

Eight beliefs in Buddhism

Hakuun Yasutani Roshi

Eight beliefs in Buddhism, by Hakuun Yasutani, translated by
Eido Tai Shimano (Youval Tal Ltd., 1966, Jerusalem).

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(Zen River, 2011, Uithuizen)

introduction

My teacher, Harada Roshi, set forth eight important points regarding the study of Buddhism, which he called “Right Belief in Buddhism.” They are simple, yet they refer directly to the essence of the teaching. If one understands these eight points clearly he can say that he knows what Buddhism is.

The eight points are:

- I Buddha-Nature
- II Misconception of the “self” (ego or “I”)
- III Eternal Life
- IV Law of Causation
- V Existence of All Buddhas
- VI Mutual Attraction between Buddhas and Sentient Beings
- VII Not Two but One
- VIII Road to Buddhahood

Having been his disciple for some thirty years, I was at least able to open my Mind’s eye to a degree, and for this I am very grateful to him. I hope my lectures will help you in your study of Buddhism.

Hakuun Yasutani
1966

I buddha-nature

a

Even though I said there are eight points regarding the study of Buddhism, this does not mean that there are eight different things existing separately in front of us. There is only one truth but we can view it from eight different angles. Each of the eight not only is related to the others, but each also contains the other seven within it. Therefore, if a person is able to believe even one, he naturally can believe the others; while if a person is unable to believe even one, although he may claim to believe the others, his faith is either shallow or mistaken. This is so because the essence or root of all eight points is Buddha-Nature.

In the Nirvana Sutra Shakyamuni Buddha said: all sentient beings have Buddha-Nature. "All sentient beings" means not only human beings, but also animals and plants, and even inanimate objects. In fact Buddha-Nature is the other name for all existences in this world. Since it is said that all sentient beings contain Buddha-Nature, there is, of course, no difference between a white man and a black man; between men and women. All have Buddha-Nature.

When the Sixth Patriarch met the Fifth Patriarch for the first time the Fifth Patriarch asked if it were true that the people living south of the mountain lacked Buddha-Nature. The Sixth Patriarch replied that even though there is north and south, as far as Buddha-Nature is concerned there is neither (north nor south). Because of this answer he was able to become the student of the Fifth Patriarch.

Dogen Zenji, the famous Japanese Zen master of the 13th century, interpreted this phrase in the Nirvana Sutra as meaning: All sentient beings *are* Buddha-Nature itself and nothing else. Hence it is not a matter of whether there *is* or there *is not*; it is simply important for us to realize the fact that all existences are Buddha-Nature.

However, no matter how many times I repeat this, if the content is not clear it becomes merely a play of words. So now let us begin to analyze and appreciate this Buddha-Nature.

First let me correct several common misconceptions about Buddha-Nature. Some people think that Buddha-Nature is a spiritual soul existing someplace within our bodies or within everything, and that it is concealed until a person becomes a Buddha. The following story derives from this typical misconception.

Officer Chiku asked the Zen master Chōsha, “When we cut an earthworm in two, both halves continue to squirm. Then which half contains the Buddha-Nature?” The master scolded him saying, “Don’t be silly!” Officer Chiku, however, insisted “But both halves move.” Chōsha replied, “Because the earthworm is still alive.”

Jōshū sometimes said, “The dog has Buddha-Nature” and other times, “The dog does not have Buddha-Nature (*Mu*)”. Needless to say, his main intention in saying “yes” sometimes and “no” at other times was simply to make us realize that Buddha-Nature is beyond yes and no. Not only is all existence Buddha-Nature itself, the whole universe is Buddha-Nature. To speak of this Buddha-Nature is to explain the multitudinous things in the universe. To speak of this Buddha-Nature is to explain the real nature of ourselves.

I could repeat this endlessly, but instead let me choose one of the most fundamental characteristics of Buddha-Nature and try to explain it. We call it *ku* (shunyata). This is a condition of no fixed entity, or in other words, of selflessness or selfnaturelessness. Dr. Junjiro Takakusu, one of the most outstanding Buddhist philosophers of the 20th century, called it the Theory of Non-Entity.

Ku is the essence of all existence. The very best, simplest, and most direct expression which proves this fact is one of the sayings of Nagarjuna: “All Dharmas (phenomena) are the result of cause: I call them *ku*.”

Most religions other than Buddhism believe in a Creator, declaring that everything is made by Him. If my understanding is correct, this is true among some people of China; it is also true of Judaism, Christianity, Islam, and Hinduism. Buddhism, however, teaches that all phenomena are the result of the law of causation. If the cause changes, there is a corresponding change in the effect; if the cause disappears entirely, the effect naturally vanishes. Therefore no phenomenon has a fixed entity of its own.

If I were to explain this teaching using more concrete examples I might say that a good man does not have the specific entity “the good.” He may become a bad man according to circumstance. A bad man has no specific entity “the bad.” If the cause changes he may become a good man. The same may be said of poor persons and rich persons, healthy persons and sick persons, crude persons and civilized persons; or of

happiness and unhappiness, peace and war, heaven and hell. Or take as another example the interaction of carbon and diamond. Placed under sufficient pressure, carbon will turn into diamond. On the other hand, if the pressure is removed the diamond will disintegrate into carbon.

The main point is that nothing has a fixed entity of its own. Everything is in its immediate state temporarily by reason of particular causes, and this state of non-specificity is called *ku*.

The more experienced atomic scientists of today have begun to explore this field, but Shakyamuni Buddha discovered the fact of *ku* 2,500 years ago. When he first began to preach Buddhism he used it as his fundamental teaching, and it has since been transmitted from India to China, and from China to Japan.

One of the primary aims of Buddhism is that we experience this fact of *ku* directly and actualize it in our daily life. To believe Buddha-Nature, to understand Buddha-Nature, to practice in order to see it clearly, and finally, to infuse it into our daily life—that is Buddhism, that is all.

My teacher, Harada Roshi, would always draw a circle on the blackboard at the beginning of every lecture and say that the universe is One. The third patriarch, Ganchi, wrote in his *Believing in Mind*, “It is perfect; it does not have any deficiency, nor does it have anything superfluous.” This is a good explanation of Buddha-Nature.

Now let me explain Buddha-Nature in a different way. All existences are perfect as they are. This perfection is demonstrated as a circle. The leg of a crane is long and is perfect in its length, whereas the duck’s leg is short and is perfect in its shortness. Perfection does not mean that we should try to shorten the crane’s leg or lengthen the duck’s leg in order to make each of them conform to our preconceived notion of a more pleasing appearance. The real meaning of perfection is that things are perfect as they are. The tall person is perfect as tall. The short person is perfect as short. It is not necessary for a short woman to wear high heels. The black person is perfect as he is and the white person is perfect as he is. The elephant is perfect as it is. The ant, although small, is perfect as it is. An ant cannot do the things that an elephant can do, but neither can an elephant do the things which ants can do. There is no reason for a wealthy man to be haughty because he is wealthy, nor is there any reason for a poor person to feel inferior. Both are perfect as they are.

A great actor is able to perform on the same stage sometimes as a beggar and sometimes as a rich man, but no matter what kind of person he portrays his worth will not change. He is always one perfect circle.

Although some of the old patriarchs expressed their perfection by sitting, we can express our perfection also by walking, by sleeping, in fact by all our actions. "All sentient beings are primarily Buddha" really means this perfection. When a person truly understands this he will never have any reason to complain or to be discontent. For then no matter what kind of situation he may find himself in, he can live peacefully, with gratitude that he is able to work for the sake of others. This devotion is the life of the Buddha, and to learn this is the life of the Buddhist. Some people, however, are always complaining about their situation, so naturally they cannot appreciate their perfection. They are always thinking selfishly and thus can never find satisfaction. These people are simply called bumpkins.

I **buddha-nature**

b

Now let us study this Buddha-Nature more thoroughly. It is possible to say that Buddha-Nature is another name for human instinct. About three years ago when I gave a talk at Antioch College in Yellow Springs, Ohio, I was asked, "Doesn't Buddhism deny human desire?" I replied that Buddhism does not deny human desire but that it teaches the correct way to channel all desires. The questioner, however, then asked me if Buddhism were not, nevertheless, like Stoicism. I therefore explained human instinct from the Buddhist point of view.

All living things have a natural tendency towards life preservation. This tendency in human beings may be regarded as the human instinct for life preservation, and it may be said that from this instinct is derived all of what we call human desire.

The two strongest desires are the desire to eat and sexual desire. Both are the result of the instinct for life preservation. When we become sick we temporarily lose our appetite. Sometimes we may not even wish to eat at all. But the urge to live does not disappear. In fact, in accordance

with the instinct for life preservation, desire for eating is controlled by the condition of the body.

Sexual desire is strong when one is young and has lots of energy. We want to hand down our instinct for life preservation to the coming generation in order to perpetuate life. When we become seriously sick, sexual desire naturally disappears; when one becomes old it also decreases. But the instinct for life preservation will always remain. The attachment to life may become weak but the desire to live as long as possible will stay the same throughout one's life. An old man may say to a young man, "I am old enough, I don't care when I die." This is a gesture and is not his real heart. If you echo his words and say, "Go ahead and die" you will surely hurt his feelings. I am eighty now but do not wish to die. I want to live as long as possible and to work as much as I can.

Some people may ask, "Why then does one commit suicide?" A person commits suicide not just because he wants to die. If a person commits suicide simply for that reason he is without doubt mentally disturbed. Someone who is not mentally ill and who kills himself is someone who cannot live in the way he would like. Such a suicide is an expression of resistance and is another form of the instinct of which I am speaking. For example, when one becomes sick and suffers great pain he might think it better to die and he might say, "Let me die." If he were able to be released from his pain and could feel joy and peace again certainly he would say, "It is good I did not die. Now I want to live as long as I can."

However, some people may still ask why there are so many suicides in the Scandinavian countries, particularly Norway and Sweden, where social welfare is well established and old people are spending comfortable days in homes for the elderly. Again, here is another form of the same instinct. These people feel that life is not worth living. They can find no meaning in life, thus suicide is rebellion against a tasteless existence and tedium.

The human instinct for life preservation imbues in man not only the desire to lengthen his lifetime but also the desire to enrich his life as much as possible. Thus he may seek fame, fortune, power, intellectual prowess; or his wish for expansion may be expressed as the search for joy, the appreciation of art, the invention of new things, adherence to morality, belief in religion, or the actual practice of religion.

Our urge is to seek endless life and endless expansion. Buddhism teaches us how to satisfy this urge.

Buddhism may seem to resemble Stoicism because it, too, has strict precepts. The most important one is non-killing. This precept of non-killing appears in Mahayana tradition, for example in the ten Siksapada for monks, as well as in the five precepts for laymen. If I am correct, one of Moses' Ten Commandments is: "Thou shalt not kill." If Moses meant that one was not supposed to kill even a heretic or an enemy or an insect, that is exactly the same as the Buddhist precept. One must not kill any living thing.

If all human beings followed this precept of non-killing there would be no wars. Buddhism teaches us to seek peace. Throughout the history of Buddhism there have been no religious wars. If a Buddhist faces the situation of "to kill or be killed" he will be killed. Gandhi, though not a Buddhist, was strongly influenced by the Indian tradition of non-killing and expedited the independence of his country by means of non-violent resistance (his famous fasts). The Buddhist priests in South Vietnam burned themselves in order to protect Buddhism. Both are good examples of the precept of non-killing.

Of course committing suicide is against Buddhist precept. The Buddhist priests burned themselves because that was the only way, under the circumstances, for them to protect the Dharma and save many lives. They knew that it was a sinful act but they gave their lives for the sake of the Dharma.

From the Buddhist point of view everything has life. Or it can be said: everything is none other than life, that life being called Buddha-Nature. Hence it is said: all existences are Buddha-Nature itself.

In conclusion let me explain three Buddha-Natures. They are: *Shoin Busho*, *Ryoin Busho*, and *Enin Busho*.

Shoin Busho is Buddha-Nature itself, and all I have spoken about up to now is this *Shoin Busho*. Literally it means the fundamental cause—that we have the marvelous capacity to become Buddha. However, if we do not know this, it is a pearl for pigs.

Fortunately we have the capacity to realize this *Shoin Busho*, and this capacity is called *Ryoin Busho*. *Ryo* means "to realize."

Though we have both *Shoin Busho* and *Ryoin Busho*, in order to achieve realization it is necessary to have some cause, some condition, since nothing happens accidentally. For example, meeting the appropriate teacher

to receive the most suitable guidance is a good cause. This is called *Enin Busho*, and fortunately enough we have this, too. *Enin* means “cooperating cause,” and when we say *Enin* we generally think of some environment outside ourselves; but after all, self and others are not two separate entities. If there is something outside us it surely exists within us, too. These three Buddha-Natures are a treasure belonging to human beings.

Since it is indeed difficult to be born as a human being, do not miss this opportunity. Having the correct aspiration and determination to be enlightened in this marvelous Buddha-Nature—that is the important thing.

