

Selections from
The Embossed Tea Kettle

Hakuin Zenji

Zen Writings

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Introduction to this edition

I wish to express my thanks to George Allen & Unwin for giving me permission to reprint extracts from 'The Embossed Tea Kettle' of Hakuin Zenji. The original work has been out of print for some years. It was one of my wife's favourite books; we both felt a link with the writer's words which defied the passing of centuries and the gulf of different cultures.

Though most of our books to date have been concerned with the martial arts of east and west, I think that students of the martial arts, as well as others, will find inspiration and guidance in the writings of this famous Japanese Zen Master. Wisdom and humility pervade each paragraph, and images of daily life emphasise that Hakuin was speaking to the common man, as well as to monks and princes.

Paul Crompton

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A SHORT LIFE OF HAKUIN

HAKUIN was born on December 25th, 1685. His father's family name had been Sugiyama, but he had been adopted into his wife's family at the time of his marriage and his name was changed to Nagasawa. His mother was the daughter of the Postmaster of the town of Hara in the province of Suruga.

The Nagasawa family belonged to the Nichiren Sect, and this was of importance in the spiritual development of the son, whose childhood name was Iwajiro.

From his earliest years Iwajiro was noted for his remarkable memory. It is said that at four he could repeat by heart over three hundred village songs, and that once after returning from a service where a sermon was preached on the Devadatta Section of the *Saddharma-pundarika-sutra* (*Hokke-kyo*) he astonished everybody by giving them an accurate account of all that he had heard.

Unfortunately a sermon on the eight Hot Hells which he once heard terrified him and it was a long time before he recovered from the spiritual shock. Eventually, however, as a result of his terror he was moved to seek for the Truth. He had difficulty in persuading his parents to permit him to leave his home and begin his serious religious life by entering a temple and accepting the guidance of a priest. The temple was Shoinji, of the Rinzai Branch of the Zen sect. At last, on March 26, 1699, he received primary ordination at the hands of Tan Reiden. His name was now changed to Ekaku.

From that day he began his long religious quest. He went from one temple to another, from one famous priest to another. The search was interrupted for a time by the death of his mother in 1706, but he continued studying the Scriptures (*The Kokoshu*, a Collection of Lectures for Zen Retreats) and the *Shijunisho-kyo* (*The Scripture of the Forty-Two Chapters*). At one period he was much influenced by the famous poet Ba-o, who lived in the Zui-in-ji in the province of Mino. Hakuin's clear and polished literary style was no doubt due in great measure to the influence of this poet.

About 1708 he went to study at a temple in Takata, in the province of Echigo, under a priest named Shotetsu. Then he moved to Iiyama in the province of Shinano. Here he studied under an old priest named Etan of the Shoji-an. This old priest treated Hakuin in an off-hand and rough manner. Most young men would soon have taken offence and gone off to more congenial surroundings. But Hakuin had been deeply impressed by the old man's character, so he patiently bore the harsh treatment and after many months 'under the hammer and shackles' of his teacher he received the reward of his patience.

This is what he tells us of his great experience at Iiyama:

'One day, in the morning, I wandered round the town of Iiyama on my customary alms begging route. I was walking alone when a wonderful idea about the Way came into my mind, of which I could not rid myself. I became so obsessed with this idea that I did not notice where my feet carried me. Suddenly I found myself, without knowing how I had come there, at the door of someone's house where I was begging alms. For a long time I was standing there, so absorbed in the new idea that the master of the house who had ordered me to go away over and over again finally in exasperation took up a writing brush and hurled it at me.'

Hakuin's face was cut and he was knocked over in a faint. The neighbours rushed out to see what was happening, but even all the bustle and noise did not penetrate into his mind. His whole soul was still filled with the great thought. Two or three passers-by lifted him up and asked him what was the matter. But he suddenly clapped his hands and burst out laughing. Everybody who saw this thought he was only a crazy priest, so they left him and went their way. After he had come to himself he brushed off the mud and dust from his clothes and went back to his temple with a smiling face. As he reached the temple his teacher, Etan, was standing on the temple verandah and saw him coming in. He called out: 'Something has happened to you, what is it?' So Hakuin told him the whole of the morning's experience and what his great thought had been. Then his old teacher said: 'Now you must take the vows and not be satisfied with having attained to that, from now on your studies

will have to be deeper than ever. Your life will be more strenuous since this enlightenment has come to you.'

Etan Shoji's long continued discipline had at last produced its effect. Hakuin had grasped the inexpressible reality of the nature of mind. He had reached enlightenment, knowledge of the real nature of truth.

Soon after this experience Hakuin was called back to nurse his first teacher at Dai-sho-ji in Numazu, near to his old home in Hara. It was here that he studied the *Pi-yen-lu* (*Hekigan Roku* or *Blue Cliff Records*), also the *Diamond Sutra* and many other great scriptures at temples in that neighbourhood.

Now, however, his own health began to deteriorate. His account of his illness and his remarkable recovery is given in his *Yasen Kanna*.

After his recovery he continued his studies and went on travelling widely seeking further wisdom from many well-known teachers in all parts of the country. Sometimes he was tempted to stay with some enlightened priest, no matter how cold and uncomfortable the place. He expressed his feelings in two short poems:

Oh! let me hear again the echo of that snow, falling in the twilight

At that ancient Temple in the grove of Shinoda!

and one which is a sort of motto for his life:

Having heard the Way in the evening
Let me die in the morning.

After still further pilgrimages he had decided to retire to a distant hermitage in the province of Mino (to a place called Iwataki). He was dissuaded from this by an urgent message from his father who was then dying. So he returned to his own home and, after his father's death took up residence at the temple of Shoinji, which was almost derelict and very desolate. It was here that he had begun his religious life, and here he lived in great poverty till the end of his life, only going away when requested to lecture and teach at various temples, mostly in the near neighbourhood.

But his piety and learning soon became known throughout

A SHORT LIFE OF HAKUIN

the land and many great persons and hundreds of young students came to him for guidance and instruction. How spiritually contented he was now, in spite of his many material discomforts is shown by his little poem, composed at this time:

'Feelings of pity and harshness
All are reduced by distance
Happy indeed, I will not seek
The hills of any distant country.'

Here in his first and last temple he died at the age of eighty-four, on January 18, 1769. The posthumous title of Shin-Ki-Doku-Myo was given soon afterwards.

YASEN KANNA

A CHAT ON A BOAT IN THE EVENING

BY HAKUIN ZENJI

PREFACE TO A CHAT ON A BOAT IN THE
EVENING

(Words) Selected by the Starved and Frozen One of the
Hermitage of Poverty.

IN the Spring of the seventh year of the Horeki era (1757), at the (Zodiacal) Sign of the Ox in the fourth duodenary of the Calendar, the proprietor of the book store, called Shogetsu Do, in the capital, sent a letter written in the current handwriting to the near disciples of our Kokurin (Hakuin). In this letter he said:

'I have heard with humble respect that there is a manuscript entitled *Yasen Kanna* (A Chat on a Boat in the Evening) among the papers of your Teacher. I am told that in this work he has put together very carefully the secrets of long life, secrets which train the spirit, nourish the soul and supply power for doing work. Indeed this work contains the essence of what is called the divine elixir of life. Therefore wise men who know the good things of the world, when they think of this book, think of it as they do of the rainbow shining in the clouds after a long drought. Some wandering monks have transcribed it, but they keep it hoarded away as a great secret and do not let it be seen. It is as if the mighty forces of heaven are kept uselessly stored up in a great chest. My request is that this book may be given a life as long as that of the catalpa tree and that our spiritual thirst may be quenched.

'I hear that your revered teacher, even in his old age, always enjoys being helpful to others. So, if you think there is anything which may be of benefit to us ordinary mortals in this writing, surely, surely, he will not grudge it to us.'

This letter which was sent in duplicate, was presented to the teacher. He smiled. So his disciples opened the box containing the old manuscripts. More than half the papers had already been consumed in the bellies of the moths. The disciples, however, immediately emended and copied the writings, and now fifty pages have made their appearance. They are being enclosed in proper covers and sent to the teacher in the capital. I am a day or two older than the other disciples, so I have felt compelled to undertake this preface.

The teacher said:

'This teacher (I myself) has been living in this temple for about forty years. Since I took up my alms-bowl, three generations of hempen-robed monks have crossed this threshold. Here they have submitted to my poisonous spittle and endured my painful rod, but they have forgotten to go away. Some have been here for ten, some for twenty years. Some do not seem to dislike the probability that they may become dust under the trees of this Swan-Grove (this temple). They are all of them prominent men, "Fair Flowers" for all regions. They live scattered about to the east and west, within ten or twelve miles. They live under conditions of great suffering, in old decaying houses, temples and broken down tombs, which they rent as hermitages. Distressed in the mornings, pained with bitter evenings, starved in the daytime, frozen at night, nothing passes through their mouths but vegetables and barley flour. Their ears hear nothing but scoffs and reviling or scolding words. What touches their bodies is only angry fists and painful rods. What they see causes them to furrow their brows. What they hear brings sweat to their bodies. The very gods must surely shed tears for them. The demons must surely put the palms of their hands together and pray for them.

'When these men first came here, they looked like So-gyoku (Sung-yu in Chinese) and Ka-an (Ho-yen in Chinese) so attractive were their looks, and their skin shone like fine oil. But before long they were like To-ho (Tu-fu in Chinese) and Ka-to (Chia-tao in Chinese) their bodies dried up, their faces haggard. If one met them on the shores of the lagoon they were like bent up wizened things. If they were not in truth very Bodhisattvas of men, bold and strong of spirit, regarding not the life of their bodies, what pleasure could there possibly have been for them

in crowding together here for such a long time? It is because these men have too often suffered excessively and been too strict in their disciplinary exercises that their lungs have shrunk, their bodies have become wizened. They suffer pains in their loins and have indigestion and other diseases which are too hard to cure. For very pity and grief, I myself, never too well, and pale, feel that I can no longer restrain myself, but must daily exercise my hoary old head and try to feed them from these aged breasts of mine, by imparting to them the secret of what I call introspection.

'Let me say here, too, that if anyone who has come to practise meditation and discernment of the Way and is an advanced student, has fits of dizziness and feels weary in his body as if the five internal organs of his, are out of harmony with each other, even if he tries to cure his ailments by the use of the three medical arts of acupuncture, moxacautery and drugs, then even if he were Ka-da (Hua-t'o in Chinese) or Henso (Pien-ts'ang in Chinese) it would be difficult for him to be healed. But I have the secret of the hermit's elixir of life. My dear friends, I hope you will make trial of it, you will soon see wonderful results. It will be to you like the sun bursting out in its full brightness through the clouds and mists of night.

'If you wish to practise this secret art, desist for a while from activities, refrain from meditating on the model subjects² and first of all learn to sleep. Before you go to sleep or close your eyes, stretch out your legs and press them tight together, and let the energy of your whole body fill your body below your navel, breathing centre and loins, and time after time think of the following sort of things.

'It is this body of mine, all the parts below my navel and loins, which is nothing else than my own primal, essential dignity, what need then is there of such things as nostrils. This body of mine is my true original home, why should I need news of my (earthly) home? This body of mine is in very truth the pure paradise of my soul, what need is there of any further glory? This lowly body of mine is in truth my very own Amida, what law can he teach me?

'Bring such ideas into your mind again and again, and you will find that when the effects of such reflexions have taken a hold on you, that your body will be stronger, for its energy will fill your loins right down to the soles of your feet and the lower

part of your abdomen will become round like an unused ball. Meditating thus time after time for five or seven days or perhaps up to twenty or thirty-seven days, the five aggregations and six accumulations of sickness, pain and other symptoms of disease will be cured. If they are not you may cut off this old monk's head and carry it away with you.

'When my disciples heard this they were filled with joy and were very grateful. Each one carried on this secret discipline privately and all saw marvellous results. How soon the effects were felt depended on the exactness of their performance. More than half were entirely cured. Each of them continued to praise the wonderful effects of this method of introspection.

'The teacher (I) says, "Do not let this cure of the sickness of your hearts be sufficient. The better the cure so much the more is the need to carry on the discipline. The better you understand, the more you will progress!" When I first began this method of disciplinary study I became severely ill—my pain and distress were worse, ten times worse, than what you have suffered. It became impossible for me to move, and I used to think in my heart, as people in the world probably think, that I would like to get rid of this old skin bag of bones as quickly as possible, rather than go on suffering so much. But, Oh, how great was my joy when I was taught the secret of this method of introspection, for I found that I was entirely cured. My joy was like that which you all of you feel. A great man once said: "This indeed, this is the divine art of long life and immortality. With this, a life which lasted for three hundred years would be called only a medium length life. No one can guess how much longer it may go on."

'My own joy was unlimited. I did not neglect to perform the proper discipline for three years and I noticed that my body was getting better gradually and my vitality stronger. Now, however, I began to think in my inner mind that even though I might be disposed to carry on this discipline and support life for, say, eight hundred years, as did Ho-so (P'eng-tsu in Chinese) I should be nothing better than a ghost protecting the corpse of a dull ignorance. It would be like a badger sleeping in its old burrow, at last there would be nothing but the dust of destruction. Why have I never yet had such companions as Kak-ko (Ko-hung), Tek-kai (T'ieh-Kuai), Cho-kwa (Chang-Hua), and Hi-cho (Fei-chang) (those immortal beings!)? Would it not be

better, I thought, to perform the four great vows,³ to learn the rules of Bodhisattvas, always to fulfil the works of the law, to destroy the irreversible, firm dharma-kāya, which does not die before the void and is not after the void, and to achieve the strong and indestructible body of the immortals.

'So I secured two or three like-minded colleagues of men—Bodhisattvas—who came to study the mysteries with me. Together with them I practised the method of introspection as well as meditation. Together with them I cultivated the virtues of the ascetic life and together with them I struggled for more than thirty years. Each year another two or three members were added to us, till now there are nearly two hundred who have been added to us. In this fellowship there are monks who have come from all parts of the country, men who have undergone labour, sorrow, weariness, men of pity, whose spirits make them dizzy and almost demented. I pitied these men and handed on to them this teaching about introspection privately, and they were immediately cured. The more they understood the more did they progress.

'Though my own age is said to have passed that of a withered old tree, I do not suffer from even one pint of painful illness, my teeth have not fallen out, my eyes and ears are clearer than ever, so that I am apt to forget the darkness and cloudiness of life's end. Never in any month have I had to omit the fortnightly duties of the law. In response to requests from the provinces I have attended more than fifty or sixty meetings, where four or five hundred men have assembled, and have expressed to them my views in accordance with the wishes of the monks, and I have lectured on the Scriptures and the records sometimes for five or seven "ten-day periods". Not once have I been obliged to close any meeting before finishing it in proper course. My body is healthy and my energy is greater now than it was when I was a young fellow of twenty or thirty. I realize that all this is entirely due to the method of introspection.

'My disciples, who were living with me in the Temple, with tears of grateful respectfulness, said: "Oh, Teacher, out of your deep compassion and in mercy to us, please write down the main points of this method of introspection. Write it so as to preserve it and succour us and those colleagues of ours who, like us, may in future suffer from the weariness which comes

from hard meditation." The teacher agreed and immediately this manuscript was written.

