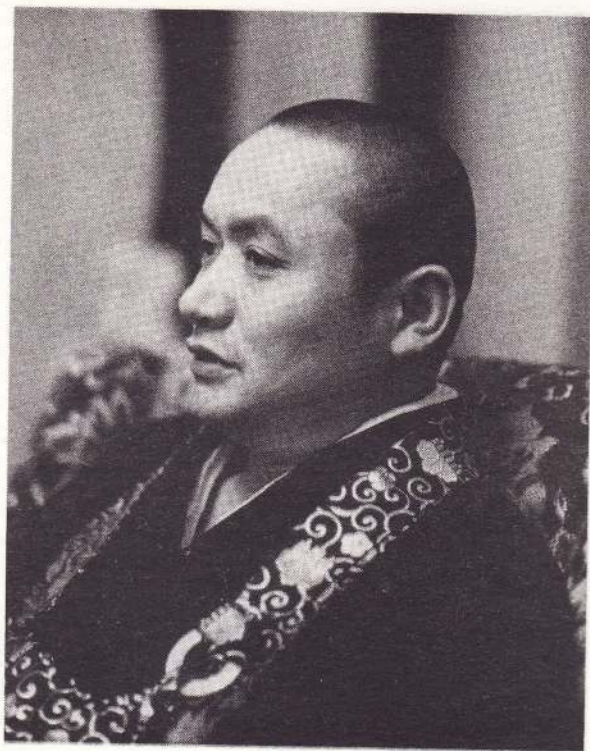




HoTo

Spring 1979





Jokoji Hojo Sama

Kobun:

Tonight we have a special guest. Many times I mentioned to you my elder brother. Finally he has come to visit this zendo. His name is Keibun Otogawa. Everyone calls him Hojosama. Here tonight everyone is a zazen practitioner so he will say something for us and we will listen to him.

Keibun:

Good evening everybody. When I entered this room I was deeply moved to feel the atmosphere of this zendo. The atmosphere is quite a divine scent atmosphere, and I realized that this group is the group to seek truth, to touch how to live sincerely, how to obtain true happiness. My younger brother, Kobun, told me very often about you, that you are all very sincere people, very splendid people, and now I realize that his mention of you was quite good here. I respect you, I respect you all,

and I wish your effort to seek truth, to make utter effort to be enlightened, to be accomplished, will be done soon. I think it is accomplished already.

Now, as Kobun has introduced, I am chief priest at Jokoji Temple where Kobun was born and was brought up. Now I want to acknowledge and appreciate not as a priest, but as the elder brother of Kobun about your support, your kind support to Kobun, your kind help to Kobun. As you know, Kobun is the strangest person. (laughter) I think his person is a rare existence. In Japan he was loved by all, by all who were around him although he made many mistakes! His speaking is, as you know, very slow, and his behavior...how to say?...as you know.

Yes! (laughter) I myself, I think that I am wiser than Kobun. (laughter) I can speak more smoothly than Kobun. But it is quite a mysterious thing for me that I was not so loved as Kobun. A person who visited Japan and my temple whose name is Chris Boissevain...do you know him?...yes. A young and fresh person. Yes. One day I talked with him about the difference between Kobun and myself. I wanted to know why Kobun is loved and why I was not so loved by all. And Chris answered that the doors of Kobun are always open. He is a (naked) man, and all can enter from his open doors. And my doors are opened only when necessary. I think to be loved and to be respected are quite different. Kobun everyone loves, and myself I wish instead of to be loved, to be respected, but I think I cannot get both.

Kobun:

Talking maybe strange thing! (laughter)

Keibun:

I was going to talk about loving. Yes. I think zazen is practice to find the true self for the sitter, and to find how to live, how to think, how to look, how to hear, how to love your important practice. And then how to die. And I think no path for your zazen practice. There is result in zazen practice. If someone continues to make much effort to practice zazen, he or she will be able to live life fully. He or she will be able to open like a flower, to bloom.

I think I have spoken enough. Thank you for hearing. Thank you for listening and many thanks for supporting my younger brother Kobun. Thank you. Thank you. Thank you for this evening. Thank you. Thank you.

All Are Buddhas

In November 1978, Kobun Chino Otagawa presented a series of lectures at Haiku Zendo in Los Altos concerning BUDDHA'S PRECEPTS. The first three of these lectures have been edited for publication here.

November 7, 1978

I'd like to introduce what Bodhidharma expressed about Buddha's Precepts. In the beginning of One Mind Precepts he spoke, "To transmit the Precepts is to be awakened in Buddha's mind." And he goes on...describing what each one of the ten Precepts means.

The first is: No Killing Life. Fu Sessho Kai. One hundred thousand million years of sustaining our lives. It is a daily thing we do. Taking the lives of others to our life we continue to live; this perspective is natural understanding.