II misconception of the “self” (ego or “I”)

a

The usual misconception about the self, from the standpoint of Buddha-Nature, is none other than a misunderstanding of that very Buddha-Nature. Since Buddha-Nature is non-self there is no specific entity “the self.” Yet this “I” concept is so deeply rooted in our thinking that we persist in erroneously considering ourselves to be separate entities. The purpose of this chapter is to correct this critical misunderstanding.

It is generally accepted that inanimate objects do not have consciousness*. From the Buddhist point of view, however, all objects, living and non-living, are none other than the root of consciousness itself. This root of consciousness manifests itself as animal-like in animals, inanimate-like in inanimate objects, and so forth. Although all existences are the source of consciousness itself, non-living objects are not “self-conscious.” There is no struggle in the inanimate world where changes occur very naturally. The flowing of water, the burning of fire, the erosion of mountains, the formation of rocks—all are natural processes involving no strife.

Although plants may not be conscious in the same sense that human beings are, they do indeed have a desire for life—or more correctly, an

* The English term “consciousness” and the Japanese word “shiki” or “shinshiki” are not exactly equivalent. “Shinshiki” can be translated as “the root of consciousness” or “the source of consciousness.” I will explain this more thoroughly in the chapter on Eternal Life.

instinct for survival. They, too, are engaged in the struggle for existence, however their struggle obviously does not involve combative behavior.

Herbivorous animals, also, are concerned primarily with the problem of finding food, and are not apt to look for a fight. They are peace-loving animals who wish to avoid conflict. When attacked by an enemy they will simply try to protect themselves; they will not attempt to retaliate. These animals obey a herding instinct which is in fact their principal means of defense. Horses, oxen, cows, deer, sheep—all are peaceable creatures who flock together in the interest of safety.

On the other hand, when we observe a fierce animal like the lion or tiger, or a savage bird like the hawk or eagle, we can readily see that each is equipped with some particular weapon of prey.

What, then, about human beings? They do not have any of the weapons which carnivorous animals have; furthermore they prefer to live together in societies. It would seem then, that human beings are peace-loving creatures. However, because of their superior intellect they can, and do, kill all kinds of fierce animals. Indeed, because of this highly developed intellect they have invented nuclear weapons and are now able to destroy even themselves.

When we look at this classification, according to consciousness development, of non-living things, plants, herbivorous animals, ferocious animals, human beings—it becomes an apparent fact that as the intellect develops, the concept of dualism increases and hostility intensifies; as the sense of consciousness grows so does the danger of self-destruction. Now unless man begins to realize his essential wisdom, he will most certainly be destroyed by his “superior” power.

What is his essential wisdom? What is it that he must realize? He must realize his Buddha-Nature—that is, he must come to know as a fact that “self” is only an illusion.

This illusion of “self” or “I” or “ego” is the result of the development of human consciousness. When living things began to notice the self they also began to notice the non-self—those things existing outside themselves. Unfortunately most of us accept this apparent duality of self and non-self. We do not have the vision to see beyond it to the real truth, and because of our limited understanding we erroneously believe that the struggle between self and non-self is instinctive.

Some scholars believe that conflict is inevitable, particularly since everything in this world appears to be dualistic: left, right; good, evil;

up, down; light, dark; and so forth. But those who do are like the person who, when he sees two hands moving in opposite directions to tear a piece of paper, believes, on the basis of what he is seeing, that two separate things (i.e., hands) are opposing each other, forgetting the very important fact that, after all, two hands belong to one person.

To further explain this seeming opposition between self and non-self I might say that the two factors involved are self and the circumstances of self. The self and the circumstances of self may appear to be different and may appear to oppose each other, but no self can exist without circumstances and no circumstance can exist without self. This is a fact, and in this respect the world may be called a monist world, or a world of One Perfect Circle. This is the real world in which all existences live as Buddha-Nature. Fortunately we are able to see this world, as I have demonstrated in previous chapters.

When we hear such an explanation of non-self we may begin to question the concept of “I”, but it is indeed difficult for us to admit from the bottom of our heart that it is a completely mistaken idea. We have harbored this misconception ever since we developed consciousness. Alas, we have never rejected it, even for one moment, and thus have we become so deeply attached to it that even though we may understand intellectually the explanation of non-self we cannot easily accept it.

The average person thinks only in a vague way about the existence of the “I”, but philosophers and theologians have very specific classifications for this concept. Such classifications are fourfold:

1. The “I” is smaller than our corporeal body and exists within ourselves.
2. The “I” is larger than our corporeal body and embraces our body within it.
3. The “I” is as big as our body and behaves and exists along with the body.
4. The “I” exists apart from our body.

Most religions other than Buddhism proclaim the existence of a “soul”, declaring that it is located in the corporeal body, and that it survives after death and goes either to heaven or to hell. If you misinterpret Buddhist teaching you may confuse some Buddhist ideas with the idea of the soul. Please remember that non-self and soul are very different. I

will explain what the difference is in my third chapter on Eternal Life. Buddhism teaches not only that there are no individual “I’s” but also that there is no universal “I” or Creator.

One of the most important studies in Buddhist philosophy is the study of the various analyses of the human body, for these analyses prove that there is no “I” or ego. In the Maha Prajna Paramita Hridya Sutra it is concluded from an analysis of the body into five faculties that there is no fixed ego. From another twelve (or eighteen) part analysis involving the six sense organs and six fields of the senses it is demonstrated that the essence of human nature is *shunyata* (egolessness, formlessness, emptiness).

Let me explain briefly one analysis that employs the six sense organs and six fields of the senses. According to this method everything is divided into two categories: subject and object. No subject can exist without an object; no object can exist without a subject. The subject can be divided into six parts: eyes, ears, nose, tongue, body, and mind; the object can also be divided into six parts: sight, sound, smell, taste, touch, and thought. Each of the related parts act on each other—eyes and sight, ears and sound, nose and smell, tongue and taste, body and touch, and mind and thought.

In atomic science an “object” can be analyzed into elemental particles; as a result there is no substance, for example iron or gold, which is intrinsically “iron” or “gold.” That is to say, everything exists as an aggregation or combination of particles. Nothing has a specific entity of its own. This is, in fact, the concept of *shunyata*.

There are two viewpoints regarding the concept of *shunyata*, Hinayana and Mahayana. The Hinayana viewpoint, called *shakkukan*, is the more analytic of the two. A house, which has pillars, roof, floor, ceiling, threshold, and so forth, is seen as a combination of these parts. There is, of course, no specific entity called “house.” From the Mahayana point of view, called *taikukan*, the house is seen as a whole but, again, there is no reference to any fixed entity.

With a clear understanding of the Mahayana concept of *shunyata* it is easy to see why there is no ego. How can there be? Subject is *shunyata*. Object is *shunyata*. Both are *shunyata*. The intuitive realization of this fact is called *kensho*. Zen practice begins with *kensho*.

The concept of *shunyata* is an important teaching of Mahayana Buddhism and is the basis for many other teachings, but if one wishes to

have complete understanding it is not enough to look just at this one concept. The study of *shunyata* is meant simply to cure the bumpkin sickness (attachment to the delusion of duality).

II misconception of the “self” (ego or “I”) b

There are many philosophical teachings in Buddhism which offer an abstract explanation of non-self. Let us now look at non-self from a commonsense point of view.

Were we to consult a physiologist he would be hard put to tell us which part of the body is the “I”. For if our entire body were “I” we would be able to control it however we wished. Yet the fact is that whether we like it or not, our body follows its own laws, changing from day to day, becoming old, and finally dying.

Dogen Zenji said, “The body is not the “I”; life goes with time and never stops even for a moment.”

Suppose, then, we were to consult a psychologist. He, too, would be at a loss to say which mental process reflects the “I”. Nor could he tell us that body and mind together are the “I”. For we are so used to saying “This is my body. This is my mind.” Apparently both body and mind are possessions of the “I” rather than the “I” itself.

Moreover we say such things as “This is *my* fortune; this is *my* position; this is *my* honor; this is *my* right.” There are always many things to be possessed, but never do we know who is the possessor.

For example, the so-called “absentee” landlord—the one who owns land but does not live on that land, preferring to live elsewhere—does, nonetheless, live somewhere; the so-called “I”, on the contrary, is purely nominal. While the absentee landlord may be, in a sense, “absent,” there is no doubt of his existence; the “I”, on the other hand, is totally imaginary. The “I” is an illusion to which we are obstinately attached, and this illusion is a constant source of unnecessary pain. Think of it! Throughout our lifetime we are a slave to an imaginary existence, at times even performing sinful deeds on its account as well as at other times struggling to show only the greatest integrity. How foolish!

There was a marvelous era in history, from the 14th to the 16th century A. D., called the Renaissance. If I understand correctly, there was great scholastic as well as artistic activity during this period and many believers in God came to discover through their intellectual pursuits, the “I”, thereby emancipating themselves from slavery to a deity. This is one of the reasons the Renaissance is considered to be a brilliant epoch in Western history.

This Renaissance “I”, however, from the Buddhist point of view, is none other than man’s stubborn ego, hence Renaissance man’s “enlightenment” cannot be called the true awakening. He merely exchanged his concept of universal ego (God) for the concept of “self-ego” and continued to think of this ego as residing within himself. It is six of one, half a dozen of another. So although I must acknowledge that the Renaissance was a time of great artistic and scientific advancement, I would not choose to call it a “brilliant” period. Scientific advancement has produced the atomic bomb; man can destroy the world in one minute. The important thing is not advancement. The important thing is that we break through our delusion of ego and return to our original Buddha-Nature. Then science may have some real value.

Following the Renaissance the theory of ego-actualization became popular in Europe. According to this theory it is the purpose of human life to respect and actualize the ego. As a result of this theory we can see at least three trends which have influenced the modern world in various ways.

One trend is Capitalism. Unfortunately it stresses materialistic gain and is not concerned with morality; nor does it care much about an individual’s personal problems. In a word, Capitalism lacks ethics. Confucius said in his Analects: “If one acquires wealth he goes against Perfect Virtue. If one has imperfect virtue he cannot become wealthy.”

Another trend is Communism, which declares that religion is the opiate of the masses. There is a bit of truth to that. All religions, except Buddhism, have some opiate aspects. Buddhism is neither opium nor alcohol, but like milk, it is highly nutritious because it does not contain any teachings of superstition or the supernatural. Needless to say, Communism is extremely materialistic and is based on a premise of self-centeredness and dualism; it, too, lacks right ethics.

The third trend is what I call “rail-less ego supreme thought,” and is anti-public order. This philosophy is currently popular among the

younger generation who are seeking what they call “freedom” while denying the importance of the social system. If one affirms the existence of the ego and believes that to oppress it is unnatural, one has also to acknowledge that law is unnecessary, morality is hypocrisy, religion is opium, and that people have a right to live “spontaneously” and “freely.”

The Buddha realized fully the non-existence of the ego and has been teaching us for over 2,500 years how to achieve that realization. I am convinced this is the only way our confused world can be saved.

In *Sho-do-ka*, the *Song of Enlightenment* by Yoka-Daishi, there is the following saying: “All things are transient and completely empty; this is the Great Enlightenment of Shakyamuni Buddha.”

In recent years, especially in Japan, people have started to say that “everything is flowing.” From ancient times Buddhism has taught that not one existence stops its movement, even for a moment; that all existences are changing constantly. How is it possible for an unchangeable ego to exist? Enlightenment is nothing other than the full comprehension of this fact and of the words, “All things are transient and completely empty; this is the Great Enlightenment of Shakyamuni Buddha.”

Heaven and Hell are creations of our mind. Buddhism teaches us this. When we are full of the illusion of ego we act egoistically and everything outside of us becomes our enemy. This is the life of Hell. When we realize the fact of egolessness we are able to devote ourselves to others and naturally all things become our friend. Consequently we are able to have a universal personality. This is the life of Heaven. The best way to achieve this universal personality is through Zazen practice.

Zazen must be practiced. Hearing an explanation is not enough. However, as preparation for one’s actual practice it is helpful to know what Zazen is, so let me explain very briefly.

Our first step in Zazen practice is to find a stable sitting posture. Then we must regulate our breath and make it calm. Finally we must concentrate our spirit and make our mind like white paper.

Spiritual concentration is especially important. Zen in Buddhism and Zen outside Buddhism* can be classified according to purpose and,

* Zen outside Buddhism usually means: (1) Ordinary Zen which is free from any philosophic or religious content such as the concentration of the mind in the tea ceremony or Noh; (2) Gedo Zen which has some religious and philosophical aspects but has no relation to Buddhist teaching. This includes practices as the quietistic sitting of Confucianism and Hindu Yoga, and the contemplative practices of Christianity.

more especially, to method of concentration.

Zen Buddhism was brought from India to China by Bodhidharma. The purpose of Zen is realization. This realization must be the same as that of Shakyamuni Buddha so far as content is concerned. That is to say, we must see the reality of human nature. We must break through our misconception of ego; we must awaken our true self which is no other than the universal self.

The first Zen experience, regardless of its depth, is nowadays called *kensho*. *Kensho* is the first step in Zazen—but only the first. Afterwards we must practice diligently to get rid of our bad habits and to polish ourselves so that we can finally achieve our universal personality. This is the sole purpose of Zen.

