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We are now almost finished with the sutra of Hakuin Zenji, **The Song of Zazen**.

All sentient beings are essentially Buddhas. As with water and ice, there is no ice without water; apart from sentient beings, there are no Buddhas. Not knowing how close the truth is we seek it far away - what a pity! We are like one who in the midst of water cries out desperately in thirst. We are like the son of a rich man who wandered away among the poor. The reason we transmigrate through the Six Realms is because we are lost in the darkness of ignorance. Going further and further astray in the darkness, how can we ever be free from birth-and-death? As for the Mahayana practice of zazen, there are no words to praise it fully. The Six Paramitas, such as giving, maintaining the precepts, and various other good deeds like invoking the Buddha's name, repentance, and spiritual training, all finally return to the practice of zazen. Even those who have sat zazen only once will see all karma erased. Nowhere will they find evil paths, and the Pure Land will not be far away. If we listen even once with open heart to this truth, then praise it and gladly embrace it, how much more so then, if on reflecting within ourselves we directly realize Self-nature, giving proof to the truth that Self-nature is no-nature. We will have gone far beyond idle speculation. The gate of the oneness of cause and effect is thereby opened, and not-two, not-three, straight ahead runs the Way. Realizing the form of no-form as form, whether going or returning we cannot be any place else. Realizing the thought of no-thought as thought, whether singing or dancing, we are the voice of the Dharma. How vast and wide the unobstructed sky of samadhi! How bright and clear the perfect moonlight of the Fourfold Wisdom! At this moment what more need we seek? As the eternal tranquility of Truth reveals itself to us, this very place is the land of Lotus and this very body is the body of the Buddha.

Hakuin Zenji begins with "All sentient beings are essentially Buddhas." When we can realize directly the truth to which the Buddha was awakened, then every person without exception is from the origin born with the very same wisdom as that of the Buddha. Only because of our egoistic filter and attachment, is that wisdom blocked and obstructed. We all perceive this great blue sky and at the root of this great blue sky,

we are all equal. Only from time to time, according to the clouds that pass by, sometimes a white cloud, sometimes dark ominous clouds, we are prevented from seeing the truth. This is not the fault of the truth but the delusion of the ego. If we can let go of the ego filter and see clearly, then

"Giving proof to the truth that Self nature is no nature"

Our human character, there is nothing there whatsoever, nothing at all, we are given this understanding. If we can truly and actually understand the essence of this meaning of nothing at all, then

"We will have gone beyond idle speculation"

When we are still seeing it as "Is it this? Is it that?" our true nature is not clarified yet. When our true nature is clear we realize how we no longer need these questions. Because we do not yet know our actual truth directly we hang on to a position, a point of view, we are stuck on our own opinions and start arguing and debating. Yet humans are equal, all of us, when it comes to our true nature and being human. We are all endowed with the same wisdom, we are all unified by that one and the same wisdom, we all have this same empty-minded, pure wisdom. When we clarify this wisdom, we no longer need any debate or explanation.

"The gate of the oneness of cause and affect is thereby opened."

When we realize that we all have the same source and are the same Buddha Nature at our source then we all become clear and joyful

"Not two not three straight ahead runs the way"

The true Buddha Dharma is not divided into many various teaching varieties such as small vehicle, large vehicle, affiliation by hearing, or experiencing, etc. We just need these because our wisdom is still so very distant and unclear. We have to get rid of that ego and for that we speak of the three paths but when we realize that we all are that same wisdom, we see that we are all one true mind at the root. This is what Hakuin has taught with these words.

As the Buddha said that in this world, everything is ego

expression, dualistic and differentiated. However, we cannot be fooled by those dark rain clouds in the sky. Do not be deceived by appearances, instead see that true blue-sky nature, pure and clear with which we are all endowed. We are all liberated from the origin. To lead us to this the Buddha taught us - not by taking us somewhere else but teaching that if we all realize our original mind we will know that we were never deluded in the first place. If we live in this state of mind and open our clear eye to it then,

“Realizing the form of no-form as form, whether going or returning we cannot be any place else. Realizing the thought of no-thought as thought, whether singing or dancing we are the voice of the Dharma.”

Here Hakuin teaches of this mind that has realized this clear mind directly.

As the Sixth Patriarch said, “Abiding in no place, awakened mind arises”

Everyday we give birth to many varieties of mind, but these are all abiding somewhere, the place of ego filter, the address of profit and loss, the location of good and bad. This is why we give rise to a mind moment, a ‘me’ gets stuck in there and we get opaque, unclear. We get excited about the words we are speaking, We get hot and our ki gets high, our ideas and thoughts get us so excited and we start to think that “nobody is being as badly treated as we are”, “no-one can possibly be suffering as much as I am. We get stuck in our mind. In this way, our mind is in a location but original mind has no place, where it abides. It is not stopped anywhere. What is important about this is to let go of the position that we believe we are in, because we believe we are in a position we are caught on it. We think we are suffering, losing out, miserable, not getting anywhere, and we feel insulted. In our mind originally there is nothing like any of that whatsoever.