'And what is the sum of the teaching of this document? Roughly it is the teaching that the maintenance of life is better than the moulding of outer forms alone. The essential of the moulding of outer forms consists mainly in pressing the vital forces down to below the navel. When the mind is concentrated in that way and the spirit is intent, then the elixir of life is made. When the elixir is thus made then the outer form becomes firm, and when the outer form becomes firm the inward spirit becomes perfected. When the inward spirit is thus perfected long life ensues. This is the secret of the nine revolutions of the elixir of the hermits (i.e. the most perfect form of the elixir).

'It is of utmost importance and must be well understood that what I mean is that this elixir is not an external thing. It is entirely a descent of the spirit-heart into the space below the navel. If all my disciples resident in this Temple are assiduous in performing this discipline and try to progress without carelessness, not only will the meditation sickness be cured and the weariness of the body is overcome, but the Zen teaching itself will also make great progress, and in future years those persons who are now in doubt will be found clapping their hands and laughing for joy.

'But now, look! The moon is high, the shadow of the castle has gone.

'On the twenty-fifth day, fourth calendar sign, in the Spring of the year, in the seventh year of the Horeki Era (1757).

'In the temple of distress and poverty, by the hungry and frozen one burning incense and bowing down his head.'

A CHAT ON A BOAT IN THE EVENING

ON the very first day that I went into the mountains to study and practise meditation I made up my mind to be strenuous and bold in faith, and to work hard at carrying on the refining discipline of the Way. But after only two or three frosts had passed over me, suddenly one night I received an enlightening experience. The many doubts which I had felt up to this time were brought into harmony with the root principles of the inner spirit and they melted away like ice in water. The karma-roots which produce the life-death cycle sank to the lowest depths and dissolved like foam on the surface of the sea. I pondered frequently on the quick way in which the karma-cycle eliminated man—the twenty or thirty years spoken of by the men of old. Oh! how uncertain they are! Only a few months and they are all forgotten by those who were doing the dancing!

But after that night, when reflecting on my daily life, those two conditions of life, activity and non-activity had become entirely out of harmony. The two inclinations in me towards finiteness and infinity had become indistinct in my mind. I could not make up my mind to do or not to do. So that thought occurred to me that I would like to clothe myself in a lustrous glow and throw off my present life and depart from this world.

Finding myself in such a state of mind, I set my teeth, fixed my eyes clearly and determined to forego sleep and food. But, before I had spent many months in that strenuous way my heart began to make me dizzy, my lungs became dry, my limbs felt as cold as if they were immersed in ice and snow. My ears were filled with the ringing as of the rushing waters of a swift river in a deep canyon. My inward organs felt weak and my whole body trembled with apprehensions and fears. My spirit was distressed and weary, and whether sleeping or waking I used continually to see all sorts of imaginary things, brought to me through my six senses. Both sides of my body were con-

tinually bathed in sweat, and my eyes were perpetually filled with tears. I knew that even if I resorted to famous teachers in every part of the country and searched for great physicians in any part of the world none of the hundred medicines would be of any avail.

It was at this time that someone said to me:

'There is a man living on the cliffs of the mountains of Shirakawa in Yamashiro. People call him Haku-yu and speak of him as Teacher. His age they say has passed in review three or four full cycles of the years of the Rat (which means that they thought he had lived for about two hundred and forty years!). His abode is about eight or nine miles from the nearest habitation of men. He does not like seeing people and if anyone goes up to his dwelling he always runs away in order to avoid them. Some think he is a wise man others think he is a fool. The villagers speak of him as their own hermit. It is rumoured that he was a teacher of Ishikawa Jozan (1583-1672) of the Takeyama school. He is an expert astronomer and also skilled in medical lore. Not long ago some one visited him and treated him with due courtesy and was fortunate enough to hear from him some of his rare sayings. This visitor to him said after he had come away and pondered over what he had heard that these words would certainly be of real benefit to mankind.'

When I myself heard this I said nothing to anybody, but clad myself in my travelling garments and started off early one morning while the dew was still on the ground. It was the beginning of the first month in the year of the Tiger in the era of Ho-ei (1704-1711, i.e. 1710). I crossed over a valley still in deep shadow and hastened to the village of Shirakawa. There I deposited my bundle at a tea-house and made enquiries about the location of Haku-yu's abode. A villager pointed with a stick to a place far up the valley. Guiding myself by the sound of the running water I went up this valley for nearly three miles when I reached a place where I had to cross the torrent. Then I had to struggle through thick underbrush until I came upon an old man, who pointed out to me a spot far up in the clouds. There I could just see a gold and silver looking dot, not much bigger than an inch square. As I went on this little dot was sometimes visible and sometimes lost to view according to the swirling

mists of the mountains. I had been told that the little dot which I was shown was the place where Haku-yu hung the rush curtain at the entrance to his cave dwelling. I girded up my clothes and began the steep climb. After passing along some precipitous places I pushed through some more thick underbrush. Ice and snow bit through my straw sandals. The damp mists weighed down my clothes. Sweat poured out of me and my fat flowed away. At last I reached the little rush curtain.

Here I stopped for a moment and looked at the scenery. The surroundings were of an infinite purity and everything seemed to be sublime, the universe of phenomena was truly uplifting. My spirit trembled and I was filled with awe. For a short time I leaned against a rock and inhaled the sweet air several hundred times. Then I shook out my garments and straightened out my collar and hesitatingly and deferentially peered through the little rush curtain. There I could dimly see Haku-yu sitting upright with his eyes fixed straight in front of him. His luxuriant hair reached down to his knees. His face was ruddy and beautiful as the fruit of the jujube tree. He was wearing a large cloth as an apron and was seated on a soft straw mat.

The cave itself was barely six feet square. There was absolutely no furniture nor anything necessary for living purposes, no food. Only a small desk on which were placed three books. These were the *Mean of Confucius* (Chung-yung, Chu-o in Japanese), the *Lao-tse* and the *Diamond-Wisdom Sutra* (Kongo-Hannya, the *Vajracchedika Prajna-paramita-sutra*).

I made a courteous bow of respect and then told the old hermit carefully what were the symptoms of my illness and asked for his advice and help. He opened his eyes and fixed them on me and then spoke very slowly. He said:

'I am a man living here in these mountains, more dead than alive. I sleep in the company of the deer. I gather chestnuts for my food. How can I have knowledge of anything else? I am really quite ashamed that I should have been the cause of troubling a self-sacrificing monk like you to come and visit me.'

On hearing these words I became all the more urgent and went on with my request, 'knocking at his door'. Then Haku-yu quietly took my hand and began to enquire about my five internal organs (heart, liver, stomach, lungs and kidneys) and

went on to investigate the nine marks (colour, finger-nails etc.). My finger-nails were only half an inch long (half what they should have been). He furrowed his brows as if he were actually in pain and then said :

'Alas! Your meditation has been too unmeasured and your asceticism too strict. The chance of cure has been lost. You are too seriously ill. This meditation sickness of yours will indeed be difficult to cure. Even if you were to try all the three curative measures, acupuncture, moxacautery and medicines, hoping to be cured by them, and even if the most famous doctors were to use all their medical knowledge you would not see any wonderful results. You are already defeated because of your excessive meditation practices. Unless you now heap up the goodness of the method of introspection you will find that at last you will not even be able to stand.'

And by 'standing' he meant literally standing on my feet.

So then I said :

'Please, I would like to hear the essential secrets of this method of introspection. While studying it I will practise it as carefully as I can.'

Haku-yu remained very silent as he slowly changed his posture. Then very quietly he said :

'Ah! Sir, you are the sort of person who likes to ask many questions. Shall I tell you a little of what I learnt long ago? I learnt the mysterious key to the knowledge of preserving life. It is something which but few men know. Providing one is not remiss in carrying out this system, wonderful results will certainly be obtained. A long life may be expected. For, you see, the Great Way is divided into the two fundamental principles, the negative and positive, the Yin and the Yang. When these two are in harmony men of character are produced. For then there is an innate vitality silently moving within the body, the five organs are so arranged that the correct rhythmical movements of the pulse are carried on. The breathing which protects the body and the blood which gives it activity mutually rise and fall in regular motion about fifty times each day and night. To

each full exhalation there is a rhythmic movement of about three inches, and so too for each full inhalation. There are about thirteen thousand five hundred full breathings in and out during a full day and night. The heart is then doing its work regularly and easily. It is fire which burns upwards. The lungs do not get tired or become heated with their constant effort to keep in tune with an excited heart. None of the elements which make up the material of the body are worked to exhaustion. None of the five activities of life, obtaining nourishment, movement, perceptive-ness, study and realization of the purpose of life—all these are carried on with ease. Nor do the six "dependants", by which I mean the six sense organs become fixed, and therefore the chief fundamentals of the bodily structure remain unimpaired.

'But when these fundamental principles are out of harmony then the structure of the body goes wrong, each part and all the elements of it become disordered and any or all of the hundred diseases may be produced. When that happens then none of the hundred medicines will provide any remedy. All the physicians in the world, joining hands in consultation, will not be able to do or even to say anything useful.

'But let me put it in another way. The maintenance of the life of our bodies may be compared to the defending of a country. Enlightened princes and sages always give their attention to the masses of their people. Unenlightened rulers, on the other hand, only pay attention arbitrarily to the upper classes. Now when this happens the "Nine Lords" assert their own authority and the Hundred Lesser Lords call for special consideration for themselves, so that at last there is nobody to take care of the poverty and distress of the common people. At such times, though the country may look green, amongst the people there will be nothing but starvation and death. Then the virtuous will hide away, the people will be angry and discontented. Local nobles will isolate themselves or rebel. The barbarians, who surround the land, will rival one another in making raids and uprisings, till at last the common people will be reduced to the direst distress, and the rhythmic order of the national life will come to an end.

'But when attention is devoted to the masses of the people, then the Nine Lords restrain their ambitions, the Hundred Lesser lords observe their agreements sincerely and do not forget the hard labours of the poor and common people. In the fields

there is enough millet and to spare. There is also enough and more than enough material for clothing the womenfolk. The wise men of the provinces join up with the nation, the local nobles are submissive and afraid to offend. The common people are well nourished and so the whole nation is strong. No one dares to oppose the laws and no enemies make incursions on the land. The land does not hear the sound of the war drums, and the people do not even know the meaning of the word "Halberd".

'And it is just like that with the human body too. The man of character always looks after the needs of the body in a reasonable way. When these organs are thus reasonably cared for, the Seven evils do not operate in the body, nor do the four heresies invade it from outside. The bodily defences are so strong that the heart and mind are healthy. The mouth does not have to taste the bitterness of drugs, nor does any part of the body have to experience the pains of acupuncture or moxocautery.

'But the man who follows the current of folly, selfishly turns his attention to what he calls "high estates". This causes a disorganization of all the material elements of the body. So the Five Officials (i.e. the main internal organs), shrink from fatigue, and the Six Relatives (i.e. the organs of sense) suffer and become inharmonious. This is why the official (at Shitsu-en, Chi-yuan) said, "The true man in breathing, breathes through his heels, the common man in breathing breathes through his throat." Kyo-shun (Hsu-Tsun) said, "When the spirit is in the lower (parts) the breathing is from afar (scarce), when it is in the upper (parts) the breathing becomes short." Jo-yo shi (Dhang-yang-tsu) said, "In man there is the spirit of the real unity, when that descends below the navel the 'positive' returns. If one wants to know the time when that 'positive' returns the sign is the heat (of the body). Roughly speaking for maintaining life the upper parts of the body should be kept pure and cool, and the lower parts warm. Then the twelve pulses and the twelve branches (veins?) will be in agreement and in accord with the twelve months and the twelve hours (of the day). This is just the same as when the six lines of the system of divination (Eki, I-ching) complete the circuit and the year is completed. When the five negative lines are on top and one positive line is at the bottom (of the divination sign) this represents the winter solstice. This is what is meant perhaps, by breathing

through the heels. When the three positive lines are on top and the three negative lines at the bottom (of the divination sign), this points to the beginning of spring, when all things are full of the spirit of growth and the hundred herbs receive the abundance of the growth of springtime. When the perfect man energetically fills the lower parts this is the sign that when he has received this energy his powers of resistance are complete and his spiritual power is great.

'When the five negative lines of divination are underneath (in the divination sign) and one positive line is on top. This means deprivation. It is the season of the ninth month. When the sky receives this, the trees and gardens lose their colours, the hundred herbs wither away. This is the sign that the ordinary man in breathing is breathing through his throat, and his looks become emaciated, and his teeth will fall out. And that is why in the *En-ju-Sho* (Yen-shou-ju) it says: "When the six positive lines give out, all the lines are negative and men easily die".'

So one ought to know for certain that one should energetically fill the lower part of the body with spiritual energy, and this is essential for nourishing its life.

In ancient times Go Kai-sho went to see the teacher, Seki-dai, and after performing the ablutions he asked about the art of making the elixir. The teacher said: With me is the mysterious secret of the original and true elixir, and unless it is to the very highest 'vessels' (i.e. persons) it must not be handed on. In old times Kwo-se-shi told this to the Emperor Kwo. (Huang, the Yellow Emperor, legendary date about four thousand years ago.) After the Emperor had performed the thirty-seven ablutions⁵ he accepted it. For outside the Great Way there is no true elixir, and outside the true elixir there is no Great Way. After all, there is the Law of the Five (methods of) getting rid of the desires (coming from the five senses). When you have got rid of your six 'desires' and your five senses have forgotten their functions then the primary and intricate and true spirit will similarly fill your whole vision. This is what that great Great White Hermit (or man of the Way, Tao) said 'I who serve heaven am united with the heaven which I serve.' This is the overflowing spirit spoken of by Mencius. This is to be stored up below the navel, preserved for years and months, this is to be

made unconquerable, and then one morning one lights the fire in the oven of the elixir, the external and the internal and all in between, the eight fastenings and the six bindings will all together become the one great elixir. Then one will for the first time understand that one's self was born before the heavens and the earth, and that it will not die after the great void, and that it is the true and eternal divine 'hermit'. This is the time when the true elixir oven is successful. How could such a one have pleasure in such magic doings as driving the winds, striding on the mists, pushing down the land, walking on the water and such 'closed up' things? He may stir up the ocean into cream, or turn the soil into gold. But as has been said by the ancient wise men, 'The elixir is below the navel, the fluid is the fluid of the lungs, and one turns down the fluid of the lungs to the space below the navel and so turns the lung fluid into the elixir.'

Here I said: 'I have listened to your words with respect, and I will cease from my Zen meditation for a time and will take the opportunity of trying hard to tranquilize myself. What I am afraid of is what Ri-shi-sai called a tendency to diarrhoea, and if I keep my mind on one place will not my spirit and my blood become stagnant?'

