs to most people until they hear 衆生本来仏なり *Shujo bonrai hotoke nari*—“All beings are endowed with Buddha-nature from the very first.” Suddenly they exclaim: “Then I too must have the Buddha-nature! But where is it? Thus like Enyadatta when she first missed her head and started rushing about looking

for it, they commence their search for their True nature.

They begin by listening to various teisho, which seem contradictory and puzzling. They hear that their Essential-nature is no different from the Buddha's—more, that the substance of the universe is coextensive with their own Buddha nature—yet because their minds are clouded with delusion they see themselves confronted by a world of individual entities. Once they establish firm belief in the reality of the Buddha-nature, they are driven to discover it with all the force of their being. Just as Enyadatta was never without her head, so are we never separate from our essential Buddha-nature whether we are enlightened or not. But of this we are unaware. We are like Enyadatta when her friends told her: “Don't be absurd, you have always had your head. It is an illusion to think otherwise.” The discovery of our True-nature can be compared to Enyadatta's discovery of her head. But what have we discovered? Only that we have never been without it! Nonetheless we are ecstatic, as she was at the finding of her head.

When the ecstasy recedes, we realize we have acquired nothing extraordinary, and certainly nothing peculiar. Only now everything is utterly natural.

10 Cause and Effect are One

You cannot hope to comprehend the exalted nature of Zen without understanding this lecture on *inga ichinyo* 印可一如, the meaning of which is that cause and effect are one. This expression comes from Hakuin-senji's *Chant in Praise of Zazen*. Bear in mind that this lecture will not be an explanation of cause and effect in the broad sense but only in relation to the practice of zazen.

Strictly speaking, you ought not to think of zazen in terms of time. While it is generally true that if you do zazen for a year it will have an effect equal to a year's effort, and that if you practice zazen for ten years it will produce an effect proportionate to ten years' effort, yet the results of zazen in terms of enlightenment cannot be measured by the length of your practice. The fact is, some have gained deep

enlightenment after only a few years' practice, while others have practiced as long as ten years without experiencing enlightenment.

From the commencement of practice one proceeds upward in clearly differentiated stages which can be considered a ladder of cause and effect. The word *inga* 印可, meaning cause and effect, implies both degree and differentiation, while *ichinyo* 一如 signifies equality or sameness or oneness. Thus while there are many stages corresponding to the length of practice, at every one of these different stages the mind substance is the same as that of a Buddha. Therefore we say cause and effect are one. Until satori-awakening, however, you cannot expect to have a deep inner understanding of *inga*.

Now let us relate this to the parable of Enyadatta, of which I spoke earlier. The time she saw no head reflected in the mirror and rushed about wildly looking for it—this is the first, or bottom, step. When her friends tied her to a pillar and insisted she had a head; when she began to think, “Possibly this is so”; when they whacked her and she yelled “Ouch!” and

realized she had a head after all; when she rejoiced at finding it; when finally her joy abated and having a head felt so natural that she no longer thought about it—all these are different steps and degrees of progression—when viewed retrospectively, that is. At every one of these stages she was never without her head, of course, but this she realized only after she had “found” it.

In the same way, after enlightenment we realize that from the very first we were never without Buddha-nature. And just as it was necessary for Enyadatta to go through all these phases in order to grasp the fact that she had always had a head, so we must pass through successive stages of zazen in order to apprehend directly our True-nature. These successive steps are causally related, but the fact that we are intrinsically Buddha, which in the parable is Enyadatta’s realization that she had always had a head—this is equality, or undifferentiation.

Thus Dogen-zenji in his *Shobogenzo* states: “The zazen of every beginners manifests the whole of their Essential-nature.” He is saying there that correct za-

zen is the actualization of the Bodhi-mind, the Mind with which we all are endowed. This zazen is sai-jojo, wherein the Way of the Buddha suffuses your entire being and enters into the whole of your life. Although we are unaware of all this at first, as our practice progresses we gradually acquire understanding and insight and finally, with satori, wake up to the fact that zazen is the actualization of our inherently pure Buddha-nature, whether we are enlightened or not.

II Oneness and Manyness

When you have kensho you see into the world of oneness, or equality, and this realization can be either shallow or deep; usually a first kensho is shallow. In either case, you still do not understand the world of differentiation, the world that people ordinarily assume they do understand. As you continue your practice on subsequent koans your awareness of the world of oneness, of non-differentiation becomes clearer, and since it is through this world of oneness

that you are seeing the world of differentiation, this latter also becomes clearer.

At the beginning, the perception of oneness is not distinct—there is still the idea of “something confronting me!” With deepening practice this barrier gradually dissolves. Even so, the feeling that others are actually oneself is still weak, and this is particularly true when these others have qualities we do not like. With a shallow kensho we resist the feeling that such people are indeed oneself. With further training, though, you are able to live a life of equality and to see that even people whom you recognize as having negative characteristics are not less than yourself. When you truly realize the world of oneness, you could not fight another even if that “other” wanted to kill you, for that person is nothing less than a manifestation of yourself. It would not even be possible to struggle against him. One who has realized the world of equality will regard with compassion even people who have homicidal intentions, since in a fundamental sense they and oneself are of equal worth. In the same way, all of nature, mountains and rivers,

are seen as oneself. In this deeper realization of oneness you will feel the preciousness of each object in the universe, rejecting nothing, since things as well as people will be seen as essential aspects of yourself. This deeper awareness, mind you, comes only after your practice has fully matured.

