

# Every Breath You Take (Dharma Talks 1-99)

Dharma Talks by Ven. Shikai Zuiko o-sensei

Commentaries on Book Eleven of the Avatamsaka sutra, translated by Ven. Anzan Hoshin roshi and Ven. Shikai Zuiko sensei

## Jo-gyo-bon: the Practice of Purity

(Avatamsaka sutra, Huayan jing, Kegon-kyo, Book Eleven)

translated by Ven. Anzan Hoshin roshi  
and Ven. Shikai Zuiko osho

Then the wakeful one All-Pervasive Knowledge asked Manjusri, who was open to Openness, "How should wakeful ones unfold activities of body, speech, and mind without fault? How should they unfold activities of body, speech, and mind that do not harm? How should they unfold blameless activities of body, speech, and mind? How should they unfold invulnerable activities of body, speech, and mind? How should they unfold activities of body, speech, and mind which do not fall back? How should they unfold unshakable activities of body, speech, and mind? How should they unfold excellent activities of body, speech, and mind? How should they unfold unblemished activities of body, speech, and mind? How should they unfold stainless activities of body, speech, and mind? How should they unfold activities of body, speech, and mind that are guided by perfect knowing?"

"How should they unfold arising in the right circumstances, among good people, with complete physical capacities and clear mindfulness, understanding, complete in conduct, fearlessness, and awareness?"

"How should they unfold excellent, foremost, peerless, immeasurable, incalculable, inconceivable, incomparable, unfathomable and inexpressible investigation?"

"How should they unfold the strength of good roots, of aspiration, skillful means, the power of the recognition of context and content; the five strengths: confidence, thoroughness, mindfulness, harmony, and perfect knowing; and the four bases of subtle perception: determination, consciousness, effort, investigation?"

"How should they unfold skill in discerning the elements, aggregates, and sense bases, skill in understanding interdependent emergence, skill in understanding the three conditional realms of desire, form, and nothingness, and skill in understanding the three measures of past, present, and future?"

"How should they thoroughly practise the seven factors of awakening: mindfulness, investigation, exertion, joyfulness, calm, concentration, and equanimity? How should they unfold openness, signlessness, non-obsessiveness? How should they fulfill the perfections: generosity, integrity, flexibility, exertion, practice, and perfect knowing? How should they fulfill kindness, compassion, joy, and equanimity?"

"How should they unfold the energy of knowing what is true and what is not, the energy of knowing the consequences of events, the energy of knowing the inclinations of beings, the energy of knowing the various styles of beings, the energy of knowing the capacities of beings, the energy of knowing the destinations of all paths of practice, the energy of knowing the obscurations, deviations, and clarification of all practices and meditative states, the energy of knowing one's own past existences, the energy of knowing future existences, and the energy of knowing the ending of all outflows?"

"How should they always gain the protection, respect, and support of shining sovereigns, dragon sovereigns, sovereigns of the forest spirits, sovereigns of celestial musicians, sovereigns of violent shining beings, sovereigns of bird-like creatures, sovereigns of horse-headed beings, sovereigns of serpentine creatures, sovereigns of humans, and sovereigns of the highest beings?"

"How should they be a reliance and liberator, a refuge and resort, a lamp and a light, an illuminator and a guide, a supreme and universal leader for all sentient beings?"

"How should they become foremost and greatest, excellent and supreme, sublime and most wonderful, highest and unexcelled, incomparable and peerless among all sentient beings?"

Manjusri said to All-Pervasive Knowledge, "Excellent, child of the Awakened Ones! Your question has arisen from the aspiration to benefit many, to bring peace to many, out of concern for the world, to benefit and gladden celestial and human beings. Child of the Awakened Ones, if wakeful ones use their minds skillfully, they can unfold all supreme qualities, can have unobstructed understanding of all the Teachings of Awakening, can remain on the Path of the Buddhas of the three measures of time without straying from it even while living in the midst of sentient beings, can comprehend the characteristics of all things, cut through all contraction and fulfill all that is expansive. They will be excellent in embodiment like Samantabhadra, they will be able to fulfill all of their vows, will be free in all ways, and will be guides for all sentient beings. How should they use their minds so as to unfold all these supreme wonderful qualities?"

Wakeful ones who are at home should raise the aspiration,

"May all beings  
Realize the nature of 'home' is empty  
And release its limitations."

In serving their parents,

"May all beings  
Serve the Awakened,  
Sheltering and nourishing everyone."

When with spouses and children,

"May all beings  
Be unbiased toward everyone  
And always release clinging."

When attaining their goals,

"May all beings  
Pull out the arrow of craving  
And realize utter serenity."

On festive occasions

"May all beings  
Enjoy Reality,  
Realizing amusement is not real."

If in the rooms of palaces,

"May all beings  
Enter the highest life,  
Always free of the stain of craving."

If putting on adornments,

"May all beings  
Release false embellishments  
And come to abide in Reality."

When ascending a balcony,

"May all beings  
Tower as Reality,  
Seeing the panorama of everything."

When giving something away,

"May all beings  
Be able to release everything  
With hearts free of clinging."

When in gatherings or crowds,

"May all beings  
Release compounded things  
And unfold knowing the nature of all knowns."

If in danger and difficulty,

"May all beings  
Have freedom,  
And be always unobstructed."

When they move past householder's life,

"May all beings  
Have no hindrance in 'leaving home,'  
And their hearts be free."

Entering the monastery,

"May all beings

Display the various standards  
Of being without struggle."

Going to advisors and teachers,

"May all beings  
Skillfully attend to their teachers  
And practice the ways of virtue."

Requesting ordination,

"May all beings  
Reach the phase of 'no turning back,'  
And their intelligence be unhindered."

Shedding the clothing of householders,

"May all beings  
Cultivate roots of expansiveness  
Free from the yoke of wrong action."

When shaving their hair,

"May all beings  
Leave behind self-grasping forever  
And enter into no birth and no death."

Donning monastic robes,

"May all beings  
Have stainless intelligence  
And fulfill the Way of the Great Sage."

When they formally 'leave home,'

"May all beings  
'Leave home' with the Awakened One  
And liberate self and other."

Taking refuge in the Buddha,

"May all beings  
Continue the Lineage of the Buddhas,  
Raising the unsurpassable aspiration."

Taking refuge in the Teachings,

"May all beings  
Enter fully into the Discourses  
And their perfect knowing be as deep as the sea."

Taking refuge in the Harmonious Community,

"May all beings  
Harmonize the multitudes,  
So that all become free from obstruction."

When receiving novice precepts,

"May all beings  
practice discipline  
And not act out of corruption."

Receiving guidance from an advisor,

"May all beings  
Deport themselves with dignity  
And their actions be truthful."

Receiving instruction from their teacher,

"May all beings  
Enter unborn Knowing  
And arrive at liberation."

Receiving the complete precepts,

"May all beings  
Fulfill the practices of freedom  
And master the ultimate Teaching."

When entering a hall,

"May all beings  
Ascend to the ultimate sanctuary  
And rest, at ease and unshakable."

When setting out a place to sit,

"May all beings  
Unfold the flower of virtues  
And understand their own clarity."

Sitting up straight,

"May all beings  
Be seated on the throne of Awareness,  
their intelligence disentangled."

Crossing the legs,

"May all beings  
Have strong roots of virtue  
And unfold the immovable."

Practising clarity,

"May all beings  
Settle their minds in clarity  
Until nothing is left behind."

Practicing insight,

"May all beings  
See Reality as it is,  
Always free of the struggle of opposing it."

When uncrossing the legs,

"May all beings  
Observe that all activities and things  
Resolve into falling away, vanishing."

Lowering the feet and resting,

"May all beings  
Unfold freedom of attention  
And rest at ease, unstirred."

Raising the legs,

"May all beings  
Leave the sea of birth and death  
And ripen all virtues."

Putting on lower garments,

"May all beings  
Bear fundamental goodness  
And a sense of responsibility."

When putting on a belt,

"May all beings  
Gather roots of virtue  
And not loosen and lose them."

Putting on outer garments,

"May all beings

Unfold unexcelled foundations of virtue,  
Arriving at the Other Shore of the Teaching."

Putting on the kesa,

"May all beings  
Come forward  
And unfold equanimity."

Taking a toothstick in hand,

"May all beings  
Realize complete Reality  
And enter spontaneous purity."

When chewing on the toothstick,

"May all beings  
Have the eye-teeth of wisdom,  
And bite through all delusion."

When going to the toilet,

"May all beings  
Release passion, aggression, and stupidity,  
And wipe away wrong action."

Washing up afterward,

"May all beings  
Quickly go  
Past the edge of the mundane."

When washing the body,

"May all beings  
Be pure and harmonious,  
Ultimately there are no defilements."

Washing the hands in water,

"May all beings  
Have pure and clean hands  
To receive and hold the Teachings of Awakening."

Washing the face with water,

"May all beings  
Enter the nature of equanimity  
And realize stainlessness."

Picking up a walking-staff,

"May all beings  
Raise the great work of benefit  
And point out the true path."

Taking up the almsbowl,

"May all beings  
Perfect the vessel of truth  
Together with the activities of humans and shining ones."

Setting out on the road,

"May all beings  
Go where the Buddhas have gone,  
The realm of leaning upon nothing."

When on the road,

"May all beings  
Move in the stainless realm of Reality,  
Unobstructed Knowing."

Seeing an uphill road,

"May all beings  
Always climb above the usual,  
Their minds free from wavering."

Seeing a downhill road,

"May all beings  
Be unassuming in intention  
And establish foundations of virtue."

Seeing a twisting road,

"May all beings  
Abandon false paths  
And always clarify narrow views."

Seeing a straight road,

"May all beings  
Be straightforward in intention,  
With no obsequiousness or deceit."

Seeing a dusty road,

"May all beings  
Shake away the dust of defilement  
And unfold purity."

Seeing a road free of dust,

"May all beings  
Always practise great compassion,  
With hearts that refresh and mature all."

Seeing a dangerous road,

"May all beings  
Abide in the realm of what is true  
And escape the distress of wrong actions."

Seeing a gathering of people,

"May all beings  
Display the profound Teaching,  
So that all may gather in harmony."

Seeing a tall tree,

"May all beings  
Shed the struggle of self-righteousness  
And be free of pettiness and aggression."

Seeing a grove,

"May all beings  
Be worthy of the respect  
Of shining beings and of humans."

Seeing high mountains,

"May all beings'  
Roots of virtue stand forth,  
Their summits above all grasping."

Seeing thorn trees,

"May all beings  
Quickly cut through  
The thorns of passion, aggression, and stupidity."

Seeing trees heavy with leaves,

"May all beings

Form a canopy of light  
From changeless liberation."

Seeing flowers in bloom,

"May all beings'  
Subtle perceptions of wonder  
Blossom forth like flowers."

Seeing trees in bloom,

"May all beings'  
Have flower-like features,  
And be marked with nobility."

Seeing fruits,

"May all beings  
Fulfill the consummate Teaching  
And realize the Way of Awake Awareness."

Seeing a vast river,

"May all beings  
Enter the stream of Reality,  
Flowing into the ocean of Awake Awareness."

Seeing a reservoir,

"May all beings  
Wake up right now to  
The truth of the seamlessness of the Buddhas."

Seeing a pond,

"May all beings  
Be eloquent in speech  
And skillful in teaching."

Seeing a well,

"May all beings  
Have the capacity to clarify  
And so elucidate all things."

Seeing a spring,

"May all beings'  
Skillful means increase  
And roots of virtue never wither."

Seeing a bridge,

"May all beings  
be like a bridge  
and bear all across to freedom."

Seeing flowing water,

"May all beings  
Unfold clear determination  
To wash away delusory stains."

Seeing a garden,

"May all beings  
Clear away the weeds of fixation  
From the garden of the senses."

Seeing a forest of "sorrowless" trees,

"May all beings  
Leave behind greed and lust forever  
And not give rise to anxiety and fear."

Seeing a park,

"May all beings  
Follow the ways of practice  
Which move into unfolding as Awake Awareness."

Seeing people wearing adornments

"May all beings  
Be adorned with the Buddha's  
Thirty-two marks of nobility."

Seeing the unadorned

"May all beings  
Release elaboration  
And practice simplicity."

Seeing people obsessed with pleasure,

"May all beings  
Delight in Reality,  
And be unwavering in love for it."

Seeing those without obsession,

"May all beings  
Not incline towards fixation  
On fabricated things."

Seeing people who are happy,

"May all beings  
Always be serene and joyous,  
Gladly offering to the Buddhas."

Seeing people who suffer,

"May all beings  
Unfold knowing the essence  
And expel all anguish."

Seeing people in good health,

"May all beings  
Enter complete and perfect knowing  
And be without illness or afflictions."

Seeing people who are ill,

"May all beings  
Know the body is empty and open  
And release struggle and conflict."

Seeing people who appear to be attractive,

"May all beings  
Always have unstained confidence  
In the Awakened and wakeful ones."

Seeing people who appear to be unattractive,

"May all beings  
Be free of attachment  
To any unwholesome thing."

Seeing people who are grateful,

"May all beings  
Come to know the richness offered by  
The Awakened and wakeful ones."

Seeing people without gratitude,

"May all beings

Not add to the punishment  
Of those who are hurtful."

Seeing mendicants,

"May all beings  
Be harmonious and serene,  
Training themselves thoroughly."

Seeing aristocrats,

"May all beings  
Always keep to pure activity,  
Moving past all contraction."

Seeing ascetics

"May all beings  
By rigorous practices  
Come to the Only Condition."

Seeing people who are disciplined,

"May all beings  
Keep clear determination in practice  
And not wander from the path of Awakening."

Seeing armoured people,

"May all beings  
Be armoured with integrity,  
And move to the state beyond learning."

Seeing people unarmed,

"May all beings  
Always be free of  
Acting out of contraction."

Seeing people debate,

"May all beings  
Be able to counter  
All inverted views."

Seeing people of right livelihood,

"May all beings  
Succeed in right livelihood  
Never needing to do what should not be done."

Seeing a king,

"May all beings  
Become sovereigns of Reality,  
Always displaying the Teaching of Truth."

Seeing a prince,

"May all beings  
Be born in the truth  
And be children of Awakening."

Seeing the elderly,

"May all beings  
Be able to decisively cut through  
And not follow contracted conduct."

Seeing a high minister,

"May all beings  
Always practise right mindfulness  
And all their activities be true."

Seeing a castle,

"May all beings  
Be strong and firm in body  
And tireless in mind."

Seeing a capital,

"May all beings  
Gather all qualities of virtue  
And always be delighted and joyful."

Seeing someone in a forest,

"May all beings  
Be worthy of the honor and acclaim  
Of shining beings and of humans."

Entering a village to beg for alms,

"May all beings  
Enter the profound realm of Reality,  
Without obstructions of attention."

Coming to someone's door,

"May all beings  
Enter all Gates  
Of Awake Awareness."

Entering a house,

"May all beings  
Enter the vehicle of Awakening as Awareness,  
Always equal throughout all times."

Seeing those who refuse to make offerings,

"May all beings  
Never turn from  
The ways of supreme virtue."

Seeing those who make offerings,

"May all beings  
Forever abandon  
The three contracted paths and destinies."

Seeing the alms-bowl empty,

"May all beings  
Be open of heart  
And without afflictions."

Seeing the alms-bowl full,

"May all beings  
Completely fulfill  
All the ways of virtue."

If treated respectfully,

"May all beings  
Respectfully practise  
All the Teachings of the Buddhas."

If treated disrespectfully,

"May all beings  
Not act in ways  
That are constricted."

Seeing people with modesty,

"May all beings

Act with discretion  
And dress appropriately."

Seeing the shameless,  
"May all beings  
Go past shamelessness  
And live with care for all."

Receiving fine food,  
"May all beings  
Fulfill their aspirations  
And be free from envy and craving."

Receiving poor food,  
"May all beings  
Without fail receive  
The taste of practice."

Receiving soft food,  
"May all beings  
Be steeped in compassion,  
Their minds becoming gentle."

Receiving coarse, hard food,  
"May all beings  
Be without attachments  
And cut through mundane craving."

When eating,  
"May all beings  
Be nourished by joyful practice  
And filled with delight in Reality."

When tasting,  
"May all beings  
Taste utter Awake Awareness,  
filled with the ambrosia of the deathless."

When finished eating,  
"May all beings  
Accomplish all tasks  
And fulfill the Teachings of the Buddhas."

When presenting the Teachings,  
"May all beings  
Attain unobstructed eloquence  
And display everywhere the essence of the Teachings."

When leaving a place,  
"May all beings  
Penetrate Awakened experience  
And move past the three conditional realms."

Entering a bath,  
"May all beings  
Enter the knowing which knows the nature of all knowns,  
throughout the three measures of time."

While washing the body,  
"May all beings  
Purify body and mind,  
Inside and out."

In the heat of the day,

"May all beings  
Cast away countless afflictions,  
Allowing them all to end."

After the heat when the cool comes,

"May all beings  
Experience completely Reality  
And their heat be cooled."

When reciting the Discourses,

"May all beings  
Be aligned with the Teachings of the Buddhas,  
Through unwavering mindfulness."

If they should meet a Buddha,

"May all beings  
Become All-Pervasive Richness,  
Dignified and adorned with all."

Seeing a memorial site of the Buddha,

"May all beings  
Be as honored as is this shrine,  
Receiving the offerings of shining ones and humans."

Inspired by the sight of the shrine,

"May all beings  
Inspire by the sight of them  
All shining beings and humans."

Bowing their heads before the shrine,

"May all beings  
Move past the perspectives  
Of shining beings and humans."

Circumambulating the shrine,

"May all beings  
Act always without bias  
And unfold knowing the nature of all knowns."

Circling the shrine three times,

"May all beings  
Constantly see the path of Awakening as Awareness  
With attention unobscured by recoil."

Praising the virtues of the Buddhas,

"May all beings  
Fulfill all the virtues  
So continuously extolled."

Praising the marks of the Buddhas,

"May all beings  
Unfold the body of Awake Awareness  
And realize formless truth."

Washing their feet,

"May all beings  
Fulfill the bases of subtle perceptions,  
Moving as unobstructedness everywhere."

When going to sleep at night,

"May all beings

Calm all things  
And uncover the stainless mind of clarity."

Awakening from sleep,

"May all beings  
Realize each thing as it is,  
Pervading the ten directions."

"Child of the Awakened Ones, if wakeful ones use their intelligence in this way, they will unfold all supreme and wonderful qualities, which cannot be shaken away by any shining beings, demons, monks, aristocrats, celestial musicians, violent shining beings, and so on, nor by any who have only a hear-say knowledge of the Teachings or those who self-fabricate enlightened states."

## Every Breath You Take 1: Home

Dharma Talk by Ven. Shikai Zuiko o-sensei

Dainen-ji, November 1st, 2007

EVERY BREATH YOU TAKE is the only moment that you can practise. Any practice you've done before this breath is gone forever. And relying on there being another breath in which you'll actually get around to practising is a mistake because you do not know whether you will have another breath.

And one day there will not be another breath. So you may as well take the opportunity of the breath that is breathing you right now to notice reality; to wake up from the rapture of fabrications, of dreams, of conditioned experiencing, to the reality of this moment of the whole bodymind breathing, seeing, hearing, tasting, touching, feeling, smelling, colours, sounds, forms, the myriad of dharmas that arise in each moment, the myriad of experiences that arise in each moment, the myriad of knowns that arise in each moment of knowing. And you are Knowing in itself.

You are not a knower. There is no knower. If you notice a knower you have noticed a contraction into a sense of self that is knowing something. So all you have to do at that point is practise mindfulness of breath, feeling the breath moving the bodymind in and out, sitting up straight which is a short form for noticing the presencing of the whole bodymind, opening the eyes, opening the peripheral vision: practising the whole bodymind in the whole moment.

Now we like to think, each and every one of us has thought these things, that we are somehow special. We really don't need to do this practice as much as the guy or gal beside us because obviously we are vastly superior.

Recognize that as a contraction into a sense of self with a habitual storyline. What you may not have noticed is that in the next moment you just know and you are convinced that everyone in the Hatto is better at this than you are. And it is as if those two opposed points of view can exist in the same moment. And you start to establish a little bit of mindfulness practise. You start to be able to sit on the zafu for half an hour. You start to be able to wake up from time to time and see that the thought you were following was just that, it was a thought, so you woke up for a moment to the reality of the moment. You saw a thought as a thought. You remembered to feel the breath or else you allowed yourself to notice the breath moving the bodymind in and out. You noticed seeing, hearing, tasting, touching, feeling, smelling. You sat up straight and for a moment that movie you were entertaining yourself with dropped away. And you could actually experience the clarity of this open moment free of conditioned experiencing, free of those little clotted bits with their stories that we call self-image.

Last week and the week before I read to you from the text "The Practice of Purity: Verses from the Flower Garland Discourse". This is a translation which the Roshi, with a small amount of assistance from myself, did some 15 years ago. It is a translation of the Avatamsaka Sutra. That sutra was written some 1600 years ago but it was written about and for guys and gals, and then monastics, who were just like you, and just like you, and just like you, who sat down on a cushion to look into what was going on, who they really were. And of course because this is difficult we like to assume that somehow or other it was easy for those old guys because they were like bigger and better, than we could ever be. But we forget that they were people. They sat their bums down on cushions, bunches of straw, or on a rock, and they were looking into the actual nature of experiencing which can be rough. And so stories were written about teachers and about students. The only object of the story was to point out to a student something that would be useful to them in helping them cut through the contractions of self-image that come up in different situations.

Now as I said, we like to think we're very special. No one has experienced our angst. Well in a way that's true. Just as each breath that we breathe can only be breathed by us so each contraction that you feel, each fluctuation in temperature, each rush of feeling tone, can only be felt by you, however, all human beings experience in the same way. The process is the same. The content might vary and does vary but the context is the same. So when feelings come up of being somehow apart, removed from, somehow being self with everything else being other, you've recognized a moment of reality; that set of sensations is there. At the moment of recognition, feel the breath, sit up straight, open the eye gaze, practise basic mindfulness and that will open.

The Avatamsaka Sutra was put together. In Book 11 is a story that Manjushri, Wisdom, was asked a question by a student. In the "Kigon-gyo, Book Eleven", Kenju, a Wakeful One, or All Pervasive Knowledge, asks Manjushri, "How should the

wakeful ones practise thoroughly unfold activities of body, speech, and mind without fault?" Even 1600 years ago asking "What can we do to wake up? What can we do to deepen our practice?"

Manjushri said, "Good question. You want to practise to benefit all beings." Well he said it a little bit..., the way it has been translated in The Practice of Purity, and in other texts, it's a little bit more...detailed than that. So out of this question of how people could "unfold excellent, foremost, peerless, immeasurable, incalculable, inconceivable, incomparable, unfathomable and inexpressible investigation" rose these 140 verses.

Verses are not prayers, although in some texts, not published by Great Matter, they have been referred to as prayers. Basically in one text it was saying that we are praying that other people will smarten up. That other people will wake up. We pray that all beings can wake up. Well that's not really at all what we are doing here. It's exactly the opposite.

You've heard at least one of the verses of the 140 if you've ever been here for closing bells. That is chanted as well every night during sesshin:

As we enter into sleep this night,  
"May all beings  
Calm all things  
And uncover the stainless mind of clarity."

The first verse in "The Practice of Purity" is addressed to Wakeful Ones who are at home.

Wakeful ones who are at home should raise the aspiration,  
"May all beings  
Realize the nature of 'home' is empty  
And release its limitations."

As the Roshi has said in the formal student series, "The Anatomy of Awakening" students are learning to see all of the patterns and "realms of deep conditioning which human beings call 'home'."

And when you look into it you'll find that each of you most probably have a set of associations that come up with the word 'home'. You would be quite unique if, in fact, you did not. A 'home' is not a house. A 'home' is this moment, this moment, displays everything. It displays the whole universe. Our set of feeling tones, patterns, associations about 'home' arise within the moment within which they are arising. When we believe that our patterns and associations and feeling tones are definitions of truth we often find ourselves setting out, seeking after this fabrication that we have become intoxicated with. We look for 'home'. We want to be comfortable. We want to have a set of associations. This type of concepts and yearnings often arise for people around holidays. Around Christmas for example there may be thoughts of reconciliation that will occur, understandings that will happen that have never happened before but yet we dream on. And of course, economies are driven by these dreams.

Verses are given and have been given so that students can give themselves another way of looking at their own experience. They're not little bits and pieces to be memorized and then chanted to block what one is actually experiencing but rather tools that one can use to look at and open up new understandings.

Self-image becomes very reactive because when it hears something that seems different than what it believes it will often react and perhaps even attack by saying things about "the inhuman way" in which the monks may view a student's life by suggesting to them that their yearnings for 'home' may be just fabrications, may be something that never existed ever. Now this is not talking about abdicating responsibility. Not at all. But rather talking about recognizing that in each moment you have an opportunity to look and see more clearly what is arising for you.

The text, "The Practice of Purity", is addressed to monastics in some specific areas. Monastics are home leavers. Monastics have recognized that the usual definition of family and home is too small and it is too isolating because for 'home' there has to be 'not home'. There has to be self. There has to be other. And practice says there is no self, there is no other. There is just this moment of experiencing. There is just the benefit of all beings and what are you going to do about it? So verses such as these, such as The Practice of Purity, can aid you, as do all the forms of practice, in seeing more completely what arises for you in each and every moment.

Next week we will look into the second verse which is about serving parents.

You're quite welcome to come forward during daisan with any questions that you might have or send an email to me if you do have questions. The text is available. You can read it. See what happens.

Thank you for listening.

## Every Breath You Take 2: Serving Parents

Dharma Talk by Ven. Shikai Zuiko o-sensei  
Dainen-ji, November 8th, 2007

So it's this moment.

You're sitting, breathing in and out.  
You can feel the posture,  
see the seeing,  
hear the hearing,  
notice thoughts coming and going,  
notice sensations coming and going.

The instruction is really simple: when you notice anything, anything at all, any moment of experience, you practise mindfulness of breath, of body, of mind; mindfulness of the whole body in the whole moment.

Teisho, Dharma Talks, interactions with teachers, practice advisors, exist for only one reason and that is to remind you to practise in this moment.

Thoughts and feelings arise on their own in response to cues. In the "Avatamsaka Sutra" and "The Practice of Purity, verses from the Flower Garland Discourse", which is the "Avatamsaka Sutra", the question was raised as to how practitioners who had become home leavers, who had become monastics, could "unfold the energy of knowing what is true and what is not, the energy of knowing the consequences of events, the energy of knowing the inclinations of beings, the energy of knowing the various styles of beings, the energy of knowing the capacities of beings, the energy of knowing the destinations of all paths of practice, the energy of knowing the obscurations, deviations, and clarification of all practices and meditative states, the energy of knowing one's own past existences, the energy of knowing future existences, and the energy of knowing the ending of all outflows".

These verses came about as a consequence of practitioners wanting to know some 1600 years ago: how to practise with this breath, with each breath in each moment. Now bear in mind, these verses were written for people who had established basic mindfulness practice, who had expressed their intention to practise the Dharma through the taking of vows and so, as with all of practice, the more they understood, the more mature their practice was, the more deeply they could practise. However, anyone who has started to practise can read these verses and can allow them to throw a slightly different light on the interactions that we have moment to moment when we're not sitting on the zafu.

Last week we looked at:

Wakeful ones who are at home should raise the aspiration,  
"May all beings  
Realize the nature of 'home' is empty  
And release its limitations."

The next verse (and watch what happens in your experience, as you hear certain words and remember to practise when that happens, to practise with what you have noticed):

In serving their parents,  
"May all beings  
Serve the Awakened,  
Sheltering and nourishing everyone."

All manner of pictures, emotions, feelings, can arise when we think about parents. It's amazing how we have constructs, that we've constructed without even knowing about who these people are, but more importantly, how we are, what we want from them. And as we get older, we start to understand that perhaps we don't know anything about these people, our parents. We may know of the role. We may know of the interaction between ourselves and these people who nurtured us. We cannot, in most cases, ignore the fact that if it weren't for them, we wouldn't be here.

And we don't have to have any certain set of feelings to recognize that. But we are a feeling based culture and we're always looking around for the "right" set of feelings. When this was written, the whole context of families would have been radically different from what we experience. Most families would live in an extended family situation with innumerable people perhaps living in a single compound with birth, old age, sickness, and death, right there, in your face.

For most of us today it's not like that. We tend to be, on the whole, a rather modular society. So that we have, well, "me" first of all, then "me" and somebody else, then "me" and "our" family, and almost peripheral players in this would be parents who live out of town, out of country, in totally different circumstances and we've made up all sorts of different stories about them.

So how do we practise with this? Does the fact that we are studying Zen mean that all of a sudden we're going to become

an incredibly loving and dutiful child? Not necessarily.

But what we can do is recognize that the process of being a human being is the same for every human being who has walked on the face of the earth. We're born. Randomly. A sperm hits an egg and, *bedang*, there "you" are nine months later. Now, there's no lottery where "your" name got picked out as the "special one". Not at all. Very, very, random.

But facts can speak for themselves, and, on the whole if you're alive, someone looked after you. Human babies are notorious for not being able to look after themselves. The period in which they are apparently unable to look after themselves seems now to be extending well into the 30's and 40's in some cases, but yet on the whole we're playing out roles. We don't seem to have learned the necessary skills, communication and otherwise to interact on any level that is mutually satisfying most of the time because when we're in a situation, patterns come up. And we may find ourselves playing the role of the dutiful, affectionate daughter with clenched teeth. Or we may find ourselves telling ourselves stories while perhaps one of our parents is going on and on and on with the same old story.

So, what to do?

Well, that choice is up to you. We can, however, as practitioners studying the Way, studying reality, recognize that just as we deal with patterns, so does everyone else that we interact with. Every time we come to a general sitting or a formal sitting, at the end of the sitting we chant The Four Great Vows:

All beings without number I vow to liberate.  
Endless obsessions I vow to release.  
Dharma gates beyond measure I vow to penetrate.  
Limitless Awakening I vow to unfold.

Those of you who do samu have chanted the samu chant:

May all beings be happy,  
May they be peaceful,  
May they be free.

Neither of these chants are cute little sayings to get you into the mood to work but rather are statements of intention. In another translation of the Avatamsaka Sutra the question of serving the parents was translated like this:

"While serving their parents they should wish that all beings serve the Buddha, protecting and nourishing everyone."

With that statement we've released individual responsibility because a "wish" that someone else should do something is not particularly useful other than it does, perhaps, give one the sense that they're a good person and if everyone else would shape up everything would be great.

The way it has been translated here:

"May all beings serve the Awakened"

And in the statement "serve the Awakened" we're talking about the reality of Awake Awareness, the reality of being a human being, the reality of recognizing that all human beings, all beings really, are born, live, die, need shelter, need food, need nourishment in other ways, and we're making the statement, as with the samu chant, that we will do what we can.

So when this verse is raised, when practitioners, and in this case it was written for those who had deepened their practice, matured it enough, that they took the responsibility for receiving vows to live as monastics, perhaps even as lay monks rather than fully ordained monastics, making the statement that their intention is to live out as best as they possibly can what is expressed in the vows and the chants that we chant.

So we can recognize that our parents are people just as we are, but that we have learned, the bodymind has learned, many patterns of reactivity and feeling tone about everything not just around this particular situation with parents, around everything. We're learning to see them for what they are as they come up so that we can cut through reactivity that arises by feeling the breath, sitting or standing up straight, opening the eye gaze, and take whatever action is the most useful in each particular moment. The choice of what that is, is, of course, up to the individual. This can cause problems for students as well because apparently another thing we human beings like is rules. We like to have solid guidelines that will dictate actions that we should take. Practice does not provide that. Practice provides instruction which, when you follow the instruction, will show more and more clearly, the process of perception and cognition so that when you do make choices for action in any situation, it is not propelled by conditioned experiencing. It is not propelled by old patterns, but rather comes about because of an open intelligence as to what needs to be done in that moment.

The verse again:

In serving their parents,  
"May all beings  
Serve the Awakened  
Sheltering and nourishing everyone."

An aspiration that is raised every time you chant The Four Great vows, every time you chant The Samu Chant.

It's funny too, in this culture, I recently heard someone say, "Isn't it sad that we really don't grow up until we're orphans." The person who said this was, as I am, in their sixties.

So practice can help you grow up and take responsibility for being a real human being.

Thank you for listening.

## Every Breath You Take 3: Spouses and Children

Dharma Talk by Ven. Shikai Zuiko o-sensei

Dainen-ji, November 22nd, 2007

Carrying on with "The Practice of Purity" verses:

When with spouses and children,  
"May all beings  
Be unbiased toward everyone  
And always release clinging."

In order to make that real, the being unbiased, it is necessary that we see the ways in which we are biased. The habits and patterns, the belief systems, the unquestioned assumptions that we have accumulated in a lifetime get in the way. We look at a spouse, and perhaps even today, even in this part of the world, we see something that belongs to us whose purpose is to make us "happy", to do our bidding. And we develop ways that we can cause that to happen. We forget, we don't see the person, the other being that is perhaps in front of our very eyes at that moment, instead we see a stranger. Often this makes people very uncomfortable. Somehow the spouse has let them down.

A large percentage of murders are committed by spouses. Interestingly enough, I just read this today: there are fewer common law spouses who are murdered than legally married.

So we become habituated to situations and when self-image does not get what it wants, it acts out in a variety of ways. Sometimes it takes people two, three, four, or more, marriages, attempts at acquiring spouses that will make them "happy", before self-image realizes that it doesn't exist, before there is a recognition that we're not the centre of the universe. Everything is not in place to make us "happy". It seems pretty obvious but we're not in the habit of looking at our patterns and our beliefs as they come up. Practice provides us with an opportunity to do that. We don't need to get forensic and look at something and start to dissect it because that, especially when you're sitting in formal practice on the zafu, is following thoughts, it's engaging in discursiveness.

When you have noticed that this has happened, you have noticed a slice of reality which is that that tendency was there, those thoughts were there. You've noticed it from the larger space. For a moment you've woken up. At that point practise by feeling the breath in the bodymind, sitting up straight, which is, of course, feeling the posture, feeling the sensations of the bodymind and opening the peripheral vision. You're practising that moment of clear seeing; seeing what was going on.

In the formal practice space you of course do not have the opportunity to act out a lot of those unquestioned assumptions. Verses such as "May all beings be unbiased toward everyone and always release clinging" give you a reminder that you can stop, feel the breath, open the eye gaze, no matter where you are, no matter what you are doing, you can open to the larger context. You have more choice. You do not have to follow the patterns that you have perhaps usually followed. They are not who you are. They are something going on within experiencing that you have noticed.

When you take the time to do this, you may start to uncover things about the thing you still think of as "yourself" that perhaps you've never noticed before. You may favour one child over another. You may regard yourself as superior to or different from the spouse and you may have acted that out without knowing that that was what you were doing. When you remind yourself that the moment of noticing anything is the only moment that you can practise, you can make the choice to follow the focusing of attention or to practise and allow attention to open so that any choice you make as to an action you will take, and an action of course can be saying something, it can be widening the gaze to look at someone and see the whole bodymind, to actually see that person as a person rather than an object that is somehow influenced or even owned by you. You may uncover expectations that you have of how they should be, how they should act. No problem. The moment you notice that, you can practise because you've noticed something that is true about that moment of experiencing. You've noticed reality and you will be able to make a better choice.

The verse also says "be unbiased toward everyone". Well, when we are seeing how we are biased, we can take that into account, practise with it, open up, and make a choice that is more beneficial to the others, more fair. And the releasing of clinging is what does occur when our attempts to define ourselves as a personality, as a self with very specific views about how we are and how the world is, are opened. When that's opened we find that we do not need to be driven, propelled into action, by any of our reactivities. We recognize we are not defined by the roles that somehow or other have become imposed upon us, most of the time without our being asked. In fact this is so common, the passing on of family culture patterns, the passing on of patterns of the larger culture, it is so common that, in fact, it is a bit of a joke. For example, people have been known to say things such as, "well if you want to know what she's going to be like fifteen years from now,

look at her mother". That isn't useful because that's putting more layers around this being that may be standing in front of you breathing in and out, experiencing the process of being a human being, just as you are.

We don't need to define ourselves by roles and when we practise this moment of experiencing and we should happen to see a pattern coming into play, the only thing to do with that in the Hatto is to feel the breath, sit up straight, and open the eye gaze and as the facility to do this increases as our practice matures, we recognize that, well, we can do that everywhere. Not only that, but we start to see it happen in our time off the cushion.

Sometimes it can be difficult for us to recognize that we are human beings and that we are not much different than, perhaps, someone who is selling their six year old child right now to the sex trade. We're not much different from someone right now who is beating on their spouse. Perhaps it's just the luck of the draw, as it were, that we are not in those positions. We may, most likely, never ever be in a position like that but we can start to develop the capacity to see the smaller reactivities, the smaller movements of attention, the ways that by acting as a role to a role rather than as a human being to a human being, we diminish ourself and that other human being.

As I mentioned with the last verse, we are in a situation now in history where children really don't get a chance to grow up because for various reasons, including wanting to give their kids what they never had, wanting to take over the caring, the directing, the giving of commands, the child is protected, totally, and never learns to operate fully on its own as a fully grown up human being. We can start to see the ways that we do that and how necessary it is for us to practise at the moment of seeing it and perhaps make a different choice than we may have when we were operating out of reactivity.

Children can't make parents change what they do. Parents can open closed patterns, practise, and make the best choice for action when with children. The choice is up to the individual.

Practice can give you reminders that you are able to practise, you are able to feel the breath, sit up straight, open the eye gaze, allow experiencing to open more fully, and make those better choices.

Stop using others to prop up self-image's idea of who it is and how the world is, and open past that small bundle of concerns that self-image occupies itself with.

Once again, the verse is a reminder:

When with spouses and children,  
"May all beings  
Be unbiased towards everyone  
And always release clinging."

Thank you for listening.

## Every Breath You Take 4: When Achieving their Goals

Dharma Talk by Ven. Shikai Zuiko o-sensei

Dainen-ji, December 13th, 2007

EVERY BREATH YOU TAKE...

...lets you know that you are alive and you can practise the life that is living as you.

The verse:

When achieving their goals,  
"May all beings  
Pull out the arrow of craving  
And realize utter serenity."

Goals? What are we talking about? It's always good to know. In some texts, this was translated as lust or desire which immediately evokes a sexual connotation but that is not the only area in which self-image craves, and grabs, and clings. The word "lust" limits and constrains the understanding of the verse as a reminder to practise. The narrowing of attention into a singular focus is the same no matter what the subject of the "desires or lusts or goals"...sex, wealth, respect, being the best at something, things. So the Roshi and I chose "goals" as the word to open up the understanding of craving and the things craved.

Let's expand our understanding to be more inclusive of day-to-day interests and activities.

Some definitions of "goal":

Merriam Webster: the end towards which effort is directed.

Thesaurus: Goal-the state of affairs that a plan is intended to achieve and that (when achieved) terminates

behaviour intended to achieve it. (The ends justify the means. That moves it into the theoretical, philosophical, based in language, not in experience. We won't go there now.)

"An objective or goal is a personal or organizational desired end point in development. It is usually endeavored to be reached in finite time by setting deadlines.

"On a personal level setting goals is a process that allows people to specify then work towards their own objectives, commonly financial or career."

A destination, a terminus.

Since around 1315, it has been a sport term: end of a race, football goal. Over the years the use of the word "goal" has moved into the "personal". Over the twenty years I worked with a wide variety of people to help them move past their perceived blockages in life, the most common response given when asked to identify their "goals" was "to be happy".

"Being happy" seems, on first hearing, like a perfectly reasonable goal but don't be fooled. Do you know what you are talking about when you are talking about "being happy"? If you don't know, how would you know when you have attained it? Take the risk to look into what "happy" means to you. How do you know when you are "happy"? Most don't know because "happiness" often is just another story line, from TV, from the movies, from magazines, views into other people's lives, and expectations of oneself often built by others.

"Happiness" is a word, a metaphor, for sensations felt in the bodymind, sensations of lightness, effervescence, ease, and serenity, on the whole sensations that are pleasant. Sensations are present in the bodymind as long as we are alive. Learn to notice them. When noticed, if sensations feel good, practise. If sensations feel bad, practise. Over time, you may find yourself choosing to engage more often in activities that feel "good". But that's up to you.

Feel the breath.

Right now.

Good.

You're alive.

You can make a choice to open the tendency to fixate on one thing in the mistaken belief that once that one thing is attained it will make "everything all right". When we focus on the product, that one thing, that goal, we tend to ignore the process and that gives a feeling of something missing, of unsatisfactoriness. That unsatisfactoriness is a fabrication. Everything is all right. There is no problem in this moment. There very seldom is. The sense of problem, which seems to guide the lives of many, is made up of the contractions into a sense of self that is separate from everything else and is somehow lacking. What is lacking is the everything other than the goal or product which we have ignored in our haste, our focus, to get to the goal, attain the thing. So even after goals are reached, that sense of craving is still present.

"Pull out the arrow of craving" by practising, feeling the breath, sitting up straight, and opening the peripheral vision. What is described as "the arrow of craving" rips into, and binds the open space of experiencing into a congealing, a bunching, a contraction into a "self" which starts to talk about the "problems" and the craving to end the problems and the promises that when the "problems" are solved, the desired goal will be reached and "everything will be all right". All of this is of course based in a fabricated future. Don't be fooled. Just feel the breath, sit up straight, open peripheral vision, and practise. Again and again and again.

Of course it is necessary to identify what one needs to do in the course of a day. Of course the clearer one can be about what one is doing, the more the chance of "success", the more open experiencing, the more open information available, and the more elegant, flexible, and effective one's choices can be.

As the whole bodymind is practised in the whole moment, the more chance we have of actually knowing the nuanced sensations of the bodymind. We might actually start to notice, and be surprised by those moments that we might call "happiness". Surprise! That experience of "happiness" is seldom what we thought or had talked to ourselves about. "Goals" may change as our understanding changes.

One drawback of goal setting, expressed in an essay about the power of the word, is that "implicit learning may be inhibited".

When the focus of attention is on the "product, the goal, the process is not noticed. If our "goal" is to get through the 30 minutes of sitting, we can be focused on the imagined ringing of the gong and we don't remember to practise when we notice those as thoughts. We may "get through the sitting" but that focus on the imagined end point or product, and obviously it is imagined as we don't have it yet, has compromised our ability to practise when noticing the myriad of dharmas, moments of experiencing.

The essay on goals also says, "there can be a focus on an outcome without the openness to exploration, understanding, or growth." Another way of saying the same thing.

Any time you notice any focusing of attention, whatsoever, be it on a colour, a light, a sliver of the floor, a thought, practise whole bodily mindfulness. This opens the tendency to propagate closed patterns that have been on automatic. You won't lose anything except those stories you made up that confused you about the difference between a thing and a thought about a thing.

A cat is a cat. You can see the cat, hear the cat, smell the cat, touch the cat. The cat is experienced by all the senses of the bodymind. The "real cat" really affects more of the senses than the thought of the cat. Across the board we can say that the thing itself is "more real" than the thing thought about. DUH! Of course! When you see that and have a "duh, of course" moment, "why didn't I know that before" moment, and so on, practise. Feel the breath, sit up straight, open the eyegaze. Cut off the tendency to want to dissect, talk about (especially to yourself), theorize over, try to recreate, and so on.

Let it go.

Practise now.

Nothing is ever good enough for self-image. Self-image gets what it thought it wanted but is not satisfied. No wonder. No craving is satisfied by a thought. At the moment of noticing dissatisfaction, dukkha, practise the whole bodymind in the whole moment. Self-image is always missing the whole moment, missing that which is already present and always has been—seeing, hearing, tasting, touching, feeling, smelling, breathing—practise and recognize again and again that there is nothing missing.

Once any sort of comment on experiencing that moment of waking up, of completion, of satisfaction, of "happiness" starts—let it go. It's a thought. There is nothing to be held onto, nothing to crave, no need to crave.

Feel the breath, sit up straight, open peripheral vision.

Practise.

We accumulate stuff to prop up what we want the world to see, "Look at me. Look at what I've done". We don't even take the time to realize that we've never done anything "all by ourselves". Phrases such as "self-made" are totally untrue. Without the long line of people who came before us and taught us everything we know, we wouldn't have been able to do what we did.

Practice provides the opportunity to see our habitual patterns of craving and chest beating that we engage in to prop up the views of self-image.

When we identify a goal, we can be pushed by poverty mind to be "single minded" as we take actions to move us toward what we have identified as our goal or desire. We don't notice the process because we are focused so tightly on the outcome that any recognition of the moment-to-moment reality of our lives is obliterated and increases the sense of lack, of wanting, of craving, to get that thing that will "make everything all right". "Everything all right" as a stable and secure and nailed down state is not gonna happen.

Anzan Hoshin roshi, says in "Doing Not Doing-What Can Be Held?" the current Teisho series that,

Self-image lives in a world of things—dead things such as stones and desks and cars and houses and clothes and living things some of which become dead things so that they can be consumed and other living things that are other selves. In that world of things the selves scramble against the other selves to own the dead things. To arrange structures out of the things by piling them up into acquisitions that give them some semblance of a feeling of life...

You may have accumulated things—papers, diplomas, money, knowledge, possessions—but they are not who you are. They are the knowns arising within Knowing and you are the Knowing, that moment of waking up to reality, understanding that awareness is the only condition and that the intention to do what you can for the peace, happiness, and freedom of all beings is expressed and realized.

When attaining their goals,  
"May all beings  
Pull out the arrow of craving  
And realize utter serenity."

Thank you for listening.