We laugh at things that are funny and we are sad when things go badly but there is nothing at all, from where this comes forth. From this place of nothing at all these all come forth, and in this way we become one with the world around us when something funny happens we become funny happening, when something sad happens we are born forth as sadness. In this way we are always new and fresh, always new always fresh, this new fresh mind and awareness is the Buddha. We always want this freshness and if we are not fresh, our mind is not settled. When we are pulling around things of the past, we are not settled. We have to be always fresh, then

“Abiding in no place awakened mind arises”

Without the slightest bit of being caught in our mind, we move and transform, this is our healthy way of being. As the bell goes ‘gong’ we hear ‘gong’, we hear the birds, ‘chirp, chirp’, we become the flower, we

become the moon.

We have this actuality with which we are born, this is our awareness, in each moment, every instant our true mind is born. There is only this moment, that is birth and death and so there is no birth or destruction, even to think we are alive at this moment, to have that thought is already a separation. We are alive in each moment we have no room for an idea of being born, of being alive or being dead, there is no such awareness, that is not correct but stopped awareness. When the bell rings “Gong,” awareness is born at that very moment.

That which is nothing at all is “gong” so there is no coming forth or going away, it is only this instant of GOOONG. This world and I are one and the same, without birth, without death. Realize this and we know that true clear mind that is just newly born. IT is not that there is an I that sees, hears, and thinks, that is the big mistake. There is nothing in my mind at all yet there is seeing, hearing, and speaking.

If you think in your mind there is knowledge or wisdom that you have to understand, that is the big mistake. There is nothing at all in our mind yet there is hearing and seeing and speaking. It is not that there is knowledge in our mind and so we understand, instead we directly perceive there is nothing in our mind at all yet we can see and hear and perceive. We are from the origin empty and unsoiled so there is no birth and no death. We are pure and unsoiled, there is nothing from the origin not any idea to be born or to die, no such mental idea. Our mind is empty from the origin no matter what arises, there is no thing to be moved around by and yet we are accustomed and conditioned to moving around in mind. Our mind has originally no shape or form so it cannot be moved around. We think we ARE and so we perceive with that mistaken view, when actually we are in each and every second creating the heavens and earth anew.

Satori is to awaken to that truth of our mind. It is not that there is something to achieve that is satori, but for our mind to always be in its most pure state, this place of nothing whatsoever completely and precisely perceiving directly, reflecting things exactly as they are. This is our mind’s pure way of being. Because it is not so easy for us to become this way, we do zazen. The Sixth Patriarch defined it as, “not adding on any thoughts of good or bad to what we perceive externally, not giving rise to any ideas about what is born forth, not being moved around by anything that comes up within, this is called zazen.” We follow this is one instruction to return to our original state of mind. We are always trying to add on ideas of good and bad and gain and loss to the world we perceive. Because we have so many previous experiences and knowledge, we color our direct perception with those. Do not color those perceptions! Receive it exactly as it is! To receive it exactly as it is, this is zazen.

Doing zazen is not about us becoming more pure or quieter or more serene. To even engage a dualistic thought such as pure or quiet or serene is not zazen. Zazen is not to give one thought whatsoever to anything, to give no partner to any thought at all. What comes diving to us just dives right to us. We do not add on ideas of good or bad or any judgment at all. It is exactly like a mirror that reflects things. To perceive that way is the original Mind of the Buddha. We all think we have to suffer and work hard to become something, that is only a conditioned idea our ego has invented - only egoistic, dualistic thinking. This is not our original Buddha Mind, we all have Buddha Mind, it does not need any of that at all.

“Looking within we are not moved around by anything that comes around whatsoever.” A mirror can reflect things because there is nothing in the mirror at all. If we have nothing in our minds whatsoever then our mind is always fresh and new. We can make clear the true value of every thing that we encounter. Not to hold on to anything in your mind whatsoever is the truth. To receive thoroughly whatever comes to us is not about holding on to it. That is not our true mind. When there is the slightest little wisp that comes up, we cut it away. If another mind moment arises, we cut that. If we are still unripe then that cutting is not sharp and we follow right after the thought that comes up. This is why at the beginning we have to make efforts but as it ripens there is not even any need to do that either. We are abiding right smack in nothing at all. That does not mean to stay still there though. This is why we can correctly and precisely receive each and every world that comes forth.

“Looking within we are moved around by nothing that comes.” We are just like this and since we still cling and are moved around, we have to do zazen.