III eternal life

a

I have been discussing Buddha-Nature, or the fact of our existence, from eight different viewpoints. One of these viewpoints is Eternal Life. It is this viewpoint which enables us to examine Buddha-Nature in terms of past, present, and future.

There are two very complicated philosophical books on Buddhism entitled *Kusha* (Abhidharma-kośa Śāstra) and *Yuishiki* (Vijñaptimātratā-siddhi-śāstra). These books are an analysis of life, and each part is written in great detail. It has been said that it takes nine years to thoroughly comprehend *Kusha* and three years to master *Yuishiki*. Although I have not studied these books extensively and naturally have only limited knowledge of them, let me try to present the problem of Eternal Life according to the explanations in *Kusha* and *Yuishiki*.

Both *Kusha* and *Yuishiki* were written during the fifth century A. D. by an Indian patriarch named Seshin Bosatsu (Vasubandhu). He wrote 500 books on Hinayana Buddhism (including *Kusha*) and 500 books on Mahayana Buddhism (including *Yuishiki*), and is therefore called the Master of One Thousand Books.

In *Yuishiki* our life is illustrated as a wave. A wave rises when the energy of the wind passes through the water. That wave, in turn, by its energy, produces the next wave. If there is no resistance or friction this

wave action continues endlessly. This fact we can learn from the physical law called the law of the conservation of energy. That is, no energy is ever lost.

Suppose that here and now we have sufficient energy to create one human being. His life energy will produce the next life just as the energy of one wave produces the next wave. This energy will never disappear, resulting in a continuous formation of successive lives. This energy is called “karma” in *Kusha* and “shiki” in *Yuishiki*.

Now, in the case of a wave, the movement of the water is vertical. The water itself does not ripple or move horizontally; the only thing which moves horizontally is the energy.

Not knowing this fact, most people think that a wave is the movement of one specific area of the water. Similarly, they think that there is some fixed substance which may be called the “I” in a human being. Naturally they think that this “I” lives from yesterday to today to tomorrow. This concept is called *jo-ken*, the concept of permanent existence (soul).

If I stand up here now and move to there in the next moment, it would generally be thought that both are the same person, but that is not true. The fact is that the “I” who stood up at that moment and the “I” who walked a few steps are different. This can be illustrated by a moving news bulletin. When we see the news on an outdoor news bulletin, we think that the letters are moving; but the fact is that each letter is formed separately by the rapid flashing on and off of light; in actuality the letters are not moving. Therefore we see that *jo-ken*, the concept of the permanent existence of some fixed thing such as a soul, is a mistaken idea.

Let me tell you of another misunderstanding. Some people think that a wave is created in a specific place and disappears from there completely. In this way they think that the moment of death (that is, the end of one swell of the wave) is the end of life and that all energy is lost at the moment of death. This is called *dan-ken*, the concept of absolute destruction.

However, both *jo-ken* and *dan-ken* are misunderstandings. The correct Buddhist understanding is this: our life is created and destroyed from moment to moment with a new self continually being formed.

Most people hold to *jo-ken* while they are alive. That is to say, they have the concept of “ego.” Many people also cling to *dan-ken*, thinking

that when the moment of death comes their life is ended and is completely destroyed. Thus their mistake is a double one.

Some people, especially those who have deep faith in some religion, or those who study spirituality, have clear *jo-ken* while they are living. But they think that even after death a specific entity, such as a soul, still exists permanently. Their concept is thoroughly *jo-ken*.

If you understood my explanation of the misconception of self, that no specific fixed self exists, I am sure you will not have any *jo-ken* concept. However, there is still a possibility that you may have the *dan-ken* concept. In order to prevent this error I shall explain the correct view of eternal life, using the teachings in *Kusha* and *Yuishiki*.

Let me start with *Yuishiki*. *Yuishiki* literally means that the whole universe is nothing but *shiki*. In other words, nothing exists outside of *shiki*; all existence is the revelation or manifestation of *shiki*.

Modern atomic science explains that all existence is the revelation of the atom, and this explanation, it seems to me, is similar to *Yuishiki*.

SHIKI

1. The EYE SHIKI – the eye, the sense of sight, all objects which can be seen.
2. The EAR SHIKI – the ear, the sense of hearing, sound.
3. The NOSE SHIKI – the nose, the sense of smell, scents.
4. The TONGUE SHIKI – the tongue, the sense of taste, tastes.
5. The BODY SHIKI – the body, the sense of touch, sensation.
6. The MIND SHIKI – the brain, the process of thought, thoughts.
7. MANA SHIKI (Skt. manas) – (a) the conveyer *shiki*;
(b) the permanent self-awareness *shiki*.
8. ARAYA SHIKI (Skt. Alaya-vijnana) – (a) the repository *shiki*; (b) the unification of truth and falsehood *shiki*.
9. ANMORA SHIKI – the pure nature *shiki*.

The first *shiki* is the eye *shiki*. This consists of eyes, the sense of sight, and all objects which can be seen. The second is the ear *shiki*. This consists of the ears, the sense of hearing and sound. In the same manner

there are the nose *shiki*, the tongue *shiki*, the body *shiki*, and the mind *shiki*.

Number six, the mind *shiki*, consists of the brain, the process of thought, and thoughts themselves. If there are no objects of thought the process loses its function and the brain naturally loses its functioning power. I understand that the subject matter of general psychology ranges from number one (eye *shiki*) to number six (mind *shiki*). However, in recent years scholars have started to investigate what they call the sub-conscious, speculating that there is something below the mind *shiki*.

In *Yuishiki* we find number seven, *mana shiki*, number eight, *alaya shiki*, and also number nine, *anmora shiki*. The book explains the capabilities of these *shiki* and the relationship between *shiki* and *shiki*.

When we die it is merely a death of the first six *shiki* which we used in our life. Our fundamental *shiki*, the source or the foundation of our personality, has no relation to birth and death. Hence even if the atom bomb should explode, number seven *shiki* and number eight *shiki* would not receive even the slightest scratch. So please, do not worry.

Number seven, *mana shiki*, is sometimes called the conveyer *shiki* and it is also called the permanent self-awareness *shiki*. This permanent

one swell of a wave = one personality

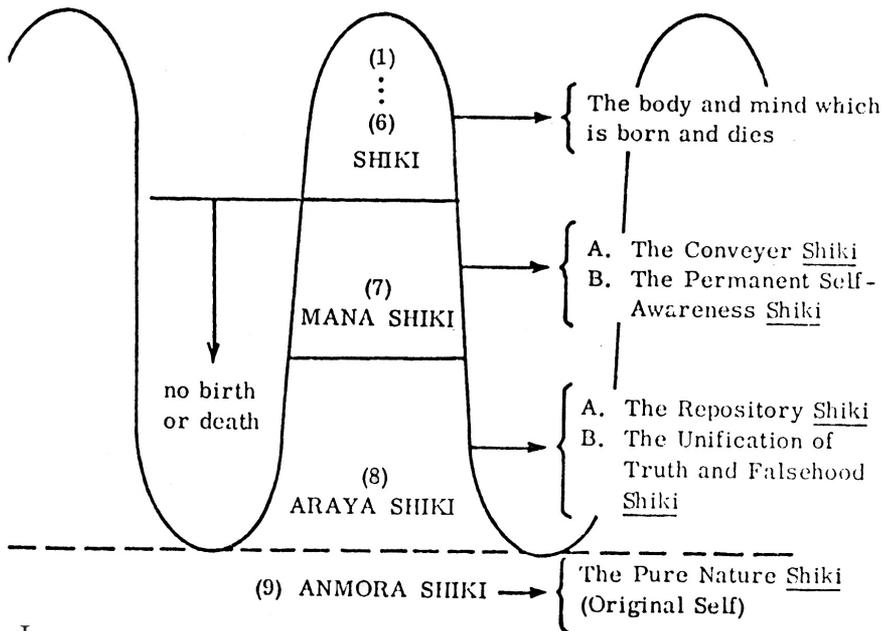


Fig. 1

self-awareness *shiki* holds the ego very clearly and constantly. Of course we have this ego consciousness in our number six (the mind) *shiki*, but that is a discontinuous awareness. Unlike number six, number seven holds the ego very strongly and does not disappear at our death.

Number eight, *alaya shiki*, is called the repository *shiki*, or sometimes the Tathagata *shiki*. That is like a storehouse, since all experiences, good and bad, are compressed and stored there from the endless past. This accumulated experience is the basis of each individual's personality or character. Also, this repository *shiki* receives and accepts all new experiences very accurately moment after moment, never losing account of even one action. Because of the differing past and present experiences, each individual's personality is different but changing. It is useless to conceal some bad action, just as it is unnecessary to advertise your good actions. All are accurately recorded in your number eight *shiki*.

Getting back to number seven, let me explain the role of the conveyer *shiki*, using the illustration of an office. The first six *shikis* are like a receptionist who sits at the entrance; number eight *shiki* is like the master who sits in the back room. The number seven, the conveyer *shiki*, conveys all the new experiences in the realm of seeing, hearing, thinking, and so forth, to number eight *shiki*. The conveyer *shiki* also conveys number eight *shiki's* messages or orders back to the first six *shikis*. Thus, number seven is called the conveyer *shiki*.

The relationship between number eight *shiki* and number nine *shiki* is very intimate. In fact they are almost the same. Number nine is called the pure nature *shiki*. That is no other than our Buddha-Nature.

Number nine is like the ocean, and each individual is a wave on the surface of the ocean. Apart from water, no wave can exist. Apart from Buddha-Nature, no individual can exist. Wave is another name for this water, and each individual is another name for Buddha-Nature. Therefore not only number nine, but also numbers seven, eight and six are all nothing but Buddha-Nature.

In spite of the fact that each individual has such a wonderful capacity, because of number seven's delusion we erroneously think that each individual exists apart from the ocean. We even think that each individual has to fight with other individuals. That is the average bumpkin's view.

In Figure 1 I drew a dotted line between number eight and number nine simply because I wanted you to know that they are similar. One of the differences is that number eight has another name, that is, the

unification of truth and falsehood *shiki*. As it exists between number seven and number nine, in other words between delusion and truth, it tries to unify both.

Each individual, on the surface, is different, as are the waves on the face of the ocean. However, in the depths of our nature, in the ocean itself all individuals are equal with all existences in heaven and earth.

Our life produces another life by its energy when it is destroyed. In my next talk I shall try to illustrate more concretely how this transmission of energy is effected using the explanation in *Kusha*.

III eternal life

b

It is important for us to understand clearly the concept “birth and death.” According to Buddhism there are two births and deaths. One is called *bundan shōji*; the other is called *henyaku shōji*. *Bundan shōji* is ordinary birth and death. It is from the moment of our physical birth to the moment of our body’s death. *Henyaku shōji* is momentary birth and death. Most people do not know about this and think that one and the same person lives continuously from physical birth to death. In order to correct this misunderstanding let me use the motion picture as an illustration.

We know that the motions of an actor on a movie screen are determined by the movement of the film. Each frame of the film is similar to, yet slightly different from the next. As the frames are viewed one after another this slight difference causes the actor on the screen to move. The frames change in such rapid succession that it seems as though one person is moving continuously.

Momentary birth and death is exactly like the rolling of a film. It is a continual process of creation and destruction, but because we cannot see the changes (so slight) from minute to minute we believe that the same person exists all the time.

When we say at the end of a movie, “It is ended,” this kind of end is like the end of a life in *bundan shōji*. Even if one has gone to a double or triple feature, eventually there is an end. In the movie of universal life (which is what we are living) there is no beginning and no end; the movie goes on endlessly.

There is a very famous phrase in *Yuishiki* which reads: “continuous sweep like a waterfall.” It is the same with our life. A waterfall looks like one great mass of water, but actually it is composed of an infinite number of droplets. It is constantly changing according to its composition; there is no specific entity called “the waterfall.” There is an explanatory note in regard to this phrase in *Yuishiki*:

CONTINUOUS SWEEP LIKE A WATERFALL

The seed reveals the present action;
 The present action impresses itself on the seed;
 The triangle is completed;
 Cause and effect are one.

Please look at Figure 2. It shows the interaction between the first six *shiki* and number eight *shiki*. Number seven *shiki* operates between them as a conveyer. This diagram shows us how our life progresses. It shows how our karma is developed, or it may be said to show the action of Buddha-Nature.

Our life may be called Buddha-Nature sometimes, karma at other times, and *shiki* at still other times. What it is called does not matter. These words are used to explain life according to the situation, for after all, the words are no other than our life itself.