For all of us this first precept, No Killing Life, is a kind of impossible precept to keep. For many centuries, people who lived with this vow, this spirit of the precepts, are still surviving on this earth. There might be some deeper meaning of this, because if we take this Precept in a literal way, with our human understanding, the only way is to die without food. And yet, not taking food to your system is also killing life, yourself, so this dilemma, this contradiction is set forth to us with this first Precept. Even if we don't directly participate in killing lives, to allow your life to survive is the same thing. So the precept does not just concern your ethical conduct of life. It has to do with your and others basic nature of existence. This subject is the first koan—to realize your Buddha nature, your true nature.

Bodhidharma taught us the truth of eternity. "When you do not give rise to the idea of birth and extinction, that is called No Killing Life Precept..." Truth of eternity, Jo Ju Ho, is the word he put to it. Jo Ju is eternal dwelling. Ho is truth, truth of eternal dwelling, eternal living. Give birth to no-birth/no-extinction is what this precept is.

Dogen Zenji describes this precept. "Do not kill. Do not let other people kill. Beyond that, flourish our Buddha seeds. This is what No Killing Life is." It covers the ethical truth of life and the deeper meaning of what this life is all about. We eat living food, we learn the living teaching constantly as our food for how to live on this earth. Among all phenomenal currents of life we are constantly supported; we are lived by all beings. That is the truth. We are lived by who or whatever we take. We are lived by teachings that guide the direction of how to exist.

Usually the normal way of conducting this life is to continuously explore our capacities depending on what we really want to do. But one way to live is to show all natures through our existence. The whole attitude of how to live begins to appear in different ways from which we usually perceive our life and world.

Jo relates with the well-being and satisfaction of our desires. All kinds of desires relate to other desires and keep going on and on. We feel it works, and endlessly we do things by our wishing, so desires arise within us. Is it the only way to live? One hundred thousand million lives came into this life, this dynamic life, and we fulfill their wishes, how they wanted to be. That is the way to conduct the precept life. We listen to all existences, how every being wishes to be. The answer is in each moment of life—continuous existence. To promise new existence in the ultimate condition is the answer to all those who have lived whose lives surround us. This is what I think practice means. Practice and life at this point are the same thing.

The answer requires not just understanding what life is all about, but that we express it. Shikan taza is the immediate answer to it, and getting up from shikan taza is the continuous answer to the question, how to live. How you live is how everything lives. For this reason, one period of sitting is not something we take as a personal exercise to reach some kind of enlightened state. We all know this world is a radiant dynamic of enlightenment, an enlightened functioning. There is no need to seek after enlightenment. We were born as the Buddha, life was born as the awakened existence.

You can become a fantastic dancer in your dream, but in order to become a real dancer, and a real dancing person, you have to train your entire system to that form. Sitting on the cushion is not a relaxation, it is every result of your knowledge, and every experience you have come through sits there each time. It's very serious. Otherwise, because of the good feeling and because once in a while you feel an ecstatic sensation in your body, calmness, stillness, or clarity, you would forget there are hungry people on this earth. There are lots of diseases by which people are passing away. If you do not observe that in your sitting you are just escaping in your desire. It happens if once you mistake or limit the focus of your sitting practice.

To me, every second is like a fighting place. I mean a battleplace. I don't actually fight with people, but to inform your existence in each place is like a battleplace. We have experienced the second world war, and still we hear the fire of war extending. In one place it is extinguished, then it moves to another place. A kind of continuous sign of sickness is what we have.

To create the peaceful world is to sit together. We don't know who comes next to us, mother or lover or stranger...we cannot know beforehand. But sitting together for a couple of minutes or days, gradually we understand, so we see things without argument or fight, because the body system was being made to understand what this body, this life is...how other lives exist.

The great pleasure, the great accomplishment of your way-seeking mind is in realization of sitting, this form of sitting, this place to sit on this earth, this time to sit...the twentieth century. Giving birth to Buddha seed is what shikan taza way is. It is not man's improvement as a better man, it is the actualization of what we are. It is very uncomfortable at first to sit this way. It's rather peaceful to sink in the warm soft couch and have a nice drink. But to recover our lives, all lives, is the basic view of sanity, clarity. How everything is actually arising and falling moment after moment, that is how we take this sitting posture. Continuously observe it, within, without,

internally and externally, and standing, walking, to carry that understanding without flipping into the old patterns.

To have a human body on this earth, itself is a form of contradiction, so we cannot escape from this living contradiction, whatever we do. Where we appear we always have the hard phenomenon to observe. "Life is Truth," is so profound to observe thoroughly, and each thing's existence every moment is all interdepending, out of our understanding. Sense organs cannot reach to the depth of the Truth, and yet, every day we discover we are still here. Each day we renew our vow to be straight and work well, to help others, and to go on doing as well as we possibly can. This short life, fifty, eighty, or one hundred years is a very short time to learn everything we are ready to learn.