Haku-yu said with a smile: 'No, no. That teacher Ri said: Fire rises, so make it come down. It is the nature of water to come down, so make it rise. Water rising, fire descending—this is called "mixing". When these things mix together they are perfected, when they do not mix they are still imperfect. Mixing is the sign of life, non-mixing is the sign of death. When that teacher Ri spoke of the tendency to diarrhoea as a purifying symptom, he was trying to help those who study Tan-kei. These people used to say that the premier fire ascends easily and the whole body suffers and those suffering parts supply water in order to control that fire. There are two principles in the premier of fire. The "Lord" fire is above and rules in quietness, the "premier" fire has its place underneath and controls movement. The Lord fire controls the heart, the premier assists it. The premier fire is of two sorts, one becomes the kidneys and one the liver. The liver is like thunder, the kidneys are like the dragon. And that is why it has been said that when the dragon is made to descend into the depths of the sea there is no loud thunder, but when the thunder is hidden in a marsh most certainly no dragon will fly out. Whether sea or marsh, both

imply water. Is not this then a word showing that fire which rises so easily must be kept under control? Again it is said: When the heart is weary it will be emptied and warm. When the heart is empty, in order to assist it the heart is brought down and mixed with the kidneys. This is called restoring it. It is the way of completed perfection.

'Sir, your fire heart has been going the wrong way, upwards, hence your chronic sickness. Unless you bring it down again, even though you were to exhaust all the secrets of the three worlds, you will not be able to stand. And is my plan, which is so like that of the Way (Tao), to be considered very different from that of Sakyamuni. It is Zen. When suddenly it starts working you will find yourself laughing. For surely meditation through non-meditation becomes true meditation. Too much meditation must be said to be heretical meditation. Sir, facing your previous over-meditation, you are now seeing these severe sicknesses. Now, in order to save yourself from these (sicknesses) it must be by non-meditation, do you not think so? Sir, gather together the flames of fire of your heart and place them under your navel and below your feet, then your whole chest will become cool, you will not have a single worrying thought, no single drop of a wave of desire will disturb the waves of consciousness. This is the true and pure meditation.

'And do not say that you will leave off Zen meditation for a while. Buddha said: A hundred and one diseases are cured by putting your heart in your feet. Moreover there is in the Agamas a rule about how to use cream,⁶ which is a wonderful thing for saving a man from weariness of heart. Then in the *Maha-Shikwan* (*Chi-k'ai's Scripture on Meditation* 538-597) of the Ten-dai teaching the causes of disease are exhaustively examined and detailed disquisitions are given as to rules about curing sicknesses. There are twelve kinds of breathings which help in curing all diseases. There is the rule about seeing a bean, as it were, below the navel. The purpose of doing so is to bring down the fire of the heart and concentrate it below the navel and right down to the soles of the feet. This not only cures diseases but helps greatly in Zen meditation. In the last analysis there are two kinds of "Stopping" and "Meditation" (*Samatha* and *Vipasyana*) the relative and the absolute. The absolute one is complete vision of the absolute reality. The relative one puts in the first place the fixing of the mind on the protecting fire

of the heart by concentrating pressure below the navel. Ascetics who have used this method have received much benefit from it.

'In ancient times the Patriarch of Ei-hei (i.e. Do-gen, or Shō-yō Tai-shi founder of the Sōdō Sect. 1200-1253) went to the China of the Sung dynasty and paid a visit of respect to Nyo-jo (Jung-ching) at the Ten-dō (T'ien-Tung) monastery. One day he went into the "Hall of Mysteries" and asked what might help him in his meditations. Nyo-jo said: Do-gen, at the time of meditation fix your attention on the palm of your left hand. This is the summary of what Gi-shi (Chih kai) taught about stopping and meditation. Gi-shi was the first to teach the secret of this stopping and meditation in connection with introspection. By this method he saved one of his disciples, Chin-shin (Che-shen) from serious illness and snatched him from a thousand deaths. (This is described in detail in the Shō-Shi-kwan (Hsiao-chih-kuan).) Again, the monk Haku-un (1043-1121, Po-yun) said: I always make my heart fill my abdomen. I never fail to do this when, for instance, I am instructing my disciples, or presiding at meetings or associating with guests or at special meetings or at preaching services or at the seven (Verticals' where Salvation by one's own efforts is taught) or at the eight (Horizontal' where Salvation by the help of Amida is taught) I know, too, that many aged guests of mine have benefited. It is a practice much to be valued.

'Here, in summary is what appears in the So-mon (Su-wen). If one is quiet and empty the true spirit follows on. If the pure spirit is protected within, from whence can illnesses come? Am I not pleased to base my word on this? And then it is essential to protect this inside one, and to fill the whole body with the fundamental energy as well as to keep the three hundred and sixty joints, and all the eighty-four thousand pores of the skin in perfect state so that not one of them falls out. It should be known that this is of extreme importance in nourishing life.

'Ho-so (Peng-tsu) says: Here is the rule for keeping the spirit peaceful and for directing the vital energy in the correct channels. First close the doors of the meditation chamber, lie quietly on the floor and warm it. Have your pillow two and a half inches high. Stretch out your body and lie face up. Close your eyes and concentrate your mind on your chest and diaphragm. Place a goose feather on your nose and do not move till you have inhaled three hundred times. Listen to nothing and

look at nothing. When you have reached the state where you neither hear nor see anything, then neither cold nor heat can violate you, no bee or scorpion can poison you. Your life will last for three hundred and sixty years (six of the sexagenary cycles). You will be near to being a true man.

'Again Ho (Su) of the College of Literature (in China) said: If you are hungry take food, but leave off before repletion. Then ramble about for long distances and make your stomach empty. Then enter into a quiet room, sit down in the correct posture and be silent. Count your inhalations and exhalations, beginning from one to ten, then on from ten to a hundred and from a hundred continue to one thousand. You will then find that your body will be as still and your spirit as calm as the void itself. When this state has been reached and has lasted for some time your breath will automatically stop. When your breathing in and out has stopped, your breath will come out like a steaming cloud of vapor from all the eighty-four thousand pores of your body. Then all illnesses, permanent and chronic, will automatically be eliminated and you will understand clearly that all your troubles and handicaps have been destroyed in a most natural way. It will be as if a blind man had suddenly received his sight; he will no longer have to ask someone to point out the way to him. All that you have to do then is to give up worldly speech and sustain your vital energy. For it is said: He who nurtures the eye-sense always keeps his eyes shut, he who nourishes his ear-sense is always sated (by noises), he who nourishes the heart is always silent.

'Here I interrupted him and said: I want to ask you to tell me the rules about how to make use of that "cream".⁶ Haku-yu replied: If the one who meditates has the four elements out of harmony and feels his body and spirit to be wearied with the labour, he must rouse himself and let the following ideas come into his mind. If for instance, he were to place that deliciously scented, pure and clean cream, as large as a duck's egg on his head, he will feel a marvellous sensation come over his whole body. His head will become moist. That moist feeling will seem to sink deeper and go lower and lower to the shoulders, elbows, breasts, diaphragm, the lungs, the liver and the stomach, till at last it will reach the bottom of the spine and the buttocks. Then the "five gatherings" and the six accumulations within the breast, the pains in the bowels, will flow downwards like water

till there will be left a sensation of energy circulating round the whole body, warming both the legs and reaching right down to the soles of the feet. Anyone practising meditation should try to have this sensation more than once. The overflow of energy which goes on sinking in and accumulates till it brims over warming and moistening the body—just as a good physician collects all kinds of herbs and scented drugs, brews them and pours them into a bath till they brim over, and then applies them and makes them soak into every part of the patient's body below the navel. When this impression has occurred, because it is a spiritual phenomenon, the senses are intensified, the sense of smell becomes aware of rare odours, the sense of touch becomes marvellously keen. The body and spirit are so closely in harmony that there is more vitality than when it is only twenty or thirty years old. Now all the "accumulations and gatherings" in the breast melt away, the bowels and stomach become quiet, and imperceptibly the skin takes on a shining glow. Provided that one does not then become remiss there is not a single malady that cannot be cured. What virtue may not then be attained? What ascetic practice may not then be performed? What Way may not then be accomplished? The rate at which these wonders become efficacious depends solely on the perfection, "the purity or coarseness" of the person who is practising the art. When I was an infant (young) I suffered from many illnesses, ten times more serious than those from which you are suffering, Sir. I reached such a state of disease that no physician would consider my case, and in spite of making exhaustive use of the hundred remedies there was no medical art which could save me. Thereupon I prayed to all the gods, and I asked for help from many heaven-bound ascetics. Oh! how fortunate I was at last, when I received from some one the knowledge of this wonderful "cream treatment". My joy was without limit. Without intermission I practised this discipline until in almost no time half my illnesses had left me. From that time on, both outwardly in my body and inwardly in my spirit, I have known nothing but calm and peace. Gradually, but with assiduous practice, hardly noticing the waxing and waning of the moon or marking the passing of the years, my worldly thoughts became less and less and lighter, and now it is as if I had forgotten the old habits of my human desires. I do not even know how many tens of years have passed over me, but somewhere in the

middle of my life I had occasion to go away into the mountains of Wakayama province, where I escaped from the world for about thirty years. During all that time I had no communication with mankind. When I look back on that time it seems like a short dream. "A dream of millet, yellow but only half ripened".

'Now up here in this uninhabited mountain, I have cast away this withered old vessel of my body. I clothe it with only two or three thin cloths, even in those most severe winter nights when the cold breaks through the thickest woollen garments. Yet I have never suffered any harm from cold in these wornout old insides of mine. It is now many months since my supply of stored grain gave out and I have received no other grain, yet I have never felt frozen or starved. I am sure that all this is due to the wonderful impressions (made on me by the knowledge of this method of meditation). But what I have told you is a mysterious matter which cannot be rationally discovered throughout a long life. And now, what more is there for me to say?'

With these words he closed his eyes and remained sitting in silence. With tears in my eyes I then expressed my thanks to him and slowly went out of the cave. The rays of the setting sun were just tinting the tops of the trees below. After a short time I heard the sound of footsteps echoing down the valley, and I timidly turned and looked back. With surprise and wonder, I saw that Haku-yu had left his cave and was coming to show me the way. He said:

'This mountain trail shows but uncertain traces of the footsteps of man. It is difficult to distinguish East from West here. I was afraid that you, who have been a guest of mine, should be distressed on your way home. The old fellow said he would show me the way for some distance, he was wearing straw sandals, such as are generally shod on young horses, and he carried a thin stick, but he stepped over the rough rocks and climbed up the precipitous places like the wind waving over a level plain. Laughing and chatting he went in front of me as my guide. When we had descended the track for about two miles we reached the river which I must ford. Here he said: If you

follow down this river you will certainly reach the village of Shirakawa.'

Here I reluctantly parted from him.

For some time I stood and followed Haku-yu with my eyes as he retraced his steps. The pace of his old feet was strong and swift, like that of a man who was flying to a mountain retreat in order to escape from the world. I envied him and respected him. I felt bitter with myself, because I could not follow a man like that to the very end of the world. Then I slowly turned away.

After that I began to practise introspection continuously, and before only three years had passed all those former illnesses of mine, even though I used no medicines nor received treatment by acupuncture or moxacautery were thoroughly swept away as if by some predetermined fate. And not only were my illnesses healed, but also all those things which are difficult to understand or enter into or penetrate and which until then I had not been able to grasp with my hands or feet or get my teeth into—these things I now penetrated intuitively, right to their roots and down to their depths. And I have experienced this joy six or seven times. And besides all this, I forgot how many times I have experienced the 'little visions', those joys which make one dance. For the first time I realized the meaning of those words—the eighteen great enlightenments of wonderful joy and the little joys which are without number. In real truth I have not been deceived.

Previously, even though I put on two or three pairs of socks, the soles of my feet were always cold as if frozen in snow or ice. Now though three extremely cold winters have passed over me, I have worn no socks at all, nor have I gone near a fire, and though my years have passed beyond the usual span of man's life there is not even half a pint of sickness in me to which I can point. And I put all this down to the instruction given me in this heavenly art.

So do not say to me: Kokurin, who has one foot already in the grave, has written meaningless and absurd conversations and is trying to deceive other people of good class.

This tradition of which I have written is one which has bones as well as spirit. It has not been prepared for those fine people who want to be perfect in an instant.

Those who are sick and tired and fools like me, will certainly

be relieved to some extent if they look, read, and meditate carefully and with detailed study.

What I am afraid of is only that others may clap their hands and laugh and that is why 'The horse munches the dried chaff and disturbs the midday siesta'.

Dated in the Horeki era (1757) the year of the Ox of the Hi-no-to sign, on the twenty-fifth day (The day called Hei,⁸ Shepherd's Purse) (14th March, 1757).

A REPLY TO A NEAR RETAINER OF LORD NABESHIMA OF SESSHU PROVINCE

YOU must, I am sure, feel a great relief now that your long journey of inspection of the harvest crops is safely concluded, and your Korean feast satisfactorily finished. My old bodily tabernacle is safe, but I do not intend to trouble you about myself.

I am much interested in your ceaseless exertions in carrying on your plans of the 'Two Stages of Activity and Quiet Meditation'. What you say is unusual and of great weight. With regard to the other matters mentioned in your letter, each and every one of them accords well with my own sentiments. They are extremely commendable and I, old monk, rejoice greatly.

As a general rule, if the mental attitude of persons who undertake austerities and spiritual discipline is a wrong attitude, during their times of deliberately planned concentration, they will find themselves hindered in both the states of meditation—the state known as 'activity' and that known as 'quiet' or calm. When the mental attitude is wrong there will be a barrier set up between these two states, a barrier of two extremes. One extreme is that of 'darkness' and the other is that of 'scattering'.² Moreover bodily ailments will occur—such as dizziness, a painful shrinking of the lungs, and physical vitality will be lost so that frequently illnesses difficult to heal will occur. On the other hand, if the training is carried on properly and in accordance with the true method, called 'introspection', the discipline will be found to be thoroughly compatible with the secrets of health preservation. Both the body and the mind will be strong and firm, physical vitality will be great and in every way the carrying out of the 'law' will be easy and pleasant.

Now, in the Agama Sutras minute instructions are given concerning the correct method of regulating one's self for the purpose of attaining to the 'great enlightenment'. Also Chi-sha, founder of the Tendai Sect in China (538-597 A.D.) gave a very

thorough explanation of the main idea of this discipline in his book, the Maha-Shikwan, or Scripture of 'Samādhi'. A fundamental theme of his book is that, whatever teaching one is studying, whatever law one desires to contemplate, and whether one sits upright or not, or carries on the services of sacred processions³ for six hours, whatever one is doing one should concentrate one's attention—say by fixing one's eyes on the navel or loins. This concentration of one's attention must never be relaxed, even when the pressure of worldly business is excessive, or when one is entertaining guests. Do not forget to concentrate the mind by this physical pressure on the body. It not infrequently happens that when a man takes care of his health in the way mentioned here, he will be able to sit in meditation for a whole day without becoming dulled or wearied, and even if he were to recite the sutras day and night he will not become tired, or if he were to write all day long he will feel no distress, and again if he were to give instruction in the law the whole day he will not break down. No matter how many works of merit he were to perform, there would be no onset of sluggishness, but rather his tired heavy mind would become freer and more generous and his mental vitality would become greater and greater. On the most painfully hot day he will not feel the need to use a fan, nor even would he have to perspire. On the coldest snowy night of a severe winter he would not have to wear thick clothes nor would he want to go near a fire in order to warm himself. And again, even if he were to live to be over a hundred years old, his teeth would remain firm, so that if he remained careful and was not negligent he would attain to really long life.