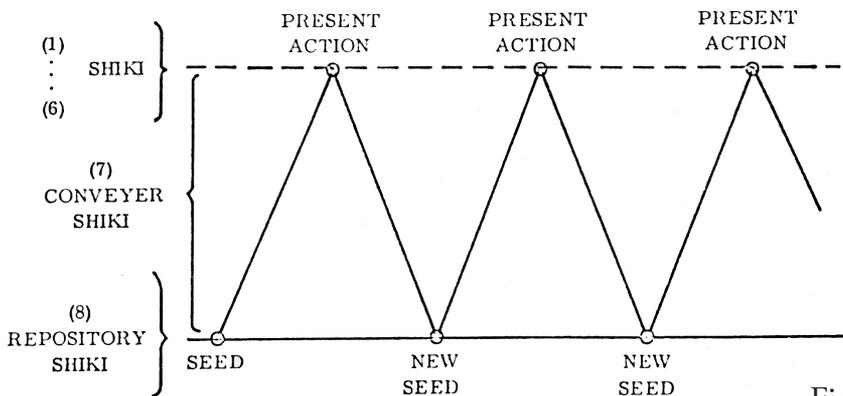


Fig. 2

From the beginningless past up to the present day, all our experiences have been kept in our number eight *shiki*, and the repository *shiki*. That is the source of our personality and is called the seed. This seed influences the present actions of our sixth *shiki* according to circumstances. All of our thoughts, words, and behavior are no other than the revelation of that seed. This is the meaning of “The seed reveals the present action.”

These thoughts, or words, or actions of the present will immediately be conveyed to the eighth *shiki* as a new seed. This is the meaning of “The present action impresses itself on the seed.” From seed to present action, from present action to seed, makes, as it were, a triangle. This process continues at full speed and thus “The triangle is complete.”

So you see, the seed becomes the cause of present actions, and the present action is the cause of a new seed. The new seed is the effect of the present action as well as the cause of another present action. These three relationships are made simultaneously. Therefore it is said, “Cause and effect are one.”

Thus can we say, “It is just like a waterfall.” For there seems to be continuous movement, yet actually there is fragmentation. And so it is with our life. From moment to moment—fragments. Yet there is an endless continuum. There is no fixed entity which can be called the “I”.

This is not so only while we are alive, but also at the moment of death, in life after death, and at the moment of conception. *Jo-ken* and *dan-ken* are both erroneous concepts. Our life continues eternally, having no fixed entity.

Using the explanation in *Kusha*, let me explain in a more concrete manner how life is continuous. If I were to call *Yuishiki* “Buddhist spiritualism,” I would call *Kusha* “Buddhist materialism.” Needless to say, they are much different from ordinary spiritualism or materialism so far as their content is concerned.

In *Kusha* the continuation of life is explained by four U. The U refer to the fact of our four existences which are:

Present life U

Death U

Middle life U

Conception U

Please look at Figure 3. The horizontal line is the border between the present life and the future life. The moment our mother conceives us is conception U. We are born, we grow up, become children, adults, old people—this is called present-life U. Then comes the moment of death. This moment is death U.

No one doubts the existence of conception U, present-life U, and death U. Those who have *dan-ken*, however, think that this is the end. But then what happens to the energy which was our life energy? And what about the law of conservation—that no energy is ever lost? If this great energy which made our human actions were to disappear at the moment of death it would be like one swell of a wave not producing another wave.

According to *Kusha*, after this moment of death there is middle-life U. This is the existence between death U and conception U. Our great energy is transmitted to the middle-life U, which has an extremely tenuous mind and body. Although it may not be necessary, let me repeat once again. This middle-life U, like present-life U, is constantly changing and does not have any fixed entity. It is said to be much superior to present-life U. It is like an electric current: it can pass through all obstacles. It can even fly hundreds of miles in a moment. It is also said that middle-life U has intellect, emotion, and will, as well as the five sensory organs. The middle-life U survives by eating perfume.

Now let me continue to explain how karma is transmitted to the middle-life U at the moment of death. The process is like impressing a seal on muddy ground. The present-life U is the seal. The middle-life U

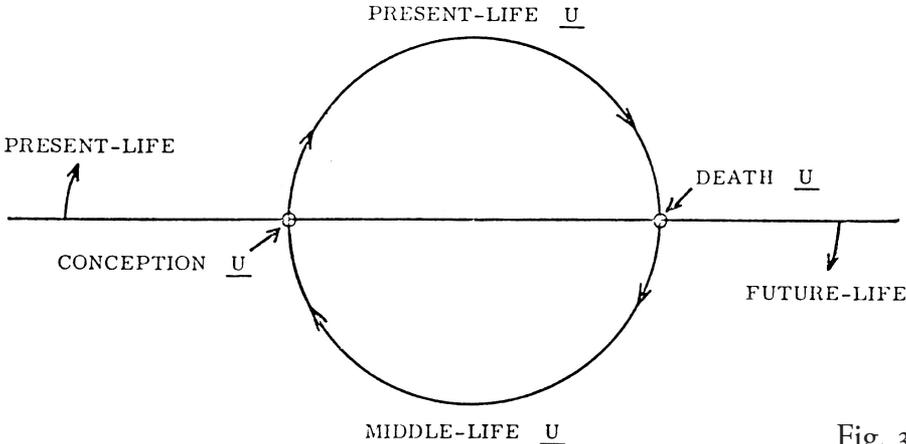


Fig. 3

is the muddy ground. The design which is carved on the seal is karma. The moment the seal is impressed on the surface of the ground the design is exactly transposed; thus all karma is transmitted to the middle-life U. The middle-life U then continues its momentary birth and death as well as ordinary birth and death in seven day periods, waiting for the opportunity to be conceived.

It is said that the middle-life U has some mysterious power to see, feel, and find its parents, and that it is able to see the sexual intercourse by which it may be conceived. At that moment, if a middle-life U is going to be born as a man, it will fall in love with a woman. Those going to be born as women fall in love with men. Like electricity, only the opposite sexes are attached to each other.

The middle-life U then transmits all of its karma to the new life cell which is composed of male and female cells.

Our karma grows continually with the new U from conception U to present-life U to death U to middle-life U. This is the explanation in *Kusha*.

Although in *Kusha* it is called karma and in *Yuishiki* it is referred to as *shiki*, the fact is the same: life is continuous. Thinking that life is only this present one is much different from thinking that life has an endless future. Those who have *dan-ken* have a very different view of life from those who have *jo-ken* or those who believe in Buddhism.

The correct Buddhist view of life will become clearer after you have read the next chapter, “Law of Causation.”

IV law of causation

a

Up to now we have been studying about Buddha-Nature, misconception about the “self”, and eternal life. Now it is time to talk about the law of cause and effect. As you remember, when I spoke about Buddha-Nature I stressed two facts—that as human beings we are absolutely equal in our substance and that we have absolutely equal potentiality to be enlightened. This is what is meant by “having equal essence” (or Buddha-Nature). In this chapter I would like to clarify the other aspect

of ourselves, that is the fact that we are all absolutely different from one another according to our background and training. This is what is meant by “having different karma according to the law of cause and effect.” And this is what I call differentiation.

It seems that in ancient times people believed that everything was created by a supreme being. Hence it was also believed that differentiation was the inevitable truth. Then somehow the idea of liberty and equality became very popular and nowadays many people believe that only equality is desirable and that differentiation must be overlooked.

If I were to say that equality is not more desirable than differentiation you might think that my idea is old-fashioned. Or if I were to say that differentiation is the inevitable truth you might think me a crazy man.

Buddhism teaches us that we are essentially equal but that at the same time our reality is always different. This is a fact and no one can change it.

Take fingerprints as an example. There are billions of people in this world yet, amazing as it seems, no two sets of fingerprints are identical. This is but one of many instances in which people are absolutely different from one another. Each person’s environment, position, experience, intellect, ability, interest, view of life, and view of the universe are different—just as faces are never the same. No one can deny these facts. If a government disregards this and forcibly tries to make men equal, its policy goes against nature and will surely fail.

“Give me liberty or give me death!” is a cry which will always ring in our ears. All living beings want to have freedom—freedom of thought, freedom of speech, freedom of religion, freedom to live as one wishes. Because of man’s desire for freedom and his endeavors to achieve this freedom, we can see hundreds of thousands of different phenomena.

Liberty is incompatible with equality. These two contradictory ideas were espoused either by a very clever person in order to disturb society, or unknowing by a very foolish person. I do not know which.

The law of causation means that cause and effect are inevitably one. In mathematics if we add two and two, the result inevitably is four. The same is true when we subtract three from ten and are left with seven. The law of causation does not change. Regardless of the time, the place, or the persons involved, the ups and downs of human life are determined by this law.

I am sure that you understand this theoretical explanation. When we actually face our own personal happiness or unhappiness, however, we tend to ignore this law and say such things as “This is an accident,” or “This is my fate,” or “This is the divine will,” and so forth. Those who say such things do not understand the relationship between cause and effect which includes past, present, and future.

Past, present, and future can be divided in various ways. For the time being let us consider the past as our past life, the present as our present life, and the future as our coming life. You cannot understand the relationship between cause and effect covering past, present, and future unless you correctly understand Eternal Life. I am assuming that you have clearly understood my explanation in chapter three.

The Buddha said, “If you want to know past cause, look at your present effect; if you want to know future effect, look at your present cause.” All situations in our present life are the effect of a previous cause. We are reaping the effect of the cause which we ourselves sowed. Hence our situation, whether good or bad, is of our own making and is neither our parents’ nor society’s responsibility. Even the effects of our present everyday thoughts, speech, and actions will not disappear, but must be reaped by ourselves sooner or later. This is the Buddhist view of cause and effect and is called *Jigōjitoku*, the natural consequence of one’s deeds.

There are several important aspects of the law of causation which I shall discuss one by one.

First of all let me explain *Doji no Inga* and *Iji no Inga*. *Doji no Inga* is cause and effect at the same time. *Iji no Inga* is cause and effect at different times. Suppose I hit my head. This is cause. I feel pain, this is effect, and I might say “Ouch!” The hitting and the feeling of pain occur at the same time (*Doji no Inga*). A little while later, however, a lump may appear, a fever may develop, and the wound may suppurate. Then I may have to go to a doctor where I may also incur an expense. This is *Iji no Inga*, cause and effect at different times.

Now let me explain *Inshokadai*, the law of small cause and large effect. In this case, time is a factor; the longer the lapse of time between cause and effect, the greater the effect. For example, if you save money, the longer you keep it in a bank, the greater the amount of interest you will receive. On the other hand, if you have a debt and do not repay it for a long time, it will become bigger by reason of the added interest.

Think of your good deeds as savings and your bad deeds as debts. Since, when saving money it is wise to bank it for a long time, you had better conceal your good deeds. And since, when owing money, it is wise to repay it as quickly as possible, you had better confess* your bad deeds.

Ordinary people usually think differently. When they do something bad they try to conceal it, and when they do something good they want to tell others and be praised. Buddha called these people “upside-down delusion beings.” Our teachers encourage us to do something good inconspicuously, and if we make a mistake they want a confession of our conduct. They teach this way simply because they fully understand the law of cause and effect.

Now I will explain *Gugo*, collective karma, and *Betsugo*, individual karma. The fact of our life is that we exist separately yet at the same time we relate deeply to one another. Of course it is not always easy to discriminate between collective karma and individual karma; in actuality karma is very subtle and complicated. For the purpose of study, however, it is important to make this distinction.

Suppose I did not take care of my health and became sick. This is my individual karma and no one, not even very intimate relatives, could substitute for me in this sickness. I would have to be the one to drink the bitter medicine. I alone would have to bear the pain of an operation. This is the natural consequence of my own situation. However, because of my sickness I might give my friends and relatives occasion to feel anxiety, and if the illness were severe it would naturally affect my family’s finances. This is collective karma.

To be sailing on a ship or driving a car when an accident occurs—this is collective karma. But due to individual karma, someone may die, someone may be injured, or someone may remain unharmed.

Thus, one’s cause sometimes involves others in its effect. At the time, one may also be involved in the effect of others’ cause. This cannot be helped since self and others cannot, after all, be separated.

The behavior of a parent inevitably has an effect on the life of the child. So also, the good behavior of persons or past generations will bring happiness to those living on, while the evil deeds of persons living in the present generation may cause embarrassment to our ancestors.

* The original Japanese “sange” and the English “confession” are not equivalents but confession comes closest in meaning. In *sange* there is nothing specific to confess; it is simply the spitting out of all one’s evil karma.

Cause and effect is most often *Jigōjitoku*, self cause and effect; but *Jigōtatoku* is also possible, self cause and others' effect, and *Tagōjitoku*, others' cause and self effect. The point, however, is that we must sooner or later reap by ourselves all of the seeds which we sow.

IV law of causation

b

Now let me explain fixed karma and non-fixed karma. Our fixed karma is the result of our previous actions, fixed from the time we are born, unchangeable until we die. For example, to be born as a man or a woman is fixed karma, a condition which we cannot alter. To be born as a white man or a Negro, as a Japanese or a Chinese, is also a fixed and unchangeable condition.

Non-fixed karma is the karma which can be changed by one's effort. Take, for example, one's health. Although a person may be born a very sick baby he can, if he attends carefully to his health, become strong and well as an adult. The reverse is also true.

The length of one's life is also a matter of non-fixed karma. Longevity is related to one's honesty and beneficence as well as to one's health. If a person is honest and kind to others he can extend his lifetime.

Wealth and poverty are non-fixed karma. Depending upon one's effort one can be either rich or poor. The law of causation is an inevitable truth from which no one can escape.

If the law of causation is misinterpreted it may seem as though Buddhism teaches fatalism. The idea of fatalism comes from the notion that the relationship between cause and effect is fixed. However, cause and effect are dynamic, the effect changing constantly according to circumstance.

