RED CEDAR ZEN COMMUNITY

1021 N Forest • Bellingham, WA

Winter Practice Period 2016

Zen Pioneers in the West

Shunryu Suzuki

Taizen Maezumi

Maureen Stewart

Jiyu Kennett

Dainin Katagiri

Blanch Hartman

Shunryu Suzuki Roshi
1904 – 1971

Shunryu Suzuki, often referred to as Suzuki Roshi, was the founding teacher of San Francisco Zen Center and our immediate ancestor at Red Cedar Zen Community. Our lineage goes: Nomon Tim Burnett -> Zoketsu Norman Fischer -> Sojun Mel Weitsman -> Hoitsu Suzuki (Shunryu Suzuki's son) -> Shunryu Suzuki. So Suzuki Roshi is a grandfather teacher for us.

Suzuki Roshi grew up in a small Zen template family and was sent to live and train with a disciple of his father, Gyokujun So-On Suzuki, at the age of 12. Unusually for small Zen temples, Zoun-in temple had daily zazen. It's clear that So-On was quite rough, perhaps bordering on abusive with his young charge. Suzuki Roshi later said all of the other disciples left but he was too stubborn and too unimaginative to leave. So-on gave Suzuki Roshi the nickname "Crooked Cucumber" for his awkward nature as a young man. (See also David Chadwick's biography *Crooked Cucumber)*.

In 1918, Suzuki Roshi now 15 years old, So-On took charge of another temple, Rinso-in in the down of Yaizu. With some interruptions to go to school Suzuki Roshi helped So-On to renovate this temple (established oddly enough in the well-known year 1492). Rinso-in too contained a small zendo. Most small Zen temples feature the Butsu-dan (Buddha Hall) and Keisan-do (Ancestors Hall) but do not have a Zendo. Ritual and service for the local community featuring memorial ceremonies and general pastoral care is the more usual role of a small town Zen priest, not leading zazen.

Suzuki Roshi appreciated zazen and was also interested in learning English, making an important connection while at university with a Miss Nora Ransom who was to be an important figure in his life. Suzuki's interaction with Miss Ransom was important both for his language learning and convincing him that the essence of Buddhism and Zen can be explained to Westerners.

After University, Suzuki Roshi had an important experience training for 2 years at Eihei-ji, the main training temple of Soto Zen, where he had possibly his first positive student-teacher experience studying with Ian Kishizawa-roshi who was a scholar on Dogen.

After taking over Rinso-in temple, where Suzuki Roshi's son, grandson and their families now life, Suzuki Roshi still yearned to leave for the West.

In 1959 Suzuki Roshi attained an appointment to be the interim priest of the Soto missionary temple in San Francisco, Soko-ji. This was to be a turning point in American Zen.

Soon American students began coming to daily zazen and sesshin with Suzuki Roshi at Soko-ji. The group quickly prospered, partly due to the brilliant fundraising efforts of Richard Baker. In 1966 they purchased Tassajara Hot Springs which was to become the first Zen monastery in the Western Hemisphere. In 1969 a large building was purchased in San Francisco to be the urban

hub of San Francisco Zen Center – now known at City Center. And a proliferation of Zen Center businesses – bakeries, clothing stores, a grocery story, a now famous restaurant, were established and the live-in Zen students worked long hours to bring the businesses forward. An exciting time but in retrospect many students came to feel it was all….a bit intense.

Somehow Suzuki Roshi had a real gift for giving impressionistic and insightful teachings on Dogen, koans, and how Zen plays out in our lives in a simple humble and direct way. Powerfully non-dualistic teachings on the feeling and essence of Zen. His semi-grammatical English somehow was an asset here, but it's worth reading an original transcript of some of the talks. They were heavily and wisely edited before becoming chapters of these two books.

Suzuki Roshi died of cancer in 1971 having completed Dharma Transmission with only one student: Zentatsu Richard Baker who proved to be both a very successful abbot continuing to build the organization and guide it's students and also a disaster. Baker Roshi was eventually removed from the abbacy in 1984 after scandals around sex, power, and finances.

It was a heady time for American Zen. The students at San Francisco Zen Center were deeply committed and existing within a framework of revolutationary counter-cultural change. Zen masters such as Suzuki Roshi, and then Baker Roshi, were seen as ineffable and enlightened and huge power imbalances and a powerful vision of awakening experience led to both deep and committed practice and serious problems.

Two books have been published of Suzuki Roshi's talked, *Zen Mind, Beginner's Mind* (the best selling book in English on Buddhism bar none), and *Not Always So.*

Our readings for practice period are two chapters from *Not Always So.*

Shunryu Suzuki, Not Always So

Ordinary Mind, Buddha Mind

"Buddha in its true sense is not different from ordinary mind. And ordinary mind is not something apart from what is holy. This is a complete understanding of our self. When we practice zazen with this understanding, that is true zazen."

The point of my talk is to give you some support for your practice. There is no need for you to remember what I say. If you stick to it, you stick to the support, not the tree itself. A tree, when it is strong, may still want some support, but the most important thing is the tree itself, not the support.

I am one tree, and each one of you is a tree. You should stand up by yourself. When a tree stands up by itself, we call that tree a Buddha. In other words, when you practice zazen in its true sense, you are really Buddha. Sometimes we call it a tree and sometimes we call it a Buddha. "Buddha," "tree," or "you" are many names of one Buddha.

When you sit, you are independent from various beings, and you are related to various beings. And when you have perfect composure in your practice, you include everything. You are not just you. You are the whole world or the whole cosmos, and you are a Buddha. So when you sit, you are an ordinary human, and you are Buddha. Before you sit, you may stick to the idea that

you are ordinary. So when you sit you are not the same being as you are before you sit. Do you understand?

You may say that it is not possible to be ordinary and holy. When you think this way, your understanding is one-sided. In Japanese, we call someone who understands things from just one side a *tamban-kan,* "someone who carries a board on his shoulder." Because you carry a big board on your shoulder, you cannot see the other side. You think you are just an ordinary human, but if you take the board off, you will understand, "Oh, I am Buddha, too. How can I be both Buddha and an ordinary human? It is amazing!" That is enlightenment.

When you experience enlightenment, you will understand things more freely. You won't mind whatever people call you. Ordinary mind? Okay, I am ordinary mind. Buddha? Yes, I am Buddha. How do I come to be both Buddha and ordinary mind? I don't know, but actually I am Buddha and ordinary mind.

Buddha, in its true sense, is not different from ordinary mind. And ordinary mind is not something apart from what is holy. This is a complete understanding of our self. When we practice zazen with this understanding, that is true zazen. We will not be bothered by anything. Whatever you hear, whatever you see, that will be okay. To have this feeling, it is necessary to become accustomed to our practice. If you keep practicing, you will naturally have this understanding and this feeling. It will not be just intellectual. You will have the actual feeling.

Even though someone can explain what Buddhism is, if he does not have the actual feeling, we cannot call him a real Buddhist. Only when your personality is characterized by this kind of feeling can we call you a Buddhist. The way to become characterized by this kind of understanding is to always concentrate on this point. Many koans and sayings bring out this point.

Ordinary mind understands things dualistically, but even though we are doing what we usually do, that is actually Buddha's activity. Buddha's mind, Buddha's activity, and our activity are not different.

Someone may say that "such and such" is Buddha's mind, and "thus and so" is ordinary mind, but there is no need to explain it in that way. When we do something, we cannot say, "I am doing something," because there is no one who is independent from others. When I say something, you will hear it. I cannot do anything by myself, just for myself. If someone does something, everyone will be doing something. Moment after moment, we continue our activity, which is Buddha's activity. But you cannot say that this is just Buddha's activity, because you are actually doing something too. Then you may say "I," but we don't know what "I" that is. You try to say who is doing what, because you want to intellectualize your activity, but before you say anything, the actual activity is present. Who you are is here.