Kobun Chino at Dokusan

November 9, 1978

Tonight's subject of study is the Second Precept. Fu Chu To Kai. In Chinese and Japanese the word Fu is 'no' and Chu is taking something in an unknown way. To is taking something forcefully and openly. So we simply say No Stealing. The easiest way to have some understanding of the unlimited meaning of this precept is to think about our existence before we existed or after we will finish existing. In between we have this subject. This subject opens up whether our way of practice or our way of behaving in this life is continuous or encouraging life one after another as one identity, person...or not. In other words, do we possess? Or do we obtain this life-opportunity, exist in this world this particular time, in this place, in this very unique particular way each person. Is this what we are existing, this life?

Our study here tonight is to image the real meaning of No Stealing. The ordinary meaning to take something from another is the literal meaning. At the same time, to observe a deeper meaning of this is the subject to speak about. Something happened, and we appeared on this earth. A very small drop of life occurred and it grew. A little circle of energy in your circle of energy grew, and when the time came it started to separate in two. One sees it as two, but as you know, this birth of mother and mother from it, child from it, it's not truly able to separate. Because of inner consciousness we think that this human is individual existence, and shape is dynamic move among many things, so we have no question it has that position. But the more you sit the more you observe the connection of all existence, the necessity of continuous life, and the necessity to find the direction which way you are going to move on this earth, what kind of life you want to create.

Eventually we begin to understand that we are truly an individual existence, but it is a universal thing in itself. It is an enormous dynamic going with you. Life of activity becomes a very creative art form for you. It has that potentiality. So the unseparable existence from this universe each present moment is the focus of this precept. Of course, becoming aware, desiring clothes and making clothes to put on that begin to fit nobody but you, so that you feel it is my smell, my taste, is important. Whether to house in the city or country, where the very unquestionably familiar dynamics of your body are realized is also important. If we are in a totally strange place, like going through another country, we become extremely remote in terms of relationship and understanding others, we begin to understand what a different world we have created. Where you are becomes what you are. When you are is how you are. It's a very big thing. At the same time, it's a very very big individuality. Independent interdependency is there as one personality.

The basic recognition contains the tremendous dilemma of possessing everything and anything, and possessing nothing in the literal sense. This is man's contradiction. In that realm day and night, day and night our brain is working. Where to get it, how to get it. If I don't succeed and get things I'll be very embarrassed or something like that, until someday it all pops and you begin to feel, 'No, I am going to die now. What was this whole life? Running around.'

Dying people in a real sense show a very noble face...they realize the truth of existence. At the moment of dying, people suffer and suffer with lots of pain in the body and lots

of ideas, and finally they give up, they give up everything. And something heavy drops off...everything drops off, and their faces become very, very relieved, relieved from suffering, become very noble in appearance.

Zazen practitioners are people who go through that kind of experience very often while they are still quite young. They return to their lives in a different place at the same time, but very far advanced, with a very deep concern about life, and that is how zazen is working.

Please remember this No Stealing precept. No Stealing...is the ultimate recognition we have nothing to lose. Even if someone steals your whole body or your whole mind, you have not lost anything. This is one example of devotion. Devotion is to give away, and giving yourself includes whatever it is, person or situation. This is how teacher and disciple, and devotion relationship is, not one-sided. To have two bodies is at this point remarkable sign of freedom. The mind is utterly become one, 'not-alike' each of you. And you liberate each other.

The best way to present or make a present to others is work you did. You create your own, and you give it away. You can forget it immediately because attachment doesn't follow to it. If you bought it, or empty your wallet, you cannot forget. So I wish if you have somebody to give to, give a part of your effort. Then people receive your effort, exact thing, and cannot break it or lose it.

Words you give to others from painful criticism are sometimes very bitter to receive let others receive, eventually becomes a very fantastic present. Sweet words, loving words often have no power in it. I mean, the ordinary sense of loving words. Real loving words are very open, very sweet and pierce through. That kind of present we are able to give to others. The thoughts you have upon people, about people, even it is invisible, it recreates a situation between yourself and others. Whatever we do is very important activity.

November 10, 1978

The third Precept is called Fu Ja In Kai, or Fu In Yoku Kai. The translation of this Third Precept is very difficult. Fu is "no." Ja is opposite from "right" or "correct." The direction of many ways is what it is. Yoku is desire. Usually this Precept is known as No Committing Adultery, or No Committing an Unchaste Act.

It always puzzles our life what it truly means. Is this only for married or engaged couples? Or is this only the problem or the subject of men and women? No Committing Adultery has been known as a very limited meaning of the Precept.

