

# ZEN

## ✿ THE RELIGION OF THE SAMURAI ✿

by

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## HISTORY OF ZEN IN JAPAN



## THE ESTABLISHMENT OF THE RINZAI SCHOOL OF ZEN IN JAPAN

The introduction of Zen into the island empire is dated as early as the seventh century; but it was in 1191 that it was first established by Eisai, a man of bold, energetic nature. He crossed the sea for China at the age of twenty-eight in 1168, after his profound study of whole Tripitaka for eight years in the Hiyei Monastery the centre of Japanese Buddhism.

After visiting holy places and great monasteries, he came home, bringing with over thirty different books on the doctrine of the Tendai Sect. This, instead of quenching, added fuel to his burning desire for adventurous travel abroad. So he crossed the sea over again in 1187, this time intending to make pilgrimage to India; and no one can tell what might have been the result if the Chinese authorities did not forbid him to cross the border. There on he turned his attention to the study of Zen, and after five years discipline succeeded in getting sanction for his spiritual attainment by the Hū Ngan (Kioan), a noted master of the Rin Zai school, the abbot of the monastery of Tien Tung Shan (Tendosan).

His active propaganda of Zen was commenced soon after his return in 1191 with splendid success at a newly built temple in the province of Chikuzen. In 1202 Yori-iyē, the Shogun, or the real governor of the State at that time, erected the monastery of Kenninji in the city of Kyoto, and invited him to proceed to the metropolis. Accordingly he settled himself down in that temple, and taught Zen with his characteristic activity.

This provoked the envy and wrath of the Ten Dai and the Shin Gon teachers, who presented memorials to the Imperial court to protest against his propagandism of the new faith. Taking advantage of the protests, Eisai wrote a book entitled *Kozen go koku ron* (The Protection of the State by the Propagation of Zen), and not only explained his own position, but exposed the ignorance of the protestants.

Thus at last his merit was appreciated by the Emperor Tsuchi-mikado (1199-1210), and he was promoted to So Jo, (the highest rank in the Buddhist priesthood), together with the gift of a purple robe in 1206. After this he went to the city of Kamakura, the political centre, being invited by Sanetomo, the Shogun, and laid the foundation of the so called Kamakura Zen, still prospering at the present moment.

## THE INTRODUCTION OF THE SOTO SCHOOL OF ZEN

Although the Rinzai school was, as mentioned above, established by Eisai, yet he himself was not a pure Zen teacher, being a Tendai scholar as well as an experienced practiser of Mantra. The first establishment of Zen in its purest form was done by Dogen, now known as Jo Yo Dai Shi.

Like Eisai, he was admitted into the Hiyei Monastery at an early age, and devoted himself to the study of the Canon. As his scriptural knowledge increased, he was troubled by inexpressible doubts and fears, as is usual with great religious teachers. Consequently, one day he consulted his uncle, Koin, a distinguished Tendai scholar, about his troubles. The latter, being unable to satisfy him, recommended him Eisai, the founder of the new faith. But as Eisai died soon afterwards, he felt that he had no competent teacher left, and crossed the sea for China, at the age of twentyfour, in 1223. There he was admitted into the monastery of Tien Tung Shan (Tendosan), and assigned the lowest seat in the hall, simply because he was a foreigner.

He protested strongly against this. In the Buddhist community, he said, all were brothers, and there was no difference of nationality. The only way to rank the brethren was by seniority, and he therefore claimed to occupy his proper rank. Nobody, however, lent an ear to the poor new comer's protest, so he appealed twice to the Chinese Emperor Ning Tsung (1195-1224), and by the Imperial order he gained his object.

After four years' study and discipline, he was Enlightened and acknowledged as the successor by his master Jü Tsing, who belonged to the Tsao Tung (Soto) school. He came home in 1227, bringing with him three important Zen books. Some three years he did what Bodhidharma, the Wall-gazing Brahmin, had done seven hundred years before him, retiring to a hermitage at Fukakusa, not very far from Kyoto.

Just like Bodhidharma, denouncing all worldly fame and gain, his attitude toward the world was diametrically opposed to that of Eisai. As we have

seen above, Eisai never shunned, but rather sought the society of the powerful and the rich, and made for his goal by every means. But to the Sage of Fukakusa, as Dogen was called at that time, power was the most disgusting thing in the world. Judging from his poems, he seems to have spent these years chiefly in meditation; dwelling on the transitoriness of life, eternal peace of Nirvana, vanities and miseries of the world, listening to the voices of Nature amongst the hills, and gazing into the brooklet that was, as he thought, carrying away his image reflected on it into the world.



## THE CHARACTERICS OF DOGEN, THE FOUNDER OF JAPANESE SOTO SECT

In meantime seekers of the new truth gradually began to knock at his door, and his hermitage was turned into a monastery, now known as the Temple of Koshoji. It was at this time that many Buddhist scholars and men of quality gathered around him but the more popular he became the more disgusting the place became to him. His desire was to live in a solitude among mountains, far distant from human abodes, where nothing but falling waters and singing birds could disturb his delightful meditation. Therefore he gladly accepted the invitation of a feudal lord, and went to the province of Echizen, where his ideal monastery was built, now known as Eihei-ji.

[ It was in this monastery (built in 1236) that Zen was first taught as an independent sect, and that the Meditation Hall was first opened in Japan. Dogen lived in the monastery for eleven years, and wrote some of the important books. Zazen-gi ('The Method of Practising the crosslegged meditation') was written soon after his return from China, and Bendowa and other essays followed, which are included in his great work, entitled Shobogenzo ('The Eye and Treasury of the Right Law').]

In 1247, being requested by Tokiyori, the Regent General (1247-1263), he came down to Kamakura, where he stayed half a year and went back to Eihei-ji. After some time Tokiyori, to show his gratitude for the master, drew up a certificate granting a large amount of land as the property of Eihei-ji, and handed it over to Genmyo, a disciple of Dogen.

The carrier of the certificate was so pleased with the donation that he displayed it to all his brethren and produced it before the master, who severely reproached him saying: " O, shame on you, wretch! Art defiled by the desire of worldly riches even to thy inmost soul, just as noodle is stained with oil. Thou it cannot not be purified from it to all eternity. I am afraid

that will bring shame on the Right Law." On the spot Genmyo was deprived of his holy robe and excommunicated. Furthermore, the master ordered the 'polluted' seat in the Meditation Hall, where Genmyo used to sit, to be removed, and the 'polluted' earth under the seat to be dug out to the depth of seven feet.

In 1250 the ex-Emperor Gosaga (1243-1246) sent a special messenger twice to the Eihei monastery to do honour to the master with the donation of a purple robe, but he declined to accept it. And when the mark of distinction was offered for the third time, he accepted it, expressing his feelings by the following verses:

"Although in Eihei's vale the shallow waters leap, Yet thrice it came,  
Imperial favour deep. The Ape may smile and Crane laugh At aged Monk  
in purple as insane."

He was never seen putting on the purple robe, being always clad in black, that was better suited to his secluded life.

## THE SOCIAL STATE OF JAPAN WHEN ZEN WAS ESTABLISHED BY EISAI AND DOGEN

Now we have to observe the condition of the country when Zen was introduced into Japan by Eisai and Dogen. Nobilities that had so long governed the island were nobilities no more. Enervated by their luxuries, effeminated by their ease, made insipient by their debauchery, they were entirely powerless. All that they possessed in reality was the nominal rank and hereditary birth. On the contrary, the Samurai or military class had everything in their hands.

It was the time when even the emperors were dethroned or exiled at will by the samurai, even the Buddhist monks frequently took up arms to force their will. And it was the time when Japan's independence was endangered by Kublai, the terror of the world. It was the time when the whole nation was full of martial spirit. That time Yori-tomo (1148-1199) conquered all over the empire, and established the Samurai Government at Kamakura.

It is beyond doubt that to these rising Samurais, rude and simple, the philosophical doctrines of Buddhism, represented by Ten Dai and Shin Gon, were too complicated and too alien to their nature. But in Zen they could find something congenial to their nature, something that touched their chord of sympathy, because Zen was the doctrine of chivalry in a certain sense.

## THE RESEMBLANCE OF THE ZEN MONK TO THE SAMURAI

Let us point out in brief the similarities between Zen and Japanese chivalry. First, both the Samurai and the Zen monk have to undergo a strict discipline and endure privation without complaint. Even such a prominent teacher as Eisai, for example, lived contentedly in such needy circumstances that on one occasion he and his disciples had nothing to eat for several days. Fortunately, they were requested by a believer to recite the Scriptures, and presented with two rolls of silk.

The hungry young monks, whose mouths watered already at the expectation of a long looked dinner, were disappointed when that silk was given to a poor man, who called on Eisai to obtain some help. Fast continued for a whole week, when another poor fellow came in and asked Eisai to give something. At this time, having nothing to show his substantial mark of sympathy towards the poor, Eisai tore off the gilt glory of the image of Buddha Bheçajya and gave it. The young monks, bitten both by hunger and by anger at this outrageous act to the object of worship, questioned Eisai by way of reproach: "Is it, sir, right for us Buddhists to demolish the image of a Buddha?" "Well," replied Eisai promptly, "Buddha would give even his own life for the sake of suffering people. How could he be reluctant to give his halo?" This anecdote clearly shows us self-sacrifice is of first importance in the Zen discipline.