Our activity is both cosmic and personal, so there is no need to explain what we are doing. We may want to explain it, but we should not feel uneasy if we cannot, because it is impossible to understand. Actually, you are here, right here, so before you understand yourself, you are you. After you explain, you are not really you anymore. You just have an image. But usually you will stick to the image which is not you, and you will ignore the reality. As Dogen Zenji said, we human beings attach to something that is not real and forget all about what is real. That is actually what we do. If you realize this point, you will have perfect composure, and you can trust yourself. Whatever happens to you, it doesn't matter. You trust yourself, and this is not the usual trust or belief in what is not real.

When you are able to sit without any image or any sound, with an open mind, that is true practice. When you can do that, you

are free from everything. Still it is all right for you to enjoy your life, moment after moment, because you are not enjoying your life as something concrete and eternal. Our life is momentary, and, at the same time, each moment includes its own past and future. In this way our momentary and eternal life will continue. This is how we actually lead our everyday life, how we enjoy our everyday life, and how we have freedom from various difficulties.

I was sick in bed for a long time, and I was thinking about these things. I was just practicing zazen in bed. I should enjoy being in bed. [laughing] Sometimes it was difficult, but then I laughed at myself, "Why is it so difficult? Why don't you enjoy your difficulties?"

That is, I think, our practice.

Thank you very much.

Letters from Emptiness

"Although we have no actual written communications from the world of emptiness, we have some hints or suggestions about what is going on in that world, and that is, you might say, enlightenment. When you see plum blossoms or hear the sound of a small stone hitting bamboo, that is a letter from the world of emptiness."

Shikantaza is to practice or actualize emptiness. Although you can have a tentative understanding of it through your thinking, you should understand emptiness through your experience. You have an idea of emptiness and an idea of being, and you think that being and emptiness are opposites. But in Buddhism both of these are ideas of being. The emptiness we mean is not like the idea you may have. You cannot reach a full understanding of emptiness with your thinking mind or with your feeling. That is why we practice zazen.

We have a term *shosoku,* which is about the feeling you have when you receive a letter from home. Even without an actual picture, you know something about your home, what people are doing there, or which flowers are blooming. That is *shosoku.* Although we have no actual written communications from the world of emptiness, we have some hints or suggestions about what is going on in that world—and that is, you might say, enlightenment. When you see plum blossoms, or hear the sound

of a small stone hitting bamboo, that is a letter from the world of emptiness.

Besides the world which we can describe, there is another kind of world. All descriptions of reality are limited expressions of the world of emptiness. Yet we attach to the descriptions and think they are reality. That is a mistake because what is described is not the actual reality, and when you think it is reality, your own idea is involved. That is an idea of self.

Many Buddhists have made this mistake. That is why they were attached to written scriptures or Buddha's words. They thought that his words were the most valuable thing, and that the way to preserve the teaching was to remember what Buddha said. But what Buddha said was just a letter from the world of emptiness, just a suggestion or some help from him. If someone else reads it, it may not make sense. That is the nature of Buddha's words. To understand Buddha's words, we cannot rely on our usual thinking mind. If you want to read a letter from the Buddha's world, it is necessary to understand Buddha's world.

"To empty" water from a cup does not mean to drink it up. "To empty" means to have direct, pure experience without relying on the form or color of being. So our experience is "empty" of our preconceived ideas, our idea of being, our idea of big or small, round or square. Round or square, big or small don't belong to reality but are simply ideas. That is to "empty" water. We have no idea of water even though we see it.

When we analyze our experience, we have ideas of time or space, big or small, heavy or light. A scale of some kind is necessary, and with various scales in our mind, we experience things. Still the thing itself has no scale. That is something we add to reality. Because we always use a scale and depend on it so much, we think the scale really exists. But it doesn't exist. If it did, it would exist with things. Using a scale you can analyze one

reality into entities, big and small, but as soon as we conceptualize something it is already a dead experience.

We "empty" ideas of big or small, good or bad from our experience, because the measurement that we use is usually based on the self. When we say good or bad, the scale is yourself. That scale is not always the same. Each person has a scale that is different. So I don't say that the scale is always wrong, but we are liable to use our selfish scale when we analyze, or when we have an idea about something. That selfish part should be empty. How we empty that part is to practice zazen and become more accustomed to accepting *things as it is* without any idea of big or small, good or bad.

For artists or writers to express their direct experience, they may paint or write. But if their experience is very strong and pure, they may give up trying to describe it: "Oh my." That is all. I like making a miniature garden around my house, but if I go to the stream and see the wonderful rocks and water running, I give up: "Oh, no, I shall never try to make a rock garden. It is much better to clean up Tassajara Creek, picking up any paper or fallen branches."

In nature itself there is beauty that is beyond beauty. When you see a part of it, you may think this rock should be moved one way, and that rock should be moved another way, and then it will be a complete garden. Because you limit the actual reality using the scale of your small self, there is either a good garden or a bad garden, and you want to change some stones. But if you see the thing itself as it is with a wider mind, there is no need to do anything.

The thing itself is emptiness, but because you add something to it, you spoil the actual reality. So if we don't spoil things, that is to empty things. When you sit in shikantaza, don't be disturbed by sounds, don't operate your thinking mind. This means not to

rely on any sense organ or the thinking mind and just receive the letter from the world of emptiness. That is shikantaza.

To empty is not the same as to deny. Usually when we deny something, we want to replace it with something else. When I deny the blue cup, it means I want the white cup. When you argue and deny someone else's opinion, you are forcing your own opinion on another. That is what we usually do. But our way is not like that. By emptying the added element of our self-centered ideas, we purify our observation of things. When we see and accept things as they are, we have no need to replace one thing with another. That is what we mean by "to empty" things.

If we empty things, letting them be *as it is,* then things will work. Originally things are related and things are one, and as one being it will extend itself. To let it extend itself, we empty things. When we have this kind of attitude, then without any idea of religion we have religion. When this attitude is missing in our religious practice, it will naturally become like opium. To purify our experience and to observe *things as it is* is to understand the world of emptiness and to understand why Buddha left so many teachings.

In our practice of shikantaza we do not seek for anything, because when we seek for something, an idea of self is involved. Then we try to achieve something to further the idea of self. That is what you are doing when you make some effort, but our effort is to get rid of self-centered activity. That is how we purify our experience.

For instance, if you are reading, your wife or husband may say, "Would you like to have a cup of tea?" "Oh, I am busy," you may say, "don't bother me." When you are reading in that way, I think you should be careful. You should be ready to say, "Yes, that would be wonderful, please bring me a cup of tea." Then you stop reading and have a cup of tea. After having a cup of tea, you continue your reading.

Otherwise your attitude is, "I am very busy right now!" That is not so good, because then your mind is not actually in full function. A part of your mind is working hard, but the other part may not be working so hard. You may be losing your balance in your activity. If it is reading, it may be okay, but if you are making calligraphy and your mind is not in a state of emptiness, your work will tell you, "I am not in a state of emptiness." So you should stop.

If you are a Zen student you should be ashamed of making such calligraphy. To make calligraphy is to practice zazen. So when you are working on calligraphy, if someone says, "Please have a cup of tea," and you answer, "No, I am making calligraphy!" then your calligraphy will say, "No, no!" You cannot fool yourself.

I want you to understand what we are doing here at Zen Center. Sometimes it may be all right to practice zazen as a kind of exercise or training, to make your practice stronger or to make your breathing smooth and natural. That is perhaps included in practice, but when we say shikantaza, that is not what we mean. When we receive a letter from the world of emptiness, then the practice of shikantaza is working.

Thank you very much.

Taizan Maezumi Roshi

Maezumi Roshi came to the United States in 1956, at the age of 25, as an assistant to the abbot of Zenshuji, a Soto Zen temple in Los Angeles. Eventually he founded his own sitting group which became Zen Center of Los Angeles. He came from a Zen family in Japan----his father was a Zen priest and built a temple after World War ll and was head of the Soto Zen supreme court.

Maezumi received dharma transmission from his father at the age of 24, and he also studied with Rinzai Zen teachers. Overall he was given permission to teach from 3 different teachers in 3 different lineages----2 Soto and 1 Rinzai. This is very unusual.

