

ASIAN PSYCHOLOGY AND CULTURE

Suzuki, Shunryu (1970). *Zen Mind, Beginner's Mind*. Weatherhill: New York and Tokyo.

The true purpose of Zen is to see things as they are, to observe things as they are, and to let everything go as it goes. This is to put everything under control in its widest sense.

Our way is not to sit to acquire something; it is to express our true nature. To cook is not just to prepare food for someone or for yourself; it is to express your sincerity. The Bodhisattva's way is in each moment to express his nature and his sincerity.

We are always running on the same track. And there is no beginning or end to the track. There is no starting point nor goal, nothing to attain. Just to run on the track is our way. This is the nature of our Zen practice.

The activity of big mind is to amplify itself through various experiences. In one sense our experiences coming one by one are always fresh and new, but in another sense they are nothing but a continuous unfolding of the one big mind. With big mind we accept each of our experiences as if recognizing the face we see in the mirror as our own. Because we enjoy all aspects of life as an unfolding of big mind, we do not care for any excessive joy. So we have imperturbable composure.

Whatever we do is the expression of our true nature. As long as we are alive, we are always doing something. But as long as you think, "I am doing this," or "I have to do this," or "I must attain something special," you are actually not doing anything.

When there is no gaining idea in what you do, then you do something. In zazen what you are doing is not for the sake of anything. You may feel as if you are doing something special, but actually it is only the expression of your true nature; it is the activity which appeases your inmost desire. But as long as you think you are practicing zazen for the sake of something, that is not true practice.

If you continue this simple practice every day you will obtain a wonderful power. Before you attain it, it is something wonderful, but after you obtain it, it is nothing special. It is just you yourself, nothing special. As a Chinese poem says, "I went and I returned. It

was nothing special Rozan famous for its misty mountains; Sekko for its water.” People think it must be wonderful to see the famous range of mountains covered by mists, and the water said to cover all the earth. But if you go there you will just see water and mountains. Nothing special.

It is a kind of mystery that for people who have no experience of enlightenment, enlightenment is something wonderful. But if they attain it, it is nothing. But yet it is not nothing. Do you understand?

In order not to leave any traces, when you do something, you should do it with your whole body and mind; you should be concentrated on what you do. You should do it completely, like a good bonfire. You should burn yourself completely. You should not be a smoky fire. You should burn yourself completely.

If you do not burn yourself completely, a trace of yourself will be left in what you do. **Zen activity is activity which is completely burned out, within nothing remaining but ashes. This is the goal of our practice. That is what Dogen meant when he said, “Ashes do not come back to firewood.” Ash is ash. Ash should be completely ash.**

75—If you limit your activity to what you are doing just now, in this moment, then you can express fully your true nature, which is the universal Buddha nature. This is our way.

When we practice zazen we limit our activity to the smallest extent. Just keeping the right posture and being concentrated on sitting is how we express the universal nature. Then we become Buddha, and we express Buddha nature. So instead of having some object of worship, we just concentrate on the activity which we do in each moment.

102—When you become attached to a temporal expression of your true nature, it is necessary to talk about Buddhism, or else you will think the temporal expression is it. But this particular expression of it is not it. And yet at the same time it *is* it! For a while this is it; for the smallest

ASIAN PSYCHOLOGY AND CULTURE

particle of time, this is it. But it is not always so: the very next instant it is not so, thus this is not it.

102—Our teaching is just to live, always in reality, in its exact sense. To make our effort, moment after moment, is our way. In an exact sense, the only thing we actually can study in our life is that on which we are working in each moment.

102—When you believe in your way, enlightenment is there. But when you cannot believe in the meaning of the practice which you are doing in this moment, you cannot do anything. You are just wandering around with the goal with your monkey mind.

102—Because each existence is in constant change, there is no abiding self. In fact, the self-nature of each existence is nothing but change itself, the self-nature of each existence.

57—Building character is like making break—you have to mix it little by little, step by step, and moderate temperature is needed. You know yourself quite well, and you know how much temperature you need. You know exactly what you need. But if you get too excited, you will forget how much temperature is good for you, and you will lose your own way.

