

普源一滴水

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Hakuin Zenji's 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 Buddhas 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 Lotuses and this very body is the body of the Buddha.

“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. “

There is only a little more than a month left to his year. As December approaches we think of Rohatsu Osesshin and many places, almost all Zen dojos are preparing for the sesshin that honors the deep awakening, the Buddha's enlightenment on the morning of December 8 when he saw the morning star and was deeply completely awakened.

And wanting to come as close as possible to this experience ourselves. Being determined to realize deep enlightenment no matter what, this great vow is firmed and training is done. When we were in the dojo it was considered that if you had not yet done a Rohatsu Osesshin you couldn't be a "true monk". When it is time for Rohatsu we put away the futon and don't lay down for one week, only sleeping sitting up and zazen is much more tense than usual with sanzen seven times a day.

When we have nothing more to say in sanzen and we are sitting because we have to and only because we have to, the Jissaryo will come and kick us out of the zendo, making us go back to sanzen. Then as we near the sanzen area the Shikaryo and other members of the Joju quarters are laying in wait, The monk that comes stumbling around the corner is then kicked out of the sanzen area as well, told that they shouldn't be there with no ki. Kicked out of the Zendo, kicked out of the sanzen area, back and forth again and again to the Zendo, and again kicked out of the Zendo, and then told once more that someone with no gusto should not be coming to sanzen and sent back once more.

In this way we become stuck, desperate, pursued and closed in on. You can only run away or crazily go for it. Which will it be? A state of mind impossible to describe. In this way the usual ideas, manners and conditioning according to which we live in daily life, all of this is blown away in this irresolvable crisis.

This is the way of teaching monks in a specialized Zen dojo, pressuring the monks to cut away all dualism and all typical ways of looking at things, returning to

the original purest mind, guiding them to touch the very source of the Mind. This way of teaching, if you mistake it even the slightest bit, can become violent, or in the circumstances of being pressured and pushed and challenged it can also result in a great increase in psychological insecurity and confusion. This is the traditional way of doing a training of essence, the experience in today's zendos is very far from this. It really is difficult to practice to the same depth as this style of practice allows.

Nevertheless, on the occasion of Rohatsu Osesshin, we come to it with a deep vow and with that focus we continue our reading of Hakuin Zenji's Song of Zazen.

“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.”

This is the place of the Song of Zazen which most closely touches the experience of deep awakening and realization.

The song of Zazen starts out with “All Sentient beings are essentially Buddhas”, all sentient beings are endowed with Buddha Nature. Here is the basic point of Buddha Dharma. All beings are EQUAL and are all equally endowed with Buddha Nature. I think this is the true essence of the Buddha Dharma, with this we have the most essential doctrine, that all beings are Buddha, that all beings are to be liberated. This is what we have been born for, coming through a long, long history continuing on our journey and finally arriving close to being Buddha. All living beings are continuing and evolving in this direction in this way the Buddha Dharma teaches.

However, if this is left only as a doctrine, it is not useful for anything. No matter how much we vow to wish for peace, we can't just wish it we have to actualize it. It is just too sad if all of the arguments and conflicts continue and peace is not actualized. True and actual peace has to be actualized. As Hakuin puts it in his Song Of Zazen, all sentient beings are essential Buddhas and ending with its final and clear message that this very body is the body of the Buddha. We all continue this journey to realize our true nature, because we are all Buddhas from birth. No matter what else we might do we must realize this true Buddha nature within. Enter that state of mind, vow to realize that, enter the Path and work diligently.

“This very place is the land of Lotuses and this very body is the Body of the Buddha”

The very mind which is doing the seeking, is, as it is, paradise. We are the realization of this. We thought there was somewhere else to go for this paradise, some

Buddha waiting across a river from us but it isn't like that after all, that there was always this shore only. If we open our eyes and look, this very place is that.

