

Fukan-Zazen-Gi
Translated by Gudo Nishijima

Recently I have met my necessity to translate "Fukan-Zazen-Gi, or The General Introduction of How to Practice Zazen." "The Fukan-Zazen-Gi, or The General Introduction of How to Practice Zazen" was written by Master Dogen in 1227, but later it seems to be revised by Master Dogen himself, and so nowadays "Fukan-Zazen-Gi" is usually published in its revised one. Therefore in this case I also utilize the edition, which has been used as the authorized one for hundreds years continuously.

Fukan-Zazen-Gi

Generally speaking, when we research the Truth, the Truth are originally pervading through the Universe, and so how is it necessary for us to rely upon sometimes practice, or sometimes experience?

Furthermore, the methods, which are useful to arrive at the fundamental principle, are existing everywhere, and so how is it necessary for us to be exhausted by the enormous efforts to get them?

Enormously much more, we, Buddhist monks, totally have got rid of the secular garbage or dust already, and so who is it necessary for us to believe in the necessity of methods brushing off or wipe off them?

Generally, we, Human Beings, are impossible to get rid of our adequate place, and so how is it necessary for us to utilize even a bit of part of our legs for that purpose?

However, if there were any kind of the slightest gap existing actually, the gap of the expanse will become much more wider as if it were the width between the Heaven and the Earth, and so if there occurs any kind of difference, because of the difference we have to lose our mental and physical serenity completely.

Even though we are proud of our clear understandings, being full of clever decision, getting further excellently different consideration, getting the Truth, clarifying the mind, encouraging the will excellently piercing the sky, and even though we are taking a walk to put our head into the area of considering Action, but actually speaking, we are totally losing for ourselves to put our body actually into the area of Real Action itself.

Furthermore, in the case of innate Genius at Jetavana Anathapindikarama, we can actually look at the historical remains, where Gautama Buddha himself authentically sit there for 6 years. And the historical person in Shao-Rin-Ssu, who has transmitted the Central Symbol of Buddhism into China, has been presenting his authorized dignity of facing the wall for 9 years even today. Even in the case of such ancient examples those Old Sacred Personalities have been already like this. How is it possible for us, the people today, to spend the time without practicing Zazen at all?

Therefore we should stop our efforts to looking for words and to understand verbal expressions at all. It is necessary for us to study our passive steps of turning light to ourselves for reflecting ourselves opposite. The consciousness of our body and mind might vanish in a few minutes, and our original face and eyes will manifest themselves naturally. And if we want to get anything ineffable at once, just practice something ineffable, that is, Zazen, at once!

Generally speaking, if we want to practice Zazen authentically, it might be better for us to use a quiet room, and what we drink and eat, might be better to be moderate. Many kinds of miscellaneous circumstances must be thrown away, and many kinds of business should be stopped so far totally. Don't consider Good and Bad! Don't worry about Right and Wrong! Stop the motion of Mind, Will, or Consciousness! Stop the consideration of Consciousness, Thoughts, or Reflection. Never, never, intend to become Buddha! And such a kind of efforts can never be limited only inside sitting, or lying.

In general situations, we should spread a thick carpet on the floor, and on there we use a thick and round cushion for Zazen. Sometimes we practice a full lotus posture, and sometimes we practice a half lotus posture. In the case of the full lotus posture, first we put our right foot on our left thigh, and then we put our left foot on the right thigh (for example.) And in the case of a half lotus posture, we push over our right thigh with our left foot (for example.) We should put our clothes over the legs for making the situation of clothes orderly.

Then we put our right hand on the left foot, and put our left hand on the right hand to put the tops of both thumbs together supporting with each other.

Then regulate our posture into the authentic sitting, and don't incline our spine left or right. Don't slouch the spine forward, or lean backward. The line of ears must be parallel with the line of the shoulders horizontally, and the nose aligned with the navel. Hold the tongue against the palate, keep the lips and teeth closed, and keep the eyes open naturally.

Breathe softly through the nose, and after settled the physical posture already, make a deep breath once, sway the body left and right. Sit immovably in the mountain-still state, and think the concrete state of not thinking. How is it possible for us to think the concrete state of not thinking? It is just different from thinking. This is just the abbreviated technique of Zazen.

What is called Zazen, is different from learning Zazen, but it is just the Peaceful and Pleasant Gate into the Universe. It is the practice and experience to clarify the Truth. The Universal System has been realized already, but nets or cages for us have never arrived at us yet at all.

If we have arrived at what we intend to, the situations might be the same as if a Dragon has got the water, or a Tiger has got mountains as the guard behind. We should exactly notice that the True Dharma has manifested itself naturally, and both darkness and vagueness have been destroyed first.

When we stand up from sitting, move our body gradually first, and then stand up stably. Don't be hasty or violent. In the case of standing up still, first we should move our bodies slowly, and then stand up. We should never be hasty or violent.

Reflecting Ancient Times, transcending the common sense, overcoming the Sacred, dying in Zazen, or passing away in standing still, all have been relying upon the power, which has been trained by the practice.