Let me give you a simple example. Two people plant seeds of grain at the same time. One person cultivates his field, fertilizing it with rich manure; the other does nothing except watch the weeds. Indeed there will be a great difference in the crops!

Some people say that Buddhism is nihilistic and pessimistic, but this is not true. There is no concept of fate in Buddhism. Buddhism teaches

the great universal movement of cause and effect, and it teaches one how to integrate one's behavior with this movement.

Regardless of the effect, cause and *En* (second cause), are indispensable. Take, as an example of *En*, bean seeds. They require water, soil and sunshine. These are *En*. Without them the bean seeds will not sprout, will not flower, will not produce new beans. If the bean seeds are kept in their dried condition, no matter how many years pass, there will be no new beans.

When we die we are in the middle-life U. Even though we may have great aspirations to be born as a human being again, if we have no parents (*En*), we simply cannot be born. Thus it is not just our aspiration, but also our having parents which makes it possible for us to become human beings. The parents' part is *En*. From cause to effect, *En* exists as a very important factor. Although different people may have similar causes, the effects will be either good or bad depending upon *En*.

The Buddha said, "Although we live hundreds of thousands of millions of eons, karma does not appear. When cause (karma) unites with *En*, an effect can be seen."

Now it is time to explain the relationship between effect and Ho (one's acceptance of the effect). We have a tendency to think that an effect cannot be changed—that it is the result of cause and *En*. Depending upon our attitude, however, a bad effect may be turned to good. Suppose someone is put in jail. This is an effect the prisoner cannot escape. However, the way in which he accepts the situation is up to him. He may choose to repent and to become a good man, or he may choose to think that since he is an "old-time offender" he had better commit his next offense more skillfully. Or he may make the jail his spiritual training center and choose to read good books, continue his Zazen practice, and so forth. Thus his attitude will greatly alter his condition. Again you can see how fatalism is a wrong conception. Nothing is fixed. The law of causation can be useful if one understands it thoroughly and uses it wisely.

Man and his environment are not separate. One's situation is not made by either God or the Devil, but is a natural consequence of one's deeds. We express ourselves by action, speech, and thought even though we do not know what is good or bad. These actions echo within us and influence our personality.

When one's personality changes, one's circumstances also change. This is part of cause and effect at the same time, and one cannot hide from this inevitability.

Buddha-Nature is absolutely equal for everyone. Cause and effect (karma) is absolutely different for everyone. But equality and differentiation are two aspects of one fact. The existence of Buddha-Nature automatically establishes the existence of differentiation, and vice versa. Therefore, no matter what the conditions—no matter how miserable or happy we may be—all are nothing but the ever changing forms of Buddha-Nature, the absolute value itself. The endless forms of differentiation are not a matter of chance either, so we had better naively accept them [sic?]. As a matter of fact, that is the only way. May I repeat: cause and effect cannot be nailed down. Karma is a dynamic thing. Thus, if you are unhappy about your present condition, do not hesitate to change it so that you may eventually produce the results you desire. If you work hard and patiently, with all your might, you can alter any unfavorable condition.

I would like to tell you a famous Zen koan which will help explain the law of causation more fully. This koan is found in the well-known Zen text called *Mumonkan*, the *Gateless Gate*. The title is “Hyakujo's Fox.”

Hyakujo lived in the temple of Daichi-in at Mount Hyakujo in China. Whenever he would lecture, there was an old man who would always come, sitting behind the monks. As soon as the lecture would end, the old man would leave. For a while he came every day, but no one saw him.

One day he remained after the lecture was over and all the monks had left. Hyakujo noticed him and asked, “Who are you?” The old man bowed and in tears he answered, “Thank you, Master, for asking me. I look like a human being, but actually I am not. I am a fox. Long ago I was a Zen master. I had a monastery here on this mountain. One day a monk came to see me and in all sincerity asked, ‘Is an enlightened man controlled by the law of cause and effect?’ I answered him, ‘The greatly enlightened man is not controlled by the law of causation.’ Ever since telling this untruth, I have been reborn 500 times as a fox. I will be grateful for your teaching.” Then the monk [sic] bowed three times to Hyakujo and asked, “Is an enlightened man controlled by the law of

cause and effect?” Hyakujo replied in a clear and vigorous voice: “Even Shakyamuni Buddha or Amitābha Buddha cannot escape the law of cause and effect.”

At this the old man suddenly awakened, and in tears, bowing many times, he said, “Thank you, thank you! I have just been released from being a fox. My dead body will be under the cliff behind the mountain. May I ask one more favor of you? Although I have been a fox, I was previously a monk. Please have a funeral service for me as for a monk.” Then he disappeared.

Hyakujo was the only person who knew of this incident. When he went back to his room he called the head monk and said, “Please announce to all the monks that we are going to have a funeral service after lunch.”

The monks were surprised and began to gossip. “Who died? What’s the matter? Head monk, for whom is this funeral service?” “I don’t know. I was merely asked by the Master to make this announcement.”

When lunch was over Hyakujo appeared and said, “Are you ready? We will have the funeral now. Please come with me.” The monks followed him with puzzled expressions. When they arrived at the cliff, Hyakujo picked up the body of a dead fox and said, “We are going to have a funeral for this fox, but please perform the funeral rites prescribed for a monk.” They all recited the sutras very attentively and then returned to the monastery. But no one understood why they had had a funeral for a fox.

That night Hyakujo gave a formal lecture to the monks. “If you preach at random out of your half-way satori, you will suffer punishment and fall into hell. I don’t know whether you noticed, but when I gave my daily lectures there was an old man who always attended. He was, in fact, a fox. Long ago he had been a Zen master at this monastery. Once he told a student of his that with absolute enlightenment one is no longer controlled by the law of cause and effect. Because of this half-truth he became a fox for 500 rebirths. He repented his error, however, from the bottom of his heart, and he asked me for the truth. I told him, ‘Even all the Buddhas of the three worlds cannot escape the law of causation.’ As soon as I spoke he obtained sudden and complete enlightenment, and was released from being a fox. Since he asked me to bury him as a monk, we did so. You must all be very careful when you teach others.”

Then Obaku, Hyakujo's senior monk stood, bowed three times, and asked loudly, "Because of your correct answer that old man was released from being a fox. Well, if he had never taught a lie how would he have fared? A fox becomes a man, a man a heavenly being, a heavenly being a Bodhisattva, a Bodhisattva a Buddha, and then after that what? At last there is no place left to go. Give me an answer.

Hyakujo understood exactly what was in Obaku's mind and said to him, "Come closer to me and then I shall tell you."

Obaku also understood exactly what was in the teacher's mind, and walked up to him and slapped him in the face. Then Hyakujo laughed and clapped his hands. "I was intending to slap you and instead was slapping myself." This was Hyakujo's acknowledgment of his disciple's understanding.

Why did the old man become a fox when he said "The enlightened man is not controlled by the law of cause and effect," and why was he released from being a fox when he said "No one can escape the law of causality"? If you are able to see the essential meaning of this with your Mind's eye, you will know that the old man's rebirth into a fox 500 times was actually a joyful life.

Mumon, the author of Mumonkan, wrote a poem regarding this koan:

Controlled or not controlled
are two sides of one coin.
Not controlled or controlled,
both are a thousand mistakes.

To be "controlled" and to be "not controlled" are the same thing from an enlightened man's point of view, but they seem to be different things for an ordinary person. Mumon has said this very simply. However, let me explain it further.

If we grasp the fact that to be "controlled" and to be "not controlled" are the same, there is no problem. But if one thinks that they are different, that is an idea and not a fact. To be "controlled" or to be "not controlled"—either thought of separately is half a fact and therefore not the fact at all.

When we cut our real fox in two we have *innen* and *shoku* (*ku*). *Innen* is the condition whereby all phenomena appear and disappear,

i.e. cause and effect. When conditions cease, so do phenomena. Why? Because all existences in this phenomenal world have no fixed entity of their own. The forms we see are really just momentary appearances. This appearance-and-disappearance is a manifestation of *ku* or *shunyata*, the condition which underlies all phenomenal existence. All existences change form according to the conditions. Whatever the form, that is *innen*. Having no particular form is called “freedom from the law of causation,” while having a form which relates to the condition of the moment is called “being subject to the law of causation.” Therefore our very subjection to the law of causation bears witness to our freedom from it, and our freedom from it bears witness to our being subject to it.

The moving-picture, which I mentioned before, is a good example. The image appears according to the conditions of the film, the light, and the screen. The picture itself has no fixed entity; it changes according to the movement of the film. This is “being subject to the law of causation,” and this “having no fixed entity” is *ku*. To grasp this Oneness, with its two aspects, as a living fact is called *kensho*.

Thus the true spirit of every koan is understood once one has had *kensho*. If someone who has not had *kensho* gives a Zen lecture, it is just like a baby singing love songs.

Since the enlightened man knows that both to be “controlled” and to be “not controlled” are the same, whichever one he says is the truth. In the case of the ordinary man, who has not yet had the experience, whichever one he says is not the truth.

If you really understand *ku* or *shunyata*—the condition which underlies all phenomenal existence (the condition of “having no fixed entity”) you will be content no matter where you are and no matter what you are doing.

This is called “emancipation from birth and death.” If you become a fox, that is fine. There is no need to become a human being; no need to become a Buddha. This contentment itself is to be Buddha. The real meaning of “to attain enlightenment” is to attain this state of mind.

V existence of all buddhas

a

All of us are primarily Buddha-Nature itself and all of us have eternal life. According to the law of cause and effect, we can become whatever we like. Therefore it is natural that many Buddhas exist because they have broken through the illusion of ego and have realized their essential Buddha-Nature.

If Buddhas did not exist, our Buddha-Nature would be like a bad bank check. In Buddhist teaching, however, there is no such falsehood, for in fact there are many senior Buddhas who do exist.

I said “exist,” but this does not mean that there is some fixed thing which is called “the Buddha.” Whenever any sentient being wishes to be saved, Buddhas respond and change their form accordingly. One of these Buddhas appeared in this world about 2,500 years ago as a human being in order to save other human beings. He was born in India and came to be called Shakyamuni Buddha (Gautama). This is the correct view of the Buddha, and it is a mistake to consider him merely a sage who happened to be born in India.

A Buddha’s purpose is none other than to save all sentient beings. Buddhas appear not only in the human world but also in the animal world, and in heaven and hell as well. When they appear in these various realms they become exactly like the beings living there. Then they guide them and show them what is the right way to live. It is said that Buddhas appear mostly in the human world because these worlds are the most effective places for their teaching.

Although many Buddhas exist, their numbers are few when compared with the limitless universe. There is an expression *ichi butsu do*, which means “One Buddhaland” where only one Buddha is responsible for teaching. Sometimes *ichi butsu do* is called *sanzen daisen sekai*.

In recent years I have often heard the expression “astronomical figure.” The Buddhist concept of the universe involves figures which are even greater than these astronomical figures, but those who rely only on their limited common sense cannot conceive of it.

If I say the universe is endless, this abstract expression can be understood by everyone. No one would disagree. If I support this statement with specific examples, however, giving large figures, most people would say, “Incredible! It must be a lie!” This is because they are relying on

their common sense. When discussing the Buddhist view of the universe, common sense must be put in cold storage.

Although I do not know anything about astronomy, I understand that the distance between the earth and other heavenly bodies is measured by a unit called the “light year.” If a star is one light year away from us, that means it will take one year for its light to reach the earth. If I understand correctly, there are many stars which are 100 and even 1,000 light years away.

Now turning to the Buddhist view of the universe, let me explain *sanzen daisen sekai*. Think first of all of one solar system. Then multiply this by one thousand. That is what we call one small *sensekai*. One thousand of these small *sensekai* is called one middle *sensekai*. One thousand times one middle *sensekai* equals one *sanzen daisen sekai*. In other words, one *sanzen daisen sekai* is a billion times one solar system! And it is this huge place, the thought of which staggers the imagination, which must be cared for by one Buddha.

In the famous Jodo Sutra it is said, “Hundreds of billions of times the distance to the West, there is a Buddhaland and it is called Paradise. The Buddha is called Amitabha (Amida).” In that very same sutra there is also the following quotation: “Amitabha Buddha exists right here and now within us.” Thus, although Buddhism speaks of an endless universe, its main concern is none other than our own mind. In short, nothing exists outside of ourselves.

Dogen Zenji said: “Don’t say there is a beginning or an ending of the universe or of the existence of a Buddha. If you discuss such a matter you are not really studying true Buddhism.”

Not only is the universe endless in terms of space—it is endless in time as well. The Buddhist term for measuring time is called *Ko*. There are two illustrations which explain *Ko*. One is *Poppy Ko* and the other is *Rock Ko*. Both are similar, but I will speak of *Poppy Ko*.

Suppose there is a container the length, width, and depth of which measure forty cubic miles. And suppose this container is filled with poppy seeds. Then suppose that every three years a poppy seed is taken away. When this container is finally empty, the length of time it took to become empty is called one *Ko*.

There are many expressions in sutras and Buddhist scriptures about *Ko*, but the most familiar example is in our opening sutra. Although it is translated into English as “the Dharma, incomparably profound and

minutely subtle, is hardly met with, even in hundreds of thousands of millions of eons,” this “hundreds of thousands of millions of eons” is none other than *Ko*.