When the conditions mentioned above are really carried out, there is no 'Way' which cannot be performed. What rule is there that could not be observed? What 'Dhyana' or mystic meditation is there that could not be practised? What virtue is there that could not be brought to perfection?

If, however, on the other hand, the ancient practice as mentioned above, is not performed, and the secret of the true discipline is not correctly memorized, and if one seeks to explain the teaching and to understand things in one's own arbitrary way, then the stage of reasonable contemplation will be overpassed, the opportune time for thought is lost, and as a result one's throat and chest become stopped up, one's mind will rise

up in pride, one's legs will be as cold as if they were steeped in ice and snow, one's ears will ring with noises as if they were listening to the echoes in a deep valley, one's lungs will become painfully constricted, the moisture of one's body will dry up, till at last a disease difficult to heal will come upon one, and the very origin of life itself will be endangered. And all this would be because the correct method of the true discipline is not known. It would be a truly pitiable state of affairs.

Now, in the book to which I have referred, the Maha-Shikwan Sutra of Chisha, we find mention of what are called the 'Relative Samādhi' and the 'Absolute Samādhi'. What I am now writing to you about in this discussion is a sort of summary of this teaching about the 'Relative Samādhi' in its connection with the method or law of introspection.

When I was young I had quite wrong ideas about this matter. I used to think that the Way of the Buddha was nothing other than keeping the mind in absolute calm and quiet. I was always searching out dismal places and sitting there as if I was dead. My chest was choked up, as it were, with what were only trivial matters of worldly business. My mind was distracted. And I was not able to enter into any active way of life at all. So, alarming distresses crowded round me. My mind and my body were perpetually in a state of weakness. I was always sweating under my arms, and my eyes were continually filled with tears. My mind, too, was all the time bothered with grievances. I had not the least impression that I had obtained any power by means of the Way, of learning.

And then, luck came to me. I was extremely fortunate, for in the middle of my life I received guidance about the true and good way of knowledge. The secret of the method of 'introspection' was told me. I practised this method by myself, in private, for the space of three years. The illness, which had till that time been practically incurable, now began to melt away like frost or snow in the morning sunlight. Poisonously hard problems, set for meditation, difficulties of faith, difficulties preventing me from penetrating through to the truth, difficulties in expounding and explaining the teaching, and difficulties which hindered the beginning of periods of meditation—all these things which had formerly been such that I could not get my teeth into them—all of them, without exception, were softened and alleviated together with my bodily sickness, and

they melted away like ice. And now, this year, when I have passed the average length of man's life, I have ten times as much vitality as I used to have when I was only thirty or forty years of age. Now my body and soul are both healthy and strong. And I do not sweat under my arms any more. And though I have sometimes, of my own will, refrained from lying down or reclining for two or three, or even seven days at a time, my mental energy has not deteriorated. Surrounded by three or five hundred earnest monks I have preached on the Sutras and expounded the mystic records for periods of thirty or fifty days at a time and have not felt any exhaustion. I, myself, realize that this is due to the good effects of the method of 'Introspection'.

At first my main object in carrying out this method was the simple one of health preservation. But in the course of carrying on the method, though I did not consciously search for it, I discovered that my power of understanding was enlightened, and I frequently actually attained to real power—how often I did so, I cannot remember.

The most important thing to remember is that the first duty is to carry on the correct discipline by oneself within one's own heart, and one must not pick and choose for one's own selfish desires, either one or other of the two conditions of life—I mean the life of activity or the life of the calm. Sometimes one is tempted to think that the life of calm helps us to progress even better than one had hoped, while the life of activity does not seem to help us at all. But one who is carrying on the life of calm will sooner or later find that he is unable to enter into the active life at all. If a man, who has been leading the life of calm, at sometime or other has to enter the active life, with its worldly business, he may find that he entirely loses all the advantages of the powers which he had attained to in his quiet place of meditation. He will find that he has lost every jot of spiritual vitality which he thought he had gained. He will, probably, be inferior even to a man of the world who has not given any attention to the spiritual matters of the life of calm. He will find that all sorts of rubbishy ideas continue to revolve in his mind, he will have feelings of fear which he had not expected any more, and quite small jobs will frequently seem to be of enormous weight. He will then have nothing to show for all his pains in living the life of calm.

For reasons such as those mentioned above, Dai-e Zenshi

(1089-1163) wrote that the method of the life of activity is a million times better than the method of calm. And another sage, Haku-san, said that unless the life of activity is fully lived, one may be like a man carrying a great weight of one hundred pounds and climbing up to the top of Mount Yo-gaku.

But you must not think that all that I have said means that you should dislike or cease from trying to carry on the discipline of the life of calm, and deliberately seek to live only the life of activity. The less one understands and knows about these two conditions of life—the active and the calm—the more careful should one be to value them both and remember that they are only two aspects of one uniform condition. This is what is meant when it is said that a monk who is really practising meditation does not know that he is walking when he is walking, or sitting when he is sitting. When one has come to a realization of the nature of the Reality of the Self,⁴ then there is nothing which excels the life of activity as a means of attaining that vital power which can be used in any and every place. Here is a little story to illustrate this point.

A rich man entrusted a hundred pieces of gold to a servant and told him to guard it. That servant, therefore, shut himself up in his room, bolted the doors and sat down guarding the treasure, so that no one could come and rob him. Now such a man's work can by no means be said to be lacking in energy. However, one might compare such a man with the 'sravaka' or disciple of lower rank carrying on his one-sided discipline (of calm alone).

But if a servant is told to carry the gold to some other place, which would entail his passing through places where robbers might surround him like wasps and thieves might troop round him like ants, then that man would have to be bold and brave, gird on a sword, step high and carry his treasure on a high pole, so that he might get the treasure safely to its destination without confusion or any other 'mix-up'. Such a man would show no signs of fear, he would work hard and lustily and everybody would praise his valour and strength. In this case the man might be compared to a Bodhisattva of the 'quick' and 'perfect' Way, who seeks Nirvana, not only for his own sake, but also for the purpose of teaching all sentient beings.

The treasure of hundreds of pieces of gold represents the determination or will to carry out the plan of meditation, firmly,

irreversibly, with concentrated, deep mindfulness. The robbers who surround like wasps and the thieves who troop around like ants represent the five delusions,⁵ the ten bonds⁶ binding us to the wheel of existence, the five lusts⁶ and the eight false views.⁷ The man in the second part of the story represents the perfected Bodhisattva, who performs the correct meditative discipline perfectly, in the 'quick' way, and who has thoroughly investigated the truth. The 'place' to which he takes the treasure represents the 'treasure place' of the great calm of the other shore, where are provided the 'four virtues' of perpetual happiness and purity. This is why it is said that the monk who comes to meditate truly and correctly, must sit facing the innermost sanctuary of truth.

And with regard to the 'sravakas', or disciples of lower grade, sometimes they are too lightly thought of, but people of our present times cannot match them either in their seeking of the Way nor in the brightness of their knowledge and virtue. For people today carry on their discipline from wrong motives. They are fond only of places where the talk is nothing but tittle-tattle. They do not know what is the correct behaviour for Bodhisattvas, nor do they have the proper 'cause and effect' relation with the Buddha's land—and so the Tathagata has criticized and even scolded them by comparing them to the leprous, itching body of a field fox, and the Buddha has likened them to things of the nature of scorched reeds and rotten seed.

The third of our patriarchs, Seng-tsun (So-san in Japanese, died 606), said, 'If your desire is to attain to knowledge of the endlessness of the chain of causation, which is the teaching of the "One Vehicle", you do not have to hate the "six dusts" which darken the mind.' Of course, by these words he did not mean that we may be fond of these 'six dusts'. What the patriarch's saying means is that just as a water bird does not get its wings wet when it goes into the water, so we must simply go on with our correct method of meditative discipline, being careful neither to reject nor to make choice of these 'Six Dusts'. If you absolutely avoid the 'Six Dusts' and are fearful of the 'Eight Winds', which disturb the mind, such as profit, loss, praise, blame, fame, ill-fame, pain, joy, then one will be broken, one will be ground to pieces in the mortar of the lower grades of discipleship, and one will never attain to the perfect Buddhahood.

Another ancient sage, Yo-ka Taishi (a disciple of Hui-neng, 665-713 A.D.), in the same connection said, 'The performance of true meditation must be still within the sphere where desires exist. It works from within that sphere in order to interpret the meaning of the facts of existence. From within the fires the Lotus blossoms, but even to the very end it never gets soiled with mud'. Now this saying, again, does not, of course, mean that one may be addicted to the 'five lusts'. What it really means is that, even if one is surrounded by the 'five lusts' and the 'six dusts', just as the Lotus is not soiled by the mud so all these lusts and dusts must be treated in entire purity of mind and simplicity of life. Because even if a man goes to live in the forests and mountains far away in the country, and eats only one egg a day or fasts entirely and performs the discipline of meditation for six hours each day, yet he can never be absolutely free (from the dusts and lusts) in his performance of the Way. Much less then, when a man is living in the close fellowship of life, with a wife, or with brothers and sisters and with all the confused 'dust-raising' affairs of village life. In all these cases unless one has the eyes to discriminate the true nature of things, one will not be able to meet the demands of the true discipline even to an infinitesimal degree.

And this is why Bodhidharma said, 'If you desire to seek Buddha, you must be able to discriminate concerning the true nature of things'.

But now, if suddenly one's understanding is opened to realize that all aspects of reality are but one, and that there is in truth only one Buddha Way, then even the 'six dusts' will be seen to be comprised within the discipline and the 'five lusts' are also comprised within that same discipline of meditation—for all one's acts, all one's words, all one's activities and all one's quiet times are so comprised within the true method and practice of meditation. If such is indeed the case then that form of the meditative life which is carried on in the forests and mountains is as far from being the only way to true attainment as the heaven is from the earth. Bodhidharma was not either blaming or praising the ascetic, who is rather uncommon in the world, when he compared a seeker's life to the Lotus living in the midst of the fire.

The sage Yo-ga attained to the inner mystery of the Tendai teaching, that the three realities,⁸ the absolute, the phenomenal and the assumed, are in fact but one. He had practised the dis-

cipline of samadhi with meticulous care, and in the record of his own life he tells us, that according to the way one looks at the matter, there is good and there is bad in whichever of the 'Four Postures' one takes up for meditation. At the foundation of all there can be real contemplative samadhi. What he says is of course only 'half a word and one ideogram'—(teaching suited to beginners), but in any case it is extremely difficult to carry out his teaching—viz: that one can meditate in whatever of the four postures one is in—walking, sitting, standing or reclining. When he tells us that samadhi is actually concealed within or preserved under these four postures, i.e. that it can be carried on in whatever posture one is in, he is trying to tell us that the whole system of sense knowledge is contained in those four postures. They are in themselves a form of samadhi, and samadhi is in truth one with them. His 'Bodhisattva' is one who, without rising from his seat or without leaving his monastery, yet manifests the enlightenment through any of the four postures. The four postures are also attitudes of mind, mental behaviour. And Yo-ga was himself a fine model of that very teaching which he bequeathed to us.

The same teaching is to be learnt from the blossom of the Lotus. That flower blooms in the water, and if it is brought too near to fire it immediately withers. So fire is the worst enemy of the Lotus. Nevertheless that Lotus which does come to blossom within the fire has a greater and more delicious scent and is the more beautiful the nearer it is to the fire. So, too, the man who (like the ordinary lotus which finds fire to be its greatest enemy) avoids and dislikes the 'five lusts' and comes to meditation obsessed with the danger of those lusts, even though he may be well informed about the 'two voids' that neither self nor life have any reality, and no matter how clear may be his knowledge of discernment, if such a person leaves the calm of meditation and comes out into the fire or the life of activity, he will be like a shell fish or a leach which has no water, or a baboon or monkey separated from its forest trees, he will not have the vitality, not even half the vitality he should have. He will, in fact, be like the lotus blossom which instantly withers when it is brought near to the fire.

But, if, on the other hand, while remaining normally amongst the 'six dusts' of the active life, a man clothes himself with a sort of spiritual sheen, is simple, unalloyed, complete and of one

piece, that man will not err to any great degree. He may be compared to the man in the story who delivered that treasure of gold while passing through the great riots and disturbances of the world's life. He is one who boldly and successfully displays his courageous disposition and advances without delay or hesitation. And by the very fact of so doing such a man raises up the very source and origin of his own soul and mind, and brings to a final end all those roots of existence which tie us to the cycle of life and death. For such a man there is nothing but great joy, enough to dissolve the sky and shatter the iron mountains. He is to be compared with the lotus which blossoms and becomes ever more beautiful and more deliciously scented as it gets nearer to the fire.

And if you ask, 'How can this be?' it is because the fire is itself the lotus and the lotus is itself the fire.

What I wish to do here is to repeat, and it cannot be repeated too often, that this discipline of introspection must not be arbitrarily or excessively indulged in. It is truly essential that proper care be taken in the matter.

The true discipline of introspection teaches us to realize that the 'Unexpressible, absolute truth' of which Jo-shu (Ju-shin A.D. 778-897) wrote, is to be identified with the very elements which we see in our own selves, in our own bodies.

The true practice of introspection is—to this mind of mine below the navel, the breathing centre of the abdomen and the loins and feet in totality (in combination) the 'non-ideogram' of Jo-shu (Ju-shin) (i.e. the inexpressible reality)—and what logical reasoning is there in that? This mind of mine below the navel, the breathing centre of the abdomen and the loins and feet is in totality my own personal dignity, and where is the place for any nostrils in my personal dignity? This mind of mine below the navel, the breathing centre of the abdomen and the loins and feet is in totality my one and only pure land—and what grandeur is there in this pure land? This mind of mine, below the navel, the breathing centre of the abdomen and the loins and feet is in totality the Amida of my body and this Amida—what law does he expound? This mind of mine below the navel, the breathing centre of the abdomen and the loins and feet is in totality the home of my origin—what need of news of my home is there?

Coughing and spitting, moving one's elbow (i.e. using the

writing brush) when awake or when asleep—can any resolve by such a man be left unattained?—or left unaccomplished? If he, without delay, stirs up his determination, his courageous will, what his ordinary (everyday) will and consciousness could not do, with unexpected un-earned freshness of bosom (heart) with unexpected clearness—as one who can walk over ten thousand miles of ice-edges—and consequently as one who can advance into (the midst of) a rebel camp or step out on to the stage of a theatre or song-hall he will be as if he were in a place where no man is—he will be like that King, Ki-u (Chi-u), mentioned by Un-mon—his great mental activity will issue forth, proclaim itself.

Then all the Buddhas and all sentient beings will be but illusion, life, death, Nirvana will be but an imagined dream. Heaven and hell will be seen through, the Buddha world, the demon's palaces will vanish and melt away. At his own will he will expound the tiniest mysteries of the million immeasurable 'law-gates' (doctrines). He will bring blessings to all existences.