The great lack of faith, the many conflicts of our limited world are like this looking for another shore. But, in this limited world, in this unsatisfactory, insufficient world, if we open our eye of wisdom then right here, there and everywhere is the Truth and holding the infinite truth we are given this deep understanding. This great joy is the meaning of the Song of Zazen. We are not seeking some promised land or deep understanding from someone “over there”. If we open our eye of Prajna wisdom. our eye of deepest truth then this insufficient world we realize is plentiful, sufficient and perfect. The incomplete world, as it is, is complete. This is the truth which will liberate us and through which we will become fulfilled. But to be able to receive “all sentient beings are essentially Buddhas” and “this very place is the land of lotuses” then we ask why, if we are all enlightened from the origin, do we fight and conflict so much? Because the essence is not clarified we remain in confusion. What then is this essence ? “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.”

In this Song of Zazen the most important point is how should we be in order for our eye of wisdom to operate? How should we be so that this true liberation can take place? This is what is being taught here.

Right now at Sogenji Dojo there are 35 people from all over the world doing training, giving their diligent efforts, from the September sesshin, through the October osesshin, finishing the November sesshin, now we have come to Rohatsu Sesshin. With these sesshins worked through and much essence from many long years of practice we are truly in a time of great Ki energy and a deep state of mind. I feel this is something for which we should be very thankful. Everyone, each and every person, is digging into their deepest state of mind, going inward to realize that which unites all human beings. All people, anyone who realizes this state of mind will come to know this deep awakening. We have to have the deepest commitment, vow and determination. For this everyone is giving us their sitting. This is truly “all sentient beings are essentially Buddha's”. We are all endowed with this eye of wisdom that is in no way whatsoever any different from that of the Buddha. But because of our egoistic view, our extraneous thinking and opinions, our eyes are blinded. We have to settle our deepest mind and when we become very clear within, this splendid dignified character with which we are all endowed begins to function spontaneously, all of its own. Everyone believes this and practices with this belief.

In compared with other kinds of Buddhism, Zen is focused on "Seeing directly and Becoming Buddha." Directly experience this true root source of all beings, go straight to the true nature of all existence, This is Zen's truth or it is not Zen and for this we do zazen. Zazen is for this body which is buried by and wound up in egoistic mind and self centered filters. From right there realize and polish the true Buddha nature. This very form is doing zazen, which is, just as it is, the Buddha's form. We settle and quiet the mind. Deepening more and more that profound mind becomes clarified. This is the subtle flavor of zazen. In this way people from all over the world who love zazen are doing zazen. Even if they are not only doing zazen, as they become settled and quiet inside then just by sitting the usual everyday turbulence and noise and busy minded thoughts are stilled. We are surprised not having known we have such a quiet mind within, should we really become this settled? How quiet it can become! We feel this way and notice this for the first time, To realize and experience this state of mind is zazen. Even people working so hard in this busy world, if it is someone who has experienced this quiet of mind even a little, then they will wonder if there is not also some way in the midst of that busyness to be in that quiet state of mind.

It is a matter of course to wonder this, And in our busy work and everyday world we have this zazen of one breath. This becomes very necessary, without forcing, we should exhale all the way out to the very end of the exhalation, quietly breathing out to the very most furthest end of the out breath, If we do that, then we can, in that one single breath, separate from everything and in a mere few seconds we can exhale out everything we have been so caught on and let go of all of those stuck places. In this way, right from where we breathe out everything completely a totally new, fresh awareness and state of mind are born. This One Breath Zazen is necessary and there are many who are already making use of this.

But if we could resolve it all with one breath that would be fine, but it doesn't quite all get resolved that simply, with just that. When we first get up in the morning we can do this, or at work, when we get stuck and don't know how to move through something. Especially at these times take a moment and five or ten times to exhale out completely. If we actually do this our body will become relaxed and expansive and our state of mind will be pleasant and refreshed. we really feel that all of that staleness and stuckness has been blown away completely. It is very necessary for us to be able to renew and regenerate our state of mind. It is aid that the hermits of olden days ate mist to stay alive. No one can just eat mist and stay alive perhaps, but all living beings receive nutrition from the air. Just like plants receive nutrition from the air, when we breathe deeply our state of mind comes back to life and our Ki goes to every corner of our body. As Master Dogen said, "I put myself completely into the Buddha and the Buddha comes completely right to me". When

we exhale completely our hardened ego and personal views are no longer defending a small self, we become this state of mind where everything is completely trusted to the Buddha. We breathe out everything, let go of our small-minded stuck places and in doing that we are able to understand the state of mind of the Buddha.