## THE HONEST POVERTY OF THE ZEN MONK AND THE SAMURAI

Secondly, the so-called honest poverty is a characteristic of both the Zen monk and the Samurai. To get rich by an ignoble means is against the rules of Japanese chivalry or Bushido. The Samurai would rather starve than to live by some expedient unworthy of his dignity. There are many instances, in the Japanese history, of Samurais who were really starved to death in spite of their having a hundred pieces of gold carefully preserved to meet the expenses at the time of an emergency; hence the proverb: "The falcon would not feed on the ear of corn, even if he should starve." Similarly, we know of no case of Zen monks, ancient and modern, who got rich by any ignoble means. They would rather face poverty with gladness of heart.

Fugai, one of the most distinguished Zen masters just before the Restoration, supported many student monks in his monastery. They were often too numerous to be supported by his scant means. This troubled much those of his disciples whose duty it was to look after the food-supply, as there was no other means to meet the increased demand than to supply with worse stuff. Accordingly, one day the disciple advised Fugai not to admit new students any more into the monastery. Then the master, making no reply, lolled out his tongue and said: "Now look into my mouth, and tell if there be any tongue in it." The perplexed disciple answered affirmatively. "Then don't bother yourself about it. If there be any tongue, I can taste any sort of food." Honest poverty may, without exaggeration, be called one of the characteristics of the Samurais and of the Zen monks; hence a proverb: "The Zen monk has no money, moneyed monk knows nothing."

## THE MANLINES OF THE ZEN MONK AND THE SAMURAI

Thirdly, both the Zen monk and the Samurai were distinguished by their manliness and dignity in manner, sometimes amounting to rudeness. This is due partly to the hard discipline that they underwent, and partly to the mode of instruction. The following story, translated by Mr. D. Suzuki, may well exemplify our statement:

When Rinzai was assiduously applying himself to Zen discipline under Obak (Huang Po in Chinese, who died 850), the head monk recognized his genius. One day the monk asked him how long he had been in the monastery, to which Rinzai replied: 'Three years.' The elder said: 'Have you ever approached the master and asked his instruction in Buddhism?' Rinzai said: 'I have never done this, for I did not know what to ask.' 'Why, you might go to the master and ask him what is the essence of Buddhism?'

Rinzai, according to this advice, approached Obak and repeated the question, but before he finished the master gave him a slap.

When Rinzai came back, the elder asked how the interview went, said Rinzai: 'Before I could finish my question, the master slapped me but I fail to grasp its meaning.' The elder said: 'You go to him again and ask the same question.' When he did so, he received the same response from the master. But Rinzai was urged again to try it for the third time, but the outcome did not improve.

At last he went to the elder, and said:

" In obedience to your kind suggestion, I have repeated my question three times, and been slapped three times. I deeply regret that, owing to my stupidity, I am unable to comprehend the hidden meaning of all this. I shall leave this place and go somewhere else." The elder said: "If you wish to depart, do not fail to go and see the master to say him farewell."

"Immediately after this the elder saw the master, and said: " That young novice, who asked about Buddhism three times, is a remarkable fellow. When he comes to take leave of you, be so gracious as to direct him properly.

After a hard training, he will prove to be a great master, and, like a huge tree, he will give a refreshing shelter to the world."

When Rinzai came to see the master, he advised him not to go anywhere else but to Daigu (Taiyu) of Kaoan, where Rinzai would be able to get instruct him in the faith.

Rinzai went to Daigu, who asked him where he came. Being informed that he was from Obak, Daigu further inquired what instruction he had got under the master. Rinzai answered: 'I asked him three times about the essence of Buddhism, and he slapped me three times. But I am yet unable to see whether I had any fault or not.' Daigu said: 'Obak was tenderhearted even as a dotard, and you are not warranted at all to come over here and ask me whether anything was faulty with you.'

Being thus reprimanded, the signification of the whole affair suddenly dawned upon the mind of Rinzai, and he exclaimed: 'There is not much, after all, in the Buddhism of Obak.'

Whereupon Daigu took hold of him, and said: 'This ghostly good for nothing creature! A few minutes ago you came to me and complainingly asked what was wrong with you, and now boldly declare that there is not much in the Buddhism of Obak. What is the reason of all this? Speak out quick! speak out quick!' In response to this, Rinzai softly struck three times his fist at the ribs of Daigu. The latter then released him, saying: 'Your teacher is Obak, and I will have nothing to do with you.'

Rinzai took leave of Daigu and came back to Obak, who, on seeing him come, exclaimed: 'Foolish fellow! what does it avail you to come and go all the time like this?' Rinzai said: 'It is all due to your doting kindness.'

When, after the usual salutation, Rinzai stood by the side of Obak, the latter asked him whence he had come this time. Rinzai answered:

"In obedience to your kind instruction, I was with Daigu. Thence am I come.'

And he related, being asked for further information, all that had happened there.

Obak said: 'As soon as that fellow shows himself up here, I shall have to give him a good thrashing.' 'You need not wait for him to come; have it right this moment,' was the reply; and with this Rinzai gave his master a slap on the back.

"Obak said: 'How dares this lunatic come into my presence and play with a tiger's whiskers?' Rinzai then burst out into a Ho, and Obak said: 'Attendant, come and carry this lunatic away to his cell.'"



## THE COURAGE AND THE COMPOSURE OF MIND OF THE ZEN MONK AND THE SAMURAI

Samurai encountered death, as is well known, with unflinching courage. He would never turn back when confronting his enemy. To be called a coward was for him the dishonour worse than death itself. An incident about Tsu Yuen (Sogen), who came over to Japan in 1280, being invited by Tokimune (Hojo), the Regent General, well illustrates how much Zen monks resembled our Samurais. The event happened when he was in China, where the invading army of Yuen spread terror all over the country. Some of the barbarians, who crossed the border of the State of Wan, broke into the monastery of Tsu Yuen, and threatened at front of him. Then calmly sitting down, ready to meet his fate, he composed the following verses:

"The heaven and earth afford me no shelter at all;  
I'm glad, unreal are body and soul. Welcome thy weapon, O warrior of  
Yuen! Thy trusty steel, That flashes lightning, cuts the wind of Spring, I  
feel."

This reminds us of Sang Chao (Sojo), who, on the verge of death by the vagabond's sword, expressed his feelings in the follow lines:

"In body there exists no soul. The mind is not real at all. Now try on me thy  
flashing steel, As if it cuts the wind of Spring, I feel."

The barbarians, moved by this calm resolution and dignified air of Tsu Yuen, rightly supposed him to be no ordinary personage, and left the monastery, doing no harm to him.

## ZEN AND THE REGENT GENERALS OF THE HOJO PERIOD

No wonder, that the representatives of the Samurai class, the Regent Generals, especially such rulers as Tokiyori, Tokimune, and others noted for their good administration, of the Hojo period (1205-1332) greatly favoured Zen.

They not only patronized the faith, building great temples and inviting best Chinese Zen teachers, but also lived just as Zen monks, having the head shaven, wearing a holy robe, and practising crosslegged Meditation.

Tokiyori (1247-1263), for instance, who entered the monastic life while he was still the real governor of the country, led as simple a life, as is shown in his verse, which ran as follows:

"Higher than its bank the rivulet flows; Greener than moss tiny grass grows.  
No one call at my humble cottage on the rock, But the gate by itself opens  
to the Wind's knock."

Tokiyori attained to enlightenment by the instruction of Dogen and Doryu, and breathed his last calmly sitting crosslegged, and expressing his feelings in the following lines:

"Thirty-seven of years, Karma mirror stood high; Now I break it to pieces,  
Path of Great is then night."

His successor, Tokimune (1264-1283), a bold statesman and soldier, was no less of a devoted believer in Zen. Twice he beheaded the envoys sent by the great Chinese conqueror, Kublai, who demanded Japan should either surrender or be trodden under his foot. And when the alarming news of the Chinese Armada's approaching the land reached him, he is said to have called on his tutor, Tsu Yuen, to receive the last instruction.

"Now, reverend sir," he said " An imminent peril threatens the land." "How art is going to encounter it ? " asked the master. Then Tokimune burst into a thundering Ka with all his might to show his undaunted spirit in encountering the approaching enemy. "O, the lion's roar!" said Tsu Yuen.

"The art of genuine lion. Go, and never turn back." Thus encouraged by the teacher, the Regent General sent out the defending army, and successfully rescued the state from the mouth of destruction, gaining a splendid victory over the invaders, almost all of whom perished in the western seas.

## ZEN AFTER DOWNFALL OF THE HOJO REGENCY

Towards the end of the HoJo period, and after the downfall of the Regency in 1333, sanguinary battles were fought between the Imperialists and the rebels. The former, brave and faithful as they were, being outnumbered by the latter, perished in the field one after another for the sake of the illstarred Emperor Godaigo (1319-1338), whose eventful life ended in anxiety and despair. It was at this time that Japan gave birth to Masashige (Kusunoki), an able general and tactician of the Imperialists, who for the sake of the Emperor not only sacrificed himself and his brother, but by his will his son and his son's successor died for the same cause, boldly attacking the enemy whose number was overwhelmingly great.

Masashige's loyalty, wisdom, bravery, and prudence are not merely unique in the history of Japan, but perhaps in the history of man. The tragic tale about his parting with his beloved son, and his bravery shown at his last battle, never fail to inspire the Japanese with heroism. He is the best specimen of the Samurai class. According to an old document, this Masashige was the practiser of Zen, and just before his last battle he called on Chu Tsun (Soshun) to receive the final instruction. "What have I to do when death takes the place of life?" asked Masashige. The teacher replied:

"Be bold, at once cut off both ties, The drawn sword gleams against the skies."