When our zazen ripens it really becomes “In all the boundless realms of space not a single hair can be inserted, from the limitless past through the boundless future we are never separate from the here and now.” We are surging throughout this whole universe, as all the ten thousand things, at one with our perceiving. Subjective with no gap between, no seam at all, that direct perception is what we become, we become the flower, we become the moon, we become the wind, we become the sun, in this way our life energy is always fresh and always new. It is born fresh and we are not separate in any way from society, we are not separate in anyway from the heavens and earth, we are completely at one. There is no need for some mental explanation that if we do not make efforts we cannot liberate all beings; if it is necessary, we will manifest in that way as a matter of course. Each and every mind moment is clear and pure as it manifests and we are ourselves.

“Realizing the form of no-form as form, whether going or returning we cannot be any place else.”

Without any personal form at all, without adding in

any self-conscious awareness or dualism we manifest exactly as things are and we become each and every world completely and settle there.

“Realizing the form of no-form as form, whether going or returning we cannot be any place else.”

Our body is made out of six billion cells of many kinds, each variety has its own function, eye cells, skin cells, hair cells, stomach cells, intestine cells, lung cells, all of our body's functions have their cells but in fact they are originally all from one cell we received from our parents. In accordance with their programming, they increased to sixty billion that made this one person. If we look at that original cell then we see that our brain and soles of our feet and skin are all one and the same cells, yet the brain cell is a brain cell, the sole of the foot cell is a sole of the foot cell and the skin cell is a skin cell. All of it comes from one original cell which is the source of it all and that is what gives forth all of the abilities. The origin is without form but each and every part has a fixed form through which it functions. In any given cell, its superficial form is that it goes to its useful place and they all together make one living being. This is the same with all the forms throughout the whole world; they are made from molecules in many, many different mixtures becoming people, flowers and the moon. They are all collections of molecules and from the original flowing of energy they are not a form but formless.

We also have to see that this place of no form as form is how our life is too. Just like there is a grocery person, a rice seller, a fish seller, a soy sauce seller, a sumi seller in the olden days it was all divided and in that, each had a place, with this each person made their living. In this world, everyone is needed to do what everyone is doing, if there is some part that is missing society cannot move and by dividing it up among people, it works. The person who takes care of the road and the one who works the signals; only with all of them moving together do things work. If we think about it, the world is the same as a drama.

While everyone is equal, only some of us get up on the stage and do Ophelia or Hamlet. There are many varied roles and when they come down off the stage, they are again all friends and equal. Sometimes the actor becomes a bad guy or a kind person, or a devil or a hero, depending on what role they are given. At the time they perform with everything, they are, and if they do not, the whole drama goes bad. It is not about saying I want to play this role - in fact for all of us, “Realizing the form of no-form as form, whether going or returning we cannot be any place else.” Therefore, when we go on stage, we act completely and when we come off, we all do our utmost for the harmony of everyone.

We have to live this with everything we are or it will not work. If we look at one person's life, we can see

that even if I myself work hard, things are still always changing. The Buddha said that there is nothing fixed, when we were born we were small enough to fit in our mother's hand. If we were not taken care of we could not live one day, and we grew, made friends, have self-conscious awareness and tried for goals and intimate friends. Life in that way has its own value and we work in society and express our ability. In society, we work to go to the very top edge but we cannot always do the same thing forever. We have to leave the work world, then we go from ripened years to elder years and then in our last years we let go to our finishing years and complete our life there. While calling it "me," there is no such thing as a "me" to be clung to. We have various experiences at various stages, acting out the drama of life and so we are always having this life energy flow so there is nothing to which we say "no." We may have disappointments and hard times but that is not the end. We realign ourselves and our ki and we go forward one more time.

In the Flower Garland Sutra it tells in one section about the Golden Lion. Sokuten Bukko was teaching the truth of the Buddha, which is the truth of the Flower Garland Sutra. The problem was the emperor could not understand "form of no form" - and so to explain it, he borrowed the golden lion and taught formlessness with it. If we looked at the lion, we see it had a shape just like a lion, it manifested in this way so that anyone who saw it would see it as a lion. Its nails, hair and legs all the way to its tail were completely pure gold. All parts of his body were empty of form; all of those things that were the energy and parts, the whole lion-ness is formless. Each individual part that we can see is of form. The Heart Sutra says, "That which is form is emptiness and that which is emptiness form." The gold is without form so it is called emptiness or void, the lion is and has a form, so the lion is gold and the gold is lion. Our mind is the same; originally, there is no form. Yet, while from the point of view of form we are rich, poor male or female, philosopher or uneducated, old or young but in our truest form we are not old, young, rich, poor, scholar or uneducated. Because we do not see through to that true nature, the forms confuse us. This is what we have to see very, very clearly. We have to see the form and live that form totally, even if it is a borrowed form we cannot live it in a compromised way, while knowing it is borrowed we use it completely and totally. This is our life.