With this deep, profound state of mind, without any misunderstanding of the world we see, without being stuck, we receive a huge all embracing state of mind, we all have to live in this state of mind. To actualize this state of mind is zazen. We do zazen as part of our everyday process and use it as our everyday refuge. If we do zazen even a little we feel its benefit and want to realize that source. For those who live like this a correct state of mind, a correct way of seeing this world this will be born. Then we can let go of that world of good and bad, gain and loss and are able to be blessed with the direct encounter of our true clear mind. This is "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."

From both Hakuin Zenji's Song of Zazen and from Dogen Zenji it is said "To study the way is to study the self. To study the self is to forget the self. To forget the self is to be enlightened by all things. To be enlightened by all things is to remove the barrier between self and other."

To study the truth is to learn oneself, that is, to let go of oneself; this is what he is saying. We naively look outside for the truth, but if we want to really encounter that true light, know that inner source from which it comes and illuminates the external then as Buddha said, "Find refuge in oneself, do not look to another for refuge. Find the truth within yourself, do not look externally for the truth."

The Buddha taught this and Daruma Daishi also said to let go of all external connections. If we are not careful we start thinking that what we should seek is somewhere outside of us. But it is that very mind which seeks which is of the greatest importance, that very seeking mind is the source of truth. Now, what becomes a problem is not acknowledging anything external, then our learning becomes but a learning of the ego and only the ego is acknowledged. Today we seem to respect external and egoistic things and pursue authority that is external, the ancients said that we have to know that true master not the ego and to live from that true place. This is our basic doctrine.

For this reason "To study the way is to study the self. To study the self is to forget the self. To forget the self is to be enlightened by all things. To be enlightened by all things is to remove the barrier between self and other." This is not the learning of something external. We have to use and respect our ego, but neither is the ego everything. We don't think of ego as superior or

splendid instead we are all still incomplete and insufficient. The ego not being complete we have to do this for ourselves. The world is clearly like this, when people think they are complete that is the end of their creativity. Consider how this is true for writers, they write and write and write always thinking that it is still not sufficient or complete "not finished yet, that's not it yet." The dancer dances without stopping all the way into the next world. The same is true for martial artists and for great figures of religion. There was one who even said that he was the head of the sinners, he claimed that no one was as terrible a sinner as he was. This is the true integrity of a person of training. There is a deep truth in this. To be strict with our ego and with this we realize a large true self, that true self of all people, the Buddha nature, the all embracing mind - all of these names are given to it .

While saying that we have to clarify our daily life, and to be that true nature, we do zazen to experience this clear mind directly, "To study the way is to study the self To study the self is to forget the self"

If we are not careful we so easily fall into a pit of dualism of profit and loss, of ego centeredness, we have to let go of that to see the great deep calm self and with this profoundly seeing eye, to not be deceived. For this we do zazen and that gives birth to this state of mind. If we even once give awareness to gain and loss we have to let go of that completely. If we really want to know the true self we have to let go of that small minded ego, and while this seems simple it is not so easy. We have been living in this ego mind our whole life, to separate from it is not such an easy thing to do. We have been so intimate with our ego for so long. This is why when we all vow to do it, and want to do it, it is very difficult to let go of that ego. It can't be done with half baked zazen where we just sit feeling good and don't sit wholeheartedly. We cannot let go of our ego like that. We may do zazen that feels good to us, but to go beyond good and bad, that kind of zazen we can't do like that. We have to do zazen that goes beyond life and death. There with the true whole hearted energy put into it, we can realize that true state of mind and know this truly seeing eye.

"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."