Thus becoming, as it were, an indispensable discipline for the Samurai, Zen never came to an end with the Hojo period, but grew more prosperous than before during the reign of the Emperor Godaigo, one of the most enthusiastic patrons of the the Shoguns of the Ashikaga period (1338-1573) and were not less devoted to the faith than the Emperors who succeeded the Emperor Godaigo. And even Takauji (1338-1357), the notorious founder of the Shogunate, built a monastery and invited Soseki, better known as MuSoKokuShi, who was respected as the tutor by the three successive Emperors after Godaigo. Takauji's example was followed by all succeeding

Shoguns, and Shogun's example was followed by the feudal lords and their vassals. This resulted in the propagation of Zen throughout the country. We can easily imagine how Zen was prosperous in these days from the splendid monasteries built at this period, such as the Golden Hall Temple and the Silver Hall Temple that still adorn the fair city of Kyoto.

## ZEN IN THE DARK AGE

The latter half of the Ashikaga period was the age of arms and bloodshed. Every day the sun shone on the glittering armour of marching soldiers. Every wind sighed over the lifeless remains of the brave. Everywhere the din of battle resounded. Out of these fighting feudal lords stood two champions. Each of them distinguished himself as a veteran soldier and tactician. Each of them was known as an experienced practiser of Zen. One was Harunobu (Takeda, died in 1573), better known by his Buddhist name, Shingen. The other was Terutora (Uyesugi, died in 1578), better known by his Buddhist name, Kenshin.

The character of Shingen can be imagined from the fact that he never built any castle or citadel or fortress to guard himself against his enemy, but relied on his faithful vassals and people; while that of Kenshin, from the fact that he provided his enemy, Shingen, with salt when the latter suffered from want of it, owing to the cowardly stratagem of a rival lord. The heroic battles waged by these two great generals against each other are the flowers of the Japanese war history. Tradition has it that when Shingen's army was put to rout by the furious attacks of Kenshin's troops, and a single warrior mounted on a huge charger rode swiftly as a sweeping wind into Shingen's headquarters, down came a blow of the heavy sword aimed at Shingen's forehead, with a question expressed in the technical terms of Zen: "What shall you do in such a state at such a moment?" Having no time to draw his sword, Shingen parried it with his war fan, answering simultaneously in Zen words: "A flake of snow on the red hot furnace!" If his attendants had not come to the rescue Shingen's life, he might have gone as "a flake of snow on the red hot furnace." Afterwards the horseman was known to have been Kenshin himself. This tradition shows us how Zen was practically lived by the Samurais of the Dark Age.

Although the priests of other Buddhist sects had their share in these bloody affairs, as was natural at such a time, yet Zen monks stood aloof and

simply cultivated their literature. Consequently, when all the people grew entirely ignorant at the end of the Dark Age, the Zen monks were the only men of letters. None can deny this merit of their having preserved learning and prepared for its revival in the following period.

## ZEN UNDER THE TOKUNAGA SHOGUNATE

Peace was at last restored by Iyeyasu, the founder of the Tokugana Shogunate (1603-1867). During this period the Shogunate gave countenance to Buddhism on one hand, acknowledging it as the state religion, bestowing rich property to large monasteries, making priests take rank over common people, ordering every householder to build a Buddhist altar in his house; while, on the other hand, it did everything to exterminate Christianity, introduced in the previous period (1544). All this paralyzed the missionary spirit of the Buddhists, and put all the sects in dormant state. As for Zen it was still favoured by feudal lords and their vassals, and almost all provincial lords embraced the faith.

It was about the middle of this period that the fortyseven vassals of Ako displayed the spirit of the Samurai by their perseverance, self-sacrifice, and loyalty, taking vengeance on the enemy of their deceased lord. The leader of these men, the tragic tales of whom can never be told or heard without tears, was Yoshio (O-shi died 1702), a believer of Zen, and his tomb in the cemetery of the temple of Sengakuji, Tokyo, is daily visited by hundreds of his admirers.

Most of the professional swordsmen forming a class in these days practised Zen. Munenori (Yagyu), for instance, established his reputation by the combination of Zen and the fencing art. The following story about Bokuden (Tsukahara), a great swordsman, fully illustrates this tendency:

"On a certain occasion Bokuden took a ferry to cross over the Yabase in the province of Omi. There was among the other passengers a samurai, tall and square shouldered, apparently an experienced fencer. He behaved rudely toward the fellow passengers, and talked so much of his own dexterity in the art, that Bokuden provoked by his brag, broke silence. "You seem, my friend, to practise the art in order to conquer the enemy, but I do it in order not to be conquered," said Bokuden. "O monk," demanded the man, as



Bokuden was clad like a Zen monk, "what school of swordsmanship do you belong to?" "Well, mine is the conquering enemy without fighting school." "Don't tell a fib, old monk. If you could conquer the enemy without fighting, what then is your sword for?" "My sword is not to kill, but to save," said Boku-den, making use of Zen phrases: "my art is transmitted from mind to mind." "Now then, come, monk," challenged the man, "let us see, right at this moment, who is the victor, you or I."

The gauntlet was picked up without hesitation. "But we must not fight," said Boku-den, "in the ferry, innocent passengers should be hurt. Yonder, a small island you see. There we shall decide the contest." To this proposal the man agreed, and the boat was pulled to that island.

No sooner had the boat reached the shore than the man jumped over to the land, and cried: "Come on, monk, quick, quick!" Bokuden, however, slowly rising, said: "Do not haste to lose your head. It is a rule of my school to prepare slowly for fighting, keeping the soul in the abdomen." So saying he snatched the oar from the boatman and rowed the boat back to some distance, leaving the man alone, who stamping the ground madly, cried out: "O, you fly, monk, you coward. Come, old monk!" "Now listen," said Bokuden, "this is the secret art of the Conquering enemy without fighting school. Beware that you do not forget it, nor tell it to anybody else." Thus, getting rid of the brawling fellow, Bokuden and his fellow passengers safely landed on the opposite shore."

The O Baku School of Zen was introduced by Yin Yuen (Ingen) who crossed the sea in 1654, accompanied by many able disciples. The Shogunate gave him a tract of land at Uji, near Kyoto, and in 1659 he built there a monastery noted for its Chinese style of architecture, now known as O-bakusan.

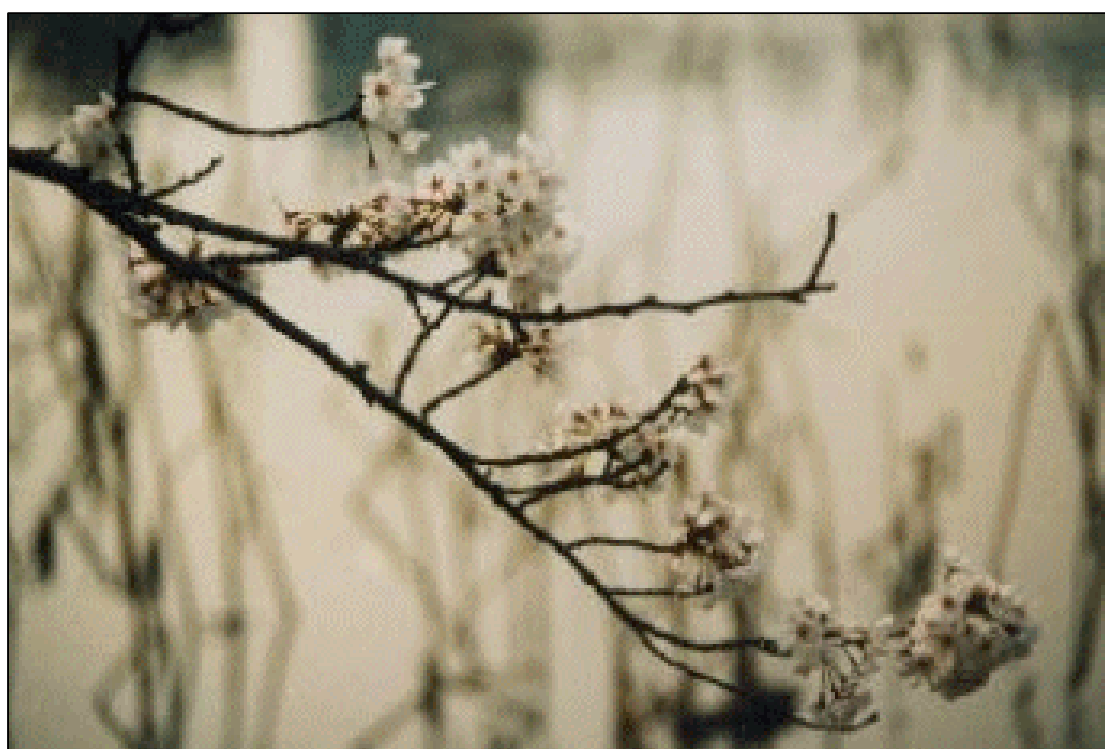
The teachers of the same school came one after another from China, and Zen peculiar to them, flourished a short. It was also in this period that Zen gained a great influence on the popular literature characterized by the shortest form of poetical composition. This was done through the genius of Basho, a great literary man, recluse and traveller, who, as his writings show us, made no small progress in the study of Zen. Again, it was made use of by the teachers of popular ethics, who did a great deal in the education of

the lower classes. In this way Zen and its peculiar taste gradually found its way into the arts of peace, such as literature, fine art, tea ceremony, cookery, gardening, architecture, and at last it has permeated through every fibre of Japanese life.