In just this same way, our world is appearing to have a form but from the origin, it has no substance or shape, we have a true nature that is only manifesting these various forms. This is why mountains, rivers, flowers, birds, houses and people are all borrowed forms, manifesting, all of them. But these borrowed forms, while saying that they are only borrowed, that is not something melancholy. There is no need to be caught on a mental understanding of it.

A person takes a photo of something, that is called a

picture, and the word in kanji is "sashin," to reflect the mind. To reflect the mind, but if this world is only something borrowed how do we reflect the mind? This world that is always in flux, how could there be any mind or center? But in fact, while this world is constantly in flux, what it is manifesting is also the truth. To see that clearly is the core of Buddhism.

To put it a different way, we close the shutter of a camera - zap. In that instant, we have to see that mind, see that mind in this objective world, in this phenomenal world that is always changing so it is not the true world, to be true. That is why the mind is not the objective world - any world that will decay has to be seen as the truth, as the eternal.

To have the eye to see this clearly is the Buddhist absolute value. Therefore, to grasp this mind within each person, this eye has to be discovered within ourselves. This not a some "thing" inside of us, it is formless it has to be formless and also free from our own opinions and explanations, without any personal position, without good and bad, do not get caught on any of that.

Separate from those dualistic opinions, and in one instant realize it directly. Our lens is transparent and free from any egoistic opinion that clouds it. The lens has to be clear and transparent and that is what the pure subjective is. The five foot lump of red flesh of Rinzai, Joshu saying "Mu" and Daruma Daishi saying, "Only emptiness nothing sacred" and this subjective always moves of its own. Each moment grasping the world as it encounters it, just as we have to wind the film each time we take a photo, we cannot hold onto one frame forever, it has to always be new fresh mind when catching the world or it is not a photo. In each and every moment to be in the world with its truth in that moment and seeing that clearly is:

"Realizing the thought of no-thought as thought, whether singing or dancing we are the voice of the Dharma."

Hakuin Zenji says it this way.

One mind-moment is the moment of right here, right now. This moment's mind is one mind moment. This is also one instant. It is in accordance with this that we catch the world of one instant and here is the mind. But since this is mind, it is also eternal and can be awakened to. This is why in China there was a wise one who carved on his daily washing bowl "every day new and fresh, fresh and new every day", in order to keep the mind from stopping and stagnating. To wash the mind along with the face every day and every day to meet the day and people with a fresh mind. Right there is the true life and the true world.

The past completely left behind, we all have things we cannot even talk about in our past but these do not return to this moment. We have a whole new life

to live in each day, past ideas and experiences don't twist things, thoughts about the past are what obscures the present, if we cannot be in this present moment every moment. Just as we are not drinking old water or breathing old air or eating old food from three years ago. This moment is always new and this body as well is always evolving anew, and in doing this we have a true way of living correctly and correctly meeting people and things. In our mind, this is what is most difficult. We have to live a new and fresh life and recharge our mind and world, living in a new mind in society and in doing that we have to always forget what has past and like the river's water that flows on by, we have to be a clear lens, transparent, holding on to nothing at all. To always be seeing the outer world from this place, this is what it means to really be alive in the most truthful way. To be alive is not about living full of thoughts of the past. To live in the truth is to live fully, completely in this very moment of the truth. To live in the fresh state of mind that can receive everything that comes as the truth, this is to truly live. For a human to be alive is to be in this forward-looking fresh state of mind.

Rinzai Zenji has said that we should not add on any thoughts to our first and direct perception. We should add on no second associations to what we perceive and if we can do this, it is more important than ten years of pilgrimage. As long as we are human, we of course give rise to the mind of a moment, and are happy, angry, good, bad, and have likes and dislikes. These are all mind moments and as they arise, just leave them and don't add on anything else. Don't add on mind moment on top of another mind moment. Zazen makes this possible. We do not have to try and waste energy on trying to not have any mind moments arise. To not be grieving about the future or regretting the past, to not be concerned about the future or dwelling in the past and if we can do that it is worth more than ten years of pilgrimage or ten years of zazen. This is the most advanced way to realize the Buddha Mind.

In each mind moment to be fresh and seeing from a fresh state of mind, then we can see with the eyes of the Buddha and the mind of the Patriarchs, to hear and see with the same ears and eyes as the Buddha, this is what this means. Of course, we get irritated and agitated. To exhale out long and let go of all of it this is zazen. In society as we work it is difficult to do zazen so we have to do a one breath zazen, all the thoughts and ideas and memories of the past, all of our instabilities and insecurities we take care of with this one breath zazen. We let go of everything, we become empty and this is what is important. This is the zazen we can really make use of in our daily life. We have to see this clearly, zazen is not about not seeing, not hearing and not feeling, do not get stuck like this, but to cut and let go of everything and have the courage to do that.