Furthermore a turning point utilizing a finger, a pole, a needle, or a wooden block, and another usual experiences utilizing a hossu, a fist, a wooden stick, or a cry of 'Katsu!', are also the identified experiences, which are far beyond the decision by consideration, or judgement. How is it possible for any kind of mystical ability, practice, or experience, to be available to know? It might be some dignified form outside of voice or color. How is it possible for them not to be criteria before recognitions or perception?

Therefore, we should never select abilities between the clever or the stupid, discussing higher wisdom, or serious stupidity, or selecting a clever person or a stupid person. If we sincerely consider problems, it must be just pursuing the Truth. Practice and experience should never naturally become tainted with each other, and what is aimed at, should be balanced and constant.

Generally, this world and the other land, or the western world and the eastern land, all are keeping Buddhist characteristics, and solely including the orthodox behavior. Just we are diligent in practicing Zazen only, and we are just being caught inside the state without motion.

Even though our situations are so much different having so many differences, we should solely practice Zazen for pursuing the Truth. How is it possible for us throwing our own sitting seat for wandering in the foreign countries here and there without any criterion? If we make a mistake even only one in our step, we have to commit our mistake just at the present moment.

Fortunately we have got the excellently valuable human body already. Should never pass the valuable time without doing anything. We, human beings, have already got the very important faculty for Buddhist Morals. How is it possible for anyone to lose the so valuable Time in vain spending it for instantly fleeting joy?

Not only like that, the physical substances are so fragile like a dew drop on grass leaves, and the flimsy life is very similar to a flash of lightning. They suddenly vanish completely, and they erase themselves at once.

I would like to ask to elegant people of studying Buddhism that because of having accustomed to models of dragons, don't be afraid of the Real Dragon itself. Relying upon the direct and simple efforts of practicing Zazen diligently, and revering the person of transcending theoretical learning and forgetting intention. We will have identified ourselves with the Ultimate Truth of many Buddhas, and receive directly the balanced Autonomic Nervous System of many Patriarches's Samadhi. If you will continue this Something Ineffable, the Warehouse of Treasures will open naturally, and it will become easily possible for us to receive and utilize them as we like.

Fukan-Zazen-Gi (1) Commentary

MASTER DOGEN AT KENNIN-JI

Master Dogen became a Buddhist monk in the year 1212, at Enryaku-ji in Kyoto. He practiced the life of a Buddhist monk there for about 3 years. Noticing, however, that the training in Enryaku-ji at that time was too concentrated upon intellectual consideration, he went to visit Master Eisai at Kennin-ji in Kyoto, and eventually he moved to Kennin-ji.

Because Kennin-ji belongs to the Rinzai Sect, we can suppose that Master Dogen also received a Koan from the Master, and that he also considered the meaning of the Koan during Zazen as a method to get Enlightenment. Such a method is different from the practice of Zazen itself. But Master Dogen was a very sharp-minded person, so much so that it was likely impossible for him to have the misunderstanding that he had attained the so-called Enlightenment, when the fact was he had not attained anything. Therefore we can suppose that he might have worried about the fact that he hadn't experienced so-called Enlightenment at all.

Perhaps then Master Dogen had doubts about whether Zazen, as it was practiced in Japan at that time, was true or not. So he might have begun to want to go to China, in order to research the true Buddhist practice of Zazen, which was done in China at that time.

But at that time Master Butsuju Myozen, who had become the second Master of Kennin-ji succeeding Master Eisai, might have had the same idea as Master Dogen. Butsuju Myozen also had the hope to visit China to experience the real situation of Chinese Buddhism and Zazen directly. So Master Myozen and Master Dogen decided to visit China together in order to get Enlightenment there.

MASTER MYOZEN AND MASTER DOGEN IN CHINA

Unfortunately, Master Myozen fell ill about two years after they arrived in China. He died in Tendozan Keitoku-ji on 27th May, 1225.

Master Dogen continued traveling to several Chinese Buddhist temples, one by one. He hoped to meet a true Buddhist Master, by whom he (Master Dogen) could be satisfied. On the 1st of May in 1225, Master Dogen met Master Tendo Nyojo, who had become the Master of Tendozan Keitoku-ji. After that, Master Dogen studied Buddhism under Master Tendo Nyojo until his return to Japan in 1227.

The value of the historical fact that Master Dogen met with Master Tendo Nyojo is very great. Before meeting with Master Tendo Nyojo, Master Dogen practiced Zazen on the basis of the idea that by practicing Zazen practitioners could get Enlightenment, which is different from the actual practice of Zazen itself. It was due to Master Dogen's great concern about the fact that he couldn't get the so-called enlightenment, that he visited China.

But Master Tendo Nyojo's Buddhist teachings were completely different from what Master Dogen expected. As Master Dogen described in the Shobogenzo chapter

entitled 'Gyoji' (Chapter 30), Master Tendo Nyojo proclaimed that, "To practice Zazen is just to get rid of body and mind. It is not necessary for us to burn incense, recite Buddha's names, confess our sins, or read Sutras, at all. But if we just sit, everything has been got already since the beginning." These words suggest that "To practice Zazen is just to make the autonomic nervous system balanced and get rid of the consciousness of body and mind. If we practice Zazen solely, the getting rid of the consciousness of our body and mind has already been realized since the beginning."