## Every Breath You Take 5: Amusements

Dharma Talk by Ven. Shikai Zuiko o-sensei  
Dainen-ji, December 20th, 2007

EVERY BREATH YOU TAKE...

...is the only moment that you can practise.

You are alive in that moment.  
You are the Knowing of that moment.

And the instruction is:  
when you notice any dharma  
any moment of experience  
whatsoever  
practise whole bodily mindfulness.  
Feel the breath.

Still there?

You're alive so you can make a choice and as you are students sitting in the Hatto, ostensibly, you're practising.

You want to learn to practise. So you feel the breath. You sit up straight. You open the eye gaze, over and over again. There are aids and arts to help you, to remind you to practise.

This evening we're looking at "amusement".

That's appropriate. (recorded December 20/07)

On festive occasions  
"May all beings  
Enjoy Reality  
Realizing amusement is not real."

Now you might notice self-image reaching out little thoughts about, "What do you mean? My Nintendo game is real?" "Does this mean I can't go to the movies anymore?" "Perhaps I have to give up crossword puzzles."

Relax. This is not about giving up other than in the sense of releasing. It's about opening up so that more and more information, more and more of your actual experiencing of reality is available.

I guess I'm kind of a bookish type so I like to know what words mean.

Amusement:

.amused, entertained, or pleased  
.something, especially a performance or show designed to entertain

Aha!

.distraction, diversion

Entertainment:

Now what does that mean exactly? Lots of things including our favourite form of entertainment, probably our favourite form of entertainment popped to mind and self-image is at its, "Oh no I can't give that up."

So once again, any time you notice any moment of experiencing, any dharma, any flash of experience, practise by feeling the breath, sitting up straight, and opening the eye gaze.

Entertainment comes from the Latin—tenere—to hold. Entertain means to hold. Something that grabs your attention and narrows the knowing of experiencing, focusing on the "entertainment" and ignoring the rest of reality.

No matter what the entertainment may be, it is not reality. The entertainment is arising within awareness and is part of reality. Each time this is recognized during formal practice, for example, when you notice that it's really a little puppet show going on seemingly in your head or a movie or a series of flashcards but attention had narrowed and there you were entertaining yourself with thoughts about this and that, what you should have said, what you should have done, what they should have said, and so it goes on and on.

When you notice that narrowing you are, as it were, popped out of it. You are no longer held by that fabricated puppet show or movie. You can see it. There is a moment of clear seeing. "Wow! Thoughts!" Before any more words come up, feel the breath, sit up straight, open the eye gaze. Practise the reality of that moment.

Interestingly, there's not a difference between how you are when you are focused on your own thoughts, making your own movies, writing your own books, on the zafu, and sitting in a movie theatre watching the film, sitting at home watching the television. The mechanism of perception and cognition is the same. The tendency to focus is the same. Attention narrows onto that subject, the thing that is entertaining, amusing or holding us. Distracting us from reality.

As soon as you notice it, you've escaped. So you can practise that moment of openness and you do it by feeling the breath, sitting up straight, opening the eye gaze and there's a flood of reality at that point. It's always been going on. Didn't stop but because we were being amused by our stories on the zafu or by other people's stories on the sofa, we were not

knowing the totality of reality in that moment.

When we practise that moment we'll have more of that opening occurring. The tendency to get lost decreases!

Now sometimes students get a little freaked out when they can no longer "get lost" in their favourite films, television programs, books, or other activities. It seems to have lost its hold on them. It's often presented as a problem and there can be a sense of losing something, losing something that had been used as an "escape". An escape from what? An escape from the ceaseless ranting and whining and cajoling and moaning and whingeing and chest beating, of self-image.

Self-image, those contractions that occur with views about how we are and how the world is has a surprisingly adroit capacity to come up with a story to fit many situations. So on the one hand we might be saying to ourselves, "Well yeah, the reason I'm practising is so that I can see that really I have a choice here. I don't have to follow this movie script I've made up." But on the other hand self-image is saying, "Yeah but I don't wanna stop." "I like it." It may not be that we have a fondness for it, but bodymind gets used to the kick.

You will not lose anything, guaranteed, except perhaps everything you thought was true, but you've been warned before.

Now, when attention becomes fixated on something to distract itself from reality there has to be a payoff, wouldn't you think?

Well, in the case of the amusement or entertainment industry we may not know the names of the people who get the payoff but we sure know the payoff comes out of our pockets. In the case of our own thoughts, feelings, puppet shows, there really isn't any payoff other than that sense that we've been here before. We have a certain set of patterns to deal with it, whatever it may be, and if that slips for a moment, well, for a moment we might not be able to lose ourselves in the very things that we want to find freedom from.

So feel the breath, sit up straight, open the eye gaze. No matter where you are. No matter what you're doing. But this is especially important when you are sitting in the formal practice hall formally practising.

When the bodymind is entertaining itself with stories, a choice has been made to be held by and to hold onto that story. Before we started to practise many of us have expressed that, well, we really didn't have any choice in certain situations, because, well, that's just how we are. That starts to slip as we continue to practise and perhaps to our embarrassment, we may find that actually we've kind of bumbled along without, perhaps, ever really making a real choice.

We've been pushed and pulled by patterns. Self-image doesn't want to let go of its beliefs, these are just generalizations, but the beliefs that are acquired in the course of a person's lifetime often come to represent them. They are that belief. And people will defend those up to the point of their own death. History shows that is true over and over and over again.

The process of perception and cognition is the same for all human beings. Thoughts are thoughts for all human beings. Colours, forms, sounds, breathing in and out; the same. The content of thoughts obviously will vary but the process is the same. The process is the same for all human beings be it watching movie on a DVD or in a theatre or telling stories out loud or to oneself. Those practising are instructed to practise mindfulness of body, breath, speech, and mind, at the moment of noticing anything.

When you notice that you've been totally focused on the movie or the discursiveness, you are now no longer totally focused on the movie or the discursiveness. You've seen more of reality. You have seen that that discursiveness or that movie is only part of what's going on. You were lost, now you're not. This is self-evident as you can only notice when you notice. And you practise at that moment of noticing.

Practising at the moment of noticing fixation on the amusement, be it a movie or discursiveness, or the infinite variety of ways that we humans have found to use our extra time and energy, practising at the moment of noticing, brings the richness of that moment of reality out in the open. It had always been there but it had seemingly been eclipsed by the fixation on the amusement.

Amusement is enjoyable. Amusement in the context of the rest of experiencing is even more enjoyable. The whole bodymind in the whole moment is unbelievably rich and enhances everything that you choose to do. There is no call to give up watching films and enjoying other things. There is instruction on how to practise when you notice focusing during formal practice: you feel the breath, you sit up straight, you open peripheral vision. You are practising that moment of noticing reality.

Psst! [Osho whispers] More intelligence is available practising reality.

The Dharma, the Teachings of Reality give the instruction to practise mindfulness over and over and over again using a myriad of forms. Practising the Dharma is practising Reality. A moment of reality is also called a dharma.

"Ho" means "dharma" as in The Three Jewels in Japanese—"Namu ki ho".

So this time of year that reminder to practise reality is everywhere.

"Ho ho ho"!

Thank you for listening.

# Every Breath You Take 6: In the Rooms of Palaces

Dharma Talk by Ven. Shikai Zuiko o-sensei  
Dainen-ji, December 27th, 2007

## EVERY BREATH YOU TAKE

...is a sign that you are alive and you have choice.

A choice to practise or to propagate thoughts and feelings and shut down and stain the open expanse of experiencing.

If in the rooms of palaces,  
"May all beings  
Enter the highest life,  
Always free of the stain of craving."

Well, we don't, every day, get to see or enter into the rooms of palaces. You walked up the front walkway into the expanse of Dainen-ji, not a palace but in this city, in this town, let us say a modest monastery which was once a modest merchant mansion in a lumber town. So when we look at words like "palace" we have to take into account the culture and the time frame. In every culture and in every time frame there have been buildings built that have been bigger and better than the buildings in which the mass of inhabitants dwelt.

Someone who had accumulated more stuff than anybody else could erect an edifice which was, in many cases, very blatantly, in size and appointments, to show the wealth and power of the individuals who inhabited that palace.

So when people entered into the rooms of palaces, and the ordinary people perhaps got to enter into one room, the great hall, they could grovel in front of the lord of the palace or the king of the castle and feel inferior, feel small, feel overwhelmed, feel awed. Well, that was what was supposed to happen.

When contracted we feel smaller than "that which is so much bigger". We are humbled. We can be controlled. We've fallen for the hype and do what is asked of us by the environment of "the palace".

That contraction into an image of a self which has storylines about itself, feels small, impoverished, lacking. It wants to satisfy that lack by craving for things that the other has which it does not have. We have narrowed attention into our stories and the reality of the open life, the luminosity of this moment of being alive, is stained, covered, hidden, obscured, but it is still there and it always was.

The instruction for the practice of mindfulness is to practise the whole bodymind in the whole moment whenever any thing, any knot, any dharma or moment of experiencing, is noticed. When attention is unfolded through the activity of basic whole bodily mindfulness, all the information experienced by the senses with and as the bodymind is available to knowing, which is what you are.

There's also the palaces of discursiveness; the way we chat to ourselves about what it would be like when we are in this dream place which, of course, has been influenced by all of our experiences, all of the information we've come across which tells us what we should have if we want to be respected, if we want to have power, if we want to pretend that we are that which we are not. A mundane example, or mundane examples, and we've all seen them, is when people of lesser means try to emulate what they think they have seen in these "palaces" and what they think it means and then, wanting to incorporate, wanting to claim for themselves that perceived status, objects are acquired. Now, what often happens is that rather than objects of beauty or utility, the things that are acquired have become symbols.

A chair, ill designed, badly carved, with picky upholstery, and a shoddy gilding job, sits proudly covered in plastic in a small living room, unveiled on holidays. A copy of a chair seen in a palace where one has actually been, and seen with one's own eyes, or something one has seen in a magazine owned by someone we've never met but may admire, or seen in a book, or a video, a copy of that chair (and they are usually bad, bad copies) has been purchased to make the owner feel better than they feel. Feel that they have more status. And hopefully send a message to anyone who comes into that living room that they are different from what they seem and in an old saying, "attempt to show a touch of the royal". Mythologies trying to fill that hole of dissatisfaction.

Pleasing lines, colour, texture, even in what may be the tiniest of details, are perceived by the open bodymind. When something pleasing is seen there may a response, an immediate response, such as "ah!" Just without words, the open experience of the senses and we can feel open, good, happy for the tiniest moment, because we have been touched by that experience. When that "ah!" occurs, we are changed. Our view is wider. Open experiencing, luminosity, shows us something that the bodymind has resonated with.

When we notice, whatever grace or beauty affected us may be used as a guide to broaden the understanding of space, art, of design, of history. When we are contracted into poverty mind, there are those old stories of resentment, "How come she has that and I don't? I hate her." "How come he has so much and I, who am more worthy have nothing?" "I'll never ever be able to have any of those things those rich ones have, let's kill them." And on and on. Not pleasant and not aesthetically pleasing.

Aesthetics, the science of how things are known through the senses, was created in 1735. It means the study of sensory or sensori-emotional values. Noticing how what is sensed is experienced. A certain texture of cloth is pleasing. A certain colour repellent. The light at a certain time of day soothes and another time of day depresses the system.

As you are able to practise whole bodily and experience the "rooms of palaces", be they actual rooms in palaces, or adobe huts that are the largest in the village, remnants of past glories, or simply the largest oldest house in town with its stories, with the open senses we are able to see, feel, respond to, be informed by, and learn that experience.

You can go anywhere. You can do anything and have it be open and rich and satisfying. When that feeling of lack comes up, that resentment, jealousy, anger, whatever it may be, we are diminished. Why bother following that?

At the moment of clear seeing into the reality of this moment  
and this moment  
and this moment,  
and the practising of body, breath, speech, and mind in this moment  
and this moment  
and this moment,  
all the senses are open and any choice made,  
(and of course the only choice when on the zafu is to feel the breath, sit up straight, open the peripheral vision: practise),  
any choice made,  
in time,  
will be made from the richness of that clear seeing  
rather than the contraction and poverty mind of self-image  
with its whining about never having such nice stuff, being unlucky, and so on.

The stories block open experiencing and they're not much fun.

Open experiencing informs choices we may regard as mundane. You may find yourself decluttering your living space, washing and then one day even ironing your jubon. Why? Because you notice differences that the senses perceived and it was nicer. You may find yourself getting rid of things like horrible patterned carpeting, or wallpaper. You may find yourself polishing your shoes, placing them carefully. You may find yourself getting rid of the comb-over and even letting dyed hair fade as the stories about who you are and how you should be fade and reality is clearly seen.

When experiencing is unstained, you can go anywhere, any time, and have fun. You can see beauty in simple lines that you may never have noticed before. You have a world opening to you, as Knowing. Your choices have more information upon which to be based and, really, everything benefits.

If in the rooms of palaces  
"May all beings  
Enter the highest life  
Always free of the stain of craving."

Thank you for listening.

## Every Breath You Take 7: Adornments

Dharma Talk by Ven. Shikai Zuiko o-sensei  
Dainen-ji, January 3rd, 2008

EVERY BREATH YOU TAKE

...clearly is the only moment that you can practise.

The verses from "The Practice of Purity" present reminders to practise and give examples of the many situations and locations in which we may find ourselves.

If putting on adornments,  
"May all beings  
Release false embellishments  
And come to abide in Reality."

Adornments, a decoration, that which adorns, from the Latin, ad ornare, to furnish, was in original usage referring to furnishing rooms.

The use of the word has been expanded to include personal use and means to enhance the appearance of, especially with beautiful objects; to enliven or decorate as if with ornaments.

One example given even uses people as the adornments — people of fashion who "adorn" the court.

There's a lot of fun to be had as well as moments of shock and horror when looking into the topic and history of "adornment". Gold, for example, has a long history of use in making ornaments and adornments, symbols of wealth and power. The manufacture of those symbols of wealth and power has been fueled by vast quantities of sweat and blood from the unfortunates who found the gold through painstaking backbreaking work. And that doesn't even include all the people who have been killed for their little stashes of gold.

The same is true for all the ore from which those symbols of wealth and power were created. Not just the earth but animals and organisms have been exploited and turned into "adornments".

Coral reefs have been killed and destroyed so that coral beads could adorn necks and ears and wrists. Whole species of birds have been decimated if not made extinct, in the name of fashion. Birds have been stuffed, whole, to decorate pompadour wigs and hats. Feathers have been ripped out of a bird's skin to edge a soft evening coat. Children have been mutilated in the course of the acquiring of diamonds: The symbol of eternal love. The love of self-image for its image of a self is, perhaps, closer to the mark. We won't get into ivory and pearls and rubies and emeralds and furs and on and on. Each history appalls.

An image of ourselves, of who we are, is a contraction into a self with a certain established set of patterns. It is self-describing. There is no room for a wider view. The self-descriptions pull tighter and tighter into a solid, locked away, separate self, which is usually busily describing itself by all the things it is and is not.

Mostly these tend to be things that are lacking. This contraction into poverty mind and sense of lack hurts so the self-described self, lurking behind the eyes, gets to looking around for things that could "fill the emptiness I feel inside of me".

The objects of craving, the things it thinks will make it happy, are, in essence, symbols. Symbols prop up an image of a self and broadcast messages to the world. It's always good to know what's being said. It's always good to know what one is saying to oneself and to the world.

And today, the beginning of the 21st century, the first decade, symbols are being presented and consumed faster and faster, and are more instantly widespread, than ever before in human history.

In the end of the 20th century and the beginning of the 21st century, flesh and bone are being manipulated and used as "adornments" for that sense of a self. The flesh of the bodymind is a symbol. We won't go into all the piercings, and tats, and implants, and steroids, and blue pills, because that would just take too much time so we'll limit ourselves to "adornments" that are actually placed on the bodymind.

Also, we could regard the phrase "false embellishments" as another way of pointing to those stances and patterns that we play out:

having to be better than someone at something,  
having to have more of anything than someone,  
having to be someone worth something through having certain "things":  
talent, knowledge, depth of feeling or understanding and on and on and on.

It is all so tiring.

But it's not a problem.

When you see any pattern for what it is and whole bodily mindfulness is practised, the capacity to use the moment to do something other than to act out the pattern is strengthened and the pattern is weakened.

Each time you practise mindfulness you are practising the reality of this moment of clear seeing. You can raise the intent of the verse when putting on an earring or a belt buckle, or a pair of glasses. Take the time to feel the breath, stand up straight, and open the eyes. The clear seeing of reality of that moment will present more information, more background on the action you are taking. Is the adornment functional? Is it useful in any way? What is it saying?

For example, earrings. (Psst! If you notice a movement of attention into making this personal, practise; feel the breath, sit up straight, and open the eyes.)

I'm not talking about you. I'm talking about patterns and tendencies.

A hole through the ear is not useful to the bodymind. However, it can be used to put things through. It's a convenient hanging place for signposts. Things are hung from it. What is hanging from it? What's the message? Why? Now let's talk diamond earrings. A diamond stud. The bigger the better. Why? Broadcasting, perhaps, class, money, self-worth, a tool for intimidation, it goes on and on. Forget about all those missing hands of children in West Africa where blood diamonds produced chaos.

People can hang whatever they want from their ears outside the monastery. Inside, jewelry and embellishments are too distracting and too helpful for perpetuating patterns and thus not useful to the practitioner or the practice environment.

Now, people can embellish their self-image or their ears any way they want. Notice what you're doing. Give yourself the chance to look more clearly and to be more informed about what is happening in the reality of this moment. At the moment of noticing anything, practise that moment of clear seeing.

With practice there'll be more moments of clear seeing.

If putting on adornments  
"May all beings  
Release false embellishments  
And come to abide in Reality."

What you put in, and on, the ear is up to you.

Thank you for listening.

## Every Breath You Take 8: Ascending a Balcony

Dharma Talk by Ven. Shikai Zuiko o-sensei

Dainen-ji, January 10th, 2008

### EVERY BREATH YOU TAKE

When ascending a balcony,  
"May all beings  
Tower as Reality,  
Seeing the panorama of everything."

When this verse was first written, the architecture would have been different from the architecture with which we are familiar: different countries, different materials, different construction, different design. The same is true for the word "Balcony".

Each of us when hearing the word come up with our own thought or picture or image of what that balcony would be.

But to take the word "balcony" literally is too confining. 'Cause that would mean that the verse would be specific to balconies. Perhaps a variety of them. Some on which you could go out on, some you couldn't, some with railings some without, some enclosed, some wooden, some made out of iron, and on and on and on. But, perhaps the word was used in other places, other times and "balconies" were what provided the most significant place where people could easily access a wider view of the environment or context. Today we have elevators and escalators, some extreme such as the CN tower in Toronto, the Empire State building in New York, to whisk us quickly to a wider view of the surroundings.

But then what about airplanes and hot air balloons? Well, I don't think we need be too specific. The intent of the verse is when rising up from our usual location on the ground, we have an opportunity to "Tower as Reality" and see the panorama of everything. Ascending to a higher place provides the opportunity to raise the verse and practise at the moment of noticing anything, thoughts, seeing that which is seen, hearing that which is heard, breathing and so on, rather than settling for the poverty of contraction and withdrawal into some story or state which is feeding itself by propagating fear of heights, or fear of confined spaces and so on.

When we practise, whether we do it on the second floor of Dainen-ji, buckled onto our zafu, or whether we do it rising up in the elevator at the Rideau Centre or perhaps even sitting in a plane seat flying away to some exotic place, when we practise, we are accessing and opening to a wider view.

We can practise anywhere, anyplace. Nobody else needs know what we are doing when we notice a contraction, a dharma, a moment of experience, and use it to feel the breath moving the bodymind in and out, use it to sit up straight and to open the eye gaze and experience the openness of reality in that moment.

Poverty mind or stories narrow and seemingly pinch experiencing. Feeling bad, small, weak, inferior, or feeling good, strong, superior, have the same mechanism. A narrowing of attention into a contraction and the spinning of explanations or declamations provides another way for self-image to amuse and distract itself. When you notice it, stop it. No matter where you are. Stop it. Look at it. Practise.

Feel the breath. Sit up straight. Open the eye gaze.

As you continue to practise mindfulness, you will see more details more clearly of the process of perception and cognition. You'll start to see the process of the contraction of self-image into a self, a "me" which is seemingly apart from everything else, held by the bonds of fabrication. Held in place by fantasies.

As you continue to practise, there'll be more and more moments of waking up when practising. Practising reality shows that experiencing is vaster than we could ever imagine. As the Roshi has said, it is unthinkable. The more open, the vaster, the more spacious, experiencing is seen to be and the more we can understand, Reality, as is said in the verse, "Towers".

When we are mindful of the open expanse of actual experiencing, we are seeing the panorama of everything that is arising in that moment be it on the zafu or be it what we are seeing from the top of the Empire State building. There is room for everything. No matter where you are or what you are doing there's no need to check and see if this is a moment to practise. All moments and whatever is noticed arising are cues to practise. There's no need to pick and choose. Picking and

choosing is making things complex by allowing thoughts to carry on for too long. Stop. Look. As the panorama of actual experiencing opens everything can be seen, nothing is hidden, nothing is being conditioned or affected by conditioning. At that moment, a being or beings were described as "towering as reality".

If all beings practised Reality it seems to me that it would be possible and logical that the devastating actions we commit, inadvertently or intentionally would be changed as the panorama, that vast network of relationships, is seen. But we'll never know. That thought was a fabrication... just a story.

When a panorama, a context, is seen more information can be used to inform choices. When going up to a high place... practise with whatever is noticed.

"Tower as Reality" ...OK...why not?

When ascending a balcony,  
"May all beings  
Tower as Reality,  
Seeing the panorama of everything."

Thank you for listening.

## Every Breath You Take 9: When Giving Something Away

Dharma Talk by Ven. Shikai Zuiko o-sensei

Dainen-ji, January 17th, 2008

EVERY BREATH YOU TAKE

...you can...

when giving something away,

Raise the verse:

"May all beings  
Be able to release everything  
With hearts free of clinging."

The reality is everything is given.

Our life.

Our breath.

Given for, as the Roshi has said, "for no reason at all."

Now, giving is enjoyable. Giving can make us feel "good". Perhaps we start to like that "feeling", perhaps we start to identify ourselves as a "giver", and without noticing it, maybe, we start to expect something in return.

As we start to notice this, and as we practise at the moment of noticing, we might start to see that we are clinging to, counting on, expecting, enjoying, identifying with, that good feeling, or that expectation of something in return. We might start to notice that giving can turn into barter.

Now the verse,

When giving something away,  
"May all beings  
Be able to release everything  
With hearts free of clinging."

...reminds us we are learning, with practice, to "...release everything With hearts free of clinging".

That "clinging" describes the unquestioned patterns that are woven into an image of a self, a description which we may not see or may be loathe to release which has placed value on almost everything. The "clinging" may be to the thing we are giving away, or to the idea we have of how the receiver should receive it, and the sense that something is now owed to self-image by the receiver.

You all know what I mean. It's the stuff of drama and comedy.

"Drinks and dinner and later I'll get..." [students laugh],

"I'll pretend to enjoy whatever they're enjoying even if I hate it and maybe I'll end up with a spouse...", [laughter]  
right up to gigantic corporate donations that are tax write-offs.

Barter. The content may vary and some of it can be interesting, but what we are interested in, here and now, is the fact of

the patterns; the movement of attention into the content so that it defines what course of action we chose to take.

Of course, the first choice of action for a practitioner is to practise basic mindfulness when noticing anything rather than allowing that "clinging" to propagate.

"Hearts free of clinging."

"Hearts"?

The organ ticking in the chest?

Is that what is being talked about?

No one knows, exactly, to what extent the cells of the bodymind are affected by movements of attention but it can be experienced. Self-image, a pattern, that defines how it is and how the world is, presences, and contraction is apparent, but we are used to unquestioningly calling that "me" without seeing how attention narrows and that most of whatever else is going on seemingly vanishes. An interaction has occurred, something has been given, something has been received, reactivity may have surfaced, and usual patterns may have played themselves out.

We give things. We give gifts of objects. We do samu. We give the gift of offering up our time and energy to support the practice. Self-image likes to think that the object or the activity of bodymind is being given freely and we may get the feeling that we "are a good person", and that we "are really practising". Then one day, we may notice that when what is given is received and the other doesn't respond the way we think they should all of a sudden there's someone, "me", feeling angry, offended, slighted, unacknowledged, vindictive, vengeful, all sorts of states. We've become it. The state has taken over and is defining who we are. No problem.

What to do? You guessed it. All at once: Practise. Practise at the moment of noticing anything.

Now, it's easier to do this in the monastery. The monastery itself is gift, a reminder, which gives us not just a zafu and zabuton in the practice hall, (that we might be secretly be regarding as "mine") but the gifts of ikebana, sho, plates, teisho, dharma talks, robes, food, forms.

"Shin" heart, mind, essence, that which is not the actual flesh and bone and marrow, shin the calligraphy of which is just outside the door to the Zendo, to the right, as you're facing the Zendo door, "shin" means heart, mind, essence, that which is not the actual flesh and bone and marrow, "shin" allows us to see contraction and it is affected by it. The contraction is felt in the flesh, the bone, and the marrow, and "I", the body and the mind, bodymind, contracts and suffers.

But in that contraction and suffering there can be a strong sense of "me", how I am, self-image wanting to define that moment. The forms offer up in many different ways tools for practising in that moment.

Now sometimes students speak of an increasing sense of "aleness", separation from the usual world as they start to practise. Now, we are alone. We may all breath in the same air as we do and breath it out but we are alone. We may affect each other and everything else with what we do but we are alone.

Knowing, that which knows, and can make choices, knows all of the dharmas as the chance to know all the experiences arising within experiencing and makes the choice to practise. Now perhaps it is that sense of knowing and wanting to know more about this is what brings us to practise, disguised as a bodymind with a name and number and lots of other definitions. As we practise, we start to see the definitions for what they are, movements of attention towards, focusing on, one aspect of experiencing to the exclusion of the rest.

No problem. That's not what you are.

Just see it.

Practise mindfulness by feeling the breath, sitting or standing up straight, opening peripheral vision.

When you do that, there is an opening that occurs that is vaster than what you had been experiencing.

The pattern is not being fed.

It may still be there but it is not a problem because it is balanced out with all the other moments of knowing, all the other dharmas.

It is not being fed. Over time it ceases to "have a life of its own" and you start to see that you are most certainly not those patterns.

The information is still available, information that comes up when we see a pattern is still there and it can inform choices.

The first choice for a practitioner, of course, is to practise...basic mindfulness. Use the forms with as much care and detail as possible and see what happens.

The next time you give something or are given something, you'll be sure to notice more details arising around the activity of giving and receiving. No matter what content you may notice there is no problem. You are not those thoughts. You are not those patterns. They're just something going on. And there's a knowing of them. There's no need to follow them.

There's no need to do anything about or with them. Just feel the breath, sit up straight, open the eye gaze, and enjoy the gift of the life that is living as you (as well as, perhaps, any chocolates, or books, or...[students laugh])

Start to notice, "with a heart free of clinging" the true endlessness of giving and receiving.

Thank you for listening.

# Every Breath You Take 10: In Gatherings or Crowds

Dharma Talk by Ven. Shikai Zuiko o-sensei  
Dainen-ji, January 24th, 2008

## EVERY BREATH YOU TAKE

...is the moment you can practise.

When in gatherings or crowds  
"May all beings  
Release compounded things  
And unfold the nature of knowing all knowns."

Well, here we are. Are we a gathering? Are we a crowd? Is this what we are talking about? We are a Sangha, a community of practitioners, sitting, practising zazen. Practising, as Knowing, basic mindfulness, and as a result of practising basic mindfulness, each thing that is known is released. You are learning to look into the process of perception and cognition.

That's what each one of you, as individuals, is here to do.

However, as with all the verses in "The Practice of Purity", the reminder is also very useful for when you are not sitting with Sangha. It is meant to be useful for when you are actually with others in gatherings or crowds where the purpose is other than to teach you how to practise.

Now, unless we've been packed in cotton wool for all of our lives we surely have picked up on that the history of gatherings and crowds is, on the whole, not a pretty one. We've all heard tales of "crowd mentality" and "mob madness" from many times, many places, in so many ways, with so many excuses along the line of, "well...everyone else was doing it..." It plays out over and over again.

The verse refers to the release of "compounded things". Compounded things refers to that contraction and intensity felt when a myriad of dharma, moments of experience get lumped together in a density that blocks and seemingly obliterates the rest of what is actually going on. As the focusing and narrowing becomes more pronounced, the state becomes more intense. Many such states in many gatherings and crowds have produced terrible acts. That's not good.

Compounded things, that sense of a me with all of its

"I must do",

"...I should do..."

and "what will people think if I don't..."

and on and on has even, probably, seduced some of us into staying at gatherings and parties that were really dull and boring.

It may have encouraged us to engage in activities that we may not have under ordinary circumstances. It is a good idea to look into what's really going on. And we may even save ourselves the agony of sitting through terrible, terrible, concerts and plays because, "what will this line of people sitting between us and the escape route think?" [students laugh.]

Feeling into the whole bodymind, in the whole moment shows immediately that any thoughts and feelings are only part of what is going on. They're only part of your life, a very small part. The tendency to focus on and confuse that small part with the whole thing can produce a tide of individuals, moving in the same direction, with a singular goal.

The Roshi has said many times, and as you have observed, our first intention is to help, to make things better. If you've seen someone slip on the street you've felt your own movement to respond and you've seen others do the same. The first response is easily, and it would seem increasingly, overridden by social and cultural pattern, "Well, I didn't want to get involved", "I might get sued". "It's not my business..." and so on.

Another thing easily observed is that we do what others do. That's easily demonstrated: just go and stand in a public place looking up intently. [students laugh]

See what happens.

Little observable bits of how we are affected by seeing, hearing, touching, tasting, thinking, feeling, and smelling, the senses, have been studied and the conclusions, simple minded as they may be, have been used, and are being used to elicit desired effects. The desired result can vary from getting us to buy something, to vote for something, or to blow up something. The something we might buy can be a nice, plastic and metal machine, that will save us the time of slicing or something, or it can be a belief.

The knowns may be different but the process of knowing is the same. It only "makes sense", that being the case, to look more deeply into the process. The process I'm talking about is the process of perception and cognition. And this is what you're doing right now. When you notice a thought, when you notice a feeling, when you notice an itch, when you notice the sound of my voice, when you notice anything, feel the breath, sit up straight, open the eye gaze. You've practised that moment of knowing.

When a dharma is known, by Knowing, that moment is practised, as you just did, and the "compounded thing", whatever was known, is released and the process of practice unfolds more and more clearly the nature of knowing all knows.

We affect each other in many ways most of which we never notice...until we start to practise. Looking more deeply into what is going on with your life in this moment is wonderful. It's wonderful to be truly able to experience what's really going on with the bodymind in whatever context it may find itself.

It's really interesting to see cause and effect in more detail as it is being experienced. It's also important to remember that what is being talked about is experiencing which can only be experienced by the individual, by you, by you, by you... It is difficult to talk about, "Its meaning is not in words but it answers sincere questioning" and the sincere questioning is asked by the whole bodymind in the whole moment. All the words used to talk about experiencing are pointers to you, for you, to encourage and prod and nag you into looking into your own experiencing.

If the verse were "stay away from crowds and gatherings" that would be a red flag pointing to an intention to control what you do, an intention of controlling your behaviour.

Now that's not the case.

Let me remind you of the verse:

When in gatherings or crowds  
"May all beings  
Release compounded things  
And unfold the nature of knowing all knows."

The verse is a reminder to you, that you can practise reality wherever you are. You are knowing colours and forms and sounds and movements of attention. You can know them more and more clearly. You can unfold the nature of knowing all knows by over and over and over again feeling the breath, sitting or standing up straight, opening the eye gaze. You can do that anywhere. You don't need a special outfit. You can release compounded things and you can make whatever choice you want to make.

[Sotto voce:] A piece of advice, mundane though it may be: finding yourself in a gathering or a crowd, check out where the washrooms are and the location of the nearest exit and make sure you can get to it...

Thank you for listening.

## Every Breath You Take 11: If in Danger and Difficulty

Dharma Talk presented by Ven. Shikai Zuiko osho  
Dainen-ji, January 31st, 2008

If in danger and difficulty,  
"May all beings  
Have freedom,  
And be always unobstructed."

Pretty well an all-purpose verse. Appropriate on many occasions and even moment to moment.

What kind of danger or difficulty is being talked about? Whatever is going on, for any being, for you. There's no danger or difficulty for which the verse is not to be used.

Remember the original verse was written and ended up in Chapter 11 in the Avatamsaka sutra, and it was written sometime during the first and second century C.E. (A.D.), it is thought to have originated in India, and most likely was written by different people. A product of Buddhism and in an Indian setting, it contains the symbols, mythologies, figures and stories standard to Buddhism, used in other contexts as well, although based in Indian culture there is such a wealth of information, the Sutra is regarded as a compendium of Buddhist teachings.

Yet it is fresh today.

Were dangers and difficulties different 2000 or so years ago? Yes and no. In a mundane way, everything was very different. Climate, technology, design, and on and on.

You are unlikely to be trapped in a dusty side street with a dusty steer whose horns loom large silhouetted against the sun. Probably a danger or a difficulty 2000 years ago and it could be a danger in some parts of the planet today. Not here.

If I were a little slow in crossing an icy slushy street and slipped as a bus is moving towards me, I would consider myself in danger or difficulty. If I froze, obstructed by a stream of limitations, I wouldn't be as likely to get out of the way as I might if free from conditioned experiencing. A good time to practise.

Icy streets and motorized traffic would not have been a danger or difficulty 2000 years ago. It is now, here. Contexts change. The situations bodyminds find themselves in are different for each, but the process of experiencing, the process of

being a human bodymind, is the same for all humans. The process of being born, seeing, hearing, tasting, touching, feeling, smelling, breathing, thinking, is the same. It always has been. Those people are us, we are them.

Today, more than any other time in history, we have knowledge of the terrible things that happen in every moment, there is danger and difficulty all the time, further away from or closer to us and often traceable to choices each and every one has made. Species are becoming extinct. Some young birds have been found with stomachs full of our discarded plastic. The hormones injected into farmed animals are producing who knows what effects on other species, us, for example. It would be really easy to go on about the horrors we've heard about but we don't need to do that. What we need to do is recognize that in this moment, we can practise and make a better choice than following an old unquestioned pattern which obstructs and conditions experiencing.

When experiencing is unobstructed, the seeing, hearing, tasting, touching, feeling, smelling, breathing, are unobstructed and the colours, forms, sounds, of this moment stand forth free and vivid.

The instructions for basic mindfulness are the same here, now, and then: when anything is noticed, anything, feel the breath, sit or stand up straight, open the gaze. Open to the vastness of this moment free of obstruction.

The verse:

When in danger and difficulty  
"May all beings  
Have freedom,  
And be always unobstructed."

Wouldn't it be wonderful if all beings had freedom right now?  
Who wouldn't want that?

"And be always unobstructed."  
Who wouldn't want that?

Right now?

Here's what you do right now. Feel the breath, sit up straight, open the eye gaze. Practise the whole bodymind in the whole moment. Each time you notice a contraction, and practise basic mindfulness the "obstruction" or "covering" or "curtain", the contraction is opened instead of contracting further and obstructing further.

Freedom.

Wonderful. Nice. Available right now.

Thank you for listening.

## Every Breath You Take 12: Move Past Householder's Life

Dharma Talk presented by Ven. Shikai Zuiko osho

Dainen-ji, February 15th, 2008

EVERY BREATH YOU TAKE

Is a moment you can practise.

Every breath you take could be the last one.

The Great Matter is birth and death  
Life slips past and time is gone,  
Right now, wake up! wake up!  
Do not waste time.

The verse:

When they move past householder's life,  
"May all beings  
Have no hindrance in 'leaving home',  
And their hearts be free."

Early on in the series, it was mentioned that these verses were most likely written originally for monastics but they can be useful and informative for lay practitioners. After all, we all go up in "high places", elevators, stairs, escalators. We all go to the bathroom. We all have family and friends, acquaintances, and people we interact with. We all see water and use it. We all may put on adornments or see people putting on adornments. We see people who are in good health and ill health. We see or are in gatherings of people.

The verses are speaking of the stuff of everyday life.

This particular verse is specific to monastics.

When they move past householder's life,  
"May all beings  
Have no hindrance in 'leaving home',  
And their hearts be free."

In this lineage, monks are those who have "left home" to practise intensively for the liberation of all beings. That intention is expressed daily, moment-to-moment, and in different ways with different verses and chants all stating that this is rooted in the Four Great Vows and is being done so that all beings are happy, peaceful, and free.

The first disciples of Gautama Siddhartha had to leave home if they wanted to practise and study with him. There was a realization, an understanding, that when people would pop in to get their little bit of teaching and then pop out and go home, they'd pick up and reinforce a lot of their usual patterns and the Way would not be as completely open as quickly as it could be when the teacher could keep his eye on them.

Giving up the life of a householder and vowing to practise with anything that comes up is essential to the training of a monk. Monks have recognized that our usual definition of family is far too small. All beings are family.

Not just referring to a physical structure or location, the word "home" can also refer to the bundle of convictions and beliefs and states that define who we think we are and what we do. To paraphrase the Roshi, we are used to hunkering down in the nest of self-image with its unquestioned assumptions and its usual circle of petty concerns. That little nest can be a prison. The prison of self-image narrows and pinches and the bodymind experiences the painful effects of contraction and the choices fueled by contraction.

We live in a world defined by states and the fictionalized accounts of the reasons for those states. We dream and imagine what life would be like if there were freedom from the constant nattering of self-image. There's a yearning to move beyond and we seek it out.

And one day you entered through the front door of, in the old days, Daijizan, in the more recent old days, Zazen-ji, or, as this evening, Dainen-ji. You are seeking and asking to be taught to practise.

Some who enter the gates of practice have taken monastic vows and now some are teachers, some are practice advisors continuing to study and practise, moment-to-moment, 24/7.

Now, if thoughts come up in reaction to this such as, "Yeah, yeah, that's what I want to do." Or on the other end of the spectrum, "Not in a million years!" Just recognize that that thought is there. You've recognized something about experiencing in this moment. You've noticed thoughts as thoughts, feelings as feelings, and you can sit up straight, open the eye gaze, and feel the breath. You can practise basic mindfulness in this moment.

Associate and general students are learning to practise and are seeing the process of perception and cognition more and more clearly. Students are learning to see states as those knotted nests of conditioned experiencing rather than as something we might call a "personality".

In Sanskrit, these obstructions, defilements, poisons, were named klesa and in your study you might come across references to "the burning flames of passion, aggression, and ignorance". The three klesas.

Indeed we've experienced the strength of states, haven't we? When, through the practise of basic mindfulness, basic patterns have been opened and the burning flames are somewhat quenched, you may find that you have more energy. As the energy that was locked into maintaining these contractions, be they falling into the category of passion, aggression, or ignorance, opens, there is more energy to do what needs to be done. There's more energy available and more and more it will be dedicated to the liberation of all beings.

This recognition has led, and will continue to lead students to receive monastic vows, to become "home leavers". Becoming home leavers in this lineage means that each monk has walked away from the life of a householder and all that entails. They have dealt and are dealing with situations that arise just like anyone else. Rather than the romantic "running away from the world", which of course is impossible, there is in fact a more inclusive embrace which includes more beings.

Each monk has vowed to practise and teach for the liberation of all beings beyond convenience. All resources are dedicated to that end. This makes for long days and there are interactions with many beings. You can see how impossible it would be to engage in and sustain any socially defined relationship. So much time is required for maintaining established social relationships that the time for practice would be severely diminished. Each monk has faced many situations, many hindrances, and is vowing to continually practise with whatever arises.

Vows have been received. Vows are taken seriously. The vows which you've heard if you've ever been at a sitting when Fusatsu, the renewal of vows, is celebrated, provide ways of seeing more clearly into moments of experiencing and to practise rather than feed into the creation of hindrances through the playing out of old patterns.

When they move past householder's life,

"May all beings  
Have no hindrance in 'leaving home',  
And their hearts be free."

And let their hearts be free.

Basically we're stating a wish or an intention for those moving past householder's life that the shin, heart, mind, essence, be free from the bonds of conditioned experiencing, and that there be no hindrance.

Now that can apply to all students looking at and seeing more and more clearly those comfortable little nests.

May all beings be happy, may they be peaceful, may they be free.

That's nice.

Oh! A suggestion. You may wish to go on the website and read through "The Eightfold Path". It's a lot of fun.

Thank you for listening.

## Every Breath You Take 13: Being Without Struggle

Dharma Talk presented by Ven. Shikai Zuiko osho  
Dainen-ji, February 28th, 2008

EVERY BREATH YOU TAKE

Is the only moment you can practise.

So feel the breath, sit up straight, open the eye gaze. Practise this moment.

Entering the monastery,  
"May all beings  
Display the various standards  
Of being without struggle."

"Being without struggle?" "But this is tough." "What do they mean, 'Being without struggle'?"

"Various standards?" "What do they mean, 'Various standards'?"

So let's look at this from who, what, where, and when?

Who? You and all beings.  
What? Embodying practise.  
Where? Here.  
When? Now.

"May all beings display the various standards of being without struggle."

What's being talked about, and pointed to, is how you are right now and a wish, an expressed intention, that practice will mature and open so that no matter what the situation, there will be just the display of reality moment-to-moment, free from struggle.

How is this done? It is done moment-to-moment, using the forms, the standards, of the monastery to practise moment-to-moment, while you are in the monastery. The only reason the monastery is here at all is so that you can learn to practise.

You are starting to recognize the ways in which you cause a sense of a self to struggle by taking part of your experience and feeding attention into it so that it comes foreground, obscuring vast amounts of reality and, often, defining what you do.

Reactivity comes up in many situations. It comes up during teisho and Dharma Talks. This is what Anzan roshi had to say in teisho 5: "Sun and Moon, Hands and Eyes" in the series "Five Fingers, Ten Directions: Commentaries on Eihei Dogen zenji's text 'Jippo'".

...But when something is said about this luminosity it can be as if weeds fill the Hatto, the Dharma Hall, as students become entangled in thinking about luminosity, telling themselves stories about luminosity, instead of opening into what recognition might have stirred within them...

You can expect to have thoughts fly up like hornets in response to something that may be heard or experienced. It's not that it's "wrong".

It is what is going on. See it as such. Recognize there is no need to follow or act out any of these thoughts and feelings in any way. Use the forms of deportment of the bodymind to deepen your ability to see more clearly the process of

perception and cognition. Each time you notice anything, practise basic mindfulness.

This is simple but it isn't "easy". We are used to taking our self-descriptions very seriously.

We don't need to take our self-descriptions seriously at all. All of practice points to the many ways we do take things very seriously. And when you notice anything, no matter what the content, feel the breath, sit up straight, open the peripheral vision.

Open to this moment.

Practise the whole bodymind in the whole moment.

Notice how you are right now.

Feel the breath,

sit up straight,

and open the peripheral vision.

You know what you noticed.

You just proved it.

You're not any of those thoughts.

You're not any of those feelings.

You're not any of those reactivities.

If you were, you would not be able to know them.

There was a flurry of thoughts fueled by patterns.

So you feel the breath.

So you sit up straight.

So you open the eye gaze.

The only moment you can practise the life that is living as you,

the skin, meat, bone, and marrow,

of the whole bodymind in the whole moment,

is now.

There will be many more moments of reactivity that are known, increasingly, to be just that: reactivity. Reactivity is not who you are. The word "reactivity" is being used to describe a process that can be known. We are used to defining ourselves by our reactivities. We like this. We don't like that. We feel good about this. We don't feel good about that. We feel good about this person. We don't feel good about that person. And on and on and on. And we are just now learning to see those things for what they are rather than as descriptions of a self, personality. What do we do in situations where reactivities occur and old patterns start to run their stories?

Well, you can take it seriously as something that can define how you are and let it define who you are. You can follow the pattern, feeding attention into it, and then try to hide it by glossing over the fact that it is there and pretend that it is not happening. You can "dissociate" from it. You can become the thing that makes the decision to keep or hide or develop a strategy. But all of that requires struggle. That's what you've already done over and over and over again in your lifetime and it doesn't work. Time to try something else. After all that's what brought you here.

The forms provide the tools you need for cutting through that sense of "struggle".

The forms afford endless opportunities for feeling more completely, becoming more intimate with, the bodymind. When you raise the arms, align body and breath, feel the feet on the floor, and come to gassho, the capacity to know, to feel more completely the skin, meat, bone, and marrow, develops. Bodymind is learning.

In the course of our lifetimes we have been "looked at" and we've looked at others and we have learned to define ourselves by what we think is seen of us and what we see of others. We develop mannerisms, ways of carrying the bodymind, that we hope will make us seem more girly, womanly, manly, boyish, young, or older, and on and on and on.

Well, as you've probably figured out by now, those roles don't "play" in the monastery.

The forms give us a means of paying more attention to the whole bodymind in the moment, to notice more completely what is going on. The practice, the instruction to practise tells us to practise anytime we notice anything at all about experiencing. The forms provide the optimum opportunity for seeing what's going on in that process of perception and cognition that is occurring wrapped around the breath; your life, the bodymind, the skin, meat, bones, and marrow, of and in this moment.

You are asked to leave the more obvious adornments, jewelry, cosmetics, clothing with labels and cartoons on it, at the door. Now, people have many reactivities, many thoughts about why this is so and why it should or should not be so. It must be so in order that the more obvious and coarse ways adopted to prop up a sense of "self" can be "left at the door". You can then use the forms for practising with the whole bodymind to see the more subtle "adornments" of habits and patterns.