And for doing it in this way we cannot do it with compromising effort . If it is not done completely and with everything we have it will not be accomplished. People of old said that a true person of belief is one who wants to open their clear mind no matter what, one who will warp and twist at nothing , and that this person must have a state of mind like a diamond. A diamond state of mind is one in which no matter what comes along, one will not turn away from ones deepest vow to break through. Go straight and deep and realize that true nature. That true nature is not

your small individual nature or self. We realize it for all beings, it is all things and every thing, We must make a firm vow and commitment to awaken all beings totally and without exception.

This vow has to be present or the essence won't come forth. We have to decide that we must bring true peace to the mind of all beings, and with this determination we do zazen. This actual vow and essence, this itself is the Buddha Nature and the Buddha's Mind. We are told that zazen is the comfortable way and want to say that everything is fine just as it is. The desires are fine as they are, that in fact it doesn't matter whether we are diligent, just the way I am is fine. But this is only the seeking of ones personal satisfaction . If we wanted to seek our own happiness we wouldn't have to go to all this trouble. People in the world are unhappy and dissatisfied. and unclear. Is it fine like that?

We are not doing zazen for such a narrow limited purpose. Rather we are doing it for those confused and suffering in society, because we know how much they hurt, we feel we have to do something and we don't want to sink into a small, narrow, self-centered mind and only protect that. That is the source of all the pain and conflict we know, we realize that people are so entrenched in their own small, personal world and that is the cause of the conflict in the first place. We must not search for only our own security and comfort. We have to widen our state of mind to include the suffering of all beings and for this we have to bring forth great strength and straightforward bravery and continue with our passionate ongoing diligence. Not to guard and protect ourselves, but to liberate all people in the world, we first have to liberate ourselves. We have to resolve to do this or our zazen will become twisted and confused and only for own own small self. First we have to see how it is in the world, see the source of people's deep suffering and sadness . In order to resolve the pain of the people in the world we have first to realize and resolve the pain within ourselves. Realizing how that is done we clarify the way and this is the essence of our zazen.

First and foremost we have to do zazen for people in society and doing this we realize the Buddha with our own mind. This clarification of our true mind is called satori, when the Buddha saw the morning star he awakened, When Kyogen heard the sound of the tile clacking against the green bamboo, he awakened. Priest Reibun saw the opening peach flower and awakened. Hakuin Zenji heard the sound of the morning bell ringing and realized satori. Our deep mind which vows to realize the liberation of all beings suffering and to encounter this deep mind directly and for doing that we have to totally and completely separate from all of our egotistic thoughts and ideas while continuing our diligent efforts over and over and over and over again. We are then also about to honor the Buddha within ourselves and then are able to meet the true Buddha within.

Rinzai Zenji, before he came to Obaku's mountain, exhaustively studied the sutras. He realized that they were only prescriptions for medicine not the medicine itself, he realized that they could not bring one peace of mind itself. For this reason in that Tang Dynasty, he went to the most advanced teacher of the greatest Path, Master Obaku, and with Master Obaku he trained for three years cutting, cutting, cutting, cutting his mind's true source, digging and digging and digging continuously. That priority of training is described as straight-forward honest and without any doubt at all. His senior disciple Bokuju saw his very honest way of training and he asked him how long he had been at that dojo. "Three years" Have you done sanzen during those three years? "I don't know what to ask." For Rinzai Zenji his whole practice was negating his small self completely, that was everything. About what would someone ask if they were working only on internally extinguishing their ego, continuously. "I don't even know what to ask." Bokuju said to him to ask about the essence of Buddha's enlightenment, not the 5048 sutras but the essence of that which cannot be put into the sutras. He went and asked him and before he was finished he was hit 20 blows. Rinzai had done exactly as he was told to do, where had he gone wrong that he should be beaten 20 times? Why was he hit? What had happened? He couldn't understand at all and after being hit so hard his mind was completely blank, When he came back like this his older brother disciple was waiting for him and asked him "How was it?" Rinzai answered that he had done as he was told and before the words were even out of his mouth he had been hit 20 blows. "Go back again".