When he died in 1995, at the age of 64, he had 12 successors and more than 30 Zen centers and 100 Zen groups in several countries associated with the lineage he created---the White Plum sangha.

His dharma heirs include:
Bernie Glassman
Charlotte Joko Beck
John Daido Loori
Jan Chosen Bays
Gerry Shishin Wick

I was originally reluctant to include Maezumi Roshi in this group of early Zen teachers because he had sexual relationships with some of his female students and not only is this a violation of the precepts and teacher/student ethics, it also caused his wife and children much pain. As a result of his affairs, they left the United States and returned to Japan. It also caused much turmoil in the sangha---many students left.

One of the things that caused me to include him after all, is this quote from his daughter, Kirsten Mitsuzo Maezumi: “He wasn't a good father or a good husband to my mother, but he was an outstanding teacher with a love for the dharma and a vision of liberation that took precedence in all he did. As an adult in my travels and my own seeking, I hear testimonials of his awakened buddha nature and hear and see the proof of it in the differences he has made for so many other gifted beings to step into their place as teachers and facilitators of peace and consciousness. It is a lineage spanning continents and decades and I am very proud of him. It's the best consolation I can have seeing and hearing his students teach.”

The reading I chose comes from his book Appreciate Your Life. I read several chapters of this book before selecting this chapter and, in the book, Maezumi's dedication to the dharma is very noticible.

I also really like some of his dharma heirs.

Buddhas. Appreciate this as *your* life!

Do It Over and Over and Over

How do you answer when someone asks you, "Why do you practice?"

In the *Genjo Koan,* Dogen Zenji says:

To study the Buddha Way is to study the self.
To study the self is to forget the self.
To forget the self is to be enlightened by the ten thousand dharmas.

*To be enlightened by the ten thousand dharmas is to free one's body and mind and those of others.**

The word *narau,* or "study," is more like "to repeat something over and over and over." We could also say "to learn," but not necessarily to learn something new. Perhaps an even better word would be *practice*. To practice the Buddha Way is to practice oneself, or just live life. This seemingly repetitive process is nothing but one's own life.

Our practice is much more than acquiring some kind of knowledge; instead, the implication of practice is doing over and over and over and over. In a way that is what we do in zazen. Of course, our zazen is not just learning something over and over; rather, as Dogen Zenji says, it is realization itself. In other words, do not separate practice and realization. We do not practice for the sake of realization; realization is already here. Each of us has some realization, one person more, one person less. When you do zazen day after day, time after time, moment after moment, you are manifesting yourself as that realization. Repeat what you know by merging your life into what you know, or what you have studied, and do this over and over and over again.

Dogen Zenji says, "To study the Buddha Way is to study oneself." How do we study ourselves? How do we practice ourselves? I say "we," but it is always singular. My life! Your life! The Buddha dharma, the One Body, is completely my life, completely your life. Shakyamuni Buddha himself found this out. That is why he said: "How wonderful! I and everyone in the universe are enlightened." Not just *I,* but everyone. That is what *I* means; *I* means everyone. But knowing this is not enough. That is why the words *learn* or *study* are not quite sufficient. They do not convey this sense of over and over and over. In other words, minute after minute, how do we live our life as the One Body, or the One Body as our life? No more, no less.

Dogen Zenji said, "To study the self is to forget the self." When the

* Eihei Dogen, "Shobogenzo Genjo Koan," trans. by Hakuyu Taizan Maezumi and Francis Cook, in *The Way of Everyday Life: Zen Master Dogen's Genjokoan with Commentary by Hakuyu Taizan Maezumi,* Los Angeles, Center Publications, 1978.

Buddha dharma and my life are separate, when I do not see that my life is the One Body, that is a delusion. When I see that they are together, that is the so-called enlightened life, or the *genjo* koan. *Genjo Koan* is the name of one of the writings of Dogen Zenji. We translate it as Manifesting Absolute Reality. In other words, absolute reality manifests as one's own life. How do we work with this koan? By realizing and living our life as the Buddha dharma, as the enlightened life. By not talking about enlightenment as if it is something outside our own life. Even talking about delusion or enlightenment is already a kind of delusion. The same can be said for studying koans or for doing shikantaza. When we set anything up as the object, as something outside ourselves, right there we are conditioned by it. It does not matter how fine the object is, the result is the same. It is a deluded view, a kind of ego trip because in one way or another the ego is involved. It is very easy to be trapped there.

How can you forget the self? Dogen Zenji says, "To forget the self is to be enlightened by the ten thousand dharmas." To be enlightened, to be confirmed, or to be verified by the ten thousand dharmas simply means to be verified by anything and everything, or more straightforwardly, by all of life itself. Life is verified by itself. It has to be! When we forget the self, all we are is the ten thousand dharmas, all we are is life itself. This is how we must live, over and over again.

"To be enlightened by ten thousand dharmas is to free one's body and mind and those of others." In other words, there is no division between oneself and others. The Buddha realized this when he saw the morning star. Seeing into his own nature, he saw the universality of his life, the freedom of his life. Life is absolutely free from the beginning. It is not at all restricted. The Buddha found this out, and we should appreciate our life in this way. When you are truly unconditionally open, you are forgetting the self at that moment. If you are hanging on to something, you have the self and you are not completely open. When we truly forget the self, there is no division between inside and outside, no division between yourself and externals. In such a way, we can appreciate life in its fullness.

I think openness is a wonderful characteristic of the American temperament. How can we be unconditionally open? What kind of openness

are we talking about? Thorough openness itself is the best wisdom. When you are open, you are able to be one with another person. It does not matter if the person is a close friend or a stranger.

Some of you ask, "How do I apply this to the workaday world? I have stress-filled workdays. How can I forget the self in the midst of trying to meet deadlines?" Simply put yourself completely into your work and just do whatever needs to be done. Deadline after deadline? There is no deadline! Each moment is a beginning as well as an end, not a goal or a deadline set up by someone else.

So when you practice shikantaza, just sit. This is the condition of openness. Then, being totally open, you are nothing other than all space and time. Dogen Zenji says, "On this body, put the Buddha seal." The Buddha seal is this openness, where there is no conditioning, no division between yourself and the object, no division between yourself and your life. When you close this gap, Dogen Zenji says, you become "the Buddha seal itself; the whole space becomes subtly itself." If we are open this much, is there anything else that we need?

For the most part, we are not just sitting; we are nursing delusions one after another. There is often this feeling that *I am doing shikantaza*. When we have this feeling, then shikantaza is not at all shikantaza. Instead, there is some kind of maneuvering, some kind of action of one's self. Do not be fooled by words and ideas. When you practice with a koan, take the koan as your life. Koans are not something to study or evaluate apart from yourself. Make your life itself *genjo* koan, the realization of koan. This is what your life already *is*. Such a life is totally open and full, and one is not conscious of oneself.

So imprint the Buddha seal, not the human seal, upon your body and mind and penetrate this openness. Just do this over and over and over.

Maurine Myo-on (Subtle Sound) **Stuart**

Maurine Stuart was born in Saskatchewan, Canada in 1922. She studied music and graduated from the University of Manitoba, after which she studied piano in Paris and performed as a concert pianist. There she also developed her interest in Rinzai Zen Buddhism.

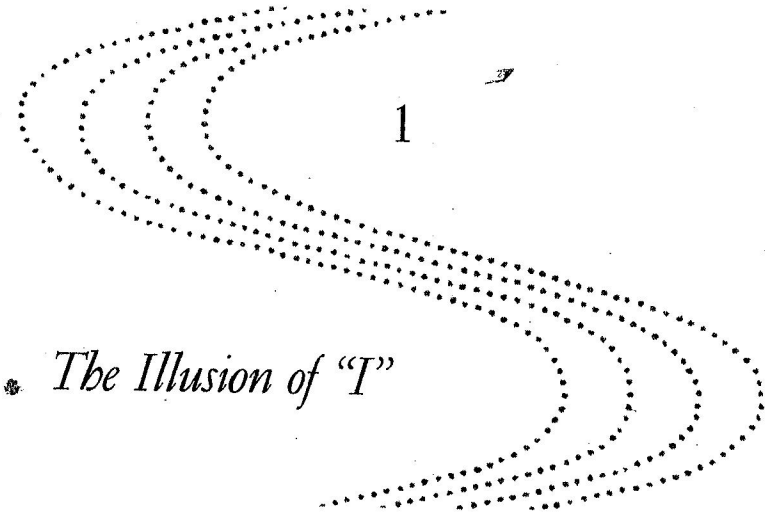
In 1966, now living in the United States, she married, over time had three children, taught piano, and joined the Zen Studies Society in New York City led by Eido Shimano. During this period she also studied with Haku'un Yasutani. In the early 1970s she moved to Massachusetts where she later became the president and spiritual director of the Cambridge Buddhist Association. In 1977 she was ordained by Eido Shimano but soon after left Simano's lineage because of his mistreatment of women.