I think I have spoken that there is only you yourself and Absolute being, so to have two objects as the Absolute is the basic confusion about itself and about the object you are facing to.

As an ethical meaning, No Committing Adultery is quite obvious. It is a confused state. And it causes separation of really relating with the one whom you wish to relate with. Like chasing after many rabbits you cannot catch one. Basically, the problem is not the objective side, but the subjective side.

It relates with many subjects such as whether to have one teacher or to go to another teacher to learn. All of us have various experiences from very small childhood so we have many, many teachers, those who taught us many things. In Japan, we have many problems about this so we have various kinds of names for all kinds of teachers. The final teacher is called Dharma Master, or Basic Master, who confirms your completion of Practice, and who liberates you from him or from her, and lets you be an independent existence to decide everything by yourself, and to take all responsibility about what you do.

This relationship and meaning of what this independence means can be spoken to each individual, married couple, or even unmarried couple. It is a very delicate subject. Being born as a man or a woman or how man or woman can be in training has been a great subject. It is an interesting thing to discuss. We know the base of the customs of man and woman. At the same time, the law of each nation opens up the qualities and discriminations of man and woman.

I would like to talk about my personal experience. From thirteen years old I had various kinds of teachers, many fine teachers who studied about one thing. This Ordination Master who transmitted Buddha's Precepts is the first master and one of the greatest masters to me. His name is Kin-ei Otogawa, Zenji. Over and over he appears to me, physically to my life and...almost always I feel I am in his hand, like a little ant, walking.

My Zazen Master Kodo Sawaki Roshi, was invited to the Temple Sogenji, my Ordination Master's Temple, and I started to sit zazen with him. He supported my zazen practice all the way through today, and I feel very grateful to this master, Kodo Sawaki, who is almost the opposite from this Ordination Master. I'll say the Ordination Master is the law itself, discipline itself. The Zazen Master was an undisciplined one, perfect freedom. Whatever you do is allowed and whatever you do you have to take care of it by yourself. I was young and didn't know myself from the outside. From the inside I understood many things, and spoke pretty clearly what I understood. What it really means in the broad aspect I didn't catch, and most children are like this. They understand but they don't understand what it means.

The Dharma Flag Master, or Hodoshi, chooses you as the head practitioner for one practice period, usually for ninety days. The first year of university study, I went back to this master's temple. He is Reiyu Tamiya, Roshi. He came to Hawaii to teach Soto tradition and stayed there about seven years. His wife is my cousin's daughter, so we had a very close relationship. I was chosen in this practice period as the head practitioner and had a very interesting Shuso Ceremony. Many, many people came from different places. You don't speak the modern language, you speak Zen terminology from beginning to end. Like Shakespearean drama, it is a perfect play. The questions people bring up are also all in Zen terminology, mostly relating with koan subjects, and the hardest part is answering to the travelling monks who join to this kind of occasion. They are very, very hard people to have this Dharma combat with. They live for talking to you... shaking you up in public. We call this ten pa, very special questions, a special subject. It is very hard and they prepare many tricks to let you fall in. There were three of them. I don't know where they came from or who their teacher was. No one knows, they just travel and sit among monks and ten pa! You are shook up! Anyway, I was very young, and it went very well.

And again I had a great opportunity to be close to a Zen master in Kyoto, Sawaki Roshi, after my Dharma Transmission with my basic teacher Koei Chino. Having so many teachers felt to me like a sort of adultery, you know, committing adultery in a very deeper sense. I had much thirst within me, and each master, each teacher fulfilled me, but I wanted more fulfillment than that; I was very thirsty about learning. And finally this Dharma Master settled me down. "No more seeking. No more seeking." A sort of peak experience taught me not to look around any more.

And I was feeling these days how he felt when I went away from him and continued to practice with Kodo Sawaki, and here with Suzuki Roshi, and now with all of you. How do you feel about life and practice and transmission? It feels very, very peaceful always whenever I feel these masters are present in zazen practice. No more questions, and continuous support always appears from right behind me, and it doesn't confront me any more, it's always behind me, supporting me. But the support is presence, is absolute, because the one who is right there I cannot see. Only I can feel. But the ones I see confront to him, all are his manifestation. I mean these masters' continuity is right here, I can see it. Right here! His manifestation is there. Right there another figure of his manifestation is there, and for always, all ways he comes to me, so I am surrounded by his presence. All the time.

Bodhidharma mentioned what this Fu Ja In Kai, or Fu In Yoku Kai is. He explained in this way, "Not to give birth to attachment in the truth of non-attachment." It is called no fulfillment. No desire fulfillment.