You can ask any question you want to ask. As you are asking practice advisors or a teacher to answer a question for you,

there is a form for the interaction which gives you the best possible chance of seeing more of the reality of the situation. Next week's verse speaks explicitly of the interaction between students, teachers, and practice advisors, so there's more to come. Stay tuned.

Briefly, in any situation when interacting with a monastic, your senior, practise the whole bodymind; stand up straight, even if you have been sitting down, hold the hands in shashu, feel the breath, feel the skin, meat, bone, and marrow, see the patterns of reactivity that come up and practise basic mindfulness.

Now if you have a tendency to want to be charming, social, to comment on the weather, to engage in meaningless chit chat just because you feel uncomfortable, by using the form of feeling into the space of the moment with the whole bodymind, you can afford yourself the chance to actually practise rather than to act out the tendency to want to fill what may be uncomfortable space with the detritus of usual social interaction. Wait to follow the lead of the monastic. You don't have to do anything. The more fully attention is open, the more completely the bodymind can rest calmly, eventually, in the form.

I'm not talking about any state of "calm" or "bliss" or "serenity". In fact, sometimes the simple act of standing in shashu when facing a senior or a teacher can produce reactivities that are strong and that can be uncomfortable, really uncomfortable. Sometimes we might feel totally exposed. Sometimes we might want to just slide away from the interaction without having anything uncovered. That's not a problem. That's what people have been doing since the beginning of people. Practice gives us the way and the means for seeing these habitual patterns and reactivities.

Now, there may be things like dryness of the mouth, the eyes dilating like those of a deer frozen in headlights. There might be squeezing or pinching in the muscles. The heartbeat might go up. We might perspire. And on and on and on. I don't want to give you ideas [wave of laughter from students] but I do want to let you know that any and all of that stuff has been happening to human beings since the beginning of practice. That's the kind of stuff you will notice more and more clearly. It will have less and less tendency to come foreground as you learn to practise mindfulness at the moment of noticing. As soon as you notice a label or a story or anything coming up about what's going on, you feel the breath, you stand up straight, you open the peripheral vision. You actually practise the whole bodymind.

And there might be, from time-to-time, gentle, kindly, grandmotherly, pointing to what you are doing by the senior, the practice advisor, or the teacher. This in itself may be uncomfortable and may produce another flurry of reactivities. They are not the problem. The problem is believing that they are who you are and that you must defend these strategies and stances. All you need to do is see them. They are what is being pointed to by all the instruction. And then you feel the breath, you sit or stand up straight, you open the eye gaze. You practise the whole bodymind in the whole moment.

Be without struggle.

Entering the monastery,  
"May all beings  
Display the various standards,  
Of being without struggle."

Thank you for listening.

## Every Breath You Take 14: Going to Advisors and Teachers

Dharma Talk presented by Ven. Shikai Zuiko osho  
Dainen-ji, March 6th, 2008

EVERY BREATH YOU TAKE

...is the opportunity to practise presenting itself no matter where you are no matter what you are doing.  
You're learning to notice that opportunity.

Going to advisors and teachers,  
"May all beings  
Skillfully attend to their teachers  
And practise the ways of virtue."

"Skillfully attending" to the teachers means, at this stage of your practise, that you, by using the forms, give yourself the best possible chance to receive and practise the teachings. Remember that the transmission of the teachings of reality is not just or only in what is "said" during any exchange.

The meaning of "skillfully attending" changes as our understanding and ability to practise matures. Formal students are starting to understand "sendaba", the wordless understanding of what is needed and called for moment-to-moment by the Dharma through the Lineage and the Teachers. Monks have vowed to practise sendaba.

You are learning to skillfully attend to your own experiencing and to apply the instructions for mindfulness practise anytime you notice anything. Through attending, knowing, and practising, you are maturing practice. The forms are tools to

help you see into experiencing more clearly. The forms use the whole bodymind. The more completely you are able to practise the forms, the more your understanding will deepen.

As an associate or general student most of the face-to-face "attending to the teacher" will occur during Daisan or practice interviews. Put effort into practising the forms.

When you are going to see teachers and advisors there are a number of forms to be used. All of the forms are there to help you see and practise with the thoughts and feelings that "the dreaded" or "the anticipated" Daisan or practice interview has stirred.

The forms include, taking care of the zafu and zabuton when it is time for you to leave the Hatto, bowing at the door, walking down the hallway or stairs with hands in shashu, ringing the densho, replacing the striker, and upon hearing the gong, the response to your strike on the densho requesting entry, opening the door, bowing, and walking to the seat in front of the teacher or practice advisor, and then, taking your seat on the zafu. There are myriads of moments of experience to be known and practised. But many are missed.

Sometimes we are so obsessed with our particular pattern of "scripting", or "anxiety", or "fear" or "anticipation", that major actions, say, ringing the densho are overlooked. This isn't a problem.

After your name is announced for Daisan there may be a strong tendency to prepare yourself, to come up with something to say that self-image believes will "satisfy" or "impress" the teacher or the practice advisor. We're used to doing that. In fact when we look at our previous experiences with learning almost anything we can recognize that we've been trained to try and come up with answers that will get us "the gold star" [snickers from students]. Keep things simple and recognize that attention is narrowing into thoughts. Practise at that moment of recognition.

Self-image has many vague and muddled and confused ideas about what a "good" Zen student should be like. We will try and arrange ourselves so as to present a close approximation of what that fabricated ideal should be. (This is really quite silly when looked at logically: If self-image, the very process that causes us to seek out practice, knew what it was talking about when it was talking about practice, then it wouldn't be there.)

You have recognized that you don't know what's really going on with the life that is living as you. So here you are sitting in the Hatto, the Dharma Hall, learning to practise reality as it is by noticing experiencing more completely and actually practising mindfulness of the whole bodymind through feeling the breath, sitting up straight, and opening the eye gaze: practising the whole bodymind in the whole moment.

The moments of experiencing that you do notice and practise provide the gateway to noticing the process of perception and cognition more clearly. You are also learning a new language with which to talk about what you have noticed. And meanings are shifting.

When you finally take your seat in front of the teacher or practice advisor and THE QUESTION, [students laugh] "how's your practice?" is asked even the best laid plans for responding [more laughter] as "someone who knows" become all knotted, and contracted and our memory may even seem to have been wiped clean. That's not a problem. That's just something going on. Self-image will try and make it a problem. All you need do is feel the breath, sit up straight, and open peripheral vision.

Over and over again you hear the instruction to practise when you notice ANYTHING at all. Self-image, those contracted ideas about how you are and how the world is, seems to have a hard time understanding the word "anything". It has favourite things that it likes to recognize, favourite moments to practise, self-image may make decisions that the light coming in the window, the sound of the fan or of birds outside, the feeling of your knee on the zabuton, are all just too trivial and need not be mentioned as it might make us seem silly. We want something more profound. Self-image wants to be profound and so will gloss over many moments of experiencing trying to get to the "golden nugget"; the sign of what it has achieved, what it knows, how good it is, and how it will impress the teacher. None of this is a problem. It's the stuff of practice.

The form for Daisan is to take your seat in front of the teacher or advisor, arrange the bodymind in the posture of zazen, practise basic mindfulness of the whole bodymind, and notice what happens. Anytime you notice anything, practise basic mindfulness.

How easy is that? Well it may not be easy but it's simple.

Hands may start to move out of the mudra. If you don't notice this it will be pointed out to you. It's not that you have done a "bad" thing but rather that you have noticed some rather major movements of bones, meat, tendon, only after the major movement is underway and it has been pointed out to you. Isn't it amazing that such major movements aren't noticed, often, by the person moving?

By maintaining the form, by practising, you will see more clearly into the details of such habits and patterns.

Eyes are another major indicator of the activity of perception and cognition.

When you are in front of the teacher or practice advisor the eye gaze should be kept open to the peripheral vision. As you do that you'll start to notice strong tendencies for the eyes to dart around or for the gaze to become strained with the eyes

forced open as if toothpicks were propping up the eyelids [laughter of recognition]. This will be pointed out to you. Once again it is not that this tendency to dart or stare is "wrong". It is something that goes on with human beings. You might as well notice it. By using the form for Daisan or practice interviews you will see more clearly into this process as well. It may be uncomfortable but so what. You are in a safe place. Feel the breath, sit up straight, and open the peripheral vision. Actually practise in that moment of noticing.

Learning anything new can be "uncomfortable". Recognize that the teacher or practice advisor is not "judging" you or trying "to best you" or "compete" with you. The monk is rather using every opportunity to show you, directly, in this moment, how to mature your practice. We're not used to this kind of generosity. We are used to being looked at, judged, embraced, or discarded; used in one way or another. Reality, the Dharma, and the teaching and teachers of reality are not using you for anything nor are they interested in you as a "social" being. It makes no difference to them whether you are old, young, rich, poor, straight, gay, male, or female.

In this lineage definitions of male and female, definitions of sex and gender, are not used to discriminate, as they are in social culture. This freedom from the bias of socially defined roles and labels affords an opportunity to see the many ways our sense of who we are has been shaped by these unquestioned patterns and assumptions.

Using the forms allows us to see the habits, and patterns, and stances, that have developed based on these definitions.

Dogen zenji wrote about this in the 13th century.

If you want to study the Dharma and end contraction and struggle, forget such things as male and female. As long as all delusions have not yet been clarified, then neither men nor women have clarified them. When all delusions are clarified and True Reality is known, then there is no "male" and "female".

This is from the "Rahai Tokuzui: Bowing and Acquiring the Essence" by Eihei Dogen zenji translated by Yasuda Joshu Dainen roshi and Anzan Hoshin roshi.

Today, practice advisors and teachers, in this lineage, are all "monks". There is no division into "monks" and "nuns". In Dogen's time social culture was stringently defined by sex and gender and there are references to nuns and monks. The word "nuns" is loaded because it reflects a social culture which universally puts a lower value on females, "nuns", than males, "monks".

The Roshi has spent considerable time addressing questions of gender that come up in language. In the front of publications it is written that, "the Ven. Anzan Hoshin roshi and Great Matter Publications use non-gender specific language in order to clarify and make the teachings accessible to all practitioners."

And guess what? We mean it.

The "Rahai Tokuzui" goes on to say,

The five aggregates of form, reactivity, symbolization, patterning, and consciousness, are just the five aggregates, however they might appear; as a woman or a man makes no difference. Women and men can both receive the Dharma. If you are serious about the Buddha Way, you cannot make such distinctions about "male" or "female". This is fundamental to the Way of Awake Awareness.

You might also noticed a lack of other widely accepted forms of social interaction such as shaking hands, hugging, filling up gaps of silence with chit chat, everybody talking at once, yelling at each other just to be heard, and on and on and on.

The forms provide the ways and the means for seeing clearly during any interaction how you are. And through practising mindfulness when you notice anything, uncovering who you are.

Any interaction with a teacher or practice advisor is based only in your desire to practice and your demonstrated willingness to use the instructions and the forms for looking into how you are as completely as you are able.

Encountering a teacher or practice advisor in the halls of the monastery or in the monastery grounds provides opportunity for receiving verbal or non-verbal instruction outside the formal area of Daisan and practice interviews.

The basic instruction is the same no matter where you are: practise, allow attention to open, and wait to follow the lead of the monk. A tendency when we're not actually sitting in the Hatto or in the room for Daisan or practice interviews, is to drop the forms of interaction and lapse into social mode. By using the forms, which include functional talking, you can get to see those patterns based on self-image and its "me, me, me, me, me, me, me" contractions into those ideas of an image of a self. You start to see whatever is coming up as simply something going on rather than a definition of who you are. Practise at the moment of noticing anything.

Remember, you can ask anything. The form is simple, "Gassho Osho or Gassho Ino or Gassho Tando or Gassho Chiden" and when you have the monk's attention, when you are standing facing each other, ask or say whatever you wanted to ask or say. If you desire to communicate about something, anything, it is worthwhile and appropriate to use that moment fully and completely by attending fully and completely.

When you encounter monks outside the monastery, the same instruction holds: wait for the monk to lead. If they bow you bow. If they nod because bowing may cause confusion for others, non-students, who are in the grocery store, or on the street, wherever you may be, you nod.

Now there is nothing stopping you from extending invitations to social events to monks but don't be surprised if they decline. After all, the monks have made the choice to live their lives for the liberation of all beings rather than to become involved in the secular world.

If a monk accepts your invitation to attend a function, recognize that there may be a great deal of uncertainty on your part as to how you should act, what you should do, what will they think of you and on and on and on. The usual stuff of self-image that comes up is no different whether you're going to the movies or going to Daisan. Use the forms of interaction to see how you are in a different context. This can be invaluable in maturing practice and uncovering who you really are. If you have questions, ask them. Ask a practice advisor or a teacher. When you have self-image asking self-image, when you engage in discursiveness about the question about practice recognize you're asking an idiot the question [louder laughter].

Going to advisors and teachers,  
"May all beings  
Skillfully attend to their teachers  
And practise the ways of virtue."

Thank you for listening.

## Every Breath You Take 15: Requesting Ordination

Dharma Talk presented by Ven. Shikai Zuiko osho  
Dainen-ji, March 13th, 2008

EVERY BREATH YOU TAKE

...open to your life as it really is

...go on

...take a chance.

The verses of "The Practice of Purity", even though they were written a long time ago, in a different place, are giving you a tool to look at and practise with the details of patterns on many different occasions. The verses provide another way, a different way, of looking at our usual day-to-day experience.

After years of practice some people who started just like you, practising as associate, then general, then formal students, decide to ask to be ordained as a probationary monk.

The verse is not a required part of the formal request to be ordained, but, as with all the verses, provides different ways of looking at the situation.

Requesting ordination,  
"May all beings  
Reach the phase of 'no turning back'  
And their intelligence be unhindered."

One requesting ordination has recognized, to a greater or lesser degree, that there is "no turning back", no possibility of "going back" into the thrall of previously held beliefs. There has been a recognition that it simply is not possible to grasp and hold on to anything. The fact of impermanence has been recognized. There is the knowledge gained from experience that the "self" is a fiction.

Before we come to practice, we define ourselves by who we "think" we are. We define ourselves by the fictionalizations, the stories we have created to explain ourselves to ourselves and to fashion ourselves to present an appropriate image to others. We are an image-of-a-self.

The displays of self-image run the gamut from believing that the perfect shade of lip gloss or the right sexy deodorant will make us irresistible and will attract "the one" or maybe just get us some sex, [student laughter] to believing that killing those who don't believe as we do will be our gateway to paradise.

We grasp at things, mentally and physically, that we believe will make us "happy" and fulfilled. The mechanism, the functioning of the process of contraction is the same no matter what is being grasped after, could be happiness, love, a nice butt, the perfect mate, the perfect family, the perfect dÃ©cor in the perfect home, recognition, respect, money, land...

Now history and current events show clearly that this grasping doesn't work. Our personal experience may have shown us

that once or twice too. 2600 years ago, Gautama Siddhartha taught that the narrowing of attention into grasping, trying to grab that which we believe to be the "thing" that will make us satisfied and end dhukka, the sense of unsatisfactoriness that grows and causes suffering, wasn't necessary. And guess what? That still maintains. That isn't necessary. The Buddha taught a way to end it. The Four Noble Truths are the base of understanding what and how you are practising. They're called "noble" because they're true. Just the facts. Just the facts.

In "Becoming Buddha" from "The Complete Teachings of Reality", Zen Master Anzan Hoshin says:

These facts are: first, that all conditioned existence gives rise to dhukka or unsatisfactoriness, suffering, contraction, and confusion. The second Noble Truth is: this suffering, this dhukka is fueled by the mechanism of grasping, of trying to hold, to hold on to something when it cannot be held and by continually misunderstanding the nature of our experience. The third Noble Truth is that it is possible to end this. The Buddha himself had experienced the end of this dhukka, this suffering. And the fourth: That it is possible for others to experience this by practising.

We sit. We practise mindfulness. We are looking into the nature of our experiencing. We are understanding the nature of our experience more each time we feel the breath, sit up straight, and open the eye gaze. Each time we practise the whole bodymind in the whole moment. The suffering caused by dhukka can be ended. It can be ended by anyone willing to put their ass on the line or, more politely, their buttocks on the zafu. [students laugh]

Wikipedia, the free encyclopedia had this to say about dhukka.:

Siddhartha Gautama, the Buddha repeatedly stated that the only purpose of Buddhism is to seek the cessation of dhukka, by understanding the Four Noble Truths and acting accordingly. The other three Noble Truths explain the source of dhukka, the means of transforming it, and the method of executing its cessation.

We are often and have often been, propelled into action based on grasping for things to fill some kind of perceived lack. You've all experienced that sense of a self with its fixed points of view that reacts and causes confusion and chaos. You are learning to see that this isn't who you are. It is just something going on. It's a pattern that you do not have to follow. You can do something else. You can practise. You can grind that pattern to dust with that contact between bottom and cushion.

You know from your own experience that following any reactivity, whether it is called embarrassment or perfectionism or anger or anxiety or fear, is like feeding it and it gets bigger and stronger and impedes the process of perception and cognition. We get into states and, when we do that, we make ourselves more stupid. Over and over and over again.

When attention funnels into contraction experiencing is more and more conditioned by the contraction as it gets stronger and stronger.

Remember: experiencing that is conditioned by contraction causes suffering.

Conditioned, hindered experiencing, open experiencing that is obstructed, causes suffering.

Suffering is driven by dhukka, that basic sense of unsatisfactoriness that causes contraction, grasping, and confusion, that causes "bad space".

Contractions, bad space, can be known and at the moment of knowing you practise mindfulness by feeling the breath, sitting up straight, opening the peripheral vision, practising the whole bodymind in the whole moment.

Those requesting ordination have recognized through their own experiencing that the teachings of reality are true. They've learned that conditioned experiencing or the conditioned existence need not continue and can, in fact, be ended. They know through their experiencing that patterns can be practised and worn out.

Those requesting ordination are manifesting that recognition by offering their flesh, meat, bone, and marrow, into practising the teachings of the Lineage, and, they are vowing to practise, and teach, beyond convenience for the freedom of all beings.

All beings can practise, all human beings can benefit from practise so the verse is also an encouragement to others.

The verse expresses both the intention of the one requesting ordination and the expression of the heartfelt wish that all beings do just this.

The verse:

"May all beings  
Reach the phase of 'no turning back'  
And may their intelligence be unhindered."

If beings were "open", free from habits, and patterns, and states, if experiencing were unconditioned, and the nested intelligences of the bodymind free to function to full capacity, it's possible the world would be a much different place.

How could anyone not want that?

Thank you for listening.

## Every Breath You Take 16: Shedding the Clothing of Householders

Dharma Talk presented by Ven. Shikai Zuiko osho  
Dainen-ji, March 20th, 2008

EVERY BREATH YOU TAKE

...this one... right now...

...is a moment in which you can practise.

You can feel the clothing you are wearing moving and shifting with the moving and shifting of the bodymind caused by the breathing.

You're alive in this moment.

Practise this moment.

The gatha or verse:

Shedding the clothing of householders,  
"May all beings  
Cultivate roots of expansiveness  
Free from the yoke of wrong action."

When people are ordained, they are literally and metaphorically "shedding the clothing of householders".

The clothing of householders, the clothing worn before receiving vows is replaced with monk's robes. Robes are worn on all formal practice occasions. These practice occasions include ceremonies, formal sittings, and interviews with students engaged in the process preliminary to acceptance as a student.

Those monks who work, and all of us have had to, adapt their work attire so as to align with guidelines in the "Saijo-Shingi, The Department of Radiance, the Monastic Precepts of the Northern Mountain Order". Clothing aligned with the Shingi is a constant reminder of vows and a reminder to continuously practise.

Each time the moment is practised the tendency to follow contraction and contracted ways of acting is opened. Experiencing in that moment is open and expansive. That's how it is all the time. It gets hidden when attention focuses in on certain favourite patterns. This is true for anyone, public, associate, general, or formal students, or monks. This is true for any being. This verse, as the others, once again encourages anyone to open past contracted states and cut the tendency to be limited or yoked by the contraction caused by following usual patterns.

The guidelines for monastic clothing are simple: black, in good repair, the right size, and without externally displayed markings such as labels, branding, colourful patterns, and designs.

There are many more details about how to make robes and other clothing, what to wear and when, there's history, useful information on how to care for items, when and how to wash, spot cleaning, and so on. This type of detailed instruction for monks means that there is no need for wasting energy and effort in having to figure out, on their own, what to wear and how to take care of it.

The information and methods we have of doing anything at all when we first start to practise is not complete and will expand as practice matures. For example, a student offering samu is given explicit details about the task from a monastic. The more clearly a monk can explain exactly what the task is, the best way to do it, the location of the required materials, the more the student has a framework which frees them from having to worry about how to do the task. They can just do it and practise whilst doing it.

Now, if they have a better way, the monk will be glad to hear it. We're always looking for a better way to do things.

The student can do the assignment, in the assigned way, and learn to notice more details of perception and cognition as they practise.

Self-image, those views of how we are and how the world is, often bubbles up and entralls us even when we are doing simple tasks. We get lost in thought and forget what we're doing. Or we may seem to be watching ourselves doing some things. All of a sudden, we may notice ourselves acting out the part of a good and mindful student. We may find ourselves bustling around in a parody of committed activity. We get so busy being what we think is a good and mindful student that we forget what we are doing and end up with dust and woolly bits of stuff blowing in the hallway, food bits left in the sink trap to rot, cleaning cloths left on radiators and on and on and on. Now this isn't a problem. As practice matures we become more traceless in our actions. We start to understand moment-to-moment, that taking care of what needs to be taken care of is not limited to taking care of the zafu and zabuton in the Hatto or Zendo.

In the matter of clothing, and other patterns we carry with us, we are asked to leave the usual social indicators of the "worth", the "status", the "value", the classification of individuals, at the door of the monastery.

In 1991, the Roshi quoted a poem I'd written on beginning the Straight Path.

Backpacking the Straight Path  
(instructions for the Zendo)

Bare bones  
Bare flesh  
ONLY

Leave the backpack of self-image:  
Parent, child, male, female,  
Straight, gay, old, young,  
Black, white, older, younger,  
At the door with your  
Shoes and socks

Pick it up on the way out  
Too heavy?

Unpack in Suchness  
And the load  
Lightens.

Our "Householders clothing", familiar stuff, everyday things, jeans, tight skirts, short skirts, shorts, pantyhose, suits, are uncomfortable for sitting. Although jeans and so forth may be worn for samu.

Those of you who are already wearing the kunsu, the folded cloth lower garment, which is wrapped around the waist, know, from experience, and right now, that it frees the legs in a way that no pair of trousers or pants can. The feet are covered by the kunsu when sitting. This is really useful in this northern climate. [student laughter] The experience of the expansiveness of the space around the limbs changes your experience of sitting.

On another note; clothing is a major social indicator in any culture. We're all familiar with this. The leaders are supposed to have the best, the most showy, the most expensive, clothing. We learned to read each other instantly by what we see each other wearing. People wear labels in huge letters like banners of worth. When really they've been turned into billboards for the product. And we don't even get paid for it. And it seems the bigger the lettering, the more familiar the lettering, the more the item costs. Go figure.

We could go on and on about fashion, clothing, resources, style, detail, merchandising but that's all content. All of this can be interesting and fun (to some) but it isn't the point of the verse.

I was talking with the Roshi today about gatha or verses and their point. The Roshi said, "the point of the various gathas that we chant such as the Gokan-no ge or meal chant, is not the chant itself but doing the chant. It is not a matter of telling yourself a Buddhist story about what you are doing. The words are important as they are instructions to be practised, but much more important is the practise of doing the chant, to stop, to establish mindfulness, before doing the task or before moving on to the next."

Those who have taken monk's vows have recognized, to a greater or lesser degree, that they need not play out any kind of pattern (nor should they wear them) and all other students are learning to do or not do just that through studying and practising mindfulness. Committing to practise and using the many reminders to practise; forms, clothing, chants or gatha; many interesting and funny things may be discovered; for example millions of people expressing their individuality by wearing the same things. That makes no sense... except to merchants.

You understand that the verse is not just referring to the physical clothing that we wear everyday.

When pushed and pulled into action by contraction and the unquestioned assumptions we hold about reality, we can do some really stupid and downright hurtful things. Wrong action and the consequences of wrong action do capture and burden us. We've all experienced that yoke of wrong action; again, to a greater or lesser degree. That something, that contraction, narrows and limits experiencing.

Who needs that?

Shedding the clothing of householders,  
"May all beings  
Cultivate roots of expansiveness

Free from the yoke of wrong action."

Thank you for listening.

## Every Breath You Take 17: When Shaving their Hair

Dharma Talk presented by Ven. Shikai Zuiko osho

Dainen-ji, March 27th, 2008

### EVERY BREATH YOU TAKE

...lets you know that you're alive  
...and, you can make a choice to notice your life  
...in the only place it's happening  
...which is right NOW  
...in this moment.

As you're sitting there breathing in and out, feeling the bodymind, little creaks and groans, feeling the lungs expand, you can almost feel the hair growing on your head, on your arms, cells falling off. That's life.

The verse...

When shaving their hair,  
"May all beings  
Leave behind self-grasping forever  
And enter into no birth and no death."

As the Roshi has said, gatha, songs or verses, remind us first of all to practise. You heard this last week, in a quote. Practise now if you notice any thought about not remembering, or if you notice anything at all; feel the breath, sit up straight open peripheral vision to the whole visual field.

The point of the various gathas that we chant, such as the Gokan-no ge or meal chant, is not the chant itself but doing the chant. It is not a matter of telling yourself a Buddhist story about what you are doing. The words are important as they are instructions to be practised, but much more important is the practice of doing the chant, to stop, to establish mindfulness before doing the task or before moving on to the next.

The reminder is to feel the breath, feel the body, open to the visual field, and allow whatever is noticed; the breath, colours, forms, sounds, tastes, fabric on the body, the knees on the zabuton, whatever little clots of contraction have started as part of a pattern of self-identification, self-image, to open completely.

The verses of "The Practice of Purity" are reminders of the possibility of practice in any situation and they provide an opportunity to explore perspectives and to expand our usual understanding of various aspects of our experiencing.

When a person is ordained a monk in the Northern Mountain Order, the head is shaved except for the shura, a patch at the nape of the neck. During Shukke Tokudo the person will kneel in front of the Roshi. The Roshi holds the shura and asks three times, "Shall I cut the shura?" three times the monk replies "yes." The Roshi asks, "Shall I cut it?" Yes. "Shall I cut it?" YES. And interestingly enough, the last "yes" has always been stronger than the first two.

Now sometimes the Roshi has responded to the person being ordained and said, "Are you shura?" [students laugh] In asking permission to cut the shura, three times, the Abbot is asking, as the voice of the Lineage of Teachers, "Are you making this choice freely?" "Do you understand what you are doing?" "Are you committed to follow through?" The question is asked in front of the assembled Sangha of monks, and students.

It's a bald and very public declaration of the intention of the person to practise and study without fail, beyond convenience.

When the shura is cut, the cut hair is put in a bowl of water and is shown to every person in the Hatto. Heads bend and look down to the little hairs floating on the water in the black bowl. Everyone sees the commitment.

Now we could say the scraping away of the hair is something like the cutting through and wearing out of patterns of contraction. The shaving is done with a razor (we all know the sharper the blade the better).

The cutting through and wearing away of the patterns of contractions is done with the practice of zazen, with bowing practice, chanting practice, oryoki practice, samu practice, and the diligent use of all the forms of practice. The sharper, the more diligent one's efforts can be... the better.

The bald head, gleaming in the lights of the Hatto, the removal of the hair, shows the recognition, to a greater or lesser degree, that there is no solid and permanent self, and, most of all, that bald head reminds the person who is sporting it, and others, to practise.

Now, in a way we can say the monk is shaving away thousands of years of hair as a statement of self-image, as a universal social identifier. Hair has been, and still is, a pan-cultural sign of status, power, worth, beauty, and gender. But that is not why we are doing it. That's not why we are shaving our heads. It's a good reminder to practise. It's a good reminder, every day when shaving, at least once, of what the monk is doing.

The hair will always grow back if the shaving is stopped. And patterns can come back, or can become more firmly entrenched, if they're not practised.

Hair has been cut, braided, grown to extreme lengths, had patterns cut into it, been waxed, coated in earth, grease, and dung. It has been shaven off as punishment. And this I believe is a really big bonus, and may be behind a lot of shaven heads in the past; the shaven head provides no place for lice to live. [student laughter] This is very useful. And I'm sure makes for a more comfortable situation. Now putting all romanticism aside, in the early monasteries which sometimes housed over three thousand people, it would be crazy of us to think that parasites would be of no small consideration.

Today, globally, the care of hair costs over nine billion dollars a year. Four billion of that is for dye, for hair colourants. I know in the past I've surely paid out at least one hundred thousand dollars on hair care products. [student laughter]

The export of human hair from China and India last year generated somewhere around one hundred and fifty-four million dollars. Now that's what is known. But we do know that people are very clever about finding ways around official routes in the name of profit. The money generated could be twice that.

Human hair is used for wigs, extensions, and brushes. It's used to make hairnets, to hold hair in place. It finds its way into the linings of jackets and is often woven into fabric. Hair, a pan-cultural social signifier, is big business. And hand in hand with that, the exploitation of beings to supply demand is big business.

A monk could be said to be shaving away social signifiers. But they're really only shaving as part of receiving ordination and living day-to-day, 24/7, as a monk. The Shingi, the rules of deportment say that hair can be grown to as long as 1/4 or even 1/3 of an inch. Special circumstances requiring longer hair can be discussed with the Abbot. The growth of moustaches and beards must be approved by the Abbot. Men should be clean-shaven when entering the Hatto in the morning.

The shaven head is very practical. With the early hours and busy days there would be many, many, bad hair days. [student laughter] A quick swipe of the razor and you're good to go.

This is the verse that the monks chant before shaving.

Now, as we are being shaved,  
May we leave behind self-grasping forever  
And enter into no birth and no death.

This verse is "closer to the bone" as the monk is expressing their intention to practise as completely as possible so as to wear out the contractions of self-image completely.

The verse is slightly different from the translation we chose in "The Practice of Purity";

When shaving their hair,  
"May all beings  
Leave behind self-grasping forever  
And enter into no birth and no death."

Here the intention and the wish is that all beings be free from the suffering of the contraction into a self that is other to everything else. The verse is spoken on behalf of, and is extended to, all beings. (It's not an invitation for everyone to shave their heads.)

Thank you for listening.

## Every Breath You Take 18: Donning Monastic Robes

Dharma Talk presented by Ven. Shikai Zuiko osho  
Dainen-ji, April 3rd, 2008

EVERY BREATH YOU TAKE

...could be the last one...

...and rest assured that one day, you don't know how, you don't know where, you don't know when, you too will die. That's reality.

Recognizing the reality of birth and death, recognizing that no one gets out alive, can and does help anyone make better choices about what to do moment-to-moment. Of course, the first choice for students is to practise. Everything in the monastery including the bald, black robed monks, is here to remind you to do just that.

You're learning to practise mindfulness of body, breath, speech, and mind, what Anzan Hoshin roshi has referred to as the Four Gates of Zen practice.

Those who have recognized the reality of birth and death and have dedicated body, breath, speech, and mind, to practise have committed themselves by receiving ordination as monks.

At the beginning of formal sittings, after incense has been lit on the Butsudan, the han, the big wooden block hanging on the west wall of the Hatto, is struck three times.

The calligraphy on the block of wood says "Great Matter" and each strike resonates through the bodymind as a reminder that, as it says in the Great Matter gatha, "The Great Matter is birth and death, Life slips past and time is gone. Right now. Wake up. Wake up. Do not waste time."

A reminder of reality.

Now, like everyone else, before the monks hear those three strikes, they have woken up from sleep, gotten out of bed, and have gotten dressed. They, as countless other monks, over a couple of thousand years, don or put on monk's robes.

For all formal practice situations, as was mentioned in a previous Dharma Talk, monks wear robes. The robes we wear, the monks of the Northern Mountain Order, are a version of monastic clothing that has evolved over a couple of thousand years and has traveled, and been informed by various cultures, Indian, Tibetan, Chinese, Japanese, and the West.

Many rupa or statues from India, Tibet, China, Korea, Japan, including rupa in the monastery, can be seen to be wearing a lower garment, which is the same as the kunsu students, and monks are wearing right now. When something works for practice why change it? Monastic clothing isn't trendy.

Here's the verse from "The Practice of Purity":

Donning monastic robes  
"May all beings  
Have stainless intelligence  
And fulfill the Way of the Great Sage"

As the robes are put on the body the verse reminds us of what we are doing; fulfilling the Way of the Great Sage, Gautama Siddhartha, the Buddha, the one who woke up, the big really big original "wise one".

This reminds us of the Lineage and reminds us that we are doing something that has been done by countless others over the last, roughly, 2600 years.

No matter how early it is, no matter how warm or cold we are, when we are reminded to practise it has to be recognized that, obviously, others have experienced the process of being a human being just as we are experiencing in that moment. The process of being a human being is the same for all humans. If the very real people who practised and became the Lineage of Teachers could do it, we can do it.

Any reminder to practise is useful. Putting on clothing, in this verse, specifically monastic robes, reminds us of our vows, our commitment, and what we are doing.

Over time there's not even the thinking of oneself as, or the reminding that one is, a monk. There is just the caring for the bodymind, the eating and drinking, the getting dressed for whatever is scheduled, the sitting, in short the doing of what needs to be done. All the choices and activities of the bodymind are firmly rooted in the teachings of Reality, the Dharma. That's what fulfilling the way, the way of reality, means. And we can do it just as did the Great Sage, the Buddha, Gautama Siddhartha.

The Buddha practised, woke up, and dedicated himself to teaching. I suppose we could say he's the first monk in this lineage. All his first students were monks, "home leavers".

And they did leave home and they did wander the countryside, as mendicants, beggars existing on food that was given to them. When that rag tag group started to become noticed the king asked them to wear something that would identify them as being monks rather than just a band of bandits or thugs.

These first robes were made of fabric patched together and dyed, most likely with dyes from plants, to give some sort of cohesive appearance to the various fabrics. Some of the "found" materials were rags found around corpses in charnel grounds.

The Buddha and his band of monks wandered in their patched together robes, teaching those who asked how to end the suffering of conditioned experiencing. There are a number of teisho and Dharma Talks on the Four Noble Truths and the Four Great Vows, which, if read and listened to, will prove invaluable to your practice. I encourage you to listen to and read them. I won't explore those essential teaching on practice right now.

But right now you can feel the breath, you can sit up straight, and you can open any visual focusing.

Go ahead. Take a chance. You're breathing in and out. You're alive.

The verse goes on to wish that all beings may have stainless intelligence; that all beings may experience the open intelligence of the bodymind, unstained or free from conditioned experiencing, unobstructed by the knots and gnarls caused by the unquestioned assumptions, habits, and patterns of how things are, that cause beings to suffer. Contractions condition experiencing and at the very least make us less intelligent than we really are and at the worst have made we humans very destructive on a large scale which we live with and hear about every day.

Who couldn't benefit from stainless intelligence?

When the Buddha and the Sangha of monks were wandering in warmer climates than this, the cloth made from discarded rags was wrapped around the waist and one end went over the shoulder. As monasticism was affected by the prevailing cultural patterns of the time the monks were, at first, all male and the fact that one shoulder and part of the chest was bare wasn't a problem. When the Sangha included women, the necessary coverage would have been adapted from the way of dressing that was contemporary to that time.

If you look at the rupa in the monastery, statues and some of the drawings, you can see quite clearly that the lower garment, the kunsu, folded and wrapped, is much the same now as it was then. Scarcely a new idea, and, as I said, certainly not a "trend".

Adaptations of robes continued as monks traveled into Tibet, China, Japan, and eventually, the West, to right here, right now. People knew who the monks were from how they looked. As monasticism wasn't the type of thing that everyone did the monks stood out as different from the rest of the contemporary culture. This continues.

Current cultures, or cultures that are current, always think of themselves as contemporary, up to date, and that would have been no different long ago. Monks have been regarded as anachronistic, out of date, out of style, and perhaps just weird.

It is weird and funny that all those "contemporary" cultures and their indicators, their hair styles, their clothing, have risen and fallen and will continue to do so and yet, regardless of location on the globe, monks still look like monks.

Interestingly, just as the word "Zen" pops up frequently in literature, design, and merchandising, all of which have nothing whatsoever, to do with Zen practice, as we understand it, so monastic robes have been inspiration for haute couture and fashion. In the 1950's it was the cowls of Christian monks, in the 80's and the 90's, the influence of the East crept in, and at the turn of the 21st century Tibetan, Chinese, and Japanese, influences were strong on the runway. This of course has nothing to do with our understanding and realization of practice and monasticism. But it's fun to know.

The wearing out, and the eventual absence of the contractions of pattern and habit, by the process of practice, allows the full and stainless intelligence of the bodymind to be open and free of the fabrications of self-image, which corrupt experiencing.

Practice provides the method. As you come to the monastery to practise zazen, to start to learn to notice thoughts, feelings, sensations, please, use everything including, the sight of the bald, black robed monks, to remind you to feel the whole bodymind in the moment.

The verse again:

Donning monastic robes  
"May all beings  
Have stainless intelligence  
And fulfill the Way of the Great Sage."

Why not?

Thank you for listening.

## Every Breath You Take 19: When They Formally Leave Home

Dharma Talk presented by Ven. Shikai Zuiko osho

Dainen-ji, April 10th, 2008

EVERY BREATH YOU TAKE

...is the oxygen that is vital and totally necessary for your life

...be interested now

...'cause it doesn't last...

Practise when there is a noticing of anything at all, that sense of "me" or "I" that's noticing something, that sense of contraction into a self that believes that it is apart and separate and that anything else is "other".

Feel the breath.

Sit up straight.

Open the peripheral vision.

The verse:

When they formally 'leave home',  
"May all beings  
'Leave home' with the Awakened One  
And liberate self and other."

The verse states what the "home leaver", and all others who leave home to practise as monks, will do to the best of their ever-increasing ability. The verse reminds them of what they are doing and expresses the wish that all beings "leave home" by following the example of the Buddha and following the instructions passed down through the Lineage.

Now, so as not to exclude anyone in the Hatto right now; associate students, general students, formal students, can remember that, in an earlier talk, "home" was not only describing the physical building and the inhabitants but was also being used to talk about all the patterns we've accumulated, that we feel comfortable with, and wrap around ourselves, to create a sense of "self" with stories about who we are and how the world is.

The contraction into a "self", that nesting into the familiar, and the result that everything else is regarded as "other" tears the fabric of reality and it does causes problems on many levels. The problems are not just things that "we" experience, that "we" alone experience, as that is impossible. Whether we like it or not, how we are affects everything else. Practising mindfulness gives us the way to open around that sense of "self" and "other" and thus open to reality.

The liberation of the contraction into a "self" is simultaneously the release of that which seems separate from us, which we regard as "other". That sense of "self" is a fabrication. "Other" is a fabrication which we make up and it is often cartoon-like.

The contraction into a self creates what has been referred to as a barrier, an obstruction, an obscuration, a wall.

Recently, a general student mentioned in Daisan that at one moment, the moment of practising mindfulness, everything was open, there was a sense of ease and lightness, a recognition that there was no problem.

As soon as attention started to move to a "self" that was an experiencer of that sense of lightness, all of sudden, attention narrowed into a sense of "me", a sense of a "self", and there was a "wall" between that student and the teacher. The student was surprised at how apparent, how palpable, that was, "I can feel it!"

A reminder to practise in that moment opened the perceived wall, and it became a "gate" into reality: the reality that as well as that sense of a self that was separate in that moment there was also seeing, hearing, tasting, touching, feeling, smelling, thinking, and that there was room for everything and there was no need to focus attention on any one thing.

Now, students often express or exhibit impatience with practise. Self-image wants everything all at once. Very seldom is it clear what that "everything" is.

So we need to be reminded that we're learning to do something and we need reminders of what we are doing so we can keep on doing it: Practising. That's why verses such as those in "The Practice of Purity" can be very handy.

The last two lines of the verse;

'Leave home' with the Awakened One  
And liberate self and other.

When you come to practise you are given instructions on how to practise and these instructions have spanned 2600 years. They were first spoken of by Gautama Siddhartha, the Buddha, the Awakened One, and maybe somewhere around 200 years later, people started to write them down.

But whether one is practising as an associate, a general, a formal student, or as a monk, the basic instructions are the same.

Why?

Because the process of perception and cognition is the same for all human beings.

When contraction happens, it is as if a wall, a barrier has come into being. That wall or barrier seems to separate the "self", the "me", from everything else.

Following the instructions of the lineage of Awakened Ones opens attention to the context within which the wall or barrier is happening, the whole bodymind, and when this is done, the "barrier" is a "gate" and it opens.

A moment of experience is called a "dharma" in Sanskrit. A moment of experience, something that is known, a dharma, with a little "d". If it has a big "D" then it is talking about Reality and the Teachings of Reality.

When mindfulness is practised and attention opened, the moment of experience, the dharma, can be seen to be, in reality,

a gate, an entrance into further opening.

Now there's lots of instruction that has been written down, there are lots of teisho, and Dharma Talks, and chants that point to the fact of the Dharma and the Dharma gates.

The third of the Buddha's Four Great Vows also reminds us of what we are doing. It tells us what the situation is and what to do.

The Third Great Vow:

"Dharma gates beyond measure I vow to penetrate."

And those of you who have come to general sittings will remember that this is chanted; the Four Great Vows are chanted at the end of the sitting.

"Dharma gates beyond measure I vow to penetrate". Dharma gates; experiences arising within experiencing, arising within awareness, are beyond measure. That's a fact.

We are reminding ourselves that as moments of experience are "beyond measure", they can't be measured or counted. We'll need to penetrate them. We'll need to enter through that dharma gate by practising basic mindfulness over and over and over again.

The gate, the dharma we've noticed, is only one of many, many experiences in any moment of experiencing.

The dharma, the dharma gate, has space around, lots of space to each side, up and down, and behind. The gate, which may have been perceived as a barrier, opens when you practise, when you feel the whole bodymind in the whole moment by feeling the breath, sitting up straight, and opening to the full gaze.

Now, remember the student who noticed the "wall" that had come up? Well, the student practised and that wall, that barrier, that gate, opened, but, really quickly, a thought came up again, there was a congealing into as self.

What to do? What should any student do in that moment? Recognize you're learning to practise and that rather than a problem of you "being a poor student", "being stupid", or "critical", there is just another dharma gate to be practised, to be penetrated. Use it. Do not let it use you.

If you allow attention to go into those thoughts about, oh you know, the favourite ones about being stupid, not being as good as everyone else, being better than everybody else but nobody really recognizes it...

[student laugh loudly in recognition]

Don't be fooled by the content.

Ignore it.

At just that moment of recognition feel the breath, sit up straight, open the eye gaze.

You're practising because you want to learn how to practise. Practise means to do something over and over again. And the over and over and over again [students giggle] of it means you acquire increasing facility with the activity. That requires moment-to-moment effort and we need to learn that.

Now discipline, rather than being something that has whips and chains associated with it, simply means the willingness to learn. So we make ourselves available through the discipline of coming to practise and putting our butt down on the zafu.

A reminder that the dictionary definition of practice is "To repeat (an activity) as a way of improving one's skill in that activity."

The verse again:

When they formally 'leave home',  
"May all beings  
'Leave home' with the Awakened One  
And liberate self and other."

Practising, learning how to open, learning how to penetrate dharma gates, is what the Buddha taught. "Buddha" means one who has woken up to reality, an Awakened One. Everybody's "Buddha".

But sometimes, a lot of the time, nearly all the time, when you're not practising, you don't know it.

That's why you have to practise.

You believe there is a barrier dividing and obstructing and you believe the stories of why the barrier is there. You have a choice to open attention and open the "gate".

Contraction into self and other limits and causes problems. In many ways. It enslaves us. It kills. Again, there's no need to

go into case and point because we all have examples that are easily available; both things that we have experienced individually and things that are going on in "the world". None of it is necessary. These contractions into an image of a self cause suffering for all beings.

So?

Stop it.

Those who have formally left home have vowed to practise and penetrate dharma gates until there is no more "self" and "other", until there is the liberation of "self" and "other".

They wake up and just as did the first Awakened One, Lineage Ancestor Gautama Siddhartha, they vow to practise and teach until all beings are liberated.

Thank you for listening.

## Every Breath You Take 20: Taking Refuge in the Buddha

Dharma Talk presented by Ven. Shikai Zuiko osho

Dainen-ji, April 24th, 2008

### EVERY BREATH YOU TAKE

...is the only opportunity to practise your understanding with the whole bodymind.

The verse today is the first of three looking at the Three Jewels, the root precepts. The root precepts, the Precepts of the Three Jewels, are the most essential, the most vital, the heart, of the other thirteen Bodhisattva precepts. At the heart of the first precept is the recognition that you are Buddha, you are awake, (not all the time because you're learning) and that "Awareness is the only condition".

The verse:

Taking refuge in the Buddha,  
"May all beings  
Continue the Lineage of the Buddhas,  
Raising the unsurpassable aspiration."

A person "taking refuge in the Buddha" is declaring in the verse the recognition that all beings have the capacity to practise, wake up, to continue the Lineage, and is encouraging, wishing that all may do so.

When receiving the Three Jewels, the intention, the aspiration to continue the Lineage of the Buddhas and liberate all beings is vowed, out loud, in a formal ceremony between the teacher and a formal student.

The Three Jewels are also chanted at the beginning of formal sittings and general sittings. It's always good to know what you are chanting and it is essential to establishing and nurturing practice.

Right now, feel the breath, sit up straight, open the eye gaze.