Being told this, since he was such an honest monk, he once again went back in to question Obaku, He was again hit 20 times and he went and repeated his question three times and all three times he was hit. With this Rinzai Zenji felt he had had enough, that someone who is like me can't do this rough path. It seems my mind will never open. I must go somewhere else where even someone like me can work. He spoke to Bokuju honestly in this way.

Bokuju said to him, I understand. If you say that there is nothing that can be done about it. But still you have to go once more and do your parting greetings to the Master, Just do that and then go so Rinzai Zenji went to do greetings to Master Obaku, Ahead of Rinzai's arrival at Master Obaku, Bokuju had gone in and spoken to Master Obaku. "That young monk will without fail be useful for others in the future, A person of great value, That monk should not be wasted. Please guide him well in the path of awakening. Please aid him. Having said this when Rinzai came to do greeting to Master Obaku, he said to Rinzai:" There is nothing to be done about your leaving this mountain, but don't go anywhere else, I have a friend Master Taegu only go to his place. If you go there without fail he will say something to you of great essence. On hearing this exactly as he was told Rinzai went to the place of Master Taegu.

"Where did you come from?"

Yes. I came from the place of Master Obaku."

"What did Master Obaku teach you?"

Rinzai told him what he had done and asked him, 'I asked the same question three times and was hit like this, Where was I mistaken?'"

When he asked Master Taegu in this way Master Taegu said "What an incredibly kind man that Master Obaku is! I didn't know he was that kind a man! To teach you that kindly! He actually hit you three times-how very, very kind!"

At hearing these words suddenly Rinzai understood. He had thought that Obaku was hitting him because he had been mistaken, and now, for the first time he realized that was not the case. Master Obaku with his whole being and ki had hit Rinzai, becoming the mind of the Buddha with his clear mind and without a single extraneous thought, had completely hit Rinzai. Rinzai having been hit like that could not even think or judge, and that mind that could not think or judge, that very mind, that very instant when he was hit, that moments state of mind that no one had ever taught him, that he had never heard of from anyone else, THAT very state of mind was the true essence of awakening, wasn't it? He finally understood. For the first time at Taegu's words Rinzai understood what Master Obaku had done.

"SO is that all there is to Obaku's teaching? I thought there was so much more to Obaku, but is that all there is? So Obaku was this kind of priest!" said Rinzai.

We feel hot, we feel cold, we feel pain, we hear a song of a bird going 'chu chu" and that very awareness that very most direct perception that very mind is the Buddha's awakened mind, our true mind. He understood this and that this is true not because we train but because we have this from birth. We are all originally endowed with it. But to this originally clear mind we add good and bad, understanding and ignorance and with these we dirty the clear mind. So that is the true mind prior to ego! so this is what that is. From morning to night we live in this state of mind, and he had been give the deep understanding of this.

Bankei Zenji also says, "You have all gathered here today to hear my talk so my talking being heard is a matter of course, but that dog that is barking "bow wow" outside the window. You did not come here to hear that dog barking, but you can all hear that dog barking, can't you? That is the Buddha's truth. Not the external learning and knowing and ideas but that which is prior to judgment that freshly born perception, that mind is the Buddha mind." So taught Bankei Zenji. The egoistic view, the ego awareness, and the awareness prior to that - the difference between

body, of our thinking and of any sense of having had those until we are expanded as one single layer of Mu throughout the heavens and earth. We go into this state of mind completely, at first that is only words, but finally it is not words at all and is even prior to mental understanding. But it does not end there, through this state of mind we suddenly realize that which is prior to the birth of mu, where no understanding CAN arise, where there can be no judgment. That is still not satori or realizing the true self, we are in this state of mind but we have to be reborn from it. In all of our five senses we have to realize this state of mind of being.

“Suddenly you break through the barrier; you will astonish heaven and shake the earth. It is as if you have snatched the great sword of General Kan. You kill the Buddha if you meet him, you kill the Ancient Masters if you meet them. On the brink of life and death you are utterly free, and in the six realms and the four modes of life you live, with great joy, a genuine life in complete freedom.”