## ZEN AFTER THE RESTORATION

After the Restoration of the Meiji (1867) the popularity of Zen began to wane, and for some thirty years remained in inactivity; but since the Russo-Japanese War its revival has taken place. And now it is looked upon as an ideal faith, both for a nation full of hope and energy, and for a person who has to fight his own way in the strife of life. Bushido, or the code of chivalry, should be observed not only by the soldier in the battlefield, but by every citizen in the struggle for existence. If a person be a person and not a beast, then he must be a Samurai brave, generous, upright, faithful, and manly, full of selfrespect and selfconfidence, at the same time full of the spirit of selfsacrifice. We can find an incarnation of Bushido in the late General Nogi, the hero of Port Arthur, who, after the sacrifice of his two sons for the country in the Russo-Japanese War, gave up his own and his wife's life for the sake of the deceased Emperor. He died not in vain, as some might think, because his simplicity, uprightness, loyalty, bravery, selfcontrol, and selfsacrifice, all combined in his last act, surely inspire the rising generation with the spirit of the Samurai to give birth to hundreds of Nogis.

# THE TRAINING OF THE MIND AND THE PRACTICE OF MEDITATION



## THE METHOD INSTRUCTION ADOPTED BY ZEN MASTERS

We have described the doctrine of Zen inculcated by both Chinese and Japanese masters, and in this chapter we propose to sketch the practice of mental training and the method of practising Dhyana or Meditation.

Zen teachers never instruct their pupils by means of explanation or argument, but urge them to solve by themselves through the practice of Meditation such problems as "What is Buddha?" "What is self?" "What is the spirit of Bodhidharma?" "What is life and death?" "What is the real nature of mind?" and so on. TenShwai (Tosotsu), for instance, was wont to put three questions to the following effect: (1) Your study and discipline aim at the understanding of the real nature of mind. Where does the real nature of mind exist? (2) When you understand the real nature of mind, you are free from birth and death. How can you be saved when you are at the verge of death? (3) When you are free from birth and death, you know where you go after death. Where do you go when your body is reduced to elements? The pupils are not requested to express their solution of these problems in the form of a theory or an argument, but to show how they have grasped the profound meaning implied in these problems, how they have established their conviction, and how they can carry out what they grasped in their daily life.

A Chinese Zen master tells us that the method of instruction adopted by Zen may aptly be compared with that of an old burglar who taught his son the art of burglary. The burglar one evening said to his little son, whom he desired to instruct in the secret of his trade: "Would you not, my dear boy, be a great burglar like myself?" "Yes, father," replied the promising young man." "Come with me, then. I will teach you the art." So saying, the man went out, followed by his son. Finding a rich mansion in a certain village, the veteran burglar made a hole in the wall that surrounded it. Through that hole they crept into the yard, and opening a window with complete ease broke into the house, where they found a huge box firmly locked up as if its

contents were very valuable articles. The old man clapped his hands at the lock, which, strange to tell, unfastened itself. Then he removed the cover and told his son to get into it and pick up treasures as fast as he could. No sooner had the boy entered the box than the father replaced the cover and locked it up. He then exclaimed at the top of his voice: "Thief! thief! thief! thief!" After that, having aroused the inmates, he went out without taking anything. All the house was in utter confusion for a while; but finding nothing stolen, they went to bed again. The boy sat holding his breath a short while; but making up his mind to get out of his narrow prison, began to scratch the bottom of the box with his fingernails. The servant of the house, listening to the noise, supposed it to be a mouse gnawing at the inside of the box; so she came out, lamp in hand, and unlocked it. On removing the cover, she was greatly surprised to find the boy instead of a little mouse, and gave alarm. In the meantime the boy got out of the box and went down into the yard, hotly pursued by the people. He ran as fast as possible toward the well, picked up a large stone, threw it down into it, and hid himself among the bushes. The pursuers, thinking the thief fell into the well, assembled around it, and were looking into it, while the boy crept out unnoticed through the hole and went home in safety. Thus the burglar taught his son how to rid himself of overwhelming difficulties by his own efforts; so also Zen teachers teach their pupils how to overcome difficulties that beset them on all sides and work out salvation by themselves.

## THE FIRST STEP IN THE MENTAL TRAINING

Some of the old Zen masters are said to have attained to supreme enlightenment after the practice of meditation for one week, some for one day, some for a score of years, and some for a few months. The practice of meditation, however, is not simply a means for enlightenment, as is usually supposed, but also it is the enjoyment of nirvana, or the beatitude of Zen. It is a matter, of course, that we have fully to understand the doctrine of Zen, and that we have to go through the mental training peculiar to Zen in order to be enlightened.

The first step in the mental training is to become the master of external things. He who is addicted to worldly pleasures, however learned or ignorant he may be, however high or low his social position may be, is a servant to mere things. He cannot adapt the external world to his own end, but he adapts himself to it. He is constantly employed, ordered, driven by sensual objects. Instead of taking possession of wealth, he is possessed by wealth. Instead of drinking liquors, he is swallowed up by his liquors. Balls and music bid him to run mad. Games and shows order him not to stay at home. Houses, furniture, pictures, watches, chains, hats, bonnets, rings, bracelets, shoes in short, everything has a word to command him. How can such a person be the master of things? ToJu (Nakae) says: "There is a great jail, not a jail for criminals, that contains the world in it. Fame, gain, pride, and bigotry form its four walls. Those who are confined in it, fall a prey to sorrow and sigh for ever."

To be the ruler of things we have first to shut up all our senses, and turn the current thoughts inward, and see ourselves as the centre of the world, and meditate that we are the beings of highest intelligence; that Buddha never puts us at the mercy of natural forces; that the earth is in our possession; that everything on earth is to be made use of for our noble ends; that fire, water, air, grass, trees, rivers, hills, thunder, cloud, stars, the moon, the sun, are at our command; that we are the law givers of the natural phenomena;

that we are the makers of the phenomenal world; that it is we that appoint a mission through life, and determine the fate of man.



## THE SECOND STEP IN THE MENTAL TRAINING

In the next place we have to strive to be the master of our bodies. With most of the unenlightened, body holds absolute control over Self. Every order of the former has to be faithfully obeyed by the latter. Even if Self revolts against the tyranny of body, it is easily trampled down under the brutal hoofs of bodily passion. For example, Self wants to be temperate for the sake of health, and would fain pass by the resort for drinking, but body would force Self into it. Self at times lays down a strict dietetic rule for himself, but body would threaten Self to act against both the letter and spirit of the rule. Now Self aspires to get on a higher place among sages, but body pulls Self down to the pavement of masses. Now Self proposes to give some money to the poor, but body closes the purse tightly. Now Self admires divine beauty, but body compels him to prefer sensuality. Again, Self likes spiritual liberty, but body confines him in its dungeons.

Therefore, to get enlightened, we must establish the authority of Self over the whole body. We must use our bodies as we use our clothes in order to accomplish our noble purposes. Let us command body not to shudder under a cold shower bath in inclement weather, not to be nervous from sleepless nights, not to be sick with any sort of food, not to groan under a surgeon's knife, not to dry even if we stand a whole day in the midsummer sun, not to break down under any form of disease, not to be excited in the thick of battlefield, in brief, we have to control our body as we will.

Sit in a quiet place and meditate in imagination that body is no more bondage to you, that it is your machine for your work of life, that you are not flesh, that you are the governor of it, that you can use it at pleasure, and that it always obeys your order faithfully. Imagine body as separated from you. When it cries out, stop it instantly, as a mother does her baby. When it disobeys you, correct it by discipline, as a master does his pupil. When it is wanton, tame it down, as a horse breaker does his wild horse. When it is sick, prescribe to it, as a doctor does to his patient. Imagine that you are not

a bit injured, even if it streams blood; that you are entirely safe, even if it is drowned in water or burned by fire.

EShun, a pupil and sister of Ryoan, a famous Japanese master, burned herself calmly sitting crosslegged on a pile of firewood which consumed her. She attained to the complete mastery of her body. Socrates' self was never poisoned, even if his person was destroyed by the venom he took. Abraham Lincoln himself stood unharmed, even if his body was laid low by the assassin. Masashige was quite safe, even if his body was hewed by the traitors' swords. Those martyrs that sang at the stake to the praise of God could never be burned, even if their bodies were reduced to ashes, nor those seekers after truth who were killed by ignorance and superstition. Is it not a great pity to see a man endowed with divine spirit and power easily upset by a bit of headache, or crying as a child under a surgeon's knife, or apt to give up the ghost at the coming of little danger, or trembling through a little cold, or easily laid low by a bit of indisposition, or yielding to trivial temptation?

It is no easy matter to be the dictator of body. It is not a matter of theory, but of practice. You must train your body that you may enable it to bear any sort of suffering, and to stand unflinched in the face of hardship. It is for this that Sorai (Ogiu) laid himself on a sheet of straw mat spread on the ground in the coldest nights of winter, or was used to go up and down the roof of his house, having himself clad in heavy armour. It is for this that ancient Japanese soldiers led extremely simple lives, and that they often held the meeting of perseverance, in which they exposed themselves to the coldest weather in winter or to the hottest weather in summer. It is for this that Katsu Awa practised fencing in the middle of night in a deep forest.

Kisaburo, although he was a mere outlaw, having his left arm half cut at the elbow in a quarrel, ordered his servant to cut it off with a saw, and during the operation he could calmly sit talking and laughing with his friends. Hikokuro (Takayama), a Japanese loyalist of note, one evening happened to come to a bridge where two robbers were lying in wait for him. They lay fully stretching themselves, each with his head in the middle of the bridge, that he might not pass across it without touching them. Hikokuro was not

excited nor disheartened, but calmly approached the vagabonds and passed the bridge, treading upon their heads, which act so frightened them that they took to their heels without doing any harm to him.