This way of thinking is one of the most important principles of Buddhist philosophy. Zazen is never any idea that the method is to practice Zazen, and the aim is to get Enlightenment. The practice of Zazen is not to be viewed as some instrumental means to a separate end called Enlightenment. Zazen is just the act of sitting at the present moment. So it is absolutely necessary for us to think that in Zazen the aim and the method are perfectly combined into one by the act of sitting itself. Therefore it is very important for us to practice Zazen as the first enlightenment, and it is not necessary for us to worry about if, or when, the second enlightenment will come. The first enlightenment is just the practice of Zazen itself at the present moment. The second enlightenment is just the perfect understanding of the Buddhist philosophical system based on the Buddhist practitioner's sincere daily life on the basis of practicing Zazen.

MASTER DOGEN'S HOMECOMING

Master Dogen returned to Japan in 1227. He was 27 years old. Upon return, someone asked him, "What have you brought back from China?" At that time he answered "Nothing." And then he added, "If it is necessary for me to say something, it might be (what I have brought is) The Flexible and Soft Mind." And we can interpret his words to indicate our body and mind, as they are, in the balanced state of the autonomic nervous system.

WRITING FUKAN-ZAZEN-GI

Master Dogen, who had come back from China, stayed in Kyushu for a while, then he entered Kennin-ji in Kyoto once again. At that time we can think that he might have had a very strong feeling of duty to spread the true Buddhism in Japan, the Buddhism he had studied and learned under Master Tendo Nyojo in China. He wrote about this situation in the Shobogenzo chapter entitled 'Bendo' (Chapter 1.), saying it was as if he was carrying a very heavy burden on his shoulders. Therefore we can think of "Fukan-Zazen-Gi" as Master Dogen's proclamation for opening his teachings.

There are two different editions of Fukan-Zazen-Gi. One is called "Shinpitsu-Bon", and

the other is called "Rufu-Bon." The "Shinpitsu-Bon" means the edition that was written in his own calligraphy, and "Rufu-Bon" suggests the edition that has been spread widely to the public.

"Shinpitsu-Bon" was written with a style of Chinese characters that was new at the time, and so it was designated as a National Treasure. It has been preserved in the Eihei-ji Treasury, where it remains at present.

After reading it again and again, I suppose that "Rufu-Bon" has been revised and polished a great many times by Master Dogen himself. So I think that "Rufu-Bon" might be the fully accomplished version and the best version to be used as the standard edition of Fukan-Zazen-Gi.

Fukan-Zazen-Gi (2) The original text of Rufu-Bon

In general, when we pursue the truth, the fundamental truth pervades throughout the universe, and so it seems to be perfectly unnecessary for us to rely upon the practice or the experience (of Zazen). Furthermore, the methods of arriving at the fundamental principles naturally exist, and so how is it necessary for us to exhaust our efforts (for getting the truth)?

Especially in our case, we, Buddhists, have already perfectly left the value of secular societies like garbage and dust. How is it necessary for anyone to believe in the necessity of methods to brush or wipe away those secular values?

Generally speaking we usually have not lost the adequate situations, and so how is it possible for us to necessarily utilize a bit of the tip of the edges of the feet (of Zazen) at all?

However, even if there was just a bit of the smallest gap, then the gap would become bigger and bigger as if it were like the distance between heaven and earth; and if the smallest difference slightly occurred between right and wrong, we would have to lose our mind perfectly in serious confusion.

Even if we were so proud of our sharp intellectual understanding, and were full of intuitive decisions, getting sharp intuitive enlightenment in a perfectly independent area, getting the ultimate truth, clarifying the human mind, and even though we were elegantly strolling through situations, having the strong confidence that our intellectual thinking ability has surely entered into the real world, having the strong and sharp mind of piercing heaven, (but actually looking at the situations), it seemed to be perfectly

impossible for us to avoid the faculty of intellectual consideration to get the vigorous state of real acts in the area of reality.

Furthermore, we can trace even the clear footprints by the genius (Gautama Buddha) of Jetavana Anathapindikarama, who made his efforts to practice Zazen for 6 years, and we can still hear even today the famous Master's information in Shorin-temple (Bodhi Dharma), who practiced Zazen facing the wall for 9 years. Even the ancient great Masters have shown their excellent example like those. How, then, is it possible for us to pass a bit of time of a day without practicing Zazen?

Therefore, we should stop the intellectual efforts of researching words and pursuing speeches at once, and should begin to learn the study of stepping back by illuminating ourselves. (Then the consciousness of) body and mind will drop off from us naturally at once, and our original face and eyes will manifest themselves suddenly. If we would like to get such a situation as this at once, we should do it at once, without any hesitation at all.

In general, when we practice Zazen, a quiet room is preferable. Eating and drinking should be moderate. Miscellaneous circumstances should be thrown away perfectly, stopping all kinds of jobs, don't think about good and bad, and don't have any concern between right and wrong. Stopping motion of mind, will, and consciousness, stopping consideration by image, thoughts, and intuition, and never intend to become Buddha! Such a state of practicing Zazen does never relate with sitting and lying down in our daily life.