Stuart was also a student of Soen Nakagawa, an important Japanese Rinzai Zen teacher and poet who was Shimono's teacher but also influenced Robert Aiken, who founded the Honolulu Diamond Sangha, and Philip Kapleau, author of *The Three Pillars of Zen.*

Although Nakagawa never gave Stuart dharma transmission, in 1982 he privately endorsed her as a teacher. While she was never declared a dharma heir or lineage holder, nor did she designate any successors, Stuart is recognized as one of the first women Zen masters to teach in the United States. She was much loved as a gentle yet rigorous teacher. Her warmth and kindness led her to be called Mother Roshi or Ma Roshi. By her example and teachings, she encouraged women in the Western Zen mahasangha. She led and taught at the Cambridge Buddhist Association from the mid 1970s until her death from cancer in 1990 at the age of 67. As she wished, her ashes were buried under birch trees in the garden of the Cambridge Buddhist Association center.

The book, *Subtle Sound: The Zen Teachings of Maurine Stuart*, is the collection of Stuart's dharma talks, edited by Roko Sherry Chayat.

Subtle Sound
The Teachings of
Maurine Stuart



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The Illusion of "I"

SHAKYAMUNI BUDDHA taught many wonderful things, and he taught them according to the circumstances. He spoke according to the profession, the understanding, and the experiences of the person with whom he was speaking. When he talked to a poet, he spoke in and of poetry. When he talked to a mother, he talked about her children. Above all, he spoke of the unity of life everywhere, and of compassion for every living being. His teaching came from his own experience of the human condition, from his intuitive understanding of its essential character.

Buddhism embraces all religions, all traditions. We Buddhists have deep respect for every one of them, and realize that fundamentally, we are all one. We may use different phrases at different times, but we are all one.

This practice that we are engaged in is very down to earth and pragmatic. At the same time, it is preeminently of the spirit. It is a balanced and satisfying way of life, with feet firmly planted on the ground and heart open to the whole universe. This practice does not impose any creeds or dogmas upon us. It

demands no blind faith, no submission to any separate deity or person or thing. This is an essential matter.

In Buddhism, all beings, without exception, are seen in the beauty and dignity of their original perfection, not their original sin. By our own efforts and intuitive insights we may uncover this perfection, which is our real and intrinsic Buddha-nature. This is enlightenment. Our Buddhist practice, deep and simple, is a way of life. It is a life-long study and practice—not only for this life, but for the next life, and the next, and so on. It can be a profound study, with inner meanings and depths endlessly expanding before us, and it can also be extremely simple, just teaching the basic ethical practices of daily living, practices of unselfishness, compassion, and good will toward every living being.

Buddhism emphasizes the transiency of all material things, and the illusory and impermanent nature of what we think of as our own personal ego. It also teaches the unity and kinship of all life. This practice involves mindfulness in every aspect of our lives. So it is, as Mumon says, like walking on the edge of a sword, over the ridge of an iceberg, with no steps, no ladders, climbing the cliffs without hands. There is no deviation from this path, this sword's edge, this ridge of the iceberg. We must be mindfully present with whatever difficult part of the path comes along.

Everything we do in the zendo—the arrangement of each object, the sitting in this wonderful posture, the walking with mindfulness—is exceedingly important. Not just in the zendo, but wherever we are, this mindfulness is important. Not to step on insects; to see if there is an impediment in the road and take care of it so somebody else doesn't fall; all of this is an extremely important part of our practice.

Then, of course, there is our meditation, our zazen. In awakening this intuitive mind, we awaken a deep compassion for all living creatures not as beings separate from ourselves, but as part of our own being, as we are of theirs. This, too, we feel in

the zendo. We don't talk to one another, we don't gossip about things, we don't chat about the weather. We are sitting in deep silence, sensing what it is that belongs to every human being, animal, plant, tree, stone, the whole universe. And it makes us very compassionate and openhearted to one another, if we permit it. This is living practice.

Books are beautiful and inspiring. Lectures may help us. Scriptures are also important, but these are not enough. It's living practice that is most essential. Buddhism is not based on blind faith in anything that is written in any book, however holy. Even the preaching of Buddha himself is not to be treated in this way. The Buddha said, put no other head above your own. If it doesn't fit, don't do it.

What our practice is based on is right understanding. This is the first step on the Eightfold Path, obtained through reasoning, study, devotion, zazen, and the practice of selflessness and love. Some people think that Buddhism doesn't have much to do with love. It has everything to do with love. It just doesn't sentimentalize it. It doesn't get icky, or gushy, or oozy. It's very practical, this selflessness and love practice. Don't give me a long speech about love, but show me by your action what is in your heart. Don't weep sentimentally about something and the next minute crush an insect.

With deep practice, with more and more understanding, we come to realize that we are not punished for our sins. This is not part of our way of being. We are not punished for our sins, but by them. Whatever we do that is not loving, that is selfish, that is egocentric, that is grabby, comes home to roost. If we are in pain, if we suffer, we need to examine where it comes from. Probably it issues from some activity that is not unselfish, that is selfishly motivated. We suffer because we want so much, because we think that situations should be different from the way they are.

When we are chanting the Three Refuges—when we take refuge in the Buddha, in the Dharma, and in the Sangha—what

are we doing? We take refuge in the Buddha: the Buddha was a great teacher. The historical Buddha may not ever have lived, but the presence that we think of as the Buddha, or Buddha, without the article, is a great teaching. We have not found somebody or something to make us feel secure. It's not a refuge in that sense. We are not hiding in the Buddha. Refuge is used as an example. The idea is that an ordinary human being came to an awakened state of mind by realigning himself to the situations around him. This is available to every single one of us. This human being disciplined himself by working on his own mind, which is the source of our chaos and confusion. We can't blame it on somebody else. We can't hide in something. We have to take full responsibility for this chaos and confusion, and if we really want to do something about it, we will.

When someone comes to me and says, "I don't really know how to integrate my practice into my work," I tell that person, "Don't try. Practice and work go together. If you feel that they are separate, you are bringing about a state of confusion. Whatever kind of practice you are able to engage in, however much or little, the quantity of it is not so essential. This extends itself into your work, and the quality of your work extends itself into your practice. There is no way to separate them. If you try to separate them, then you have chaos and confusion. Whatever you are doing, do it. Just do it."

Someone who practices archery told me, "I can stand up; I can do all the wonderful preparations; but when it comes to letting the arrow go, I can't do it." I said, "Stop the 'I' from doing it; just shoot." Thoughts of making a mistake, not hitting the target, being embarrassed in front of the teacher, these are what cause chaos and confusion. Let the 'I' go and just shoot. Let the 'I' go and just work. Let the 'I' go and just sit.

We take refuge in the Dharma. The Dharma is our path. Everything in our life is a constant process of learning and discovering. Everything in our life is to be related to fully. Everything is the path, constantly changing, constantly becoming

something else. There is absolutely nothing that remains the same even for one minute. So we have many ups and downs, many waves in the ocean of our life. Taking refuge in the Dharma means that we relate fully to every single thing that happens.