Let us take the body as a concrete example of the absolute equality of things. In the realization of the sameness aspect, of each object having equal value, your face and the soles of your feet are not different; one is not high and the other low. Similarly, a law-breaker is not inherently evil, nor is a law-abiding person a pillar of virtue.

Nevertheless, for society to function harmoniously, people who go against the accepted laws—who kill or steal, for example—must be segregated for the protection of others. This being true, it is clear that there is another aspect, that of relativity—in this case of moral distinctions.

To understand and act upon differences is not a simple matter. For example, one who truly understood differentiation and could function in accord-

ance with it would never overeat; he or she would eat only when hungry, and then just enough to satisfy hunger. Ordinary people who have not yet awakened think they understand the relative, common world of distinctions, but true understanding can take place only when the aspect of oneness has been realized in depth. Having experienced the world of equality through kensho, one now sees differences in and through the aspect of sameness.

When I first came to America and looked into the faces of the people, they all looked alike. But now I can differentiate faces here quite easily. You can help people only when you are able to recognize and accept the differences among them, seeing each individual in the light of his or her own unique qualities. To do so represents an advanced state of training.

Even after kensho, when you perceive that everything is one and you are no longer confronted by an external world, you still cannot live in and through that experience. Somehow you keep returning to the previous state of mind. However, if you continue to work on subsequent koans, each time you resolve

another koan, that experience is reaffirmed and you return to the world of non-duality with great clarity. Gradually the clarity and the ability to live in this world of oneness improve.

So there is both suddenness and gradualness in Zen training. The experience of awakening is sudden, but the integration of the experience into your life is gradual.

To awaken quickly is not necessarily advantageous, nor is to take long time necessarily disadvantageous. When you practice earnestly each day, you are actualizing in your life the aspect of oneness. Though not even striving for enlightenment, one is gradually becoming aware of the world of equality through wholehearted, single-minded zazen.

Hearing this last, you may think, "If through wholehearted zazen in our daily life we are actualizing the kensho state of mind, what need is there to think about kensho?" As you have heard me say many times when you are involved in zazen to the point of self-transcendence, that is enlightenment manifesting itself. Therefore it is said in Zen, "One minute

of sitting, one minute of being a Buddha.” Zazen is the cause of which enlightenment is the effect. But since this cause and effect are simultaneous, or one, you are not consciously aware of this enlightenment. Realizing this intrinsic enlightenment—suddenly exclaiming, “Oh, this is it!”—is something else again. This latter is a distinct effect, different from “cause and effect are one,” and its realization requires the strong faith that one can awaken to one’s True-nature. This vital point must not be overlooked.

12 The Three Essentials of Zen Practice

What I am about to say is especially applicable to daijo Zen, which is specifically directed toward satori, but it also embraces saijojo, though in a lesser degree.

① The first of the three essentials of Zen practice is strong faith (*daishinkon* 大信根). This is more than mere belief. The ideogram for *kon* 根 means “root,” and that for *shin* 信, “faith.” Hence the phrase implies a faith that is firmly and deeply rooted, immovable, like an immense tree or a huge boulder.

It is a faith, moreover, untainted by belief in the supernatural or the superstitious. Buddhism has often been ascribed as both a rational religion and a religion of wisdom. But a religion it is, and what makes it one is this element of faith, without which it is merely philosophy. Buddhism starts with the Buddha's supreme enlightenment, which he attained after strenuous effort. Our deep faith, therefore, is in his enlightenment, the substance of which he proclaimed to be that human nature, all existence, is intrinsically whole, flawless, omnipotent—in a word, perfect. Without unwavering faith in this the heart of the Buddha's teaching, it is impossible to progress far in one's practice.

② The second indispensable quality is a feeling of strong doubt (*daigidan* 大疑団).¹⁰ Not a simple doubt, mind you, but a “doubt-mass”—and this inevitably stems from strong faith. It is a doubt as to why we and the world should appear so imperfect,

¹⁰ In Zen, “doubt” implies not skepticism but a state of perplexity, of probing inquiry, of intense self-questioning.

so full of anxiety, strife, and suffering, when in fact our deep faith tells us exactly the opposite is true. It is a doubt which leaves us no rest. It is as though we knew perfectly well we were millionaires and yet inexplicably found ourselves in dire need without a penny in our pockets. Strong doubt therefore, exists in proportion to strong faith.

I can illustrate this state of mind with a simple example. Take a man who has been sitting smoking and suddenly finds that the pipe which was in his hand a moment before has disappeared. He begins search for it in the complete certainty of finding it. It was there a moment ago, no one has been near, it cannot have disappeared. The longer he fails to find it, the greater the energy and determination with which he hunts for it.