At the place, where we sit, we usually spread a thick matting, and we use a round cushion. Sometimes we use the full-lotus posture, and sometimes we use the half-lotus posture. In the case of the full-lotus posture, first we place the right foot on the left thigh, and then we place the left foot on the right thigh. In the case of the half-lotus posture, we push the right thigh with the left foot. Covering over (the feet and the thighs) with wearing clothes, and it is necessary for us to make them orderly and neat. Then, place the right hand over the left foot, and place the left hand on the right hand, having the two tips of thumbs touching together against each other. Just then keep your posture in the regulated sitting exactly. Don't lean to the left, don't incline to right, don't slouch forward, and don't lean backward. It is necessary for us to keep the ears and the shoulders contrasted in parallel (parallel to each other), and the nose and the navel should be contrasted (in line with each other). Hold the tongue against the palate, keep the lips and teeth closed, and the eyes should always be kept open. Breathe softly through the nose, and after already regulating the posture, take a deep breath once, and swing the trunk right and left. Then sit stably without motion, similar to a

mountain, and think the state without thinking. How can we think the state without thinking. It is different from thinking. This is just the summarized method of Zazen.

What is called Zazen can never be the so-called learning of Zen, but it is just the peaceful and pleasant entrance into Dharma. It is just the fusion of practice and experience to realize the truth perfectly. The rule of the universe has been realized already, and there is no possibility for net and cage to enter, which can capture the practitioner. If we have grasped this meaning already, (our situations) might be the same as a dragon, which has got water, or a tiger, which stands up in front of a mountain guarding itself with the mountain. We should know the facts that the true universal rules manifest themselves first, and the states of both melancholy and gaiety fall down on the ground at once.

When we stand up from the sitting, we move the body slowly and gradually, then we should stand up peacefully and happily. Never should (our getting up) be hasty or violent. We have studied since the ancient time that the transcending ordinary people, or the overcoming saints, and the dying in Zazen and losing life standing still, have come from relying upon the power of balance, which has been got from Zazen.

Furthermore, the seriously important changing moment like the pointing finger of Master Gutei, the bringing poles down by Master Ananda, the using a needle by Master Nagarjuna for teaching Kanadeva, and the clapping block utilized by Master Manjusri, or the experienced states, which are indicated by a whisk, a fist, a staff, or a shout, can never be understood at all by mental consideration or intellectual distinction. How is it possible for them to be understood by mystical ability, or by the separation between practice and experience? They might be the dignified form out of voice or color. How is it not possible for them to be different from criteria before knowledge or view? Therefore, we should never discuss whether we are superior cleverness, or inferior stupidity. We should never prefer between a clever person or a foolish person. If we make our efforts wholeheartedly, it might be just pursuing the truth. The practice and the experience do never taint with each other, and the attitudes to go forward are much further balanced and constant. Inside ourselves and outside the external world, or the western, (India), and the eastern lands, we have kept the characteristics of Buddhas equally, and manifest the behaviors of fundamentally traditional habits solely, that is just to sit in Zazen, being restricted by the state of no motion. Even though there might exist tens of thousands of differences, or thousands of differences (in methods of Zazen,) just do Zazen and make our efforts for pursuing the Truth. How is it possible for us to forget our own sitting places by going to and coming back from others' dusty countries? If we have made a mistake in the smallest step, we have to make a stumbling, or mistakes just at the moment. We have

fortunately got the important situations of human body already, therefore how is it possible for us to spend a bit of time without doing anything uselessly at all?

Fortunately we have maintained the human body and mind, which are the very important substance for pursuing Buddhist Truth, and so how is it possible for whom to enjoy the slightest instant joy like a spark of a flint at a moment, in vain at all?

Furthermore, the physical substance is as transient as a dew on a plant's leaf, and the situation of human life seems to be so similar to a flash of lightning. It has suddenly become vacant, and it has been lost at once.

Therefore, I would like to ask for those higher people, who are practicing and pursuing the Truth, that being accustomed to the miscellaneous images of imitative dragons, do not fear to meet the real dragon actually! Please make your efforts in the practice of Zazen, which indicates the Truth directly, revere a personality, who has transcended learning and having any kind of intention, become perfectly identified with the Truth of the Buddhas, and receive the balanced state of the Patriarchs authentically. If you practice what is the ineffable, (which is Zazen,) it is impossible for you to avoid becoming the ineffable. The grand warehouse of jewels will become open naturally, and you have got the perfect freedom to get jewels and utilize them without any hindrance.

Fukan-Zazen-Gi (3) Interpretations

Generally speaking we can say that, what is necessary to write about Zazen, was written by Master Dogen in Fukan-Zazen-Gi, and what is not necessary to be written is not written in Fukan-Zazen-Gi. Therefore, what is written in Fukan-Zazen-Gi, has always inevitably had important value, and so I would like to trace through all of its sentences again according to my interpretations.

(1) Affirmation of the Real World

In general, a person, who absolutely believes in an idealistic philosophy, usually thinks that what they think in their brain is the highest criteria in the world. Therefore, they think that the real world, which is different from their Ideal, is always imperfect, that it is always unsatisfactory.

But at the same time, there are people who believe in a materialistic philosophy, who think that it is very clear that this world is made of matter. To them, the world strictly made of matter, is never satisfactory, but it is the one and only world in which we can

live. And so, they think, if we want to make this world better, it is necessary for us to destroy the world.