We take refuge in the Sangha. We know how much it means to us to sit together. The atmosphere is created here by all of us. With our sincere attitude, we strengthen one another. We sit down here together and share a sense of trust. Somebody said, "But what if I cry in the zendo?" Then cry. You're in wonderful company. We all understand this feeling. "What if I laugh?" Laugh. You're in wonderful company. It may lighten all our hearts. We're not here to judge you, to say that's bad, you don't do that in the zendo. We trust one another, and we have a large-scale friendship. I may not see you for months at a time, but when I do see you, it's as if we just said hello five minutes ago, good-bye five minutes ago, and we're back again. We have this trust and this friendship, but at the same time we have to stand on our own two feet. We are working together, sitting together, helping each other, but not in a way that we become dependent on each other's help. That would be taking away something very important. We become independent, and then we can really depend on one another. We have a clean, clear friendship, without expectations and without demands.

Every day we chant the Four Great Vows. In chanting them, we are reminded again and again of what our work is. It is an impossible task. How can we sincerely vow to do what we cannot do? These vows are Buddhist vows, and in Buddhism there is the understanding that the "I" of "I vow," this intentional "I," is an illusion. So the first realization with these vows is that 'I" cannot undertake anything. And with this, the first step in our path is actualized. "I" is the obstacle; we get rid of it.

So now we put our palms together with a different attitude: not "I" vowing, but giving myself up to the carrying out of the vow. If this attitude of giving ourselves wholeheartedly and

completely is truly practiced in whatever we are doing, the touchiness of "I," the stiffness of the ego, is softened. Just as we experience in sesshin, there is no thought of "I" doing anything. And in this softening, our suffering is decreased.

This softening is also the preparation for the working through of our passions, which we all have. Our emotional reactions, great or small, are aptly called in Buddhism "the fires"—the fire of sadness, the fire of loneliness, the fire of anger. With the attitude of giving ourselves, we can also give ourselves to the fires, rather than avoiding or refusing them or being carried away by them. Usually we refuse to come into contact with those fires, or we give in and are carried away by them, swept away. We are not willing to suffer their irrational force, and so it remains wild, and in need of humanizing. Neither refusing nor letting it rip: this is compassion for ourselves. Giving ourselves into the fires again, again, and again. They will consume "me," which is a real purification. They will consume the ego. With the absence of that ego, the fuel is gone, and the fires revert to what they have ever been: our own true Buddha-nature.

The central core of Buddhist practice is *anatta:* no "I." With this illusion of "I" gone, everything can be seen as it really is: different, but not separate. There is no clinging, no alienation; just a warm connection with what is. Buddha's teaching began with suffering and the way out of suffering. And he taught us through his own life, his birth, his awakening, and his death, the way out of loneliness, separation, and the fear of death. If there is no "I," if the shell of "I" is cracked, the liberation of the heart naturally shines forth, and acts in peace and joy for all beings.

This path, so clearly shown to us, is a way out of the illusion of "I," a way out of loneliness, separation, and fear of death. Only "I" can fear. Without "I," there is no fear. It says in the *Heart Sutra,* "No hindrance in the mind, therefore no fear." When that ego-shell is cracked, the wonderful warmth of the

human heart is released. It is liberated; it shines, flows, acts. True Buddhist compassion warms and inspires us on the Way. True Buddhist wisdom lights our dark places and helps us out of our suffering; it helps us to feel peace and joy for all beings. At the end of the Bodhisattva's Vow, we chant, "May we extend this mind over the whole universe, so that we and all beings together may attain maturity in Buddha's wisdom." What is our Zen practice, if not this?

Roshi Jiyu Kennett

Roshi Jiyu Kennett was a senior lecturing student in the London Buddhist Society when, in 1962 at the age of 38 she moved to Sojiji temple in Japan to train under Keido Chisan Koho Zenji. She studied 5 years at Sojiji and received Dharma transmission. During her time in Asia she faced severe prejudice and manipulation by the politics of the Japanese Soto establishment. However, she maintained her focus on the desire to learn the Dharma and prevailed.

In 1969 she became the first woman to receive authorization to teach Sōtō Zen in the West. In the United States she founded Shasta Abbey in Mount Shasta, California and the Order of Buddhist Contemplatives.

Kennett was regarded as a fierce teacher, who worked to develop resiliance in her students. She is also noted for the effort to translate Japanese religious custom to Western religious customs (such as by setting buddhist chants to hymn music).

Jiyu Kennett died in 1996.

ZEN IS ETERNAL LIFE

RŌSHI JIYU KENNETT

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CHAPTER 5

The Necessity of Understanding the Heart of Kanzeon

AT THE BEGINNING of the last chapter I said that it was necessary for a layman to find and bring forth the heart of compassion, and I then went into the physical method of doing meditation for this purpose. Now I want to talk about the mental attitude to be adopted in daily life, as well as in Zazen, for this purpose.

In the *Kanzeon Scripture* there is the following passage:– "Mujinni Bosatsu said to the Buddha, 'World-honoured One, how does Kanzeon visit this world of patience? How does he preach the Dharma to all beings? What is the extent of his skillful means?' The Buddha said to Mujinni Bosatsu, 'O good man, if there are beings in any country who are to be saved by Kanzeon assuming any form from that of a Buddha down to that of a human, animal or devil, Kanzeon will manifest in the form of such a being and preach them the Dharma.' "

Originally, in India, Kanzeon was called Avalokiteśvara and was definitely male but, on being brought to China, the concept of Kanzeon became female. Instead of being the idea of the seed of compassion within each and every one of us she became the Goddess of Mercy. How did this come about? The answer lies in the fact that the Chinese found Buddhism, in its early form, not suitable for spreading to the masses as a means of salvation, presupposing, as it did, the perfection of the individual rather than

salvation for all. With the growth of the Mahayana ideal, as I explained earlier, new scriptures were written to expand the old doctrines, and the Mahayana ideal itself became embodied in the cosmic Buddha Amitabha and the compassionate Bodhisattvas, especially Kanzeon. It is believed that Amitabha, or Amida, gained Buddhahood on condition that all who sincerely call on his name shall go, at death, into his Western Paradise, where they can continue to liberate themselves under more encouraging and happier circumstances than they enjoyed on earth. In other words, Shakyamuni Buddha was no longer thought of as an historical figure but as one incarnation of a transcendent cosmic reality, Buddha Nature, which is working at all times and in all worlds for the salvation of all sentient beings. Amida became the celestial example of Buddhahood. Kanzeon, the all merciful, became the goddess who helped to guide the faithful on their road to the Pure Land of the Western Paradise. From this it will be seen that whereas Pure Land, or Shin Buddhism as it is called in Japan, tends more towards the devotional attitude of faith, the Zen attitude is one of intuitive knowledge within oneself of the existence of the Buddha Nature. For Zen Kanzeon remained a statue, embodying the characteristics of mercy and compassion which the Zen trainee must find within himself; a seed which he must fertilize and cultivate to good growth through Zazen. There is room in the world for both view-points, the devotional, pietistic and the intuitive, although I have heard it said by some that Pure Land and Zen are incompatible. My own view is that, in the deeply spiritual knowledge of religion, they represent opposite ends of the same tunnel and, according to one's temperament and character, so one enters at the entrance of one's own choice. Although they are externally very different, it is impossible to say which end of the tunnel is the right one since this can only be decided by the individual concerned. At all events Zen temples do not recite the *Amida Scripture*, but they do recite the Kanzeon one for the purpose of raising the seed of compassion in the trainee.

The statue of Kanzeon, the compassionate aspect of the Buddha, at Shasta Abbey. The Hall is also used as an Ihaido or Tombstone Hall. This particular hall is commonly used for housing memorials of the dead in eastern temples.

The statues of Kanzeon in Japan appear female until, on looking at them closely, one realises that they are neither male nor female but something which is beyond both. This is because, if someone truly realises the heart of Kanzeon, he becomes a new creature, beyond the opposites of male and female, right and wrong. Therefore, in every large Zen temple, there are two meditation halls, one for laymen and one for *unsui*, a word which translates as Zen trainee. The statue in the Layman's Meditation Hall is that of Kanzeon because laymen have not, as yet, learned to

transcend duality and, until reaching the heart of Kanzeon, are still in the "world of patience" where the opposites of male and female, right and wrong exist. The statue in the Unsui Meditation Hall is that of Manjusri, Great Wisdom, and those who enter there are no longer conscious of male and female, right and wrong, like and dislike. They are unsui, free as the clouds and strong and gentle as water, with the determination of both to wander across the universe in search of truth and wisdom, swirling all obstacles from their path as they go, for they have undergone true rebirth.