There are, in addition, *Creation Ko*, *Continuation Ko*, *Destruction Ko*, and *Emptiness Ko*. Thus the world is created, continues to exist, is destroyed completely, and becomes empty; and from emptiness to creation again the cycle continues endlessly. In this way Buddhism teaches that the universe is limitless.

In *Shobogenzo*, Dogen Zenji describes the existence of innumerable Buddhas, quoting many sutras and scriptures. His description is indeed concrete and covers all the details.

In Buddhist tradition there is a very solemn ceremony called *Jukai*. For one week all participants bow and recite the names of the Buddhas. This is not a matter of speaking, but a matter of experience and feeling. Once anyone has attended this ceremony, he will be very impressed and will feel religious sentiment. It is indeed an unforgettable experience.

Religion is a matter of knowing by experience and is not a matter of theory. There is a saying: “I am a member of one thousand Buddhas.” It seems to me that this is a most encouraging expression. Even though we are very immature now, someday we can reach the path of the Buddha. “In the future I should be the one who becomes the Buddha.” To tell this to ourselves is the greatest encouragement for our practice.

There is a famous koan in the Blue Rock Collection. Once the Master Baso became sick. The manager monk came to see him and asked, “Teacher, how do you feel today?” Baso replied very painfully, “Sun-faced Buddha; Moon-faced Buddha.” This is the point of the koan, but ordinary people cannot grasp its spirit. Literally, Sun-faced Buddha means the Buddha who has 1,800 years to live, whereas Moon-faced Buddha has only one day and one night to live. Since Zen dialogue utilizes colloquial expressions, I suppose “Sun-faced Buddha; Moon-faced Buddha” was a colloquial expression in China at that time. If I translate “Sun-faced Buddha; Moon-faced Buddha” it might go something like this: Baso said, “Last night I thought I was going to die, but this morning I feel better.”

It is important for us to understand Baso’s wonderful teaching—and his compassion in awakening the manager monk’s Mind’s eye even though he himself was facing death. “Sun-faced Buddha; Moon-faced Buddha”—these words echo even now.

v existence of all buddhas

b

There are two traditional interpretations of the existence of Buddha in Buddhism. One is called *Rishaku*, which means theoretical and logical interpretation; the other is called *Jishaku*, which means actual interpretation. I will explain about Kwannon Bodhisattva using both interpretations.

Most Buddhist scholars say that Kwannon is our compassionate mind but there is no concrete Bodhisattva existing outside us. This statement is only half true. It is a theoretical interpretation of Kwannon and omits the actual interpretation. For every theory there is an underlying fact. Theory and fact must exist simultaneously; if not, either the theory is false or the fact is misunderstood.

Kwannon Bodhisattva is indeed our compassionate mind, and if we cultivate this compassion we can all become Kwannon Bodhisattva. In this sense there are many Kwannons in the world. Kwannon literally means “to hear others’ anxieties intuitively.” A person who saves others and who is full of compassion by virtue of this intuitive faculty is called Kwannon Bodhisattva.

Without exception we all have the sympathetic spirit of Kwannon. Because of our misconception about the ego, however, we have lost this intuitive feeling. Thus, even though others may be terribly depressed, we do not care. At least that is how it is with those who are the most unenlightened. Buddhism encourages us to realize the fact that the concept of ego is an illusion. Then it helps us to awaken our inherent sympathetic spirit. As a means to this end, Buddhism teaches us to do charitable work. This is the theoretical interpretation of Kwannon Bodhisattva.

As long as we have Kwannon’s virtue we cannot deny that the real Kwannon who cultivates this virtue and uses his compassion one-hundred percent really does exist. This is the actual interpretation. Some people cannot accept this interpretation because they think there is only one life; they do not believe in eternal life.

To further clarify this actual interpretation, let me explain Monju Bodhisattva and Fugen Bodhisattva. According to the theoretical interpretation, Monju is our enlightened wisdom and Fugen is our complete compassionate mind which evolves from this enlightened wisdom. This

interpretation is correct. However, to say that no real Bodhisattvas like Monju or Fugen exist is an error. It may not now be possible to prove that two Bodhisattvas besides Shakyamuni Buddha did exist, but neither is it possible to prove that they did not exist. Both Bodhisattvas appear in Buddhist sutras and scriptures quite frequently. It is the natural and correct attitude of a Buddhist to believe in the actual existence of these two Bodhisattvas.

There is one more important Bodhisattva whom we must not forget. His name is Maitreya Bodhisattva (Miroku). He was assigned to be the successor of Shakyamuni Buddha and will appear in this world 5,670,000,000 years after Buddha's death. It is said that he is now in Tosotsu Heaven preaching to heavenly beings and that when Buddhism disappears from this world he will become Buddha.

There are 500 arhats, worthy men, who were Shakyamuni Buddha's direct disciples. Sixteen of these arhats are especially distinguished and are now preaching Buddhism in the places where it is most appropriate to do so. This view of the arhat is the actual interpretation.

Although I am speaking at this time only of the existence of Buddhas and Bodhisattvas, the truth is that in this limitless universe there are numberless beings. Philosophically speaking we can classify these numberless sentient beings in the following manner:

1. naraka-gati, or that of the hells.
2. preta-gati, or hungry ghosts.
3. tiryagyoni-gati, or animals.
4. asura-gati, or malevolent nature spirits.
5. manusya-gati, or human existence.
6. deva-gati, or deva existence.
7. Sravaka, a hearer; a term applied to the personal disciples of the Buddha who seek self-emancipation through a teacher.
8. Pratyeka, individual enlightenment, i.e., one who lives apart from others and attains enlightenment alone, or for himself, in contrast with the altruism of the Bodhisattva principle.
9. Bodhisattva, a Mahayana disciple who has evolved to save all sentient beings.
10. Buddha.

According to the theoretical interpretation, extreme ignorance, strong ego-consciousness, intense suffering, are hell. Complete selflessness, utter contentment, the fullness of light are Buddha. The other categories come in between these two extremes.

Although Buddhism teaches that the world is an enormously big place, its primary concern is to teach complete emancipation. This enormous limitless universe must be swallowed by the self. Were there no universe, no self could exist; were there no self, no universe could exist.

Unfortunately, however, because of modern science and industry, people nowadays tend to believe only that which they can comprehend through their limited knowledge. If the matter is beyond such comprehension they simply say “it is superstition.” Some people say that to bow to the Buddha is idol worship. Once I visited a Zen group meeting where the altar had been replaced by a scroll depicting mountains and water. This was supposed to be a “scientific” approach to Buddhism.

In recent years, in Japan, Buddhism has lost its power as a religion. Now it is considered to be merely a philosophy, or perhaps just a method of discipline. I am convinced, however, that the religious aspect of Buddhism is going to grow in the Western world.

VI mutual attraction between buddhas and sentient beings

a

Because of the developments in science like radio and television, we are accustomed to being able to hear and see things which are happening far away. In a sense, the term “mutual attraction” means this kind of long-distance communication. The Japanese words are *kano doko*, *kano* meaning “to feel,” *o* meaning “to respond,” *doko* meaning “to interact.” “Mutual attraction” is not the exact equivalent, but the implication is correct—that is, that the “interacting” can be invisible and can take place regardless of distance. Now I guess my talk on “mutual attraction” will be easily understood. In this instance, however, emphasis will be on the mutual attraction between all Buddhas and sentient beings.

I have already explained the fact that all of us have Buddha-Nature and that many Buddhas do exist, having completely polished their own

Buddha-Natures. However, if there were no mutual attraction between Buddhas and sentient beings, none of us could ever become Buddhas. Even though we may have the seed of the plant, if there is no sunlight or heat, or water or soil, that seed will never sprout. We have a seed called Buddha-Nature, but only when we have the light of the Buddhas' wisdom and the water of compassion will our seed grow and become a plant.

There was a master in China named Chisha who founded what is called the Tendai philosophy. In one of his writings he described four different kinds of mutual attraction between Buddhas and sentient beings. I will speak about these.

1. *Meiki-Meio* (potential motive and invisible response).

Our enthusiastic desire is inconspicuous, but in our subconscious mind we are already seeking the Buddha's teaching. This is called *meiki* (potential motive). *Meio* refers to the Buddha's teaching which also is inconspicuous but which is continuously guiding us. It is like the seed of the plant which has not received the sun's light or heat directly but which is responding indirectly to the stimulus of the temperature and humidity. Of the four different kinds of mutual attraction, this first one—potential motive and inconspicuous response—is the most fundamental.

Even though many people apparently do not pay much attention to the teaching of Buddhism, quite a few are seeking the Buddha's Way in their subconscious mind. Therefore the Buddha's invisible response to these persons is important.

This invisible response comes mainly from the many monks who do Zazen by themselves in small temples in the mountains, receiving no visitors, but reciting sutras or The Great Vows for all. It also comes from the many great masters who spend their lives in the mountains practicing Zazen, but also devoting themselves to this invisible response. Those people who are not aware of this honorable work and who can see only the surface of the matter are apt to be critical, saying that such action has no social significance and that the attitude of these monks and masters is very egoistic. But this is not true.

2. *Meiki-Keno* (potential motive and visible response)

In this case the Buddha's teaching is visible. For instance, we know that there are many Zazen groups and that lectures on Buddhism are

being given in many places. Although it may seem that most people are not interested in these things, in their subconscious minds they are deeply influenced by these happenings. Therefore, do not be discouraged by the fact that there may be only a few people attending your Zazen meetings. If you think that the meetings are having little effect, you are wrong. Although you may feel that your effort is in vain, you had better be patient, since many people in this world are being influenced by what you are doing, whether they realize it or not. It is like the seed under the soil wanting to grow because the season has come. Although it hasn't yet sprouted, all that is needed are light and water. Therefore, commit yourself to this inconspicuous effort, having strong faith and joy. Your effort will certainly be effective.

3. *Kenki-Meio* (visible motive and potential response)

Our eagerness is showing. We seek a leader for our Zazen but cannot find one. We must not be put off by superficial and temporary conditions, however. As long as we have enthusiasm and continue to study and practice, our understanding of Buddhism will become clearer and deeper, and that will be sufficient cause for having a good leader. No leader will appear by himself. Nothing happens accidentally. But an enthusiastic student will cause the arrival of a good teacher.

This is like the plant which has already sprouted and is eager to grow, but which is not getting direct sunlight. If the plant is able to endure the inconvenience, surely the rain will come and someone will transplant it to a propitious place where there will be an abundance of sunshine.

4. *Kenki-Keno* (visible motive and visible response)

This is the fourth kind of mutual attraction between Buddhas and sentient beings. It is like the sprouted plant which is receiving the light and heat it needs to blossom. The more one's enthusiasm increases, the more the Buddha's guidance will be given and the more one can begin to open his Mind's eye.

I will tell you a true story about mutual attraction between Buddhas and sentient beings. There was a man named Tsuruoka. This gentleman was not interested in Buddhism at first, but one summer he took his child who was sick to Kamakura, one of the Buddhist centers of Japan. While he was there he occasionally visited the famous Zen temple,

Kenchoji, since it had an atmosphere of serenity and neatness. But of course, he did not have any intention of worshipping or doing Zazen.

It would appear on the surface that the temple could offer nothing to this kind of visitor, but we must not overlook “potential motive and invisible response.”

When the summer was over, just before going back to Tokyo, Mr. Tsuruoka visited Sugawara Roshi, the master of Kenchoji. The master did not speak about anything concerning Buddhism or Zen; he simply served Mr. Tsuruoka a cup of tea and gave him a small sutra book. Mr. Tsuruoka was not much impressed with the gift, thinking the gesture to be an ordinary routine of the temple; so naturally, he did not examine its content. When he returned to his home he put the sutra book on his family altar—potential motive and visible response.

A few years passed. One summer day he was taking a nap on a reclining chair near the altar. When he awakened, he took the sutra book down from the altar to read, wishing to pass some time. This particular sutra explained about the great love parents give to their children and how many kindnesses and good actions they thus deserve.

Mr. Tsuruoka was very much surprised to discover that sutras teach such humane and important aspects of life. He immediately sent a messenger to the Buddhist bookstore and bought a commentary on the sutra, which he read very thoroughly. The more he read, the more he realized how profound and influential the sutra was. Although he still was not receiving direct guidance from a master, his having received the sutra book from Sugawara Roshi was invisible guidance; hence—visible motive and invisible response.

Mr. Tsuruoka soon realized, however, that to study by himself not only was insufficient, but also could lead to misunderstanding. So every month he visited the abbot of Zojoji—visible motive and visible response. His cause and effect now well ripened, Mr. Tsuruoka finally started Zazen practice under Sugawara Roshi’s guidance.

I heard this story from Mr. Tsuruoka directly.

Mencius said: “Whatever thing is accomplished, is not accomplished by that day alone; it is accomplished by the causes.” Nothing can be done in one day or night. And needless to say, nothing happens of itself.

VI mutual attraction between buddhas and sentient beings

b

There are many Bodhisattvas—Monju, Fugen, Kwannon, Seishi—and other well-known students. Both directly and indirectly there is mutual attraction between these Bodhisattvas and ourselves, just as there is between ourselves and Buddhas.