In Buddhism, however, the world, where we are living now, is only one world, which really exists. So it is necessary for us to affirm the real situation of the world. It is inevitable for us to live in the world and to make the world a little better as much as possible. Master Dogen proclaimed that, generally speaking, human beings believe they are living usually in an adequate situation, and so to them it seems to be unnecessary to pursue the truth relying upon practice and experience.

(2) Real Situations of Human Life

When, however, we actually examine the real life of human beings, we find that our situations are not so adequate and easy. For example, when a very small problem occurs in our daily life, that small problem often becomes bigger and bigger, and it will usually grow so big that it will usually become very difficult for us to solve the problem at all. With a sharp mind and an excellent intuitive ability, we seem to acquire great understanding of our particular problems. This apparent understanding of the problem gives rise to a very strong confidence in our mental ability. This confidence is so strong that it becomes impossible for us to enter into the area of real act, the area that is beyond our mental function.

(3) Real Excellency of the Ancient Masters

Looking at the excellent Masters of the ancient past, we find that Gautama Buddha practiced Zazen at Jetavana Anathapindikarama for 6 years, and the Great Master Bodhi Dharma in Shorin Temple, practiced Zazen for 9 years. Those excellent Masters have practiced Zazen enormously, and so it is inevitable for us to practice Zazen as well.

(4) Real Contents of Zazen

The real contents of practicing Zazen is never the same as researching words, or pursuing the meaning of sentences. It is to turn the direction of the light inside to illuminate ourselves for reflection. Then our consciousness of our body and mind vanishes naturally, and our original eyes and faces manifest themselves actually. Therefore, if we want to experience such a kind of reality, which cannot be described with words, it is necessary for us to realize it by the act of Zazen.

(5) Circumstances of Zazen

Originally, it is better for us to utilize a quiet room, and drinking and eating should be moderate. Throwing away all circumstances, and stopping all of our jobs for a little while, we should never have any consideration of good and bad, and we should never have any interest in the true or the false. Stopping the functions of mind, will, and consciousness, and stopping the consideration of images, verbal and other types of consideration, intuition, and so forth, we should never even intend to become Buddhas. The situation of Zazen is completely different from the usual types of sitting and lying down in our daily lives.

(6) The Concrete Methods of Zazen

We usually spread a thick mat at the place of sitting. At the time when Master Dogen lived, even in Japanese houses, mats were not used so much. So when they practiced Zazen, they needed to use a mat on the wooden floors. And on the mat they used a special round cushion called Zafu.

In Zazen, sometimes we use the full-lotus posture, and sometime we use the half-lotus posture. In the case of the full-lotus posture, first we place the right foot on the left thigh, and then we place the left foot on the left thigh. In the case of the half-lotus posture, we push the right thigh with the left foot. In the case of the half-lotus posture the description Master Dogen used the phrase "to push." Such a description might suggest a little looser folding of the legs.

There is a problem concerning whether it is permissible for us to change the legs right and left. Master Kodo Sawaki clearly explained that, "Master Dogen has given only one example." So we can interpret that it is permissible for us to change the legs right and left during Zazen, if it is necessary.

The clothes should be placed over the legs and the feet softly and neatly. Then the right hand should be placed over the left leg, and the left hand should be placed on the right hand. When the positions of feet are opposite, the position of hands also should be opposite. The two tops of thumbs should be put together, and they should be placed in front of the navel.

Then just sit in the regular posture, without leaning to the left, without inclining to the right, without slouching forward, and without leaning backward. The horizontal line of the shoulders and the horizontal line of the ears should be parallel and the nose and the navel should be constricted vertically.

Hold the tongue against the palate, and the lips and teeth should be closed. The eyes should always be kept open. Breathe softly through the nose, and after having regulated the posture truly, take a deep breath once, and swing the trunk right and left. Then sit stably without motion, similar to a mountain, and think the state without thinking. How can we think the state without thinking? It is decisively different from thinking. This is just the summarized method of Zazen. Therefore we should never think that "to think about not thinking" is a kind of thinking at all.

(7) The real substance of Zazen

The practice of Zazen is never an effort to become balanced, but it is just the state, which has realized the balanced state of body and mind in the universe already. It is just the perfectly realized truth, and the fusion between practice and experience. The rule of the universe has been realized already, and any hindrance, or any restriction, hasn't appeared at all. If we have begun to recognize such a situation, we are like Dragons, which have become very vigorous getting water, and we are like tigers, which were guarding themselves in front of a big mountain. First of all, the rule of the universe has been realized in front of us, and both the gloomy darkness, which comes from the stronger sympathetic nervous system, and the flimsy easiness, which comes from the stronger parasympathetic nervous system, have vanished already, and we should experience such real situations directly and exactly.

(8) Finishing Zazen

After finishing Zazen, when we stand up from the sitting, we should stand up slowly, keeping our stable condition peacefully. We should never be hasty or violent.

