

ZEN NOTES



SOKEI - AN SAYS

When you practice zazen you will come to realize how "mind and the surroundings of mind are mutually interfused."

In the beginning of your practice you close your eyes, and, trying to retreat into the pure metaphysical world, you forget your surroundings. You fall to one side!

Then, when you open your eyes and walk into Broadway, you completely forget the metaphysical world and drown yourself in the waves of color and sound. This is wrong too.

In both cases, because your mind and the surroundings of mind are not mutually interfused, you cannot practice meditation and actual life in the same moment. How curious that Zen students cannot work and meditate at the same time, that they cannot realize mutual interfusion.

For instance, you are observing the "sailing-boat" koan. You go back to your original state: there is no sky, no ocean, no sailing-boat, no time, no space, no motion--all disappear. You come to your master, you close your eyes--and your master will whack you! Next time you enter the master's room, you run around and dance and sing: "I am the sailing boat! I am the sailing boat!" The master throws you out.

It is when you are working at your routine task meditating, when you meditate working at your routine task, that your attitude as a Zen student becomes perfect. You do not shut your eyes, you do not dance and sing. You do not complain about "no time to meditate." It is like a cat watching a mouse, quiet, but at full tension: deep meditation and activity. Meditation must not be relaxed; meditation must be tense, like the string of a bow the moment before the arrow is shot. You must not relax. Better go to bed if you want to relax. But when you write your letter, play the piano, walk onto the stage with that intense concentration the master will say: "These are Zen students."

PROVE IT! *In our youth we practice meditation to attain Reality. Going into the mountain cave and closing our eyes we try to forget everything, staying all summer and eating only once a day. In the autumn we come back to the temple. We meet the master and he says: "You have met Reality? Prove it!"*

TO ENCOURAGE THE STUDY OF THE ORTHODOX SECT OF RINZAI ZEN

III TRUE SAMADHI When the Supremely Awakened World-honored One first went out from the palace of his father the king to seek the Dharma-gate of Emancipation he knocked upon the doors of wise men and sages everywhere, but all his efforts were to no avail and in the end he failed to accomplish his purpose. Then it was that he determined to achieve his goal by relying solely upon his own indefatigable zeal. Making a seat upon a stone beneath a tree, he seated himself upon it in the correct attitude of mind and body; and, though countless demon hordes swarmed round this seat attempting to confound him, he remained unmoved and one by one subdued them all. In the end, through hardship and severe discipline, he attained the fulfillment of his vow. Therefore this seat is called the Diamond Seat. Because the Buddha attained True Awakening seated upon it, it is called the Bodhi Seat. And because this True Awakening is the Dharma-gate of Emancipation itself, the so-called Supreme Way, and the Brightness of the World, this seat is also called the Seat of Good Omen. This seat the Buddha has bequeathed to all posterity, indicating the way to it with his own most noble and to-be-revered footprints.

The Sixth Patriarch said: "The non-arising of any thought regarding surrounding phenomena outside, either good or evil, is called *za*. The seeing into one's own immobile mind within is called *zen*. *Zazen*--to sit quietly and reflect--is not taught. It is just to sit in the correct attitude of mind and body."

The Sutra says: "The pure cool moon of the Bodhisattva sports in Ultimate Emptiness. When the water of the mind of living beings is stilled, the image of Bodhi appears within it." When the *moon of the Bodhisattva* confronts the *bright mirror*, the reflection and the image exactly conform to one another. When the billows of emotion and the waves of consciousness subside, the moon of Reality of itself appears in the water of the mind. Therefore, since *zazen* is the Dharma-gate of tranquillity, it is spoken of as the direct path to the attainment of Buddhahood.

Furthermore it is said; "One moment of sitting, one moment of Buddha." And also: "Though a man perform the meritorious deed of *zazen* but once, he annihilates forever the countless offenses he has piled up."

Everyone should make it his habit to practice *zazen* with ardent determination, resolute will and continuous aspiration. When the good results of *zazen* have accumulated, you will attain the state where rest and motion are one, where you and your surroundings are not two, and where your everyday life is naturally utterly peaceful. Then Correct Understanding and Correct View unfold, and, in the pursuance of Correct Livelihood, you will hold steadfastly to unshakable faith. And in the last moment of life, absorbed in Correct Samadhi, there is no turning back, there is not the slightest fear, for the Great Freedom has been attained.