Buddha said the same thing about the good ox driver. The driver knows how much load the ox can carry, and he keeps the ox from being overloaded. You know your way and state of mind. **Do not carry too much! Buddha also said that building character is like building a dam. You should be very careful in making the bank. If you try to do it all at once, water will lead from it. Make the bank carefully and you will end up with a fine dam for the reservoir.**

Right Effort: Pride is extra. Right effort is to get rid of something extra. From achievement to non-achievement means to be rid of the unnecessary and bad results of effort. If you do something in the spirit of non-achievement, there is a good quality in it. So just to do something without any particular effort is enough. When you make some special effort to achieve something, some excessive quality, some extra element is involved in it.

You should get rid of excessive things. Pride is extra. What you do is good, but something more is added to it. So you should get rid of that something which is extra. This point is very, very important, but usually we are not subtle enough to realize it, and we go in the wrong direction.

ASIAN PSYCHOLOGY AND CULTURE

By purity we just mean things as they are. When something is added, that is impure. When something becomes dualistic, that is not pure. If you think you will get something from practicing zazen, already you are involved in impure practice.

If enlightenment comes, it just comes. We should not attach to the attainment. The true quality of zazen is always there, even if you are not aware of it, so forget all about what you think you may have gained from it. Just do it. The quality of zazen will express itself; then you will have it.

If we are looking at something, it can vanish from our sight, but if we do not try to see it, that something cannot vanish. Because you are watching it, it can disappear, but if no one is watching, how is it possible for anything to disappear? If someone is watching you, you can escape from him, but if no one is watching, you cannot escape from yourself.

65—To give is non-attachment, that is, just not to attach to anything is to give...Moment after moment we are creating something, and this is the joy of our life.

We have a saying, “Dana Prajna paramita.” “Dana” means to give, “Prajna” is wisdom, and “paramita” means to cross over, or to reach the other shore. Our life can be seen as a crossing of a river. The goal of our life’s effort is to reach the other shore, Nirvana. “Prajna paramita,” the true wisdom of life, is that in each step of the way, the other shore is actually reached. To reach the other shore with each step of the crossing is the way of true living.

Dogen-zenji said, “To give is non-attachment.” That is, just not to attach to anything is to give. It does not matter what is given. To give a penny or a piece of a leaf is “dana Prajna paramita”; to give one line, or even one word of teaching is “dana Prajna paramita.” If given in the spirit of non-attachment, the material offering and the teaching offering have the same value.

With the right spirit, all that we do, all that we create is “dana Prajna paramita.” To produce something, to participate in human activity is also ‘dana Prajna paramita.’ To provide a ferryboat for people, or to make a bridge for people is ‘dana Prajna paramita.’ Actually, to give one line of the teaching may be to make a ferryboat for someone!

Not to be attached to something is to be aware of its absolute value.

When we sit in the cross-legged posture, we resume our fundamental activity of creation. There are perhaps three kinds of creation. The first is to be aware of ourselves after we finish zazen. When we sit we are nothing, we do not even realize what we are; we just sit. But when we stand up, we are there! That is the first step in creation. When you are there, everything else is there; everything is created at

ASIAN PSYCHOLOGY AND CULTURE

once. When we emerge from nothing, when everything emerges from nothing, we see it all as a fresh new creation. This is non attachment.

The second kind of creation is when you act, or produce or prepare something like food or tea. The third kind of creation is to create something within yourself, such as education, or culture, or art, or some system for our society. So there are three kinds of creation. But if you forget the first, the most important one, the other two will be like children who have lost their parents; their creation will mean nothing.

Usually everyone forgets about zazen. Everyone forgets about God. They work very hard at the second and third kinds of creation, but God does not help the activity. How is it possible for Him to help when he does not realize who He is? That is why we have so many problems in this world. When we forget the fundamental source of our creating, we are like children who do not know what to do when they lose their parents.

And we should forget, day by day, what we have done; this is true non-attachment. And we should do something new.

Because your attainment is always ahead, you will always be sacrificing yourself now for some ideal in the future. You end up with nothing.

Our Soto way puts an emphasis on *shikan taza*, or “just sitting.” When we practice zazen we just practice it, and whether we find joy in our practice or not we just do it.

When a cart does not go, which do you whip, the cart or the horse?”
Whatever you do, that is zazen.

What is true zazen? When you become you! When you are you, then no matter what you do, that is zazen.