Master Mumon Ekai says clearly that this absolute state of mind of mu is not total awakening yet, because we cannot realize it, because we are no longer there. This is where we have to be sent to, to be reborn from, with a resonance that touches all of our senses, with this we are reborn. This state of mind of being completely without any bit of an inside or an outside. This absolute mu is what we are give the taste of.

“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.”

In Buddhism there is no separating from reality with fancies in the air, rational understandings are not played around with. These are called idle speculations. There is no way for such an explanation to even reach here. In just the way that Joshu has said it, we realize the actuality of that state of mind of Mu. There is nothing at all to be held onto whatsoever. We are given this deep understanding, in this state of mind we are able to realize this; separating from any speculation we couldn't do it even if we tried. Then for the very first time we know directly the place of this very place is the land of the lotuses, this very body is the body of the Buddha. We now know the actual experience where “all sentient beings are essentially Buddhas” truly becomes the experience of “this very place is the land of lotuses and this very body is the body of the Buddha.” This experience and actual essence being realized is the Buddha Nature.

“I cannot realize true peace of mind yet, can't you please do something for me?” Niso Eka Daishi asked the Buddha for his teaching with his most sincere true state of Mind and Daruma Daishi answered him quietly. “That mind which can be give peace of mind, please put it out there. I will give you peace of mind.”

After thinking for a while, Niso Eka Daishi said, “Even if you tell me to put it out there, there is no way for me to do that. Our Mind is not something that can be held or grabbed. If I try, it is nowhere to be found.”

Daruma Daishi answered without a pause. “It's not there. Right there. Then isn't that the place of true peace?”

Maybe it could be said that he had ripened to this point. It was not a game of words. Hearing this one thing, this one wholeheartedly and complete answer, Niso suddenly was completely awakened. He said, “I have received this great peace.”

The Sixth Patriarch said, “From the origin there is no single thing”. he saw through it all. This is because in the Diamond Sutra where it is written “Abiding in no place, awakened mind arises.” Hearing that one phrase the Sixth Patriarch deeply awakened. He realized that this mind of no thing at all is what is always in every instant being born anew, again new, again new. We have to believe this. It is not because we have been storing up things in our Mind for a long time that we can function. Only because of the actuality of the fact that we have nothing in our mind whatsoever, that we can perceive precisely that actuality which is right in front of us then, in accordance with that our functioning comes forth freely. Of course, our experience and creative and inventive efforts and repeated practice have to also be gathered for this, but the source point of that is that we receive and perceive things without any preconceived notions and precisely and exactly perceive what is there. This is the base, and on top of that repeated practice and diligence is added or it will not work. Our mind is that very truth of there is no thing from the origin, from that place of nothing whatsoever, suddenly it transforms freely.

It is with this teaching “from the origin there is not one single thing”, that Daruma Daishi based all succeeding Zen Buddhism.

We are always trying to find some refuge in something else, externally. Whether it is possessions or knowledge or sometimes it is the importance of money. By law as well, or human relationships, but all of the insecurity of humans comes about because we believe there is something in which we can find security. This is because people are always trying to grab hold of something, and if we cannot be sure that there is something in our hand we feel that we cannot live. When we are felling this, if someone told us that we can live best if we hold on to nothing at all, probably nobody would believe them. More than that, one would feel more insecurity than ever.

We are, however, always trying to attain something but unable to attain it. We are always trying to protect something but not able to protect it. This is our actual state of being. While having a physical body that will

have to be destroyed, we suffer with birth, sickness, old age and death. And not only that, but no matter how much we seek and try, there is the suffering of not attaining what we strive so hard for. There is the suffering of always having to be around the person we dislike the most, and we have to separate from the person we love the most. Then there is the suffering of having pain as long as we have feelings. We have these sufferings from not getting what we want, and no matter how hard we try we cannot attain something, and then eventually, we fade away. And with these things we get confused.