Although I am very immature in my practice, I am nonetheless speaking to you about Buddhism. This is neither a coincidence nor a superficial arrangement, but is an actual form of the mutual attraction between you and myself.

Since there is a mutual attraction among Buddhas, Bodhisattvas, and ourselves, we might conclude that even without practice we will still become Buddhas. But the fact is not so. Why is this? The answer is very simple. The mutual attraction is not just between ourselves and Buddhas, but between ourselves and all existences. We respond to devils as well as to Buddhas, to bad friends as well as to good ones, to egotism and immoral movements as well as to movements for peace. A diligent man impresses us, but at the same time a man who enjoys life without having to work hard arouses our jealousy.

These different responses are just like the different wave lengths which are broadcast from radio and television stations. When we tune in the radio, we hear different sounds. When we tune in our receiving set to Buddha's broadcasting, we receive his teaching. When we tune on the devil's channel, we are persuaded to do evil.

When one likes alcohol, he finds himself in the company of drunkards. If one is addicted to gambling, he finds himself associating with other gamblers. Those who like to do *Zazen* are attracted to others who do *Zazen*; and if one studies Buddhism, he will be in touch with many students whose interest is the same.

The attraction exists between human beings and animals as well. Dogs take kindly to a person who likes dogs. The same is true with cats. In fact, since animals' minds are simpler—freer from delusion—they are naturally more sensitive and intuitive. Hence the attraction is more vital.

When a bull enters the slaughterhouse, although he does not understand human language, he senses his fate and protests, even with tears in

his eyes. Buddhists stress vegetarianism because of this mutual empathy between man and beast. Confucius said, "If we hear the scream of an animal being killed, we cannot stand to eat meat."

In the well-known Chinese scripture called *Resshi*, there is the following story. Once there was a boy who went out in the ocean in his boat every day to play with the seagulls. His father noticed this and said to him, "I know that you go out in the ocean to be with the seagulls. Please catch one of them for me tomorrow." The boy replied to his father, "If you want to have one, I will do it for you." But the next day when he went out in his boat as usual, there were no seagulls anywhere about.

We can understand this story only if we believe that the seagulls sensed the boy's intention to capture one of them. It is an example of mutual attraction between bird and man.

There was a famous Zen master named Chisno in Reiju, China. There was no head monk in his monastery. (A head monk takes charge of the training of the other monks and does all the exacting work in the monastery.) The monks asked the master why he would not appoint a head monk, to which the master replied, "My head monk has not yet been born." The monks were perplexed by this strange answer.

A little while later the master said, "My head monk has been born." The monks thought the master's statement unusual, but gave no further notice.

One day, years later, the master said, "My head monk has become a monk and has started his pilgrimage for the training." Again the monks in the monastery did not understand what the master meant.

Then one day the master said to the monks, "Since my head monk is coming today, please clean up his room." He also told them exactly what time the head monk would arrive and said, "You must go to the gate to welcome him."

Half doubting, half believing, the monks cleaned up the room, and when the time came they went to the gate. One traveling monk arrived. (That traveling monk, by the way, was later called Unmon and became one of the most distinguished masters in the history of Zen Buddhism.)

Upon his arrival the traveling monk went to the master's room for formal greetings. The master asked, "When did you decide to come to this monastery?" The traveling monk answered, "A few months ago I heard about you, and I decided I wanted to meet you and practice under your guidance." The master said, "I knew of your coming here even

before you were born. That is why I did not appoint a head monk until today. From now on, although you are a newcomer, you will be the head monk.”

The master then told the following story: “You and I were born in India at the time of Shakyamuni Buddha and became his disciples, working very hard and developing a mysterious power. Naturally, we were very good friends. However, afterwards you were born three times as the emperor; and because you enjoyed your ordinary human life too much, you lost that mysterious power. I, on the other hand, have been continuing my practice constantly, and I still have this mysterious power. That is why I was able to predict that you would come here, even before you were born.”

When my own teacher told us this story for the first time, he said its meaning could not be understood by the limited intellect of the earthworm, that is, by our intellect.

I am pleased that in recent years psychologist have begun to study the subconscious mind and the other mysterious powers which we nowadays call extra-sensory perception. If your understanding is correct with regard to my lecture on eternal life, and if you know precisely what the eighth *shiki* is, you will know that the existence of extra-sensory perception is entirely possible. One of my students, a professor of psychology, is studying this phenomenon, and I am doing my best to help him learn as much as he can about it.

There is mutual attraction in the relationship between teacher and student. If the teacher is strict, many enthusiastic disciples will follow him; if he is lenient, he will attract lukewarm students. Becoming enlightened involves mutual attraction. A teacher can help a student make his mind like white paper. The harder the student strives, the stricter the teacher’s guidance, and eventually the student will become enlightened.

VII not two but one

a

When I talked about misconception of the “self” (ego), I said that man’s essential wisdom is his realizing the fact that the concept of self is merely an illusion. This chapter, like the other chapters, is intended to alert us

to the importance of awakening this essential wisdom so that we can return to our original Buddha-Nature.

Superficially speaking, everything in this world is dualistic and opposed to every other thing. When we see things deeply, however, we realize that everything is dependent upon every other thing, and thus we discover that the fact is “not two but one.”

For example, we speak of big and small, long and short, good and evil, right and wrong; but big is big only when there is small, and if there is no evil no good can exist. The plus exists because of the minus and vice versa. Plus and minus cannot exist separately.

I understand there is a saying that one marriage partner is the other partner’s “better half.” This is a wonderful expression. It is impossible for a husband to exist without a wife; and no wife can exist without a husband.

This applies not only to the relationship of a married couple, but also to the relationship between parents and children, teacher and student, and so forth. If there is no child, one cannot become a parent; without a student, a teacher, although he may have extensive knowledge, cannot teach.

The relationship between subject and object is the same. No matter how beautiful a piece of music may be, if one does not have an ear, one cannot hear it. And although one may have a good ear, if there is no sound, one will hear nothing. The relation between one and all, and the relation between self and the universe, are also the same. If there is no universe, there is no self. This is understandable. What is more difficult to understand is that if there is no self, there is no universe. Yet this also is true.

“One in all; all in one” can be illustrated by means of a fishing net. One square of the meshes of a net can exist only within the framework of the whole net. If one square mesh of the net is taken away, the four squares around it will disappear, although the net itself will not disappear. The net, however, ceases to function as a net, for were one to try to catch fish with it, one would surely fail.

One tiny hole on the surface of a balloon will affect the entire balloon. One broken tooth on the wheel of a watch will render the watch inoperative.

Thus each existence, no matter how small or inconspicuous, has absolute meaning and value. But it has value only in relation to other

existences and only when working harmoniously with them. Apart from the whole each separate existence has no significance at all.

“One in all; all in one” exists both logically and factually. In Buddhism the fact is called “absolute.” Each one of us is absolute, and to express this fact we say, “Above the heavens, below the heavens, I alone am the world-honored One.” When we know ourselves and take responsibility for our actions—when we cooperate with others to create a peaceful society, each one of us is an absolute and honored existence.

Unfortunately, however, ordinary people forget the “all” and see only the “one” that is self. They see only the superficial dualism and do not know the underlying truth that self and others cannot be separated. They fight with each other, and are jealous and cause each other to suffer. What a pity!

From the point of view of dualism, such persons feel that if others receive benefits the self may lose something. Hence in the interest of self-benefit, they do not concern themselves with someone else’s loss. If dualism were truly a reality, there would be two different ways: “my way and his way.” The strong-willed person would very likely become egotistic and self-centered, and for the sake of money might even disregard his relatives. A weak-hearted person, on the other hand, would always be confused and indecisive about his way in life. But any man who knows the Tao sees clearly that self and others are not two. He is totally unconfused, and can live happily and most effectively.

In Japan, during the Tokugawa period, there was a man named Sontoku Ninomiya who became enlightened while reciting the Kwannon Sutra. He once said “self and others are one” using the following illustration: If a man has a vat filled with water and tries to paddle the water to his side, the water will naturally escape to the other side; but if he strokes the water to the other side, it will flow to his own side.

If a person works for others, he will be praised and respected by everyone and will become a great person. If, on the other hand, a person works very self-centeredly, ignoring others, he will never attain real success. His achievements will be limited and short lived. Moreover, people will look upon him with disdain.

We must learn that if we cause some damage or trouble to others, we will sooner or later have to incur some trouble or damage to ourselves as well. We know, however, that there are persons who devote themselves to others and yet do not receive anything good; and that there are other

people who live very egotistically and yet spend their lives happily. To understand this strange phenomena we must know about the idea of previous karma. I spoke about this in the chapter called “Cause and Effect.”

We can see only what is happening right now; the future as well as the past is difficult to see. Suppose we were riding on a train and there was an accident and many people were killed. We would place the entire responsibility for the accident with the railroad company and not with the passengers. This may seem right according to common sense. Suppose, however, there was an earthquake and many people were killed. Who would be held responsible for this? An earthquake occurs suddenly. No one knows which part of the earth will shake nor from where the stones and rocks will tumble. Hence we think that no one is responsible for someone’s dying in an earthquake but that the earthquake itself is the bad cause.

If we think about this more deeply, however, it is not such a simple matter. The relation between all animals on this earth and the earth itself is very profound. We cannot say that when bad things happen it is the fault of the earth and when good things happen it is because of human beings. The earthquake occurred because it had to; it was not intended to inflict any damage on anyone. If someone is killed, it is his own responsibility since he was there at the time. He was not commanded to be there by anyone else. No Supreme Being directed him there. He was there because he wanted to be there or because he had to be there.

The point is this: If one is in a certain place at a certain time and no earthquake occurs, one will not be killed by an earthquake. Likewise, if there is an earthquake but not where one is, one will not be killed. The earthquake and the person each have fifty percent of the responsibility. Nothing can exist on one side alone.

If two persons collide on a dark street, both are responsible for the collision. They both should apologize to each other and depart from each other joyfully. This is human wisdom and it should be so. Unfortunately, nowadays if two bicycle riders collide, both shout, “Foolish!” simultaneously and say, “This is your fault!” They have lost their human wisdom. They are egotistic and can only see one side.

If one loses completely his human wisdom and has in his mind only egotistical, false wisdom, I should say that this is the most shameful form of human existence.

VII not two but one

b

There was a master in China named Yoka Genkaku who composed the beautiful poem, *Sho-do-ka, The Song of Enlightenment*. In this poem there is the following phrase: “Non-Buddhists are clever but have no wisdom.” No matter how clever they are, the people outside Buddhist teaching have not yet opened their prajna (absolute wisdom). They can only see things dualistically and are tricked by surface phenomena.

When we speak of human intellect we can speak of two things—absolute wisdom and relative wisdom. Needless to say, absolute wisdom is the wisdom of enlightenment which enables us to see things as one. Relative wisdom, on the other hand, allows us to see only the surface of existence. Relative wisdom can also be divided into two: right wisdom (which affirms the law of causation) and wrong wisdom (which negates the law of causation).

If a person has only wrong wisdom he will ignore morality and will not respect the law. The person who knows right wisdom, however, understands the law of causation and naturally knows that good effect comes only from good cause. Even though he may not be enlightened, he respects human justice and feels ashamed if his behavior is immoral. Such a person feels joyful when he devotes himself to others.

If a person opens his inner eyes he will realize the fact that self and others are absolutely one. It will not be possible for him to commit a crime. Since everything is the self, it is impossible to steal and it is impossible to be robbed, just as it is impossible to kill and it is impossible to be killed. There is no way to cheat and no way to be cheated.

The enlightened person must not rest, for he has to teach this fact (of not two but one) to the unenlightened. The real life of a Buddha is teaching the Way of Enlightenment—leading people to peaceful, happy life.

Unfortunately, many people do not know this and believe that the struggle for existence is unavoidable. Thus they say “survival of the fittest. The weak must perish.” These people insist that peace, harmony, cooperation, are merely a dream—that reality is a question of to kill or be killed. Most people who have never heard of the teaching of “not two but one” do not have a clear understanding of life.

If one realizes the underlying fact that self and others are not separate, one knows that reality is none other than peace and cooperation. On the other hand, one who sees only surface reality (that is, dualism) will draw the conclusion that the world is nothing but conflict and opposition.

Many beings in the world struggle in order to improve all aspects of life. When there is no struggle life becomes passive, and all one's strength and power is drained. Even in athletic sports, only when the goal is victory over the opposing team can the competitors maintain their vitality and their desire to improve their skill.

Cooperation and harmony does not mean compromise. Fighting is also a form of cooperation, but it must serve the interests of all the participants. It is quite possible for one to have a rival in his work, but competition should help both opponents improve their skill; competition must never cause hatred or be destructive.

If a couple knows that they are one body the husband can devote himself to his wife and the wife can commit herself to her husband, and they can become full of joy with each other. This is the right form of human existence.

The Chinese character for "human" consists of two connecting lines which look like an upside-down small "y". Each line supports the other and each line is dependent on the other; the lines have no validity when separated.

