

曹源一滴水

Number 56

November 2001

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October 25, 2001

Six weeks have now passed since the attacks of September 11th. The shock is now traversing the entire world and the great fear of white powder is infecting the minds of people everywhere. Because of bombs and missiles people are having to abandon their homes and villages. These people, who are already severely impoverished, are forced to endure even greater poverty. Their place of livelihood is taken out from under them and they have to be on the move, suffering more than ever.

So many companies have gone bankrupt and people are losing their jobs. There is not enough food to go around and people are afraid of not having enough to eat. There is great insecurity and this fear is greater than that of any white powder. The situation grows more and more severe. People are tense, afraid and insecure and that puts pressure on our hearts. Whenever we watch the television news, there are more and more tragic reports and just hearing them our hearts beat faster and faster. In this way all kinds of reports are increasing and our hearts are having more and more pressure on them all the time. Today within these circumstances there are more and more people who are overstimulated and their ki energy is excited and high. They have no hope, and cannot know joy from the bottom of their hearts. This situation causes more and more damage. For those of us who know how to do zazen, especially at these times, we have to go within to stabilize and settle.

Our body's situation, heartbeat and psychological pressure are very hard to control with our will. We have many thoughts and ideals as human beings and to a certain degree, we can see from there, however, the true essence is not that simple. There is a central point for aligning our body and mind and that is the breath. Without

our even knowing it, our breath becomes shorter and shorter. It becomes faster from our rapid heartbeat and becomes more and more shallow. Right now we have to deepen our breathing to deal with the ongoing instability of incident after incident in rapid succession.

Our mind and body have to be aligned, finetuned and settled or we cannot make decisions and act objectively and with clarity. We cannot align our body and mind with just our will. When we deepen our breath we become more settled. If we breathe deeply again and again, our racing heartbeat becomes slower and more settled. Exhale long and deep. If we keep our breath long then our state of mind and our worries are clarified and our mind becomes bright. Deeply exhale and then inhale. This is a very important way of breathing.

We make our exhalation soft and deep and as long as it can be. Letting go of all of the pressure in our shoulders and body by exhaling. Our abdomen grows more and more flat if we don't force the breath. We need to breathe out to where it flattens, and then give it one or two little pushes to complete the exhalation. Then the lower abdomen will bring the breath in again naturally. We will inhale naturally from within and in this way we can inhale simply, trusting the breathing, and that brings a very safe and settled state of mind. Although it may be challenging at the beginning, if we continue over and over again we can exhale slowly and quietly again and again. The exhalation makes our body very soft. The inhalation brings in energy and liveliness to our body. We do our exhalation and inhalation with a huge feeling, firmly and abundantly. This way of breathing is very important.

Those who are familiar with this know to put their concentration on the breath by counting numbers. Matching them perfectly we exhale

along with the number to the very final point of the exhalation. When we inhale, we do it naturally, allowing the inhalation in and liberating the breath completely and then, again, we exhale very, very quietly. In this way we accompany the breathing with the counting, again up to ten, and then, once again, starting at one. Then no matter how busy we are, our decision making, our activities and judgement are correct and clear. As much as possible we need to make some time for this breath, to commit to doing it every day and not to quit or give up.

Right now at Sogenji we are doing the osesshin of the autumn and heading for the Rohatsu osesshin. We build energy, doing sesshin again and again with people gathered here from all over the world. Our zazen will bring peace, even a little, to people all over the earth. We pray for peace and deepen our essence in sesshin. Now is the time of autumn, when leaves are changing colors and nature is changing seasons. Our state of mind returns to the source of life energy as well. In the depths of winter our mind and body return to their source, this is the truth of how things are.

In Zen on the 22nd of December, we celebrate Tojitoya. We greet that day letting go of our delusions and attachments with our exhalation, and deepen our state of mind. Up until that day, the nights become longer and longer and we purify our minds more and more. The Winter Solstice, this longest night of the year is the time of deepening and digging into our true nature and then realizing our original true nature. With the Buddha Nature we believe in all people and from the Buddha Nature our highest quality activity and work comes forth. Right now we are working on that with full taut energy.

Is the mind of human beings good or evil, or is it not good and not evil? Do we just live spontaneously and by chance or are we educated, or are we controlled by our environment? Is it all decided ahead of time? We are educated to respect human beings' true dignity, our worth and our ego, however, do we truly respect the true human? Have we seen a true person's actual worth? Do we know what is the actual ego? We are so often moved around by something we think we can or should rely on. There is nothing more lonely than this. We are easily moved around by some ideology and living without awakening to that fact. Moved around by a political power or an ideology, we lose track of our true self.

Nevertheless, even if we don't want to be moved around, because of the current political and economic situation, the war, and the terrorists at work even our homes and our way of life may be taken away. This is too big to be repaired by one person's power but neither does that mean that we are going to die from this.

We must develop the mind that is like a lake, deep beyond the waves of suffering and joy.