The good results of *zazen* are immeasurable. Exert yourselves to the utmost to practice it.

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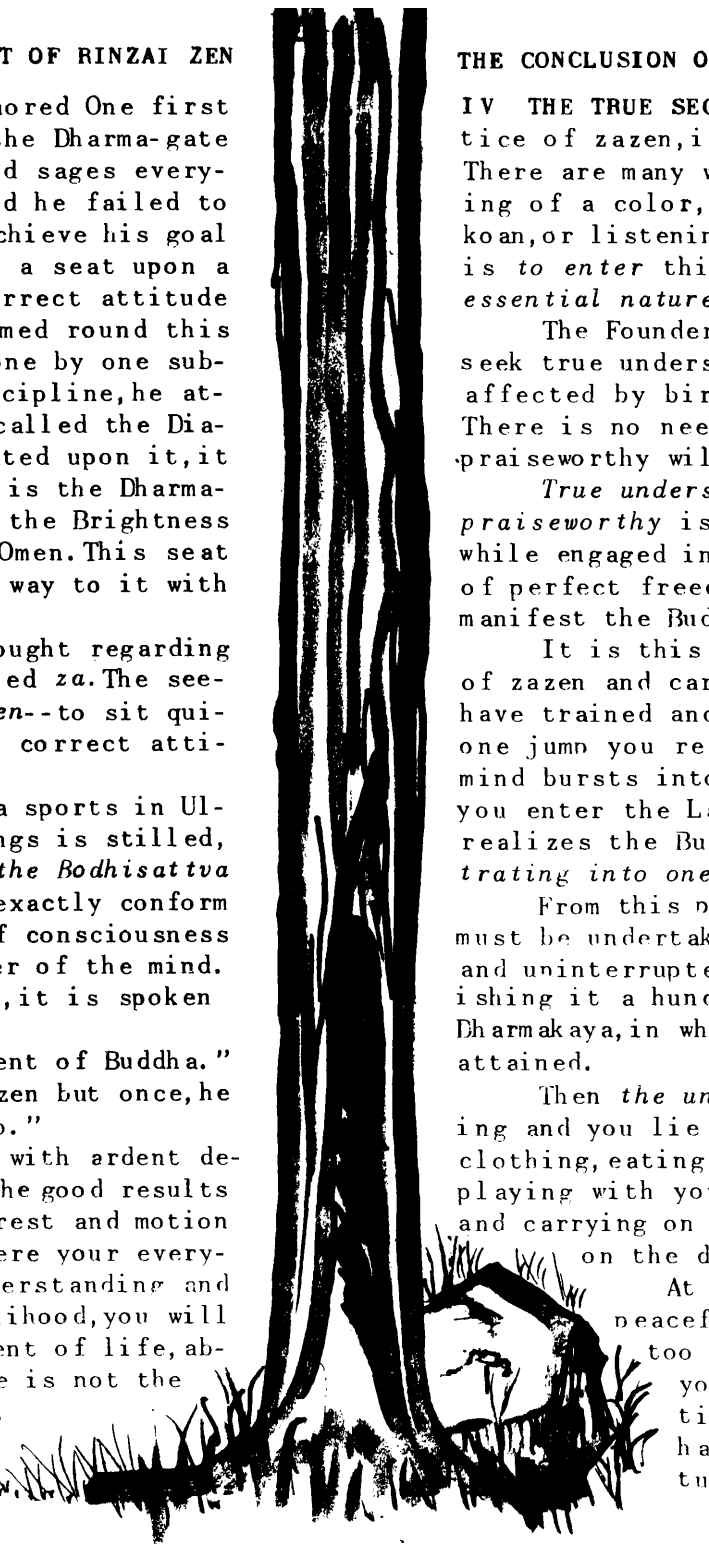
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THE CONCLUSION OF A TWO-PART MESSAGE FROM GOTO ZUIGAN ROSHI

IV THE TRUE SECT Although our Zen sect encourages the earnest practice of zazen, its true aim is that men should realize the Buddha-mind. There are many ways by which this may come about--through the sudden seeing of a color, the unexpected hearing of a sound, the observation of a koan, or listening to a Master's *teisho*--but the actual experience itself is to enter this mind. This is what is known as *penetrating into one's essential nature* and *awakening to Tao*.