Because you lose yourself, your problem will be a problem for you. If you do not lose yourself, then even though you have difficulty, there is actually no problem whatsoever. You just sit in the midst of the problem; when you are a part of the problem, or when the problem is a part of you, there *is* no problem, because you are the problem itself. The problem is you yourself. If this is so, there is no problem.

The essence of heaven and earth is the same as the essence of self. Look down where you stand.

Seeking a Buddha outside, rushing to get away from this world and find some ideal world somewhere else—it is like being in the water but forgetting the fact and moving about looking for water. Being in the Buddha, surrounded by the Buddha, yet raising our voice and calling out for the Buddha!

ASIAN PSYCHOLOGY AND CULTURE

The living path to Buddhahood and liberation is to take the stand ever on the self, always and everywhere to be the lord and master, to concentrate on where one stands and bring to life what is before one.

Outside the mind there is no place to go. It is the mind itself that is the first object of our quest, and also the last.

The practice of becoming when we are in trouble is to become the trouble itself. When you are in Rome, as the saying goes, do as the Romans. We are always thinking about ways to avoid problems or about how to solve problems by taking some action, instead of by becoming. What we can learn through zazen is the practice of becoming, becoming, becoming, more and more become, become! When you become a teacher, do what teachers do! When you become a student, do what students do!

In the ordinary sense of becoming, we think in terms of becoming the President of the United States. In this case, in order to become, the President has to be nominated and elected. Only by relying on many other people's efforts can he become President.

This is not what I am talking about. Become—by your own nomination, by your own commitment. And that practice will become like our own flesh and blood and will be with us for the rest of our lives, wherever we go, whatever we do. So zazen teaches us to become Mu, become the koan, become, become, become.....! No transformations! Just become!

There is no Buddhahood besides your ordinary mind.

Instead of gathering knowledge, you should clear your mind. If your mind is clear, true knowledge is already yours. When you listen to our teaching with a pure, clear mind, you can accept it as if you were hearing something which you already knew. This is called emptiness, or omnipotent self, or knowing everything. When you know everything, you are like a dark sky.

Sometimes a flashing will come through the dark sky. After it passes, you forget all about it, and there is nothing left but the dark sky. The sky is never surprised when all of a sudden a thunderbolt breaks through. And when the lightning does flash, a wonderful sight may be seen. When we have emptiness we are always prepared for watching the flashing.

So you should accept knowledge as if you were hearing something you already knew. But this does not mean to receive various pieces of information merely as an echo of your own opinions. It means that you should not be surprised at whatever you see or hear. If you receive things just as an echo of yourself, you do not really see them, you do not fully accept them as they are. If you are ready to

ASIAN PSYCHOLOGY AND CULTURE

accept things as they are, you will receive them as old friends, even though you appreciate them with new feeling.

If you want to appreciate something fully, you should forget yourself. You should accept it like lightning flashing in the utter darkness of the sky.

When sticking attachment arises in Buddhahood, that is the world; when in the world sticking attachment is left off, that is Buddhahood.”

The main thing in realizing Buddhahood and obtaining liberation is to leave our passionate attachments.

Just once throw away everything. Love and hate, picking and choosing, throw them all away—the no-difficulty-of-the-Way as well—and have done with the clear running water. He who thus renounces all and renounces attachment to all, can truly possess all.

Look at our mind of possessions these days, the possessors of rank, of fame, yes and even of scholarship. What do they do? The scholar is trapped by scholarship, the man or rank and fame by rank and fame, and the rich man by his wealth. They are afflicted by it; they have to labor for it; and instead of being able to use it they are burdened by it. Because of their sticking attachment they can never throw it away. They are no more than keepers for it. To leave all, to throw away all, is the real way to pick up all and possess all.

Without accepting the fact that everything changes, we cannot find perfect composure. But unfortunately, although it is true, it is difficult for us to accept it. Because we cannot accept the truth of transiency, we suffer. So the cause of suffering is our non-acceptance of this truth.

The teaching of the cause of suffering and the teaching that everything changes are thus two sides of one coin. But subjectively, transiency is the cause of our suffering. Objectively this teaching is simply the basic truth that everything changes. Dogen-zenji said, “Teaching which does not sound as if it is forcing something on your is not true teaching.”