It is very recent to really notice the difference between purity of love and attachment in that love, and I'm very much aware what is my attachment in this love. Attachment grows all the time and it causes lots of problems, blind spots, unclear spots. You are attached to parts of the whole thing. I really understand now why Bodhidharma said, "Not to give birth to attachment in the truth of non-attachment." Non-attachment is truth. In such a situation we give birth to attachment. That's very important to see.

Birthday Poem

Today the patriarchs,
not taken in by
historical situations,
grew breasts
gave birth
and stayed home
to celebrate —
[forty-seven years
of undivided life.]

Sonja Margulies
March 7, 1978

Intransigent

I rise and sit at dawn
cold, grey, still
inside the igneous head
of my northern mother.
I peer out from her stoney eye
at the shadow forms around me,
look behind her deepened stare
to the bleak landscape
of her fathers, their minds
frozen by the need of life:
no sighing, no dreams.

**

In another time
fierce Bodhidharma
flew from India
to a granite cave
in China, sat nine years
staring at stone, his eye
engraved the Buddha on that wild land:
rock has that possibility.

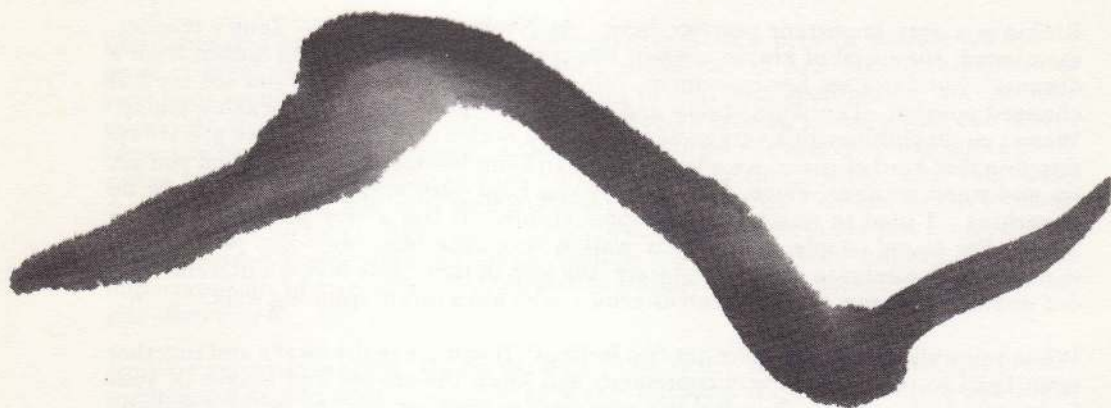
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Denser rock,
ignorant of air,
I am the cave of ancients.
For ages my blind walls
have hidden from the fire's truth,
wanted only false reflection.
Life on life
I echo my darkness.

**

Blind being,
enchanted stone,
I pass through
undreamed generations,
unwilling to be saved,
wanting to be struck forever.

Edie Norton
1978



A Few Words About Sumi-e

All the arts are body/mind activities. If in teaching, I emphasize the whole body, it is because I have found that the mind wags on no matter what. The groundedness of the body is what we have learned to ignore.

Sumi painting is not supposed to be a display of technical proficiency. The aim is a direct expression of the whole person: body/mind. So simple to say — so difficult to do. "The Mustard Seed Garden" encourages the hesitant student saying, "It is far better to be crude than to be banal."

Barbara Hiestand

Rohatsu Sesshin Lectures

Kobun Chino Otagawa lectured at Rohatsu Sesshin, Hidden Villa, Los Altos. Three of the lectures have been edited for publication in HoTo.

December 2, 1978

Kin hin is a very important practice here. As Nyojo Zenji, Dogen Zenji's teacher, mentioned, the speed of kin hin is when you see a person who is doing kin hin from a distance, you don't see her movement, but one or two seconds later you see she has changed position. That kind of slow and soft movement is what I am speaking about. When you do kin hin with a very aware mind, you notice in everyday life we are always skipping that kind of space; we always get up and run immediately. Or, when you get up and stand straight, alone, immediately you hold onto something, or lean, or do something. I used to watch older peoples' kin hin. It has a very good feeling, you know. For young people, old peoples' walk is very uncertain, but when you get into their physical condition, their mind state, the step of their walk is very different from our unaware walking, which has no direction, which is a sort of spinning walk.

When you walk very slowly there are two feelings. If you are really awake and together from head to toe and are very contented, and know the energy and weight of your body, you don't wobble. You feel not only you are walking, but the world is walking with you. But at the edge of that, there is the sensation that still you are walking. Old people's walking is toward the certain object, and even wobbling they are moving to the object. Our wobbling is just wobbling. We don't know which direction we are walking.