When a layman arrives to study he is taken to the Layman's Meditation Hall and shown the statue. He is told that he must become as Kanzeon Bodhisattva which it represents; all-compassionate, all-seeing, all-helping. Just as the statue has a thousand arms to help in all places at once and a thousand eyes to see where the help is needed, so the lay student must search within hemself for a means to benefit mankind throughout the world. He must find within himself the strength of a thousand arms and the sight of a thousand eyes. He must so cleanse his heart that no attachment to anything of his old selfish self remains within him and this is done by the power and training of the meditation I described in the previous chapter. But he must not train for the sake of helping others only, nor for the sake of helping himself. He must just train for training's sake and nothing more. In some ways this type of meditation could be called brainwashing for it is a constant criticism of oneself in the minutest details, but it is brainwashing with the difference that it is done by one's own wishes and not by those of another.

The motive for coming to a Zen temple is all important. It was Shakyamuni Buddha's love for the world that made him go in search of the cause of suffering, old age, decay and death; and at a later date he just trained for training's sake, albeit in the service of mankind. Those who wish to study Zen should consider this point carefully. The purpose of Zazen is NOT to think about gaining anything; this will become clearer as I progress. Shakyamuni

Ringing the great bell at Shasta Abbey at 11 A.M. *and 3* P.M. *to announce that the temple is open to visitors.*

Buddha had already found the heart of Kanzeon prior to his setting out on his journey. He was, in fact, already half-enlightened. Too many people nowadays want to study Zen solely for the benefit of themselves and, without the Bodhisattva mind, which is the heart of Kanzeon and Fugen, they will never achieve it. All the pictures of the East warn that this is so if one has the eyes to see them clearly. Always Kanzeon appears as a mother pouring out the waters of mercy upon the sea of the world and, behind her, walks her little son, Miroku, the Buddha which is to come. Those who seek only wisdom, and are unwilling to seek for the heart of Kanzeon, will never find either for their basic motive is selfish. Nor is training to attain the heart of Kanzeon by itself enough. One trains neither for self nor others in true training; one trains for training's sake.

It is for this reason then that a Zen student must first find his true heart, the heart of Kanzeon, before he can be allowed to enter

the great meditation hall of the unsui. He will be expected to meditate from three in the morning until nine at night, he will be watched minutely and his slightest action regulated. Since he must be of impeccable moral character the smallest infringement of the Precepts will bring down strict censure. But all meditation is not just sitting. If one puts one's slippers correctly, and this is the first thing to be taught to a new-comer to a temple, it becomes a form of meditation. Slippers must be placed neatly together, with their backs to the door, so that they do not offend the eyes of others nor get in their way when entering and leaving rooms. This is the first attitude of mind to be cultivated–the thought of order, tidiness and other people's comfort. The small ceremony, performed by oneself prior to bathing, has the same purpose. The words of the prayer are, "I am about to cleanse my body; I pray that I may cleanse my heart." When the bath is over the prayer becomes, "I have cleansed my body; I must work hard to cleanse my heart." In the Bathroom itself strict rules govern the placing and folding of the clothes on the necessary rails and shelves, the way in which they are to be folded must be so as to cause no offence of sight to others and also so as not to occupy too much room in case there is no room for others. In the bath, no soap must be used, since it is communal, and no towel or face cloth allowed to be placed in the water. All washing must be done at a separate washing place outside the bath, in a special position, and the water disposed of in such a way that it does not soil the feet of others. Only then may the actual bath be entered. When in the bath one sits in the Zazen position with the washing cloth upon one's head so that it shall not be in others' way. All bathing is, like everything else, done in silence since one must consider that others are working hard on cleansing their own hearts and do not wish to be disturbed by idle chatter. There is a special small ceremony prior to the use of the lavatory, and also one for after it; a special position of the body must be used, not the conventional one, so as to remind one that all habits of mind and body must be changed completely

if one is to understand the Truth of Zen. One must make no noise in walking, stand and sit in attitudes that are neither disrespectful nor arrogant to others and one must sleep on one's right side, with one's head on a meditation cushion, instead of a pillow, and the coverlet tied by two strings around one's body lest, during the night, someone in the Meditation Hall may awaken and be disgusted by the sight of a body in an unsightly position or partially uncovered. Since all sleep in the Meditation Hall together this is a wise precaution. The *Tenkien*, or senior on night duty, who walks around the Meditation Hall with a lantern to make certain that all is well, carries a kyosaku and is empowered to thrash any sleeper who is uncovered or partially uncovered during the night. This is one of the strictest rules of the temple.

The prayer before meals also reveals the Zen idea of others rather than self (See "Fushuku-hampō," Book Two). When the eating is over, and it must, of course, be done in silence for the purpose of considering the necessity of eating as explained in the prayer, the washing-up water is passed round. Each trainee must wash up in his own bowl and later make an offering of the washing-up water by drinking it whilst reciting the prayer in his mind, "I am going to give this water to the hungry ghosts so that they too may be filled." So nothing is left, the bowls are polished clean reminding the trainee that, just as the bowl is immaculate with nothing left, so must he himself become. The bowl from which one eats, which is also the begging bowl, is called "the round head of the priest" in Zen terminology, and it must always be pure and immaculate, empty of all defilement. Meal taking is a very important thing in Zen–within it can be found all the teaching of Zen Truth. The house work must be done in the same spirit. One does not think about only cleaning one's own living space but helps all others to clean theirs, for the mind is such that he who just cleans up himself is selfish–one takes the Bodhisattva vow for all beings as well as oneself. The garden is cleaned and tended in the same way and periods of meditation in the medita-

tion hall are interspersed with manual labour in the garden, Kitchen and house. These periods must not be regarded as chores but as a means of doing moving meditation. The Cook and his assistants must live and think in such a way that they can see the Buddha Body in a stalk of cabbage and cherish it just as much when handling it in their cooking. He who regards anything as clean or unclean, holy or unholy, is still in the realm of the opposites and thus very far from the Zen way of life. Herein lies a grave difficulty for the beginner who can understand that one must work hard to reach immaculacy of mind and then is shocked out of it by the teacher who does some wicked act so as to teach him not to cling even to immaculacy. In fact, in order to teach his pupils, friends and acquaintances this a teacher will often resort to very strange and fantastic methods of teaching, appearing sometimes unreasonable, angry, grumbling, cajoling, dishonest or even mad. Whenever the teacher behaves strangely one must remember that he is holding a mirror in front of the person being taught; that person should study himself carefully and not criticise the teacher, however bewildering and worldly his behaviour may seem. If he is licensed to teach he knows what he is doing. Dōgen Zenji does not tell us so much in words, but from the many references in his writings and the actual "Tenzo-kyokan" or "Manual for the Monastery Cook" which he wrote, I strongly suspect that he got far more understanding from his wanderings near, or work in, the Kitchen than from a good many other places. In fact, some Zenists go so far as to say that the monastery's understanding of Zen can always be tested by a careful study of the Chief Cook whose character must be so kaleidoscopic as to be able to embrace all Buddhism in a grain of rice. Doing one's washing is another important thing for a Zen trainee. Here it is very obvious that the idea of cleaning up one's own dirt is synonymous with throwing out the stupid ideas and notions that one has in one's head. Mending clothes, the idea of tidying oneself up, and shaving heads each have their own appropriate spiritual meanings within

the same scheme of thought. Thus every aspect of life is made into a meditation on how to think of others and purify oneself. Each one of us also has something that he must cure–a secret vice, a rasping voice, heavy footfalls, unsightly dress–anything that can offend others must be carefully attended to. Never for a moment must one consider oneself only.