The teaching itself is true, and in itself does not force anything upon us, but because of our human tendency we receive the teaching as if something was being forced on us. But whether we feel good or bad about it, this truth exists. If nothing exists, this true does not exist.

We do not seek for something besides ourselves. We should find the truth in this world, through our difficulties, through our suffering. This is the basic teaching of Buddhism. Pleasure is not different from difficulty. Good is not different from bad. Bad is good; good is bad. They are two sides of one coin.

ASIAN PSYCHOLOGY AND CULTURE

So to find pleasure in suffering is the only way to accept the truth of transiency. Without realizing how to accept this truth you cannot live in this world. Even though you try to escape from it, your effort will be in vain. If you think there is some other way to accept the eternal truth that everything changes, that is your delusion. This is the basic teaching of how to live in this world. Whatever you may feel about it, you have to accept it. You have to make this kind of effort.

If you are suffering, you will have some pleasure in the teaching that everything changes. When you are in trouble, it is quite easy to accept the teaching. So why not accept it at other times. It is the same thing.

Zazen is like dirt which you cannot detect. It is like the human dirt which attaches itself to your body. In Kyoto I have a good friend who sells incense. He continually smells if incense, but the scent has so penetrated into his body that he himself cannot smell it. In the same way, zazen also penetrates into your body and mind.

The body is a house, and it must have a master. It is the master of the house who is known as the original face. Experiencing heat and cold, or feeling a lack, or having desires—these are all delusive thoughts and do not refer to the true mastery of the house. These delusive thoughts are something added.

They are things which vanish with each breath. To be dragged along by them is to fall into hell. By going deeper and deeper into zazen, find the source of the thoughts. A thought is something without any form or body, but owing to the conviction of those thoughts remaining even after death, man falls into hell with its many pains.

Every time a thought arises, throw it away. Just devote yourself to sweeping away the thoughts. Sweeping away thoughts means performing zazen. When thought is put down, the original face appears. The thoughts are like clouds; when the clouds have cleared, the moon appears. That moon of eternal truth is the original face.

The heart itself is verily the Buddha. What is called “seeing one’s nature” means to realize the heart Buddha.

The pure heart is the pure heart of our own nature, our natural heart which is not a whit different from the Buddha heart. Opposed to this is the impure heart which gives us no peace from morning till night, the egoistic heart of illusions, the passion-ridden heart.

Fundamentally our true heart, our true nature, is pure and infinite, like the moon clear in the blue sky. At some distant time past our knowing, it was tainted by passion and became the impure heart, something not our real self but which

ASIAN PSYCHOLOGY AND CULTURE

came afterwards. That which came afterward becomes predominant and sets at naught the true heart, just as the concubine sets at naught the real wife.

We entrust ourselves to the operations of the deluded and passion-ridden heart, so that the real master, the Buddha heart, cannot even show its face.

The wicked nature of the impure heart is compared to a venomous serpent or a wild beast. It bears off the life which should develop into the Buddha who is our true nature. In our breast is coiled the poisonous serpent which is always breathing out the fire of the three poisons, bringing on us agonies and sufferings.

The Zen method is to sit in the meditation posture and swell with our breath and vitality what is called the “field of the elixir” (the abdomen below the navel). In this way the whole frame is invigorated. Now the delusions which are the impure heart come up without ceasing.

We should make these fancies, coming one after another, the koan (theme) of our meditation. What, after all, is this thought? Where did it come from? We penetrate with the spear-point of our meditation to the source of the successive fancies.

In the end appears the glory of the true self, where the practice *is* the realization. This is called seeing one’s true face, and it is said that nine out of ten people can achieve I (in this very life). The practice as described has nothing artificial about it, but its easiness is deceptive, and the old masters all had a hard time with it. “After winning a hundred battles, now I grow old in the great peace,” or “How many times for your sake do I enter the green dragon’s cave where the jewel is hidden!”

Buddhism is not about anything strange to us. Its essence is simple; the perfect realization of man’s “true face.” The great Hideyoshi once asked Kuroda Josue: “What is the commonest thing in the world?” He replied: “A man.” Then he asked him: “What is the rarest thing in the world?” He replied again: “A man.” The old verse says:

Many men, but not a man among them.

O man, be a man! O man, make yourself a man!