I don't want to talk about what kind of sitting we are doing. I would like to sit with you, and you sit also and discover real understanding of what sitting is by yourself. It's impossible to teach the meaning of sitting. Even if I speak, you won't believe it! Not because I speak wrong, but even if my talk is right, until you really believe so, experience it, and confirm it by yourself, you cannot believe it. I feel that Dogen is truly right, that sitting is the action to go into Buddha's world. Without having anything, just turn to Buddha's world. In other words, because you are Buddhas yourselves, so you can sit.

Some say Buddhism doesn't admit the existence of God. This is a very big question. Who knows? Who knows? If you say Buddhists don't decide one way or the other, maybe that is much closer to the truth. But I believe that a real Buddhist knows what God is, and does know peoples' minds, so there is no argument about what it means between sitting people and people who believe in God. Because sitting in shikan taza is not depending on human intellect. It is not just depending on the dynamics of this body only. Dharmakaya is not mere human body. Of course, a human body sitting there is complete proof that it happens. Nirmanakaya's existence is that. And Sambhogakaya as one whole is sitting in this way. In other words, when you sit, the cushion sits with you. If you wear glasses, glasses sit with you. Clothing sits with you. Your house sits with you. People who are moving around outside all sit with you. They don't take sitting posture! And it is not something you understand. It's indescribable. And yet, when you are experiencing sitting with all, that understanding, each is all there, and here with you.

December 3, 1978

When we sit like this, facing the wall hour after hour, being supported by others' presence around us, an incredible content of sitting goes with us, so fast, sensations coming and going, memories which you have experienced fully but didn't notice how complicated a situation you have come through.

Continuously I suggest that you have good posture. That is because posture is a sort of proof of mind situation, a reflection of the invisible part of your life which penetrates your body, your physical conditions, so it helps to start with good posture and let your mind ride on good breath, smooth deep even breath coming in and going out, which keeps you in the present moment. As soon as you forget the breath, mind-phenomena colors your breath, and all sorts of movies go on in that breath, and your body continuously reflects whatever goes in those personal movies. We like to just let them go and forget them, or maybe finish them, but I don't want to say just forget them. The one who keeps watching, keeps letting the whole thing happen, is a very important part of yourself. Not necessarily a judgemental function of that self, but just observing it.

In daily activities we have almost no time to be really alone. Day after day we are surprised that our activity created so many fantastic things, sometimes too many things which we cannot afford to take care of. Once in a while we sit a short time, and irregularly, rarely really look at ourselves. We wish to be very wise, and live this life very meaningfully and usefully all the time. We'd like our whole life to be so, really enjoyable and useful to whoever lives with us, but alas, we know it is so difficult to be wise. We are almost opposite to wise. It's hard to see what's going on. Even what's wrong with us, we don't know. What's wrong with others sometimes we can see, but what's wrong with each of us, we cannot see so well.

I really wish each sitting will make our perspective more broad, and let our mind and body be able to move in every direction toward what's happening. I think this is what is meant by transcending. The mind transcends and is able to embrace the reality and find out what's the best way to let blocked situations have an unfolding. I recognize when I'm very busy every day concerning so many things one after another, my effort gets very shallow, my work is not effective to each situation. And day after day whatever I am supposed to be concerned with appears, and day after day those concerns increase in number, so finally I come to realize I'm getting in a helpless situation, with no time to concentrate on what's most important for me, and what's the most important thing to do, which needs lots of time.

How deep your thought, your concern reaches to the actual situation or person is what we mean by expressing the content of sitting. We can sit in imagination, of course, but imagination sitting is so powerless. It's just like a dream, or image. If you love somebody truly, there is no doubt that image is within you, even if it is not expressed to that one. To have the thought in you is already expression.

Prayer will be the next process of expression. Physical movement toward it will be the next. But as you notice, how to show up to the one to whom you have concern is a very

big subject. With your best condition, as your finest appearance, you show up. To do that, we have to have tremendous practice. Physical presence is the final expression. So I am always very, very careful to receive people who come to my house. I receive them all as my master's visit.

Observing the mind with the mind is a part of you taking care of a part of you. In daily activity there is no time to really let this contrast of yourself and another self confront each other. Always we finish up things with the intuitive level of our understanding. We don't need to have indexes. It all sinks into our so called alaya vijnana.. Alaya vijnana is 'store consciousness', which is very deep and very dark, and extremely broad. For instance, it covers the edge of the universe which astronomers don't know. Whatever occurs, in terms of storage, our mind covers it. And yet, when every knowledge, every understanding, every capacity is oriented by yourself, it is still blind. It's like an incredible encyclopedia. You may find your memory of yourself in the encyclopedia, but present 'you' is not in it. But it comes from your present self, so the subject is: what is the self of no-self? This is a very important point. The whole alaya vijnana, with all contents in it, turns to something else, from which you see yourself. It may be compared to Plato's metaphor of the cave. You live in the kingdom alone. Every understanding and every tendency you act in the world is oriented by your presence. If the world is arranged from your self, this alaya vijnana is the continuous growth of the kingdom in which only you are living, and people and things are appearing, but it is not understood, really.