If we can see from the beginning that there is not one single thing, and not to see it in a desperate negative way, but from within see that nothing at all and bring forth new transformation and new birth. We are born into this world with nothing at all, and yet how many things we own and hold on to and because of this grasping we have so much suffering. There is nothing which we can hold on to eternally. WE have to let go of all of it. And if we see it this way then we can see how from a place of nothing at all, how much has manifested and come forth! From there we can see our reality in a new light of how much we are always holding on to and owning, how extremely blessed we are. But this cannot be resolved with just conceptualization. We have to once let go and lose everything that we have and hold on to. WE have to have this experience this once, this is the base of all religion. To receive deepest faith and belief is to be reborn completely. To have our life energy transformed in this way we have to once throw away everything we have into the house of God. We have to throw all of our ego and our thoughts and only with this actual experience we can manifest this truth.

Bukko Kokushi of Kamakura had a disciple named Yodai Bhikhu. his name in society was Chionowa and he said the words the bottom of the barrel falls out and the water can't pool there and so the moon cannot be reflected either. That which had been stored up in his head, the bottom of the barrel fell out and he became completely sopping wet. Suddenly then Chionowa was able to realize complete and full awakening. At this time Chionowa was able to see that there was not even a place left for the moon to be reflected and this was in fact his original way of being. To have oneself no longer there is not for there to be nothing at all, but to realize that there is some greater Self that is there. That little self that tries to defend and protect some idea of a small egoistic self is rigid and defensive and protective in all ways. This small self, when separated from, becomes the deep love and faith that fills the heavens and earth. It is to this which we must awaken. This Self is given the borrowed name of Buddha and the wisdom of this is what extends throughout the heavens and earth, we realize that we are one and the same with all things in the universe. WE know this great compassion for all

things directly, as when the Buddha said "Everything in the three worlds are my children and everywhere in the three worlds is my house." This is that very experience. Also from that same experience is the walking hand in hand with the patriarchs and Buddha, seeing from the same eyes and hearing from the same ears. How wonderful that is! When we let go of that small self we can see and hear and perceive with the same perception of the Buddha and the patriarchs. There is nothing greater than this. This is why in Zen from the olden times the Buddha Nature is drawn by a circle. A circle is zero, that great all-embracing huge round complete Mind! Nothing extra, nothing missing, as an ancient put it. In this one great circle all things are included. This one great circle is also the Mind of each and every one, this circle is equal in each one and the one circle of every one of all of the 6.2 billion, and yet this circle also includes all things, the birds flowers mountains and rivers.

Kyozan Ejaku said to Sansho Enen Zenji, "What is your name?" "My name is Ejaku." "That is my name." "Then it is Enen." Kyozan was very happy and laughed at this young monk. You are me and I am you. When this state of mind is awakened to, what a relief that is! We are all trying to hold on to our small narrow self, dividing things between a self and an other and keeping it protected and guarded. WE are always making a barrier between ourselves and others, fighting over power and conflicting. We need to become the other persons state of mind, to become that persons position.

If we can become large enough in mind to receive the other person's suffering, when we can become that huge and abundant in mind, when the parent becomes the state of mind of the child and the child becomes the state of mind of the parent. Or, when the person whom we thought of as an enemy, we can feel their deep feelings as a human as well, and then we can see how everyone is someone's mother and someone's child and that we all have this one and the same life energy which unites us all. WE realize this and that we fight because we think we have to protect ourselves and that we kill each other because we think we have to defend ourselves. There is nothing more sad than this, to open a greater wisdom and bring harmony to all of society. Within this harmony we find empathy for another person and become their state of mind and feel how they feel. Then we can finally know true peace of mind and peace is born. Where our true self is no self, when this is awakened to for the first time true faith is born in this world and we let go of all empty speculation. Then there is no more need for ideas and empty speculation that this person is bad and that person should be fought against, always and continually letting go of empty speculation. That is what we have to be diligently making efforts for today.

Sogenji Osesshin Schedule 2004

January	15-21	Osesshin
February	16-22	Osesshin
March	13-19	Osesshin
April	16-22	Osesshin
May	7-13	Osesshin

June	7-13	Osesshin
July	4-10	Osesshin

For Sesshin information contact sogenji@po.harenet.ne.jp

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