In the beginning one concentrates one's mind on counting the breaths when meditating, but later, as problems present themselves, such as painful legs and other portions of the body, sights that may be disturbing and sounds that distract, one must learn to deal with them by neither trying to hold on to them nor trying to thrust them away. Just one observes that they arise and disappear.

Gradually the trainee will realise that his powers of concentration are growing; the peace within him will deepen. He will begin to ask questions as to what Kanzeon is and how she actually appears as he will realise that all Kanzeons do not appear as ladies in white dresses but sometimes as judges who punish in order to make one better, doctors who employ a knife which is painful in order to cure, teachers who are cruel to be kind to their pupils. The true meaning of compassion is often misunderstood.

Many people also misunderstand the role of the Inō priest, or Disciplinarian, whose thankless job it is to see that the temple rules are kept and mete out punishment to all offenders, however slight their offences may be. He also has the job of beating all trainees twice a month with his kyosaku to encourage them to greater efforts and to teach them that praise and blame are but two sides of the same coin. He is the embodiment of the saying that the "kindest Kanzeon is to be found in hell." Do not misunderstand the use of the words heaven and hell; both places are here and now ~~and now~~ and of our own creation. Gradually, as the trainee's meditation deepens, he will discover that it is a joy to be alive and that all men, irrespective of colour, race, sex or religion, always have been, and always will be, one. When this moment comes,

right and wrong, male and female, like and dislike cease to exist and he will find himself bathed in a joy that seems to fill the universe. From this point there is neither self nor other and one trains for training's sake.

Without realising it, the trainee will have become the living incarnation of Kanzeon and proved the truth of the scripture that Kanzeon can be seen in any form from that of a Buddha to that of a human, animal or devil. He will have been reborn in heaven upon earth and that heaven will always be with him for it is, in fact, his own discovery and his own creation.

Dainin Katagiri Roshi

1928 – 1990

Dainin Katagiri Roshi was a Japanese Soto priest. He was the founding abbot of Minneapolis Zen Meditation Center (1972-1990) and left behind 11 Dharma heirs, several of whom have gone on to establish Zen Centers in Minnesota and elsewhere in the mid-west.

Born in Osaka in 1928, Katagiri grew up in a Pure Land Buddhist household - unlike many of his Zen contemporaries he did not grow up in a temple family. His family experience during the war was turbulent. He ended up separated from his family after his mother died and his father experienced many setbacks in business. As a teenager he supported himself as a diesel mechanic. He said later, "I started to have some doubt about always working in the company, carrying a pencil and a lunchbox and building diesel engines. Should I spend my whole life like this?"

Out of a desire for something more meaningful he ordained as a Zen priest but soon considered switching back to the Pure Land school of his upbringing. Eventually finding some resonance in Zen he also discovered a passionate interest in the English language and the West.

Katagiri was sent to America to be an assistant priest at the Soto Zen missionary temple in Los Angeles in the early 1960's. He soon left that position (under cloudy circumstances) and move to San Francisco intending to study English, go to college and find his way in the world.

But a student in Suzuki Roshi's small but growing San Francisco Zen Center heard about Katagiri and connected Suzuki to Katagiri. Suzuki Roshi asked for help. Katagiri was reluctant, but eventually willing, to work at SFZC assisting Suzuki Roshi. He reflected later:

> I wanted to go to college in San Francisco—making money by myself and studying English. I already had a schoolboy's place. But I was caught by Jean Ross, one of Suzuki Roshi's American students. I had helped her when she visited Japan. Now she recommended me to help Zen Center. She said: ‗Please don't live separately from Zen Center; please help us.' I was not agreed, but she constantly recommended to me: just see Suzuki Roshi. So I went to Sokoji Temple to see him, and he immediately said, ―That's a good opportunity, please help us.‖ Even though I had decided I wanted to go one way, here was a completely different way. So I was completely caught by Suzuki Roshi. Then I met the students of Zen Center and they said: ―Please come, please help us. I was completely caught by everybody and finally I couldn't say no, so I decided to come to Sokoji anyway.

But Katagiri didn't want to just be Suzuki Roshi's assistant just like he didn't want to just be a worker bee for the Soto Zen church. Eventually through various connections he found his way to Minnesota where there was a cluster of interested American Zen Students but no teachers. He said later that he'd heard that all of the teachers skip the middle of the country and go to either New York or California. "I wanted to go where no one would go," he said later.

He continued to help out at San Francisco but it's likely SF Zen Center would have wanted him to stay on there. Richard Baker was by all accounts a domineering, and effective, leader, so it's likely there wasn't a lot of psychic room for Katagiri. After Suzuki Roshi died Katagiri did help out for another year or so, and 12 years later when Richard Baker left after his scandal, Katagiri started coming back regularly to lead practice periods and teach.

From the mid 1970's until his death, like Suzuki Roshi relatively young and from cancer, in 1990, Katagiri focused on the Minnesota Zen Meditation Center and a rural place he hoped to make into a training monastery called Hokoji. In the last few years of his life he very carefully, and it sounds like even while he was pretty sick, completed the training and Dharma Transmission of 11 priests. About half men, half women. This included many of them training seriously in Japan and it became clear later that Katagiri had worked hard to re-establish good relations with Japanese Zen.

Host of his heirs established centers themselves, in Minnesota, Nebraska, and other places in the midwest. He also gave jukai to 30 or 40 people, some of whom have gone to do priest ordination with Katagiri's disciples. One of those people was Byakuren Judish Ragir who is Eko Jeff Kelley's teacher. Judith did jukai with Katagiri roshi and priest ordination with Dosho Port. Jeff also trained at first with Dosho. (Dosho himself had a bit of a scandal, but that's another story.)

Katagiri loved Dogen and he loved zazen. His most well known teaching is about silence. Two books collecting his talks have been published: *Returning to Silence* and *You Have to Say Something.*

You can listen to Nomon Tim Burnett’s reflections on Katagiri Roshi in a Dharma Talk on our website given on November 25, 2015. Tim practiced briefly with Katagiri Roshi in 1987.

Just take one step

EVERYONE LIKES ZAZEN AT FIRST. They feel that in zazen they can relax. But actually zazen is beyond tension or relaxation. If you do zazen, forget about relaxing and just sit down.

Regardless of whether you understand it or not, just do zazen with wholeheartedness, completely beyond any thoughts or speculations about obtaining any benefit. Just put all that aside and just sit. This is realizing Buddha. If you become a buddha, your body language speaks of your life—not merely of the little life you are living now in this moment, but of your whole life.

The important point is not to try to escape your life but to face it—exactly and completely, beyond discussing whether or not your zazen or your situation is good or bad, right or wrong. This is all you have to do.

One day, as the monk Baso sat in zazen, his teacher passed by and asked him what he was doing. "I want to become a buddha," said Baso.

His teacher immediately picked up a tile and started polishing it.

"What are you doing?" asked Baso.

"I'm polishing this tile to make a mirror," said his teacher.

"Ridiculous," said Baso. "How can your polishing make that tile a mirror?"

"How can your zazen make you a buddha?"

Baso's teacher really wanted to correct Baso's understanding of Buddhist practice. For Baso at that time, zazen was merely a means to an end. This is our common, dualistic attitude toward everything.

In the dualistic world, things always seem to exist in complete separation. They are never unified. But the dualistic world is created by human speculation. It is the world we conceptualize through our consciousness.

Human thought and speculation are not wrong, but they are often deceitful and evasive. When we are caught up in the dualistic world, we act just like a dog or a cat trying to get a piece of meat hanging from a pole tied to its own body. The moment it sees the meat, it goes for it, but of course it can never reach it. And the pole isn't stiff, but flexible, so that when the animal moves, the food snaps to the right and left, flying in all directions. This only makes the animal move all the more wildly.

This stuff dangling and moving in front of us is just noise created by our human consciousness. We enjoy getting lost in it, but it's deceitful, because it's dualistic.

To do zazen correctly is to transcend this dualistic world. Dogen Zenji said,

> The zazen I speak of is not learning meditation. It is the manifestation of ultimate Reality. Traps and snares can never reach it. You must realize that just there in zazen, Dharma is manifesting itself, and that from the first, dullness and distraction are struck aside.