So it is a very big subject to come to a real understanding with one other person in this life, to really notice there is somebody who can see this world with you. We have this little body, but, as I said, it isn't so. It covers the entire universe as yourself. So by listening to others, from chatting about the weather to deeper levels of communication, you can go through an incredibly refined and deep understanding with another person. Living together, you share everything, you have a home together, or a community together, or a nation together. The thing to which alaya vijnana turns is called amala vijnana, ninth consciousness. The same thing is called Tathagata garbha, storage of Buddha's mind.

December 4, 1978

I always feel this kind of sitting practice is like the root of a tree, or the foundation of a building, it's very invisible. Nothing very splendid happens, even if we expect in the beginning that something has to happen because I have to change my messy life situation! This is the last chance! But against my expectation, what it is is tremendous pain. If we concentrate on smoothing practice, we cannot get it. It is very hard to breathe, our breath gets stuck somewhere in our chest or throat. If we do push it hard, many times our head begins to feel dizziness. Counting breathing doesn't succeed. You always come to five, to seven, and you are wandering off the track, and each time you are very ashamed about it, and come back to one. One to ten you go, and finally you feel you made it! And next one doesn't come. To do such a simple thing is very hard.

I think what Buddha said was true, that life is nothing but suffering. Happiness doesn't come so often. To make somebody really happy is so rare and so hard. We say, "I don't have time to make others happy." As I said, to find a little time of day to be by ourselves, a quiet place, a quiet time, is very hard. If you shorten your sleeping time, you may have some time to sit early in the morning, or late at night, or maybe in the middle of the night. As you know, real study cannot be through this kind of lecture. Real study has to be done as a pounding-time by yourself. Like squeezing juice, drips of juice. A little bit comes out.

A real, personal level of understanding, confirming that your intuition is really true, is very rare. There is lots of information, tv, magazines, second hand, third hand, copied information, but those make your mind just busy. We have to have some way to really organize everything and find where we are, and what that information was actually telling us.

This is a very interesting time for each of us to gather together and have lots of struggle with languages and thoughts and actual practice, understanding little by little until finally your own transparent wisdom is formed in the center, and it begins to crystalize your knowledge from the center. My feeling is that it is again about time to recover our natural nature and begin feeling every kind of race and nation as our brothers and sisters. Not just friends from a distance, but basic brotherhood, because even if we have a tremendous vertical theory of how human beings were formed on this earth, we need to know what is the meaning or purpose of life appearing on this earth.

Especially there is not much strength to trust others, to find identity in others. It has been caused by a sort of hot state, in which elements move very fast and bump into each other without staying together. So we slip, bump into each other and make energy, and separate quickly. And again bump into each other. So it makes us, as you notice, very impatient. Probably if men stay together more than one hour they will begin to argue. Instead of getting more and more familiar, they get bored, or one says it's time to go. Especially when it's just talk, you get exhausted. We have very fast meetings, and move to different spaces. Meeting is supposed to be very creative, always, but in a very speedy time we just find agreement and go on, and we forget what we have agreed.

Right attitude is always symbolized in your mind as language. If I ask, "What's the most important thing for you?" each person will say, "I think this is most important." That is what attitude is, the purpose of your present life. It is not like saying, "Because my teacher said so and so, so I'm going with it." It's not like that.

Sometimes I feel I am a Buddhist. Most of the time I don't think about it. Buddha and Buddhist are a little bit different, though. If you can believe that whatever appears to you is Buddha, and you can trust it with your whole life, you are Buddhist. When someone appears not a Buddhist, we immediately say, "That's not Buddhist!" We manifest ourselves as a certain form and put a label on it, and we say, "Look at us, how nice it is!" But the point is to be able to observe, or see, or listen to teaching in the phenomena where we are. It is a living situation, so reading manuscripts of all different kinds is to reflect our understanding. There is no new teaching in the ultimate sense. It is always simply confirming.

You can study so that you confirm your intuition and insight with written words, but you study better by observing other people, and listening to them, because each person is full of understanding, without knowing about it, and they are very humble, they are all called students. That's who we are. So the student makes a teacher out of the student, because teaching is there if we are willing to listen to it. And a tremendous secret is that the one who is supposed to teach comes close to you. That's why we came here. We don't know why! I am sorry, but it is all a natural thing. With your sense of fondness for people you like, you may feel that it is your karmic habitual pattern you are following, but it isn't so, there is a more intuitive sense guiding you to what you choose. It's not just choice, it is decided before you choose. So when you see your life partner, look at that partner very closely and ask where they came from. You always feel such people are the greatest gift to you.

