

The Buddha-mind seal, whose customs and traditions extend to all things, is found in both India and China, both in our own world and in other worlds as well. It is simply a matter of devotion to sitting, total commitment to immovable sitting. Although it is said that there are as many minds as there are people, all of them must negotiate the Way solely in zazen. Why leave behind your proper place, which exists right in your own home, and wander aimlessly off to the dusty realms of other lands? If you make even a single misstep, you stray from the Great Way lying directly before you.

You have gained the pivotal opportunity of human form. Do not let your time pass in vain. You are maintaining the essential function of the Buddha Way. Would you take meaningless delight in the spark from a flintstone? Form and substance are like dew-drops on the grass, destiny like the dart of lightning—vanishing in an instant, disappearing in a flash.

Honored followers of Zen—you who have been long accustomed to groping for the elephant—please do not be suspicious of the true dragon. Devote your energy to a Way that points directly to suchness. Revere the person of complete attainment beyond all human agency. Gain accord with the enlightenment of the Buddhas. Succeed to the legitimate lineage of the patriarchs' samadhi. Constantly comport yourselves in such a manner and you are assured of being a person such as they. Your treasure-store will open of itself, and you will use it at will.

Heart of Dogen's Shobogenzo – Norman Waddell and Masao Abe

Fukanzazengi

(Universal Promotion of the Principles of Zazen)

The Way is originally perfect and all-pervading. How could it be contingent upon practice and realization? The Dharma-vehicle is utterly free and untrammelled. What need is there for our concentrated effort? Indeed, the Whole Body is far beyond the world's dust. Who could believe in a means to brush it clean? It is never apart from you right where you are. What use is there going off here and there to practice?

And yet if there is the slightest discrepancy, the Way is as distant as heaven from earth. If the least like or dislike arises, the mind is lost in confusion. Suppose you gain pride of understanding, inflate your own achievement, glimpse the wisdom that runs through all things, attain the Way and clarify your mind, raising an aspiration to escalate the very sky. You are making an initial, partial excursion through the frontiers of the Dharma, but you are still deficient in the vital Way of total emancipation.

Look at the Buddha himself, who was possessed of great inborn knowledge—the influence of his six years of upright sitting is noticeable still. Or Bodhidharma, who transmitted the Buddha's mind-seal—the fame of his nine years of wall sitting is celebrated to this day. Since this was the case with the saints of old, how can people today dispense with negotiation of the Way?

You should therefore cease from practice based on intellectual understanding, pursuing words and following after speech, and learn the backward step that turns your light inward to illuminate

your self. Body and mind will drop away of themselves, and your original face will manifest itself. If you wish to attain suchness, you should practice suchness without delay.

For the practice of Zen, a quiet room is suitable. Eat and drink moderately. Cast aside all involvements, and cease all affairs. Do not think good, do not think bad. Do not administer pros and cons. Cease all the movements of the conscious mind, the gauging of all thoughts and views. Have no designs on becoming a Buddha. The practice of Zen (sanzen) has nothing whatever to do with the four bodily attitudes of moving, standing, sitting, or lying down.

At the place where you regularly sit, spread out a layer of thick matting and place a cushion on it. Sit either in the full-lotus or half-lotus posture. In the full-lotus posture, you first place your right foot on your left thigh and your left foot on your right thigh. In the half-lotus, you simply press your left foot against your right thigh. You should have your robes and belt loosely bound and arranged in order. Then place your right hand on your left leg and your left palm facing upwards on your right palm, thumb-tips touching. Sit upright in correct bodily posture, inclining neither to the left nor the right, leaning neither forward nor backward. Be sure your ears are on a plane with your shoulders and your nose in line with your navel. Place your tongue against the front roof of your mouth, with teeth and lips both shut. Your eyes should always remain open. You should breathe gently through your nose.

Once you have adjusted yourself into this posture, take a deep breath, inhale, exhale, rock your body to the right and left, and settle into a steady, unmoving sitting position. Think of not-

thinking. How do you think of not- thinking? Nonthinking. This in itself is the essential art of zazen.

The zazen I speak of is not learning meditation. It is simply the Dharma- gate of repose and bliss. It is the practice-realization of totally culminated enlightenment. It is things as they are in suchness. No traps or snares can ever reach it. Once its heart is grasped, you are like the dragon when he reaches the water, like the tiger when he enters the mountain. You must know that when you are doing zazen, right there the authentic Dharma is manifesting itself, striking aside dullness and distraction from the first.

When you arise from sitting, move slowly and quietly, calmly and deliberately. Do not rise suddenly or abruptly. In surveying the past, we find that transcendence of ignorance and enlightenment, and dying while sitting or standing, have all depended entirely on the strength gained through zazen.

Moreover, enlightenment brought on by the opportunity provided by a finger, a banner, a needle, or a mallet, the realization effected by the aid of a fly whisk, a fist, a staff, or a shout, cannot be fully comprehended by human discrimination. It cannot be fully known by the practice-realization of super-natural powers. It is activity beyond human hearing and seeing, a principle prior to human knowledge or perception.

This being the case, intelligence, or lack of it, does not matter. No distinction exists between the dull and sharp-witted. If you concentrate your effort single-mindedly, you are thereby negotiating the Way with your practice- realization undefiled. As you proceed along the Way, you will attain a state of everydayness.