Rinzai Zenji and the Buddha also said that if we meet the Buddha we should kill the Buddha, if we meet the Patriarchs, we should kill the Patriarchs, if we meet

an Arahant, we should kill the Arahant. It seems severe but we have to have this severity or we will not realize that place of letting go of all attachments to all the ten thousand things and be in the mind of this moment. This is what Master Rinzai is telling us, if we can be in this mind and be unattached, we can be free, and be the true master in every place we go. This world is our world and we are attached to nothing and stuck on nothing, and in each world of each moment we can respond from the place of being the true master and when we realize this then everywhere we go is the true place, the place of truth. We can receive this.

The Sixth Patriarch gave us the following rules for zazen:

“Externally to bring forth no thoughts to what we perceive, this is za. To internally be moved around by nothing within, this is zen.”

In this way he taught, and this concerns everything that occurs to us. We accept it all no matter what comes, without our mind being moved around at all. It is not about protecting a “not being moved around” state, but we do not put any judgment or opinion into it. We are all so used to judging and adding opinions and thinking this and that, but that is being used by those things and a slave to them yet we do not even realize that. Instead, we have to use those things or we lose the freedom we receive. Receive it but we do not judge or criticize and right there is our true nature. Our absolute true nature. So, we are free to judge or not judge. We learn this and that is zazen, this is what the Sixth Patriarch teaches us.

We live in the real world along with all the things we remember. They come into the window of our mind and then there are all kinds of imaginings but these are all things that come into mind as ‘scenery’. To be caught on them is like being caught on the scenery that goes by a window. Our past memories, our hopes and our meetings, all of it is like scenery outside a train window. We have to make our seat on that train firm and solid and not chase after the scenery that is always changing. If we try to hold on to that scenery we lose our firm seat. We have to keep our seat well established and then in each and every moment to receive whatever comes. In this, we have our true way of encountering in the world and society.

“Realizing the form of no-form as form, whether going or returning we cannot be any place else. Realizing the thought of no-thought as thought, whether singing or dancing, we are the voice of the Dharma.”

This way of encountering the world is expressed by this, just like seeing a movie or scenery if we are enjoying it then no matter what we see and hear we know it as a phenomena then everything we perceive is interesting. If we move and are moved around, then at that moment, we are pulled off center and we

are melancholy and heavy in our state of mind. As Master Dogen says, "If we leave and go out after it, it is deluded, if it comes to us, it is enlightenment."

We get tired because we bring our mind out to external things, we only have to receive whatever comes and then there is no fear or delusion.

No matter where the Buddha went, it was his world and home. There was no place that was not his place of being at home. The mind of the window is originally empty and so we receive whatever comes and no matter what comes it is only scenery at our mind's window so we don't need to worry or be confused by anything at all. This is

"Realizing the form of no-form as form, whether going or returning we cannot be any place else. Realizing the thought of no-thought as thought, whether singing or dancing, we are the voice of the Dharma."

In the olden days in the Tang dynasty in China, in the city of Koyo in the area of Chukan there was a beautiful young girl named Seijo who had a handsome young friend Ochu, he was the same age. Her father would say to his family kidding "When you two grow up you should get married and be a couple because you could have such a beautiful child and when she was about the right age he forget what he had said when they were younger and gave her away in marriage promising her to someone else. Ochu went many times to her father but he would not take back his promise to the husband to be and finally Ochu decided to leave and took a boat down the Yangtze River. He saw someone running along on the bank and it was Seijo, she had left her fathers house. He took her hands and they went together to the capital and for five years they were together there and had two children. Still, they could not forget their hometown and their parents. They got a boat and went back to their home and Ochu went first to the house of her father to ask his pardon since they had been gone so long and there were already two children. When he first went to her fathers home he was so happy to see the father's healthy face, and he told him that he had wanted to come first and ask his pardon. The father said no, ever since he had left she had been sick and nodding and silent in the back room. Ochu insisted, "no she is waiting in the boat" The father said such a thing is not possible, there is nothing so silly as what your talking about, and he called to her in the back room and she smiled when she saw Ochu for the first time in five years. Then he brought back the other Seijo and they both smiled and embraced and became one again. This is from an old Chinese book of ghost stories.

This is an old folk tale but it also has deep religious meaning as well, our world has many varieties of experience in it, happy, sad, miserable, joyful, we have busy lives but isn't there some insecurity there? Is this

really all right? Are you not lonely? Is there not some hometown of the heart that we have forgotten? Like seeing suddenly our parents' faces, don't we have a feel like that about our deepest Mind? That is a call to religious practice; we are all incomplete and dissatisfied, since we live a limited life. We all want something infinite and eternal, we are all wanting to return to our hearts hometown and that is the Buddha Nature calling us, calling to our most splendid mind which has been sleeping many years in the back room. When the borrowed form is returned they become one that is when our religious mind is united with our world and we sit comfortably at home and our life is complete. This is Zen or Nembutsu (chanting of the Buddha's name) which become one and the same when they are:

"Realizing the form of no-form as form, whether going or returning we cannot be any place else. Realizing the thought of no-thought as thought, whether singing or dancing, we are the voice of the Dharma."