What is taking "refuge"?

"Taking refuge" in the Three Jewels of Buddha, Dharma, Sangha, as the Roshi says in, "Cutting the Cat; Zen Teachings on the Practice of the Bodhisattva Precepts" really means that "all refuges have been taken away and one vows to stand exposed to experience as it is. In 'taking refuge' we find our stability, our resting place, in the fact that there is no point in consoling and indulging ourselves with hope and fear."

What are precepts?

Precepts, as the Roshi says in "Cutting the Cat" are "the basis and ground of healthy practice... they are also the Path itself".

He goes on to say, "Dogen zenji translated the precepts, literally and culturally, he did so with the attention to the root of the precepts, to Buddhanature itself." The verse refers to one who is receiving the Precepts of the Three Jewels.

Chanting the Three Jewels does not mean one has formally received the transmission of the precepts. It means chanting the Three Jewels with the Sangha, the harmonious community.

Those interested in their life, as it really is, use the form of chanting and the words they are chanting to look further into what they are actually doing. There are thousands of texts and teisho and Dharma Talks addressing the basic questions of practice. There are the opportunities of Daisan and practice interviews and informal interaction to ask questions and have them answered.

You will receive answers and be pointed in the direction of more answers covering continents over a couple of thousand years through the experience of other human beings, people just like you.

But just as only you can feel your breath, only you can practise, and only you can ask your questions. It really is all up to you.

With questioning and answering and increasing understanding, students may make the decision to practise as general students, then probationary formal students, and formal students. As a formal student they may ask to receive or "take refuge" in, the Precepts of the Three Jewels.

At the time when a formal student does receive the Precepts from a representative of the Lineage, a Teacher, the student receives a Dharma name. The Dharma name reflects one's basic nature and is a reminder of the aspiration, the intention, of what you are doing, and also of the basic tendency or habitual pattern that can "trip you up". A two-sided coin if ever there was one.

Let me remind you that we're talking about what the Precepts mean here and now in this Lineage. They may have meant and may mean different things to different people depending on place and time and the understanding of individuals. There is no one answer or description that will cover all places, all times, all people.

There are ample opportunities to ask questions during Daisan or practice interviews or by email or even a letter (remember those?).

Again, we're talking about what taking refuge in the Three Jewels means here and now at Dainen-ji. You may come across "taking refuge" in other material but, although it perhaps sounds similar, it is not specific to this Lineage.

Anzan Hoshin roshi has set in place a very clear approach to practice.

Anyone who attends a general or formal sitting where there are opening chants has chanted, or at least listened to, and resonated with The Three Jewels:

Awareness is the only condition.  
All that arises as the display of Awareness.  
This is the seamless expanse of all that is.

If you have attended on a Wednesday when Fusatsu, the renewal of vows has been celebrated, you have chanted the Three Jewels in Pali, in Japanese, and in English.

The Pali:

Buddham saranam gacchami.  
Dharmam saranam gacchami.  
Sangham saranam gacchami.

The Japanese:

Namu kie Butsu.  
Namu kie Ho.  
Namu kie So.

and the English, in this Lineage:

Awareness is the Only Condition.  
All that arises as the Display of Awareness.  
This is the Seamless Expanse of all that is.

You may have heard or in the course of your study come across another English version:

This is Buddha.  
This is Dharma.  
This is Sangha.

This translation has been expanded upon and made clearer by the Roshi.

The Roshi's statement that, "when Dogen zenji translated the precepts, literally and culturally, he did so with attention to the root of the precepts, to Buddhanature itself" helps us see more deeply into why he translated the Three Jewels as he did and why we chant the first as "Awareness is the Only Condition."

Awareness is the word chosen to translate "Daiku" or "Great space". Awareness, Buddhanature itself, is always Great Space. Most of the time we don't see or know it as such because it seems to be clogged, conditioned by the convincing contractions of an image of self, self-image. Although it may seem that the great space of open experiencing has been lost, it has not, it is not. Awareness, that Great Space only seems to have disappeared as it is obscured by the density of the filters of contraction.

The moment you notice any dharma, any moment of experiencing, the instruction is to practise mindfulness. The moment you notice mindfulness was covered over, you are mindful. You are practising that moment of mindfulness. When we practise anything, dancing, singing, cooking, carpentry, playing the guitar, we get better at it. The same is true for the practice of mindfulness. Practice is called practice because as you do it over and over again you become more skilled, more adept, you get better at it.

Our Lineage gives the Three Jewels only to formal students. Why? When a student is accepted as a formal student their understanding is that of a formal student. Although that understanding is still fledgling and will deepen and mature, a formal student is practising moment-to-moment with an understanding that Awareness, Great Space, is the only condition and is always available. They are practising rooted in that understanding.

Practice is a process of understanding with the whole bodymind.

Understanding is demonstrated, moment-to-moment, by each student.

From "Cutting the Cat",

Precepts are basically ways to simplify our interaction with thoughts, emotions, and situations, in order to evoke a mind which can respond cleanly, and clearly, free from indulgences and obsessive self-service.

To realize that which we already are, Awareness itself, to wake up completely, to complete the Path, to continue the lineage, and to liberate all beings is "the unsurpassable aspiration".

You can understand now the wisdom of the process of becoming ready to receive the Three Jewels, the first of the Bodhisattva precepts.

When asking to receive the Three Jewels, a formal student is asking to have their understanding made manifest and their commitment made formally, out loud, between themselves and their teacher as a representative of the Lineage.

Again from "Cutting the Cat",

The precepts are not a status symbol or an achievement. They come in a time in a person's practice which is optimal for that person. Just because someone has only received Refuge, or has not even taken that, means nothing. Bow to that person as someone who has given you a chance to see your pride and expose your self-imagery.

Receiving the Precepts, chanting the Precepts, is profound but it is not "heavy": Suchness, things as they are, reality, does lighten your life moment to moment.

The student receiving the Three Jewels needs to know what they are being entrusted with. Awareness is the only condition. As Awareness itself the student is taking responsibility for this recognition and vowing that they will do their very best to open whatever comes up.

The next verse looks at the second of the Precepts of the Three Jewels and expands on how that will be done. The third looks at who will provide guidance and support.

Thank you for listening.  
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## Every Breath You Take 21: Taking Refuge in the Teachings

### EVERY BREATH YOU TAKE

...lets you know you're alive and is your only chance to practise the Dharma; The Teachings of Reality. All the past breaths are gone and none of us know if we're going to have another one. With this breath you can make a choice. You can choose between contraction and the open space of reality.

What ARE you going to do?

The verse from "The Practice of Purity", which can be said informally after receiving the Three Jewels, addresses the second precept:

The verse:

Taking refuge in the Teachings,  
"May all beings  
Enter fully into the Discourses  
And their perfect knowing be as deep as the sea."

"Taking refuge in the Teachings", the second of the Precepts of the Three Jewels, was translated by the Roshi as, "All that is arises as the display of Awareness." The second precept expands on the first, "Awareness is the Only Condition."

You are Buddha. You are awake but most of the time you don't know this because it is clouded with habitual patterning and contraction and congealing into a sense of a self. The reality of the open space of experiencing is obstructed and often seems to have disappeared. But it is not gone. How to uncover this reality?

Well, I'm glad you asked.

The Teachings of Reality, the Dharma, give you the tools and instruction necessary for you to realize that you are Awareness in itself and that this was and is always the case. You just don't know it all the time. Practising the fact of the open space of experiencing opens the congealing caused by the feeding of attention into habitual patterns which create density and the sense of a self, an image of a self, which stands apart and propagates the belief that it is separate from everything else.

This is a fiction.

A formal student receiving the Precepts of the Three Jewels is stating their understanding that reality is vast, open space, daiku, Awareness. They are vowing, out loud to the teacher, that they will exert every effort to realize, to make real, this understanding in every moment.

As understanding is not present all the time, the student is vowing to practise with any obscurations, obstructions, Dharma gates. They are vowing to practise with whatever arises within Awareness. "All that is arises as the display of Awareness." The student is expressing their recognition, however rudimentary and partial it may be, that all moments of experience, all dharmas, are arising within Awareness. The second precept, sometimes expressed as "This is Dharma" and translated by the Roshi as "All that is arises as the display of Awareness" also points to the wealth of material and resources on the Teachings of Reality, the Dharma, that are available to guide them to realize their understanding fully and completely.

This fact of experiencing, the fact that "All that is arises as the display of Awareness", is the base of practice and it isn't necessary for a person to have formally taken the precepts for this to be a useful reminder. Anytime you chant it or hear it or read it or have a thought arising about it, you are presented with the chance to practise this fact, this reality, this moment of mindfulness.

Taking refuge in the Teachings of Reality is recognizing that there is no "safe" as self-image would have us believe. There is birth, old age, sickness, and death. That's reality. Nobody gets out alive. Reality is unpredictable and there is no place to hide nor is hiding necessary. There is nothing to hide from. There's simply the display of Awareness presenting itself as experiences.

Taking refuge is also recognizing that the Dharma, the Teachings of Reality, give you the means to extinguish the burning flames of passion, aggression, and stupidity, sort of like a fire extinguisher for the three klesa.

The Teachings of Reality, the Dharma, show us over and over and over again that this is true and provides us with the tools and instruction that we need to open around anything that comes up.

By using these tools and instruction and through practise and study of shastra, sutras, suttas, teisho, Dharma Talks, students can "enter fully into the Discourses", enter fully with the whole bodymind in the whole moment.

The Teachings point to, through the experience of many other human beings just like you, the pitfalls, the habitual patterns and tendencies of your own experiencing. This process of pointing and recognition, however momentary, starts the instant you make contact with the Teachings. What is always being pointed to is your own experiencing in this moment. You just need to be open to see what is being shown.

The forms of teaching are not just zazen. Zazen is the base practise. But we can't always be sitting. We walk. We talk. We move around. We do things. The other forms, all making it possible for you to stop and look more and more clearly into your experiencing, include bowing, kinhin, chanting, dokusan, daisan, practise interviews, oryoki, samu. The Teachings are presented in many other ways; the written word, the spoken word, the sho, the zenga, the ikebana.

Everything is here for you.

All the forms, all the presentations of the Dharma, point to your experiencing in the moment. Self-image is not used to this kind of generosity. Often when instruction is given to show how you can see more clearly through the use of the forms there is a flurry of reactivity. There is a tendency to regard instruction as criticism and self-image will try its damndest to defend itself and its position. Fortunately, this is not who you are. This like anything else is something arising within your experiencing.

You just have to see it.

That moment of seeing is a moment of mindfulness. You "top it up" by feeling the breath, sitting up straight, opening the eye gaze, by practising and deepening that moment of clear seeing, that moment of seeing a display of Awareness, (and sometimes, believe me, that display can be like fireworks. It may not be comfortable but I can't recall anyone ever saying to me that I would be comfortable all the time. Take a risk.)

The moment of clear seeing, of insight, is a moment of mindfulness. When you practise that moment you are building upon, and stabilizing, mindfulness. You are learning what the Teachings of Reality are and you are learning how to use the

Teachings with the whole bodymind.

There are many moments of reactivity when one enters into practice and many things seem to be the cause of it. For example, during teisho with a lot of "strange" sounding "foreign" names there can often be a flurry of comments, to oneself, comments exchanged between self-image and self-image, and questions, around the idea of, "Oh, what possible use could these foreign guys and gals be?" "Why do we have to listen to this? It's just boring." "How come there aren't many women in the Lineage?" Blah blah blah. You name it we've heard it. [student laughter].

Now, of course, it's simple. These discourses present the history of the Dharma. They are the records of practice from other places, other times. Entering fully into these discourses can mean seeing the reactivity as reactivity rather than as an expression of who you are, rather than the expression from a self.

Now, you may have noticed we don't have "exams" although each moment can be examined, so whether you remember the names or not will not give you a better or a worse mark because there are no marks. All you need to do is sit there, do nothing, except see, except breathe, except sit up straight, except open the eye gaze, which the bodymind wants to do anyway. It "likes" it.

Now, reactivities are neither right or wrong, they're neither good nor bad. They are not who you are. They're simply something going on. And you can use them; you should use them as a cue to practice.

Some one or some thing in the Teachings, in the discourses presented, may interest you. There may be a flash of something, of curiosity, a flash of, "I want to know more about that!" When you recognize a moment of interest you can research whatever caused that moment of interest. A treasure house of resources is available to you.

Here's the snag. You have to do it. No one else can do it for you.

The Lineage, the teachers, the practice advisors, can only point. Only you can do the "footwork".

There's zazen. There's the monastery. There is the Dharma: The Teachings of Reality.

The forms are tools to help you see "how you are". The question, "How's your practice?" is asking you what you are noticing about experiencing in that moment.

The reality of the moment is that your life, your patterns, your tendencies, arise as well as seeing, hearing, tasting, touching, feeling, smelling, breathing in and out. This is true for all beings.

Patterns come up during daisan and can be seen. The teacher sees them first and that pattern is then pointed out so that you can see it for what it is. Now, the aspect of daisan and practice interviews is covered in another verse. Stay tuned.

Interesting things can happen during daisan and practice interviews. We can be constantly surprised at how patterns and orientations that we did not know about come up. Really interesting.

From "Cutting the Cat" by the Roshi,

...receiving the Three Jewels, the student is expressing and recognizing his or her own nature as a Buddha, as an Awakened one; recognizing that, in this waking up, there is a freshness, a sense of possibility. If one can see this nature exactly as it is, then, this possibility would be complete in itself and unfold itself in actualizing Buddhanature as one's life. But since there is a gap between the possibility and the way that we tend to live our usual moments, there is a need for the Dharma, the teaching and practice which exposes this gap completely to us and allows us to transform it into spaciousness, into further Awakening. In order to expose our little charade of self-image fully we have to recognize that there are others who have been through this and can guide us, who will practice alongside us, who will feed us, who will fight with us, who give birth to us, who bury us, who fill the ten directions.

The verse:

Taking refuge in the Teachings,  
"May all beings  
Enter fully into the Discourses  
And their perfect knowing be as deep as the sea."

In the next verse we'll look at the third precept, "Taking refuge in the harmonious community", the Sangha.

Thank you for listening.

## Every Breath You Take 22: Taking Refuge in the Harmonious Community

Dharma Talk presented by Ven. Shikai Zuiko osho

Dainen-ji, May 8th, 2008

EVERY BREATH YOU TAKE

...is the breath of all beings.

The verse,

Taking refuge in the Harmonious Community,  
"May all beings  
Harmonize the multitudes,  
So that all become free from obstruction."

This verse is about the third precept of the Three Jewels, "Taking refuge in the Harmonious Community".

You've all come across or will come across this expressed as, in the Pali, "Buddham saranam gacchami", in Japanese, "Namu kie So", in English, "This is Sangha", and, as we chant it in the Three Jewels every morning, every evening, "This is the Seamless Expanse of all that is".

"May all beings  
Harmonize the multitudes,  
So that all become free from obstruction."

Now let's look at a typical human-centric misunderstanding that could, if unexamined, get in the way of your understanding.

Hearing "harmonize the multitudes" we may have thought of "the multitudes" as those hordes of people with all the restlessness and turmoil going on for others, and for yourselves, so that right now, if we don't clarify it, you may hear only impossibility or an idealistic, yet probably, realistically, doomed, dream.

Once again, and it can't be said too often, as with all the teachings, this verse is pointing to how you are, right now.

Anzan roshi says about the third precept of the Three Jewels that,

'This is sangha' is the proclamation of the willingness to recognize the inherent harmony of each moment. Not just to try and bring about harmony amongst fellow practitioners, or amongst all people, or even amongst all beings, all trees, all grasses, all fields, all skies, all clouds; but to uncover the inherent harmony within all of our thoughts, all of our feelings, in all of the sounds that arise within us, moment after moment. To uncover complete harmony.

After all, the open space of Awake Awareness, has, self-evidently, room for everything. Everything is already present. Any chopping up into this and that is a fiction. The Dharma uncovers that fiction and shows you how to uncover it further.

Having recognized the first precept of "Awareness is the Only Condition" and that this is Buddha or waking up, and having recognized that "All that is arises as the display of Awareness" and that this is Dharma, the Teachings of Reality, we can look at "This is the seamless expanse of all that is" and see that this is Sangha, the Harmonious Community.

The Dharma, "All that is arises as the display of Awareness" points to how we can uncover that fact of the Harmonious Community, of Sangha, moment after moment.

"Sangha" basically means community. As the word traveled through time and across distance meeting different cultures and understandings what the word describes changes and can be different in different contexts.

Originally, the word referred only to male, ordained, monks. Over time, in the Mahayana tradition, this expanded to include nuns and then eventually lay men and women. In Ch'an, "Chinese Zen", there was a recognition of, and, an inclusion of, mountains and rivers. Dogen zenji recognized that everything arose within Awareness and that nothing was excluded, "This the seamless expanse of all that is" because "All that is arises as the display of Awareness." This is Dharma. This is reality. This is Sangha.

In "Cutting the Cat Into One" the Roshi says,

...so that we can actually apply it to our situation, then "Sangha" or the community of harmony, means the community of beings that compose this moment of experiencing: the colours and forms and sights and sounds and thoughts; the five skandhas of form, feeling, perception, formation and consciousness that arise and describe and create our world. "This is the seamless expanse of all that is." The colours are the way they are, blue is blue and red is red, and when you stand up you're a bit taller than when you are sitting down. These are just the basic facts which we can always find and there's a natural sense of sanity to them. Reality itself makes a certain sense which we can begin to contact more and more; and when we contact this basic and common sense, we find that there is more sanity in how we live and how we do what we do. Our sense of what our situation is becomes based upon the situation itself, rather than our views of it.

The more that we drop our views of what is going on, the more that we begin to see clearly. The more that we allow the

possibility of "not knowing" anything at all...the more comprehensive our knowing tends to be, simply because it doesn't become locked within patterns. We're not living from the past. We're not living from our image of who and what we are. As we experience more and more who and what we really are, as we experience this Sangha, once more this leads back to "This is Buddha" and to deepening our appreciation of and our ability to actualize being Buddha.

The verse:

Taking refuge in the Harmonious Community,  
"May all beings  
Harmonize the multitudes,  
So that all become free from obstruction."

The Three Jewels,

"Awareness is the only condition.  
All that arises as the display of Awareness.  
This is the seamless expanse of all that is."

Thank you for listening.

## Every Breath You Take 23: When Receiving Novice Precepts

Dharma Talk presented by Ven. Shikai Zuiko osho

Dainen-ji, May 15th, 2008

EVERY BREATH YOU TAKE

...this breath, can be used to look clearly into the life that is living as you.

The verse;

When receiving novice precepts,  
"May all beings  
Practise discipline  
And not act out of corruption."

This verse was written a long time ago for a person who was deepening their commitment to practice, receiving the Bodhisattva precepts and entering into monastic training as a novice.

A novice, in this case, would be somewhat similar to a postulant in the Northern Mountain Order, someone sticking a toe into the water of monastic training, checking it out to see if it suits them. And the monastic order is checking out the person, to see if they are suitable.

When the verse was written, some 1600 years ago in India, the situation of the person becoming a novice, was in many ways different from our situation but in many ways quite the same.

Today, in other places, and other monastic orders, there are still similarities and differences.

Taking monk's vows can vary from a rite of passage, to necessary training for taking over the family temple, or as a preparation for the rigours of business. We see photographs of kids as monks, monks and teachers married, and with hair, "weekend" monks. There are lots of variations.

If you're interested in finding out more about the historical and present day Bodhisattva Precepts your research will uncover lots of material.

So, rather than providing descriptions of different understandings which wouldn't be useful to you right here, right now, other than perhaps as a sleep aid [student laughter], here's a quote from "Cutting the Cat" by the Roshi,

A mind of vow is so fundamental to our practice that it has become part of the formal context of our training. When people receive the Bodhisattva Precepts from their teacher, they formally acknowledge and vow to themselves that they will, to their utmost, take responsibility for being Buddha. They vow to themselves and to their teacher. Lay persons can receive a total of sixteen Precepts. For lay monks, postulants, and monks there are many more.

Now, something pertinent to now, something each of you can use to deepen your understanding of what you are doing, of practice.

From the verse;

"May all beings  
Practise discipline  
And not act out of corruption."

Words affect us, at a cognitive, intellectual, and a biochemical level. They affect the whole bodymind.

"Discipline" can bring up all sorts of stuff; perhaps a shudder, a frisson, a hint of something unpleasant. This, of course, all depends upon your previous encounters with the word; a ruler on the palm of the hands, standing in the corner, standing in the cold at military attention, a regimen of cold showers or being grounded (and a lot of really unsavoury, unsavoury stuff...)

What we're talking about with "discipline" is "the willingness to learn".

Here are a couple of dictionary definitions of discipline:

Activity, exercise, or a regimen that develops or improves a skill; training

The treatment suited to a disciple or learner; education; development of the faculties by instruction and exercise; training, whether physical, mental, or moral."

So, can we agree?

Discipline—the willingness to learn.

The verse expresses a wish that all beings find in themselves the willingness to learn to see the patterns of contraction that can corrupt, or change for the worse, their actions: The wish that all beings can learn to practise mindfulness and their actions be uncorrupted.

Seeing anything arising within experiencing, is a moment of clear seeing. Seeing you are not mindful is a moment of mindfulness. Seeing that you are nodding off or focusing on a fantasy is a moment of mindfulness. Practise the instant of seeing that moment of mindfulness so that mindfulness will be present more often and the tendency to follow useless or damaging patterns will wear out.

You are learning to do this.

Learning is a process.

Practice is a process.

Life is a process.

A process takes time.

Learning takes time.

The biochemistry, the interactive chemical processes in living human beings take time to adjust and re-form, to change. The process takes as long as it takes. You may have noticed there is no meter on the zafu [student laughter].

The last two lines of the verse again;

"May all beings  
Practise discipline  
And not act out of "corruption."

One of the meanings, a basic meaning, of "corruption" is:

the act of changing, or being changed, for the worse; a departure from what is pure, simple, or correct. The act of corrupting or of impairing integrity, virtue, or moral principle; the state of being corrupted or debased; loss of purity or integrity, depravity, wickedness, impurity, bribery

(other meanings; moral perversion, corrupt or dishonest proceedings, bribery, debasement or alteration, as of language or a text, putrefactive decay, rottenness, any corrupting influence or agency.)

It is always interesting to look into what the words we use, read, and hear, actually mean. It's a lot of fun.

Here' a little story the Roshi passed on to me for the Shuso Hossen dharma talk I gave on December 12, 1991, when, after postulancy, and two years of training as a novice, the Roshi acknowledged that I was a full monk. (December 12, 1991 was also the 12th anniversary of the death of our grandfather in Dharma, the Roshi's teacher, Yasuda Joshu Dainen Hakukaze roshi.)

The story;

A rice farmer looked out over the flooded fields where his family had just planted a new crop of rice

seedlings. He began to speculate on just how much this crop would bring in. As his fantasies grew he became more and more excited. His rice plants would be tall and heavy with grain. Everyone in the village would whisper with awe that he was the favourite of heaven. He'd go to town and buy a huge barrel of sake, clean white sake, not that home-brewed village stuff, and invite the whole village to celebrate his fortune. He could barely wait for the harvest. In agitation he raced out into the water, reached down and began to tug at the tops of the seedlings to encourage them to grow. When harvest time came, the rice stalks were small and stunted because they had been so badly pinched and the fields yielded only a few bushels of grain and those came from the seedlings he had missed in his haste.

The act of planting rice, allowing it to grow, and harvesting the crop is simple and straight forward. It's a lot of work and it takes the time it takes before the crop can be harvested. The farmer allowed his fantasies of fame and fortune to fuel his actions. He was changed for the worse.

His "corruption" pushed and pulled his actions and he pushed and pulled the rice ruining most of it.

Actions propelled by "corruption", changed, for the worse, by misunderstandings of the nature of reality, damage on many levels.

Our states corrupt and, if followed lead inevitably to more or less corrupt individuals, corrupt relationships, corrupt businesses...corrupt governments...corrupt nation states...

Acting out of corruption can even lead to a world situation where pornography, arms, and trafficking in human beings are said to be the top three revenue generators...it's not too difficult to see how this could happen...

When receiving novice precepts,  
"May all beings  
Practise discipline  
And not act out of corruption"

Thank you for listening.

## Every Breath You Take 24: Receiving Guidance from a Practice Advisor

Dharma Talk presented by Ven. Shikai Zuiko osho

Dainen-ji, May 31st, 2008

...and a very good moment to you.

Use the moment.

Notice what else is going on.

It's raining this morning. It's almost a tropical rain. Big, juicy, fat, raindrops, and the air is moist, it's humid.

Did you notice that when you bowed to begin the sitting round, that the volume, what you were perceiving of the sound of the raindrops, changed?

Now, that type of sound was something that was familiar to the people who wrote and listened to these verses some 1600 years ago.

EVERY BREATH YOU TAKE

...is the only moment that you can practise.

Every breath you take is now, is this moment, and so it was when the text from which these verses have been translated was put together, in India.

Then it was called the "Avatamsaka Sutra", but not, of course, in English. That is a translation. But it was composed some 1600 years ago, in a different language, in a different part of the world. This text, sometimes called "The Flower Garland Sutra", ancient and classical, was of influence to all of East Asian Dharma.

And it can be useful to each and every practitioner, now, because it's talking about human beings. People are people and the process of being human hasn't changed. Evolutionary change takes a long, long, time. The verses, presenting the reality of the interpenetration of all things, show how everything we do, however mundane, affects all beings.

The verse:

Receiving guidance from an advisor,  
"May all beings  
Depart themselves with dignity  
And their actions be truthful."

So if there is a little thought coming in about what truthful means, or how "truthful" you may or may not have been, use that as a cue to practise the whole bodymind in this moment. Feel the breath, sit up straight, open the eye gaze and recognize it takes longer to talk about it than it does to do it.

But we will burden ourselves with lots of words and if they're coming from us to us, if we're talking to ourselves, it can create a massive burden. That's why we need advisors.

"Receiving guidance from an advisor". Well, it's not so very complicated. A guide is someone who has been somewhere, knows the territory, and can take other people through it. Often we would like to make ourselves quite distant from a practice advisor, because, "after all, they're not like us". "Look at them with their bald heads." "Look at them with the little patches of stubble that they've missed." [students laugh] "Look at them in their black robes." And sometimes, without even knowing it, what we will do is have an idea that they sprang, full blown, this way, from some alien place that has really nothing to do with us.

But, they've been there. They've had their butt on the zafu for many, many, hours more than you have. They've come across, they've experienced, they've practised, through myriads of states, myriads of obstacles, but the determination was there to continue, even when self-image might have been saying, "Run! Get out of here!" But it is the recognition that thoughts are thoughts, feelings are feelings, and they need not propel us into action. They need not be the factor that determines the choice we will make.

So, the practice advisors that you find yourself sitting in front of have made choices, over and over and over again, to persevere. And there is a dignity every time any one pulls themselves up, feels the breath, opens the eye gaze, practises the whole bodymind, and makes a decision not to follow the whimsical, or serendipitous, or seductive, song of self-image. It isn't necessary.

So, your name is called. Here is a clue: when your name is called for a practice interview there will be a flurry of activity, of experiences arising within experiencing, "Oh no. Not her." [students laugh]. "Shi...[Osho snaps fingers] why me? Why me?"

Now the form for zazen is to sit, legs neatly folded, hands neatly folded in the mudra, spine straight. So rather than following a usual view, a usual reaction, of say, putting our hands up to our head while we go, "Oh no," collapsing into a little heap, we sit up straight. And before you can talk to yourselves about it, the bodymind presents itself as open and you practise that openness in that moment. Out of the dignity of the form of zazen you're given the opportunity to notice more of the details.

And when you leave the Hatto, to make your way to the designated rendezvous, you have ample opportunity to practise moments of experience, or dharmas, as they present themselves. You can feel the feet on the floor going over different surfaces. You can feel the space around. You can see the changes in the light. You can "see" innumerable, (see as in "know"), innumerable sensations that the bodymind is experiencing.

Often, however, and I don't think I'm giving away a secret here, often, we'll be so busy figuring out what we're going to say that we don't notice the reality of the experience of the bodymind in the moment.

The use of the forms, the hands in shashu at the diaphragm, the eye gaze open, all aid you in seeing what's really going on in that moment.

There's no problem if a thought is present. It's one thing amongst a myriad of knowns. If you notice it that means for the merest fraction of a second you have not been totally involved in it. So there's been this waking up, this moment of mindfulness, this moment of recognition of the reality of the moment. Use it. Feel the breath. Feel the whole bodymind. Allow the bodymind to express its full dignity.

Now, dignity is an interesting word. There're all sorts of things, different definitions that will come up for us, and some of them are rather... stiff. Some of them present images, perhaps, of uniforms, and crowns, and resplendent robes, and so on but that's not what we're talking about. Those are interpretations that peoples of different cultures and languages have made.

So I spent some time looking up "dignity" and... it comes from the Latin "dignus"; worthy. So now there's a choice point, there's a moment where we can say, "well, what's 'worthy'?" And we can pick a way to follow. So if we take it "outside" of the bodymind then we have the self that is looking to be seen, or may be seen, in a certain way by others. But if we look at from the sense of the bodymind being "worthy" of full expression, "worthy" of being allowed to function fully and completely and openly with access to all the intelligences of the bodymind, unimpeded, aah, it can take on another meaning.

In Farsi "dignity", another word for "dignity", is "grace". Now we all know we're not talking about what we're going to say before we eat but "grace" as in fluidity of movement, "grace" again as unimpeded by whatever is arising in the moment.

Also in Farsi; "capacity". The bodymind has untapped capacity. What impedes it is contractions into a sense of "self" with story lines. We've all experienced what it is like to be overcome by a contraction, to be overcome by self-image, to have the open experiencing of the bodymind twisted and gnarled. What we call the state, of course, will influence our interpretation. If we take away calling it anything, if we take away the possibility of interpreting it as anything, we can just "know" it. There's this moment of knowing the gnarling that can occur, that makes us smaller than we actually are, smaller than the

bodymind, and the capacities of the bodymind, are.

The verse again:

Receiving guidance from an advisor,  
"May all beings  
Deport themselves with dignity  
And their actions be truthful."

"Deport" means carrying, how we "carry" the bodymind. And when we start to understand that we are not the bodymind, that we are the Knowing of the bodymind, we can start to appreciate that we have far more choice than we previously thought.

We can see the gnarls that come up, and gnarls don't just have to be so-called "bad" things. We can get all gnarly when we're very happy because the contraction can come up and we can get all carried away, jumping around, and doing things that are extraneous to the actual experience of what is happening in the bodymind.

Because we're learning how to practise we simply don't know a lot of these things yet.

All of the forms, everything in the monastery, every word that is said to you by a practice advisor, or a teacher, or texts, are resources for you to help you see more clearly into each and every moment of experiencing.

In "Completely It", from the teisho series "Five Fingers, Ten Directions: Commentaries on Eihei Dogen zenji's text 'Jippo'" there is a quote, by the Roshi, from Dogen zenji,

To go further, calling someone to come to us is easy but getting them to leave is difficult.

The Roshi goes on to say,

It is not so difficult really to bring out the original you; it is much more difficult not to make it into merely another limited reference point and objectify it. The old habits, the old perspectives, our usual dependence upon using verbalized thoughts and the categories of self and other can begin to creep in.

So, when you have entered the space where the practice interview is being conducted the form is to use the bodymind as completely and as openly as possible. To take your seat, to sit in the posture of zazen, and to use the dignity of that posture to help you see more clearly the details of experiencing.

Self-image has many, many views about the moment the question, "How's your practice?" is asked.

Various stances and strategies will come up, and, if my own experience has any validity whatsoever, there will be or there may be a tendency to take it personally when we're told that, perhaps, what we were saying or doing was not complete.

Self-image does tend to view instruction and correction as criticism but as has been said by the Roshi, "Practice is too intimate for it to be personal."

So, the posture, and maintaining the posture, will help you see those contractions that come up into a sense of a self that wants to personalize what's going on.

What can you do?

Well,  
You know what to do  
and  
It does take longer to talk about it  
than  
To actually do it.

The verse again:

Receiving guidance from an advisor,  
"May all beings  
Deport themselves with dignity  
And their actions be truthful."

Thank you for listening.

# Every Breath You Take 25: Receiving Instruction from their Teacher

Dharma Talk presented by Ven. Shikai Zuiko osho  
Dainen-ji, June 7th, 2008

Here you are.

You made it.

It is a beautiful day.

And maybe the touch of the warm, moist breeze on your face occasioned some little murmurs or even shouts from "mara", from self-image, tempting you to do something else rather than place one foot in front of the other until you arrived at the monastery door.

You're learning.

With each breath you're learning more.

The verse:

Receiving instruction from their teacher,  
"May all beings  
Enter unborn Knowing  
And arrive at liberation."

## EVERY BREATH YOU TAKE

...is the only chance you have to see clearly into the process of perception and cognition and through practising precisely at that moment to enter into the moment as it truly is.

Every breath you take in daisan, which means great space, is a chance to learn more about how you are. In daisan you are invited to enter into the world as experienced by the Lineage of Teachers.

Instruction is often beyond words. Although words may be used, instruction may also be given through gesture, through silence, through a smile, through a raised eyebrow.

As is said in many ways, "Its meaning is not in words but it answers sincere questioning". That's from the Hokyo Zanmai by Dongshan Liangjie daisho which was written around 850 C.E.

Another one from the Hokyo Zanmai, "Although beyond description it is no unable to speak. It has words but has no words."

Remember you're learning.

Another quote, "Ultimately, we don't understand our speaking is not yet correct."

But is interesting to see how reliant we are upon words. Before the words there are many moments of experience that arise. You're learning to see those and to use those as a point to practise.

What is always being pointed to is your own experiencing in that moment so that you can see, can know, experiences arising within experiencing and practice at the moment of being what you really are, which is Knowing in itself.

The usual mind acts based on patterns, habits, unquestioned assumptions about how you are and how the world is. This, at the very least, is the cause of limitation and obstruction born out of your misunderstandings.

Teachers instruct you on how to cut through those understandings, how to use those misunderstandings rather than be used by them, how to clarify obstruction.

You don't need to unquestioningly, follow the same old tired habits and patterns. There is a total field of all possibilities available but you need to be available to seeing, to knowing, that.

From "Turning the Wheel of the Way" teisho 6 by Ven. Anzan Hoshin,

The main point however is not to follow a sense of obstruction. You do not need to believe the limiting views of others. You do not need to limit others by your view of them. You do not need to become blocked by your feelings of incapacity and how you define yourself through thoughts.

Everything is always beyond our definitions and ideas about it. For example, this life is seen as a matter of being born but the Buddhas and Awakened Ancestors know all things to be always Unborn, always sheer luminosity moving within itself. Is it born? Is it Unborn? If it is unborn then is there old age? If there is old age, is it still Unborn?

To help you pay attention and to learn to attend to your own experiencing and to learn to open past the same old, same

old, same old, you have been given the gift of forms, ways of deporting the bodymind, in formal situations, that will show you more and more clearly "how you are" and you will be reminded of the instructions for practising mindfulness as long as you continue to show up. Just like you did today.

The forms for deporting the bodymind when sitting, walking, lying down, eating, have all been carefully considered, and adapted, by the Roshi and, now, with the help of the Dharma teachers. Although based on traditional forms they are evolving so that they are contemporary and they are based, founded, on a simple standard established by the Roshi when he first started teaching: Does it work? Is it useful?

Forms are carefully considered and the underlying principle of "Does it work?" and "Is it useful?" is always, "What is the most useful as a tool for students to deepen their understanding and therefore their practise?"

Forms are informed by context. There are different forms for associate and general and formal sittings. The form for entering the room for a practice interview with a practice advisor is not as detailed as when entering the room for daisan with a teacher. The form for dokusan with the Roshi is even more nuanced.

There are also forms for interaction by telephone and by email. And guidance and instruction is given by telephone and email.

Ven. Jinmyo Renge osho-ajari wrote this to a student studying at a distance and, as with everything, it is very useful to anyone who is a student,

The details of the forms are important because they can show you the difference between opening attention and spacing out or folding down. Opening attention is opening to what is, paying attention to what you are actually doing. Through attending to the details of the forms, not adding anything extra, not rushing through them or glossing over the details, old habits stand out more clearly and that gives you the opportunity to practise with them.

You don't have to 'like' the forms to practice them. If you feel impatient as you are bowing forward, bow through the impatience and do the form thoroughly and completely anyway. It is as with the posture  $\hat{A}$  you might be tired, but there is no need to slump. You might be bored, but there is no need to twiddle your thumbs. To do either of those would be agreeing to allow a state to be more important than your practice and if you do that, then you're stuck with the state. Better to practise with it.

By practising the details of the forms you are practising with the movements of attention that give rise to such things as impatience and boredom and resentment and many other kinds of states that are so habitual that usually they go unquestioned. The forms will not allow us to rush past our experiencing to act out habitual states. They insist that we pay attention and through practising them, we can see more clearly when we are not paying attention (or are paying attention to meaningless bullshit, like a state that is so contracted that it doesn't give a fig about anything except being contracted).

The verse again, just to remind you,

Receiving instruction from their teacher,  
"May all beings  
Enter unborn Knowing  
And arrive at liberation."

The use of the forms for deportment of the bodymind, going to, entering into the room for daisan, and sitting in daisan, give you a "lifesaver", something to keep you from being swept away by the currents of habitual patterns.

A quote from the Roshi from "Completely It", from "Five Fingers, Ten Directions: Commentaries on Eihei Dogen zenji's text 'Jippo'",

Sitting up straight as the ten directions means to sit completely. Practising mindfulness of the breath, of the sensations of the hand does not need someone to do it. Simply be mindful of the breath with the breath, of the hand with the hand. Hearing a sound does not need someone to do it; it only needs the hearing and the sound.

Use the forms meticulously to see more clearly that you are Knowing, you are knowing those contractions into a "someone". Practise at that point. If "someone" does arise, practise. Keep doing that until that sense of "someone" no longer arises. If no longer arises, those contractions are no longer born, when it has been worn out by continuous practise. Use everything to see this. And to practise.

When your name is called for daisan use that breath to see "how you are". Practise at that moment of seeing.

When you enter the room for daisan use every breath, use the form, to see "how you are". Practice at that moment of seeing.

When you take your seat use the breath to see "how you are". Practise at that moment of seeing.

When you are sitting on the zafu facing the teacher in daisan, the space between can be said to be a fast flowing river with no readily available way to cross. (That of course is a metaphor.) The teacher is sitting on the other side of that seemingly fast flowing, perhaps dangerous, river only because their teacher showed them how to cross.

The teacher you are sitting across from has vowed, has promised, to repay this generosity, the generosity of the Lineage, by using everything they have available to show others how cross that seemingly uncrossable, fast flowing, dangerous, river. That's the way it works. That's how it has always been. That's how you have the Teachings of Reality available to you.

You see that fast flowing river and you can't see a way across. Self-image will come up with all sorts of stories to support that view; "If I were only feeling better I could get across". "Well, if I were younger, if I'd started earlier, or if I weren't so sleepy, then I'd be able to get across." "If I didn't have all these terrible situations in my life then I'd be able to do it." And it goes on and on and on.

You can see the details of the process of perception and cognition and you can use every moment of seeing those details to practise, as long as there is breath.

At some point you may notice the "rock" that the teacher is pointing to, raising an eyebrow about, smiling about, and you may decide to put your toe in and practise. And you may find the "rock" just where the teacher said it would be. And remember, you found it. It was your experiencing. Over time any student may safely reach "the other side" by following the pointing of the Teachings of Reality.

You might fall in from time to time but the hand of the Lineage will reach out and grab you only if your hand is out. Only if you're open to receiving and if you keep showing up.

This is from "Zazen Yojinki: Notes on What To Be Aware of in Zazen" by Keizan Jokin zenji (1268-1325). This was translated by Yasuda Joshu Dainen roshi and Anzan Hoshin roshi.

This is the practice of the supreme Samadhi which is the knowing of unborn, unobstructed, and spontaneously arising Awareness. It is the door of luminosity which opens out onto the realization of Those Who Come Thus, born through the practice of great ease. This goes beyond the patterns of holy and profane, goes beyond confusion and wisdom. This is the realization of unsurpassed enlightenment as our own nature.

The verse once again,

Receiving instruction from their teacher,  
"May all beings  
Enter unborn Knowing  
And arrive at liberation."

Bon voyage.

Thank you for listening.

## Every Breath You Take 26: Receiving The Complete Precepts

Dharma Talk presented by Ven. Shikai Zuiko osho

Dainen-ji, June 28th, 2008

### EVERY BREATH YOU TAKE

...that one right now that's slightly moving your shoulders up and down, expanding the rib cage, lets you know that you are alive.

There's a bodymind around the breath.

There's seeing and hearing and tasting and touching and feeling and smelling and you can make a choice and another choice and another choice as long as that breath continues to move the bodymind in and out.

The choice is pretty simple: Will you choose contraction? Or will you see whatever is going on, recognize that; that seeing is a moment of mindfulness, is a moment of waking up? Use that moment. Practise that moment. Practise it because as you practise it there will be more of it, there will be more waking up, there will be more recognition that you are Buddha.

You are Awake Awareness. You are Awareness in itself.

That gets obscured and that's what brings us to practice. We recognize that there's more than social cultures (all of them). Which are fictions. That social cultures are fictions. There may be just a little flash and we follow it because we start to understand through the experience of the whole bodymind in the whole moment that there's more available.

We enter in to practice, we come across instruction, that self-image of course want to co-opt. It will memorize the words. That's easy. It will spout back the words. Well, it thinks that's easy. And it thinks it's fooling itself.

And it thinks it's fooling everyone around.

Sleazy little—blank, blank, blank, blank, blank blank blank. Self-image is a nasty little thing. And it's not one thing. It's all those moments of contraction that come up for each and every one of us. And they've come up for each and every practitioner for 2600 years. That's why we can talk about it. But self-image, again, wants to isolate itself. It creates this structure, "self", with everything else being "other". That's pretty simple and self-image is not used to keeping things simple. Because if things are simple it, of course, is exposed.

And because we've made our sense of "self" into the central thing, everything else is fringe so this "self" is "me me me me me". All we have to do is see it. It doesn't mean that in that instant that pattern is going to be wiped out entirely, will never happen again, and everything is going to be "blissful". Â You know. That's not going to happen. Not on the first attempt anyway. [students laugh loudly and long]

It's another fiction that we tend to believe in.

Now here's a little hint. When these contractions come up if there's an, "if only I—blank blank blank blank blank—everything would be great and I'd be happy".

That's at the root of these fictions.

So, with every breath you take, feel it, sit up straight, open the eye gaze. It could be your last one. And that's just true. Nobody in the course of human history has gotten out alive.

(And it's funny; people are still waiting to hear from beyond.)

We enter into practice and we have a glimpse, it could be a big flash, it could be just a little hint, it could be anything, because all of our reasons for coming to practise are suspect, because they're generated, on the whole, by self-image. And we practise, we go through different stages, and in this series of Dharma Talks we've addressed a lot of aspects of what a student experiences; they practise, they become a general student, they become a formal student, they take precepts.

The first are the Three Jewels.

And the Three Jewels:

Awareness is the only condition. (Remember that. Awareness is the only condition.)

All that is arises as the display of Awareness.

This is the seamless expanse of all that is.

And as has been said over and over again in this series of Dharma Talks and the Roshi's teachings and the teachings of every teacher in the Lineage; everything, everything, is contained in those first three precepts.

The longer we practise, the more vulnerable we allow ourselves to be, the more risks we take in exposing thoughts, feelings, and so forth, the more we are able to practise and the more you understand.

Today's verse,

Receiving the complete precepts,  
"May all beings  
Fulfill the practices of freedom  
And master the ultimate Teaching."

Now, self-image might want to jump on that, mastering "the ultimate Teaching" something way far in the future that it has to scramble to climb up to, get on top of, and claim for itself. So when any little thoughts like that come up; feel the breath, sit up straight, open the eye gaze, because you have seen the functioning of the process of perception and cognition, the narrowing of attention, whatever makes it occur, whatever is the cause, and whenever it occurs, no problem. You've seen it; makusa, do nothing. The seeing is enough, allow the bodymind to practise itself in that moment, to feel the breath, to sit up straight, to open the eye gaze, and it takes longer to talk about that than it does to do it. Save your energy kids. [students laugh]

After the Three Jewels have been received the student can ask to move on and to ask to receive the Three Pure Precepts.

Wrong action does not arise.  
There is only the arising of benefit.  
There is only the benefit of all beings.

Now who could deny "the benefit of all beings"?

Even if we hear it and think it's airy-fairy and impossible. Well... wouldn't it be nice?

And as your practice continues, working with precepts to help you question into your moment to moment experiencing,

you start to understand what these words may mean, you start to have hints, but it is not complete.

The next of the precepts, The Ten Grave Precepts.

...and at this point a commitment is made that is deeper, fuller, more specific, and gives you a chance to look at your moment to moment experiencing more clearly.

And questions may come up. Self-image will say, "Oh, I know the answer to that question. So I'm going to do just whatever the f... I feel like". All you have to do is see that; feel the breath, sit up straight, open the eye gaze. It's another fiction.

Now you'd think that with all this self-image and its fictions around that the stories would become more interesting. Apparently that's just not the case. Apparently since the beginning of story telling time they've pretty well been all the same based on, "gimme gimme gimme gimme gimme" and "if only...blah blah blah...I'd be happy for the rest of my life." Commonality.

And that goes across all the social and cultural distinctions that we human beings have fabricated.

#### The Ten Grave Precepts

There is no killing.

There is no stealing.

There is no sexual misconduct.

There is no lying.

There is no trafficking in delusion.