The history of Zen is full of the anecdotes that show Zen priests were the lords of their bodies. Here we quote a single example by way of illustration: Ta Hwui (Daiye), once having had a boil on his hip, sent for a doctor, who told him that it was fatal, that he must not sit in Meditation as usual. Then Ta Hwui said to the physician: " I must sit in Meditation with all my might during my remaining days, for if your diagnosis be not mistaken, I shall die before long." He sat day and night in constant Meditation, quite forgetful of his boil, which was broken and gone by itself.

### THE THIRD STEP IN THE MENTAL TRAINING

To be the lord of mind is more essential to enlightenment, which, in a sense, is the clearing away of illusions, the putting out of mean desires and passions, and the awakening of the innermost wisdom. He alone can attain to real happiness who has perfect control over his passions tending to disturb the equilibrium of his mind. Such passions as anger, hatred, jealousy, sorrow, worry, grudge, and fear always untune one's mood and break the harmony of one's mind. They poison one's body, not in a figurative, but in a literal sense of the word. Obnoxious passions once aroused never fail to bring about the physiological change in the nerves, in the organs, and eventually in the whole constitution, and leave those injurious impressions that make one more liable to passions of similar nature.

We do not mean, however, that we ought to be cold and passionless, as the most ancient Hinayanists were used to be. Such an attitude has been blamed by Zen masters. "What is the best way of living for us monks?" asked a monk to Yun Kü (Ungo), who replied: "You had better live among mountains." Then the monk bowed politely to the teacher, who questioned: "How did you understand me?" "Monks, as I understood," answered the man, "ought to keep their hearts as immovable as mountains, not being moved either by good or by evil, either by birth or by death, either by prosperity or by adversity." Here upon Yun Kü struck the monk with his stick and said: "You forsake the Way of the old sages, and will bring my followers to perdition!" Then, turning to another monk, inquired: "How did you understand me?" "Monks, as I understand," replied the man, "ought to shut their eyes to attractive sights and close their ears to musical notes." "You, too," exclaimed Yun Ka, "forsake the Way of the old sages, and will bring my followers to perdition!" An old woman, to quote another example repeatedly told by Zen masters, used to give food and clothing to a monk for a score of years. One day she instructed a young girl to embrace and ask him: "How do you feel now?" "A lifeless tree," replied the monk coolly,

"stands on cold rock. There is no warmth, as if in the coldest season of the year." The matron, being told of this, observed: "Oh that I have made offerings to such a vulgar fellow for twenty years!" She forced the monk to leave the temple and reduced it to ashes.

If you want to secure Dhyana, let go of your anxieties and failures in the past; let past be past; cast aside enmity, shame, and trouble, never admit them into your brain; let pass the imagination and anticipation of future hardships and sufferings; let go of all your annoyances, vexations, doubts, melancholies, that impede your speed in the race of the struggle for existence. As the miser sets his heart on worthless dross and accumulates it, so an unenlightened person clings to worthless mental dross and spiritual rubbish, and makes his mind a dustheap. Some people constantly dwell on the minute details of their unfortunate circumstances, to make themselves more unfortunate than they really are; some go over and over again the symptoms of their disease to think themselves into serious illness; and some actually bring evils on them by having them constantly in view and waiting for them. A man asked Poh Chang (Hyakujo): "How shall I learn the Law?" "Eat when you are hungry," replied the teacher; "sleep when you are tired. People do not simply eat at table, but think of hundreds of things; they do not simply sleep in bed, but think of thousands of things."

A ridiculous thing it is, in fact, that man or woman, endowed with the same nature as Buddha's, born the lord of all material objects, is ever upset by petty cares, haunted by the fearful phantoms of his or her own creation, and burning up his or her energy in a fit of passion, wasting his or her vitality for the sake of foolish or insignificant things.

It is a man who can keep the balance of his mind under any circumstances, who can be calm and serene in the hottest strife of life, that is worthy of success, reward, respect, and reputation, for he is the master of men. It was at the age of fortyseven that Wang Yang Ming (Oyomei) won a splendid victory over the rebel army which threatened the throne of the Ming dynasty. During that warfare Wang was giving a course of lectures to a number of students at the headquarters of the army, of which he was the chief commander. At the very outset of the battle a messenger brought him

the news of defeat of the foremost ranks. All the students were terror stricken and grew pale at the unfortunate tidings, but the teacher was not a whit disturbed by it. Some time after another messenger brought in the news of complete rout of the enemy. All the students, enraptured, stood up and cheered, but he was as cool as before, and did not break off lecturing. Thus the practiser of Zen has so perfect control over his heart that he can keep presence of mind under an impending danger, even in the presence of death itself.

It was at the age of twentythree that Hakuin got on board a boat bound for the Eastern Provinces, which met with a tempest and was almost wrecked. All the passengers were laid low with fear and fatigue, but Hakuin enjoyed a quiet sleep during the storm, as if he were lying on a comfortable bed. It was in the fifth of Meiji era that Dokuon; lived for some time in the city of Tokyo, whom some Christian zealots attempted to murder. One day he met with a few young men equipped with swords at the gate of his temple. "We want to see Dokuon; go and tell him," said they to the priest. "I am Dokuon," replied he calmly, "whom you want to see, gentlemen. What can I do for you?" "We have come to ask you a favour; we are Christians; we want your hoary head." So saying they were ready to attack him, replied: "All right, gentlemen. Behead me forthwith, if you please." Surprised by this unexpected boldness on the part of the priest, they turned back without harming even a hair of the old Buddhist.

These teachers could through long practice constantly keep their minds calm, casting aside useless encumbrances of idle thoughts; bright, driving off the dark cloud of melancholy; tranquil, putting down turbulent waves of passion; pure, cleaning away the dust and ashes of illusion; and serene, brushing off the cobwebs of doubt and fear. The only means of securing all this is to realize the conscious union with the Universal Life through the Enlightened Consciousness, which can be awakened by dint of Dhyana.

## ZAZEN, THE SITTING IN MEDITATION

Habit comes out of practice, and forms character by degrees, and eventually works out destiny. Therefore we must practically show optimism, and habitually nourish it in order to reap the blissful fruit of enlightenment. The pure meaning of securing mental calmness is the practice of Zazen, or the sitting in meditation. This method was known in India as Yoga as early as the upanisad period, and developed by the followers of the Yoga system. But Buddhists sharply distinguished Zazen from Yoga, and have the method peculiar to themselves.

Keizan describes the method to the following effect: "Secure a quiet room neither extremely light nor extremely dark, neither very warm nor very cold, a room, if you can, in the Buddhist temple located in a beautiful mountainous district. You should not practise Zazen in a place where a conflagration or a flood or robbers may be likely to disturb you, nor should you sit in a place close by the sea or drinking shops or brothelhouses, or the houses of widows and of maidens or buildings for music, nor should you live in close proximity to the place frequented by kings, ministers, powerful statesmen, ambitious or insincere persons. You must not sit in meditation in a windy or very high place there you should get ill. Be sure not to let the wind or smoke get into your room, not to expose it to rain and storm. Keep your room clean. Keep it not too light by day nor too dark by night. Keep it warm in winter and cool in summer. Do not sit leaning against a wall, or a chair, or a screen. You must not wear soiled clothes or beautiful clothes, for the former are the cause of illness, while the latter the cause of attachment. Avoid the Three Insufficiencies that is to say, insufficient clothes, insufficient food, and insufficient sleep. Abstain from all sorts of uncooked or hard or spoiled or unclean food, and also from very delicious dishes, because the former cause troubles in your alimentary canal, while the latter cause you to covet after diet. Eat and drink just too appease your hunger and thirst, never mind whether the food be tasty or not. Take your meals regularly and punctually, and never sit in meditation immediately after any

meal. Do not practise Dhyana soon after you have taken a heavy dinner, you should get sick thereby. Sesame, barley, corn, potatoes, milk, and the like are the best material for your food. Frequently wash your eyes, face, hands, and feet, and keep them cool and clean.

"There are two postures in Zazen, that is to say, the crossed leg sitting, and the half crossed leg sitting. Seat yourself on a thick cushion, putting it right under your haunch. Keep your body so erect that the tip of the nose and the navel are in one perpendicular line, and both ears and shoulders are in the same plane. Then place the right foot upon the left thigh, the left foot on the right thigh, so as the legs come across each other. Next put your right hand with the palm upward on the left foot, and your left hand on the right palm with the tops of both the thumbs touching each other. This is the posture called the crossed leg sitting. You may simply place the left foot upon the right thigh, the position of the hands being the same as in the cross legged sitting. This posture is named the half crossed leg sitting."

"Do not shut your eyes, keep them always open during whole meditation. Do not breathe through the mouth; press your tongue against the roof of the mouth, putting the upper lips and teeth together with the lower. Swell your abdomen so as to hold the breath in the belly; breathe rhythmically through the nose, keeping a measured time for inspiration and expiration. Count for some time either the inspiring or the expiring breaths from one to ten, then beginning with one again. Concentrate your attention on your breaths going in and out as if you are the sentinel standing at the gate of the nostrils. If you do some mistake in counting, or be forgetful of the breath, it is evident that your mind is distracted."

Chwang Tsz seems to have noticed that the harmony of breathing is typical of the harmony of mind, since he says: "The true men of old did not dream when they slept. Their breathing came deep and silently. The breathing of true men comes (even) from his heels, while men generally breathe (only) from their throats." At any rate, the counting of breaths is an expedient for calming down of mind, and elaborate rules are given in the Zen Sutra, but Chinese and Japanese Zen masters do not lay so much stress on this point as Indian teachers.