He will never be exhausted even though passing through the innumerable hindrances. He will never be poor in his long and careful 'spiritual-almshounds' (i.e. in his efforts to bring enlightenment to others). He will clear up the ten thousand deeds of illusionary vision (literally the deeds which cause effects and appear to men of misted eyesight like flowers in the sky). He will establish passages (entrances) through the valley of sounds (i.e. this world of form and sound).

Also he will wear on his arm that mystic amulet which takes away life. With his mouth he will 'bite' and denounce the defences of the evil living monks (literally bite and smack his lips on the birds' claws and animals' teeth of the wicked monks). He will afflict the monks of the three darknesses of the ten regions.

He will pull out the nails and draw out the wedges (i.e. obtain freedom) and be absolutely free from subjection to anyone.

He will strike down the foolish, blind, wicked fellows whose teeth are like that sword-tree (on which devils hang the clothes of criminals as they cross the river on their way to hell) and whose mouths are like bowls of blood. Thus will he repay the deep mercy of the Buddha. This is what is called the Karma of the Buddha land, the majesty of the Bodhisattva.

So much for that. Kwai-so (Huai-su in Chinese c. 660 A.D.) of

the Sei-hei temple (Sin-ping in Chinese) was a great man far surpassing the ten thousand others. He was in a state of calm and quiet, and safety, he had the mysterious consciousness and vision—but the crowd of watchers who had no vision but thought it was sufficient to polish and purify (their souls)—one can hardly believe even in a dream that there could be such men.

This crowd day by day performed the non-caused and all day long they are up against the caused (phenomena), all day long they perform (aim at) the infinite but are up against the finite. And why is this? Their way of insight is not clear because to them the dharma nature of reality is uncertain. They are to be pitied because as regards this life (human stage of life) which is so hard to come by, they enter like a blind tortoise going into an empty valley, or guard a coffin like a ghost—they pass through it (life) in darkness, and return uncorrected to their home of the three hells.¹⁰ All of this is because the guidance for discipline of progress was bad and the root of the 'vision' was not true—and as a result the toil of their heart energy was wasted and they were unable to obtain even the slightest merit. They are truly to be pitied.

And the priest Ippen Shonin (of the Jishu sect—A.D. 1229-1289) hung a gong round his neck and went up and down the country chanting the 'Prayers to Buddha and Amida', and he continually bewailed the errors of men as he told them the truth that, 'If once a man enters the threshold of the Hells, there can be no second return'. Doing this good work of warning, he travelled eastwards to the provinces of Oshu and Dewa, westwards to the furthest parts of Tsukushi Hakata, until he visited the founding priest of the temple of Yura,¹¹ where, it is said that he finished his great work as a Bodhisattva, and entered Nirvana. Are not his footsteps to be highly valued?

When one thinks carefully about the beginning and end of this world of ours in which we exist as men, it is evident that the power of wealth is not enough to enable men to be born into heaven, nor are works of wickedness worth mentioning as being sufficient to cause men to drop down into the hells, for ultimately (in the final analysis) it is life in this corrupted world which inspires all these. Those, in this corrupted world, who have attained to such high positions as that of kingship, or ministries of states, or who are the great ones of the earth, or

are just ordinary laymen, such people have in past lives obtained some good merit which has enabled them to attain to the positions which they hold in this world. They have sown the seeds of a good karma triumphing over other evil merits, but their 'wealth' was not sufficient to cause them to be born in heaven. They have only succeeded in being born into homes of wealth and abundance. They now have retainers and concubines surrounding them. They have heaps of property which they control, but they have not attained to true discernment. Therefore they are not benevolently disposed towards the common people. They do not show kindness to children. All that is great about them is their love of luxury. Today they perform evil works which have evil karma effects, and tomorrow they cause pain or even commit murders. They have come into this world bearing a certain amount of virtue, but they vainly set up for themselves a glory which is nothing but a mirage in the sky. Burdened by an endless repetition of evil works they will return to the eternal city of evil—there seems to be no end to this sort of evil in this world. And that is why I repeat again to you that you should not overlook the essential secret of correct introspection, but practise it constantly.

Now first of all, in this true discipline of introspection, there is the secret art of the nourishing of life itself. Introspection is in real agreement with what the hermits call the 'Elixir of Life'. This art began with the sage, Chin-hsian (Kon-Sen Shi). Later it reached Chi-Sha, founder of the Tendai sect, who gave minute information about it in his *Maha-Shikwan Sutra*. I, myself, heard about it in the middle of my life, from my teacher, Haku-yu. This teacher, Haku-yu, concealed himself in a cave near Shirokawa, in the province of Yamashiro. I was told that he had passed two hundred and forty years in review during his life. The local people used to call him the Hermit Haku-yu. He is said to have been the first teacher of Jo-zan Shi. (Ishikawa Jo-zan, 1583-1672). Here are some of the things he said about this matter:

'The whole art of life nourishment consists in keeping the upper parts of the body cool, and the lower parts warm. It is essential to know that, for the nourishing of life, one should concentrate one's vital powers in the lower parts. Frequently people, hearing that the divine elixir is only a matter of performing the five

good works (alms, meditation, etc.), did not know that the five fundamentals which make up the material body (fire, wood, metal, water and earth) are known by the five sense organs—eye, ear, nose, tongue, touch. If somebody asks what is meant when it is said that the kneading of the elixir is done by 'assembling' together all the five roots or senses of the body, it must be answered that there is the law of the five elements which prevent the increasing of desire. The eye, for instance, must not look at random, the ear must not listen at random, the tongue must not talk at random, the body must not touch at random, nor must the mind think at random. When these important laws are obeyed, then the spirit of this complex essential nature will be supplied, as it were, before one's very eyes. This essential nature is what Mencius called the "Expansive Spirit". From this it follows that by concentrating these in the space under the navel and preserving it, year after year, so that it becomes invincibly strong, then before you realize it, the elixir-oven will raise the elixir, the outer, the inner, and the central, the eight regions and the four quarters of the universe will become one great elixir confection. Then one will realize that one's self has not come to birth before Heaven and earth, and that one's self does not die later than the Void, but that one is one self a divine hermit having length of life. With this attainment comes the power to stir up the great ocean into cream, to change the hard soil into harder gold, and so it is said that 'One grain of the elixir changes iron into gold'.

Haku-o said, 'It is essential to nourish life.' First, this is not just moulding the form. The secret of moulding the form consists in discipline tempering the spirit. When the spirit is disciplined the mind becomes concentrated. When the mind is concentrated the elixir is produced. When the elixir is produced the form becomes fixed, and when the form is fixed the spirit is perfected. It should be known that the elixir is certainly not an outward thing (object).

We know that there are jewel fields and millet fields in the earth. Jewel fields are places where jewels are produced, and millet fields are places where grain plants are grown. So, too, in man there is what we call the 'space below the abdomen' and this is the treasure room where the energy is stored and preserved: here is the fortress town where the divine elixir is purified so that life may be preserved for long years. There is an

ancient saying that an arm of the sea can control a hundred valleys because it descends so deep. For the ocean itself already occupies the ten thousand waters underneath, and even though it enfolds the hundred rivers, the ocean itself never increases nor diminishes in size. So, too, the lower abdomen has its position underneath the five internal organs of the body. It never tires of storing up the energies. And when the divine elixir has been produced and perfected it enters into the hermit city. This elixir is itself in three places, but the elixir I am speaking of is in the lower one. The elixir place and the lower abdomen are both below the navel—they are one real thing with two names. The elixir place is two inches below the navel; the point in the abdomen (where energy comes from) is an inch-and-a-half lower, and the true energy is always preserved within these. When the mind and the body are even, then though life may be long and see 100 years, the hair will not dry up, the teeth will not get loose, the eyesight will be clear, the skin will gradually become lustrous. This is the experience when the energy has been preserved and the divine elixir perfected. There will be no end to the counting of the years.

But, of course, the efficacy of this discipline depends entirely on how purely or how coarsely it is performed. The physicians of ancient times who dealt with the mind used to heal before the disease began. They made men control their minds and attend to their spirit. The ordinary run of modern physicians do just the opposite. After seeing the disease which has already taken hold, they try to cure it by the three methods of acupuncture, moxacautery and drugs. Many are not saved. For it is a matter of fact that soul, mind and spirit are the real three foundation pillars of the self. So the wise man is careful to attend to his mind and not waste it himself.

To put the matter in another way. The art of preserving life may be compared to the art of protecting a country. What we call the 'spirit' is like the prince, what we call the 'soul' is like a minister of state, and what we call the 'mind' is like to people of the land. Just as loving the people is the means of perfecting the state, so being careful as to how one attends to the soul and mind is the means of perfecting the body. When the people are squandered away, the country perishes. When the 'mind' is exhausted, the body dies. That is why a sagely prince puts his own heart (desires) at the bottom. The ordinary sort of prince,

however, attends selfishly to his own heart (desires). And when he selfishly attends only to the top, he relies on the 'Nine Lords' of high estate, plumes himself on having under his authority the 'Hundred Officials' but never gives thought to the poverty and decay of the common people. Then avaricious ministers rob, exacting officials deceive and flay the poor. In the fields there is a look of starvation and men fall down from actual starvation. Then the wise and the good dive into concealment. Between the officials and the people there arises anger and envy, till at last the common people are reduced to the greatest misery, and the pulse of the nation ceases to beat.

But when the attention of the ruler's desires is given sincerely to the lower classes, and the labour and weariness of the people is never forgotten, then they become prosperous and the whole country becomes strong. No officials rebel. No enemies invade the land.

So it is with man's body. The wise and sensible man always keeps his heart energy low down. And for that reason the 'Seven Ills' do not find any place to move about in, nor can the 'four false views' invade him from without. The defences are protected, and so the inner forces—the mind and spirit are preserved in health. And the body does not have to undergo the pains of acupuncture or moxocautery. Such a body is like a powerful nation which does not have to listen to the sound of war drums or tom toms.

Long ago the sage, Gi-Haku (Chi-peh) replied to a question by the Emperor Huang (legendary Emperor 4000 B.C.) saying, 'If there is inward calm, void, within, then the mind conforms'. If one protects the inward spirit from whence can illnesses come? Today, unfortunately, men do the opposite. From the time of their birth to their death, not for a single moment does their controlling mind protect their inner self. They do not even know what this ruling mind of theirs is! They are as foolish as dogs and horses who daily merely run about following their own feet. How dangerous! Is it not said in the warrior homes that it is because this ruling or controlling mind is not properly fixed that unexpected distresses arise. Surely it is evident that when the controlling mind protects the inner self, distresses will not come at random. If in anyone there is no ruling mind, even if it be but for one minute, such a person does not differ in any respect from a dead man. At any rate it cannot be said that

profligacy and vicious luxury will not beset such a one. Here is a little parable explaining this matter. In an old house, dwelt in only by an aged woman, decayed, emaciated, in extremity of weariness and starvation, even though the owner is absent, no stranger may enter it without reason. But when that house loses its owner, burglars break into and even rest there, beggars hide in it and sleep there, foxes and rabbits might run about inside it, badgers might hide in it. Wandering ghosts might cry out there in the day time and ghosts moan there, a thousand suspicious things, a hundred ghost-like forms might be there—altogether it might become the cave dwelling of crowds of evil beings. And so it is with a man's body.

When, in the lower abdomen, it is as if all were settled immovably like a rock, with intense persistence, then not one jot of illusory thought, not one atom of desire or lust, not one half point of mantic desires will be found there. Then heaven and earth are at one's command, the universe is the steed one rides upon, one will be a keen performer of the discipline, hard and firm as Mount Ko-ju (Hou-chung), and like the merciful and benevolent, ocean itself. Buddha himself could not insert his hands against such a one. Demons could not spy on such a person. Day after day that man could perform ten thousand good works without becoming weary. He will be called a truly grateful child of the Buddha.

If, however, a man is captivated suddenly by evil conditions, drawn away by wanton conditions, without realizing it he may lose that controlling power. This is called Sudden Ignorance.¹² It is a state in which thoughts are created, names¹³ are made up and activities begin. Then evil demons of hindrances¹⁴ rise up like bees round him, bewitching spirits bringing false views to him hustle about him like ants. The decaying house of the four elements of dreams and hallucinations, the home of the five hindrances and imaginery flowers in the sky, is immediately changed and becomes the dwelling of devils.

There are thousands of forms, ten thousands of appearances. Every day tens of thousands of kinds of life and death are here! Outwardly, perhaps, it may look like the shape of a high-stepping gentleman, but in the inner heart the changes of mind which take place are as many as those of a she-devil! In such a mind there is more pain eternally present than there was in that terrible battle of Yashima. Within that breast there are greater

disturbances than there were in the rebellion of the Nine Nations! One thinks of the story of the Conflagration in the Rich Man's House—in the parable told us in the *Saddharma Pundarika*). Such a mind is known as the 'Sea of Works', in which life and death are perpetually rising and sinking. And if there is no raft there, no true raft of meditation on the reality, and no sailing ship of bold and brave ascetic discipline, then that unruly mind will be drawn down into the swift current of the waves of vain knowledge and the whirlings of desire. And such a mind will never be able to pass safely through the evil smelling and poisonous fogs of darkness to reach the farther shore of the four virtues.¹⁵

Alas! Alas! People of this latter sort, may be furnished with the wisdom and virtues of humanity, and with the marvellous state of the Tathagata with nothing lacking. They may be provided with the 'cinta-mani jewel'¹⁶ which can fulfil every wish of the possessor, they may have the jewel of each and every Buddha nature. They may perpetually shed forth the bright light¹⁷ of the Bodhisattva body. They may be dwelling in the land of purity where this world of suffering should be identical with that Buddha world where the eternal truth is revealed, or in that land of Vairocana where the law nature and the absolute is manifested—and yet, in spite of these wondrous states, because their 'Wisdom Eye'¹⁸ has been already blinded, they look at all these marvellous truths in a perverted and wrong way. They can only see it all as part of the world of suffering. They think of it all as being nothing but sentient existence in darkness. They, like ignorant horses and cows, have no real discrimination. They expend their human bodies, which are so hard for us to come by in the cycle of karma lives, and they waste their human times of life, which are so hard for us to attain to in that karma chain, that they go round and round, wandering in the city of the three hells which were so painful to them in the past, and in the 'Six Regions'¹⁹ which are so miserable for them all. They grasp at the unchanging land of Vairocana's eternal calm but fear in their minds that it is itself hell and they weep as if it were the Avici hell²⁰ itself. Such is the way of the world. An insignificant boasting in small indecisive views. It is a boasting in painfully ridiculous learned explanations which comes through the senses (ears and mouths). It shows a disbelief in the Buddha's law and a deafness to the

true law, a one-sided efficacy which does not for one moment protect the right thinking of the controlling mind—it is the final end of the experiences of such people. Greatly to be pitied, and ever more pitied, is that eternal transmigration. To be feared and ever more feared are the painful fruits of the long night of life and death.