The sun always gives us light and heat. Air and water devote themselves completely to animals and plants. Some plants give their fruits to animals, and the animals spread the seed so that the plants may continue to live. Flowers produce sweet honey and ask the bees to carry their pollen to other flowers. Rice and wheat devote themselves completely to human beings and ask man to protect their existence eternally. These are the beautiful forms of nature.

Buddhism confirms the fact that all things devote themselves to others, wishing to improve in order, finally, to reach Buddhahood.

We recite "may we extend this mind over all beings so that we and the world together may attain maturity in Buddha's wisdom" because we know this reality; in this sutra phrase we are fervently expressing our heart's desire.

The official Rikko, while conversing with Nansen, said: "Priest Cho says, 'Heaven and earth and I are of the same root; all things and I are of one substance.' That is a marvelous expression." Nansen pointed to a

flower in the front garden and called to the official very loudly, saying, “You must not look at this flower as though you were dreaming!”

Let me first explain who the Priest Cho was. He was one of four particularly distinguished disciples of Rajo Sanzo in China. He was honored not only as a Buddhist, but also as a very talented writer. The emperor in reign asked Priest Cho to become a layman and act as his secretary. Priest Cho refused, and at this disobedience the emperor became very angry.

At that time Priest Cho was writing his famous book, *Hozoron*. He needed a week to finish, and although the emperor wanted to execute him immediately, Priest Cho asked if the execution might be postponed so that he could finish the book. The emperor granted the delay. Then at the end of the week, Priest Cho was decapitated. He left his famous verse behind:

No master have the four elements,
Unreal are the five skandhas.
When my head meets the white blade,
‘Twill be but slicing the spring wind.

The famous phrase “heaven and earth and I are of the same root; all things and I are of one substance” is found in the book *Hozoron*. It is not difficult to understand this concept intellectually, but it must not remain a concept; it must become part of one’s own life. Nansen scolded the official Rikko, telling him that he must gain the experience for himself.

Most of you, I guess, understand that self and others are not two. Like official Rikko, however, you may simply think that it is a wonderful idea, having not yet truly experienced it.

The significance of Zen practice is the realization of “not two but one” and in the actualization of it. May I repeat? Zazen is the way of realization as well as the way of actualization. And of course, it is tranquillization *per se*.

An elderly lady named Osatsu was practicing Zazen under the guidance of the famous Hakuin. One time she sat for an entire night, and in the early morning when she heard the sound of the rooster she composed the following poem:

The fields, mountains, man, grasses, and trees
Are nothing but the voice of the rooster;
Which remains and says,
“I hear the voice”?

This is the wonderful realization of Oneness, and we call it *kensho*. Then we know that everything is different and yet the same. We know what Buddha-Nature is.

VIII road to buddhahood

a

We have reached the final chapter of the Eight Beliefs. The first was Buddha-Nature; now we will study the road to buddhahood.

The essential teaching of Shakyamuni Buddha is that all beings are able to become Buddha since all beings have Buddha-Nature. Whether we know it or not, instinctively we have taken the essential vow—that is, to become Buddha. This is the natural function of Buddha-Nature—just as the vow of the peach seed is to become a peach tree, or the vow of the egg is to become a chicken.

Although there are many philosophical systems in Buddhism, and although there are many descriptions of how to become Buddha, let me explain what are called the *Rokusoku*, or six stages of a Bodhisattva's development as defined in the Tendai tradition.

1. *Risoku Buddha* (realization that all beings are Buddha-Nature)

All sentient beings are primarily Buddha. In short, all beings are Buddha-Nature itself, whether it is known or not.

2. *Myojisoku Buddha* (those who hear and believe are in the Buddha-Law and are potentially Buddha)

If one believes that he is primarily Buddha, and if one reads books or receives guidance from a Buddhist leader, even though his belief may be theoretical or conceptual he nonetheless belongs in this category. Like you who are listening to my lecture and have begun to realize that you are fundamentally Buddha—it is natural for you to walk the road to Buddhahood. You are already becoming Myojisoku Buddha.

3. *Kangyosoku Buddha* (advance beyond terminology to Zazen practice, or study and accordant action)

This does not mean simply a person who obtains conceptual knowledge of Buddha-Nature, but rather one who actually starts real Buddhist

practice such as Zazen, and who identifies his everyday life with Buddhist thought. In addition, it means one who enjoys the teaching of the Buddha, one who recites sutras, preaches the Dharma to others according to his power, and acts always as a Bodhisattva having a vow. Such a person is *Kangyosoku Buddha*.

By the way, speaking of vows, the four Great Vows for All are an important part of the life of a Buddhist:

“All beings, however limitless, I vow to save;
Fantasy and delusion, however endless, I vow to cut off;
Dharma teachings, however immeasurable, I vow to master;
Buddha’s Way, however lofty, I vow to attain.”

There are also other practices which may be thought of as vows. The Six Paramitas are an example:

To offer charity
To keep precepts
To have endurance
To be diligent
To do Zazen
To use wisdom.

If one is able to practice these things his life is the life of *Kangyosoku Buddha*.

4. *Sojisoku Buddha* (semblance stage, or approximation of perfection in purity)

By intense Zazen practice one may conquer his delusions and make his mind and body pure. His state of mind may, in fact, resemble satori. As *Sojisoku Buddha* he still has not completely broken through his fundamental delusion, however. The real light of prajna has not yet emerged. This level is somewhat comparable to what is nowadays called shallow *kensho*.

5. *Bunshinsoku Buddha* (discrimination of truth and its progressive experiential proof)

At this point, one has broken through a delusion and has opened his satori eye. This stage has very many levels. Nowadays those we call the

best Zen masters belong to the lower level of this stage. If one becomes a successor to a lenient master and leads a life which is not as pure as it ought to be, although he may be considered a master, he does not even belong in this category.

It is indeed difficult to become Buddha as an ordinary man; yet we try to be master of the whole universe. It is natural for us to encounter many difficulties in our practice.

6. *Kugyosoku Buddha* (perfect enlightenment)

In the history of this world there existed only one *Kugyosoku Buddha* and that was Shakyamuni Buddha. As I have said before, there are many *Kugyosoku Buddhas* existing in the universe, but Shakyamuni Buddha was the only one to appear in this world.

When one reads books or listens to lectures about Buddhism, one automatically advances from *Risoku Buddha* to *Myojisoku Buddha*. But to become *Kangyosoku Buddha*, one must be initiated. One must take refuge in the Three Treasures: Buddha, Dharma, Sangha. One must renounce the egotistic life which one has been accumulating from endless past, and one must commit oneself to others.

There is a traditional initiation ceremony called Sange: the spitting out of all ones accumulated evil actions. Also, when one is initiated by a teacher one must keep these ten precepts:

- Do not destroy life
- Do not steal
- Do not commit adultery
- Do not lie
- Do not take any intoxicating liquor
- Do not preach too much
- Do not praise oneself and blame others
- Do not be stingy in spreading the Dharma
- Do not become angry
- Do not abuse the Three Treasures.

It is also part of the etiquette of a disciple of Buddhism to know and practice the following:

“Do not commit any evil deeds
But do only that which is good;
Purify your own mind;
This is the teaching of Buddha.”

There are several more important precepts which have to be kept and teachings which have to be followed, but the most fundamental are the Great Vows for All and the Six Paramitas. More concretely, a Buddhist disciple must continue his practice and choose one or two important vows for himself which he must work on very diligently. For example, to do *Zazen* thirty minutes every day, to determine to lead another person to Buddhism, to help someone—materially or otherwise—who has lots of problems—these are a few relatively easy vows which one can take.

Anyone who takes vows and practices them may be considered *Kangyosoku Buddha*. There is a book called *Shushogi* which tells how to practice Buddhism and how to become a real Buddhist disciple. This book explains all the practical matters.

My teacher, Harada Roshi, devoted his life to lecturing on the *Shushogi* and on *Zazen* in order to help others. If you read *Shushogi* you will undoubtedly discover the essential teachings of Buddhism, and you will also acquire a deep and strong faith which will become the backbone of your life.

VIII road to buddhahood

b

There are two roads to Buddhahood. One is called sudden enlightenment and the other is called gradual enlightenment. A person must follow the way most suited to himself. Those who have deep dharma karma are easily able to listen to the teaching with a “white paper” attitude and can reject all the theories most ordinary people hold. It is not a matter of being clever or dull, but a matter of karma.

There are two different kinds of delusions—the delusion of reason and the delusion of fact. The delusion of reason can be crushed suddenly but the delusion of fact must be broken gradually. From ancient times it has been said that breaking the delusion of reason is like breaking a

stone. However difficult, when the time comes it can be shattered at once. On the contrary, breaking the delusion of fact is like cutting off the fibre of the lotus root. Although the fibre appears already severed it actually is not, hence it has to be cut away little by little.

Although we say simply the “delusion of reason,” there are actually eighty-eight different kinds of delusions. Therefore we need to be enlightened many times. Very rarely does a person believe the most profound enlightenment immediately. If he does he must have a deep dharma karma indeed.

To tell you the truth, anyone who really commits himself to practice can, within twenty or thirty years, see his own inner truth and correct his misunderstanding. Such a person will have the same eyes which Shakyamuni Buddha and Bodhidharma had. Although this is a life’s work, it can be accomplished in one lifetime.

I am speaking only of the eye of enlightenment. Actualization naturally requires more effort. There is a very big difference between *Risoku Buddha* (realization that all beings are Buddha-Nature) and *Kugyosoku Buddha* (perfect enlightenment). To clarify the difference, let me tell you the following story.

Tokusan, who lived in northwestern China during the Tong dynasty, was an authority on Buddhist philosophy, particularly the Diamond Sutra. According to Buddhist philosophy, it takes a tremendous number of years for ordinary people to become Buddha. In Zen, however, it is said that by attaining satori, one can immediately become Buddha. Tokusan heard this and became very angry, thinking, “If Zen really says this it cannot be authentic Buddhism. It must be a fake Buddhism.” So he decided to go to the south of China to correct what he believed to be fallacious teaching.

Full of confidence and carrying commentary books on the Diamond Sutra, Tokusan left his country. When he came to Reishu he was hungry and found a teahouse by the street where an elderly woman was serving rice cakes. This elderly woman was not an ordinary person, having a certain degree of the eye of enlightenment. As soon as she saw Tokusan, she felt he must be a priest who possessed only theoretical knowledge. She said, “May I ask you a question? You have so many books. What are they?” Tokusan said, “These are commentary books on the Diamond Sutra.” “Is that so?” she said. “In the Diamond Sutra there is a phrase, ‘Thoughts of the past are beyond grasp; the thought of the present is

beyond grasp; and thoughts of the future are beyond grasp.' You said you wanted to have rice cakes. By what thought did you say so?" Tokusan couldn't utter even a word.

Because he was an honest man, Tokusan did not try to trick the elderly woman. Humbly he asked her if there were a Zen teacher nearby. "About four miles from here there is a master named Ryutan," the elderly woman answered. Tokusan went there immediately.

He met with master Ryutan from early afternoon until midnight. They had a dharma argument and finally Tokusan was defeated. The master said, "It is very late. Why don't you go back to your room and retire?" Tokusan went out but it was very dark. He told this to the master and the master handed him a candle. As soon as Tokusan took the candle in his hand the light was blown out. At that moment Tokusan was enlightened.

The master Ryutan quietly asked, "What do you understand?" Tokusan said, "From now on I will never doubt that we are able to become Buddha by enlightenment."

The next day Ryutan told the monks in the monastery about Tokusan's enlightenment. In front of the temple, Tokusan burned all the books which he had brought from his home, stating, "However lofty the teachings are, in comparison with this enlightenment they are as a single hair to the great sky. However profound the complicated knowledge of this world, compared to this enlightenment it is as one drop of water to the great ocean." Thus with a clearly enlightened mind and no books to burden him, Tokusan left the Ryutan monastery.

Now let us review what we have learned from the very beginning of these lectures. In spite of the fact that we are primarily Buddha, because of our illusion we think that our body is about five feet high and our life span less than one hundred years. Yet we are continually trying to enlarge ourselves. There are so many contradictions between our desire and the fact that we have to suffer. Buddhism is a way to correct our misunderstanding. By teaching us that we and heaven and earth are the same body, it gives us stability and contentment.

I told you about the existence of all Buddhas and about the mutual attraction between Buddhas and ourselves. I stressed the fact that according to the law of cause and effect, all of us, without exception, can become Buddha. And I talked to you about the road to buddhahood. All of this is about Buddhism, but all is no other than the explanation of

our essential Buddha-Nature; and it is this Buddha-Nature which gives us perfect satisfaction and happiness, and which reveals to us our true value and the meaning of our existence.

Dogen Zenji said, “To learn Buddhism is to learn self; to learn self is to forget the self; to forget the self is to become one with all existence; and to become one with all existence is to be thoroughly enlightened.”

Buddhism is not merely a religion; it is a truly marvelous philosophy with the most profound ethics. Yet it is of course, the greatest religion. It is possible to understand Buddhism by reason, but when we learn it through our emotion—that is when it gives us full satisfaction—Buddhism gives us endless precise content through which we ordinary human beings can become better persons and thereby create a better society and, eventually, a more harmonious and peaceful world.