The reader is already familiar with the concept of “original realization,” but an example will illustrate this difficult point. A nervous man, addicted to ghost stories, reads a well-written one late at night. He gets the notion that the ghost he has been reading about is in the house. He barricades the door; he trembles with fear and is in danger of a heart attack. In a way he knows it is all illusion, only something he has been reading about—this is his “original realization,” which is never quite lost.

ASIAN PSYCHOLOGY AND CULTURE

But in practice he accepts the ghost, and this affects him physically. Every creak of the furniture and gust of wind reinforces his belief in the ghost. From the point of view of original realizations there is nothing which needs to be done, as the ghost has no existence; from the point of view of practical reality, to free himself from the fear which oppresses him, he must adopt a discipline of restraining his mind from thoughts based on acceptance of the ghost's existence, and return to his original realization.

But if he should regard this regimen as a sort of spell to kill the ghost, he is again asserting its existence and obscuring original realization. Even to say that the object of the practice is to free him from the ghost is not to the point; there never has been a ghost. The furniture creaks and the wind blows, but the house is ever at peace.

The usual translation of the Japanese word *nin* is "patience," but perhaps "constancy" is a better word. You must force yourself to be patient, but in constancy there is no particular effort involved—there is only the unchanging ability to accept things as they are. For people who have no idea of emptiness, this ability may appear to be patience, but patience can actually be non-acceptance.

People who know, even if only intuitively, the state of emptiness always have the possibility of accepting things as they are. They can appreciate everything. In everything they do, even though it may be very difficult, they will always be able to dissolve their problems by constancy.

Nin is our way of continuous practice. We should always live in the dark empty sky. The sky is always the key. Even though clouds and lightning come, the sky is not disturbed. Even if the flashing of enlightenment comes, our practice forgets all about it. Then it is ready for another enlightenment. It is necessary for us to have enlightenments one after another, if possible, moment and moment. This is what is called enlightenment before you attain it and after you attain it.

THE QUALITY OF BEING: When you do something, if you fix your mind on the activity with some confidence, the quality of your state of mind is the activity itself. When you are concentrated on the quality of your being, you are prepared for the activity.

In calmness there should be activity; in activity there should be calmness. Actually, they are the same thing; to say "calmness" or to say "activity" is just to express two different interpretations of one fact. This harmony is the quality of being. But the quality of being is also nothing but its speedy activity.

Everything is in flowing change. Nothing exists but momentarily in its present form and color. One thing flows into another and cannot be grasped.

ASIAN PSYCHOLOGY AND CULTURE

Before the rain stops we hear a bird. Even under the heavy snow we seen snowdrops and some new growth. In the East I saw rhubarb already.

To find the meaning of our effort is to find the original source of our effort. We should not be concerned about the result of our effort before we know its origin. If the origin is not clear and pure, our effort will not be pure, and its result will not satisfy us. When we resume our original nature and incessantly make our effort from this base, we will appreciate the result of our effort moment after moment, day after day, year after year.

Zazen practice is the practice in which we resume our pure way of life, beyond any gaining idea, and beyond fame and profit.

The big mind in which we must have confidence is not something which you can experience objectively. It is something which is always with you, always on your side. Your eyes are on your side, for you cannot see your eyes, and your eyes cannot see themselves. Eyes only see things outside, objective things. If you reflect on yourself, that self is not your true self anymore.

Your true mind is always with whatever you see. Although you do not know your own mind, it is there—at the very moment you see something, it is there. This is very interesting. Your mind is always with the things you observe. So you see, this mind is at the same time everything.

In order to see a fish you must watch the water. Actually when you see water you see the true fish. Before you see Buddha nature you watch your mind. When you see the water there is true nature. True nature is watching water. When you say, “My zazen is very poor,” here you have true nature, but foolishly you do not realize it. You ignore it on purpose.

There is immense importance in the “I” with which you watch your mind. That I is not the “big I”; it is the “I” which is incessantly active, always swimming, always flying through the vast airs with wings. By wings I mean thought and activity. The fast sky is home, my home. There is no bird or air. When the fish swims, water and fish are the fish. There is nothing but fish. Do you understand?

We are pointing out mind which is always on this side, which is true mind. Enlightenment experience is to figure out, to understand, to realize this mind which is always with us and which we cannot see.