There is no slander.

There is no slander for one's own benefit.

There is no miserliness.

There is no anger.

There is no defilement of the Three Jewels.

Now all sorts of thoughts might have come up. All sorts of little contractions with stances and strategies. No problem.

There's nothing you can do about any of them right now because I'm not taking questions at this point. [students laugh]

So just see them. Allow them to remind the bodymind to feel the breath, sit up straight, open the eye gaze. Practise that moment of clear seeing. And remember you can ask any question you want in daisan or a practice interview. That's how we learn.

Unlike courtrooms where young lawyers are told "not to ask questions that you do not know the answer to", you can ask any question, especially if you don't know the answer to it. You might not have the exact words and self-image will say, "Hmm, well I'd really like to say this better and I know it may sound stupid..." That's called covering your ass, right? [students laugh]

You do your best. You bumble along and eventually, as this practice wastes nothing, you will see more deeply into your own experiencing

As students receive precepts and commit themselves to fulfilling them as best they possibly can various other practices will be given to individual students. Now, there is no point in going into this at this moment, as, with all of practice, your understanding opens and as your understanding opens you are given tools that will help you open your understanding even further.

When you start as an associate student you may remember, or may have noticed, the forms are kept to a minimum. Why? Because students are learning how to practise. Now if a baby's learning how to eat they may get a little plastic knife. To give them a scalpel wouldn't be a good idea. You have to learn to use the tools and as facility with using the tools develops, more tools are available.

When a person has developed a certain facility, has expressed a certain dedication, and sincerity, a willingness, and a desire, through their own recognition of the truth of the teachings, to receive the complete precepts then they will receive the Forty-eight Supporting Precepts. And the commitment to working with experiencing is deepened.

The Supporting Precepts are more detailed. They give us a stronger, a bigger, magnifying glass for looking at our own experiencing and for noticing what's happening, what the experiences of the bodymind are, and they will be more and more detailed because we're no longer committed to the belief in the fictional self. That has opened through the diligence and sincerity up to this point.

I vow to respect teachers and students.

I vow to recognize intoxication and to refrain from it.

I vow to recognize the Life that lives as all lives in how I prepare and am nourished by food.

I vow to recognize lust and refrain from arousing it.

I vow to recognize, practise and teach purity.

I vow to to make offerings and request Dharma.  
I vow to always listen to explanations of the Sutras and Precepts.  
I vow to recognize the All-Embracing Mind and never turn from it.  
I vow to always care for the ill.  
I vow to never possess weapons.  
I vow to never act in support of any nation's military.  
I vow to recognize and avoid engaging in uncompassionate dealings that profit from the suffering of others.  
I vow to recognize and correct biased or deviant teachings.  
I vow to never corrupt the Dharma for personal gain.  
I vow to recognize coercion and to refrain from it.  
I vow to serve as an instructor only when my understanding is adequate.  
I vow to recognize double tongued speech and to refrain from it.  
I vow to never fail to liberate beings.  
I vow to recognize vengeance and to refrain from revenge.  
I vow to recognize and release arrogance and never fail to request Dharma.  
I vow to refrain from slighting others and speaking the Dharma in a biased manner.  
I vow to unceasingly practise and study the Bodhisattva Teachings.  
I vow to refrain from creating discord in the sangha.  
I vow to recognize selfishness and to refrain from withholding offerings.  
I vow to refrain from accepting discriminatory situations.  
I vow to refrain from causing discriminatory situations.  
I vow to recognize wrong livelihood and to refrain from it.  
I vow to recognize entanglement in secular affairs and to refrain from it.  
I vow to always act to protect sacred objects and individuals.  
I vow to refrain from harming sentient beings.  
I vow to recognize unwholesome involvement in entertainment and refrain from it.  
I vow to never sway even momentarily from Bodaishin.  
I vow to always make great vows.  
I vow to always bring forth strong resolve.  
I vow to always practise Fusatsu and retreats and to refrain from dangerous and foolish wanderings.  
I vow to observe proper order when sitting with the sangha.  
I vow to always cultivate blessings and wisdom.  
I vow to confer the Precepts appropriately and without bias.  
I vow to never act as an instructor for the sake of profit.  
I vow to present the Precepts only where it will be of benefit.  
I vow to never deliberately violate the Precepts.  
I vow to always make offerings to the Sutras and Precepts.  
I vow to always teach beings.  
I vow to always preserve the inherent dignity of the Dharma.  
I vow to never establish regulations which contradict the Dharma.  
I vow to always maintain the Dharma.

The verse again,

Receiving the complete precepts,  
"May all beings  
Fulfill the practices of freedom  
And master the ultimate Teaching."

This is Buddha.

Awareness is the only condition.

Realized practice is the bodying forth of this realization moment to moment.

With this breath,  
with every breath you take,  
see it,  
be it.

Have fun.

Thank you for listening.

# Every Breath You Take 27: When Entering a Hall

Dharma Talk presented by Ven. Shikai Zuiko osho  
Dainen-ji, July 5th, 2008

The birds are chirping.  
There are street sounds.  
A car just went by.

There's the sound of your breath.  
There's the sound of my voice.

There's the wall, white, with the changing colour of shadows in front of you.  
There's space to each side.  
You can perhaps see, in peripheral vision, the person sitting next to you and the person sitting next to them.

There's a sense of knowing the white or black of the jubon or robes the person is wearing.  
If you're wearing glasses you might be seeing the edge of the frames.  
You can see yourself blink.

There's the feeling of the clothing on your body.  
The feeling of the knees on the zabuton.  
The fan wafting air onto your face and scalp.

There's this knowing of the experiencing of the bodymind.  
There's this knowing of the experiences, the dharmas, that arise moment to moment.

EVERY BREATH YOU TAKE

...is the opportunity to practise that moment of mindfulness.

When you've noticed anything you've noticed a moment of mindfulness. You practise it. You take it further by practising the whole bodymind in the whole moment.

When entering a hall,  
"May all beings  
Ascend to the ultimate sanctuary  
And rest, at ease and unshakeable."

"Ultimate! Sanctuary!" ...all kinds of things can stirred up by those words. We might see them as big, far bigger than we are, "Ultimate sanctuary", "The Safest Place". Which, of course, is always somewhere else: Somewhere other than where you are right now.

But this is not true. These are fabrications of self-image based on previous experience with "ultimate" and "sanctuary".

Now ... "sanctuary" has, again, all manner of implications; people seeking sanctuary, seeking safety from. "Sanctuary" has multiple meanings. This is from Wikipedia; "A sanctuary is the consecrated area of a church or temple around its tabernacle or altar. An animal sanctuary is a place where animals live and are protected. In modern parlance the term is used to mean a place of safety."

Well, there is no place of safety where we can hide away from the inevitable reality of our life: Birth and death. Now this is not to say that if there is a flood we cannot move to higher ground. If someone is chasing after us that we can't run.

But reality is sanctuary, in the terms of this practice. Because the recognition that there is no safe place where we can hide allows us to notice contractions that come up and say things like, "Don't tell anybody. Come and find me. This is my secret" (for we have all sorts of stories about what's going on and that's a definition of self-image, the contraction into a sense of self that has all kinds of stories about how the world is and how it is). And as we learned in previous talks all of the precepts are means for showing us different ways of looking at our moment-to-moment experience so that we can actually practise at the moment of noticing and allow mindfulness to become more completely embodied.

So, if there is no "ultimate sanctuary" in the way we are used to thinking about it, a place, a sacred place where nothing can get to us, what is there? What are they talking about here? That we can "ascend to the ultimate sanctuary and rest, at ease and unshakeable"?

When every breath you take is grounded with the reality of experience and experiencing you no longer fall for all the stories of hope and fear, good and bad, and you are at ease in this moment and if action is required you are capable of very quickly taking the most appropriate action.

"When entering a hall" is referring to a Dharma Hall, the Hatto.

So this verse,

When entering a hall,  
"May all beings  
Ascend to the ultimate sanctuary,  
And rest, at ease and unshakeable."

...is expressing for all beings what would be wonderful if it could happen, that all beings would practise, drop all contraction, have all action fueled by contraction drop away and be all at ease in this moment wrapped around the breath.

[Osho whispers:] Word to the wise; don't hold that breath for that to happen.

But...if it did...oh, well....

And "ascending", sometimes you will hear in Dharma Talks, teisho, traditional writings, "ascending to the seat", "ascending the mountain", "ascending to the mountain seat" are phrases that are used to talk about a new teacher, a monastic who has been recognized as a sensei, a completely transmitted teacher, ascending to the seat.

But, we don't need to have anything other than a zafu and a butt to put on it to enter into the Dharma Hall and practise this moment.

This following piece is a quote from "Water Burns the Stone", a teisho by Venerable Yasuda Joshu Dainen roshi, which was given at Hakukaze-ji in 1979.

For those who may not be familiar with the name, Yasuda Joshu Dainen roshi was Anzan Hoshin roshi's teacher and our grandfather in the Lineage.

One moment of just sitting is one moment of enlightenment." These are the words of the Buddhas and Dharma Ancestors. These are the words of a dead bald man, Dogen Kigen zenji. One instant of true practice is one instant of enlightenment. True practice is true effort. True effort is true non-effort. True non-effort is without mind so it is Mu-shin (no-mind). Mu-shin is right this moment now. This is instantaneous enlightenment: Enlightenment occurs in each instant. Without past, without future, without even "now", seeing clearly is practice. Anzan sensei has a phrase which I like: "It does not matter what is seen, it is the seeing that matters."

Breathe in, breathe out, okay? If you try to make some "nirvana" your home, you only hide forever in your own in-turned minds, your personal safety. Nirvana has no place, no time. You cannot get to it. It is always HERE (shouts and bangs teisho table with staff). Breathe in, breathe out. If you make struggle your way, you lose your way in a dark forest of tense muscles, tense thoughts. Relax.

How should we practice? Too much effort is delusion, struggle. Too little is delusion. You can't struggle into enlightenment and you can't just listen to me say that this moment is it and pretend that you are living it. You have to practice fully, with pure samadhi, pure awareness. Seeing, seeing.

And in each instant is instantaneous enlightenment. In the Soto Way cause and effect is simultaneous. In Rinzai, cause is one thing, effect another. Now, naturally, both of these views are bullshit and gospel truth. What we have to do is practice without end, without goal, without strategy. Strat-e-gy. Each moment of true effort is both enlightenment and the Path to enlightenment. True effort is like water. It flows and fills the hollows, it goes where it needs to. Subtle. Subt-le. You can't hold water back with your bare hands and can't push it forward. It moves freely, clearly. Slowly, water will burn away the rocks of your delusions. Always water is fresh. Quickly, water flows.

Okay! Enough. If you remember any of this, remember that water burns the stone.

So there you sit. Breathing in. Breathing out.

Is the thing that you think of as you doing that?

No. The bodymind is doing it.

The bodymind is doing the seeing, the hearing, the tasting, the touching, the feeling, the smelling.

You are the Knowing of that.

It is the Knowing of that which practises.

Each moment of noticing anything is a moment of mindfulness. At that moment, practise, with the whole bodymind.

When entering a hall,  
"May all beings

Ascend to the ultimate sanctuary  
And rest, at ease and unshakeable."

Thank you for listening.

## Every Breath You Take 28: When Setting Out a Place to Sit

Dharma Talk presented by Ven. Shikai Zuiko osho  
Dainen-ji, July 12th, 2007

You can't buy it, barter for it, you can't fake it,  
but you can,  
with EVERY BREATH YOU TAKE,  
practise the clarity,  
the Awake Awareness,  
the Knowing that is who you really are.

When setting out a place to sit,  
"May all beings  
Unfold the flower of virtues  
And understand their own clarity."

With every breath you take you can practise mindfulness.  
Your heart is still beating.  
You're alive.  
You don't know whether you're going to have another breath.  
So you might as well take a risk.  
Feel the one that's moving the bodymind in and out.  
Sit up straight and open to the reality of this whole moment with the whole bodymind.

Now, when you heard the word "virtues" perhaps there was a cascading of thoughts, which, of course, you did not follow. Which, of course, you used to feel the breath, sit up straight, open the eye gaze, and to practise that moment of mindfulness, that moment of waking up to reality.

But there are all sorts of words that we may associate with the word "virtue". And they come up in all traditions. I'll leave the looking up of those words, the looking up of "virtue" and "virtues", to you so that you can have that list, of things, qualities, that self-image may think it has or does not have.

If it thinks it "has" them, it contracts around them and bodies itself forth in a snappy little way, perhaps, or in a self-satisfied waddle, or in an overbearing posture of body and mind.

If it thinks it doesn't "have" them, well, it may winge and wheedle and barter, clasp and rubbing its greedy little grasping little hands, looking for more of that which it does not have.

Of course, you all see that contraction when it comes up and feel the breath, sit up straight, open the eye gaze. You practise that moment of awake awareness, of mindfulness, rather than falling for the stories.

The origin of the word "virtue" is Latin. It comes from "virtus". In the dictionary I was using the word "manliness" was used but because we do not reside in the gender ghetto [students laugh] we will substitute "humanness"; taking full responsibility for being a human being, and the word "courage", which was also used.

"Courage" is an interesting word. It comes from, again, originally, the Latin "cor", which means "heart". Now from what I've and read and experienced of many cultures "heart" or "courage" is esteemed. To the point where, sometimes, certain peoples were known to have eaten the heart of enemies which they considered to be brave (but that's a kind of a little National Enquirer factoid to get your attention).

But, heart, the heart, has been recognized as being the beating at the centre of our life. To have courage is to, in practice, step past the views of self-image and learn to recognize contraction.

Now, the list of words of virtues are valued as being good. Contraction, is, in a sense, value free; just as the feeling of your thumb against the other thumb is value free. It's a sensation. To put value on it means to travel into the area of thoughts about that sensation. So it's not necessary.

Contraction comes up and, because contraction may be something that we've experienced many times, we may have the recognition or the expectation, expectation is more correct actually, the expectation that a certain type of contraction brings with it a certain type of explanation or story.

Contraction breeds contraction.

In the Forty-eight Supporting Precepts for monastics there's a precept, which says, "I vow to request Dharma". That means

to request clarification, from one's teacher, regardless of the story that one has anticipated. Asking for clarification, for elucidation, on contraction, can be scary, it can produce fear, because most of us don't realize that the stories that we get busy telling ourselves, the stories that self-image gets busy telling itself about how we are and how the world is, are stories. Self-image is self-serving.

Practice helps us see the process of contraction. It helps us see the process of perception and cognition. It can take courage to talk about certain contractions which we may have imbued with meaning. Now, we're not too reticent about the ones that we think are "good". We can get all contracted, but happy, because we think we've realized something. We're bringing it forth to get the gold star or to get, "Roshi, Roshi, come down here. This student...." [students laugh loudly]

So, we'll kind of... not talk about that part of it. [students laugh]

There are other contractions, other stories, that are brought up that we may feel "shame" or "guilt" about. I mean no one really wants to admit that they might have had a thought about, "hitting a practice advisor on the ears with the kaishaku when the round didn't end when it was at the end of its patience..." [students laugh] We tend not to talk about that because that makes us believe, because we think we are our thoughts, that we are a person who, maybe, almost did that thing. So that reveals something to us: A thought is not the same as an action.

One learns that through taking a risk, through doing our best to talk about what we noticed going on, contraction can be opened further and we can start to understand that we are actually the Knowing of those things rather than the person who "almost" did that action.

It can be a slippery slope, this listening to the stories of self-image. But anything can be talked about. We won't get forensic and analyze you because of a thought that you might have had. We've all had thoughts. We've all had thought. We've all had thoughts that maybe weren't...the nicest.

We've all had thoughts that have been self-aggrandizing. But since we've all had varieties of these thoughts, and they come up for everyone, well, we can all start to realize that all human beings are pretty much the same and the act of trying to cover contraction and story and action is like putting a stone on a plant. And when we see the stone rather than removing it or calling out to some one to help us to do this we put another rock on it and maybe another one just to be sure, just to, in truth, make things more difficult for ourselves.

It does, in fact, take courage to lift up this rock and say, "look it's here, it got put here because..." and then to receive instruction as to how to deal with that next rock, that next contraction that comes up. And you will find that the stories you make up are far heavier and far more damaging and far more to be feared than the reality that, a contraction is a contraction, a thought is a thought it's not an action. You have free will. You can do whatever you want. You can make whatever choices you want and if you want to practise then you follow instructions to the best of your ability.

When all those rocks of contraction are removed, when we know what to do when we see contraction, which is to practise whole bodily in the whole moment, we find that the choices for action that we do make can be classified according to those great long lists that every tradition seems to like to make up of qualities that we should or shouldn't have. But really it's very simple: You notice something, there's a contraction. Have the heart to do what you know to be true. Take a risk, which is really a non-risk, and those flowers will bloom.

The verse.

When setting out a place to sit,  
"May all beings  
Unfold the flower of virtues  
And understand their own clarity."

As you all know clarity comes through your own experiencing. It's not someone else's experiencing. All anyone can do is use their own experiencing to point to yours. That's what teachers do.

Through the placing of your bodymind on the zafu that you are setting out, (or that some one else has taken care of for you), you're learning to see reality as it really is, where a thought is just a thought, a thought is different from an action, a contraction is a contraction, there is no value on it, it's just something to be noticed.

If you're breathing in and out,  
if your heart is still beating,

you have time to

wake up.

Thank you for listening.

# Every Breath You Take 29: Sitting Up Straight

Dharma Talk presented by Ven. Shikai Zuiko osho  
Dainen-ji, July 19th, 2008

You showed up again!

You saw any thoughts or feelings that came up with information, stories, such as:

"...ooh...no! I don't wanna..."

"I'm too tired."

"This is going to be great."

Whatever the story was you saw it for what it was; a figment, a fabrication, words wrapped around a contraction into a sense of self

and

you took appropriate action

which was to

feel the feet, the hands

feel the bodymind

feel the breath

open the eye gaze

one foot in front of the other

and here you are

demonstrating with...

EVERY BREATH YOU TAKE

...your sincerity in wanting to practise.

EVERY BREATH YOU TAKE

...every breath that is breathing you gives you the opportunity to notice it, to sit up straight, to open the eye gaze, to practise whole bodily in the moment, and you can do it faster [snaps fingers] than I can talk about or than you can think about it.

So you may as well give up talking to yourself about it and thinking about it and just do it.

Saves a lot of energy.

The verse,

Sitting up straight,

"May all beings

Be seated on the throne of Awareness,

Their intelligence disentangled."

Intelligence disentangles itself or is disentangled from the contractions that bind it each time you see experiences arising within experiencing for what they are, experiences arising within experiencing, rather than as definitions of a self, images of a self, a personality, or who you are.

Now, of course, there you are sitting up straight, "seated on the throne of Awareness". You are Awareness in itself. You are experiencing in itself. You are Knowing in itself. And as Knowing you cannot be a "knower". There cannot be a self described as a "knower". You're learning to see that. And each time you notice anything [Osho snaps fingers] feel whole bodily, the whole moment. "Traps and cages spring open". Intelligence is freed.

We do become entangled. Human beings become entangled in their stories about what's going on. And, this has been going on for 2600 years so it's not surprising that in Teisho and Dharma Talks and Sutra self-image will go, "Ooh, talking about me..." because self-image wants to make everything personal and as has been said by the Roshi, and all the other teachers in the lineage, in many different ways, "Practice is too intimate to be personal".

The process of being a human being is the same for all human beings and that tendency to hold yourself apart from it, "because..." is, of course, a definition, a display, of self-image. You're learning to recognize that.

A long, long, time ago on the other side of the city there was a small temple and sittings were held there, in the Zendo. And often there might only be one person other than the teacher at the sittings. Sometimes there'd be a few more.

Every student gets entangled in the stories of self-image. That's why they need to be disentangled.

Well, one day was a sesshin day which means sitting walking sitting walking sitting walking sitting walking sitting walking sitting walking sitting from 4:30 in the morning when we get up to 9:30 at night when we go to bed.

This particular student wasn't so young as many are when they start sitting. And, of course, the cries and creaks of joints and tendons offered a lot of places upon which self-image could focus its attention to the point where "sensation" became the main focus.

The gong rang from upstairs and it was time for the student to go for dokusan. The student walked to the door, put out the right hand, turned the doorknob, bowed...facing into the hall. How embarrassing is that? How can it happen that a reasonable human being with sensations and senses present could become so entangled in stories about what was going on that the obvious, a form which had been practised over and over and over again, became wiped out, sense of direction became wiped out? Now this is to show how intelligence becomes compromised when we get caught up in the tangles of self-image and its stories.

Practice show us how this can become disentangled. And the process is [Osho snaps fingers], that's it; feel the breath, sit up straight, open the eye gaze, practise the whole body in the whole moment.

Forms help us with this process of learning to disentangle the intelligence of the bodymind from the stories. We are told simple things; for example, when in the Hatto at the beginning of sittings, students take their cues from the seniors. Don't move until the senior moves. But self-image says, "this doesn't apply to me and I see that I'm supposed to be over there I'm supposed to close the gap between two seats..." and it becomes so entangled in the placing of itself in the so-called "favourable light" defined by self-image that it steps out when no one else is in the room is moving. How crazy is that? How well does it demonstrate how entangled we can become in the stories of self-image. We're learning to see this.

You can take every opportunity to see how this process of entangling occurs. We do or don't do something. We execute or don't execute a form and a senior or a teacher says, "What are you doing?" Self-image's first instinct and you've all experienced it in one form or another to a greater or lesser degree, it's first instinct is to blame somebody else, "If so and so wouldn't have...then...". Because, of course, self-image sees itself as perfection and it is only the confluence of myriad events that prevent it from shining forth as the paragon of perfection which it sees itself as.

Now, that's bullshit. And every student since the beginning of students, and the beginning of practice, has come across this in one form or another. That tendency compromises the dignity of the bodymind, it compromises the integrity of the bodymind in the whole moment and makes us appear to be whinging, whining, babies. That's not intelligent.

Practice is about growing up. It is about taking responsibility for being a human being, for being as Joshu roshi said, "a real human being." So you've got it. Use it.

Now, as far as "the throne of Awareness", that certainly might throw self-image a little bit, because it certainly does like to see itself superior to everything, sitting up there with its subjects at its feet. But that is not what is being talked about.

What is meant, is, that a seat or a "throne", has implicit in the word a sense of dignity, a sense of control, a sense of being the final decision maker, but, we're talking about your own experience. So when seated on the throne of Awareness you are not going to be fooled by the whinging and whining and weeding stories of self-image. You will not be ruled by them. The choice you make, as Awareness in itself, will be the most intelligent possible in that situation.

Now, if a thought comes up about "always being right" recognize that is self-image because "always being right" just doesn't happen. But doing the best that you possibly can, making the best possible choice that you can, free of the entanglement of the stories of self-image, and the contractions into a sense of self, will free you from the stupidity of, for example, bowing into the hall.

Another translation of this verse was,

Sitting up straight,  
"They should wish that all beings  
Sit on the seat of enlightenment  
Their minds without attachment."

So we have "the seat of enlightenment".

Well, what does that mean, this enlightenment business? Well, clear seeing in the moment, being Awareness in itself, expressing moment to moment in the deportment of the bodymind the dignity of Awareness, the dignity of being Knowing in itself.

"Minds without attachment", well, that raises questions. And you are certainly free, and encouraged, to follow up on your own, what these words, these expressions of practice may mean. You never know where you'll end up when you start to look at and follow the trail of words. Now I prefer, of course, "intelligence disentangled" because it's more clear and that's why the Roshi and I chose that particular phrase to describe open Awareness, the bodymind free of the entanglements that choke us and make us act in ways that are smaller than we actually are, make us make decisions that are not as useful and intelligent as they could be.

So there you are, sitting up straight on your zafu seeing clearly the rise and fall of thoughts and feelings, of seeing hearing tasting touching feeling smelling breathing in and out. And using each moment, of noticing anything whatsoever, to practise the whole bodymind in the whole moment, disentangling intelligence.

The verse again,

Sitting up straight,  
"May all beings  
Be seated on the throne of Awareness,  
Their intelligence disentangled."

Thank you for listening.

## Every Breath You Take 30: Crossing the Legs

Dharma Talk presented by Ven. Shikai Zuiko osho

Dainen-ji, July 26th, 2008

You can feel the heart beating in your chest.  
You can feel the bones moving ever so slightly with the breath that expands the lungs.  
With the contraction of the lungs that expels the last breath  
you can open the eye gaze  
you can sit up straight.  
You can use every opportunity to practise the reality of the life that is living as you.

That's why you're here  
in spite of the stories that self-image might have about why you're here and why you're doing this practice.

All of them are suspect.

EVERY BREATH YOU TAKE... lets you know you're alive in this moment.

The verse:

Crossing the legs,  
"May all beings  
Have strong roots of virtue  
And unfold the immovable."

You're sitting there with the legs crossed, where possible, and those who are sitting in postures other than a posture where the legs are crossed may or may not have good reason for doing so right now, but as time unfolds, the bodymind unfolds and becomes more flexible. So in spite of what self-image says you can or cannot do, or are or are not capable of, the moment of noticing any of those stories, what do you do? That's right, you practise because at the moment of noticing that contraction, with that or any other story, you've noticed reality. You've woken up from the glazing over and the dream of self-image, you've woken up to the magic of reality.

Now the verse speaks of "strong roots of virtue". Well, as I'm sure you remember, we looked at virtue, the word coming from the Latin: *virtus*, which means humanness, courage, the ability to take the risk of seeing the stories of self-image as stories, and to, through practising that moment of noticing contraction or the story, to allow the contraction to unfold.

"Why does it take courage" one might ask, to practise, to sit zazen? Well, as we've all experienced, when we sit with our eyes open and when I say "eyes open" this means you... [several students have eyes closed and are dozing] We might notice that oh, there might be sensations that we are used to classifying as PAIN! And our tendency is to want to run away from pain because we have all kinds of associations with the words, just as we have all kinds of associations with every other word. "Crossing the legs" means that we're taking the risk of sitting there and having sensations present themselves. When we can cease to put meaning to them and drop them into, drop the sensations into "good" or "bad", "liked" or "not liked", we can just see an experience and feel sensation as sensation and use that noticing to practise mindfulness of the whole bodymind in the whole moment and this allows the bodymind to unfold. So there's that, there's the physical reality of the bodymind in that it's not used to being stretched in this way. But, over time, over the years, the bodymind will unfold and what you thought to be impossible when you first came to practice, you will find, through your own experience, is possible.

But it does take courage, you take a risk each time you cross the legs and sit down to "unfold the immovable" (whatever that might be). Also, there's a risk in crossing the legs and sitting down in zazen because we do start to see reality as it is. And we might find that things, that words that we had taken on to describe who we are, perhaps were not right on the money, but were in fact done to prop up an image of a self.

Now, some of the words, and I'm sure you all rushed home after last week's Dharma Talk and looked up "virtue" and came up with all those lists of words that stood prior to "heart, humanness, and courage", okay, compassion comes up. Nice! We all want to be described, or to describe ourselves as being compassionate. But, we sit in front of that cushion, or rather we sit on that cushion in front of that wall, and we start to see that this thing called "compassion" is something that we don't understand at all. We start to be able to develop compassion and understanding for ourselves as we sit, facing moment

after moment, the contractions and stories of self-image. Sometimes we can be surprised at the thoughts that we have, fortunately, we don't put them into action on the zafu, but rather, the energy is used to practise that moment of insight, clarity, or clear seeing. To practise mindfulness, which has exposed itself in that moment. So we may start to see that the idea that we are a compassionate person is just another little accessory that we've picked up, that self-image has decided to wear. When that gets exposed, well, we might not like it but who cares? Whether we like it or not, it doesn't matter. As the contraction and the tendency of self-image to dress itself up with accessories drops away, we start to understand through our own experience that the process of being a human being is the same for all human beings, and through our own experience we can start to perhaps have more tolerance and understanding for what's going on with others.

We may notice things like truth, now that seems like a virtue, does it not? Truth. And as we sit, we start to see the many ways in which a contraction into a sense of self lies to us and then we might find that our lips are moving and saying, actually very comedic stories are expressed out loud.

Let me give you an example, and it's happened, I'm sure, to each and every one of us at some point or another. Something happens, we do something and information that is not accurate somehow is expressed, and someone might say to us, or might point it out to us, "well, actually, it's this". Self-image swoops in and blatantly lies by saying: "well, that's what I meant". Like, go figure. But we don't see it until we see it as being a very typical example of a pattern of self-image to cover it's ass, with the implication that if these external forces, whatever they might have been, hadn't interfered, well then, we would have said what we didn't say, which, apparently, self-image is saying that we knew but something came in to interfere, so we didn't know it. At the very least, it's a waste of energy. Making a mistake isn't a problem. Things happen. But trying to justify in the face of... well, let's not really get into that, because it's just so silly.

So, when something happens, feel the breath, sit or stand up straight, open the eye gaze, and accept the new information that is correct. So we can go down and it can be a lot of fun to do, go down and get a list of all these things that are considered "virtues" and look at how self-image uses them.

Humility. Hmm? Humility. Contraction into a sense of self that's humble. How self-aggrandizing is that? When you notice that, feel the breath, sit up straight, open the eye gaze and it all becomes moot. You don't even need to talk about it because there's no point in bragging, there's no point in hiding, there just is what is in that moment. And it's a lot more fun and it takes up a lot less of everybody's time, so that what needs to be taken care of can be taken care of.

Oh, and we get into things like sincerity and all the stories about sincerity, but as we've already talked about, sincerity is showing up. Sincerity is doing what one says one will do. Then we have love exposed as lust, as following the patterns of biochemistry. And we could go on and on and on and on. But I won't.

You're learning to see, as you cross your legs and sit on that zafu, the process of perception and cognition and how contraction comes up and how when stories are told, they entangle intelligence. Sitting, and at the moment of noticing anything, practising mindfulness of the whole bodymind in the whole moment, unfolds, disentangles that intelligence. We learn to see how contractions arising within and sometimes obscuring awareness, can be opened so that awareness itself is present. Open, luminous. Practice at the moment of noticing anything unfolds contraction and opens the clarity of awareness. The clarity of awareness, the "immovable" of the verse, is revealed. Here's a quote from Anzan roshi, from "Before Thinking", "The Great Matter":

All states, all experiences and all ways of experiencing are rising and falling. They are all impermanent. And yet, awareness is not coming or going. So, although all Dharmas are impermanent, perhaps we could say that Awareness itself is permanent, that when we discover Awareness itself, we will discover true permanency and we will be able to abide there free of birth and death.

However, this isn't quite true either. Awareness cannot be permanent because it is not a thing, it is not an entity, it has no substance. It is indescribable, it is the nature of all our experiences. Awareness is inherently unbound by experiences because what we are aware of cannot describe or designate what Awareness in itself is. Although Awareness presents itself to us as everything that we are aware of, there is nowhere that we can lay a hand upon Awareness itself because Awareness itself is the context in which the contents of consciousness are arising. One could say that it occurs on a completely different level, except that within Awareness there are no levels. Whatever levels there might be simply occur there, within it. It is itself simply indescribable, and so it cannot be described as impermanent or as permanent. It can only be recognized as that which is living each and every one of you now.

Keep on crossing those legs! Keep a strong heart, and courage. Keep on unfolding reality as it really is, before, prior to, all the stories that self-image makes up in its version of reality.

The verse:

Crossing the legs,  
"May all beings  
Have strong roots of virtue  
And unfold the immovable."

Thank you for listening.

## Every Breath You Take 31: Practising Clarity

Dharma Talk presented by Ven. Shikai Zuiko osho  
Dainen-ji, October 11th, 2008

EVERY BREATH YOU TAKE

... THIS one...

is the only one.

All the others are gone and none of us know if we'll have another one.

It only makes sense to feel the bodymind that is wrapped around this moment, which is the breath.

Some time ago, I was giving a workshop in another country and some dude said: "Uh, what's uh so important about the breath?" Like, I was gobsmacked. [students and Osho laugh] And we can laugh about it because it's so obvious. If it isn't there... hey! [more laughter] So we might as well notice it.

Now, if you've ever been in extreme circumstances, such as, from my own experience for example, at the end of someone else's hands which are wrapped around your throat and are tightening... well, you notice it. [students laugh] And again, from my own experience, you start to feel, or I start to feel like I'm drowning inside this bodymind because the heart has gotten big and the muscle isn't strong enough to work as it should so the lungs are filling up with fluid. Congestive heart failure is what they call it, but it's like what I imagine drowning would be like except you're drowning, I was drowning, in my own body fluids.

Interesting. Interesting, and it can be worked with.

... so... the breath. You can feel it right now. So while you're feeling that breath that is moving the whole bodymind in and out, you can let go of any thoughts that might come up about doing anything. The thing you think of as you can't practise. However, it can be practised because when you notice this thing you think of as you, coming out with its little label maker that it wants to put on and say: "There, breath. There, fingertips. There, eyelashes." [students laugh] "Seeing, hearing, tasting, touching, smelling." You do not let have to let that mythical, that self-created and fabricated accountant or librarian or whatever you want to call it, go on with its business. It's taking up too much energy.

Let it go.

Just allow the clarity and sanity of this moment of sitting, being breathed in and out to be there. If something extra comes in, use that [Osho snaps fingers] as a reminder to practise what's actually going on, the breathing in and out, the heart beating. Seeing, hearing, tasting, touching, feeling, and smelling.

The verse:

Practising clarity,  
"May all beings  
Settle their minds in clarity  
Until nothing is left behind."

And when there's nothing left behind, there's nothing to do. It's only when those extras come up, that knot experiencing, and start to dictate or label or fabricate or make movies, that's the moment to practise.

In "Begin Here: Five Styles of Zen", Anzan roshi has written and spoken, actually, spoken and written very clearly about what clarity is and what this practice is. Yeah, yeah, you may have read it before, but did you understand it? Do you remember it? So, I'm going to use that text, which is one of my favourites because it is so clear, to remind you of what you're actually doing here.

In the lead-up, the Roshi says: "Our practice is about opening to our life as it is. Opening to the moment as it is and allowing this clear seeing to pervade our life." Now, at a certain point in practice, there will be that viewer, that seer up behind the eyes going "yeah, yeah, I can really see clearly what's going on in my life, I see how everybody else is getting in my way." [laughter] Or versions...

Buddha Dharma means waking up to what is evident when we see clearly, and what is evident when we see clearly is that there is no one up there behind the eyes, especially when the eyes are open (it's easier to see clearly when the eyes are open). There's no one there, what there is is a fabrication, a story that attention is being fed into. So you're learning to see that process clearly.

The teachings say that you are Buddha, it's not a matter of becoming Buddha. It is a matter of realizing for yourself that you are Buddha, and that there is a fundamental awakened quality at the core of your experience, which is most probably what brought you to practise in the first place, that thing that goes, "Wait a minute, wait a minute, there's something I don't

know about this life."

And of course, what we don't know about this life is that it can only happen in this [Osho snaps fingers] moment. So we're learning to see that. It is a matter of realizing for yourself that sanity, clarity, wisdom, and compassion are your basic nature, that all conditions are inherently unconditioned, that awareness is all that is ever going on and is never limited. Awareness is boundless and always free. This unconditioned freedom is your own nature and you can realize this. Realizing this, making it real, is the process of practice. So any time you notice, and every time you notice anything else extra coming in, feel the breath without labeling it. Sit up straight, open the eye gaze, and if you're tired, put a little extra effort in and recognize seeing, hearing, tasting, touching, feeling, smelling, recognize the aliveness of the bodymind in this moment, the only moment in which it can happen.

Now, those inconvenient to self-image monks called teachers, and practice advisors will help you with this. Now sometimes self-image is reluctant to let go of those hands around the throat because it fails to recognize that they're actually its own hands. And it can be somewhat embarrassing, let's say. [laughter] So everything in the environment of practice, everything is there to remind you that you can let it go. There's nothing that you need to do. There is no you to do it and you start to understand that, you may not be able to express it, you may want to argue with it, you may want to say: "Well, like, who's doing it? How is it happening? Could you draw me a picture?" But, because we're talking about your own experiencing, and we're talking about it through our own experiencing, which is that that experiencing has been passed down from teacher to student, to teacher to student and students turn into teachers, and they pass it on. It is about their own experiencing. It's not about someone else's experiencing that is worn on a baseball cap or a t-shirt saying, "The only thing going on is NOW." No. It's direct experiencing. Its meaning is not in words. Its meaning is in the clear understanding that there is only this moment and there's no need for anything extra.

So we'll whip through "The Five Styles of Zen" and I encourage you to read it or listen to it today, just go to the website. Why? Because your understanding will be clearer. A little caveat, or a little warning here: you probably will notice a tendency of self-image to want to place itself in one of the categories, it'll go, "Oh yeah, yeah, that's me" as if we're doing a magazine test. We want to rank. So, let it be there, no problem, use that recognition, that moment of seeing that that's what's going on to remind you to notice the breath, seeing, hearing, tasting, touching, feeling, smelling and get on with it. You've practised that moment of clear seeing.

From the text, by Anzan roshi:

Saijojo Zen

The fifth kind of Zen is saijojo zen which means "Great and Perfect Practice." It is great and perfect practice because it is not based on trying to realize anything. It is based on practising practice. It is based on sitting the sitting. It is based on seeing what you see, hearing what you hear, not looking for Buddha in any way but simply realizing one's own looking to be Buddha.

Shikan-taza is known by many names and many different forms within the Buddhist Transmission: in the Tibetan schools it is called Mahamudra, Maha-ati or Chagya-chenpo and Dzog-chenpo; the Theravadin school calls it Mahavipassana; within Soto Zen it is shikan-taza, and in Rinzai Zen as well, one practices shikan-taza after finishing koan study. Since the saijojo is so simple and straight-forward, it also seems to be quite subtle. Therefore, many people seem to have become quite confused about what shikan-taza really is. Some even consider just sitting quietly like a good little boy or girl and watching the breath, or just "being mindful," to be shikan-taza. Dogen zenji exclaimed that shikan-taza is "just sitting," it is "dropping the bodymind." This does not mean sitting in some state of dissociation from body and mind, nor does it mean that this dropping bodymind only happens when you sit. It means that when you experience each experience as it is, when you penetrate into your True Nature, when you realize that there is no body or mind, time or space, then your sitting is "just sitting." Shikan-taza is a wordless release of all gestures of grasping. It is like opening a fist or opening the eyes. It is not the closing away of attention from any state of experience. "Wordless" does not mean that one artificially induces a state of blankness, is holding one's tongue, or has gagged the mind. It is a questioning so subtle and penetrating that it occurs before and between, around and within all thoughts, impressions, sensations and differentiations, whatsoever.

Experiences and states arise freely as the activity of primordial Awareness itself. Awareness is effulgent with forms but is always formless. Nothing that arises, dwells or decays can, in itself, invite or provoke any confusion, or separation, or identification. In shikan-taza, all worlds and all beings are always sitting as their own True Natures.

In Soto Zen, shikan-taza is the root of all practice and so, although we might have to work our way through these other four orientations to some extent, some realization of shikan-taza is necessary for us to actually begin practising, if we are going to practice Soto Zen. This means having some sense of being Buddha, even if only on a feeling or intellectual level, a deep sense that no matter how screwed up you can be, you are basically sane after all. No matter how you might find yourself getting caught up in things, there is still a

basic clarity that's available to you.

Opening further and further to that clarity is the basis of saijojo zen practice. This practice flowers into simply manifesting that clarity in everything that is arising. We recognize clarity to be all that is ever, in fact, going on; that no matter what point of view we might momentarily take, that all these are just orientations within a greater view of just seeing. Kensho (seeing into one's own nature) is, in some ways, actually where practice begins within Soto Zen. It is not just having some experience of kensho, some particular experience of kensho, but the whole orientation of kensho forms the basis of one's practice.

Within Soto Zen, when one is practising as a formal student, there is an interaction between Teacher and student which is based on the Teacher working to show his or her mind to the student so that the student can recognize the Original or Primordial Nature of his or her own mind. When these two minds can meet openly, then there is Transmission. This is Buddha meeting Buddha. This is that which is before, within, behind and all around, all of your thoughts, feelings and experiences. It is that which is giving rise to your thoughts, feelings and experiences expressing themselves. The Teacher is always trying to give some taste, some flavour of this Original Mind to students, so that the students can then practise that realization to whatever extent they are able. Through that, the form of practice that student will engage in becomes clear. Soto Zen might involve koan practice, anapanasati and many different forms of practice, but they are all grounded within shikan-taza. They are grounded in some way within our realization that we are Buddha.

The verse, again:

Practising clarity,  
"May all beings  
Settle their minds in clarity  
Until nothing is left behind."

Gassho to the Lineage of Teachers. Gassho to you for doing the practice.

Thank you for listening.

## Every Breath You Take 32: Practising Insight

Dharma Talk presented by Ven. Shikai Zuiko osho  
Dainen-ji, October 18th, 2008

So. Here we are. Sitting, practising, wrapped around the breath.

EVERY BREATH YOU TAKE... is this moment.

Use it to notice the reality of this moment, the seeing, the hearing, the tasting, the touching, the feeling, the smelling, the thinking, all of those things that are going on. All of those things that make up your life in this moment, wrapped around this breath.

I've said it before. And I'll say it again while I still have breath: one day, there won't be another breath. One day, you'll be dead, each and every one of you and you never know when it's going to happen. So notice this breath, that's going on right now. Do not waste time! Wake up to the reality of your life the only place it's happening, which is NOW.

Now, the great matter of birth and death is something that Gautama Siddhartha struggled with and we tend to struggle with it today. Now, "intellectually", self-image will say, "intellectually, I understand it." And we buy into that. But it's funny, we say that about so many things, around practice in particular. "Intellectually", we understand it, which means we may have recognized that the words came out in English. [students laugh]

But you scratch that little "intellectually I understand it" and there might be lurking underneath little views that we didn't even know that we had. Like, "it's not going to happen to me", "I know this and well, I'm going to really work my ass off in the gym, I'm really going to work out, I'm really going to take this bodymind and make it immortal."

We don't even know we hold those views.

I'm not saying we shouldn't have choice in the ways we exercise, the way we use the bodymind, 'cause I've looked around, you know, and the bodymind actually hasn't evolved much in 50 000 years. It is designed for running like fury to catch something to eat, and there's not much of that going on today. It's also designed so that it does well with back-breaking labour. It does well with digging fields and planting stuff, you know, and it's exhausted, it lies down, eats, has a little sleep. But there's not many big fields around here that need tilling by hand. So here we are, with this vehicle, this bodymind, which is not who we are, but it is wrapped around the breath.

Just the last word: you will die... [students giggle]

...but you're not dead right now. So feel the breath, sit up straight, open the eye gaze, which is short form for saying "practise the whole bodymind in this whole moment".

The verse:

Practising insight,  
"May all beings  
See Reality as it is,  
Always free of the struggle of opposing it."

So these verses were written some 1600 years ago and they were said to and said by real people. People just like you and me. But they're dead now. But we have the verses. Last week's verse was talking about clarity. This week, we're talking about insight and again, reality.

So in the Sanskrit, insight: vipassana. Shamata is focusing, concentration. Vipassana is openly sitting and seeing clearly your life as it is, as it unfolds in this moment.

Now, even sitting in the Hatto, you may notice yourself trying to oppose the reality of this moment. You may find yourself arguing with yourself about whether you should or shouldn't be here. Whether you did something so horribly bad that you deserve this punishment. [students laugh] Forgive me, that's a thought I had, once upon a time. [more laughter]

So. This is a quote from "Before Thinking", page 10, "Shamata and Vipassana" by Anzan Hoshin roshi. I encourage you to, as soon as you can after the sitting, except if you're on retreat, 'cause there's no reading on retreat, look up "Before Thinking" and read about shamata and vipassana because you'll find that you have uncovered even more understanding through your experience of sitting. And as mentioned, the Buddha engaged himself in all types of practices in his search for what was really going on. This young man who had been wrapped in cotton wool, protected from reality, one day decided: "Hmm. There's gotta be more." And I'm sure you've all read the story, and if you haven't, you should. Through the little holes in the cotton wool, in the moments of clarity between the parties and the courtesans, he saw someone who was ill, someone who was old, someone who was dead and decided to find out what this birth and death was all about. So he left the cotton wool behind and went out looking and engaged in various concentration practices. They weren't the answer. They may have induced blissful states. And he noticed a blissful state can go off the rails when one is presented with something unpleasant, an aspect of reality. So the quote begins here:

Abandoning all of these different exercises, all of these gymnastics of the mind, he simply sat and observed what was going on. This observation, this clear seeing we call vipassana. Insight. Vipassana, the act of developing direct insight. Sitting, looking at, knowing your own experiencing in this moment is seeing into the nature of mind.

Now I'm going to whip you forward in time about 1600 years from the time of the Buddha. White Wind Zen Community was fledgling and the Sangha, which was under five people, sat at Daijizan. At that time, the Roshi, then Sensei, was basically funding the whole operation out of his own pocket and Saturday, he had to go to work. So after the sitting, the Sangha, whether it was two or three or four, would go walking down to the market with the Roshi and we'd have breakfast together. This was early on in my practice, it was a matter of weeks, as a matter of fact. I have a memory that it was a day like today, going into autumn, crisp and clear. So we went, we ate, and of course the students were all on their best behavior. And the meal came to an end and I remember sitting there, wondering who was going to say what to whom, what to do? I might have even remembered to practise mindfulness, to feel the breath, to sit up straight, to open the eye gaze. All of a sudden, the Roshi said: "I'll be going now" and he got up, put on his cap, nodded in a public gassho, and left.

I was blown away.