(9) Effects of Zazen

When we look at the real effects of Zazen, the state, which has transcended both ordinary people and the saints, has appeared from the practicing of Zazen, and an example of death during Zazen, or an example of death standing still, comes from the effect of practicing Zazen. Furthermore, Master Gutei in China, always held up his forefinger to answer all questions of Buddhist philosophy. In the case of Master Ananda, he realized the truth, when he was putting flagpoles down in order. Master Nagarjuna threw a steel needle into water to symbolize a becoming monk. Bhodhisattva Manjusri utilized a hard wooden clapper. These examples have always come from practicing Zazen. And when Buddhist Masters teach their students, they use a whisk, a fist, a staff, or a shout. Such explanations can never be understood by the mental ability of thinking, or distinction. It might be perhaps a dignified form, which

transcends verbal expressions and external form. How is it possible for us to deny that they belong to the criteria, which are beyond intellectual consideration, or sense perception. Of course, when Master Dogen lived, human beings had no knowledge of the autonomic nervous system. But we can think that Master Dogen clearly noticed that the effects of Zazen could never be related with intellectual consideration or sense perception at all.

(10) No Relation with Cleverness or Foolishness

Therefore it is not necessary for us to discuss whether people are clever or foolish, or whether they are preferable, or not. If someone practices Zazen sincerely, it might be just the pursuit of the truth. The practice and experience are originally the perfect fusion of the two, and so they are never separated from each other. The direction of going is always identified into one, and they are always balanced and eternal.

(11) Universality of Buddhism

Generally speaking, in the area where we are living, and in the different areas, where others are living, or in India, or in the West, or in China, or Japan in the East, Buddhism has common characteristics, which Gautama Buddha has taught us. It has occupied the fundamental attitudes exclusively, and because we practice Zazen so sincerely, we are just self-regulated in the perfectly stable situation. Therefore even though there are so many differences among us, relying upon the balanced state of Zazen, we should make our efforts to pursue the truth. How could there be any kind of necessity for us to have to throw away the place, where we should keep for our practicing Zazen, in order to run about in confusion? If we make even one mistake at the present moment, we have to commit the mistake just at the moment. Fortunately we have got the valuable life as a human being, and have been given the important ability to practice Zazen. So we should never spend our valuable time doing useless hobbies in vain. We have already kept the valuable practice, which Gautama Buddha has presented us. How is it possible for us to spend such valuable time for any kind of useless pleasure at all?

(12) Entreaties to All Buddhists Through the World

Furthermore, our physical substance is so transitory like a dewdrop on a leaf, and the changeable condition of our human life is very similar to a momentary flash of lightning. They vanish suddenly, and they are lost in a moment. Therefore Master Dogen entreated to all Buddhists through the world whole-heartedly that, "Because of having been accustomed to the artificial images of dragons for a long time, you do not doubt the truly real dragon, that is, Zazen." I would like to ask you to make your efforts

to do Zazen, which is just the truth, that can be shown by itself as it is. Please revere the person, who has transcended scientific knowledge and forgotten intentional efforts. Please identify your truth with the truth, which many traditional Masters have kept, and please succeed the balanced state of the autonomic nervous system, which many traditional Buddhist patriarchs have succeeded authentically. If those kinds of efforts are practiced for a long time, those efforts might be something which can never be described with words. The door of the gorgeous jewelry warehouse will be opened, and it will be possible for you to utilize the jewels of the warehouse well in your perfect freedom.

Fukan-Zazen-Gi (4) Real Situation of Zazen

After explaining Fukan-Zazen-Gi, I would like to add some concrete knowledge on Zazen.

(1) Without practicing Zazen everyday, it is useless for us to practice Zazen

Zazen is a practice to realize the balanced state of the autonomic nervous system. Because the balanced state of the autonomic nervous system is a momentary state, if we have lost the balance for some reason in our daily life, it is necessary for us to practice Zazen as soon as possible to recover the balanced state at once. Therefore Master Dogen also recommended us to practice Zazen four times a day regularly.

However, there are many differences in human societies since the time when Master Dogen lived, and so we should select the lifestyle, which is convenient for our daily practice of Zazen. Nowadays most of us live in modern capitalistic societies, and so we usually need to get monetary income regularly. Therefore, if we want to continue our practice of Zazen everyday, we need to find an adequate time to practice Zazen, which is suitable to our daily life and also allows us time to get some monetary income regularly. In my case, I practice Zazen in the morning for 30 minutes, and in the evening also 30 minutes after retiring from Dogen Sangha in Ichikawa City. Therefore I would like to recommend all people in the world to practice Zazen everyday following their own adequate schedule.

(2) Misunderstanding of "Satori," or "Enlightenment"

It is true that there is a fact, which is called "Satori," or "enlightenment" in Buddhism, but in fact there are so many misunderstandings of enlightenment in Buddhism.

For example, some insist that if we are practicing Zazen diligently, our mental and physical conditions change suddenly, and a miraculously splendid situation manifests

itself at once. But it is very important for us to notice that those kinds of miraculously splendid facts do never manifests on the earth at all. Such stories come from an exaggerated apparition, or a fantastic pretention. Because we are just living in the real world, and in the real world it is impossible for us to meet such miraculous facts at all. If we are affirmative to idealistic philosophy, we can imagine the possibility of such a fantastic story. But we, Buddhists, who are just realists, should never believe in such an idealistic story.

At the same time there is another story, which is also related to so-called enlightenment. Some Buddhist practioners insist that if we practice Zazen intensively and enormously, we can meet very strange physical situations, in which we can experience unusual and fantastic situations. If we follow an unhealthy schedule and practice Zazen in unhealthy conditions, it is true that we have to meet many kinds of physical disorders, or confusion, and we will lose our healthy and stable condition at once. Therefore it is necessary for us to think in accord with what is true, and that is that we always need to be healthy.