We have a very fancy name for our Sangha. Haiku Zendo is very fancy. Bodhi is very fancy. Many people misunderstand it. Like Samyaksambodhi 'That must be it! I'm going to get it!' Bodhi is that, too, but as I told you, bodhicitta is the mind which observes the transient reality and makes some certain one person or society uplifted by your effort, makes them happy by your effort before you become happy. Making that happy, you receive happiness. Mother's milk is like that. Bodhi goes from one to another, one way, it has no expectation of returning, and doing that, there is full satisfaction in it. And that mind which is gone to others hasn't lost in this way. You give that, and you think your giving mind is going with material, but as soon as it goes, here it is. Wisdom is like that. It never ends. It becomes much more powerful and better than before each time.

To save all sentient beings means to give whatever you can give. One person contains all sentient beings, so you can just give that which others don't have, which you have. Giving birth to a new baby is saving all sentient beings. Listening to teaching, even just a single word, is saving all sentient beings. Our greedy mind wants to become like an Imperial Savior, and become famous and build a big tomb, or something. That's not saving sentient beings.

for Kai

a child is playing in the meadow
entranced, he does not see me
I sneak up from behind
in an instant he turns
snatches me up in a glance
and runs off the edge of the field

Hathaway

Spring Mountain News

Fall has passed. There are hints of green beneath the battered down straw on the hillsides. Most days start frosted with a thin layer of ice then become warmer in the afternoons. Thank goodness for occasional rains and the warmer temperatures they bring. Still, there is work being done outside even with the passing of the winter solstice. The climate hasn't become moist enough and the ground soggy enough to discourage gardeners and woodcutters.

We have gone through many changes this past season. At the end of September, Bob and Becca moved to a small house in Ukiah. Soon after, Larry moved in with friends of his in Ukiah. So our local Sangha has grown in this way.

We have now four adult residents: William Stocker moved here in November and Diane Darling and her son Zack moved here in September. Carol, and Judy and her baby Nora are the 'oldtimers' now. John Chiarito is living in the cabin up the hill again. He is renting and making more improvements on the cabin. Judy's brother Paul is here for an extended visit.

We have a 5:30 p.m. sitting each Wednesday for local people to join with dinner after. We are planning on having a weekend or week long event each month, as we are able to this year. We will present more information as events are arranged.

Spring Mountain Sangha includes everyone. We welcome you to come visit or live here. Thanks to everyone who has contributed energy and spirit.

*Spring Mountain Farm
11525 Mid Mountain Road
Potter Valley, California 95469
Phone: 707-743-1428*

Lineage

I consider often this gift,
The lineage, presented at ordination.
I think about what these archaic
Calligraphies mean in this time.
Each name comes alive with its own light
Unfurling like rungs of a rope ladder,
Down through history
To fall open at my feet like crocuses,
Touching my hands and heart
Like spring blossoms from a shaken branch.

Linda Hartley
February 1979

Members and friends of Bodhi provide this publication as a gift to one another. If you can help with the printing and mailing costs, please send your donation to: Bodhi, marked 'for HoTo' Box 638, Los Altos, CA. 94022

SITTING OPPORTUNITIES

Haiku Zendo

746 University Avenue, Los Altos
Zazen: M-Sat. 5:30 & 6:20 a.m. Open sitting all day
Lecture by Kobun Chino: Wed. 8:00 p.m.
Zazen instruction: Wed. 6:30 p.m.

Edie Norton's House

162 Muir Avenue, Santa Clara (241-7265)
Zazen: Friday mornings, 6:00 a.m.

Monday Morning Group

Menlo Park, Palo Alto, Los Altos (325-5339)
Monday 9:45 a.m. Informal sitting & discussion
held at various people's homes.

Santa Cruz Zendo

113 School St., Santa Cruz (426-0169)
Zazen: M-Sat. 5:30 & 6:20 a.m.; M-F 7:10 & 8:10 p.m.
Lecture by Kobun Chino: Tues. 8:00 p.m.
All-day sitting 4th Sunday each month.
Potluck before sitting every third Tues.

Spring Mountain Sangha

11545 Mid-Mountain Rd., Potter Valley, Ca.
Call for information (707-743-1438)

So Getsu-In

The Amazing x, Box 39, Fremont, Michigan
Dan Gerber

For up-to-date recorded announcements of events in Los Altos call 948-3778

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Editorial Committee: Fran O'Connell, Editor, Angie Boissevain, Edie Norton
Cover and inside cover Sumi-e by Barbara Hiestand
Photograph of Jokoji Hojo Sama by Dan Gerber
Photograph of Kobun Chino at Dokusan by Kimiko

Typesetting courtesy of Potpourri
Printed by Vincent Bernucci, San Jose



Bodhi Box 638, Los Altos, CA 94022

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