It is said even of the emperors of the Enki and Tenryaku eras (898-930 and 947-967 A.D.), emperors who were revered as 'Three Sages of the World', that these emperors were seen by the Nichizo Shonin (d. 985 A.D.) being blackened and scorched in the fierce fires of the sixth hell. They said to him: 'Because we relied on the fact that we were rulers of Japan, the little kingdom shaped like dispersed millet, and therefore lived in luxury and pride that we have become what you now see us to be.' So too, Toshiyuki A-son who was distinguished for his genius both in China and Japan, and famous for his beautiful handwriting, and who copied out two hundred volumes of the *Saddharma Pundarika Sutra*, because he did not possess the right spirit of meditation in his life, dropped into the painful hells, and came to Tomonori of Ki-i and begged to be helped and delivered. Or again, it is said that even the Lord Hachiman, that famous warrior who was called the 'Unrivalled General of the imperial court', and who set the Emperor's heart at ease, and when all the incantations of the high ranking priests of the Southern City and the Northern Capital had wearied the Emperor's brain, scratching and wiping them off the face of the earth with the mere sound of his bow-strings—this great Lord Hachiman had to kneel in the outer porch of the King of Hell, Emma. And that famous Tada Manju was once, we are told, called by a messenger of the King of Hell, Emma, during an illness, and shown the sights of the City of Darkness. When he returned to life he was so terrified by what he had seen that he immediately entered the 'six-sided temple'²¹ in Kyoto and began studying the Buddha Way and reciting prayers to Buddha. It is said that his tears and sweat poured through the very straw mats on which he was sitting. So, too, King So-Jo of Ts'in (Chuang-hsiang) (Sixth century B.C.) who annexed the Six Lands, united the Four Seas and was feared as far as the bounds of the Barbarian States, fell into hell where he suffered its terrible pains. Hak-ki (Peh-chi) of Ts'in, who received punishment from the Emperor Wu of Sung, whose fame was spread

throughout the whole world as being a terrible villain, after he had sunk into the hell of filth and slime, at the beginning of the reign of the Ming Emperor, Ko-Bu, (Hong-u) (1638 A.D.), was afterwards seen at a place called the 'Place of the Three Reed Vision' in Mount Go-u (Kiang-su Province) for there an enormous white centipede, over a foot in length, was killed by a flash of lightning and people then saw inscribed on its back a large ideogram, Hakki (Peh-chi), the ancient villain's name! This shows how difficult it is for men to escape from their own evil karma chains.

But now, do not say, 'There is no time or leisure to go to meditation, there is too much business and it is almost impossible to carry on one's plans for meditation when the duties of this world are so pressing.' It should be known that for a robed monk who performs the discipline of meditation in the right spirit there is no such thing as business or worldly affairs. Here is a story to show what I mean. Supposing a man drops two or three money bills by mistake in a street where there is a great deal of traffic and there is a large crowd of people—will he leave it alone just because there are so many eyes watching him, or will he refrain from looking for it just because there is so much traffic in the place? Surely not! Rather he will push his way through the crowds and he will not be easy in his mind till he at last gets the lost money back into his own hands. And what about people who neglect their proper meditation discipline and forsake their plans to carry it on properly, because they say that business is too heavy and worldly affairs need too much of their attention—are they not putting a greater value on two or three pieces of gold than on the sublime and wondrous Way of all the Buddhas—than which there is nothing really more valuable? If a man, with total concentration, studies the Way, even in the midst of his business and amongst the waves of the world till he attains to enlightenment, then he will be more like that man who, in the story, dropped the gold but gave his full attention to finding it again—and when he has found it, who would not lift up his eyebrows with joy?

And that is why Myo-cho Taishi (1281-1336) said, 'See how even in horse racing, when the colts are racing backwards and forwards—even there meditation can be performed.' And Shin-ju (the Abbot) said, 'Do not read the sutras—meditate. Do not sweep the garden—meditate. Do not plant tea seeds—meditate.

Do not ride a horse—meditate.' This is indeed the ancient truth about right meditation. My own old teacher, Sho-ju, always used to say, 'Anyone who desires to learn how to meditate uninterruptedly, even if he has to enter a city of murders and swords, or to go into a room of weeping and wailing, or to attend the wrestling ring or the theatre hall or music hall, need not add adjustment of thought to adjustment of thought, nor does he have to make careful calculations about it—all he has to do is to bundle every one of these things into one meditation topic, and then go forward without a break and without withdrawing or retreating. For instance, supposing one were seized by the elbow by the chief devil of the Asuras and forced to go round the three thousand great universes for a thousand of their cycles or a hundred of their revolutions—if then that man even so did not lose his correct meditative composure even for one moment but continued steadfastly, such a man would be a true meditator. There is an ancient saying, 'During the twelve hours of the day, just keep your head cool and your eyes steady and do not let yourself get mixed up with worldly lusts of mankind.' This is a truly valuable saying. The same truth is told us in the military laws, where it says, 'Both fight and cultivate. This is the best of all the ten thousand plans for the warrior.' The same is true for meditation. Activity is the true discipline for fighting, and the introspection is essential for cultivation. These two things are like the two wings of a bird, or the two wheels of a cart.

I have already written about the secret of introspection in my *Yasen Kanna* (Chat on a Boat in the Evening). I wrote that for the benefit of monks during one of their rainy season retreats. I do not know how many were helped in their 'meditation sickness' by what I wrote there. But I do know that eight or nine who were very ill, and indeed near to death, were cured. Let all who study with a view to the discipline of meditation store up and compare together the method of Introspection and meditation for they will thereby be able to fulfil the main purpose of their normal lives.

Now, if students of the Way attain to conviction about the great teachings of the five schools of thought²² and the seven currents²³ of illusion and how to prevent these, but only live for a very short time, what would they be competent to accomplish? Or, again, on the other hand, even if, owing to the power

of introspection, a vigorous patriarch were to pass in review a period of eight hundred years, but if he did not possess the 'eye of discernment' he would merely be like a ghost watching corpses. Of what benefit would that be? Or, again, if a man sat in meditation till he was decrepit and was absorbed only in silent clearness, he would then merely be twisting his life away in a mistaken idea and would greatly stray from the Buddha's Way, but his whole life in this world would be destroyed.

And why so? If all princes were to neglect their morning audiences and give up their state duties in order to sit in long meditation; if the warriors were to be careless about their archery practice and forget their military arts in order to be able to sit long in meditation; if the merchants were to close up their shops and break up their abacuses so as to be able to sit long in meditation; if the farmers were to throw away their spades and ploughs and cease from their cultivation so as to be able to sit long in meditation, and if the artisans were to throw away their inked strings for carpenter's work, their adzes and axes so as to be able to sit long in meditation, the whole country would languish, the people would become weary, bandits would be multiplied and the nation would be in danger. Then the common people would become angry and envious and they would certainly say that meditation was an unpropitious and ill-omened practice. But it is well known that in ancient times, when the Zen teaching was flourishing, that all the sagely patriarchs, men like Nan-gaku (E-jo d. 744 A.D.), Ba-so (Ma-tsu d. 788), Hyaku-jo, Hui-hai (E-kai d. 814), O-baku (d. 850), Rin-zai (d. 867), Ki-su, Ma goku, Ko-ge (d. c. 900), Banzan, Kyu-bo, Ji-zo, used to haul stones, move soil, carry water, cut firewood, peel vegetables, and in this way beat the hand-drum of carpentry and construction work and thus earnestly seek the attainment of inward strength within the 'way of activity'. And did not one of them, Hyaku-jo, say, 'One day without work—one day without food!' Their activity in the way is ceaseless meditation. Unfortunately this good old method of the ancient patriarchs has been banished from the face of the earth in our modern times. It has ceased.

But what I have just said does not, of course, mean that meditation is to be disliked or quiet thought is to be evil spoken of. There is not so much as one half a wise or holy man of understanding, whether in ancient or modern times, who has

not brought the Buddha Way to fruition without meditation. The three essentials—obedience to the Vinaya rules (Sila), meditation and intelligence—are a great summary of the whole of the Buddha's ancient Way. Who can treat this lightly? Why! If men like all those ancient sages of the meditative way were to have doubts about the transcendent and surpassing quality of the true and unexcelled great way of meditation, then indeed thunderbolts would fall and the stars be shaken out of the heavens.

But, if one's eyes are only the eyes of sheep and one's wisdom is only the wisdom of badgers, how can one expect to understand? But, supposing that sitting in silent meditation actually does cause a man immediately to attain to Buddhahood and instantly to shed forth the bright light of the Bodhisattva mind and body, how is it possible to expect all princes, great men, soldiers and people with their thousand duties in their homes to find leisure to sit even for a few minutes in meditation? And so men speak of being ill and weary in their public duties, they give up their home affairs, and for three, five or seven days they close their doors, fasten the bolts, pile up cushions to sit or lie on, they set up sticks of incense and sit meditating, but though they do all that they get tired from their normal work, and so they only sit meditating for an inch and they go to sleep for an ell! And for three pints of meditation they actually collect a million gallons of idle thoughts. For no sooner have they settled their eyes, gritted their teeth, clasped their hands and taken up the correct straight posture for sitting in meditation, than ten thousand wicked states (of mind) grow up in their heads and compete for their minds. Then they furrow their foreheads and crinkle their brows and begin to weep and grieve, saying, 'Our official duties hinder us from performing our meditative duties, our private way obstructs our contemplation.' Then they resign from their official work and hand in their seals and go to some uninhabited spot, a calm and quiet place near the edge of a stream or under some big tree and there carry on their meditation in their own self-willed way, hoping thus to escape from the long cycle of transmigration. It all ends in a great mistake.

Really the Way of the retainer is to prepare his lord's food and arrange his clothes, tie his girdle and attach his sword. He does not fetch water from afar, he has eaten food without

cultivating it. He wears his clothes without weaving them. His very body, his hands, his feet, his hair, his teeth—all these are benefits provided by his lord. But when he has grown up and is thirty or forty years old, and the time has come for him to repay his lord's kindness, by making himself pre-eminent as his lord's assistant, so that his lord may become like those lords of China's Golden Age, Gyo and Shun, and the people like the people of that age, then he begins to tell his beads secretly, behind his sleeve, to repeat Buddha prayers in a low inaudible voice and becomes languid and careless about public affairs. He has no sense of gratitude for his lord's benefits, and, as likely as not, he says that he is sick and retires from duty altogether. But if that is his intention, even if he disciplines himself in the meditative way for three or five years in retired spots, and even though he may think that his thoughts are ceasing and his lusts are coming to an end, yet he will find that his inner organs are twisted and painful, that there are still many fears in his heart, so that even if he so much as hears only the droppings of a mouse, his bosom will burst.

Whether he were a general or just a private soldier, what special duty would such a man be fit for? Supposing some great crisis came upon the land—if it were only men like him who could go out to reinforce some exposed gate of the castle when the enemy was rushing up to it like a great tide of the sea, and the flags and banners were waving like clouds all round, cannon balls were falling about in every place like lightning, and there were terrible roarings and re-echoings of noise, the bells were ringing and reverberating as if the very mountains would fall and the spears and lances were shining like icicles out in the battle lines—if men like those we have mentioned saw and heard such things, they would not be able to swallow for fear, their hands would tremble so much that they would not be able even to seize hold of the hand-ropes. On horseback they would squat on the saddle, holding on as if they were about to fall off on account of their own trembling. At last they would be taken prisoner by foot soldiers! And why should all this happen? It would be because of the result or effect of their sitting in silence and calm with emaciated looks for three or five years in so-called meditation. Why! even such a great hero as Kumagaya Hira-yama, if he were to carry on that sort of meditative discipline would surely tremble.

And so, the patriarchs, in their mercy and goodness, pointed to the correct road to right thought and activity and uninterrupted meditation. If princes have the right spirit of meditation when they are giving their morning audiences, and if the retainers have the right spirit of meditation when they are practising their archery or doing their literary and business duties, and if farmers, likewise, have the right spirit of meditation when they are using their ploughs and spades, and artisans when they are using their inked-strings and axes, and women when they are doing their sewing and weaving, then they would all of them be carrying out the practice of the 'great meditation' taught us by all the holy ones. And that is what is meant by the scripture which says that, 'property, life, production, labour, none of these are opposed to reality'.

If, however, there is not the correct meditation activity, then everything is merely like an old badger sleeping in an empty hole. It is very sad that men today are casting off the Way and becoming nothing better than the dust of the earth. More often than not, nowadays, people are not able to recognize the black, dark valley of the two voids—of the self and of the dharma—but think it to be the sublime end of meditation—and every day they frown and furrow their foreheads and are no better than a silk worm in its cocoon. The patriarchs are separated from them by clouds and smoke! Their dislike of the sutras is like an injured mouse trying to escape from a cat; their abhorrence of the patriarchal records reminds one of a dying hare listening to the growls of a tiger. Especially are they ignorant that the ancient hole into which the two lower grades of beginners are always falling is very like Nirvana! Even the sage, Shubo Taishi (1281-1337), said, 'I myself for three years lived in a fox hole, that many people are often deluded is reasonable,' and he heaved a great sigh! And Prince Ko composed a poem in which he said, 'The captured fish stays in its bowl, the sick bird lives in its cage. They know a little peace, but do not know the great peace.'

But with regard to the upper grades of learners of the true mysteries, in their case it is only a matter of how deep or how shallow is their entry into reality, a matter of how pure or how coarse shall be their efforts to reach discrimination. Who shall choose whether a man shall stay in his own home or renounce the world? Who shall argue as to whether he should stay in the

busy city or go away into the mountain forests?

In the old days there were many great men, like Kobi of Sagami, Rikko of Tai-fu, Tohi Riko, Yoko Tainen, Choko Mujin, who could discriminate the real nature of things as easily as they could look at the palm of their own hands. Their meditation came out of their lungs and inward parts. They trod on and churned up the very depths of the Buddha sea. They swallowed the bitter waters of the waves of the river of Zen. They were honourable as mirrors of wisdom, they were magnanimous in the weight of their cognition of the truth. Idle spirits fled from them in fear, field ghosts trembled before them in distress. But all of these men gave their assistance in state affairs, and so helped to bequeath peace to the world—they put the world into the peace of Mount Tai. Who can look into the inmost sanctuary of their minds?

A man like Choko, who we have named above, for instance, rose to be assistant minister of state and reached the highest grade of officialdom. Rich was his genius as Minister. He was trusted by his prince. He was honoured by the other ministers. He was revered by the warriors. The common people clung to him. Heaven rained down plenteousness. His prince gave him many titles of honour. He lived to be nearly a hundred. His radiance flowed out to four seas. The people prided themselves with the autumn fruits of this era of Gyo. Men assumed the liveliness of the days of Shun. They felt gratitude towards their prince. And above all the treasure of the law was quietly preserved. Truly he was a great figure in that age of the world! And it used to be said too, of Cho Mujin, 'He who lives in his home and performs the Way there is Cho Mujin.' 'He who lives in his home and obtains merit spreads the inexhaustible Way (Tao). He who eats his own ration and perfects Zen, his years are as the willow.' Is not this a beautiful word for a thousand years?