③ From this feeling of doubt the third essential, strong determination (*dai-funshi* 大憤志), naturally arises. It is an overwhelming determination to dispel this doubt with the whole force of our energy and will. Believing with every pore of our being in the truth of the Buddha's teaching that we are all en-

dowed with the immaculate Bodhi-mind we resolve to discover and experience the reality of this Mind for ourselves.

The other day someone who had quite misunderstood the state of mind required by these three essentials asked me: “Is there more for believing we are Buddhas than accepting the fact that the world as it is is perfect, that the willow is green and the carnation red?” The fallacy of this is self-evident. If we do not question why greed and conflict exist, why the ordinary man or woman acts like anything but Buddha, no determination arises in us to resolve the obvious contradiction between what we believe as a matter of faith and what our senses tell us is just the contrary, and our zazen is thus deprived of a prime source of power.

I shall now relate these three essentials to daijo and saijojo Zen. While all three are present in daijo, this doubt is the main prod to satori because it allows us no rest. Thus we experience satori, and the resolution of this doubt, more quickly with daijo Zen.

In saijojo, on the other hand, the element of faith

is strongest. No fundamental doubt of the kind I mentioned assails us and so we are not driven to rid ourselves of it, for we sit in the unswerving faith that we are inherently Buddhas. Unlike daijo Zen, saijojo, which you will recall is the purest type of zazen, does not involve the anxious striving for enlightenment. It is zazen wherein ripening takes place naturally, culminating in enlightenment. At the same time saijojo is the most difficult zazen of all, demanding resolute and dedicated sitting.

However, in both types of zazen all three elements are indispensable, and teachers of old have said that so long as they are simultaneously present it is easier to miss the ground with a stamp of the foot than to miss attaining perfect enlightenment.

13 Aspiration

Even while we all do zazen, our individual aspirations are not identical. These aspirations resolve themselves into four main groups or levels.

① The first and shallowest level involves neither faith in Zen Buddhism nor even a cursory understanding of it. One just happens to hear about it and decides to try sitting with a zazen group or in a sesshin. Nevertheless, that out of millions of deluded people entirely ignorant of Buddhism one particular individual should be led to this 2,500-year-old, unbroken line of teaching is, in the Buddhist view, not a fortuitous but a karmic circumstance and therefore of vast spiritual significance.

② The second level of aspiration is a level which goes no deeper than the desire to do zazen in order to improve physical or mental health or both. This, you will recall, falls into the first of the five classifications of Zen, namely, bompū (ordinary) Zen.

③ At the third level we find people who, no longer satisfied merely to increase their physical and mental

well-being, want to tread the path of the Buddha. They recognize how exalted is the Buddhist cosmology, which views existence as not confined to one life-span but endlessly evolving lifetime after lifetime, with the circle of human destiny completed only upon the attainment of Buddhahood. More, they have established faith in the reality of the enlightenment experience, and though the resolve to attain it has not yet been awakened, the desire to pursue the Buddha's Way is clear and real.

④ The fourth level comprises those determined to realize their True self. They know this experience to be a living reality, for they have encountered people who have had it, and they are convinced they can likewise attain it. When they come before their teacher they come with an open mind and a humble heart, ready to follow whatever course he prescribes, secure in the knowledge that by so doing they can realize their goal in the shortest time.

I will now quickly recapitulate these four classes of aspirants, those who, having no particular faith

in Zen, come to it through fortunate karmic circumstances; those who practice zazen through desire only to add to their physical or mental health or both; those who practice Zen out of belief in the exalted nature of the Buddha's teaching; and those who have a strong determination to become enlightened.

Hereafter you will come before me one by one and I will ask you what you feel to be the nature of your aspiration, that is, into which of the four classes you fall. Tell me your feelings honestly. Do not add anything through pride, and do not subtract anything out of false modesty. Depending upon what you tell me, I will assign you the zazen most appropriate for you.

There is no definitive practice which applies to everyone. Generally speaking, those who put themselves in the first class are assigned the practice of counting their breaths; those in the second category the following of their breath; in the third class, shikan-taza; and in the fourth, a koan, usually Mu.¹¹

¹¹ It is not wise to assign yourself a koan. Only a teacher

When students come before me individually for the first time, they make all manner of curious replies. Some say: "I think I belong *between* the first and second classes." Others tell me: "I have a chronically bad stomach, so would you assign me a type of zazen that will help this condition?" Or sometimes a person will say: "I am somewhat neurotic; what kind of zazen would be good for that?"

Depending on the type of person and the strength of their determination, I prescribe what I believe to be a suitable practice. With stolid individuals it is usually desirable to spur them on with the *kyosaku*, whereas somewhat nervous or sensitive people can do better zazen without it. Only if your appraisal of your feelings is frank can I select for you the most effective practice.

who has given you *dokusan* and therefore knows your temperament, aspiration, and capabilities can, with your help assign you a suitable koan and, especially in the beginning, give you the necessary guidance.



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