## THE BREATHING EXERCISE OF THE YOGI

Breathing exercise is one of the practices of Yoga, and somewhat similar in its method and end to those of Zen. We quote here Yogi Ramacharaka to show how modern Yogis practise it:

"(1) Stand or sit erect. Breathing through the nostrils, inhale steadily, first filling the lower part of the lungs, which is accomplished by bringing into play the diaphragm, which, descending, exerts a gentle pressure on the abdominal organs, pushing forward the front walls of the abdomen. Then fill the middle part of the lungs, pushing out the lower ribs, breastbone, and chest. Then fill the higher portion of the lungs, protruding the upper chest, thus lifting the chest, including the upper six or seven pairs of ribs. In the final movement the lower part of the abdomen will be slightly drawn in, which movement gives the lungs a support, and also helps to fill the highest part of the lungs. At the first reading it may appear that this breath consists of three distinct movements. This, however, is not the correct idea. The inhalation is continuous, the entire chest cavity from the lower diaphragm to the highest point of the chest in the region of the collarbone being expanded with a uniform movement. Avoid a jerking series of inhalations, and strive to attain a steady, continuous action. Practice will soon overcome the tendency to divide the inhalation into three movements, and will result in a uniform continuous breath. You will be able to complete the inhalation in a couple of seconds after a little practice.

(2) Retain the breath a few seconds.

(3) Exhale quite slowly, holding the chest in a firm position, and drawing the abdomen in a little and lifting it upward slowly as the air leaves the lungs. When the air is entirely exhaled, relax the chest and abdomen. A little practice will render this part of exercise easy, and the movement once acquired will be afterwards performed almost automatically."

## CALMNESS OF MIND

The Yogi breathing above mentioned is fit rather for physical exercise than for mental balance, and it will be beneficial if you take that exercise before or after Meditation. Japanese masters mostly bold it very important to push forward. The lowest part of the abdomen during Zazen, and they are right so far as the present writer's personal experiences go.

"If you feel your mind distracted, look at the tip of the nose; never lose sight of it for some time, or look at your own palm, and let not your mind go out of it, or gaze at one spot before you." This will greatly help you in restoring the equilibrium of your mind. Chwang Tsz thought that calmness of mind is essential to sages, and said: "The stillness of the sages does not belong to them as a consequence of their skilful ability; all things are not able to disturb their minds; it is on this account that they are still. When water is still, its clearness shows the beard and eyebrows (of him who looks into it). It is a perfect level, and the greatest artificer takes his rule from it. Such is the clearness of still water, and how much greater is that of the human spirit? The still mind of the sage is the mirror of heaven and earth, the glass of all things."

Forget all worldly concerns, expel all cares and anxieties, let go of passions and desires, give up ideas and thoughts, set your mind at liberty absolutely, and make it as clear as a burnished mirror. Thus let flow your inexhaustible fountain of purity, let open your inestimable treasure of virtue, bring forth your inner hidden nature of goodness, disclose your innermost divine wisdom, and waken your Enlightened Consciousness to see Universal Life within you. "Zazen enables the practiser," says Kei-zan, "to open up his mind, to see his own nature, to become conscious of mysteriously pure and bright spirit, or eternal light within him."

Once become conscious of Divine Life within you, you can see it in your sphere, no matter how different they may be in circumstances, in abilities,

in characters, in nationalities, in language, in religion, and in race. You can see it in animals, vegetables, and minerals, no matter how diverse they may be in form, no matter how wild and ferocious some may seem in nature, no matter how unfeeling in heart some may seem, no matter how devoid of intelligence some may appear, no matter how insignificant some may be, no matter how simple in construction some may be, no matter how lifeless some may seem. You can see that the whole universe is enlightened and penetrated by Divine Life.

## ZAZEN AND THE FORGETTING OF SELF

Zazen is a most effectual means of destroying selfishness, the root of all Sin, folly, vice, and evil, since it enables us to see that every being is endowed with divine spirituality in common with men. It is selfishness that throws dark shadows on life, just as it is not the sun but the body that throws shadow before it. It is the same selfishness that gave rise to the belief in the immortality of soul, in spite of its irrationality, foolishness, and superstition. Individual self should be a poor miserable thing if it were not essentially connected with the Universal Life. We can always enjoy pure happiness when we are united with nature, quite forgetful of our poor self. When you look, for example, into the smiling face of a pretty baby, and smile with it, or listen to the sweet melody of a songster and sing with it, you completely forget your poor self at that enraptured moment. But your feelings of beauty and happiness are for ever gone when you resume your self, and begin to consider them after your own selfish ideas. To forget self and identify it with nature is to break down its limitation and to set it at liberty. To break down petty selfishness and extend it into Universal Self is to unfetter and deliver it from bondage. It therefore follows that salvation can be secured not by the continuation of individuality in another life, but by the realization of one's union with Universal Life, which is immortal, free, limitless, eternal, and bliss itself. This is easily effected by Zazen.

## ZEN AND SUPERNATURAL POWERS

Yoga claims that various supernatural powers can be acquired by Meditation, but Zen does not make any such absurd claims. It rather denies those who are believed to have acquired supernatural powers by the practice of austerities. The following traditions clearly show this spirit: "When Fah Yung (Hoyu) lived in Mount Niu Teu (Gozusan) he used to receive every morning the offerings from hundreds of birds, and was believed to have supernatural powers. But after his enlightenment by the instruction of the Fourth Patriarch, the birds ceased to make offering, because he became a being too divine to be seen by inferior animals."

It is quite reasonable that Zenists distinguish supernatural powers from spiritual uplifting, the former an acquirement of Devas, or of Asuras, or of Arhats, or of even animals, and the latter as a nobler accomplishment attained only by the practisers of Mahayanism. Moreover, they use the term supernatural power in a meaning entirely different from the original one. Lin Tsi (Rinzai) says, for instance: "There are six supernatural powers of Buddha: He is free from the temptation of form, living in the world of form; He is free from the temptation of sound, living in the world of sound; He is free from the temptation of smell, living in the world of smell; He is free from the temptation of taste, living in the world of taste; He is free from the temptation of Dharma, living in the world of Dharma. These are six supernatural powers."

Sometimes Zenists use the term as if it meant what we call Zen Activity, or the free display of Zen in action, as you see in the following examples.

Tüing Shan (ToZan) was on one occasion attending on his teacher Yun Yen (Ungan), who asked: "What are your supernatural powers?" Tüing Shan, saying nothing, clasped his hands on his breast, and stood up before Yun Yen. "How do you display your supernatural powers?" questioned the teacher again. Then Tüing Shan said farewell and went out.

Wei Shan (Esan) one day was taking a nap, and seeing his disciple Yang

Shan (Kyozan) coming into the room, turned his face towards the wall. "You need not, Sir," said Yang Shan, "stand on ceremony, as I am your disciple." Wei Shan seemed to try to get up, so Yang Shan went out; but Wei Shan called him back and said: "I shall tell you of a dream I dreamed." The other inclined his head as if to listen. "Now," said Wei Shan, "divine my fortune by the dream." Thereupon Yang Shan fetched a basin of water and a towel and gave them to the master, who washed his face thereby. By and by Hiang Yen (Kyogen) came in, to whom Wei Shan said: "We displayed supernatural powers a moment ago. It was not such supernatural powers as are shown by Hinayanists." "I know it, Sir," replied the other, "though I was down below." "Say, then, what it was," demanded the master. Then Hiang Yen made tea and gave a cup to Wei Shan, who praised the two disciples, saying: "You surpass Çariputra and Maudgalyayana in your wisdom and supernatural powers."

Again, ancient Zenists did not claim that there was any mysterious element in their spiritual attainment, as Dogen says unequivocally respecting his enlightenment: "I recognized only that my eyes are placed crosswise above the nose that stands lengthwise, and that I was not deceived by others. I came home from China with nothing in my hand. There is nothing mysterious in Buddhism. Time passes as it is natural, the sun rising in the east, and the moon setting into the west."

## TRUE DHYANA

To sit in meditation is not the only method of practising Zazen. "We practise Dhyana in sitting, in standing, and in walking," says one of the Japanese Zenists. Lin Tsi (Rinzai) also says: "To concentrate one's mind, or to dislike noisy places, and seek only for stillness, is the characteristic of heterodox Dhyana." It is easy to keep self-possession in a place of tranquillity, yet it is by no means easy to keep mind undisturbed amid of the actual life. It is true Dhyana that makes our mind sunny while the storms of strife rage around us. It is true Dhyana that secures the harmony of heart, while the surges of struggle toss us violently. It is true Dhyana that makes us bloom and smile, while the winter of life covets us with frost and snow.

"Idle thoughts come and go over unenlightened minds six hundred and fifty times in a snap of one's fingers," writes an Indian teacher, "and thirteen hundred million times every twentyfour hours." This might be an exaggeration, yet we cannot but acknowledge that one idle thought after another ceaselessly bubbles up in the stream of consciousness. "Dhyana is the letting go," continues the writer--"that is to say, the letting go of the thirteen hundred million of idle thoughts." The very root of these thirteen hundred million idle thoughts is an illusion about one's self. He is indeed the poorest creature, even if he be in heaven, who thinks himself poor. On the contrary, he is an angel who thinks himself hopeful and happy, even though he be in hell.