And then there are Naikan, Ko Rochoku, Cho Shisei, Cho Tengaku, Kwaku Kobo and many others of whom we have no records or traditions—Oh! there is no limit to their numbers. In their performance of the Way each of these excelled those who meditate under the trees. Always on ten thousand occasions they assisted in public business. They have put their shoulders (attended) into the ceremonial affairs of ten thousand lands. They have stood in the gorgeous throng of officials who wear

the 'silver fish' and the 'golden turtle' insignia of office. They have been present at ceremonial musical entertainments and at archery tournaments and they have been in attendance at imperial abdications and retirements, but they have never for one instant interrupted their performance of the Way, finally they have penetrated through to the mystery of the patriarchs. Was not this due to their spiritual experience of uninterrupted Zen, their activity of right thought? Was this not the deep goodness of the wondrous Way of the Buddha? Was this not the unique and glorious merit of the patriarchs?

Truly there is the difference of heaven and earth between these men; the sort of men who think that it is sufficient to sit in emaciated meditation, and who call what is but a deathly calm the 'root' Zen and are dying of starvation on hills and valleys. Are they not men who, as the saying goes, 'not only fail to catch the hare but lose the falcon too?' It is not only that they have been unable to attain to real discernment, but they have even ceased in the other duty of feeling gratitude to their lord. They are to be greatly pitied. It should be known that everything depends on whether the energy (put into) attaining the kind of progress which is made towards the final shallowness or depth and the intentions to progress is true or not. If, in this activity, there is energy sufficient to fight ten thousand men, then why should one choose the forest or the home? If final discernment comes only to the forest men, then would all hope be taken away from those who are parents, or those who are retainers, or those who are children living in the world? But, supposing one is living the 'forest' life, if his religious spirit is not minutely ordered and careful, and if his thoughts are not kept pure, in what way is that different from life in a home? And conversely, if a man is a householder and has a rich aspiration for discernment, and is wise and sincere in his daily work, what difference is there between that and the forest? And that is why it is said, 'If the Way is deep down in the mind, it is not necessary to live on Mount Yoshino.' So, at any rate, the meditation planned for by all officials will not excel the uninterrupted Zen of true thought to their plan of life so that it may be a meditation. This is the ancient truth which has been forgotten for the past two hundred years.

Now, if asked, 'What is this spirit of meditation?' I reply that it is to have a sincerely benevolent and sympathetic heart at all

times, whether one is talking or wagging one's elbow when writing, whether one is moving, or resting, whether one's luck is good or bad, whether one is in honour or in shame, or in gain or in loss, in right or in wrong, bundling all these things up into one verse heading and concentrating your energy with the force of an iron rock under the navel and lower part of the abdomen. Be kindly disposed towards your lord—as chief object of reverence, regard the great officials as your own associates, as a company of the illustrious Bodhisattvas. Regard the ministers of state, whether they are at the time attendant on the lord or whether they are residing at a distance as being members of the company of the disciples, of the two lower orders of Sravakas and Pratyeka-Buddhas, as men who have been led to the Buddha by Sariputra and Maha-Maudgalyana. And look upon all the ordinary warriors and the common people as if they were your own children being instructed in the Way.

If you have this 'spirit' then, by that very fact, your very clothes, your 'hakama' (divided skirt), your upper robes (Kata-ginu) will be to you as the 'seven-pieced robes'²⁴ or the 'nine-folded stoles'²⁵ of monks. Your two-edged swords will be your desk or meditation table, placed always before you. The saddle you ride on will be the cushion on which you sit in meditation. The hills, the streams, the plains will be the floor of your meditation hall. The four corners of the earth and its ten directions, the height and the depth of the universe will be to you the great 'cave' in which you are performing your meditation—they will be, in very truth, the substance of your real self. Then the positive and negative principles of creation will be to you your two daily meals of gruel. Heaven, hell, the pure land and hades will be your internal organs, your spleen, your stomach, your liver and your kidneys. Then the hall of the arts, with its outer and inner courts of three hundred mats (where state business is carried on) will become the morning and evening meetings of instruction and scripture reading. The trillions of Mount Sumerus²⁵ will be, as it were, bundled together to become your spinal column, and every form of activity in the world of affairs—such as abdication ceremonies, retirements of lords, archery meetings, writing up accounts—all of these will become to you wondrous works of the good purposes of the Bodhisattvas. They will draw forth the believing heart of brave and bold men, they will bring you into harmony with that true

discipline of introspection. Then when you are standing or sitting, moving or resting, from time to time test whether you have lost the right spirit or not lost it—this is the correct road of the true discipline of the wise and holy ones of past and present.

In connection with this matter of uninterrupted meditation in all the activities of life, the sage said, 'The Way must not be departed from for even a short time. What may be departed from is not the Way. In a passage in the book of Ro (Confucius) there are these words, 'When you feel flurried perform this—when you feel hurried perform this.' These words simply mean that the spirit of the Way is never to be lost even for a single moment.

Now, when we speak of the Way we are speaking of the way of moderation which is taught us in the Scripture of the Lotus (the *Saddharma Pundarika* or *Hokkekyo*). It is explained to us by such great men as Shikyo Zoji, Jakken Jisha, Gasoku Kanki and all the other Buddhas. And special reference is made to the Lotus Scripture because of its teaching about the importance of the correct meditation activity (method). And this activity (method) one must understand points to the state of the real self. It is not at all easy to put away entirely the important affairs of life and death if one attends to the proper performance of the discipline of discriminating the final reality, which is enough to blind the right vision, even, of the Buddha. What is of absolute importance, is that the two states—activity and calm, order and contrariness, verticle and horizontal, must have the pure, unmixed, complete and whole truth in the forefront. It must be such, indeed, that so that even if one were surrounded by a thousand or ten thousand people one would be as if one were dwelling alone in a wide open space of thousands of miles, and as the ancients said—'one's ears as if they were deaf, one's eyes as if they were blind'. Thus should it be all the time. This is the time which is called the season of sincere or real correctness and great doubt actually present. If, when that time comes, you do not go back, but deliberately go forward, then there will come to you such a joy as has not been seen in all the forty years of your life, nor will you have heard anything so joyous—it will be as if you had broken through a large pack of ice, or had breached a veritable fortress of precious stones.

Now, if anyone desires to discover whether his discriminative

nature is as it should be, pure and not false, or whether his energy is really pure or coarse for the attainment of spiritual power, then let him look first of all carefully at this little gatha or spiritual poem. It was composed by Fudai-shi (497-569 A.D.). (He was converted when out fishing, used to work with his wife at farm labour as hired workers, meditated at nights, read the Lotus Sutra through twenty-one times, eventually was called to the capital of China and became a famous teacher of the Tendai sect.) It is good to read his little poem, because it shows how that teacher after penetrating through to reality changed the nature of his teaching. Before he had penetrated to reality he had said, 'Before coming to "verse" come to "understanding".' When he had penetrated, he said, 'Rather than turning first to thought (or Mana) turn to verse'. Now Fudaishi, in his religious poem says, 'Grasping in his empty hand the spade, and riding on his buffalo, the farmer crosses a bridge. It is the bridge which flows away behind him, not the water'. And in another poem he says, 'The lights in the sacred lanterns leap into the outer pillars. The Buddha's "Holy of Holies" runs out of the temple gate'. (N.B. The lights of the sacred lantern are symbols of those 'things which contain the Law'. The outer pillars are symbols of mere 'Evanescient supports—pillars of dew'). Again in another poem he says, 'If the ox of the province of Kwai eats rice, the belly of the horse in the province of Eki swells'; or again, 'If Duke Cho drinks wine, Duke Li becomes drunk. If you wish to know the truth right away, face the South and see the Northern Constellation'.

Kanganshi's (650 A.D.) poem is 'White waves rise on the green hills, red dust rises at the bottom of the well'.

When anyone has attained to true discernment of reality these verses can be understood as clearly as one sees the palm of one's own hand. If you cannot understand their inner meaning, do not say that you have attained to enlightenment. But even so, even if you are able to penetrate the meaning of verses like these one by one, do not think that that is sufficient . . .

The patriarch Shuso Taishi said, 'In the morning knit your eyebrows together, but in the evening knit your shoulders together'. 'Myself, what am I like?' and Honnu Enjo Koku-shi (Honnu means *a priori* and Enjo means absolute) said, 'Here is a saying of the sage Hakuju, "There is even a time for rebels to rebel"'. Now when you have meditated on these topics and

have not the slightest doubt about them in your own mind, then you may know that you are of identical type with the Buddha who originated this way of discernment. And what place is there for shame to be called a high disciple of the mystery? Why indeed? In practising meditation it is essential for each one to be clear in mind concerning the heart of the Buddha. If one can attain to the knowledge of the Buddha-heart, surely it is impossible not to be enlightened as to the meaning of his words. If one has not attained to illumination as to the import of the Buddha's words, then it should be understood that one has not been enlightened as to the Buddha-mind. And so it is written in the scripture of the seven wise women that, 'The Buddha said, "Those of my disciples who are only great arhats cannot explain the meaning of my words. Only those who are of the company of the great Bodhisattvas fulfil the requirements which enable them to do so".' And when we speak of this 'Meaning' to what are we referring? We are referring to that sublime mystery, which has been handed down from patriarch to patriarch from India to our own country. And it was for the very purpose that we might be sure that we have understood the correct meaning that he has left for us these 'sayings', which are indeed so hard to penetrate. In this connection there is the word of the hermit, Shin-Ju, who said, 'You five hundred arhats of the Tendai school, clothe yourselves in the robes of the law and go out amongst the people—inscrutable miracles will surround you, wonders which are not transmitted through the patriarchs are hard—hard!' The hermit Yokko (Enen, 1693-1764) was the seventh generation grandson and his wisdom and perception was incisive, much to be respected.

In these times of ours, however, consider well how that the divine afflatus has not descended upon us. In our times men, who are foolish and degraded, do not discriminate. Men are like that foolish sort of person who has not the vision enough to distinguish jewels from stones, and such persons frequently say, 'We ourselves are indeed Buddha, so why should we go through all these hard sayings and meditation topics? So long as our hearts are pure, then the pure land is pure—and there is no use in perusing all these old records.'

People who say that sort of thing are to be considered as men who have not yet attained, or who have attained only in out-

ward word. They have not yet proved or have only proved in word (not in reality). They are shameless and foolish—they are men of the alien way. If one were to look inwardly at what we may call the rationale of the minds of such men, we shall find there only the 'Alaya wisdom'. The dark cave of ignorance. They acknowledge the robber distraction and make it their child. All that they do is to hand down distraction after distraction, but they call it the wondrous way of the patriarchal succession. When men like these see the real suffering of men, distressed in the learning of the Way and in true meditation, they do not know that they are pointing directly to the perfect and sudden (attainment) and are the foundation states of the second Vehicle.

They do not understand the 'this and that' of upward and aspiring Zen. They are a species of learner (*śrāvakas*). When one comes to investigate point by point, what they call the direct pointing of perfection and sudden attainment, it is that fundamental ignorance which is so criticized in the *Surangama Sutra* (*Ryo-gon-kyo*). Such men are far inferior to the real 'śrāvakas', yet they belittle the wise and holy men who have found attainment of reality by their own efforts. Such false learners are indeed ridiculous. Or, again, in general there are some who look at an ideogram, such as that for 'nothing' (*Mu*) or they look at an 'acorn', and then they falsely imagine things about them which they cannot even feel with their hands or tread on with their feet and they say that that is the Way of super-penetration—they think that is the Way of meditation. This is a veritable evil custom. It is a disease of meditation which is far advanced and hard to cure. It is confusion carrying on to still further confusion until it has reached the stage of incurability, a transmission of corpse to corpse—a blind discriminating.

But those who are real Bodhisattvas of the true correct learning are quite different. These men go to meditation and go, and go again and again even to places to which it is not necessary to go—reason exhausts itself. Their words come to an end, and their techniques come to an end. They spread out their hands to the limits of the horizon, and when they have reached that last limit, they rise again, as it were, from the dead, until at last they attain to the borders of 'Land of Peace'. But in any case, whatever way one ventures along this way to the secret,

bone-shaking, life-taking search—so hard to penetrate, too hard to explain—especially while one is still held by the karma of false ideas of ignorance and of the cycle of life and death, one cannot but fail to be alarmed. Aged and experienced arhats, who have attained to *samādhi*, always used to knot their brows and say that the Buddha strongly forbade anyone to teach the law of reality, while they still possessed a heart of karma revolving in life and death. Nevertheless, in spite of such warnings, eight or nine out of every ten priests who wander over the land, like rain clouds passing back and forth without any fixed abode, talk loudly without any proper knowledge or due study and say all sorts of things about there being no difficulty or doubt concerning the great teachings of the thousand and seven hundred traditions of light—the model subjects of meditation. Many of these men get very excited, they raise their fists, or hit the mats on which they are sitting and they spit out sounds from their mouths which are supposed to signify inexpressible truths. If one does not take care one will find that one has come upon a man who does not rely on any discrimination or even have any merit from study or learning. He may be even ignorant of ideograms, stubborn and narrow-minded without any vision at all. One cannot but ask what is the source from which they have derived their fearful, knavish and inadequate manner of life. Have any of them been to India or to China, or what have they been in previous times—let them but go on vociferating as they do, they will at last lose all their 'scent' and voice. Their attainments are not sufficient to be medicine to cure even a toothache.

It is a most deplorable thing that these men, who have the qualifications for becoming chiefs, and the abilities of divine beings, and who could, if they spent their energies in meditation, pile up merits—men who trace their traditions back to Tago, Baso (d. 788), Sekito (d. 790), or from Rinzai (d. 867) or Tokusan (E-zon d. 592), and who therefore might have grown to be cool shade trees for the whole world, and who were sprouts about to rise up and tower above other men, should just at the most important time have accepted false interpretations having no foundation of tradition in the line of the law. And because of this they now say of those whom they see exhausting their spirits in meditation and learning that they are merely men running about enquiring about useless matters, and they laugh

at the true enquirers with resounding repetition.

Why! even a little black-robed acolyte, running round the temple, would, if he knit his brows and put his mind to it, assuredly come to understand the 'dregs' of the true discrimination which terminate in true attainment, if they once realized the fact of their 'alaya' sense—that dark cave, so dull and so neutral, neither good nor bad, and its dire consequences. And if that is the case with an acolyte, much more might it be so with those who have received their traditions through alien lines. But what are we to say about those who are 'left in the Buddha's hands'. Some of these may have believed at first, but they have become just blind men, neutral, dull and slow, unable to attain to the headship of secular households, and eventually becoming disliked and rejected by the almsgivers and parishioners of their own temples—going on and on without knowing how to proceed correctly—as has come to be the custom of present-day pilgrims.

Let us turn aside now and ask how can one attain to true enlightenment in the correct way, when one is surrounded by excessive duties and businesses of life in the world, when one is also endangered by the 'Seven Errors and Eight Upsets'.²⁶ One may take the following illustration: Here is a brave warrior, surrounded by enemies on every side. He carries a single spear and is seated on a horse with another at his side. His fierce, bold spirit is roused by the danger, but he cannot break through by the mere use of his sword or spear. The spirit he is inspired with is that of those who uninterruptedly clothe themselves with that spirit of meditation (of which we have spoken). However, he gets no apparent benefit from his meditative spirit. He can hardly move his hand and foot, and all the four directions become to him as impenetrable emptiness or cave of the void. He feels as if his body and soul might melt away into nothingness. But if he proceeds without fear and advances boldly, then at some time the whole power of attainment may come suddenly upon him.