Like leaves in the wind, I saw all those times when I had stood up and said: "Well, gee, this has been really great, you're all great people [students laugh] let's do it again sometime, whaddaya say? No no no, I really have to go. I'd kill myself to stay here with you and waste some more time." [students laugh] We've all done it. [students laugh some more] The social conditioning, the patterns that we fall into. Now a caveat here, I'm not talking about being rude, I'm talking about seeing the ways we have all lied through our teeth. First of all to ourselves, and then to those that we might have been comingling with in various ways. "No no, it's my fault, it's not you, no..." [Osho and students laugh heartily]

So as I said, I was blown away. That put the capper on it for me, I had no escape route. That was it. I wanted to learn what was so real in that moment. Saying what you mean, meaning what you say, not embroidering, not weaving a tapestry of acceptability.

So, here we sit today, pursuing the matter further by putting the bottom down on the zafu is what we do. This practice is founded on a little shamatha, that's what got you here this morning if you had even a tiny, little thought, or even a whiff of "I don't want to do this, it's a beautiful day, I'd rather..." Those thoughts come up, they're not a problem, they're not who you are. They're just a hangover from self-image's inebriated view of how things are, which of course is that it is the centre of the world and it knows everything. So this practice is shamatha, that effort, that will to step past obstructions, the ones we create ourselves. Vipassana, the clear seeing, insight, held together with mindfulness.

A quote again from "Before Thinking":

If our practice is founded upon a process of mindfulness and insight, however, then we know that when confusion is present, the only means available to clarify it is to simply watch it, to simply attend to it, to see how it functions, to notice its effect within our entire experience.

In order to notice, in order to know our experiences, we need to place ourselves in a situation where there is a framework that will enable us to see clearly. At this point, we start to understand the necessity of the forms, basic forms, forms of deporting the bodymind, even when it's walking around the monastery, even when it's eating, it's still sitting. So, simple forms: pay attention, feet together, standing up straight, open eye gaze, hands in shashu. That frame enables us to see the machinations of self-image that wants to fill what it says is empty space with meaningless gesture, old patterns of verbosity. Now we may also have ideas that if we're practising, well, none of this should be going on, we should feel comfortable all the time. That simply isn't true because when we're adjusting the bodymind so that it is possible for us to see openly what's going on, there's going to be rushes of remnants of states that come up and put pressure, and squeeze us and make us feel things like, our teeth have grown, our teeth are huge and our lips are sticking to them and it's as if someone's holding us by the back of the neck and we can't breathe. No problem, none of that's actually going on. But simply standing, paying open attention does have effects. What do you do? Feel the breath, stand up straight, or sit up straight, open the eye gaze. Practise that moment. States, patterns, tendencies will wear out.

All of the forms in use at Dainen-ji and the forms you use if you are sitting at home, practising at a distance, are all there and available to provide a clear frame to see what's going on in your experience.

"Before Thinking":

It is to simply notice what our seeing is like, what the sensations of our body are like.

We're not used to doing that. We're used to talking about them to ourselves and to anyone around. Feel the breath, sit or stand up straight, open the eye gaze. Now this may sound perhaps quite distant, something that we can do in the Hatto, and if we get really good at doing it in the Hatto, well, then it's done. These verses from "The Practice of Purity", which come from the Flower Garland Sutra, an old text with valuable information, about practice as practised by people just like us for 1600-some years, can help us see what's going on right here, right now, no matter what we're doing. And, we do things, we do more things than just sitting. There's kinhin, there's oryoki, there's walking out, there's what we do for entertainment. We might like movies, we might like music, we might like running marathons.

Confidentially: tried that, DIDN'T like it. [students laugh]

So we recognize, we have to take care of the bodymind in some way, give it those little outings where it can stretch, where it can work the way it was designed to work, more or less.

Given there's no barefoot hunting through the grasses, given there's no large fields to till and very few large stones to roll out of the way, well, I decided to take up something that I've always wanted to do: dancing. So, I was walking down Daly Avenue, I saw a little poster, bright yellow, it said: "Beginning Breakdancing". I tore off the little slip: no telephone number, an email address. So I emailed, we set it up, I went to the first lesson, I was the only person there. Who was my teacher? A 26-year-old guy from Slovakia. Who'd a thought? But it was wonderful because I was the only student, which meant of course that I got what I needed and what I was capable of. So I decided to venture a little further, when this fellow left town, and I saw "Beginner's Hip Hop".

So I went to the first class. Gold mine. 50-year-old, 55-year-old, a couple of others, indeterminate, but you know, a couple of young people, all ripe. So we start. The first class wasn't bad, nobody knew anything. The second class, I think there was only the 45-year-old left and there were some younger sprouts there. It was okay. The next week: young people and a new teacher, 19 years old. Has a crew that has traveled around to different cities to perform. The instruction was fast, and then it was faster. Then I had to skip a week. And I went back, this week. More young people. And, they were shorter than I am, so I'm three times as old as they are, I'm about four inches taller than they are, so obviously I have more to deal with. And it's not going well. I'm at the back, I can't remember stuff. It's going so fast! So I see the possibility of uh... disaster. [students laugh] And I'm not having a good time. It does seem self-defeating to engage in something that you want to do, but you're not having a good time at it.

So possibilities present themselves. You can see the whispers of things that could come up and could sway an intelligent decision about what to do. You know there's like, "Okay, the teacher is teaching too fast!" Hey, but everyone else is getting it, I can see that with my own eyes. So self-image, at the centre of its world can say things like: "Well that's it, they should change to suit me." That's not realistic! That has nothing to do with reality. I could crawl into my little corner and bow down my weary old head and cry the blues about being "just too old" to do this. But I've done that before, I did that in the beginning, with practice. Confusion would come up and say: "I'm too old to feel the breath, to sit up straight [students laugh] to open the eye gaze".

Nonsense. So, I thought, "Well, you know, I'm not having a good time, and it's not realistic to think that the teacher is going to kick everybody else out and just teach me because I'm slower." I mean, I'm sure I could have arranged that, but at what cost? It's just not worth it.

So, I went to the teacher and I said: "Simply, this is too fast for me, I'll be in touch". And I will. And I left, and found that this particular group has another session on Saturday afternoons which is called Fusion. I've been to one of these and you know, it's women who work in offices, they're in their thirties, their forties, their fifties, and there's actually a 70-year-old there.

Hey, reality. The reality of circumstance and condition does present itself and it can be adapted to. I'll have fun, I'll work up a sweat. The bodymind will get exercise, the joints get lubricated. You get to bop and bust a few moves. [students laugh] So maybe they're moves of the older kind, but that's reality. There's the reality of seeing and hearing and tasting and touching and feeling and smelling, there's the reality of colour and forms and sounds, there's the reality of breathing in and out. But there's also the reality of our personal condition and circumstances, and we want to be able to make clear decisions, clear choices.

No matter what's going on for you, no matter what you find yourself involved in, you can start to understand more and more clearly what it is you want, what it is you like, what it is you're good at, what it is you're going to do. You can make those choices, you can take actions based on choices, unfettered by the clutching hands of self-image around your own neck. You do that by looking into your experiencing, facing your experiencing as it is. And you're learning to do that, facing the wall.

Bodhidharma called Zen: "a special transmission, outside the words, outside the scriptures, a direct pointing to the mind". So as much as you can see about what is going on, the more clarity you will have, the more what you do will be based upon insight into that process of perception and cognition. You don't have to oppose, you don't have to change a bad thought into a good thought, you don't have to sit there wishing, thinking that if you were twenty years younger, you'd really be able to nail this dancing thing. Just see what's going on, see it clearly and make the best possible choice in this moment, for you.

I'll read the verse again:

Practising insight,  
"May all beings  
See Reality as it is,  
Always free of the struggle of opposing it."

Mos' def! [laughter]

Thank you for listening.

## Every Breath You Take 33: When Uncrossing the Legs

Dharma Talk presented by Ven. Shikai Zuiko osho

Dainen-ji, October 25th, 2008

I'm glad to see the back of you. [students laugh]

Now, if that were said in another context... [more laughter] it means something entirely different. It means: "I'm really glad to see you going". That's one of the fun surprises of practice, we start to see our understanding of language, as well as everything else, change. But of course, everything is changing. And everything is going, but you, sitting there, facing the wall with your legs crossed have an opportunity to see that truly, without you, without your bodymind going anywhere, you can clearly see that whatever rises falls, that everything is really gate gate paragate, going going, always going. Gone gone, always gone. Whatever dharmas arise, must fall, nothing can be held onto. And you're realizing this with every breath you take.

The breath is this moment. All the ones before are gate gate paragate, they're gone, and there's this one. And, maybe, there'll be another one, but there are no guarantees and no one gets out alive.

Today's verse, from the Avatamsaka sutra, Flower Garland Sutra and the text "The Practice of Purity", and remember, people 1600 years ago heard these verses just as you are hearing the now as well as seeing the wall in front of you, as well as feeling the clothing on your body, feeling the hands, feeling the feet, feeling the spine upright, feeling the rib cage and the lungs expand as you practise the whole bodymind in this whole moment.

When uncrossing the legs,  
"May all beings observe  
That all activities and things  
Resolve into falling away, vanishing."

Every moment is a moment in which you can practise. When you see anything, when anything is known, that's when you can feel the whole bodymind in the whole moment, by feeling the breath, sitting up straight, opening the eye gaze. The forms of practice although sometimes self-image may view them as unnecessarily harsh, or even have other colourful descriptions of the forms, the forms provide the necessary framework for you so that you can see reality.

And so there, you have crossed your legs. If you're sitting in seiza, that is, in a way, an equivalent of crossing your legs and facing the wall, but I do encourage people to try and then become better at sitting with crossed legs because this provides a posture that is more balanced. But as with everything that the bodymind engages in, it takes time for muscles and tendons and joints to stretch and open. So you've been sitting there and you may have noticed sensations in the knees and hips and there may be the mutterings of a soloist, or even a whole choir: "Please let it be over, let it be over, let it be over, please ring the gong, ring the gong, ring the gong, please I can't stand this, can't stand this, oh! Fuck!" [students laugh] and then the gong is sounded.

Now, the tendency of someone who is not familiar with practice is to take a big sigh and then get busy [Osho makes a rubbing sound] rub, rub, rubbing the knees as if this does any good at all, except provide a distraction from what's going on. So at the end of the sitting round, when the gong sounds, it is a moment of change because you know that you are going to face in the direction of the butsudan, be on your knees, take care of your zafu and zabuton and come to standing for kinhin or to come for Daisan.

Use the bodymind fully.

Use the form fully.

You may notice yourself collapsing into an old pattern about how if you were just more flexible, or if we allowed you to lounge around, then you'd really be able to practise...

When you notice anything

no matter what content

feel the breath

sit up straight

open the eye gaze.

Practise the whole bodymind.

Take care as you move

and by taking care as you move

I mean to use each moment of noticing

anything

about the bodymind

to allow the bodymind to express itself fully

so that the mutterings of self-image

become only part of the reality of the moment

which is what they are

but we are used to believing that our stories about what's going on

are the most important thing.

Through showing up at the monastery, we exhibit by what we have done that we have managed not to fall for thoughts and feelings. Not to fall for self-image's stories about how, well, we really deserve to do something else. Each time you see something as simple as the content of a thought, you have an opportunity to practise that moment, and eventually, over time, you will start to see more clearly the details of that process of perception and cognition. You will start to see the contraction that comes up that we refer to as self-image, and remember, there are many of them, it is not one thing, and you, at the moment of recognition, exert the whole bodymind and experiencing opens.

Knowns present themselves to you as the knowing of them. You start to see, through the simple act of moving the knees, so that they are on the zabuton, rather than crossed, you can recognize that you are no longer sitting with the legs crossed. That may sound simplistic, but we tend not to notice things like that because what we have done in the past, our habitual patterns are to never be where we actually are, even though that's impossible. We're sitting with the legs crossed and we think: "Oh, I can hardly wait until I can uncross these legs and stand up, then everything's going to be great and after I get out of here, what I'll do is, yeah, I'll go down to such and such, or I'll do some deep knee bends and stretches and everthing'll be great and I'll be ready for the next time I come for the sitting" and so on...

So all of this is going on and we don't notice the details, we don't notice the simple fact that the stories we were telling ourselves about how we could not continue sitting past this moment were totally untrue and have totally fallen away, as have the sensations that we had honed in on and used to describe the whole of our experience. They're all gone. They're all gone. This quote is from "Active Recognition: On Work", given by Anzan Hoshin Roshi in October, 1986 and I encourage you to go to the website and read it.

We tend to ignore the fine details that compose everything that we do. And only recognize lumps and chunks of them. For example, when we have a task to do, we start the task by thinking about how it will be when it is finished and what we're going to be doing after that. In Zen, we begin a task by noticing the details we are working on at this moment. In the next moment, we're working on another detail and in the next moment, another detail. And, at some point, the task is finished. That means simply that we go on to other details, other moments of seeing, hearing, touching, colours, sounds. The tasks were never really finished, because it was never really there, but it was done completely because each detail was done completely.

As you sit there, with legs crossed, hands in the mudra, buttocks on the zafu, I see the back of you, rising and falling with

the breath. You can sit up straight. You can feel the breath. You can feel the whole bodymind in this moment. That is what you are learning to do, so when uncrossing the legs on the cue of the gong at the end of the sitting round, please, take care of each detail, observe that all activities and things resolve into falling away, vanishing. This is what you're learning to do. This is practice. And practice, of course, is doing something over and over again so you get better at it. It's funny, isn't it, we tend not to think of that. We practise the piano, we may practise our diction, we may practise basketball, and somehow, we understand that. We understand that playing the notes over and over again, we'll get better at it, but with Practice practice, that little part seems to have disappeared. The fact of doing something over and over and getting better and better at it.

The verse again:

When uncrossing the legs,  
"May all beings observe  
That all activities and things  
Resolve into falling away, vanishing."

And remember, that will happen to you too. Everything about you will fall away and vanish. So it is important, let's say even vital that you notice this breath, and use it to practice the whole bodymind.

Thank you for listening.

## Every Breath You Take 34: Lowering the Feet and Resting

Dharma Talk presented by Ven. Shikai Zuiko osho  
Dainen-ji, October 18th, 2008

And a very good moment to you.

Feel the breath, feel that spine, feel the lungs expand. Feel this whole moment with the whole bodymind.

Here we are, twentieth century kids, facing a wall. Practising, as other kids who grew up did, in India, China, Japan, North America. Here we are, doing the same practice. And we are looking at "The Practice of Purity", verses which were translated from the Avatamsaka Sutra, the Flower Garland Sutra.

Today's verse:

Lowering the feet and resting,  
"May all beings  
Unfold freedom of attention  
And rest at ease, unstirred."

Each time you notice attention narrowing or narrowed, is noticing a moment of the reality of your life, in that moment. At that moment, you practise the reality of your life by reminding yourself of seeing, hearing, tasting, touching, feeling, smelling, breathing in and out, the clothes on the body, colours, light, form. Everything that the bodymind is experiencing in this moment. You are the Knowing of this moment and all of us owe a debt to all of us who are no longer breathing in Japan, China, India, but who practised. Some woke up. Some carried the transmission, the vital transmission of your life as it is in this moment so that we here in the twenty first century can access our life in this moment. That indeed is a true treasure, a Dharma treasure, the treasure of Reality.

Now, ears might have perked up around the phrase "lowering the feet and resting". Lowering the feet? Lowering the feet, what is being talked about? Well, the Avatamsaka Sutra was written some 1600 years ago and these verses were written for practitioners. And of course the text was carried to China and to Japan and as we know, current or contemporary situations will be reflected in verses. And the current or contemporary situation may have been in the twentieth century, the nineteenth century, the eighteenth century, seventeenth century.

We're sitting in Dainen-ji, in the Hatto. For a moment, picture a Hatto, picture a Dharma room that is five times as long and five times as wide as the Hatto. Of course, there wouldn't be an electric light, as there is Tiantong-si in Ningbo where Dogen zenji sat and woke up. It wasn't there when he was there, of course. It would have been lit by candles. So the Dharma Hall is lit by natural light, candles or lanterns. Is there central heating? No way. Is it fans that you're feeling? No way, it's the wind announcing the coming of winter, rustling through the Dharma Hall, biting your little noses and ears. But they sit on a platform which is raised from the floor two and half feet, maybe. And as a monastic, practising your life in this temple, this is where you live. This three foot by six foot space, elevated from the floor is where you sit, where you eat, where you sleep. Underneath there's a space for your clothing and your toiletries. This is your life. There would be a curtain on one doorway of the hall. Up, it would mean, and I'm quoting from "The Practice of Chinese Buddhism, 1900 to 1950", "recess".

Well, we don't have recess. It might be an indicator that the monks are not sitting in the Dharma Hall at that moment. When the curtain comes down, there's a sign saying "Meditation under way". In the middle of this vast hall, there would be a butsudan, a platform of waking up which reminds monastics what they are doing there. In China, in this meditation hall that we're talking about now, there would be a statue of Bodhidharma, a very important lineage ancestor who stares at you

as you circumabulate in kinhin, he stares at you from the wall from a zenga by Anzan Hoshin roshi, right across from the painting of Dogen zenji. Why Bodidharma? Because in this Dharma Hall, Ch'an, Chinese for Zen, was what was taught and this is what has been passed on to us as well. The wordless teaching. And you've come across references to that in chanting texts, other texts you may have read, or from the gaping maw of Dharma teachers as they say over and over again: "its meaning is not in words" as students try to come up with a clever turn of phrase.

Its meaning is not in words, the opening of attention is not about words, it is about noticing what happens when you notice experiencing. It is about you as the Knowing, knowing reality and allowing the presencing of the whole bodymind to be known. The wordless teaching.

Now, there have been a lot of words written about this wordless teaching, have there not? And that's because words are tools, very important tools, tools that can point to your experiencing. Interestingly, in the Dharma Hall that's talked about in the text, there was a large sign hung outside the meditation hall. The character for "hall" was written without the usual element meaning "mouth" and you remember or may remember or may come across phrases such as "white moss growing over your mouth", "sitting like a withered tree". Now, we don't talk in the Hatto when we're sitting zazen. When we're sitting retreats, functional talking allows us to see the many impulses of self-image to focus in and play out its various habits and patterns. No problem that those things come up, it's a moment to practise, it is a moment to allow attention to unfold the freedom that is always present.

In Tiantong-si, in Ningbo, China, where Dogen sat, the sitting hall was slightly smaller than the one referenced in the text on Chinese Buddhism. I remember walking in there, and of course the first thing I noticed was that light bulb hanging from a cord in the middle of the hall, a recent addition. Under my feet, I could feel stone steps curve by who knows how many monks coming and going. The floor, the stone floor was worn with who knows how many monks setting one foot in front of the other during kinhin. The platform was in place on three sides of the room where those who came for whatever period of time to practise as monastics, would sit, would sleep, would eat. So the practitioners would sit after having lifted the legs up onto the platform and turned to face the wall. They would sit just as you are sitting, noticing reality as moment after moment unfolds, moment after moment of your life with the recognition that what has gone on before is gone and nobody knows what's coming next.

This has been the case in the 2600 years since people started to practise.

Self-image would like to distance itself. It has a very difficult time, this contraction into a sense of a self that believes it's the centre of the universe, it has a very difficult time recognizing that thousands and thousands of others have done just this so that you could sit here in this hall doing just this. At the end of the practice round, the gong would be struck and the practitioners would bow forward, rotate the knees onto the cushion and make motions to begin kinhin. In the case of those practising in the Dharma Halls with platforms, they would lower their feet and rest for a moment before starting kinhin.

It is quite amazing, really, for a moment to think of those people, human beings just like you and I, mostly nameless except for the teachers, whose words have come down in texts, in koan... but for a moment, all those nameless, faceless people, people we'll never know, people who did just what you're doing right now...

The verse again:

Lowering the feet and resting,  
"May all beings  
Unfold freedom of attention  
And rest at ease, unstirred."

Thank you for listening.  
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## Every Breath You Take 35: Raising the Legs

Dharma Talk presented by Ven. Shikai Zuiko osho  
Dainen-ji, November 15th, 2008

EVERY BREATH YOU TAKE... is known.

Every breath you take...  
lets you know you're alive  
and you can practise that moment of aliveness...  
by feeling the breath  
by sitting up straight  
by opening the eye gaze...

...which is a long way of pointing to  
the reality of knowing the whole bodymind in the whole moment  
the reality of allowing attention to open

so there is not a continuation of the contraction into a being that is  
in one way or another  
holding one view or another  
trying to situate itself, basically, in safety.

Self-image, images of a self which we picked up in many places, is concerned for itself and holds many points of view in captivity because it becomes convinced of its point of view. And we may start to find ourselves drowning and fighting, captured in the bonds of these views of how we are and how the world is. What to do about it?

Well, you all know. So you can do it right now.

The verse:

Raising the legs,  
"May all beings  
Leave the sea of birth and death  
And ripen all virtues."

Raising the legs,  
"May all beings  
Leave the sea of birth and death  
And ripen all virtues."

Well, that's all open to interpretation, isn't it? Yet self-image wants to nail something down. It wants rules. That contraction into a sense of self that does not want to make a mistake fails to realize that mistakes are where we learn. When there's a sense of a self that knows it all, it does all manner of things to protect itself. Crazy, stupid things. Somehow, and yet, it holds a belief that these crazy, stupid things are not noticed, even when they are really in your face.

First off, in examining this verse, what's the purpose? Well, the purpose is to give practitioners something they can use in a variety of situations to remind themselves of what they're doing. Bear in mind that was this written down some 1600 years ago in a different context entirely. So over the years, the practice of practising the whole bodymind has in many instances shifted and changed. Now there is no expectation that you would memorize these verses and bring them up like an automaton in every instance where you may be raising the legs.

Oh yeah, an aside: it's referring to YOUR legs, the legs of the individual practitioner. Because the physical context has changed, this may have been referring to, as we learned a talk or two ago, it may have been referring to sitting on a platform in a large Chan monastery, or in monasteries in Japan, sitting on a raised platform and then bringing the legs up from the floor. The legs would be dangling over the edge if you were short. If you were tall, they would actually be on the floor but you would raise the legs onto the platform where you would sit. We may raise the legs with our hands when we're putting them into position for the posture of zazen. So this can remind us that what we're doing is learning to practise the whole bodymind in the whole moment.

Nothing gets in the way of this because everything that is known, everything that is experienced is used with this practice. Self-image of course has various views, contractions come up when, for instance, the posture is adjusted. "I was sitting straight already. That monk made me crooked." It can even be tending toward the aggressive. We snap back like an elastic band into the posture that we were in before. Those contractions into a sense of self are interesting and when attention follows the contraction, the contraction becomes bigger and bigger and gestates as it were, but rather quickly until there is the birth of a being. A being who may be really ticked off because the monk came around and RUINED what they were doing. Ruined it. That recognition that what is being offered is a reminder of the capacity inherent in the bodymind for expressing itself more fully is lost temporarily.

And so there are wee stories propagated:

"They really hurt me." [Osho laughs]  
"They don't know what they're doing."  
"He, she, or it is better than this one."

No problem that thoughts come up. It's a good thing, it's a good thing to learn that that being with all its dissatisfactions, with all its problems need not be carried. It's a burden. The information might be useful, usually it's not, usually it's a fabrication. You can always talk about it later. But when there is this arrival of a being that is held onto, which of course is impossible because there's no way we can hold onto anything at all, there's birth and death, the birth and death of moments of experience. They come, they go and as the Roshi has said in the series "Doing Not-Doing": makusa, there's nothing need be done about that. You can do the thing that is faster to do than to talk about, which is allow the bodymind to be free of the contractions into a sense of self with its storylines.

Why is that useful? Because when we are attached to certain stories about how we are and how the world is, we limit the capacities of the bodymind in very noticeable ways.

So, from the verse, "leave the sea of birth and death, and ripen all virtues." Sounds good, don't "understand" it, let it pass

by. As we know, all words are metaphors for experience and experiencing. The experience and the experiencing always comes first, always has and always will. The words are pointers that allow us to look in areas that we may not have investigated before. So this vast sea of birth and death, of raindrops, of the sound of raindrops coming and going, of breathing in and out, of sitting, of seeing the wall, of the eyes narrowing perhaps and then opening as there's a moment of waking up to this moment, gives us the opportunity to actually practise the whole bodymind in the whole moment.

"Leaving the sea of birth and death" means that we are learning doing not-doing. We don't have to try and create an absence of thoughts, an absence of feelings. Not at all. Those things are no more no less than any other dharma, or moment of experience. They don't have any more value. They may be more convincing because we're used to them but take a risk: allow the whole bodymind to express itself in the whole moment so that Knowing, which is what you are, does not become captured by some crazy story.

Now, about fifteen years ago, I was in China and I was learning some bodymind work with a group of people from all over the world in a hospital in Beijing and we went on an excursion. You know, you get on a bus and then you wait in horrible traffic that seems never to move very quickly. So finally we reached our destination, the Great Wall and we went up onto the Great Wall.

I was standing, I was looking out, I could see the remnants of terraces where people had farmed in those mountains. I could see this pathway, the pathway of the wall going on and on an on. It was all very rich and interesting and I heard a voice behind me saying:

"Would you please get out of the way because you just wouldn't find a Zen monk on the Great Wall of China".

This was one of the mates from the bus. So of course, what to do? Well, I moved, because it is important to remember: person, place, appropriateness, and amount when you're wanting to discuss things. So I just got out of the way. And when we were going back on the bus and subsequently having dinner, the person, who was a well-educated person who taught at a university in the Midwest, US, suddenly turned to me and said: "I feel like a real idiot. I've been thinking about what happened. I just totally got lost in my idea of what was going on." She says: "I realized I made a fool of myself by saying 'You wouldn't find a Zen monk on the Great Wall' and I also realized that what I was doing was not taking pictures from my point of view of what was actually going on in that moment. What I was doing was taking pictures that have already been taken that I thought was how being on the Great Wall was supposed to look."

And I'm sure if you search through, you'll find, without putting any effort into it, many instances of being in situations where the contraction into a sense of self, a being, forgets that there is only this moment, there is only this breath and makes decisions as to what to say and do and how to respond based on experiencing conditioned by previous experiences. We don't see people that are actually there, we see who we think should be there. It's no wonder that in courts witnesses have to be coached. [Osho laughs]

So, when we follow these beings that are operating on what they think they've experienced sometime other than now, we're running a good chance of making ourselves seem to be, let's say, oh, I'll quote my mother here: "out of it". And as far as ripening all virtues, well, that comes up all the time, I'm not going to give you a list of things considered virtuous, but hey, we're all here because we want to do the right thing. We're all here because we've seen things, we perhaps have done things, we've heard of things that makes us shake our heads and go "that's just not right".

So taking care is the base of this practice. Taking care of what? Taking care of THIS moment, the moment wrapped around the breath and doing what needs to be done. Sitting in the Hatto. Hearing the rain. Seeing the white wall. What needs to be done is to allow the whole bodymind to express itself fully in this moment. That's what you're learning to do.

The verse again:

Raising the legs,  
"May all beings  
Leave the sea of birth and death  
And ripen all virtues."

Thank you for listening.  
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## Every Breath You Take 36: Putting on Lower Garments

Dharma Talk presented by Ven. Shikai Zuiko osho  
Dainen-ji, November 29th, 2008

No matter which box you tick on a questionnaire when it says "Sex", here we are, all of us, whether we ticked "m", "f", "h", or "undecided". We're all sitting here and we are wearing the perfect practice garment, the kunsu, the lower garment, which wraps around, which is tied and which provides the most comfort of anything you can put on to wear when you're practising.

EVERY BREATH YOU TAKE when you're wearing this lower garment or any lower garment, leggings, tights, jeans,

underpants, panties, boxers, skorts, skirts, jodhpurs, breeks, trousers, trews, kilts, bloomers, slacks... No matter what lower garment you're putting on, the moment you notice anything about that moment of experience, you are given, for no reason whatsoever, the opportunity to practise the reality of that moment of noticing by noticing the whole body in the whole moment.

Today's verse from "The Practice of Purity":

Putting on lower garments,  
"May all beings  
Bear fundamental goodness  
And a sense of responsibility."

Now, the fundamental goodness is something that is inherent in the vows, including the samu chant, for example. "May all beings be happy, may they be peaceful, may they be free." So each and every one of us has expressed to ourselves and others this fundamental goodness and clarity. A sense of responsibility? Willingness to respond to any situation by making the best possible choice of what to say or what to do. Now, of course, we'll keep it simple. The first choice is of course to practise the whole bodymind in this moment. Feeling the breath, sitting up straight, opening the eye gaze, seeing, hearing, tasting, touching, feeling, smelling, thoughts. Practising that moment of noticing reality opens further the potential for expression that will be the most useful to the most beings in alignment with the understanding, the desire, the expression that brought you to practice.

So "putting on lower garments", let's keep it simple.

At some point in the history of humankind, someone sat down and wove something. They put one piece of material over another and eureka: the fashion industry. But for the longest time, up until about the sixteenth century, a piece of cloth wrapped around the body and tied in many different ways was the garment. That was what people wore to cover their nakedness, to give them warmth. The only exception may have been the Inuit who were using animal skins and as far as we know, never developed weaving and they had leg coverings made of animal hide with a tunic over it, also made of animal hide. And it was in the sixteenth century that this idea, this fact of covering each limb separately developed. So we had leg coverings that were tied to a tunic in most of the western world as the prevailing mode of dress for men.

So now we have a division in the wearing of garments that has become the purview of self-image, that contraction into a sense of self with its story as to who we are and what the world is and what is going on in the world. So these leggings tied to a tunic were a mode of dress. The tunics became shorter, so these individual leggings now needed something additional to cover the naughty bits. So thus developed the codpiece.

And now we have pants or trousers. And why pants? Why the 's'? Why trousers? Because there were two. So when you hear someone in a store trying to sell you a "pant", or a "trouser", you have an affectation of the fashion industry and it's just wrong.

So we have these large pieces of cloth that were still wrapped by a lot of the world around themselves and tied in various ways. And it's been the longest lasting garment as far as I can find out, ever. Apparently the Vikings wore lower garments that were made up of 100 meters of fabric, bearing in mind that a loom at that time may have been only 12 inches wide, so they would have been strips. So of course modes of clothing take on meaning, the meaning of status. I mean if you can only afford 12 meters, and that other guy over there has 100, well, who, who has more status? Well, the guy with 100 meters of fabric in his pants! [students laugh]

Kilts. Self-image will make anything, will take anything to make statements of division, which can lead to violence. The kilt is still a source of argument. The Irish claim it, the British claim it, and the Scots claim it, and they fought over it. In fact, at one point, the English said the Scots could not wear the kilt because it was a bonding factor, and the wearing of the kilt was punishable by six months in prison, and the second offense: seven years of transportation to some foul colony overseas.

It is quite surprising how political garments are. And it's quite fun.

For women, the wearing of the trousers was something that just was not done until the 18th century when women working in mines and fields would wear a form of trouser borrowed from men with the skirt tucked up over it. The trouser again became a political statement. Bloomers, voluminous pants, which some say were modeled on harem pants became a symbol of women seeking liberation in the 19th century. In the 19th century in the American west, women wore trousers for riding, and when airplanes came about, for flying in airplanes, for riding bicycles, and for protesting. In the 1930s, actresses made the wearing of trousers popular. They were also popular for war work. And in Britain, women, because of the rationing of fabric, wore their husbands' trousers to work in factories, to work on the land. And in the 1960s, trousers, imagine that, only in the 1960's, trousers for women were strutting down the runways of the fashion world.

When you think about it, what meaning or thought might pop into your head if... say you saw a man wearing a skirt on the street, what might come up? We do tend to accept unquestioningly our opinions, the opinions of self-image, and use them to define self and other. So just see it, have some fun with it. And recognize that in the kunsu, this piece of fabric, wrapped around, that you are wearing so that you can practise more comfortably, is a garment that has been the prevailing lower garment in the world. All lower garments evolved from large pieces of cloth wrapped and folded in various ways.

Oh here's a little fact: First World War, the Royal Highland Regiment went into battle wearing kilts. The Germans referred to them as "The Ladies from Hell". So take nothing for granted. Start to have fun when you're looking around. When you're sitting on the zafu, use every opportunity of noticing any facet of reality at all to allow the whole bodymind to express itself fully in the whole moment. And...

When putting on lower garments  
"May all beings  
Bear fundamental goodness  
And a sense of responsibility."

Thank you for listening.

## Every Breath You Take 37: When Putting on a Belt

Dharma Talk presented by Ven. Shikai Zuiko osho

Dainen-ji, December 13th, 2008

EVERY BREATH YOU TAKE... means you're alive.

Or another way of putting it is:  
every breath that brings oxygen  
into this mass of molecules that makes up a diversity of cells  
that because we can talk, we like to call  
"me"...

...is the bodymind being the bodymind.

The thing you think of as "you" can't do any of that.  
It can't do what the bodymind does  
but  
the thing you think of as "you"  
when recognized as Knowing in itself  
the Knowing of moments of experience  
can loosen the hold of patterns and habits that condition experiencing.

The verse, from "The Practice of Purity":

When putting on a belt,  
"May all beings  
Gather roots of virtue  
And not loosen and lose them."

[Osho laughs]

We tend not to think much about belts and of course we must obviously recognize the verse as a metaphor. When wearing the kunsu, as everyone is, the belt is a long strip of cloth that is wrapped around and tied. So, perhaps the next time you fold and gather that large piece of fabric, which is the kunsu, the lower garment for sitting, when you gather and fold it and tie it by wrapping that strip of fabric around your waist, you may be reminded that you are gathering roots of virtue and each time you practise, each time you notice a moment of experience, you are exhibiting an intention to loosen the grasp of habits and patterns which we have woven into a self. And you are practising at that moment of noticing experiencing so that reality will present itself more and more clearly, so that you will not follow usual habits and patterns of the contraction into a sense of a self.

Quite a long time ago, I spoke of virtue and one of the aspects of the word is courage. The courage that it takes to look at what's going on moment to moment, in many situations, in many different contexts and recognize patterns as they want to play themselves out.

Most of us have had a long time, some of us a very long time, and some perhaps far too long a time, to see patterns that have been formed that we believe. Self-image does believe that it has to protect itself. That's why we'll find that often when someone say, in authority, or someone that for some reason or another, some self-protective reason, we are pandering to (because self-image does pander) says "black" and we, if the thing referred to is white, rather than saying "no no, white", will stand there and nod in agreement. Because self-image is scared, or because self-image does not know what it wants. Many are very unclear about what they want and when asked that question become very confused.

When we practise zazen, when we sit and practise mindfulness at the moment of noticing reality as it is, we see more and more clearly the many ways in which we act out habitual patterns. And then we start to see them as habitual patterns. And then we start to realize that we do not, and I say "realize" in the sense of making it real, we do not have to follow them. This can be uncomfortable, and it takes courage because we do not know what will happen.

You've all heard the expression "girding your loins" which means preparing yourself, a little courage for some sort of engagement. So take a risk. You have a right to an opinion, if you take the responsibility for recognizing when it's a real opinion as opposed to a patterned response. Self-image, when it is presented with something that is the opposite or is not quite what it wanted to present, will get very defensive, and will quickly come up with all sorts of reasons why it had nothing to do with whatever action or non-action came up. "The dog ate my homework" and a multitude of variations up to "I didn't know what was happening in the camps." You can see it. You can practise that moment of reality and those roots of integrity will not loosen and you will not lose them. With feet firmly planted in the Four Great Vows and that belt, which is not decorative, not a fashion item, but rather, a very practical way of keeping your kunsu from loosening, can remind you to practise this moment, moment to moment.

Apparently belts have been around since the Bronze age. One day, someone had wrapped something around themselves, others had something wrapped around them that were most probably blowing in the wind, and since there were no tightly-whities or long johns, a little cool in... you know the way I mean. [Osho and students laugh] So someone wrapped something around their waist, who knows what, who knows why, and everyone said: "Oh, that's a good idea" and before you know it, we had an industry making belt buckles. Some of which have survived to this day. Belt buckles indicated status and so on and for the longest time, basically, the belt was the male domain. The belt was a military item and still maintains to this day. The belt was worn with corsets by the military, so there could be a tiny waist and a great big, puffy pigeon chest that was desirable. It went to the point of course where it became a subject for cartoons. Then, belts became more universally worn and there were variations on the same, but it wasn't until around the 1920's in the West that belts were worn to keep trousers up.

Who'd a' thought?

And now we have a situation where you have sagging as a fashion statement, with pants being held up basically by some lower protruding bits. And if belts are worn, they're worn as decorative items. That fashion statement came from prisons where the overgarments, the trousers were basically all of one size: too big, and they sagged. Because belts were taken away because they could be used as weapons, or as an instrument of suicide, they became a status symbol on the outside. And we also have now belts as "big" for demarking the waistline, which you know, up to six, eight, ten inches of belt—big fashion statement, doesn't really hold up anything, except perhaps breasts—up and out. And there's been an increase in this particular fashion as people have become more and more "voluptuous".

So you'll see more belts, perhaps, as you go about your day-to-day activity, that could be kind of fun, I find it fun, I like to notice these things. Oh, another thing about noticing belts: if you have a belt that is leather, notice it, of course. Recognize it came from a being and it's providing you with a valuable service, but, no need to say this here, but for those who may listening in the future: don't wear that being in the Zendo or the Hatto.

The verse again:

When putting on a belt,  
"May all beings  
Gather roots of virtue  
And not loosen and lose them."

Thank you for listening.

## Every Breath You Take 38: Putting on Outer Garments

Dharma Talk presented by Ven. Shikai Zuiko osho  
Dainen-ji, December 20th, 2008

In ancient tombs have been found... grains of wheat, barley, spelt, rye that have lain dormant for thousands, perhaps even tens of thousands of years, which when put in the proper conditions, conditions conducive to the unfolding of the potential of that grain, have grown and blossomed into the full potential of that grain.

So, uh, those who think you may come a little late to practice... [Osho laughs] ...may be willing to put that idea aside. It's never too late, no matter how strongly and deeply who you really are may seem to be enfolded in costumes of self-image, the contractions into a sense of self that views itself in a certain way and the world in a certain way, to allow self-image to drop away. Self-image, those contractions, are not who you are. You've placed yourself in the conditions that provide the nutrients, the water, the information, the sunshine, so that you can unfold... your potential. That potential that lives as you.

The verse, from "The Practice of Purity":

Putting on outer garments,  
"May all beings  
Unfold unexcelled foundations of virtue,  
Arriving at the Other Shore of the Teachings."

Well, it is, in fact, quite obvious, what's being spoken of. But, some other points that are obvious when viewed in one light,

and not... not so obvious when viewed in another way, may present themselves. So, when "putting on outer garments", it could be that we think immediately of our own outer garments, specifically, we may have a memory pop up of putting on that puffy jacket. But when you can open that up you can recognize that in this verse, as it originally was written, sixteen hundred years ago, outer garments were completely different than what you are used to. That's neither here nor there, but it can be useful to see how self-image references everything to its own experience to the point that whatever else is available may get blocked out.

As you're sitting on the zafu, thoughts come up, and if attention moves into them, it can seem as if seeing, hearing, tasting, touching, feeling, smelling, become obliterated as attention is viewing only that particular content towards which it has moved. That is not a problem. That's the reality of that moment and the moment you see it, the moment you pop [Osho snaps fingers] for no reason whatsoever, the moment you wake up and see that you were involved, you have the opportunity to practise reality and unfold the foundations of virtue, unfold that capacity to see beyond self-image's self interest, and take whatever action is appropriate in that moment.

Over time, over time... over time, the tendency to fall into any of these states which obliterate reality drops away. And there is awareness itself doing what needs to be done in the moment when it needs to be done.

"Unfolding" is an interesting word. You've heard it numerous times used in teisho, in Dharma Talks, and in various texts. In the Four Great Vows:

All beings without number I vow to liberate.  
Endless obsessions I vow to release.  
Dharma gates beyond measure I vow to penetrate.  
Limitless Awakening I vow to unfold.

So when the contractions of self-image come up, it is as if space becomes knotted and it may get pulled tighter and tighter. The moment of [Osho snaps fingers] noticing it, the moment of noticing from the experience of the whole bodymind allows that contraction to unfold. There is this moment of waking up to what's really going on.

We also refer to that unfolding when we chant the Verse of the Kesa. Monastics will be more familiar with this, but those who have attended Fusatsu will have heard it chanted:

Vast and wond'rous this robe of the Buddhabody,  
beyond treasure,  
without form.  
Wearing it unfolds the Tathagata's Teaching  
and all beings are liberated.

So this process of unfolding occurs each time you recognize this moment of reality, each time the breath unfolds the little pockets in the lungs and the lungs unfold, your life is unfolding in that moment.

When you notice the contractions into a sense of self that come up, which when left untended weave themselves into a covering, a carapace that surrounds this moment which is living as you and turns it into a self, each time that's noticed, no problem, you've noticed a moment of reality; feel the breath, sit up straight, open the eye gaze, practise that moment, that carapace, that covering will unfold until there is nothing to unfold because all there is is this moment of open experiencing of the whole bodymind. When you put your arms in the sleeve of your outer garments to protect yourself before going out into the freezing cold, perhaps there may be a memory of the verse:

Putting on outer garments,  
"May all beings  
Unfold unexcelled foundations of virtue,  
Arriving at the Other Shore of the Teachings."

Thank you for listening.

## Every Breath You Take 39: Putting on the Kesa

Dharma Talk presented by Ven. Shikai Zuiko osho  
Dainen-ji, December 27th, 2008

EVERY BREATH YOU TAKE... gives you the information that "whoopie... you're alive!" You still have a chance to look into this question of birth and death.

And you do so by,  
at the moment of noticing any of the knots  
that call themselves a self  
any moments of narrowing attention  
into a story or stance

well, in fact...  
anything...

You don't have to discriminate  
and say to yourself  
"Do I want to practice here?"  
because  
you want to practice  
right there  
because  
that is a sense of self  
with a storyline  
that's trying to run the bells and whistles  
and seemingly weave and keep the bodymind  
together  
into this sense of a self.

Any time you notice you're noticing anything, you know what to do: feel the whole bodymind in the whole moment. Feel the breath, sit up straight, open the eye gaze. You don't need a list to do this, it's an action, so take it while that breath is moving that bodymind in and out. With every breath you take, you can feel the clothing on your body, and in the case of those who have taken vows, you can feel the wagesa, the lay person's reminder of the vows they have taken. You can feel the rakusu, the monastic's reminder of the vows that they have taken, the kesa. The kesa is what the rakusu came from. If one were wearing a kesa, one would be wearing a wrapped piece of cloth, quite big, going over one shoulder, made up of pieces of other cloth, which is a direct descendant of that worn and designed by the Buddha and his merry band of monks.

Today's verse:

Putting on the kesa,  
"May all beings  
Come forward  
And unfold equanimity."

You've all experienced what happens when a contraction into a sense of self comes up with a storyline and attention follows. To put it simply, you go off balance. Equanimity means flexibility, means not falling for one story or another, but just seeing them for what they are and using them as a reminder to practise the whole bodymind in the whole moment. The Buddha uncovered this reality, which, after being asked, he subsequently taught to those who were willing to leave their home situation and wander around India with him... because of course we know how it goes... once you're out of sight... hmm? [Osho laughs]

So, there they were, who knows what they were wearing, really, but they must have been some kind of ragtag assemblage which was one of many ragtag assemblages wandering around, some of whom were thieves and heaven knows what... I mean, it's interesting to contemplate that we may not, had we been there, have wanted to get involved with those other gangs. So, the ruler in the area that the Buddha and the monks were wandering around in, begging for their food for their survival, the ruler said: "Listen guys, we have a problem. The citizens are scared of you."

And I'm making this up, those weren't the words, right, [students laugh] but it had to be something like that.

The ruler said: "Look, I know that you are not running around robbing people and raping people and so on, causing havoc, but the citizenry doesn't know that, so come up with something distinctive, so that everyone can know and I can get the word out that those who are dressed in this certain way are okay."

The story is that the Buddha, and I believe it was Ananda, were looking out over the rice fields and they're going "Wow, you know, there are no fabric stores, what are we going to do? And we don't have any money."

So they said: "Okay, well, let's do this. Let's gather a lot of cloth and then we'll sew it together."

They were looking over the rice fields and noticed that the rice fields, although different in size and colour due to the different stages of development, had a coherency to them that was pleasing to the eye. They said: "I know, I know what to do. We'll collect all these old pieces of cloth from wherever, we'll sew them together, we'll dye them and we'll wear them. We'll wrap them around ourselves."

And that's what they did, so there was a distinctive look that set them apart from others wandering around.

So this, the first kasaya, big piece of cloth, was big enough to wrap around the monk completely with one end going over the shoulder. Frequently, in the hot weather, it was the only garment worn, so it had to be quite big. Over time, the kasaya traveled with wandering monks into Tibet, China, and eventually to Japan, where it was called a kesa. The wrapped robe lost its practical function as a garment to cover nakedness, but it retained its use as a reminder of the practice of waking up and bodying forth the Way. This is what it remains today, a reminder of the practice of waking up and bodying forth the Way.

Now, China had a very different climate from India, it was much colder. To help keep warm, the monks wore the kesa over scholar's robes. You know, adapt. It's still going on today. The wrapped robe was versatile and warm, but difficult to wear over other clothing. Walking about, working, climbing up mountains in the cold was made easier for monastics when the kesa was knotted over the shoulder. A hook and eye type closure was added. The hook and eye is evident in the bone or wooden ring of the rakusu. It's on the left of the rakusu.