"Pray to free me," said a sinner to Sang Tsung (Sosan). "Who ties you up?" was the reply. You tie yourself up day and night with the fine thread of idle thoughts, and build a cocoon of environment from which you have no way of escape. "There is no rope, yet you imagine yourself bound." Who could put fetters on your mind but your mind itself? Who could chain your will but your own will? Who could blind your spiritual eyes, unless you yourself shut them up? Who could prevent you from enjoying moral food, unless

you yourself refuse to eat? "

"There are many," said Süeh Fung (Sep-po) on one occasion, "who starve in spite of their sitting in a large basket full of victuals. There are many who thirst in spite of seating themselves on the shore of a sea." "Yes, Sir," replied Hüen Sha (Gensha), "there are many who starve in spite of putting their heads into the basket full of victuals. There are many who thirst in spite of putting their heads into the waters of the sea." Who could cheer him up who abandons himself to selfcreated misery? Who could save him who denies his own salvation?"



## LET GO OF YOUR IDLE THOUGHTS

A Brahmin, having troubled himself a long while with reference to the problem of life and of the world, went out to call on Shaky Muni that he might be instructed by the Master. He got some beautiful flowers to offer them as a present to the Muni, and proceeded to the place where he was addressing his disciples and believers. No sooner had he come in sight of the Master than he read in his mind the struggles going on within him. "Let go of that," said the Muni to the Brahmin, who was going to offer the flowers in both his hands. He dropped on the ground the flowers in his right hand, but still holding those in his left. "Let go of that," demanded the Master, and the Brahmin dropped the flowers in his left hand rather reluctantly. "Let go of that, I say," the Muni commanded again; but the Brahmin, having nothing to let go of, asked: "What shall I let go of, Reverend Sir? I have nothing in my hands, you know." "Let go of that, you have neither in your right nor in your left hand, but in the middle." Upon these words of the Muni a light came into the sufferer's mind, and he went home satisfied and in joy.

"Not to attach to all things is Dhyana," writes an ancient Zenist, "and if you understand this, going out, staying in, sitting, and lying are in Dhyana." Therefore allow not your mind to be a receptacle for the dust of society, or the ashes of life, or rags and waste paper of the world. You bear too much burden upon your shoulders with which you have nothing to do. Learn the lesson of forgetfulness, and forget all that troubles you, deprives you of sound sleep, and writes wrinkles on your forehead.

Wang Yang Ming, at the age of seventeen or so, is said to have forgotten the day on which he was to be married to a handsome young lady, daughter of a man of high position. It was the afternoon of the very day on which their nuptials had to be held that he went out to take a walk. Without any definite purpose he went into a temple in the neighbourhood, and there he found a recluse apparently very old with white hair, but young in countenance like a child. The man was sitting absorbed in meditation.

There was something extremely calm and serene in that old man's look and bearing that attracted the young scholar's attention. Questioning him as to his name, age, and birthplace, Wang found that the venerable man had enjoyed a life so extraordinarily long that he forgot his name and age, but that he had youthful energy so abundantly that he could talk with a voice sounding as a large bell. Being asked by Wang the secret of longevity, the man replied: "There is no secret in it; I merely kept my mind calm and peaceful." Further, he explained the method of meditation according to Taoism and Buddhism. Thereupon Wang sat face to face with the old man and began to practise meditation, utterly forgetful of his bride and nuptial ceremony. The sun began to cast his slanting rays on the wall of the temple, and they sat motionless; twilight came over them, and night wrapped them with her sable shroud, and they sat as still as two marble statues; midnight, dawn, at last the morning sun rose to find them still in their reverie. It was at the age of fortyseven that Wang gained a great victory over the rebel army, and wrote to a friend saying: "It is so easy to gain a victory over the rebels fortifying themselves among the mountains, yet it is not so with those rebels living in our mind."

Tsai Kiün Mu (Saikunbo) is said to have had an exceedingly long and beautiful beard, and when asked by the Emperor, who received him in audience, whether he should sleep with his beard on the comforters or beneath them, he could not answer, since he had never known how he did. Being distracted by this question, he went home and tried to find out how he had been used to manage his beard in bed. First he put his beard on the comforters and vainly tried to sleep; then he put it beneath the comforters and thought it all right. Nevertheless, he was all the more disturbed by it. So then, putting on the comforters, now putting it beneath them, he tried to sleep all night long, but in vain. You must therefore forget your mental beard that annoys you all the time.

Men of longevity never carried troubles to their beds. It is a well known fact that Zuio (Shiga) enjoyed robust health at the age of over one hundred years. One day, being asked whether there is any secret of longevity, he replied affirmatively, and said to the questioner: "Keep your mind and body pure for two weeks, abstaining from any sort of impurity, then I shall tell

you of the secret." The man did as was prescribed, and came again to be instructed in the secret. Zuio said: "Now I might tell you, but be cautious to keep yourself pure another week so as to qualify yourself to learn the secret." When that week was over the old man said: "Now I might tell you, but will you be so careful as to keep yourself pure three days more in order to qualify yourself to receive the secret?" The man did as he was ordered, and requested the instruction. Thereupon Zuio took the man to his private room and softly whispered, with his mouth close to the ear of the man: "Keep the secret I tell you now, even at the cost of your life. It is this don't be passionate. That is all."

## THE FIVE RANKS OF MERIT

Thus far we have stated how to train our body and mind according to the general rules and customs established by Zenists. And here we shall describe the different stages of mental uplifting through which the student of Zen has to go. They are technically called "The Five Ranks of Merit." The first stage is called the Rank of Turning, in which the student "turns" his mind from the external objects of sense towards the inner enlightened consciousness. He gives up all mean desires and aspires to spiritual elevation. He becomes aware that he is not doomed to be the slave of material things, and strives to conquer over them. Enlightened consciousness is likened to the king, and it is called the Mind King, while the student who now turns towards the King is likened to common people. Therefore in this first stage the student is in the rank of common people.

The second stage is called the Rank of Service, in which the student distinguishes himself by his loyalty to the Mind King, and becomes a courtier to "serve" him. He is in constant "service" to the King, attending him with obedience and love, and always fearing to offend him. Thus the student in this stage is ever careful not to neglect rules and precepts laid down by the sages, and endeavours to uplift himself in spirituality by his fidelity.

The third stage is called the Rank of Merit, in which the student distinguishes himself by his "meritorious" acts of conquering over the rebel army of passion which rises against the Mind King. Now, his rank is not the rank of a courtier, but the rank of a general. In other words, his duty is not only to keep rules and instructions of the sages, but to subjugate his own passion and establish moral order in the mental kingdom.

The fourth stage is called the Rank of Co-operative Merit, in which the student "co-operates" with other persons in order to complete his merit. Now, he is not compared with a general who conquers his foe, but with the

prime minister who co-operates with other officials to the benefit of the people. Thus the student in this stage is not satisfied with his own conquest of passion, but seeks after spiritual uplifting by means of extending his kindness and sympathy to his fellow-men.

The fifth stage is called the Rank of Merit over Merit, which means the rank of meritless merit. This is the rank of the King himself. The King does nothing meritorious, because all the governmental works are done by his ministers and subjects. All that he has to do is to keep his inborn dignity and sit high on his throne. Therefore his conduct is meritless, but all the meritorious acts of his subjects are done through his authority. Doing nothing, he does everything. Without any merit, he gets all merits. Thus the student in this stage no more strives to keep precepts, but his doings are naturally in accord with them. No more he aspires for spiritual elevation, but his heart is naturally pure from material desires. No more he makes an effort to vanquish his passion, but no passion disturbs him. No more he feels it his duty to do good to others, but he is naturally good and merciful. No more he sits in Dhyana, but he naturally lives in Dhyana at all times. It is in this fifth stage that the student is enabled to identify his Self with the Mind-King or Enlightened Consciousness, and to abide in perfect bliss.

## THE TEN PICTURES OF THE COWHERD

Besides these Five Ranks of Merit, Zenists make use of the Ten Pictures of the Cowherd, in order to show the different stages of mental training through which the student of Zen has to go. Some poems were written by Chinese and Japanese teachers on each of these pictures by way of explanation, but they are too ambiguous to be translated into English, and we rest content with the translation of a single Japanese poem on each of the ten pictures, which are as follows:

The first picture, called "the Searching of the Cow", represents the cowherd wandering in the wilderness with a vague hope of finding his lost cow that is running wild out of his sight. The reader will notice that the cow is likened to the mind of the student and the cowherd to the student himself.

"I do not see my cow, But trees and grass, And hear the empty cries Of cicadas."

The second picture, called "the Finding of the Cow's Tracks", represents the cowherd tracing the cow with the sure hope of restoring her, having found her tracks on the ground.

"The grove is deep, and so Is my desire. How glad I am, O lo! I see her tracks."

The third picture, called "the Finding out of the Cow", represents the cowherd slowly approaching the cow from a distance.

"Her loud and wild mooing Has led me here; I see her form afar, Like a dark shadow."

The fourth picture, called "the Catching of the Cow", represents the cowherd catching hold of the cow, who struggles to break loose from him.

"Alas! it's hard to keep The cow I caught. S he tries to run and leap And snap the cord."

The fifth picture, called "the Taming of the Cow", represents the cowherd pacifying the cow, giving her grass and water.

"I'm glad the cow so wild Is tamed and mild. She follows me, as if She were my shadow."

The sixth picture, called "the Going Home Riding on the Cow", represents the cowherd playing on a flute, riding on the cow.

"Slowly the clouds return to their own hill, Floating along the skies So calm and still.

The seventh picture, called "the Forgetting of the Cow and the remembering of the Man", represents the cowherd looking at the beautiful scenery surrounding his cottage.

"The cow goes out by day And comes by night. I care for her in no way, But all is right."

The eighth picture, called "the Forgetting of the Cow and of the Man", represents a large empty circle.