Speaking more generally, the spirit of meditation is the combating of self-willed thinking—it is a combat against the weight of one's feelings. It is a combat against dark and deep sleepiness. It is a combat against the ideas of right and wrong, of activity and quiet, of disorder and regularity—in fact it is a combat against all the forms of the objective world of the senses—the

condition which dulls the mind. By carrying on the combat with enthusiasm in the correct spirit, one may go on till there is an entirely unexpected attainment of enlightenment. Here are some instances of this fact.

There was that Bodhisattva, Yu-Se. He had transgressed the great prohibitions and could find no place for repentance. All he could do was to disturb his mind with his grief. But as soon as he had taken the great vow, he entered into the state of meditation eliminating his silent griefs when suddenly enlightenment came to him, as to an arhat who realizes that life is not produced by any external power.

So, too, Ummon Taishi, attained enlightenment after he had broken his left leg. I-zen of Mount Mo, suffered from diarrhoea day and night for hundreds of days till his body was painful and weary and death faced him. But he took the great vow, sat in meditation overcoming his pain and before long his intestines rumbled and moved many times and suddenly his illness was cured as if it had been wiped away. He had reached the point of great attainment.

Tai-en Ho-kwan Kokushi (known as Kaku-en, 1031-1098, a Tendai priest under Fujiwara Yorimichi, the Regent of our country) was expelled by the priests of Enryaku-ji, of which he had been made Abbot, only three days after his arrival at the temple. He went to the Flower Garden of Glory—that is the Imperial Palace, and visited the aged teacher, Ko-san of Shotaku-ji, there, and told him of his troubles. That temple, however, reviled and drove him away with blows. He became terribly angry, and as it was a very hot day he went off into a bamboo grove, where he sat without a stitch of clothing on him, and there he meditated in weariness. When the night came, millions of mosquitoes swarmed on to his naked body and devoured him. He resisted scratching the terrible irritation, gritted his teeth, clenched his fists and sat on still meditating in a foolish way. Several times he nearly lost consciousness, until all of a sudden he received enlightenment.

In still more ancient times there was Jo-go, the world revered one (Purusa?) who went into the Himalaya mountains and carried on his ascetic discipline for six years until he was nothing but skin and bones, and his hair, like reeds of grass, hung down below his elbows and knees. And E-ka Taishi (d. 593, the Second Ch'an Patriarch in China), cut off his own arm and

penetrated through to knowledge of the original of his own selfhood. Gen-sha (d. 908) was once weeping while riding on an elephant's back. He fell off and broke his left leg, but he penetrated through to the very bones and marrow of the truth. Rinzai had to swallow much bitter criticism, and he broke up his home and dispersed his household. Such was the sort of behaviour shown by searchers both in ancient and modern times. During all that course of time there was not one patriarch or sage, in all the three periods (past, present or future) who did not possess a nature which could discriminate between things. But in these times of ours men rely only on the self-willed and empty emotions of their own breasts, and think it sufficient if they can discriminate and understand just the things which lie at their own feet, and that is why they are unable to break through the devil's net, or Mara's net of false imaginations throughout their whole lives. This is the 'Little Wisdom' which is such an obstruction to the Bodhisattvas. This 'Little Wisdom' consists of men like these.

It is said that, in old times, when Zen was flourishing, great men of the warrior class, who set their minds on attaining to the correct spirit of meditation, used to take a company of seven or eight robust soldiers with them, mount fine horses and gallop round through such busy places as Asakusa and Ryo-goku where there were crowds of people, as though they were performing some important business, and they did this on the day of leisure when they were about to retire from public duty. They did this, it is said, in order to test themselves. They wanted to see how strong was their will, their purpose, how much concentration or lack of concentration they themselves had, with a view to carrying on their meditative life to perfect attainment. Had they attained sufficient will power for their purpose during the time of their life of activity in the world?

Shinsaemon Ninagawa, for instance, on his way to the battlefield attained great insight and power. Ota Dokwan (founder of the city of Yedo) while leading his men into battle composed poems. One aged arhat, who had performed the preparatory duties and finally completed the full course of meditative discipline at a time when packs of wolves used to prowl around and even attack his village, went out and spent seven nights sitting in vigil at various graveyards near the village, and he said that he did this because he wanted to find out whether his spirit

of meditation was strong enough to remain unbroken even when the wolves came sniffing about him, smelling his neck and ears.

Sho-ku Shonin of Shosha, the Sutra copyist, used continually to sigh, because when worldly thoughts were prolific and fertile then his thoughts of the Way were few and light, but when he had prolific thoughts about the Way then he found that worldly thoughts were few and light.

When I review all that I have written above and look at it carefully, it seems to me that I have just gone on writing prolifically, merely repeating worldly ideas—just babbling on and writing things that it will be difficult for anyone to comprehend. So perhaps I ought to wag my tail and beg for pity, because there is now nothing left for me in these last days of my life here in this temple of Kokurin-ji, and I am really half dead and half alive, with only a little breath left in my body, and the Morning star and the moon are setting for me. It is not my part now to plant myself in the way of obtaining authority, nor is it for me to fish in the worldly waters of fame. All that I now ask for is that I may just be able to assist men a little in their higher 'Way-nature'. Perhaps also I may be able to help a little in the way of learning about the infinite vows of the law, and also in assisting those men who are performing the charitable duty of teaching the law to others and trying to hand it on to those who will come after them.

There is a saying that it is easy to get hold of a thousand ordinary soldiers but difficult to find a good commanding general, so if you can lay hold of even a little in this letter of mine and with its help assist and enlarge the higher 'way-nature' of your Lord, so that his learning of the way of meditation may be brought to perfection, then some waves of this teaching will assuredly overflow and reach the hearts of those whom your Lord controls. And if those near to him on his right and left, are bathed in these waves of water then some of the water, even if only the troughs of the waves, will certainly reach to all people in the whole castle. And further, if those waves bathe the whole castle, then the troughs will go on till they reach all the people throughout the whole land. And the reason for this is that the heart of the one is the heart of a million. At last it would reach the whole world. At the highest level the Lord will feel its influence, and below, all the common people will receive much benefit. If this happens there will be

no government to compare with such a one in any other state.

Such is the tiny purpose of this old priest's daily life. If it were not so, why ever should I burn my solitary lamp all night long, continually rub my tired eyes, and write words of this sort over and over again and send them even when I have not been asked for them? If you can find anything in this letter which seems at all reasonable then do not throw it away, but read it through carefully. Then bring yourself into harmony with this secret art of Introspection, which is a means of preserving life, and so get both your body and spirit into good health. I trust you will then speedily attain to that power which meditation brings and that you will soon obtain that joy which belongs to the 'land of fulfilment, where cause and effect do not operate'.

My second prayer is that, by means of the increased energy which you may obtain through this method of introspection, you may preserve your life as long as did Takenouchi Sukune, and the child of Urashima. Then, you will be of true assistance to your Lord in his management of his estate, and you will be a comfort because of your compassionate heart to the ordinary people on his lands. And in your inward heart you will protect the 'Treasure of the Law', be satisfied even to repletion, with the joy of that law and the happiness of the meditative life until you reach the full attainment of the law. That is the whole of my thought and purpose for you.

Ever since I reached middle life I have been of the opinion that there is no better state of life for the voluntary undertaking of the meditative discipline than the life of the warrior. A warrior can never, day or night, permit any cowardice or weakness in his body. Whether in his public duties or in his social life he has to be very careful and strict. He must see that his coiffure is properly set. His ceremonial dress, his 'hakama' and 'haori', his long and his short swords must be carefully attached to his girdle. His manners and his every movement must be such that his inner spirit, as it were, overflows so as to be evident to all who meet him. And think of him as he is mounted on a fine and powerful steed, advancing against millions of enemies—going forward through their midst as if he were in a great open space without any people in it. His expression of face is that of one who will cut through and break down all his foes. That is the bright and clear spirit of meditation. When the warrior goes forth in that spirit he may attain in one month to spiritual

energy which would take the ordinary priest who deliberately leaves the world a whole year or more to attain to. What one who leaves the world would need a hundred days to acquire of spiritual power, such a warrior may have the fortune to obtain in three days.

Unfortunately many warriors do not set their minds or wills on acquiring this good fortune, and do not know how such a spirit as this may give them true guidance, so when they are mounted on the black backs of their sleek horses they all unknowingly pile on forty bushels and twenty gallons—a truly heavy load of ignorance and imagination, and they go on their way with forbidding looks and distorted faces, riding after each other and slashing away with their swords where ever they happen to be. Is this not a lamentable habit of the present times? Men who are passing through places like that, where the true spirit of meditation could be preserved so well, yet say that there is not even a small crack of opportunity for them, because of their official business, to carry on any meditation—such men can only be likened to men swimming in the ocean and yet looking for water!

In the Sutra of the forty-two chapters it says: 'There are twenty difficult things for those who are in exalted and noble positions when trying to learn the Way'. This is very true! From kings down to common men there are numberless people who have glory, fame, wealth and honour, but if one were to sweep the world one could not find one man amongst them all who so feared the painful Wheel of ever revolving life that he set himself to learn the essentials for escaping from that cycle of existence. This is the gist of our teaching which does not differ at all from the views expressed by the Golden Mouth of the Buddha. How can one expect to find any good Karma results in a world where men only go on coveting wealth and fame and are never satisfied. Nor are they satisfied when they are seeking more and more luxury and honour.

Your Lord is about the only man who sees wealth and fame to be nothing but a 'Flower of Imagination in the Skies', and who knows that luxury and honour are of a piece with dreams and phantasies. He alone is always bending his mind and turning his thoughts towards the sublime and great Way. Three times he has been so considerate as to visit this old shack of mine. In ancient days the Prince Wu did that sort of thing in

his ardent desire to learn of the Way. But he visited the temple of his time when he was planning to combine and unite the three lands (India, China and Japan). But your Lord did so because he was seeking to pass beyond and transcend the three worlds (past, present and future), in his desire to reach the further shore of Nirvana. So though their acts seem to be similar the purpose inspiring them was different.

In ancient times the reply to Prince Wu's three visits was made by the priest throwing away his plough and risking his very life. And how, then, can I begrudge a few words in order to reply to the three kind visits made to me by your Lord? I have gone on writing this letter, wondering what is the best exposition of the Way to give, and my words do not satisfy me. But I pray all the time that your Lord may raise his brows with joy when he reads them or hears them, and that his spirit may be strengthened. At the same time I hope, that perchance, I may help to provide a penetrating insight into the teaching of the law. However, this latter business of advancing the teaching of the law is not at all the sort of thing that can be done merely by the use of forceful words or letters. What is needed is that one should keep one's purpose fixed in the right direction towards the performance of the spiritual discipline, and then one will conform naturally with the great work.

Your special messenger took up his whip in urgent haste the day before yesterday, before I had had time to compose a reply to your letter. I am anxious not to seem remiss in my proper attention to you and your request. Fortunately yesterday a man named Gizen told me that he is about to return to Ibara, so I was overjoyed, as I could keep him to bring to you this reply. For a whole night I did not sleep, but though during the night from twilight till dawn I had managed to put together five hundred lines, I do not feel that I have been able to put into them all that my heart wishes to write to you. And in my old age I find that my memory is feeble, so that I have written at the end of the letter some things which I had already said in the beginning and repeated many things. Also there are many circumlocutions and many crooked changes in the lines. But there is no time to go through the letter again. So I am closing it up and am going to place it in Gizen's sleeve pocket. It is like putting in a chicken of So, calling it the phoenix of the elixir and sending it to the Lord.

When you have given it a lightning glance through, I pray you to hand it to some children of grade C or D in intelligence, and then keep it a strict secret. However, if you do happen to find anything in it to take hold of, I will write it all again and present it properly. Then please let your Lord give orders to some of his secretaries to make three or five copies. Distribute these amongst three or five groups of students who live in the neighbourhood and are young, and also to Wada and his companions. Make them read it sometimes. And on days of leisure call together the people of Ko-ko, Tsutsumi and Nakasawa and the old retainer physician, with six or seven older men. Put these men together in some room and make them listen to it. The Lord himself might perhaps sit on a cushion and doze while it is being read. It might help to strengthen his own sentiments about the Way. If half a day of leisure is spent thus pleasantly a state of joy in the law and happiness in meditation will become very evident to you all. You will not need to envy the 'Four Kings'²⁷ or the happiness of To-ri.²⁸ You will be even beyond envying the world which has triumphed over Yama²⁹ and his soldiers. Still less will you feel any envy of the shameless repletion of the banquets of words, or the lightness and luxury of the pleasures of error, or the pitiless and shameful hallucinations which make deaf the ears of those who hear the 'Eight Voices of the Buddha',³⁰ and blind the eyes of those who dance in the ten thousand dancing halls. It is too marvellous to contemplate!

With this purpose then, and with great toleration, you will think of learners—those who are near by as well as those who are at a distance—think of them as a great audience of tens of thousands and entice them, and do this all in accord with the great vow of Bodhisattva-hood seeking to become a teacher of the Way to all sentient beings—then there will come to you the unprecedented robes and crown of true wisdom even in the midst of the dust of life's business. And none knows if he may not be able to turn the sublime law-wheel of all the Buddhas, even while he continues to wear his sword, seated on the saddle of his horse and riding up and down the roads. And then there is that well-known saying: 'Under a strong General there are no weak soldiers'—so it may come to pass that under your flag numbers of men may appear like those influential warrior retainers—Kishi, Kyoki, Shinshi, Manji and Nomura or Tamura.

Then if by some chance a great crisis occurs, your general with his soldiers, though but one hundred against ten thousand cavalry, could march out with true vigour and boldness—and 'where life has not been seen—how could death be seen!' Such a company would be like the pushing forward of a rock or iron. They would be as calm as a mountain peak, they would be as swift as a hurricane. No place could withstand an assault by such men. No place which they touched would remain unbroken. Even if they found themselves in the midst of the battlefields of the rebellions of the Gempei wars, they would stand firm as if they were in the middle of an uninhabited plain. Their will power would be that of determined and bold men. The soldiers they led would be trained and disciplined by a combination of the sentiments of gratitude to the law. Who amongst such men would begrudge his life for the sake of such a Lord? And if a man has no fears about life or death there will be no seeking for Nirvana. At such times for such men all the ten directions of the whole universe melt away into nothingness before one's eyes, all the three worlds of past, present and future become concentrated in one thought. And all this is due to the power which comes from true thinking and the true spirit of meditation.

When such a state of affairs comes about, then the warriors are respectful, the people cleave to their Lord. The Lord is benevolent. His ministers are just. The farmers have sufficient millet. The women have enough cloth for their dresses. All classes of the people love the Way. The pulse of the nation is calm as in the peace of mount Tai. There is no deterioration or diminishing throughout the ten thousand ages. And nothing can be found like the good karma results anywhere else amongst men or gods. The upper officials attain to true enlightenment. The acting officers, who know the law will not behave like aliens!

With deep respect

5th Day of the Summer Dragon Month of the Calendar, in its Fifth Sign. In the Era of Enkyo 9 (1744-1747).

Under a Sala Tree.³¹

One who has not yet become a Buddha,³² so that he may teach others.

A writing by an aged priest.