In the 700s in China, Buddhist monks were persecuted. To avoid death, to avoid being executed, they grew their hair long in the style of the times and wore lay people's clothing. (Covert action. I love this.) A smaller version of the kesa, the rakusu, was developed to remind them of their practice. The smaller kesa, worn hanging around the neck, could be worn under clothing and remain a secret from outsiders. After the persecution ended, the smaller kesa continued to be worn as it allowed for much more ease of movement and we see, hanging around the necks of the monks in Dainen-ji today, the rakusu.

The Dharma gradually became infected by and ill with social culture. In some schools, the modest and humble kesa became rich and ornate and lost its value as a reminder of the practice taught by Gautama Siddhartha, the Buddha. Many monks gradually stopped practising in any real way which we would recognize and wore their costly and gorgeous silk and brocade kesa donated by rich patrons at ceremonies and funerals. These ceremonies were a major source of income and some of these kesa are indeed beautiful. I saw an exhibition in the Victoria and Albert Museum in London, I saw them in Kyoto. They were marvelous: hand woven, lots of gold, like... people like their bling!

Some lineages, including our own, left the centres of social culture and the corruption that the brocade kesa had come to symbolize and took to the mountains. And in the "Raihai Tokuzui", Dogen zenji does address this topic. The monks who took to the mountains practised in abandoned temples, in the forests, and under waterfalls. When tracked down by the very sincere, they taught. Necessarily, their robes and kesa were modest.

Kesa, the robe of the Buddhbody, have different manifestations in this, the Northern Mountain Order. The wearing of this sign of maturing practice and responsibility through the receiving of vows, begins when a formal student, upon receiving the Bodhisattva Precepts, receives back from the preceptor, a wagesa, a strip of black cloth, which the student has made. The wagesa of the Northern Mountain Order have evolved from a strip of cloth held together with two cords with tassels into a Mobius strip, which is a never ending path. I think that's great. Wagesa are another traditional form of kesa and are common in the Tendai, Shingon and Pure Land schools. In our design, the material is folded in such a way that it's a beginningless and endless Mobius strip made by the student, by hand. With each stitch taken, the student silently says The Three Jewels:

This is Buddha.  
This is Dharma.  
This is Sangha.

...to remind them what they are doing, and if it freaks them out too much, well, people do different things... The wagesa is worn around the neck. A formal student, preparing to be accepted either as a lay monk, or a postulant monk, sews a rectangular piece of folded fabric, the maneki to their wagesa, using a traditional stitch called the pine cone stitch. The maneki is placed so as to rest in the middle, at the back of the neck, just as it will on the rakusu of a novice monk. It's kind of like... training wheels. [students laugh]

As part of the preparation for novice monk's vows, the postulant sews a rakusu. The rakusu has five strips sewn from ten pieces of fabric, showing the rice fold pattern of the large kesa. The body of the rakusu measures around eleven by fourteen inches and is adjusted according to the size of the person taking the vows. The rakusu is held in place by two strips, the halter, which are worn around the neck. The maneki rests at the back of the neck. The rakusu can be made from new or old fabric. Even new fabric is cut into little pieces. The new fabric is marked unobtrusively with three dots of ink, thus making it worn, and reminding the monk that, hey, all is recycling. I prefer making rakusu from old fabric that comes from worn out robes and so forth.

For the novice, a silver pin, showing the endless knot of meditation is placed on a strap of the rakusu, just above the body of the rakusu. Prior to receiving full monk's vows, a new rakusu is made. The new rakusu still has five strips, but now the halter has a bone or wooden ring on the left, holding the strap together. The pin is retired. So, someone who knows the code can tell the stage in their monastic training the monk is at.

A monastic elder, a monk for five years, wears a seven strip rakusu. A Dharma Teacher wears a blue rakusu with seven strips. A Sensei or Roshi, the Zen Master, wears a nine strip rakusu. A large, wrapped kesa, still made of those patched together pieces, can be worn on ceremonial occasions. The kesa is hand made. It can be from new fabric, but should be modest in colour, and again, if preferred, old material from worn robes and clothing can be used. As during the process of sewing wagesa and rakusu, the monk chants:

Namu ki Butsu.  
Namu ki Ho.  
Namu ki So.

...while stitching. This is a vivid reminder of the activity and history of the robe. So, the verse:

Putting on the kesa,  
"May all beings  
Come forward  
And unfold equanimity."

Thank you for listening.

## Every Breath You Take 40: Taking a Toothstick in Hand

Dharma Talk presented by Ven. Shikai Zuiko osho

Dainen-ji, January 3rd, 2009

Bright. Bright bright bright.

White. White white white.

Cold. Cold cold cold.

A beautiful winter's morning.

When you woke up this morning, you may have noticed that even in the dark of your room, there was this moment of brightness before it became obscured into contractions into a sense of self that may have had storylines about what was going on.

"Feck! Feck feck! Don't wanna get up..."

"This'll be great. This'll be great."

"Maybe I'll have an interview and maybe I can bring up this wonderful thing that I've discovered about experiencing. Yes yes, that's IT!"... And so on...

The instruction is, of course; any time you notice anything, practise mindfulness in that moment which, of course, is the only moment that you can practise. It is the only thing going on.

So, regardless of, or perhaps even propelled by, some of the thoughts that you noticed, you put one foot in front of the other, trudded or skipped to the washroom. Washed your little face, brushed your little teeth, and here you are, after of course, all the other things you have to do to survive this incredible cold. And here you are facing that white, white, white wall. You may or may not notice it, but it's there, whether you notice it or not, it IS there. So you're encouraged to practise at the moment of noticing anything that comes forward, creates an imaginary, a fabricated knot in space and narrows experiencing into something that has been called "unwholesome", or "corrupt" or "conditioned". These are words that have been used to describe what happens when reality, when the reality of the moment becomes distorted by these knots which we refer to as self-image.

So, here we are.

Sit up straight right now. Feel that breath right now. Open the eye gaze, which is a shorter form of saying practise mindfulness of the whole bodymind in the moment by noticing seeing, hearing, tasting, touching, feeling, smelling, the breath moving in and out of the bodymind, which is a very long way of saying something you can do [Osho snaps fingers]... a couple of times, actually, in the length of time that it takes to snap those fingers (even though it was a little, feeble snap). [students giggle]

So when you were walking through the cold winter morning and you were being breathed in and out, maybe the cold as it hit the teeth produced twinges as the nerves were hit by something extreme: the cold. Now, confidentially, if you're "longer in the tooth", which is a way of saying "old", you may have noticed it more, which I think is a brilliant segue to today's verse. [students laugh]

Thank you. [more laughter]

Taking a toothstick in hand,  
"May all beings  
Realize complete Reality  
And enter spontaneous purity."

Well. Toothstick. As the man in the store that I went to yesterday asking for a toothstick said: "Toothpick? You want toothpick?"

I said "No, stick."

"Toothbrush! You want toothbrush."

"No."

So when, since it was a Middle Eastern store, when I put my fingers about six inches apart and drew an imaginary little twig, put the imaginary twig in my mouth and started rubbing it up and down on my teeth, he goes: "Ah! We used to have those, we used to have them. Everyone at home used to use them."

So, we can understand why when this verse was being translated, we decided to stick with tooth "stick" rather than toothbrush or toothpick, because we are actually talking about a stick that was used for cleaning the teeth... still done in many parts of the world today. And, as with many things, such as the neti pot for sniffing saline water up into the nose, which became a big "new age" item, we find that the toothstick, when investigated, turns up some rather remarkable facts.

And confidentially, the appearance of a toothstick is, I think, aesthetically more appealing than something in neon pink with a white handle and Mickey Mouse ears that is supposed to convince children that indeed it's fun to brush their teeth. And when you have an item like that, when you see it, you might want to consider the incredible amount of resources in energy, time, and so on that have gone into the packaging, the promotion and so on, for something which apparently, actually, may not be the best way of protecting and cleansing the teeth and mouth.

Now, toothsticks have been written about since the 14th century, which probably means that they were around a lot longer than that. The best toothsticks come from an arak or al arak, which is a tree that grows in hot areas, dusty, desert-like areas, that is always green. That's kind of interesting in and of itself, In 1961, a German scientist had some research done on why the toothstick because it is written into the guiding texts for many Middle Eastern peoples and toothsticks can be seen hanging out of the mouths of people throughout Africa. And so, this scientist had people at a German institute look into it. As it turns out, these sticks from the arak tree contain an antiseptic substance which is similar to and has a similar effect on bacteria and germs as penicillin. And microscopic study of toothsticks from the al arak tree show silica crystals and acidosis calcs which are useful for getting rid of stains and dental calculus which lead to plaque. There's also chloride with the silica, providing extra whitening, and a gummy substance which protects the teeth against cavities. There's vitamin C, which helps treat damage to the gums, and sulphuric substance which is also anti-cavity.

Now, of course, this, as with anything, can give us a chance to look at how self-image, (these views we have of how we are and how the world is), is very rooted in only its own experience. So, "toothstick? Well, obviously she's made a mistake, it's obviously toothbrush, ('cause that's what I'm familiar with)." Or, "it's obviously toothpick, (because that's what I'm familiar with)."

So you can use anything to see this process of self-image, contraction into a sense of self that has many different views. Now, some views are harmless. Some are not, as we witness time and time again. The forms that this practice provides give us an opportunity to see how we contract reality, how we knot into a sense of self with particular views, and obscure that open, luminous, spontaneous purity of this moment, which is open, which is luminous, which is bright until it becomes conditioned, until it becomes knotted and everything is drawn through that knot based on previous experiences and that knotting, that focusing narrows. So, a lot of reality is obliterated.

Use every opportunity, use the forms to see whatever it is that comes up in this moment, and at the moment of seeing it, of knowing it, you as the Knowing can know more of that reality, until it is complete, until it is always pure or empty of fabrication and knots. That's what you're doing.

So the verse again:

Taking a toothstick in hand,  
"May all beings  
Realize complete Reality  
And enter spontaneous purity."

Now, of course, it can be a toothpick, or a toothbrush, or something that's going to rotate so quickly that every organism in the mouth will be shattered and made less dangerous. And that's interesting, isn't it? Even the act of brushing your teeth kills beings.

Thank you for listening.  
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## Every Breath You Take 41: When Chewing on the Toothstick

Dharma Talk presented by Ven. Shikai Zuiko osho

Dainen-ji, January 17th, 2009

When chewing on the toothstick,  
"May all beings  
Have the eye teeth of wisdom  
And bite through all delusion."

A reminder that "EVERY BREATH YOU TAKE" covers many topics and every breath you take allows the bodymind to do many activities that are necessary for the maintenance of this thing we call the bodymind. And people have been taking care of it

for a long, long time.

Dogen zenji went to China to find his teacher and to wake up, and he brought that back to Japan in the early 1200s. Not only did he come back with information and instruction, and the ability to teach others how to wake up, he came back with practical instruction on how to take care of the bodymind, and he wrote about this in the "Senmon" chapter of the "Shobogenzo", and the translation that we use for this verse was based of course on Dogen's translation.

So, as we go back in our imagination to the early 1200s, we can understand through what we've read, or what we've heard, or what's been told us, or what we don't even know yet but are starting to get information about, that the Japanese, apparently, at that time, were not on the cutting edge of dental hygiene and when Dogen was in China, he saw that this chewing on a toothstick, in this case apparently, willow, was something that was done after the monks had cleaned their mouths. So they chewed away on this toothstick, this bit of a tree to clean further the bodymind, which is always a good thing to do and a note here: when you get older, your teeth start to go. The bone recedes and the gum recedes and it's not pleasant.

So, use the verse as a reminder to feel the breath, to stand up straight, to open the eye gaze, to actually "participate", to know what you are doing when you are busy taking care of those teeth.

So, Dogen zenji was apparently quite thorough in his presentations on "The Practice of Purity" of taking care, taking care of the bodymind, finding ways that are more complete and you can read about these in the "Shobogenzo" and various other texts.

When chewing on the toothstick,  
"May all beings  
Have the eye teeth of wisdom  
And bite through all delusion."

So the eye teeth, the dog teeth, the canines, the fangs, the cuspids, all different names for those pointy teeth, of which we have four, two in the upper jaw, two in the lower. And again, we don't really pay much attention to those things just as we don't pay much attention, often, to much of what we're actually doing. But those are the teeth that you bite into things with and hang onto, those fangs. So you're being reminded to use this moment to metaphorically use those sharp fangs to [Osho claps] cut through all delusion. And what delusion is that? Well... a delusion has been defined as a false belief based on incorrect understanding of reality.

So, we're sitting here and if there's a thought about something that someone said a while ago, or something that we're going to say to that someone sometime in the future, and we're invested in it, attention has gone into that little play, that's a delusion because it's not going on. The fact that the thought is there and it's recognized is starting to clarify delusion because you're seeing reality, you're seeing that a thought is present. You were caught up in it because when you ARE caught up in, you're caught up in it, you're not seeing that you are caught up in it, you're not seeing that, that moment of [Osho snaps fingers] waking up and recognizing that attention was focused and narrowed and caught up, is a moment of opening.

That's the point you practise immediately by feeling the breath, sitting up straight, opening the eye gaze, but noticing the sensations of the bodymind, you as the Knowing of the bodymind, use that moment to recognize that a thought's a thought. It is no more nor is it any less important than seeing, hearing, tasting, touching, feeling, smelling, breathing in and out. The reality of the moment is that all of those are going on, you might as well know them. You might as well allow the full presencing of the whole bodymind in the moment because it is going on. Just because you don't happen to notice it does not mean that seeing, hearing, tasting, touching, feeling, smelling, and breathing disappear. Which of course, logically, is a good thing. Because holy smoke! If we had to be aware, if we had to know every breath that had gone in and out of the body in order for it to go in and out of the body, not one of us would have lasted very long.

So you're practising the reality of this moment, the complete reality of this moment, the presencing of the whole bodymind in this moment. You're learning what to do. The bodymind is learning what to do. And of course, as that learning occurs, it becomes embodied and often, much to your surprise, you may be caught up in something when all of a sudden [Osho snaps fingers] there you are, the whole bodymind in the whole moment is known. Contraction into a sense of self will often come up very very quickly and want to label, want to check things out and until we learn to recognize that contraction into a sense of self that wants to organize and control, it will come up. And you will learn to see it, and each time you practise that moment of recognition by feeling the breath, sitting up straight, opening the eye gaze, you're helping, you're learning, the bodymind is becoming informed, and the practice, which is doing something over and over again, is becoming more and more embodied.

So use every moment. Use everything, anything that comes up as a reminder that you can practise in this moment. When you're standing at the sink, flossing, rinsing, gargling, sonically cleaning those teeth, the moment presents itself, you may notice that you were rushing through things, that you were already at your next scheduled event, or you were already cutting short, cutting off the fullness of the moment by burdening yourself with thoughts about how you had so much to do that this is really just an unwelcome intrusion. (It's interesting, we seem to get really involved in brushing, flossing, cleaning, just before we're going to the dentist...)

So for lo these many years, the Lineage has presented instruction on many aspects of practising in this moment. You might hear references to the gnashing jaws of the Lineage [Osho makes chomping sound with teeth] chewing up delusion. Well you may as well use your eye teeth to cut through delusion, to wear out the tendency to gnaw away at old sticks and bones of old thoughts and feelings and habits and patterns of attention.

So...

When chewing on the toothstick,  
"May all beings  
Have the eye teeth of wisdom  
And bite through all delusion."

Thank you for listening.

## Every Breath You Take 42: When Going to the Toilet

Dharma Talk presented by Ven. Shikai Zuiko osho

Dainen-ji, January 31st, 2009

It's as natural and important and vital as breathing in and out but... as we human beings have done with significant and inevitable activities such as birth and death... we have ranked this particular activity very low on the scale of things to be enjoyed or noted.

EVERY BREATH YOU TAKE gives you the opportunity, when you are practising, to notice the whole bodymind in the whole moment, without any stance of self-image necessary. It's not a problem should a contraction into self-image with its story or stance come up. That is the stuff of practice. That is the fertilizer with which your practice of mindfulness is nourished.

Today's verse:

When going to the toilet,  
"May all beings release  
Release passion, aggression, and stupidity,  
And wipe away wrong action."

Now, passion, aggression, and stupidity, what is being spoken of there?

Well, in Sanskrit, this was and is "klesa", which came from the, I believe the Pali, kilesa: mental states which temporarily cloud the bodymind and result in unskillful actions. Now, of course, human beings being what they are, this fact of states that come up and contract and cloud was looked at very closely and then the states were labeled, so we had what were called "defilements" or "poisons", "afflictions" or "hindrances", variously described as greed: "rega", hatred: "dresa", delusion: "moha". So the way we have dealt with that in this particular lineage, the way that Anzan Hoshin roshi has chosen to describe these klesa, the basic hindrances is: "passion, aggression, and stupidity". And for those who perhaps find "stupidity" a little too cringe-worthy, we can call it ignorance. Passion, aggression, and ignorance, but basically, all the words are describing the tendency the bodymind has to learn patterns of contraction and recoil and then subsequently, we have stories about them, we've developed stories about them.

In "The Straight Path", which I encourage you to read or listen to as soon as you can after this Dharma Talk, you will find the ways the Roshi has chosen to describe these basic hindrances.

Passion, craving or greed:

A continual wanting, a sense of need that can never be filled and so we keep trying to fill it so that grasping, the mechanism of trying to fill—something that really isn't empty—with things that exist somewhere else that have to hauled into the maw of the state.

The second one, hatred or anger, aggression:

"It is the flip side of craving. There are many things that we want" but people being people, "there are also many things that we don't want.

And the third craving, and this is actually in the list of five, but we're going to stop at three in this Dharma Talk because you will run across passion, aggression, and ignorance or stupidity mentioned in numerous texts and in chants. And during Futsatsu, which chants it very clearly.

The third craving is laziness, sloth, or torpor. It's unlike craving or hatred, which are both directed outwards, there's a clenching into a sense of self and it's grasping outward, or directing outward. Laziness is a folding inwards, a sliding, deep into the swampy lowlands of our own lives. Laziness is not wanting to be pulled out, not wanting to be exposed or bothered at all.

So, passion, aggression, and ignorance. Something to think about when going to the toilet, rather than reading an old copy of "True Romance" or doing crosswords or looking at the sports page, or whatever.

In Fusatsu, the chanting of the renewing of vows, you will hear the three klesas, these hindrances or poisons, referred to. In the Sange Mon, the third verse:

All wrong actions from beginningless time,  
Stemming from passion, aggression, and ignorance,  
Arising through body, breath, speech and mind,  
I now recognize as purity.

Then, what I have always viewed as a very hopeful and helpful sentence:

May the womb of the three klesas  
Give birth to Buddha

So right there, the process of practice is revealed. It is through recognizing the tendencies we have to become involved in these states, various states, passion, aggression, and stupidity basically describing them all, the fact that they're there, becoming involved, seeing them, is not a problem. It is through sitting and practising when we notice any aspect of the moment that practice matures, and eventually, a Buddha is born, an Awakened One, one who has stabilized that clear seeing so that clear seeing is all there is.

I always found that very encouraging, particularly when wrapped up in... any little state whatsoever...

So, you've got the raw material and out of that, through the constant polishing of the zafu by your butt [Osho laughs]... anyway... [Osho and students laugh, louder] so the segue, yeah, the butt! It's interesting, isn't it that human beings have this incredible capacity to put value on aspects of experiencing, and beginnings are actually seen to be more valuable, more interesting than ends.

Being born is celebrated. Not all the time and not everywhere, but birth, particularly in this part of the world, seems to be celebrated. Now, the end of that is inevitably... the D word. And THAT does not get the same kind of celebration for the individual going through it, or for all involved with it, I mean I have yet to see a Hallmark card that says: "Congratulations! You're approaching the big D!" [students laugh]

Anyway, yeah. Eating. I mean, all beings have to nourish themselves. They have to take things in one end, gnash away at them, or suck on them, or whatever it is that that particular being does, in order to extract the nutrients, the things necessary to keep the being going, to fuel it.

Now, certain practices, the Theravadin, for instance, have a tendency to want to shorten the process of being a human being, and in order to present their understanding of "attachment", they made the fact of the chewing and the result of the chewing on the food, into something to be reviled.

Great, huh? You take in some food, you chew it, you go "aaaaach" (you've seen people open their mouths when they're eating, I mean, it is not pleasant). This is not the case with our practice, which is saying: Look, the bodymind has all these senses. It's an explosion of vibrancy each moment that you're breathing. Notice it! There's no need to get fixated. There's no need when eating to focus all your attention on the food. You don't have to do that (that in itself is less than appealing), but by openly experiencing that moment of sensation on the tongue, the sensation of chewing, the sensation of swallowing, you start to find, actually, that less... I can't believe I'm almost saying "is more" [Osho laughs]... But, it's actually true, less IS more, because through the vivid experience of that interaction between the food being placed in the mouth and the sensations of all the sense organs, there's a sense of incredible satisfaction. And we won't get into how that could be used, that could be studied by individuals and experienced by individuals to increase the appreciation of the bodymind and what is being ingested.

So, anyway, in a lot of cultures, this one in particular, we don't like to speak about the end of the process. We've developed all sorts of ways of describing the product that results after all that... chewing and swallowing... And we've come up with all sorts of nifty little names: doody... poop... crap... Number Two... [students laugh] And it is amusing, isn't it? This activity that every human being does—and when things are working well, at least once a day—I have heard, though, that in some supposedly "developed" countries, this very natural activity, which should occur, all things being equal, once a day, occurs two or three times a week! Now that can make people pretty pretty irritable, and brings new meaning to the expression, you know, full of...

So, perfectly normal, perfectly natural activity, one that can tell us lots, if we have just a minimum of mindfulness about the processes of the human bodymind, of our own human bodymind, but we won't get into that right now... In fact, the processes of the human bodymind and the end of the process, which results in feces, from the Greek: dregs, the waste at the end of the process, and it's interesting, we'll use that when we say "drinking life to the dregs" [Osho laughs], but we want to hide this other activity and pretend it's not happening, even when we're doing it.

So, the end product of that process can tell lots of things about what's going on in the bodymind, and actually, the word "stool", another euphemism for the end of this process, came from Britain, where there was actually an appointment in the

royal entourage, the Master of the Stool. The job was to, after the king had been on the commode, to take the pot and examine the product, thus being able to make informed comment on the health of His Majesty. And also, you may have come across the word "throne" used to describe the toilet. So, these are just little interesting anecdotes, bits of history that I thought you might enjoy. I'm certainly in no way encouraging fixation, but open attention, and when the people were writing these verses 1600 years ago, they were writing them to help people practise moment to moment, to open to the incredible vividness of the living bodymind, in the moment.

Now, before I close, a little fact: human waste is human health's single greatest hazard. I'm not going to expand on that. One gram contains 10 millions viruses, 1 million bacteria and a hundred worm eggs... But who's counting?

When going to the toilet,  
"May all beings  
Release passion, aggression, and stupidity,  
And wipe away wrong action."

Thank you for listening.

## Every Breath You Take 43: Washing Up Afterward

Dharma Talk presented by Ven. Shikai Zuiko osho

Dainen-ji, February 7th, 2009

EVERY BREATH YOU TAKE...

...provides an opportunity to practice the Dharma, the Teachings of Reality, by using dharma, the moments of experience that you as Knowing know, and using them as a cue to practise basic mindfulness.

Every breath you take, whatever you're doing, provides that opportunity.

The verse from "The Practice of Purity":

Washing up afterward,  
"May all beings  
Quickly go past  
The edge of the mundane."

Well, the first step in understanding is actually knowing what the words mean. So we know, because we were here last week, that we're talking about washing up after [Osho stage whispers:] going to the toilet... having a poo... a dump... going number two... or whatever other euphemisms we might use to describe this vital activity, vital to the process of the bodymind. But that's what we humans like to do, be obscure, cover over, pretend that certain things don't happen and are not happening.

Questioning into anything is always a good thing. So we know with the "washing up" what we are referring to. Now, in this particular place and time, washing up actually is understood to mean washing the hands. There are many kinds of washing the hands, there's the real washing of the hands, done in private, there's the washing of the hands done in public which usually is done with great vigor, especially if there's someone around. There's the faux washing of the hands, when we may suspect there's someone lurking outside so we might turn the tap on... [Osho and students giggle]

Self-image is devious, however, and that's not all that washing up refers to. Remember, "The Practice of Purity", the original verses in the sutra were written somewhere around 400 CE in India. So the washing up may also and first of all refer to cleaning up after the "work" has been done, after the product has been left behind. So one might wash up oneself and since this was done squatting, one might use the hand, or if we had servants, a servant would take a nice brush out of a container of water and [Osho makes a scrubbing sound] and that still happens in parts of the world today. So there are many interesting approaches other than the destruction of who knows how many trees to provide those roles of tissue that we consume.

So, "quickly go past the edge of the mundane", what are we talking about with the "mundane"? Well the word means relating to or typical of this world, relationships to, characteristics of, or concern with the commonplace. We could say "worldly" because that will come up if you're looking for definitions. But then the question arises, what world are we talking about? We forget that 400 CE was a totally different context than 2008. Self-image concerns itself with its own narrow circles of concern. When we open it up a little bit, when we can see those contractions come up, contractions into a sense of self with its limited stories, limited and limiting stories of how you are and how the world is. When you can see those contractions and remember to feel the breath, sit up straight, open the eye gaze, that tendency to describe the world, the mundane by what is of interest only to self-image, does open and there are a lot of very interesting things that you may never have noticed before.

Seeing, hearing, tasting, touching, feeling, smelling, rich no matter where you are, granted, but when reading or listening to words it is interesting to see what springs to mind in your understanding of them and then to have the guts and the small

amount of energy it takes to actually look at the word and say: "What does this mean?" If you're practising, you're gonna have the opportunity to see more completely associations and so on. Why is this important? Because, on the whole, Western culture is really dumbing down. We're becoming collectively more and more ignorant. This is quite different from Europe where it's still accepted, and in other countries as well, other than the Americas, it's quite accepted that if one has spent a number of years studying a particular subject, that one may have learnt something and that that could be of value.

In North America—and you've all experienced it within the last few months—that knowledge, that experience has been dumped into a container called "elite". So you can think about that in your own time, but we've reached a situation where we have the pulling down of critical thought. We have a situation where more and more people are "going with their gut" which results in things like, 45% of the population in the US, apparently, believing in ghosts, 71% in angels, 45% believing God created all beings in their present form in the last 10 000 years, 40% of the population being functionally illiterate.

That isn't much fun for the people themselves and does cause acting out in all sorts of ways that really are not useful to themselves or the population as a whole. When you have stances based on beliefs and beliefs being the expressed stories of self-image, you have potential and actualization of many many problems.

So the mundane may not be mundane and boring, because usually boring will come up quickly around the use of the word mundane, but day-to-day activities are very interesting, they always have been, when one chooses to look outside of the closed circle of concern of the image of a self.

I found this this morning, it's from an ad in a reputable magazine, (the name of the nation to the south of us, but we don't want to name names...) "may eventually find a way to live without oil, water is another story."

Well, yeah, sure is. Goes on in the article:

"...it is the one resource that humans can't live without for more than a few days... looming crisis... massive proportions... evidence abounding... depleting water... population growth is outrunning water supply... California will be short on water by 2020... every newcomer to California adds a 140 gallons of water demand per day..." and on and on. We read a little bit further: "What can we do? The first step is in limiting waste, especially in irrigation." The second is "limiting demand by managing a population explosion driven almost totally by immigration."

[Osho tsk tsk tsks.]

Well, there are two things that are really disturbing about that. Second is the fact that no matter which way we cut it and no matter which way we travel to find a better life, and no matter where we come from, we're all drinking from this giant container that we call the globe. You can't divide it up. First, setting up a target in a country for hostility: immigrants. We sure need a lot of that, don't we, we sure need a lot of hostility towards "other", no matter where it happens on the globe?

So, why did that come up? Because of the washing up, of course. When you start to notice many different things, you start to notice that although words are not the experience, it is the describing of experience, that a word is not a solid thing, it changes over time and is particular to context. It's a lot of fun looking into what's actually going on.

Words shift over time. What did it mean then? What does it mean now? When was then? When is now? Well, with this practice, now is this moment, right now, THIS one, and it is marked by the breath that's moving your bodymind in and out. You're alive. You can practise this moment. Each time bodymind opens past the knots in space of contraction, it is opening past the edge of the mundane, the description of a self by what it believes itself to be, its description of a world based on unquestioned assumptions and beliefs about what's going on. Might as well do it. You're here. Right now. And right now. And right now.

And when you're going about your day-to-day activities, when there's washing up afterwards...

"May all beings,  
Quickly go past  
The edge of the mundane."

Thank you for listening.

## Every Breath You Take 44: When Washing the Body

Dharma Talk presented by Ven. Shikai Zuiko osho

Dainen-ji, February 28th, 2009

Rub a dub dub.

EVERY BREATH YOU TAKE...

...is and always was THIS breath. It can only be that way. All the breaths that went before are gone, never to be repeated. The air that was breathed in has been breathed out and it mixes with everybody else's breath and all the old cells and the sands from the desert and it goes on and on...

So there's this breath, the one you're breathing now, which is... this moment. You might as well notice this one, without

focussing, but as the Knowing, know that you're alive in this moment and are learning to practise the whole bodymind, which was always the case and is always the case. And you do it with THIS breath because... if you're waiting for the next breath to really practise, there may not and most assuredly, at some point, WILL NOT be another one.

So. Rub a dub dub.

The verse:

When washing the body,  
"May all beings  
Be pure and harmonious,  
Ultimately, there are no defilements."

We wash the bodymind with water. Depending upon where and in what circumstances we are will dictate how we access and what quantity of that water we have available to us. Now, in the Saijo Shingi, which are the rules of deportment for the Hakuzake Soto Zen Northern Mountain order of monastics, written by Anzan Hoshin roshi:

True purification involves not merely washing the bodymind with water, but with washing ki with kokyo, washing the student with the teacher, washing space with space.

So, as you've learned most probably, to a certain extent, what one hears or reads or is spoken of is not really the way self-image perceives it as something specific to itself. We may hear "washing the body" and go "yeah yeah yeah, so now I'll just zone out for a little while because I know how to wash the body."

That's what self-image does, the contraction into a sense of a self with a view about how it is, how the world is and what's going on is a limitation. It is a defilement of the open space of the experiencing of the open bodymind. In the Shingi, which came from Dogen zenji who was writing about or presenting these issues in 1223, 24, 25, washing was something that had specifics given to it, the specific sequences to follow while cleansing the bodymind. Why would that be? Why not just fill up the bowl and turn on the shower and go splashing away, thinking about if we use the right shower gel, well... who knows what could happen in our next encounter with... a fantasy? By having specific sequences, the individual has to maintain some sort of attentiveness to the actual process of cleaning the bodymind. So the form in itself is an aid to mindfulness, is an aid to identifying those contractions which come up and defile the open space of experiencing because of the fabrications that become more dense as attention funnels into the particular points that self-image is nattering away to itself about.

Now remember, you are the Knowing of the experiences of the bodymind. So, when you are engaged in the activity of washing that bodymind, of caring for it, you have the opportunity to see knowns, to notice how stories might come up, to notice how you may not be actually noticing what you are doing. At that moment of noticing, there's the opportunity to allow attention to open and to notice the full experiencing of the whole bodymind in the whole moment. You start to be able to notice more and more clearly the context within which thoughts arise. Now in the verse, it says "ultimately, there are no defilements." There is just the open bodymind. There is seeing and hearing, tasting, touching, feeling, smelling, there is the presencing of all beings and all times in this moment around the breath as you. And that is what you are practising.

Maintaining the teachings, acting aligned with the dignity of the Shingi, the monastic Shingi, purifies bodymind. Why? Because many opportunities are provided through the rigorous detail that has evolved from Dogen to Hanamatsu Daiji, to Joshu roshi, to Anzan roshi, to myself and Jinmyo osho and to you, these many ways of using each moment to open further to actual experiencing.

Now, when you're sitting retreat, or when you're participating in a Sesshin, or O-sesshin, there are the ups and downs of the cycles of the bodymind. We do get tired, we might notice ourselves shutting down a bit. We might notice the eyelids falling, crashing into the upper cheek, at which point the only thing you can do is to really sit straight, really feel the breath, really open the peripheral vision, practise with an effort that is equal in intensity to the perceived fatigue. Things get balanced out and then, during kinhin, you can go to the washroom, you can fill the wash basin or sink with a small amount of cold water...

(and that's not something that we do very often, we tend not to fill the basin, we tend to let the faucets run because we tend to be oblivious of the fact that this resource is valuable and not to be wasted)

...then you can scoop the water with both hands and using the following sequence: forehead, eyebrows, eyes, nose, nostrils, chin, behind the ears, put water on the face. This will help wake you up a bit, and at the end of it, you slap both cheeks simultaneously with the cold water [osho slaps cheeks five times] and for the next few moments, you may notice that the bodymind pulls itself up out of its swamp of shamatha. And you may have to do it again and again and again in the course of a day or in the course of a lifetime. That's how it goes.

These verses, as I have said, are simply ways of allowing you opportunities to practise as you go through the day to day routine of every person who is fortunate enough to be in the circumstances where it is possible to do simple things without much thought, such as showering. This isn't possible for everyone in the world, this is unique to certain parts of the world.

It may, as we know, become something very very special as water supplies run out. So why not take time now? Pay a little attention to how you actually do things. Take care as you're taking care of the bodymind. Use every opportunity, use the interactions with the teachers to help you purify defilements.

Now, "defilements" is something that self-image can get quite opinionated about. The word itself has connotations that are quite nasty and off-putting, but if say instead of defilements, contractions, knots in the open space of experiencing, we can perhaps start to understand that no word that is used can describe everything. There are many words that are used to describe contraction: unwholesomeness, poisons. Basically, they're all talking about the same thing: contractions into a sense of self with the stories about how you are and how the world is. What you're learning to do is to recognize them. At earlier and earlier stages of the process of perception and cognition and at the moment of recognizing anything, you as the Knowing recognize those, whatever they are, as knowns and moments to practise mindfulness.

So the verse once again:

When washing the body,  
"May all beings  
Be pure and harmonious,  
Ultimately, there are no defilements."

And don't forget to wash between your toes.

Thank you for listening.

## Every Breath You Take 45: Washing the Hands in Water

Dharma Talk presented by Ven. Shikai Zuiko osho

Dainen-ji, March 7th, 2009

Walking up the front path of the monastery this morning, breathing in the air, you may have noticed there's a quality to the air that happens in the spring. There's just a bit of that quality, it's softer, a bit more gentle than the biting cold of winter. Icicles are melting, snow is melting, there's water on the street. The cycle, the inevitable cycle of the seasons continues on this planet, floating in space, covered with all sorts of different beings and life forms and if we could go way way way up in space, we could look down and say: "Look at that! Everything's happening at the same time, which is now!"

So this moment of the breath that is breathing you in and out is NOW, and you can practise the only time you can practise the reality of this moment, which is NOW. With EVERY BREATH YOU TAKE, the process of looking into your life as it really is, when it's really happening, continues.

The verse, from "The Practice of Purity":

Washing the hands in water,  
"May all beings  
Have pure and clean hands  
To receive and hold the Teachings of Awakening."

Self-image, that contraction into a sense of a self that ties a knot in space and pulls through it or attempts to pull through this knotting, this congealing, all other experiences, has views about how it is and how the world is and it may hear words in Dharma Talks or teisho that may cause it to go to: "Oh well, let's just have a little snooze now, it'll be more of the same, and I of course, the All-Knowing, All-Seeing, know all of this already" or, contraction into a sense of self that goes: "I won't be able to understand it anyway, so I'll just have a nap..."

Now, in this, "washing the hands in water", we could actually understand it as being about washing the hands in water, from a very practical everyday point of view. It is, after all, the season of cold and flus. So, on a very practical, everyday plane, we can see that yes, it's a good thing because given that, some sources say now, there are ten times as many bacteria in the bodymind as there are human cells [Osho laughs]... and you thought you were YOU! This MOUND of bacteria just proliferating like crazy... what with all the other stuff that gets picked up too, and given that it is true, it's not just a nice slogo—slogan for a t-shirt... ("slogo", that's between "slogan" and "logo" [Osho and students laugh], new word.) ...each thing DOES make everything what it is. That's nice. And that's actually becoming kind of a little slogan in this world of multimedia advertising.

There have been, and there are, increasing mentions of "if the butterfly in the forests of southeast Asia flaps its wings, the ramifications travel the globe." And actually some connections are made saying that one could and perhaps some do, that that butterfly is the cause of things like Katrina, and so on, because the understanding of the usual mind is often very simplistic because it would seem that it knows less and less every day, but that's a whole different bag of butterflies...

But yes, each thing does make everything else what it is.

So, you've been out in the street, you've been handling money, you've been shaking hands perhaps with people who've been doing heaven knows what... So, it could be a good thing just to wash the hands, and it could slow down the

transmission of who knows what type of virulent organisms. So washing the hands is a good idea.

Now, we do wash hands and feet on ceremonial occasions, when one is receiving vows, for example. There is a danger that self-image perpetuates, and the danger is that of turning even the most simple things, simple, very practical things into rituals and it becomes "we purify by washing the hands and feet" and the rest of the time, well... frak, who has the time to take care of these things? So as with everything in practice, which is the activity of expressing this moment so that the bodymind and the Knowing that knows the activity of the bodymind becomes more adept at actually recognizing THIS moment and THIS moment and THIS moment and using the instructions, the Teachings of Awakening, to practise (which is to do something over and over and over again so that one becomes more adept at it). Doing this, the tendency for knotting of space and congealing and the distortion of experiencing by previously held views which narrow intelligence wears out and it is indeed a good thing.

So, washing the hands in water, one is reminded with the verse:

"May all beings  
Have pure and clean hands  
To receive and hold the Teachings of Awakening."

Now of course, the Teachings of Awakening are not something that can be received and held. They're instructions. We can hold a book, but the activity of expressing the instructions is something that cannot be held onto, it cannot be grasped. When that happens, we can, in the feeble attempts of self-image to control its experiencing and a world that is quite chaotic, self-image can come up with rules. Self-image loves RULES, because then if it knows the rules, not only does it believe it knows what to do in situations, it also believes that it has a valid argument should something else occur outside of the RULE. And we've all experienced that in the course of activity in the monastery: we are deporting the bodymind, we might be in a hurry, self-image is going: "natter, natter, you have this that and the other thing to do..." and so a cursory glance around, it might be noted that there's no one, especially no one in black in the vicinity, so we may find ourselves sliding through the doorway after having kind of bent the body forward, but with feet not really stopping... BUT should someone in black come along (and I won't tell you my own experience), and say: "You call that a bow?" Self-image goes "Well, I stopped, I stopped in the doorway, I bowed!"

"Were you feeling the whole bodymind? Were you feeling the feet on the floor? Were you feeling the hands in shashu?"

"Well of course I was. I was following the rules. I was doing what I was supposed to do."

So that tendency to search for rules is just a tendency, and when you notice it coming up and it could be something as simple as, and I've said it before so I don't want to turn into a nagger, but you know, you go to the bathroom, you finish going to the bathroom, wash the hands! It's not a rule, it's just a very practical thing to do, and if we were to say have rules about everything, we wouldn't have any wall space free and clear to actually sit with eyes open, peripheral vision open and look at the wall because the rules would be everywhere.

When you open the basic intelligence of the bodymind by noting in more and more detail moments of contraction, moments of thought... well, they're really going on, it's not that they're not going on, they are part of the reality of that moment and you noticed them, you noticed the reality of that moment, THAT's the moment you practise the whole bodymind in the whole moment so you become more adept. So the bodymind learns to do that.

In the Shingi, there's a paragraph written by the Roshi:

Take care, give care. See, know, practise and manifest the mutuality of things as they are. Each thing makes everything else what each thing is. This is the relative truth of the Total Field. All things arise as the Display of Awareness, this is the ultimate truth. Use the ultimate to understand the relative.

So... recognize that each thing, from the smallest little bacteria to the largest beings, to rocks and plants and goldfish and cats and other people and smells... affect everything. Take the time, do wash your hands. You don't need to get all Lady MacBeth about it, and should you notice that, you can recognize perhaps, the building of an obsession, but that's another matter. We've covered that and we will again, I'm sure.

So as you're breathing in and out, have fun with it. Have fun with your life as it really is, where it's really happening.

Now.

Thank you for listening.

## Every Breath You Take 46: Washing the Face with Water

Dharma Talk presented by Ven. Shikai Zuiko osho

Dainen-ji, March 21st, 2009

[Osho stage whispers:]

Washing the face with water,

"May all beings  
Enter the nature of equanimity  
And realize stainlessness."

[Osho repeats the verse in comic German accent]

Vashing ze face vis vater,  
"May all beings  
Enter ze nature of eqvinimity  
And realize stainlessness."

[Osho repeats the verse in a casual, drawling accent]

Washin' the face with water,  
"May all bein's  
Enter the nature of equinimidy  
And realahze stainlessness."

[Osho repeats the verse, speaking each line as though it were a question]

Washing the face with water?  
"May all beings?  
Enter the nature of equanimity?  
And realize stainlessness?"

[Osho repeats the verse, proclaiming each line as though it were a command or an edict]

WASHING THE FACE WITH WATER,  
"MAY ALL BEINGS  
ENTER THE NATURE OF EQUANIMITY  
AND REALIZE STAINLESSNESS."

[Osho speaks plainly:]

Today's verse: [students laugh]

Everything presented in Dainen-ji and in this Lineage is presented so that you can see more and more clearly into the actual nature of experiencing.

Every form  
every way we deport the bodymind  
every way that we do anything as we are caretaking  
THIS moment of experiencing  
shows  
when we are willing to look  
the many dharmas  
(that are, it is said, as numberless as the sands of the river Ganges)  
that arise in each moment.

We start to notice more and more details of experiencing, we start to understand that we are and always have been the Knowing of experiences, rather than the knowns. The bodymind is how Knowing knows. We sit it down. We straighten the arms, we place the hands in the mudra. We straightened the skull in balance. We open peripheral vision.

The whole bodymind sits in the whole moment. The whole bodymind has always been present. I mean that is in fact, self-evident, it just seems that we get lost so that we become a great big head sitting on a cushion, or we become a huge bust walking down the street, or, well... I think we can stop there, I think you get the point.

When we focus attention on anything, it seems to get bigger, it seems to become the only thing that is arising within Knowing. That simply is not true, but the fact of feeding attention and focussing into one aspect of experiencing does throw our knowing of reality off. That's why before we start to practise, we do seem to be, and we believe thoroughly that we are the things that we think we are. Self-image has very definite views about how it is and how the world is. It fails to notice that these can change in a nanosecond and when it does start to notice, it gets confused. That's not a problem because recognizing a moment of confusion is clarity, we've recognized something that is actually going on in our experiencing.

We follow the instructions as best we can: to show up, to sit up straight, to open the eye gaze, as we practise any moment of reality that we notice. So, as it happens more and more, there is a knowing of the whole bodymind in the whole moment. We become more adept at noticing when attention is focussed in on one aspect of experiencing and appears to

be throwing us off balance.

We practise, things balance out. Equanimity is restored.

We start to understand why the mirror is used as a metaphor in this practice, why there's a tiny little mirror over the kitchen sink in the kamidan, and we start to understand what it really means. We've heard that just as no mirror is stained by that which is reflected within that mirror, so Knowing, which is what we are, cannot be stained by any of the knowns. In this moment, whatever we may have done or said or felt or experienced before this moment, is in reality, gone. It may presence and when it does, pull forth responses in the bodymind because that's how bodymind functions, but we as the Knowing, start to be able to see the details of that... and, by following the instruction of recognizing and practising that moment of mindfulness, that moment of waking up, the capacity for the bodymind to do this increases.

So we are provided through  
the instruction  
and through the art  
and through the poetry  
and through the construction  
and through the cooking  
through the sprouting of plants  
through the washing of floors in the monastery...

we're provided with many opportunities to open to the actual nature of experiencing, the nature of the equanimity, of the balance of the bodymind. And, even though we may splash water on our little faces without thinking much about what we're doing, we start to be able to slow down a bit...  
we start to be able to feel the actual water touching the face  
we start to understand that just as that coffee stain caught in that wrinkle creeping up from the ageing mouth or just as those little white things in the corner of the mouth are washed away with the water, (they're not permanent, they can be washed away)  
so any state, any thought we may have felt about who we are and how the world is, starts to be seen for what it is, something transitory and something that does not have the ability to stain this moment of experiencing.

And we have choice about that. We as the Knowing can make the choice to keep that little coffee stain in the wrinkle that's going up around the ageing mouth, or we can make the choice to keep the little white stuff at the corners of the mouth. Or... we can make the choice to wash it off and to feel what it feels like as we splash that water on the face. And maybe we just might remember that the verse says:

Washing the face with water,  
"May all beings  
Enter the nature of equanimity  
And realize stainlessness."

Have fun washing the bodymind in this moment of experiencing.

Thank you for listening.

## Every Breath You Take 47: Picking Up a Walking Staff

Dharma Talk presented by Ven. Shikai Zuiko osho  
Dainen-ji, April 4th, 2009

[Osho walks around the Hatto, shaking a shakujo, then sits at the teacher's seat.]

EVERY BREATH YOU TAKE...

... provides the opportunity for you as the Knowing of knowns to actually see seeing and hearing and tasting and touching and feeling and smelling, to see thoughts that arise and fall,  
to see the process of perception and cognition  
and to use each moment of Knowing, or clear seeing, or insight,  
to practise that moment of clear seeing,  
to practise that moment of the clear seeing of reality.

Now why would we want to do that?

Well, let me think... Why do we practise anything? Why do we practise the trombone? Why do we practise skateboarding? Why do we practise drawing or playing the piano? Because, when we practise it, guess what happens? Right! We get better at it. Isn't that interesting?

So, we're practising those moments when we see reality, when we wake up to what's actually going on and why do we do

that?