Dogen Zenji says about our Original Face,

"In the spring it is the flowers, in the summer it is the meadowlark, in the autumn, it is the moon, in the winter it is the snow."

We have the springs joy in the flowers joy, the joy of the breeze in the spring, the joy of the colored leaves in the autumn, and then the moons radiance, the snow's stillness, and when the snow stops falling there is a pure white world. This is each and every day received, we feel our life energy, and that is possible because we know mind. We always have flowers blooming but if we do not know them with our deepest mind then there is no great wonder and joy. In the summer, there is always a breeze blowing somewhere, but if we have no mind of joy and wonder, it is only some wind. The autumn's leaves, the brightness of the moon has meaning because we receive it with our mind and the great bright moon makes peoples mind abundant. The pure whiteness of the snow makes us quiet like everything else that is returning to the root. That is possible because we feel the truth of life. This mind, this mind of right now, because of this we know it and becoming one with the world we know this truth and can clarify this. But if we try to grasp this mind in one instant, it escapes us. No one can grasp this mind. The mind, to seek and find it is impossible.

In China there was a priest named Priest Tokusan. He was famous later as the Master who used his stick like Rinzai used his great shout, he lined up with Rinzai in greatness. At the beginning, he studied exhaustively especially the Diamond Sutra and was even nicknamed after that sutra. He was always quoting lines from the Masters, interpreting what they said according to the Diamond Sutra, for example quoting about how we have to "realize Mind directly and become Buddha", and finally he put all of the volumes of the Diamond

Sutra on his back and went on pilgrimage. Going out from deep in the mountains, he crossed the Yangtze River. When he went as far as Reishu there was a teashop. There was an old woman running the teashop, he went in for a tea, and he asked for a light lunch of mochi. The word for a light lunch is written in Chinese as mind with a dot to the upper side of it. But this was not your regular old woman. She saw him and said "Wow you really have a lot of things piled on your back there" What are all those things you are carrying around with you?"

"These? This is the Diamond Sutra and its interpretation, I wrote it all."

"Oh? The Diamond Sutra? I want to ask you something then. Do you mind? If you can answer my question then your mochi lunch will be free and if not, then please leave right away."

Priest Tokusan was so full of confidence he said,

"Ask anything. I can tell you anything about the Diamond Sutra."

She asked, "In the Diamond sutra it says that you cannot grasp the mind of the past you cannot grasp the mind of the present and you cannot grasp the mind of the future. This is what I read there. You said you want to eat a small lunch but what mind do you put that small dot on, is it that past mind, the present mind or the future mind?"

Priest Tokusan swallowed hard but could not answer and after a moment he said "Old lady, you ask something extremely advanced, that is not your own wisdom. From whom did you hear that? Confess!"

The old lady sneered and said that one kilometer from here there is a master named Master Ryotan. "Go there and meet him."

Priest Tokusan went there, exclaiming, "I finally have found what I left the mountain for! He went to meet Master Ryotan who immediately gave him a question, a mondo. Master Ryotan said, "You don't even know that you have been drunk down into Ryotan's gut. Do you really think you can say that you have drunk him down into your own belly? HA!" - really a cannibalistic greeting.

Then he gave him koan after koan and they continued until it was nearly dawn. Master Ryotan finally said he should stop babbling so much mental junk, go to bed and leave tomorrow. It was very dark and there was no need to go tonight. He might as well stay the night and leave tomorrow and so Priest Tokusan went outside but it was so dark, he could not even tell if someone pinched his nose. Priest Tokusan was in trouble, "How can I tell where to go to sleep in this dark!"

"Yes, yes that is a problem." and Master Ryotan gave

him an oil lamp and a light, a torch of paper soaked in oil. He lit it for him and just as Priest Tokusan received it, Master Ryotan blew it right out. Perhaps the karma had ripened but just then Priest Tokusan broke through completely "From now on I will not doubt the words on an old Master who is renowned under the sun."

We say things we have heard from others, like fire on a paper, when it is blown out suddenly it is useless and gets us nowhere. We have to realize that which is in our own mind, not what we have read and learned, we have to know it for ourselves or we never know what is confusing or clear. We have to find that light within our own lives, that inextinguishable light. This is

"Realizing the form of no-form as form, whether going or returning we cannot be any place else. Realizing the thought of no-thought as thought, whether singing or dancing, we are the voice of the Dharma."

"Our sect's Gate is above all, without mind, without form, without location."