"There's no cowherd nor cow Within the pen; No moon of truth nor clouds Of doubt in men."

The ninth picture, called "the Returning to the Root and Source," represents a beautiful landscape full of lovely trees in full blossom.

"There is no dyer of hills, Yet they are green; So flowers smile, and titter rills At their own wills."

The tenth picture, called "the Going into the City with Open Hands," represents a smiling monk, gourd in hand, talking with a man who looks like a pedlar

"The cares for body make That body pine; Let go of cares and thoughts, O child of mine!"

These Ten Pictures of the Cowherd correspond in meaning to the Five Ranks of Merit above stated, even if there is a slight difference, as is shown in the following table:

THE FIVE RANKS.

THE TEN PICTURES.

1. The Rank of Turning

1. The Searching of the Cow.

2. The Finding of the Cow's Tracks.

2. The Rank of Service

3. The Finding of the Cow.

4. The Catching of the Cow.

3. The Rank of Merit

5. The Taming of the Cow.

6. The Going Home, Riding on the Cow.

4. The Rank of Co-operative  
Merit

9. The Returning to the Root and Source.

10. The Going into the City with Open Hands.

5. The Rank of Merit over  
Merit

7. The Forgetting of the Cow and the  
Remembering of the Man.

8. The Forgetting of the Cow and of the Man.



## ZEN AND NIRVANA

The beatitude of Zen is Nirvana, not in the Hinayanistic sense of the term, but in the sense peculiar to the faith. Nirvana literally means extinction or annihilation; hence the extinction of life or the annihilation of individuality. To Zen, however, it means the state of extinction of pain and the annihilation of sin. Zen never looks for the realization of its beatitude in a place like heaven, nor believes in the realm of reality transcendental of the phenomenal universe, nor gives countenance to the superstition of immortality, nor does it hold the world is the best of all possible worlds, nor conceives life simply as blessing.

It is in this life, full of shortcomings, misery, and sufferings, that Zen hopes to realize its beatitude. It is in this world, imperfect, changing, and moving, that Zen finds the Divine Light it worships. It is in this phenomenal universe of limitation and relativity that Zen aims to attain to highest Nirvana. "We speak," says the author of Vimalakirti nirdeṣa sutra, "of the transitoriness of body, but not of the desire of the Nirvana or destruction of it." "Paranirvana," according to the author of Lankavatarasutra, "is neither death nor destruction, but bliss, freedom, and purity." "Nirvana," says Kiai Hwan, "means the extinction of pain or the crossing over of the sea of life and death. It denotes the real permanent state of spiritual attainment. It does not signify destruction or annihilation. It denotes the belief in the great root of life and spirit." It is Nirvana of Zen to enjoy bliss for all sufferings of life. It is Nirvana of Zen to be serene in mind for all disturbances of actual existence. It is Nirvana of Zen to be in the conscious union with Universal Life or Buddha through Enlightenment.

## NATURE AND HER LESSON

Nature offers us nectar and ambrosia every day, and everywhere we go the rose and lily await us. "Spring visits us men," says Gudo, "her mercy is great. Every blossom holds out the image of Tathagata." "What is the spiritual body of Buddha who is immortal and divine?" asked a man to Ta Lun (Dairyu), who instantly replied: "The flowers cover the mountain with golden brocade. The waters tinge the rivulets with heavenly blue." "Universe is the whole body of Tathagata; observed Dogen. "The worlds in ten directions, the earth, grass, trees, walls, fences, tiles, pebbles-in a word, all the animated and inanimate objects partake of the Buddha nature. Thereby, those who partake in the benefit of the Wind and Water that rise out of them are, all of them, helped by the mysterious influence of Buddha, and show forth enlightenment."

Thus you can attain to highest bliss through your conscious union with Buddha. Nothing can disturb your peace, when you can enjoy peace in the midst of disturbances; nothing can cause you to suffer, when you welcome misfortunes and hardships in order to train and strengthen your character; nothing can tempt you to commit sin, when you are constantly ready to listen to the sermon given by everything around you; nothing can distress you, when you make the world the holy temple of Buddha. This is the state of Nirvana which everyone believing in Buddha may secure.

## THE BEATITUDE OF ZEN

We are far from denying, as already shown in the foregoing chapters, the existence of troubles, pains, diseases, sorrows, deaths in life. Our blessing consists in seeing the fragrant rose of Divine mercy among the thorns of worldly trouble, in finding the fair oasis of Buddha's wisdom in the desert of misfortunes, in getting the wholesome balm of His love in the seeming poison of pain, in gathering the sweet honey of His spirit even in the sting of horrible death.

History testifies to the truth that it is misery that teaches men more than happiness, that it is poverty that strengthens them more than wealth, that it is adversity that moulds character more than prosperity, that it is disease and death that call forth the inner life more than health and long life. At least, no one can be blind to the fact that good and evil have an equal share in forming the character and working out the destiny of man. Even such a great pessimist as Schopenhauer says: "As our bodily frame would burst around if the pressure of atmosphere were removed, so if the lives of men were relieved of all need, hardship, and adversity, if everything they took in hand were successful, they would be so swollen with arrogance . . . that they would present the spectacle of unbridled folly. A ship without ballast is unstable, and will not go straight." Therefore let us make our ship of life go straight with its ballast of miseries and hardships, over which we gain control.

The believer in Buddha is thankful to him, not only for the sunshine of life, but also for its wind, rain, snow, thunder, and lightning, because He gives us nothing in vain. Hisanobu (Koyama) was, perhaps, one of the happiest persons that Japan ever produced, simply because he was ever thankful to the Merciful One. One day he went out without an umbrella and met with a shower. Hurrying up to go home, he stumbled and fell, wounding both his legs. As he rose up, he was overheard to say: "Thank heaven." And being asked why he was so thankful, replied: "I got both my legs hurt, but, thank

heaven, they were not broken." On another occasion he lost consciousness, having been kicked violently by a wild horse. When he came to himself, he exclaimed: "Thank heaven," in hearty joy. Being asked the reason why he was so joyful, he answered: "I have really given up my ghost, but, thank heaven, I have escaped death after all." A person in such a state of mind can do anything with heart and might. Whatever he does is an act of thanks for the grace of Buddha, and he does it, not as his duty, but as the overflowing of his gratitude which lie himself cannot check. Here exists the formation of character. Here exist real happiness and joy. Here exists the realization of Nirvana.

Most people regard death as the greatest of evils, only because they fear death. They fear death only because they have the instinct of self-preservation. Here upon pessimistic philosophy and religion propose to attain to Nirvana by the extinction of Will to live, or by the total annihilation of life. But this is as much as to propose death as the final cure to a patient.

Elie Metchnikoff proposes, in his "Nature of Man", another cure, saying: "If man could only contrive to live long enough--say, for one hundred and forty years--a natural desire for extinction would take the place of the instinct for self-preservation, and the call of death would then harmoniously satisfy his legitimate craving of a ripe old age." Why, we must ask, do you trouble yourself so much about death? Is there any instance of an individual who escaped it in the whole history of mankind? If there be no way of escape, why do you trouble yourself about it? Can you cause things to fall off the earth against the law of gravitation? Is there any example of an individual object that escaped the government of that law in the whole history of the world? Why, then, do you trouble yourself about it? It is no less silly to trouble yourself about death than you do about gravitation. Can you realize that death, which you have yet no immediate experience of, is the greatest of evil? We dare to declare death to be one of the blessings which we have to be thankful for. Death is the scavenger of the world; it sweeps away all uselessness, staleness, and corruption from the world, and keeps life clean and ever new. When you are of no use for the world it comes upon you, removes you to oblivion in order to relieve life of useless

encumbrance. The stream of existence should be kept running, otherwise it would become putrid. If old lives were to stop the running stream it would stand still, and consequently become filthy, poisoned, and worthless. Suppose there were only births and no deaths. The earth has to be packed with men and women, who are doomed to live to all eternity, jostling, colliding, bumping, trampling each other, and vainly struggling to get out of the Black Hole of the earth. Thanks to death we are not in the Black Hole!

Only birth and no death is far worse than only death and no birth. "The dead," says Chwang Tsz, "have no tyrannical king about, no slavish subject to meet; no change of seasons overtakes them. The heaven and the earth take the places of Spring and Autumn. The king or emperor of a great nation cannot be happier than they." How would you be if death should never overtake you when ugly decrepitude makes you blind and deaf, bodily and mentally, and deprives you of all possible pleasures? How would you be if you should not die when your body is broken to pieces or terribly burned by an accident, by a violent earthquake followed by a great conflagration? Just imagine Satan, immortal Satan, thrown down by the ire of God into Hell's fiery gulf, rolling himself in dreadful torture to the end of time. You cannot but conclude that it is only death which relieves you of extreme sufferings, incurable diseases, and it is one of the blessings you ought to be thankful for.

The believer of Buddha is thankful even for death itself, the which is the sole means of conquering death. If he be thankful even for death, how much more for the rest of things! He can find a meaning in every form of life. He can perceive a blessing in every change of fortune. He can acknowledge a mission for every individual. He can live in contentment and joy under any conditions. Therefore Lin Tsi (Rinzai) says: "All the Buddhas might appear before me and I would not be glad. All the Three Regions and Hells might suddenly present themselves before me, and I would not fear. He (an enlightened person) might get into the fire, and it would not burn him. He might get into water, and it would not drown him. He might be born in Hell, and he would be happy as if he were in a fair garden. He might be born among pretas and beasts, and he would not suffer from pain. How can he be so? Because he can enjoy everything."