Suppose there is a person. Fundamentally whether he is in a good mood or not, that person is still that person and cannot be otherwise. But he can become a monk, or a doctor, or a fireman. He can become anything—a better person, a more understanding person, a more sympathetic person.

ASIAN PSYCHOLOGY AND CULTURE

So existentially he can become endlessly better, but fundamentally he is involved...Fundamentally we are Buddha and cannot be otherwise.

So, fundamentally speaking, we cannot become more Buddha, but existentially speaking we can become a better Buddha. This is the distinction between *honbun* and *shusho*, that is, fundamental reality and existential or phenomenological reality.

Fundamentally speaking, birth is just a phenomenon, to get old is still another phenomenon, to get sick is a phenomenon and to die is a phenomenon. Just as I strike this lectern with my stick over and over again, fundamentally speaking, our lives are just a continuation of phenomenon, phenomenon, phenomenon.

Existentially speaking, however, we have preferences. We have all kinds of adjectives, such as beautiful, happy, great, fantastic, wonderful, etc., to describe our reactions. And all of these adjectives are derived from our existential point of view.

“Happy Birthday!” Birthdays are happy! That is quite right. There are these two aspects. The “happy” is from the existential point of view and “birth” is a fundamental phenomenon. Thus they are, of course, inseparable. Most of our confusion comes because we consider the fundamental level (in Japanese *honbun*) and the existential level (in Japanese *shusho*) to be the same.

We should see very plainly, the plain fact, the factuality that *honbun* and *shusho*, although they always appear simultaneously, must be distinguished from each other. If we had no emotions, it would be easy for us to understand everything. But then life would be tasteless. Nevertheless it is these very emotions of our that confuse us.

Metaphorically, *honbun* and *shusho* may be explained like this: fundamentally, the ocean is the ocean, but phenomenologically, there are many waves. Some of these waves are turbulent and some are just ripples. Fundamentally, we are like the Pacific Ocean. The Pacific Ocean cannot be more Pacific. All the same, the condition of our waves changes. They are sometimes polluted, sometimes stormy and sometimes peaceful. But these two, ocean and wave—fundamental and existential—can never, not even for one second, be separated from each other.

The fact is that everything is all right as it is, and, in fact, cannot be otherwise—this is *Namu Dai Bosa*.

Remember that conditions are constantly changing, depending on your physical, mental, and emotional states. Don't be deluded by conditions. “Today my *Namu Dai Bosa* is bad.” “Today my *Namu Dai Bosa* is good.” This is fine as a

ASIAN PSYCHOLOGY AND CULTURE

report of condition, but don't forget that *Namu Dai Bosa* is always all right, regardless of the condition. It is always as it is!

The inseparability and, at the same time, the clear distinctiveness of honbun and shusho is the factuality of the universe.

This is a plain fact, but in the tradition of Mahayan Buddhism, it is emphasized time and again to realize Fundamental Reality, as we human beings have a tendency to look at only one aspect—that is, the existential, ever-changing condition of phenomena.

The two appear simultaneously, not like the famous saying, “two sides of a coin.” This is a wonderful expression, but when we see one side of the coin, we cannot see the other. The fundamental and existential aspects of phenomena are appearing right now, simultaneously, like water (honbun) and wave (shusho). Nothing is hidden? And consequently, nothing need be uncovered!

We are not searching for something outside, and we are not trying to uncover something concealed. Rather, we are working for the realization of that which is already revealed. But it is so close and so familiar to us, our habit of emphasizing existential phenomena is so strong, and our judgment of good and bad is so deeply rooted that it is difficult for us to appreciate this wonderful Dharma teaching.

A traveling monk went to Master Baso and said, “Please tell me what is the essence of Zen Buddhism—Truth itself?” Master Baso said, “Today I am tired.”

Exhaustion is the existential condition of the body. “Today I am tired.” “Today I am fine.” “Today...whatever.” “Today I *am*” is the essential condition and that is no other than the essence of Zen Buddhism.

Every day the moon becomes larger and larger and on the fifteenth day, it becomes full. This is one aspect of reality, and let us call it “the reality of progress.”