The Founder Rinzai said: "Present-day students of Buddha-dharma must seek true understanding. If they gain true understanding, they will not be affected by birth and death, but will come and go in perfect freedom. There is no need to seek that which is praiseworthy, for that which is praiseworthy will come naturally."

True understanding is to see one's own essential mind. *That which is praiseworthy* is to grasp the *true man of no particular position* and, while engaged in the affairs of everyday life, to move about in the realm of perfect freedom, unhindered and with complete adaptability. This is to manifest the Buddha-mind. It is also the living meaning of the Patriarch.

It is this very thing that is grasped through the earnest practice of zazen and careful reflection upon the way beneath one's feet. When you have trained and trained yourself until you can go no further, then with one jump you reach the top of the hundred-foot pole, the blossom of the mind bursts into bloom illumining the entire universe; at a single leap you enter the Land of Tathagata, and the individual human mind directly realizes the Buddha-mind. This is what is known as *the moment of penetrating into one's essential nature*.

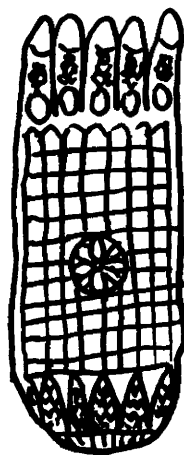
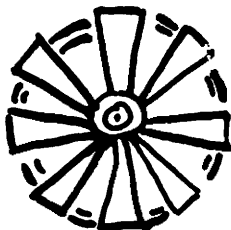
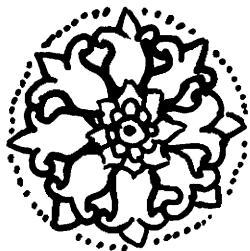
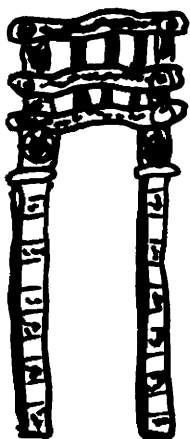
From this point on, however, the true discipline that follows satori must be undertaken. By wholeheartedly devoting oneself to the continuous and uninterrupted practice of the expedient of right concentration, polishing it a hundred times, tempering it a thousand times, the non-dual Dharmakaya, in which there is no appearing and no disappearing, is finally attained.

Then *the unconcerned mind is Tao*. You rise with Buddha in the morning and you lie down to rest with Buddha in the evening. Putting on your clothing, eating and drinking are Buddha's actions; nursing your child, playing with your grandchild are also His performances. Making a living and carrying on a business, all the activities of daily life, in fact take on the dignity and grandeur of religious rites.

At first, enjoying the repose within yourself, you abide in peaceful joy. Then you turn to the other and show him how he too may ascend this path to enlightenment. Hand in hand, yourself and the other traverse the span of life in continuous rejoicing. Then, when death presents itself, you hasten forward on the one ascending road, and there is no turning back.

This is the practice by which the Mahayana Bodhisattva fulfills the vow that he has taken. And, though the vast sky vanish and the day of complete extinction comes, there will be no cessation of the eternal turning of the Wheel of the Vow.

Earnestly endeavor to practice this!



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Isshū. Miura Roshi's given name, and that with which he signs communications to the Institute. The first character by itself means "one." The second character means "boat; vehicle."

THE SAILING BOAT KOAN as given by Sokei-an to his students.
In the distant ocean there is a sailing boat. Stop the boat!

O-SESSHIN Monthly long meditation is now scheduled for the second weekend of each month, in order to avoid the national holidays which frequently fall on first weekends.
Saturday 6:00-10:30 Sunday 5:00-10:00 Monday 7:45-10:30

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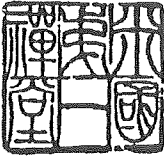
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First Zen Institute of America
113 E30 Street
New York, New York 10016
(212-686-2520)

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