Authentic practice of zazen is not a means to an end. It is an end in itself. This is why Dogen said it is not learning meditation. If you try to learn something through meditation, it becomes a means to an end. If you use zazen as a means, it is nothing but dust. Whether we think of it as iron dust or gold dust, it doesn't matter. Even if the dust that gets in your eyes is gold, it still hurts you.

Usually people have the idea that they can attain wisdom if they do zazen. But from the first, zazen is nothing *but* wisdom. If we don't understand this point, there is something stinky about our zazen. It is intellectual zazen—just the idea of zazen. It might look like zazen, but it is not zazen. It is just our everyday, helter-skelter mind.

According to traditional Buddhism, our helter-skelter state of mind must be subdued by the practices of *shamatha* and *vipassana*—tranquillity and insight. The first is to stop the helter-skelter mind and the second is to view the human world on a broad scale; in other words, to see it with wisdom. If we make our confused state of mind stop, we very naturally attain wisdom.

With wisdom we can see everything clearly. So at all cost, we have to make our minds quiet through these practices. But even though you may use these perfect practices of meditation, if you see them only as a means to an end, it's like kids playing hooky from school and wandering aimlessly through the streets. We don't want to look directly at life, at death, at zazen itself. We are always looking around for comedies and tragedies, but never do we look at life as it's being lived.

Zazen is not about destroying our thoughts or doing away with our subjective points of view. It's about how to deal with thoughts and views mindfully. In zazen, mindfulness, thoughts, and views all become simple and quiet because we are concentrated on just one thing, not many. At that time, mindfulness becomes very pure and clean, and our view becomes unified. When mindfulness, thoughts, and views all work together as one, this is zazen.

If you truly realize this, you can't be using zazen as a means to a happy future. You can only do zazen itself. Within zazen, all things work together and become one. There are no categories of good or bad, right or wrong, that can hold zazen. It touches the core of human life.

If you believe zazen is a means to an end, then it is easy for

you to use zazen like a raft to reach the other shore. But if you get to the other shore like this, you won't know what to do next. If you use zazen in any way as a means to reach the other shore, you will never be satisfied.

At this point, people sometimes throw zazen away. "I've finished," they say. "I've reached the shore, so I don't need zazen anymore." But their life is still in a fog.

Sometimes people think they should carry their zazen around with them after reaching the other shore. But if you do that, you should know you haven't actually reached the other shore. You have just come up on a sandbar somewhere in the middle of the river. Desires are endless, and if you look carefully, you will see you are still caught by them.

If you carry zazen around as a means to an end, it will just keep getting heavier and heavier. If it's five pounds at the beginning, you might be able to carry it for a mile without trouble, but if you carry it for two miles, or three miles, or five miles, you will become exhausted. This is because your false shore starts washing away the moment you reach it. This is why you are not satisfied in zazen. You are still looking for the other shore.

This is just how most of us are confused. We don't appreciate the fact that desires are endless. We have to come to realize that there is nothing to get into our hands, and that zazen is not a vehicle, not a means.

So, how can we practice zazen as an end in itself? All you have to do is take a step. Just one step. Strictly speaking, there is just one thing we have to face, and nothing else. If you believe there is something else besides this one thing, this is not pure practice. Just take one step in *this moment* with wholeheartedness. Intellectually, we think about the past and the future, but if we take one step, this shore and the other shore are *now*. Taking one step already includes all other steps. It includes this shore and the other shore. This one step is zazen.

Just make your helter-skelter mind quiet and use mindful-

ness, thoughts, and views to see both life and death in this moment. Life is endless. But that's not important. What's important is that beginningless and endless life lies within a peaceful mind. Right now, right here, our life must be peaceful. To enter the gate of peace and harmony is not an idea. Like a falling leaf, it is the total manifestation of enlightenment and the illumination of ultimate reality.

Settling in the vast openness of the sky

We receive a lot of information and thus have many things to deal with in our lives. This creates problems for us.

Look at how much information just comes from your head as soon as you sit down to do zazen. Your head is not small. It extends into the past, present, and future. So as soon as you sit down, your head starts to spin, and soon it's lost in thought. Information keeps coming so quickly that we can't stay with any one piece for very long. It just keeps coming up—one thing after another.

So, what good is zazen when your head always spins like that? Even just sitting, you're completely carried away. It leaves you thoroughly confused. This is why in zazen we must throw away all judgments and evaluations—all thoughts of good and bad, pros and cons. All we have to do is just sit down and completely open ourselves to right now, right here, without being carried away by all the information in our heads.

In Zen we often compare the thoughts in our heads to clouds in the vast openness of the sky. Clouds come and go, often in fascinating ways. Sometimes black clouds run wild in the sky, and heavy storms, even tornadoes, appear. Other times the clouds rise to lofty heights and shine in dazzling

Peaceful Life by Katagiri Roshi, Hokyoji, 1988

Being told that it is impossible,
One believes, in despair, "Is that so?"
Being told that it is possible,
One believes, in excitement, "That's right."
But, whichever is chosen,
It does not fit one's heart neatly.

Being asked, "What is unfitting?"
I don't know what it is.
But my heart knows somehow.
I feel an irresistible desire to know.
What a mystery "human" is!

As to this mystery:
Clarifying,
Knowing how to live,
Knowing how to walk with people,
Demonstrating and teaching,
This is the Buddha.

From my human eyes,
I feel it's really impossible to become a Buddha.
But this "I", regarding what the Buddha does,
Vows to practice,
To aspire,
To be resolute,
And tells myself, "Yes, I will."
Just practice right here and now,
And achieve continuity,
Endlessly,
Forever.
This is living in vow.
Herein is one's peaceful life found.

Zen Pioneers in the West: The Zen Sewing Lineage

by Chris Burkhart

> **"The proper understanding of our zazen and rakusu is the same, not different."(Shunryu Suzuki)**

When **Shunryu Suzuki Roshi** brought Zen to America, he also carried with him the traditions of Japanese Zen. Chanting, bowing, sitting, eating oryoki style meals, and wearing ceremonial robes such as rakusu and okesa. When Suzuki Roshi began teaching in California, he himself was not familiar with sewing Buddha's robe. In Japan, ceremonial robes are usually bought in specialty stores. So, Suzuki Roshi, who was used to purchasing his own robes, continued to buy the robes in Japan and had them delivered to the United States.

The person who influenced Shunryu Suzuki Roshi to change was Dainin Katagiri Roshi. The first sewing teacher at San Francisco Zen Center in 1971-1972 was **Eshun Yoshida Roshi**, whose path as a sewing teacher was cut short by illness.

It was up to **Kasai Joshin-san** to revive the ancient practice of the devotional sewing of ceremonial robes by hand. The year was 1974: Suzuki Roshi had already passed away, when the nun Kasai Joshin-san visited San Francisco Zen Center. Under Joshin-San's guidance, sewing robes in the west was truly established to become an integral part of practice.

She taught that the hand-sewn robe represented the entire and complete body of the Buddha with no part left out. Sewing was, like zazen, her body practice. The entire body of her teaching lay in her sewing, she never gave dharma talks. Until the year of her death in 1984, she often returned to San Francisco often to continue to teach.

Joshin-san transmitted her teaching to **Zenkei Blanche Hartman**. Blanche Hartman was and is a quietly compelling leader. She taught sewing through her great compassionate presence, a true heir to Suzuki's Dharma. Zenkei Blanche Hartman's steadfastness and skill allowed the tradition of Zen sewing to grow and flower in America. She continued to teach sewing practice at the San Francisco Zen Center temples. From there, the teaching of sewing spread through the lineage of Suzuki Roshi.

Most Zen practitioners who have jukai or have been ordained in the west are wearing a robe which was sewn by their own hands. And most of those who have sewn Buddha's robes learned more than "the stitch." They learned about themselves: their likes and dislikes, their preferences, their past. So, the tradition of sewing in the west today remains strong. Before jukai or ordination there is sewing, many hours of sewing. A quiet time emerged in seeking refuge in Buddha, stitching a rakusu or okesa, and seeing what is.