This is how Dr. Nishida Kitaro wrote of the state of mind of zazen. Our day to day reality does not change. It is full of confusion, delusion, indecision and pain. Yet no matter how full of suffering and pain this reality may be, there is also a place in our deepest mind where pain and joy cannot reach. We believe in this eternal true and clear mind, and because we can believe in this, we can live. It is zazen that deepens our firm belief and trust in this clear still mind.

Letting go of all connections to the external world, cutting away all concerns within, when our mind is like a firm tall wall, then we are one with the Way. This is Bodhidharma's definition of zazen.

The Sixth Patriarch defines zazen as, "'Za' is to not give rise to any impulses of what is good or bad about the outside world. 'Zen' is to not bring forth any ideas about what we perceive".

To not give rise to any ideas of good and bad about the outside world, this is zen. In the external world we hear many, many reports and we should not be full of fear and anxiety but rather, we should hear it all simply and openly and look carefully at what is best to do and what is the best way to see it. If we get excited and full of fear then we get more and more confused and then we cannot see what is happening clearly and we become greatly upset. This state of mind of "za" is to not bring forth any ideas relative to what we see and hear. In our mind we should be unmoved and see clearly and not judge. Then we have the stability of not being moved around by things that are happening. With this stability, we know "zen" which is to be clear in our deepest mind and not be moved around by anything.

To align our breathing and settle our mind's frenzy, even when things around us are severe, is not to be upset and confused by circumstances. To actually and deeply establish our true mind's existence and clarity and with that our state of mind is completely clear, transparent, full and

taut. We are not trying to become secure and quiet by relying on something external or material. With our clear mind we align the breath becoming full and taut and the inherent faith in our deep mind becomes sure.

Even if we are right where the war is taking place and in the midst of many people dying, even if we are right in the midst of great fear of poison, all of it is only that which is reflected in a mirror. We can realize this clarity of mind, we can see all of it as a phenomena. Even when it is a god or Buddha, it is still only something reflected in a mirror; that which is coming through the lens of a camera. We can see the world in this way, it comes through that lens but the lens is not affected nor is it injured by it. To realize this is to know our true state of mind.

It is not only sitting in a quiet place that is zazen. That is what we do to learn the basics, but our daily life is where we actualize zazen. Even in the midst of a great terrible tragedy, we are there and we reflect all the events without being moved around by them and can see clearly how to act, how to look at events and be in that state of mind where we are not moved around. Our deep faith in this clear mind allows us to know this place of trust.

This is our true zazen and the truth of our zazen. Right in the middle of our work and life we stay in our clear mind and are not twisted and turned around and that also further cultivates this clear state of mind. Not full of an "I me, Mine" all the time, no shadows of this, instead, a place where we are not so small and self-concerned. We can then see clearly how to take care of the problems we are challenged with, and can see what is really going on.

There is an American novelist Irene Disch who wrote about the attack on the WTC. She said that NYC became a place where all people were truly cooperating with and supporting each other. The citizens of the city were working together. Even though it was such a dangerous time, Mayor Giuliani] didn't talk about war or God or America, but said that NYC 's needs needed to be addressed clearly and immediately. For me this was the same as in Kobe at the time of the earthquake; the Kobe that I saw the very day the earthquake happened. I believe that all people have this essence of seeing clearly. When, in a great crisis we can respond somehow

beyond our own mental understanding, we can give help beyond ideology and profit and loss. It is prior to all of that when people touch the basic question of life and death. We become one with the situation and act clearly. This is possible when our way of life is well cultivated and then it is expressed there. This novelist says that the TV newscaster, after the incident, gave an interview and spoke to the people who had been working at the WTC. There was the wife of one man who was killed and who said in answer that there was something that her deceased husband wanted to say to the American people. She said that he would be against any kind of repayment or revenge or hostility. He would want to talk to the perpetrator and say that we should not shed another's blood. She said that there was something much more productive than repaying this with more violence. We have to find some way to prevent this from continuing and that can only happen if we can understand the perpetrator and communicate with him and know his mind. These were her words at the very time of her tragedy.

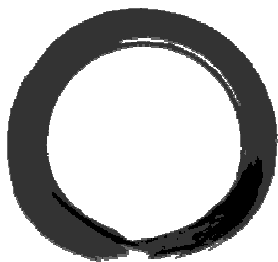
In the terrorists' actions there is great hate, yet there is in her words something which has gone beyond that deep hatred, gone beyond the physical body. Going beyond those things, she has chosen what will truly resolve this problem. Here, there is the true high quality of the human mind. Within all humans there is this place beyond deep hatred, and from this place we can see clearly. [If there are many many people who think this way then we can come from a position of strength. If there are only one or two people then the possibility lessens and we become weak. If something terrible happens, we all want to protect ourselves and this is not bad, but we need to be aware that we are doing this for ourselves. If we don't deepen our breath and clarify our true mind with our greatest efforts then we will be destroyed too.]

We have to deepen that breath and believe in that true mind. We have to trust and have deep faith and go beyond deep discouragement. We need to know that belief and hope and deep commitment are found there. To deepen that breath and make efforts to clarify that true clear mind, this is our precious opportunity and now is the most important time to do this.

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