So there is much confusion in Buddhism, which has come from the misunderstanding of enlightenment. In the case of Master Dogen, when he was in Japan before visiting China, he had also the same misunderstanding of enlightenment. At that time he was also very dilligent in practicing Zazen in order to get enlightenment. But while visiting China, he met Master Tendo Nyojo. And Master Tendo Nyojo proclaimed that "To practice Zazen is just throwing away both consciousnesses of body and mind. If we just practice Zazen, we can get the state (of enlightenment) just from the beginning at once." Hearing this from Master Tendo Nyojo, Master Dogen realized what enlightenment was. And he noticed that the first enlightenment is just to practice Zazen itself.

(3) The True Enlightenment

The true enlightenment in Buddhism is just to practice Zazen itself. In the Euro-American Civilization, from which we have received so many benefits, there are two kinds of value. One is the very sharp and exact intellectual consideration, which has been produced by so many excellent philosophical thinkers, and the other is the direct and clear sensuous beauty, which also has been produced by so many excellent fine artists.

However, in Buddhism we are making our efforts to transcend both intellectual consideration and sense perception to find the real world itself.

Therefore, relying upon the practice of Zazen when we make our autonomic nervous

system balanced, the sympathetic nervous system, which is the cause of intellectual thoughts, and the parasympathetic nervous system, which is the cause of sense perception, become plus/minus/zero, and we, human beings, can live in the real world, or the world of the truth directly. This is just the first enlightenment. In another words, when we practice Zazen every day, and when we are keeping our autonomic nervous system balanced, it is just the time when we are enlightened.

And if we continue our practice of Zazen every day, we can keep our balanced autonomic nervous system every day, and so we can think about all kinds of philosophical problems on the basis of realism, leaving from idealism and materialism. I think that this experience includes the very valuable and very strong power to erase our former idealistic or materialistic life habits, and we can just live in reality completely.

Relying upon such a habit we can think about all philosophical problems on the basis of realism every day. When we have solved all philosophical problems on the basis of Buddhist realism, then the perfect understanding of all philosophical problems on the basis of Buddhist realism will come. This is called the second enlightenment.

Reading the examples of Chinese Buddhist Masters, for example, Master Joshu Jushin, and Master Reibun Shigon, they both needed more than 30 years to get the second enlightenment. It takes rather a long time. But it is not necessary for us to worry about the fact that it takes too much time to get the second enlightenment. Because if we practice Zazen every day, we can enter into enlightenment itself at once. In other words we can get the enlightenment every day, so there is no problem for us to worry about it.

(4) Concepts of Emptiness (Ku), or Nothingness (Mu), are Completely Wrong

In the Buddhist societies today, many people insist that the fundamental Buddhist philosophy is a kind of nihilism, and many Buddhist thinkers insist that the fundamental Buddhist theory is that this world is not the real world, and that such nihilistic thought is Buddhism.

But I think that this interpretation of Buddhism is completely wrong. This wrong understanding Buddhism as nihilism comes from the very seriously incorrect translation of Master Nagarjuna's *Mulamadhyamaka-karika* by Kumarajiva, an ancient Indian scholar of the Chinese language. *Mulamadhyamaka-karika* was written around the 3rd Century by Nagarjuna, and in 4th Century Kumarajiva translated *Mulamadhyamaka-karika* into Chinese. But when I read *Mulamadyamaka-karika* in Sanskrit directly, it is very clear that Kumarajiva didn't understand the true meaning of *Mulamadhymaka-*

karika at all. Therefore the translation of Mulamadyamaka-karika in Chinese by Kumarajiva does not express any true meaning of MMK (from here I would like to use the abbreviation of MMK) at all. But Kumarajiva's translation was done as a part of the Chinese governmental translating project, and so his translation was authorized in China, and the influence of it was enormous in the Oriental societies. Therefore, in Mahayana Buddhism in the Oriental societies, the orthodox Buddhist thinkers usually insist that Buddhism is a kind of nihilism, which insists that the world is not real, but that it is an abstract image of emptiness.

However when we read MMK in Sanskrit carefully from the original text, MMK is just an example of the fundamental Buddhist thought, which explains that Buddhism is just Realism, which clearly believes that this world really exists.

(5) Realism in MMK

When we read the original text of MMK in Sanskrit, it is very clear that MMK is a book which insists that Buddhism is just a realistic philosophy. This is without doubt. MMK is divided into 27 Chapters, but even reading only the 1st chapter, it is very clear that Buddhism is just a realistic philosophy without fail.

The 1st chapter of MMK is entitled "pratyaya" in Sanskrit, which means belief, or faith. So we can interpret that Nagarjuna proclaims the fundamental Buddhist thoughts, which pervade throughout the total MMK. In this chapter Nagarjuna describes that this world is the real world, where everything exists really as it is. Therefore I selected the title of "Reliable Facts" as the title of the 1st chapter in my English translation.