These are words of the Sixth Patriarch following the Buddha. Every Patriarch, first and foremost, realized with their own experience how not holding on to a single mind moment is each person's deepest truth. And the most human quality and this is how they taught. To not think anything at all, this mind is human's truth, the Buddha realized this and awakened to this and the Buddha Nature is based on this, that in our mind we do not hold on to one single mind moment. That is the actuality of the Buddha's awakening.

"Realizing the form of no-form as form, whether going or returning we cannot be any place else."

There is no shape or form to our true nature and that is our actual base and substance. Also our mind is not stopped anywhere at all, not being stopped anywhere is the truth of our mind. We have to not search for this mind that thinks, nothing but to realize it in zazen. This is zazen. That which has no form, no shape, this mind of nothing at all is the human truth and that is the mind of the Buddha. This mind which is not stopped anywhere is our healthy human mind's most natural state.

"Realizing the form of no-form as form, whether going or returning we cannot be any place else. Realizing the thought of no-thought as thought, whether singing or dancing, we are the voice of the Dharma."

Formless means to let go of every form. Our mind is empty of form and without ego. The Buddha always taught that we have to let go of an idea of being an ego entity, a personality, a being or a separated individuality. That which is always saying "me! me! me!"; that human conceitedness; that which seeks our future good fortune; and that ignorance of thinking

about sentient and not sentient, let go of all that thought as well. We have to right now be born again, born again anew - that freshness of mind, this is our truth.

We have a body but we have no need to think it as 'my' body or a 'me', our body is society's tool, to be useful for all people. This life is not for our own self-centered joy but for all people to know joy and to use our body as a tool for this deep joy. We use this tool for realizing our deep vow. This is why we are so glad to have a healthy body, this is a huge joy in itself. Not caught on form, we realize our life and body are aids for all the people in the society to have meaning. To see our body like that is the mind of the Buddha.

Our mind's true base is empty of form, and this formless mind's vessel is actual. However, we cannot be stuck on this actuality's form or our formless mind is caught on an idea of form. Then flowing water stops flowing. Flowing water does not get rotten, not flowing water gets rotten and ferments and so we have to see this flowing mind as truth, always new, always new, in its every manifestation. Not to get caught on what is stuck, but to always change with this outer world; sleeping, waking - always new, always new. We enjoy this world full of people, together we are in a form but if we are not stuck on that, we become an old person when we meet an old person, we become a young person when we meet a young person, in accordance with the need of each moment we use our body.

We do cleaning and washing, not even sitting down for a moment's rest to "warm our seat", but always working while knowing we are never moving at all. See that very clearly and look at it freshly always.

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The Sixth Patriarch says that empty of mind-moments is to have a mind-moment without any thoughts of that mind-moment, which means to not think about what is not necessary to be thought about. We need only to think about what needs to be thought about, this is most human. We stop flowing when we think about what we do not need to think about. Of course, we have to think of what needs thinking about, but then we keep moving,

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As Hakuin Zenji has written about it, while bringing forth mind-moments do not get caught on any mind-moment, laugh and laugh and laugh; go and go

and go; and speak and speak and speak, this the functioning of a healthy mind. While having mind-moments do not be caught on them. Nor does this mean to be like a tree or a rock or non-feeling.

Yet we are also unlocatable, we are flowing and not stopping. To be flowing is our true nature our true way of being. But an ignorant person's mind stops moving and gets like frozen water or ice. Stop moving we become like ice and ferment, but flowing water does not freeze or ferment. If we get stagnant, we get fixed and only think about ourselves. To flow is the true nature of water and for us to flow is our true way of being. We always flow and are not stopped in one place or our mind gets stuck and rotten.

For as long as we are human we have to see clearly what is good and bad and this is Buddha Nature but if we are stuck on good or bad, we get rotten and stagnate. We see good and let it flow we see bad and we flow, or else good is no longer good and bad becomes worse and worse. Beautiful is beautiful and ugly is ugly; we see this as a matter of course. To not be stuck on those, not caught on good or we think we are absolutely right. Nor can we be caught on bad or we get accusative and absolutely sure and caught by that. Nor can we be caught on what is beautiful as good or bad and then caught on resentment. We cannot be caught on what is too intimate or we get hostile, we cannot get stopped or fixed or stagnant. Our mind is always flowing along, flowing along and flowing along, that is our minds way of being. We are humans so we cannot do things always completely, and incomplete is also fine, then we go beyond and let go, let go and go beyond. In this way it is like a photo of one instant or it becomes as if the shutter is double exposed we cannot see clearly because there are two photos that cannot be differentiated. Our finished things have to be left to the past and there is no way to try to catch those or it makes our mind confused, Each mind moment, each mind moment, our awareness is born anew, flowing like the flowing water, everything flows like time flows. If our awareness does not flow, it goes backwards to the past and that is not correct. Always new awareness, meeting people anew and that makes relationships full and fulfilling.