However, the moon is always full, whether we can see it or not. Let's call this “the reality of as-it-is-ness.” Nothing is lacking, nothing is superfluous. Even the crescent moon is a full moon, since, as it is, it is perfect as the crescent moon. Since only a part of the moon can be seen from earth, we are deluded into thinking that it increases and decreases in size. But the plain fact is, whether we can see it or not, whether we call it new moon, half-moon or crescent moon, the moon is full—ALWAYS!

ZEN:

If you can become the mastery of each circumstance, then wherever you stand, whatever you do, that is the Truth itself.

ASIAN PSYCHOLOGY AND CULTURE

There is no dogmatic Zen, no Zen theory and no Zen philosophy. There is only the constant realization of Self. Keeping our feet on the ground, there is only the constant revelation of THIS—as it is, at each moment.

Our teaching is just to live, always in reality, in its exact sense. To make our effort, moment after moment, is our way.

This is why we should always address ourselves, checking up on ourselves like a doctor tapping himself. This is very important. This kind of practice should be continued moment after moment, incessantly. We say, “When the night is here, the dawn comes.” It means there is no gap between the dawn and the night. Before the summer is over, autumn comes.

There is nothing in this world which is not the Buddha. To understand this we must particularly understand Ummon’s “kan-shiketsu” or, as I translate it, “toilet paper.” We must take care of the toilet paper which we use every day. We should treat it as if it were an intimate friend. But this attitude is, of course, not confined to toilet paper. We must become intimate with all things.

Someone who had been working on Ummon’s “toilet paper” as a koan told me that now he cannot help but put his palms together in a gesture of reverence every time he uses toilet paper. It is not particularly favorable to pass a koan quickly. It is better to struggle with it until we feel like offering incense to the toilet paper. Struggle until we can bow to a piece of toilet paper, instead of saying, “Ich!” or “Phooey!”

To understand this koan we must come to the point where we feel like bowing every time we carefully tear a sheet of paper from the roll. Take two or three sheets of paper and wipe. Wipe with single-minded care. Don’t laugh! This is serious. If this attitude is not perfected, zazen loses its meaning.

What is Buddha? Toilet paper! That’s all. What is this? Just breath after breath—JUST! THIS!

Today is July 5, 2003 and cannot be otherwise! This expression is important—*cannot be otherwise!* Today is the 5th, yesterday was the 4th, and tomorrow will be the 6th. It is easy to accept this. We have no complaints, no objections. When it comes to some other matter, however, even though we know it *cannot be otherwise*, we delude ourselves by thinking that it can be otherwise. This gap between the face of it cannot-be-otherwise and the hope that it can-be-otherwise is what brings us all sorts of negative feelings, such as frustration, anxiety and dissatisfaction.

ASIAN PSYCHOLOGY AND CULTURE

The state: “Things are as they are and cannot be otherwise” itself gives a fatalistic and even nihilistic impression. But the plain fact is, right here, right now things are as they are and, indeed, cannot be otherwise.

The essence of Zen is so simple that it can be described in one short word—JUST. Just! Just this! This right here, right now...Mu! Put up no resentment, no resistance. Let us become fools who can accept this *as it is-ness*.

The very moment you can believe in what you are doing one hundred percent is the very moment you will become enlightened.

When you believe in your way, enlightenment is there. But when you cannot believe in the meaning of the thing which you are doing in this moment, you cannot do anything. You are just wandering around the goal with your monkey mind.

We must awaken from the present dream state and become able to see things rightly. Abbot Muju warns us how deep is the illusion:

*In the long night's sleep, another sleep;
Within the dream, seeing yet another dream.*

And old verse says:

*In this dream world, when he tells to another what he has dreamt,
The telling of the dream too is only a dream.*

People think they have broken the dream, but it was only the dream within the dream, and they are still dreaming, sunk in darkness, writhing about, their whole life a sleep and the end a dream-dying.

Being in the world of illusion is called “living being,” and being in the world of realization is called “Buddha.” When deluded, a living being; when enlightened, a Buddha.

Dogen-zenji said, “You should establish your practice in your delusion.” Even though you think you are in delusion, your pure mind is there. To realize pure mind in your delusion is practice.

So when you say, “This is delusion,” that is actually enlightenment itself. If you try to expel the delusion it will only persist the more, and your mind will become busier and busier trying to cope with it. That is not good. Just say, “Oh, this is just delusion,” and do not be bothered by it. When you just observe the delusion, you have your true mind, your calm, peaceful mind.