The 1st chapter includes 14 verses,. In the 1st verse, Nagarjuna insists that "subjectivity" is not real, and also "objectivity" is not real. "Subjectivity" is a translation of Sanskrit word "svata", and "objectivity" is a translation of Sanskrit word "parata". I interpret that the word subjectivity means our thoughts, which we produce in our brain, and the word objectivity means our sense perception, which stimulate our sense organs. Therefore I understand that Nagarjuna proclaimed that ideas, which are produced in our brains, are not real, and sense perception, which is excitement in our sense organs, is also not real. And so I interpret that Nagarjuna denies both the real existence of ideas and of sense stimuli. This suggests that Nagarjuna fundamentally denies both idealistic philosophies and materialistic philosophies exactly.

I think that the Buddhist idea, which denies both idealism and materialism, is a very important point, when we want to understand Buddhist philosophy, because the absolute denial of idealism and materialism in Buddhism suggests that Buddhism has a rather strong criticism of intellectual consideration. However, where can we find any

kind of philosophy, which is different from intellectual philosophy? Related to this question, Buddhism proclaims fundamentally the existence of practical philosophy, which is dimensionally different from intellectual philosophy. Therefore, even though this absolutely strong denial of idealism and materialism seems to be some kind of affirmation of nihilistic Buddhist thoughts, which was Kumarajiva's wrong interpretation, the fact is never like that at all.

We can know this because in the 2nd verse of the 1st Chapter, Nagarjuna indicates four entities as real existence. The first one is the reason, or the rule of the universe, which pervades throughout the universe. The second one is the external world, where we are just living now. The third one is the present moment, when our act is done. The fourth is Reality itself, which can be identified with God. And Nagarjuna bravely asserts absolutely that there is no fifth, and so relying upon his decisive attitude, we can suppose he had very strong confidence in his own Realism.

In the 4th verse in the 1st chapter, he says that those four factors of Reality are identified with our human act at the present moment.

In the 9th verse he insists that our real act at the present moment in our daily life is just the same as the whole universe. In other words our real act at the present moment in our daily life is just the same as the whole universe itself.

And I think that this kind of Realism of Nagarjuna's must be the same as Gautama Buddha's Realism, Master Bodhi Dharma's Realism, and Master Dogen's Realism.

(6) A Place for Zazen

A place for Zazen is not always necessary to be wide, but Master Dogen says "It is sufficient enough for us to have a space, where we can keep our body to enter."

(7) The Posture

In Zazen, the true posture of Zazen is very important, and Master Dogen describes the concrete and exact postures so precisely, therefore we have to follow his instructions sincerely. For example, even in Buddhist sects in Japan, there is an example of using a chair for Zazen, but I think that such a kind of compromising attitudes should be avoided.

The most important posture in Zazen is to keep the spine from the lower part, the backbones, the neckbones, and the top of the head a little backward, into a straight

and vertical line as much as possible. Therefore, to do so, it is necessary for us to pull the chin backward and downward as far as possible for fixing the total spine. Without this posture, it is difficult for us to avoid intellectual considerations during Zazen. Without the fixed posture, a relaxed posture in Zazen sometimes becomes a cause of irritation because of the difficulty to stop thinking.

(8) Method of Breathing

Even though there are so many methods of breathing in Zazen, which have been transmitted traditionally or through legends in Buddhist societies, I think that for such a problem it is very adequate for us to follow Master Dogen's teachings, which he has shown in chapter 5 of Eihei-koroku (the consecutive number in the total paragraphs is 390) as a record of his formal lecture, which has been done in the Lecture Hall. About Eihei-koroku, there is a very reliable edition, which has been founded by Master Kishizawa I-an in the warehouse of Eihei-ji temple some decades ago. The Abbot of Eihei-ji temple, Master Niwa Rempo has reprinted this version (Kanazawa Bunko in Tokyo publishes it), So I think it might be much reliable for us to utilize this edition.

In Eihei-koroku even when Master Dogen describes the method of breathing in Zazen, he insists first on the importance of keeping the regular posture exactly, and then he describes the method of breathing. Therefore we can notice how much Master Dogen reveres the regulated posture of Zazen.

First, Master Dogen denies the regulation of breath, and the practice of keeping the mind at the highest grade, which are much revered in Hinayana Buddhism. We can interpret that Master Dogen clearly recognizes that Buddhism is never idealistic philosophy, and so he clearly notices that the idealistic efforts in Hinayana Buddhism can never be Buddhism. Therefore, even though there is the method of counting the number of breaths during Zazen in Hinayana Buddhism, Master Dogen clearly refuses such an incorrect method.

In relation to Mahayana Buddhism, even though Mahayana Buddhists sometimes insist that when the breath is long, we should recognize that it is long, and when it is short, we should recognize that it is short. In short, we should accept the real fact as it is, and we should not do any kind of intentional efforts. Therefore, in Mahayana Buddhism there is the habit to do a special breathing method, one which is done by inhaling the air by utilizing the abdomen, and exhaling the air by utilizing the abdomen. But Master Dogen also denies such a special method.

And at the end of his lecture he describes his own opinion of breathing situations, then

he says that "When we are vigorous, then we practice Zazen. When we feel hungry, we eat meals, and then we feel satisfaction sufficiently." These words suggest that the practicing of Zazen is also our vigorous activity in our daily life, and so it is not necessary for us to have any kind of intellectual criteria, or strange habits. Master Dogen encourages us just to enjoy the practice of Zazen, without worrying about the intellectual interpretation.