The Sixth Patriarch says that this mind working correctly is zazen. This is how he taught it, and it is not about clenching our teeth and saying, "not to think anything not to think anything," this is not zazen.

To have no mind-moments polluted with extra thinking is to be empty minded, to have no "I" and no form to be caught on, is to be empty of form. To be flowing always like clear water, never fixed or stagnating is to be without location.

We always want to have an appearance, whether as a boss of a company, as a teacher or as a man or as a woman or as a good person or as a bad person. There are many possible forms but to not be caught on that is

to be formless.

This "Even those who have sat zazen only once will see all karma erased." as Hakuin has said, this is samadhi; this samadhi is also called "to receive correctly." To receive correctly is one of the five perceptions in the Heart Sutra. To see or perceive, we have eyes, we see color with them and we hear voices with our ears, smell fragrances with our nose, feel tastes with our mouth, and know hot and cold with our mind. We understand hot and cold and pain and sadness, we have the roots to receive each of each of these. To perceive is to receive and this is usually considered to dirty our mind. Yet, when we receive feelings and are caught on them that is our own fault and not the problem of that which is perceived as unclean. That becomes pollution of our mind. To perceive and not add on is correct and that is the correct receiving of things. That mind of perception without obstruction is the purity of the six roots of perception. We sit in front of our desk and hear the clock but as we become absorbed in our reading, we no longer hear that clock. That is the correct way of receiving that clock. But if we start thinking about the picnic last Sunday, that is not samadhi of reading but is incorrect reception. In this way in each situation, we concentrate and do not get distracted and our practice works efficiently and is well fulfilled and we can know the samadhi of fishing, we can know the samadhi of haiku or music. There are many kind of samadhi when our mind concentrates continually as the Sixth Patriarch said

" 'za' is to externally bring up no thoughts to what we perceive and 'zen' is to internally to be unmoved by anything within."

He said it so well with this definition. To become it completely and not even be aware of becoming it is 'za' and not to be upset by anything is 'zen' definition. So in the dojo we are always teaching 'to become it completely'. We all have various histories and experience joy and anger and pleasure. We have these thoughts infinitely and boundlessly and from the old days people would purify and clarify by doing various 'arts of the way', doing Kyudo as if it is the very last arrow in our whole life, and in tea ceremony using "One meeting, One opportunity", but finally the zazen path is what has to be experienced.

In the Meiji era lived a famous swordsman Yamaoka Tesshu who from a young age realized that swordsmanship and Zen were one and the same path. He then met the great swordsman Asari Masayoshi and whenever he met Asari, Asari felt so big, Tesshu got the feeling that Asari was so big that he could not move. He did not know what to do and he realized it was not technique but mind that had to change. He went to Zen Master Tekisui and really went to sit with his life on the line. The koan he was given is from the Five Ranks:

Once the two swords have crossed points,
Retreat is no longer possible.

Rather, the adept then is
Like lotus (blooming) in fire,
Only the adept reaches this wonderful place.

Every time he went to sanzen with Tekisui, Master Tekisui hit him on the head. One of his strong students said that Yamaoka Tesshu, his good friend, could not be hit like that, he was his teacher. He kept following Master Tekisui around to kill him but could not kill Tekisui, because, as Tekisui said, "Am I the kind of priest that you could catch and kill?"

Whenever he would wake up Yamaoka Tesshu would hold his tobacco pipe like a sword. His wife was so upset that he would soon go crazy that she went to Master Tekisui to ask him to help but he said he could not. For three years Yamaoka Tesshu continued then he was deeply awakened. He waited for dawn to go to Rinshoin where Tekisui was staying and he went in to see him. They only had to see each other's faces, then they both laughed and since the hot water was not boiled, he left and went to Asari's gate. He was not moved around by his form at all and finally Asari gave up and said, "You are not my opponent" and named him his successor as Kenzen master of the Ittoryu.

" 'za' is to externally bring up no thoughts to what we perceive and 'zen' is to internally to be unmoved by anything within."

This is important in all the aspects of life, not to be caught on the audience in Butoh dance, or with driving, when the wheel is in our hands even if the children are doing marathon and the house needs cleaning we cannot let go of our attention. Also in the bath or eating, wherever we are, to not let go of our concentration is to not let go of our path. This is the way of success of our path, the refining of our samadhi, and this is the base of our path more than anything else.

Here we have the Buddhas and Patriarchs true zazen that is samadhi. This means to open the windows of our mind and realize samadhi, in our mind we are always meeting the world and all the various worlds. We encounter them by being one with them that is zazen.

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This is the ultimate state of mind for which the entrance is zazen.

Sogenji 2005 Sesshin Schedule, for information contact sogenji@po.harenet.ne.jp

December

4-10 Rohatsu

15-21 Osesshin

24-28 kosesshin

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address correction requested