And what happens when we do that over and over and over again? ...

Yes! You're right!

People have been doing this, the practice of Reality, the practice of Things As They Are, the practise of Waking Up, that was taught by the Buddha, one who woke up. People have been doing it for a long time, 2600 years for example. Maybe some before, because there is talk of the Buddhas before Buddha, so obviously people had moments of waking up, but Gautama Siddhartha taught how to do that. And this is what we're doing, and this is what people have been doing in many different locations, many different times. And there are many ways of finding out more about the history, about the tradition, about what was going on.

Now this sound [Osho shakes the shakujo] some of you may have heard before, in this very room. So, the verse:

Picking up a walking staff,  
"May all beings  
Raise the great work of benefit  
And point out the true path."

The sound you heard was from the rings of the shakujo, literal translation: tin stick. This was one of the few material possessions that monks were allowed and the purpose of this stick was manifold, depending upon context. Now, this morning, the little dew drops, drops of rain were accumulating like little jewels, like strange mystical crystal flowers on branches that are on the whole as yet bare. That same phenomena would of course have presented itself to many different eyes in many different places and times, so perhaps, in Japan, perhaps in China, on a mountain, this sound would be heard [Osho shakes the shakujo] and perhaps crystal drops would have fallen and splatted on the ground as a mendicant monk put one foot after the other, using the sound of the metal rings to let little animals know that someone was coming through, and perhaps even to send out a message to bigger animals [Osho roars] that there was a stick! [students laugh] with a person at the end and if needed... well, we'll leave it at that. And also, to defend from bandit attacks, which were very frequent.

Interesting, letting little animals know that the monk was coming by, giving them time to get out of the way, was probably something picked up from the Jains, who were around at the time of Siddhartha Gautama, and the Jains would do things, and still do in many instances, like sweep the ground before them so they wouldn't trample on bugs, and wear face masks over the nose so they wouldn't breathe in bugs, and so on. Well, I say good luck, you know, what are you going to do about that thirty percent of your body that's made up of all these bugs? Anyway, that's an aside, no offense intended to anyone. So the shakujo was a monastic accoutrement, it would let people know as well, if it were sounded out during the later mornings, that the mendicant monk was coming by and if there were food available, they would be more than willing to have it placed in their begging bowls because mendicant means that of course they had nothing. And the sound also would ring out and has rung out through numerous villages in numerous locations so that those people who want blessings can run and get some. [Osho and students laugh]

So many uses, and it's interesting, really to actually follow up little clues that you might come across in the texts and the verses of practice, just to see where it leads you.

Now, self-image, that contraction, that image of a self, is loathe to do anything really. What it wants is the key, the magic phrase, the magic moment, spoon fed to it so it won't have to do anything. Because as we know, even putting your butt down on the zafu involves, on some days, what seems to be a terrible amount of effort because we're dragging the ball and chain of reluctance and recoil, whinging, whining:

"Why do I have to? Other people are safe in their beds" [students laugh]

"I never did anything so bad that I have to be punished like this."

"Oh, I know, it'll be alright, I can feel a golden light coming down from the..." [students laugh]

It all depends what we've been exposed to, but you can rest assured that your thoughts, the content of your thoughts about what's going on are mostly wrong and can cause you all sorts of problems. The sound of the rings [Osho shakes shakujo] is very direct when we just keep it to the sound, occurring in this moment, being sensed by the bodymind in this moment, and use that moment of recognition to practise the whole bodymind in the whole moment. But of course, we human beings will make up stories and do make up stories, some which are really interesting, some of which are, oh, I'll be kind here, "same old, same old". Boring.

Now, in 713, a monk teacher named Yoka Daishi wrote verses which mention the bowl of the monk and the stick, the rings. He says:

The bowl of the monk to call the dragon, and the stick to separate the tiger.  
The metal rings at the end of the stick jingle clearly.  
Bowl and stick should not to be considered under their simple material form.  
They mean to intimately follow in the Buddha's footsteps and symbolize his precious stick.

That's from the Shodoka, written in 713. Isn't that interesting? You think, 713, that was over 1300 years ago, and someone was writing about basically what you have experienced just now in the Hatto, in Dainen-ji. The rings are struck sometimes when a new monk is "born" as it were, that's where you would have heard it, had you heard it in this context.

On the whole, the interpretations of self-image, of anything, are necessarily limited and most probably wrong. Why believe them? When they come up, when you notice anything, particularly content, recognize that's a thought. Feel the breath, sit up straight, open the eye gaze and allow the whole bodymind in the whole moment to be present to Knowing. It already is and to believe or act as if it is not is delusion. But we have these little habits and patterns, oh my! And we're trying to, as we sit, exercise our intention of practising so that we can wake up completely to unconditioned freedom.

Now, here is the verse that I spoke that was written by Yoka Daishi in 713, here it is translated by Yasuda Joshu roshi and Anzan Hoshin roshi. It's the "Shodoka: The Song of Freedom", that's S-h-o-d-o-k-a, I recommend it, it's on the website, you'll have fun with it, you might learn something.

Dew, fog, clouds, mists  
are the true robes of our bodies.

The monk's bowl that subdued dragons,  
the staff that calmed fighting tigers  
with the sound of its hanging rings

are not just relics from some old fable  
but symbols of the Thus Come One's precious Teachings.

So that's in the "Treasury of Luminosity", it's the "Shodoka: The Song of Freedom". Now remember that you have been told, I'm sure you have been told that if you have a question, feel free to write it down. But it's the writing down part that people seem to have a problem with because they fall for the old story that "Yeah yeah yeah, I'll remember..."

Well, trust me... [Osho and students laugh]

Take advantage of it because when a teacher or a monk says something to you, it's actually true. So you're invited to, if a thought comes up saying: "Oh, I don't want to bother them", recognize that's self-image generating its usual social crap disguised as being considerate, which sounds somewhat okay, but what is actually going on when you look at it is that self-image is saying: "Don't believe what they're saying because they don't know what they're talking about."

So wake up people, wake up!

Today's verse again, from "The Practice of Purity":

Picking up a walking staff,  
"May all beings  
Raise the great work of benefit  
And point out the true path."

...which is this moment...

Right now.

Thank you for listening.

## Every Breath You Take 48: Taking Up the Almsbowl

Dharma Talk presented by Ven. Shikai Zuiko osho

Dainen-ji, April 18th, 2009

Taking up the bowl of this moment, you can recognize it contains colours, forms, sounds. There's the breath, breathing you in and out... Which lets you know, of course: You're alive! And you can choose to practise in this moment.

The bowl of this moment contains spring, it contains pigeons, and grackles, and black-capped chickadees, bathing together in the pond water that has just melted.

The verse, from "The Practice of Purity":

Taking up the almsbowl,  
"May all beings  
Perfect the vessel of truth  
Together with the activities of humans and shining beings."

Well, what does this have to do with you? You might have noticed a thought popping up of an Asian-looking person with a saffron robe, carrying around a clay or metal bowl. We're all familiar with those kinds of images because they are being used more and more frequently in advertisements to sell things. But, the almsbowl, a bowl with which a monastic could collect food or money donated by supporters, was perhaps one of the very few possessions of monastics and it was vital in certain contexts to their day to day life because if they didn't get food, they wouldn't eat. It was one of the simplest, but more important objects in the daily life of many Buddhist monks.

What does it mean, in the context of this moment? What is an almsbowl? In this moment, in this monastery? Well, we could go back and back...

We recognize that alms are things that people give to support certain activities. Now whereas in many cultures, alms were given by supporters to monastics so that the monastics perhaps would do the work for them. But that's not how it's done here. When Anzan Hoshin roshi started teaching, he was a wandering monk, let's say, in this context, in the contemporary context of Ottawa, Ontario. Students came, they sought the teacher out and provided places to practise, provided what was necessary so that they could receive the teachings and so that they could do the work. So there's quite a bit of difference between the traditional understanding of "almsbowl" and a contemporary interpretation.

So then, at a certain point, Anzan Hoshin roshi, who was working at the time, was giving everything that he had to create a place where individuals who did seek him out, or who sought the teachings out, would be able to come and practise, receive the teachings and practise. So students came along, and presented what they could to help out with establishment of this place of practice, which was supported by the teacher. I came along and much as I hated the fact that I would have to sit my butt down on that cushion and go through wrestling with all the stories, all the legends that we've made up about ourselves, I had no choice, really. It comes down to that, there was nothing else to do. So, as monks do, we give everything, body, breath, speech and mind, funds, to support and build the place of practice.

A few years later, Jinmyo osho came along... same thing: the recognition that the only way the bag of bones could be useful for any of us was to sit its butt down, wake up, teach others how to do the same. Because let's face it, the legends that we live our lives by in contemporary culture are falling apart. They're based on the contractions of self-image and we see the fallout everywhere that we look.

Then came along Chunen ino. Same thing: recognition, basically, no choice.

Mishin tando. Saigyō chiden. And students came and went, and donated what they could.

But again a startling, a radical difference from the pictures, the stories about monks and the relationship with lay supporters, whereas monks would take their begging bowl around, literally for food and money, so they could live, here we have exactly the opposite, where the monastics, the monks, are giving what they have as well as body, breath, speech and mind, to build a place that could support the practice of others. Why? Because practising in this moment with the stories, with the contractions into a sense of self that diminish us, that make our life far less rich, that damage what we do, that damages others. The practice of it, the wearing out of that pattern, those patterns of contraction, is the only thing to do. It is how we can bring benefit to all beings.

But don't fool yourself into a little legend, thinking that because of your efforts, everybody is going to "ba-dang!" wake up! Won't that be nice? Whole world, everybody happy, nobody's starving, nobody's shooting each other in the head, nobody raping each other, nobody cutting off arms and legs, nobody throwing babies in the heap... like, don't hold your breath, okay?

Just breathe, notice the breath, feel the whole bodymind and feel whole bodily into this moment, which is the only thing going on.

Now, apparently this practice was started, we could say, by one Gautama Siddhartha, 2600 years ago, in Northern India. As with anything, legends grow up, and there was a legend around this particular man. One of which is used when talking about the almsbowl.

It is said, the story goes, a long long time ago, a man began practising under a bodhi tree, and a young woman offered him a golden bowl filled with rice. She thought he was the divinity, or the god of the tree. He divided the rice into 49 portions, one for each day until he would be enlightened... Now, that's legend for you, I mean, my question would be: how did he know, 49 days? But, legends aren't true, necessarily, they may have bits and pieces of fact in them, but they're stories. So he divided up 49 portions of rice and then he threw the gold bowl in the river. And that story was used to illustrate the concept of non-attachment, the non-attachment to material things.

Well in this practice, non-attachment doesn't just mean gold bowls and Mercedes and Rolex watches, material objects, it means attachment to all our stories about who we are and how the world is, our attachment to the stories of self-image, the legends we create when we follow the patterns. When we follow the contraction of self-image and allow attention to funnel into the stories, we become a living legend. The only problem is, what we're doing is cutting off the rest of our life because when attention narrows in on anything, that thing seemingly gets bigger and the rest of what is experienced in this moment—seeing, hearing, tasting, touching, feeling, smelling, the whole bodymind in this moment—seemingly disappears.

So, you're practising. You can recognize that the place of practice was created and supported by the efforts of those who came before you. And when you contribute, you are contributing to support the practice of others, probably most of whom

haven't been born yet. That's quite astounding, it's quite interesting and it is unusual. But we don't live our life by legends, although it is easier often, to believe a legend, to believe a fable, to believe a story, especially about ourselves, than to actually sit up straight, feel the breath, recognize the rest of what's going on in this moment with the whole body, to actually do the practice of reality.

And, when you contribute through the effort of your practice, and the recognition that what you are being taught is priceless, we're sometimes moved to contribute and help fill up that almsbowl. Now, what's taught? Well, as Anzan roshi speaks of in "The Primordially Awakened One, Commentaries on Dogen zengi's Kobutsushin":

Dogen presents a way of thinking that is not lost in thoughts. He attempts to express in words a way of thinking that discursive thoughts can not really do. Discursive thoughts are the run-on product of a process of narrowing attention. They are an avoidance of our inherent capacity as intelligent beings to think intelligently and openly and from many different perspectives simultaneously.

Well, don't we all need as much of that intelligence available as possible? I'd say so, because increasingly, when we look around, there's a lot of really stupid stuff going on, a lot of legends created that are exposing themselves and being exposed for what they really are: fables.

Economies, policies, weapons, the way we treat each other. Rather than calling it BS, let's just call it fictions, and wake up to the fact that the first thing to deal with is that fiction that comes up about how you are and how the world is in this moment, and to practise that moment of clearly seeing that process.

So, with every breath you take, you do have the opportunity to open to the richness that is your own experiencing in this moment, and to help others to do so by your efforts.

The verse again:

Taking up the almsbowl,  
"May all beings  
Perfect the vessel of truth  
Together with the activities of humans and shining ones."

Psst [Osho whispers]... If you want to hear more about humans and shining ones, check out "The Wheel of Becoming". That's a hint, that's all I'm going to say, but you might have some fun.

Thank you for listening.

## Every Breath You Take 49: Setting Out on the Road

Dharma Talk presented by Ven. Shikai Zuiko osho  
Dainen-ji, May 2nd, 2009

EVERY BREATH YOU TAKE...

...brings you the sound of bells, of birds, of branches cracking in the wind, laden with fresh buds.

Every breath you take...

...lets you know that you're alive and you can make a choice as to what you're going to do in this moment.

Now of course because you're sitting here in this bright, luminous Hatto, studying the Teachings of Reality, the first choice you're going to make is to practise this moment of clear seeing.

And obviously, you're all doing it!

You have done it! You're getting better at it! Or how else could you have overcome the pull of self-image and its stories of: "Maybe I'm feeling too sick to go there today. Yeah..."

But... you see it for what it is [Osho claps once]: a contraction, a storyline. You remembered to notice the whole bodymind and here you sit. Your story might have been: "Well, this really isn't worth it, I'm so busy! I'm so busy, I really need my rest. If I don't get my rest, I'm gonna get sick."

And then of course, there's the inaccurately named Swine Flu. Now, apparently, no swine actually have this thing. Now, I'm sure that the poor swine would feel pretty badly about this. (Isn't it funny that we human beings like to call things that are unpleasant after someone else? Small pox was, according to the French, the "English disease", as was syphilis.)

So, we do have this habit and it's good to notice our habits and patterns, be they individual or of a group, because out of those come the beliefs that we have used, whether we knew it or not, to create what seems to be a solid and permanent self. Well, let me tell you, it's about as solid and permanent as that other big fairy tale: the economy. But, we're not really going to go there.

So, with every breath you take, you practise this moment.

The verse, from "The Practice of Purity":

Setting out on the road,  
"May all beings  
Go where the Buddhas have gone,  
The realm of leaning upon nothing."

Well, Dharma means (with a big D that is) the Teachings of Reality, little d: moments of experience, knowns that you as Knowing can know and use to practise with. Reality is that everything that is born is going to die.

This means you.

We can fabricate our stories about how we, like a giant spider can throw out all these little strings, sticky strings to anchor ourselves into a solid and unmoving place. We can silicone ourselves, we can inject ourselves, we can "fountain of youth" ourselves, we can try and work our hearts out on something that we won't even call the same as being a chipmunk in a cage, you know those treadmills in gyms. We can do all of those things, but we're still going to die, and this breath could be your last one. So, if you're noticing it, this means—guess what? You're alive. So make a choice to open further, to open to what the Buddhas have realised. Buddhas, the Awakened Ones, they've realised there is only this moment, this moment is the moment you can make a choice and recognize that none of those sticky strings, none of those beliefs you have held about how you are and how the world is are true.

Start to look into beliefs. Self-image has generated beliefs and beliefs and beliefs. It has accumulated them, it has taken them on without even knowing that they are fictions.

You can have a lot of fun looking into fictions. Some of them are really good, some of them are really interesting, some of them are really creative. Most of them are banal and they are held by many different groups of people.

The basis is contraction into a sense of self. "There's me." As soon as that contraction is there, everything else is other to that sense of self. So there's me and everything else. Then there's "Me and Mine" and everything else. So there are divisions. There are beliefs that are commonly held, strikingly similar, yet in direct opposition. Are they useful? Well, some people say they may help them make it through the night. But if we look at the world, we'll find that on the whole, they're not useful because what they result in is killing each other and everything else that happens to be around us on a mass scale.

"god is fine. god is good. god believes in... landmines?" Come on, wake up people!

So the fictions about who we are as individuals can be seen as they come up, they can be opened so that that knot in space that we've identified with can open and although words may be floating around like pleasing or horrible wallpaper, we recognize that there's no need to believe them, they're just descriptions and any word is just that. It is a description. So we start to understand that really there is nothing to lean upon.

The previous two verses to this one about setting out on the road referenced a walking stick and an almsbowl. So of course, then we can settle down, having comfortably distanced ourself from that image created by the words which may have been of saffron robes, one shoulder bare, in a dusty land, with a big bowl, going around begging for the meal.

But, although that is true in this very day in that it does occur, what's true about the image that may arise right now is that it's arising right now, it's a thought that's arising right now. So you practise the whole bodymind in that moment and recognize you cannot distance yourself from this Teaching, from this verse, because it is also talking about you.

So, "setting out on the road", what road? Well, that's a metaphor because it's not as if that while sitting on your little zafu, you really are travelling along some mystical road to some mystical destination. There is just this moment and this moment and this moment and that's what you are practising. You have taken the risk, and it is a risk, you have assumed the willingness to put the effort forth to look into moment to moment experiencing. And what will it give you?

Nothing. [students laugh]

It will take away everything you believed to be true about how you are and how the world is. And that nothingness, that "I don't know" is the most valuable gift you can possibly have. It is freedom. It is the freedom to go, to engage in whatever your choice may be, unencumbered by the whining, whingeing, cringing self-image that wants to suck up and please, that wants to ingratiate itself, that wants to be anything but honest with what's going on.

Now, self-image likes to lean upon authorities. Self-image loves rules. Why? Well, if it's a rule, I have to carry it out, don't I? "I was just following orders." How often in the course of human history has that been the excuse for unimaginable horrors? And even today, "Well, so-and-so said this is the way we do it. I'm just following orders. I'm just following the rules".

Use the forms, which are the tools of practice, the forms for the way in which you deport the bodymind so that you have the most opportunity to see moments of experience as they arise and to practise the whole bodymind in the whole moment. Practise the reality of seeing, hearing, tasting, touching, feeling, smelling, the reality of the knowns, known by the whole bodymind. You as the Knowing of knowns can do that. And you are here, you have waded through all the BS of

self-image to sit right here right now today. Recognize that. The more you recognize it, the less recoil, the less reluctance, the less gnarly bits, the less onerous everything becomes.

Now it is in a way, kind of sad, to live in the realm, or to have to leave the realm that we've been living in which tells us stories about the "if only's":

"If only I could meet my soulmate, then everything would be alright."

"If only I had a lot of money, then I could do things to really help people and everything would be alright."

"Oh my god, if only I were thinner, then I'd meet "the one", and everything would be alright."

And the stories go on and on and on. I'm sure you've identified a few about yourself. Well, they are not who you are, no matter what the content may be, they are just another known, like the sound of the wind whipping through the trees, like the sound of a car going by, like the sound of chimes. Simply knowns.

The verse:

Setting out on the road,  
"May all beings  
Go where the Buddhas have gone,  
The realm of leaning upon nothing."

Thank you for listening.  
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## Every Breath You Take 50: When on the Road

Dharma Talk presented by Ven. Shikai Zuiko osho  
Dainen-ji, May 30th, 2009

Birds outside  
talking to each other  
making threats  
little songs of  
perhaps  
seduction.  
Who can translate?

But there's a knowing  
of the sounds  
and the bodymind is how Knowing...  
[Osho whispers]  
which is what you really are:  
Knowing, Awareness in itself

...Knowing knows  
as the bodymind.

With EVERY BREATH YOU TAKE you have an opportunity to practise that fact, the fact of reality, the fact of unobstructed knowing, the fact of the end of suffering, because it is contraction that causes suffering.

Now, the verse:

When on the road,  
"May all beings  
Move in the stainless realm of Reality,  
Unobstructed Knowing."

The verse, written some 1600 years ago was basically talking about monastics, home-leavers at that time who would set out to travel from place to place and had many things to remember when on the road. The Roshi recently addressed aspects of this in the "Doing Not-Doing" series, Part Three, talking about the 37th verse of the Bramajala Sutra. In it was laid out the things that monks took with them when they were on the road. The bodymind of course, three robes, toothstick, begging bowl and a dozen or so other items. Now you can find out for yourself directly, if you're interested, what all those things were. And I do encourage independent research.

We can also look at it from the point of view of those who are not monastics who have say travelled from a distance to come to Dainen-ji. We could say they're on the road. Now, this is not the "on the road" spoken of by Jack Kerouac and the dharma bums, in fact it's quite different. But again, another area for research if you're interested.

Your road may be one from your home to Dainen-ji for the sitting. What do you need to have? What do you need to remember? Well you need to remember your practice clothes, you need to remember to have them pristine, not just any old thing that you're going to throw on. You need to remember to remove jewelry. You need to remember to remove makeup, you need to remember to shave your face if that's what you do so that you don't come to the sittings with a 5am shadow. So there are lots of things to remember. A very important thing to remember is to notice when a contraction comes up with a story, with a feeling tone around it and attention falls into it and that story becomes a definition of who you are and how the world is.

Not useful.  
And not true.  
It is a fabrication.

We love our stories. We love to carry them around and tell ourselves over and over again, and in some cases, ANYONE who will listen, how unique we are, how ill-done by, how heroic to have overcome so many obstacles, how witty, how stupid... You know, self-image is not creative. It recycles the same old stuff over and over again. We can learn to see that.

Those who have something, some moments of having the light shine through the density of the beliefs of social culture, may ask themselves the question: WTF? [students laugh] Is this all there is? And it can happen very quickly and then may be submerged again under the clotting of stories about what's going on. But it may present itself, that opening, that moment of clarity, that moment when the light shines in and the usual understanding drops away, may propel us over the years to end up sitting in front of a blank wall.

Well, fun-seekers... [students laugh] here you are, learning how to see and recognize the realm of Reality, unobstructed Knowing. Now. As it says in the Three Jewels, which we did chant this morning:

Awareness is the only condition.

Now Awareness is not different from Knowing. The words are different but they are talking about the same thing: something that cannot really be talked about but only experienced.

All that arises as the display of Awareness.

Knowns arise within Knowing. Whatever is known is known by Knowing in itself. So knowns rise and fall, rise and fall... Birdsong.

[sound of birds is heard on the recording]

Tiredness.

The little shutoff of self-image saying: "Well, I'll just take a nap now."

Knees giving off sensations.

They're all knowns.

You're the Knowing.

You are practising the fact of being Knowing in itself and eventually, over time, should you continue with diligence and effort, the knowns cease to be as magnetic, as compelling as they used to be and you see them for the tricks of light that they really are, for the stories, for the fabrications that they really are. And they can just be there, you don't really need to do anything about them.

The moment of recognizing a story,  
the moment of recognizing any content,  
the moment of recognizing any feeling tone IS  
a moment of recognizing reality.  
You practise that moment of recognizing reality...  
because guess what?  
Just as you get better when you practise the piano,  
or skateboarding,  
or singing,  
or playing the guitar,  
or refinishing furniture,  
when you practise at the moment of recognizing reality,  
you get better at recognizing reality.

What happens as attention ceases flowing into certain aspects of knowns is that they wear out because you have to feed them, propagate them, in order for those patterns to continue. So... understandable!

Human beings tend to believe things, a couple of things: they believe that words are more important than experience or experiencing. Words, over time, since language was developed, have become a big thing, after all, the workers in words in many cultures, perhaps most, those who work in words have a higher status than those who work with their hands. Well of course that's obviously a sign of a value system. The fact is, experience comes before words and in the history of the species, experience and experiencing obviously came before language.

That can perhaps help simplify things when you as the Knowing are sitting facing the wall and you notice that attention has fallen into a story, you're talking to yourself about experiencing, you have a heads up that that is storytelling. The moment you notice it, you've noticed reality. There is the thought. You are no longer totally involved in it because you are knowing it for what it is, a known, something going on and then the rest of reality can pop forward, the rest of the knowns that the bodymind knows are presented to Knowing. By keeping it simple, you might find yourself being less interested in the fabricated stories about why things are the way they are.

Now, I'll digress for a moment...

The other day I was watching a program about a three-legged dog. The dog had been in an accident and its leg had been taken off, shoulderblade and everything—gone. First thing the dog wanted to do, and this was obvious, we could see it doing it when it came out of the anaesthetic, was get up. Well, something was a little off and it took actually a very short length of time before it was running around on its three legs. I thought: "Hmm hmm hmm."

Now, we human beings do tend to talk to ourselves about things that happen to us:

"Why me?"

"Why do I have this difficulty. This is not fair. It's so-and-so's fault. It's so-and-so's fault..."

...and this seems to delay taking care of what needs to be taken care of. It seems to delay and interfere with the bodymind's ability, due to its plasticity, to reshape itself so that whatever loss or injury has taken place can be effectively integrated, really, into the life of the bodymind. So I thought: "Now, I bet that dog was not lying there saying 'Why me? Why was I the one that got hit by the car? Why has my life been such a misery? Why have I been dealt this deck?'" [students laugh]

So.

When on the road,  
"May all beings  
Move in the stainless realm of Reality,  
Unobstructed Knowing."

Now here you are, sitting zazen. Knowing in itself, each one. The bodymind, how Knowing knows. And this was done since the Buddha started it 2600 years and when Dogen zenji went to China to find a true teacher, he found Rujing on Mount Tiantong, in Tiantong-shu, the temple there. Rujing had said that zazen is "shinjin datsuraku", or dropping through the bodymind. Hearing these words at that time, Dogen realized for himself, the precise time of the collapse of the world, and that his own bodymind was primordially "better without". Better without him, better turned out to the openness of the world, better just left always and naturally open. Dropping through, releasing, opening to the openness that is always open, dropping through, releasing opening to the openness that is always open, is how old Buddhas and new Buddhas are let loose in this world.

This was in the e-Mirror of this week, it is from Ven. Anzan Hoshin's commentaries on Dogen zenji's... [there is a pause and Osho says: "can't read my own writing!" students and Osho laugh] oh well, there we go. But you can read it when you leave or when you go home, and what is being talked about is Knowing, practising at the moment of recognizing knowns until the knowns have all opened and no longer interfere, no longer obstruct Knowing in itself.

Dogen zenji also wrote in "Genjokoan: The Question of our Lives":

Studying the way of Awakening is to study the self. To study the self is to forget the self. Forgetting the self is being awakened by the vast expanse of experience. Being awakened by the vast expanse, one's bodymind is dropped right through.

So...

When on the road,  
"May all beings  
Move in the stainless realm of Reality,  
Unobstructed Knowing."

So as you're sitting there as Knowing in itself, remember, at the moment of knowing any thing, you have noticed reality in itself and by practising at that moment, knowns release.

Have fun!

Thank you for listening.

# Every Breath You Take 51: Seeing an Uphill Road

Dharma Talk presented by Ven. Shikai Zuiko osho  
Dainen-ji, June 6th, 2009

EVERY BREATH YOU TAKE...

...lets you know you're alive. You can still practise at the moment of noticing the breath or any of the other myriad moments of experience that are your life.

Remember... you're the Knowing. The bodymind is how Knowing knows.

And, another key thing to remember: "Its meaning is not in words but it answers sincere questioning". Literally. What you are doing is practising the bodymind, the whole bodymind in the moment. Words are incredibly useful as pointers to practise, but learning a whole lot of words and repeating them to yourselves over and over again obstructs and conditions, often in a less than useful way, the ability to see the clarity and reality of the moment.

The verse:

Seeing an uphill road  
"May all beings  
Always climb above the usual  
Their minds free from wavering."

Now, "usual" as opposed to "ordinary", usual mind as opposed to ordinary mind:

Usual mind

"Usual" is a word that is used to describe how social culture, non-practitioners operate, which often is, (and before we started to practise, and even now without pointing any fingers, we fall for our words about what's going on) coming up with an argument, a contraction, an argument to use against what that particular thought is saying, and then there's the judge that's saying: "no no, that's not the way it is, it should be this way...".

[Osho knocks on the floor twice]

"Objection! Objection!" [students laugh]

So we have a whole courtroom:

pleading our case  
prosecuting us  
giving us a sentence  
(and it's usually not very nice)  
[Osho and students laugh]

Learn to see it.  
It's comic when it's seen.

When we act it out  
it is indeed not comic  
it takes a terrible toll on the bodymind  
on the environment (wherever we are at the time)  
and everything around us.

This has always been the case.  
Not just for these people 1600 years ago  
but now

At the time this verse was for monastics  
but now  
these commentaries from "The Practice of Purity"  
can help us notice bits and pieces  
we can take and use  
to help with our own practice.

"How do you walk up an uphill road?" [Osho asks in a "little" voice]

"Step by step, son." [Osho answers in a deep, "knowing" voice]

I mean, come on, it's so obvious! [Osho and students laugh]

So it is breath by breath, step by step that we do anything at all. There is only this moment and it's not as if WE are someONE, separate from this moment, moving through this moment to the next moment to the next moment to get to

some idea of a future. This is it! This moment is it. It's the only thing going on.

Recognize it.

When attention starts to narrow, and you start yakking to yourself about what it is that's going on, you are conditioning experience in a non-useful way, particularly when you are sitting in formal practice in the Hatto.

To quote from the teisho that are Anzan Hoshin roshi's commentaries on "Yuibutsu Yobutsu", which was in the eMirror of today, June 9th, 2009:

You understand. And then you think, "I understand," and you no longer understand. Over and over in your practice and study of the Dharma you can see how you obstruct yourself by inserting a self into the open space of experience.

So you have something you can follow up on, if you so choose.

Now, it's not as if this moment is something you can get away from... or, get TO... looking up the hill... to the top... When we get there... THEN we'll have the ANSWER.

Well, the answer is in this moment, as it presents itself. All you have to do in the knowing of this moment is allow the bodymind to be as it really is in this moment, which necessitates recognizing the content of the thoughts as content, as words... as thoughts. Bad or good, it doesn't matter, a thought is a thought. You don't have to do anything to get rid of it, you don't have to haul out the anti-aircraft guns and sit there in the little position, firing at these thoughts as they come up, exploding them in the air. You don't have to do that. You go: "Oh! Thought."

But, there's also the breath, there's seeing and hearing, tasting, touching, feeling, smelling, and this can happen wordlessly (because those are words: breathing, seeing, hearing, tasting, touching, feeling, smelling). The bodymind starts to learn to do it.

If there's a little something there that is contracted and starts to check off its little list, recognize it as self-image in the guise of accountant or secretary, wanting to have its little list, then check it off. It's more of the same.

BANG!

This moment of reality. Open to the rest of what's going on. And the repetition of this is in fact what practice is, you're practising the whole bodymind in the whole moment.

So, the usual mind is the mind that follows all of that stuff. It thinks it's thinking. It doesn't recognize that by going back and forth, usually between two points of view, it doesn't recognize that what that is doing is just making a knot that's tighter and tighter and tighter and contracts the intelligence of the bodymind.

Let it go.

And the way it gets let go of, is by recognizing that moment for what it is and noticing that it is arising within all these other moments of knowing that the bodymind is presenting to Knowing.

Now, "waver"... "waver"... "waver"... minds free from "WAVERING"... "waver". Hmm... What does that mean? Well, as is the case with words, there are many many many many many many meanings, so here are a few:

hesitate  
pause  
hold back in uncertainty and unwillingness  
faltering  
being unsure or weak  
moving hesitantly, as if to give way  
the act of moving back and forth

...and there's more, so if you're interested in words, have some fun, look up what it might actually mean, notice the applications.

Now the mind free from wavering. Well, you have a determination. You decide you want to practise because you want to know what's really going on. You recognize it is a straight path, but it doesn't say that it's a smooth asphalt superhighway. You might want to push down the speed pedal like a high performance car on the autobahn, but guess what? That's a view of self-image. Self-image is not who you are. It's something going on. Like life, practice takes as long as it takes. It's a process. We may wish that we could have ideal circumstances and be the perfect practitioner, but those are crazy dreams. They're self-image trying to let us understand that it knows what it's talking about, but remember when that voice comes up saying: "I understand", understanding is gone.

So you feel the breath, you feel the whole bodymind in the whole moment and you let reality, the reality that is already going on, be known. That's how it is.

Self-chattering, ranting, whining, whingeing, if it's doing any of those things, it's got words to it. Go back to the source, look

at it exactly, as clearly as you can. What's going on in the bodymind that occasions that particular tone? That's more interesting than the words. 'Cause face it, the words are pretty boring, eh?

"I'm doing it better than he is."

"I can."

"I can't."

"Why me?" "Why not him?" "Don't they see?..." and on and on and on...

Those are words, they have to be words. So see them. Use them. If you don't use them, they'll use you. (Sounds like something for a trucker's hat.) [Osho and students giggle]

Don't anybody dare. [students laugh]

So, the verse again:

Seeing an uphill road  
"May all beings  
Always climb above the usual,  
Their minds free from wavering."

Doesn't mean that wavering is defying those many other words. Doesn't happen. It comes up, right? Little contraction, moment of despair. Another little contraction, moment of elation, you know, so what? See it as a moment, see it as a dharma, a moment of experience and use it to practise with. And... you will find that the moment then is free from the conditioning occasioned by the contraction into conditioned experiencing.

Freedom from conditioned experiencing. Things as they are. Reality. This moment.

So:

Seeing an uphill road  
"May all beings  
Always climb above the usual,  
Their minds free from wavering."

Have fun!

Thank you for listening.

## Every Breath You Take 52: Seeing a Downhill Road

Dharma Talk presented by Ven. Shikai Zuiko osho

Dainen-ji, June 27th, 2009

EVERY BREATH YOU TAKE this late June morning is laden with moisture. It's humid and it's hot, but every breath you take is your life. No breath... no life.

A long time ago in a workshop, in North Carolina when I was instructing people in how to practise mindfulness through feeling the breath, sitting up straight, opening the eye gaze, noticing hearing, tasting, touching, feeling, smelling, noticing reality, noticing this moment as it is, a wisened old guy who'd been doing some form of meditation for many years said: "And uh, like, what's the importance of the breath?"

[Osho laughs]

Now, fortunately, I didn't have to answer that question because someone piped up and said: "Well, dude if you're not breathing, you're like... dead."

So here we are, we're breathing in this humid air on this June Saturday morning. Kudos for showing up on a Saturday morning.

Today's verse from "The Practice of Purity":

Seeing a downhill road,  
"May all beings  
Be unassuming in intention  
And establish foundations of virtue."

Now, as we all know, everything rolls downhill and gets bigger as it rolls downhill in many cases, and there are many little folk verses and marine sayings about what rolls downhill. And by marine, I mean soldiers, they do tend to have a unique

way of expressing things.

So stuff rolls downhill. It could be said that when we fall into states of belief about how we are and how the world is, they get bigger and bigger and bigger and bigger and impact on those around us. So, we're learning to nip that, to cut it off, to see it for what it is, to see a state, to see a sense of self, a self-image for what it really is: a contraction, a congealing of attention in that field of reality that when fed with the tit of attention gets bigger and bigger and bigger. It grows and seemingly obstructs everything else. Fortunately, that's not true, it just seems that way because attention has been narrowed into this one thing. So when we see it and recognize it for what it is, when there is this moment of waking up to reality. Waking up to the reality of the moment is that there's that "thing", there's also everything that is known by the bodymind that may have been obscured by that artificial growth, that delusion that the "thing" focussed on, the "thing" that attention had narrowed into, was the only thing going on.

So there's a popping [Osho snaps fingers] of the bubble of delusion, waking up to this moment as it really is. And remember, the only thing that is ever going on is this moment and also remember that any words about anything are only metaphors for experience, so have some fun with words.

Now what does "unassuming" bring to mind? Well, you google it:

- .exhibiting no pretensions
- .exhibiting no boastfulness or ostentation
- .acting in a way that does not assume superiority
- .not bold or forward
- .retiring

So of course we can look at it on the one hand and those are little beliefs that self-image can come up with and play out. So that would be more of the same. We may notice that for that moment, images of other people pop up in our mind and we go: "Oh, they are that way." THAT's self-image. That's a moment to be practised as soon as you see it.

Now, is that what "unassuming" means in the context of the verse?

Be unassuming in intention.

Be unassuming in our anticipated outcomes? Hmmm. Be unassuming in what is intended? Or what guides planned action? An intention, an aim that guides action. Well, well, well... it certainly does seem to indicate that the meaning you take out of it is whatever you have experienced of that particular word. Hmmm. Hm Hmmm.

Now "intention" comes from Middle English, which comes from the old French, which comes from the Latin "intendus", so you see, words travel a lot and they pick up a lot of stuff. That can make them a lot of fun. So "intendus" means to direct attention. Aha! So, we want attention open. Attention is attending to what is going on in this moment.

And "establishing foundations of virtue". Alright. A foundation holds up and is that upon which we build, the basis upon which something is grounded. Hmmm. Hmmm. Well, uh, there's the feet, and if you're not feeling the feet, as the Roshi has said "you can't stand your ground". So, yes, feel the whole bodymind in the whole moment, feel the feet, feel the breath, sit up straight, pay attention, notice what's going on REALLY. Where? In THIS moment.

Where does the past arise? Anyone have an answer? Oh come on, go ahead. Where does the past arise? [silence. Osho sighs] Oh well.

Where does the future arise? Come on, join me... RIGHT NOW! That's the only place it CAN arise. Isn't that interesting. The three times: the past, the present and the future arise right here right now as you.

Wow. Hmm.

Okay.

Now, the foundation, another foundation is the Four Great Vows, the basis of practice, that upon which we call for instruction, for elucidation, for an expression of intention. I'll remind you of the Four Great Vows:

- All beings without number I vow to liberate
- Endless obsessions I vow to release
- Dharma gates beyond measure I vow to penetrate
- Limitless awakening I vow to unfold

And when do we vow to do this? Right NOW, that's the only place we can do anything about any of this. So you're learning to look into the reality of experiencing which is: there's breathing in and out, there's hearing, seeing, tasting, touching, feeling, smelling, the feeling of the clothes on your body, perhaps a tiny rivulet of sweat running out from under your hairline... (if you have one), there's the taste of your own mouth, the feeling of your thumbs, one against the other. The only thing that is ever going on, this moment.

So "virtue". Early on in this series, we explored virtue, we went through a list of what is and has been considered to be a

virtue, or virtue, through different cultures and got down to the root, which of course is Latin, which means courage and valour. Well that's a good place to start: courage. Why would practice take courage? Well, let's look at it from the point of view of a Saturday morning. It might take a little courage on your part to face all the little beliefs that come that self-image has about how you are and what you should be doing and how the world is. You might, one foot after another, feeling that foot as it strikes the ground, have to pull yourself up straight and perhaps risk criticism from those around you who really cannot understand what the h--- you're doing on a Saturday morning when you could be sleeping in a sweaty bed, when you could be taking a nice drive to the country, perhaps to arrive and be faced with a "This beach polluted" sign. There are all sorts of delightful things that you could be doing and you could even be heading out to some of the suburban cinemas to catch a flick at 10:30 in the morning, who knows?

But you took the risk. You pulled yourself up and courageously took a step beyond the usual social and cultural assumptions about what you should be doing on a Saturday morning. Again, kudos, guys! It's always taken courage to practise, and out of that courage, out of the willingness to sit and look at the display of self-image and to cut through that by, at the moment of waking up to the fact of seeing it, noticing what else is going on, which of course has already presented itself to you, and by the time you start to put words to it... ha! That's another display of Knowing, or display of Awareness, to practise the whole bodymind in the whole moment. If you keep on doing this, you will find that you are not fooled quite as much and quite so often by the stories generated by self-image about how you are and how the world is, and sometimes you'll notice that despite the stories of being too sick, too tired, too bored, too disinterested, very keen, very much loving this practice, very much wanting to impress, very much falling for how you should be bustling around like a good student...

So all there is is this moment, and really, there's nothing going on. You're alive, you can notice it. It's Knowing, really, that notices it. Remember, all words are metaphors, they are not the experience. But, because human beings could, it would seem, language was developed to talk about experiencing. And often what will happen is we fall for the words and we take them to be more important than the experience. You'll notice that more and more as you continue to practise as well, which simply means that you will then find yourself free of the tyranny of words and find yourself less and less inclined to grab onto one and say: "THIS is the word." Sounds evocative, doesn't it, of, oh well... beliefs.

So have some fun this muggy morning, where you are in the Hatto, the Dharma Hall at Dainen-ji, feeling that humid air, which is cooling a bit now, it's a bit more cool than it was when we first stepped into the Hatto. Well, everything changes, doesn't it?

The verse:

Seeing the downhill road,  
"May all beings  
Be unassuming in intention  
And establish foundations of virtue."

We'd all have a lot more fun, I mean like all, not just the people in this room, all beings. Oh well...

Thank you for listening.

## Every Breath You Take 53: Seeing a Twisting Road

Dharma Talk presented by Ven. Shikai Zuiko osho

Dainen-ji, July 4th, 2009

The wind, air in movement, air that has passed in and out of the noses, the lungs of countless air breathers since... the beginning, whenever that was, of this recycling machine which we call the Universe, is rustling the trees, undoubtedly making and rippling waves into the water of the pond where the koi, Barry, Doug, and Nigel, having just celebrated their third birthday, are busy growing, growing.

Life goes on and with EVERY BREATH YOU TAKE, you can know you ARE alive. The breath lets you know that. That can be the cue to notice whatever else is going on. After all, as you chanted a few minutes ago in The Three Jewels,

Awareness is the only condition,

and you ARE Awareness in itself, you ARE Knowing. You are not anything that Awareness is aware of, including the bodymind. The bodymind is how Knowing knows. The bodymind is how Awareness is aware of anything at all.

All that is arises as the display of awareness.

Everything, the wind, the koi, waves on water, the fan striking your... sorry, the AIR from the fan striking your head, as opposed to the FAN striking your head, excuse me. [students laugh] This is not about being perfect but recognizing that inherent in this moment is the perfection, the completeness of this moment of knowing, this moment of recognizing that you are Awareness in itself and practising that moment of realization.

This is the seamless expanse of all that is.

There's nothing missing. When we start to contract into a sense of a self, self-image and start to think: "Well, this would be perfect if only..." you have dukkha, basic unsatisfactoriness, the mumbling of the thoughts generated by self-image, which are, if we look at them from one way, in one light, are little belief systems.

"This is great, but... if the sun were shining..."

So, a little belief that if the sun were shining, then this moment, which of course would be gone, 'cause it wouldn't be this moment any longer, it would be that moment which can't be grasped or held onto or put into a scrapbook...

So, dukkha, basic unsatisfactoriness—it's gotta be words! It's gotta be words. Now, when questioned in daisan or in a practice interview, we might say: "No, well it's not really a thought, I just have this FEELing that..."

Well, when you start to say "I just have this feeling that", you're using words, you're talking about a little belief system. So, we could say, or I could say: beliefs have to have words. There you have a pointer, something you can look at. Self-image has all these little beliefs so if a word comes up, or words come up when you're sitting, hey! That's pointing directly to the fact that you've noticed something that's actually true about that moment of experiencing. There IS a thought. There ARE words, you've recognized it, you practise at that moment by allowing the whole bodymind, which is already there, to be known by Knowing in its completeness, and you've practised that moment of realization.

And, as the Roshi said over and over and over again in many different teisho, you don't really need to do anything, you just allow, you just notice that what is present is complete, you don't have to change the content of the thought, you don't have to suppress it, you don't have to push it away, but you can notice the tendency to want to do any of those things because if they're there presenting themselves, they are there to be noticed.

So, finally, the verse:

Seeing a twisting road,  
"May all beings  
Abandon false paths  
And always clarify narrow views."

So, as you know, a metaphor for this practice is The Straight Path, radical and direct. So if you should happen to see a twisting road, the twisting and the turning of that road can cause you to remember that when you stand back, as it were, and allow self-image to make choices between this and that, you're following a false path because that thing that thinks it's making the right choice, that contraction into a sense of self that says: "Oh, I understand and I know what to do" is more of the same. It is self-image giving directions, when it has no idea what it's doing.

So you feel the breath, you sit up straight, you notice the presencing of the whole bodymind in the whole moment, a gift given for no reason whatsoever that you can notice when you are sitting, allowing yourself the opportunity to recognize the actual experiencing of the bodymind and the process of perception and cognition in this moment.

Now, in "Turning the Wheel of the Way: Teisho 3", the Roshi spoke about something that we're all familiar with. Students are learning how to practise. And students have misconceptions, they have views about what practice advisors and Dharma Teachers are actually doing.

"They keep asking us to go back to the doorway and repeat gassho monjin and take our time when what we want to talk to them about is reincarnation."

So self-image wants stories. It wants to tell them and it wants to hear them. "Please please please, tell me a story! Tell me what I'm going to get... Tell me what my karma is. Will I come back as a bug? If I get everything right, maybe I'll come back as a beautiful princess. Yes. Yes, that'll be great."

Back in the meat again, that's what reincarnation means, I mean it's obvious, carne? [Osho laughs] Chile con carne? Chili with meat? So there we go, back in the meat again. We want to believe that story. We want to believe and not just we, sitting in this room, but we human beings. When you start to read about the different folk tales of various cultures, there's always stories about how if you're a good little girl or a good little boy and follow the rules, you will get this prize after you're dead. You will come back, YOU, but like, really better... [students laugh]

Now, as the Roshi said, practice is not about proving or disproving the existence of, in that quote he had used "god", practice is not about proving or disproving things such as reincarnation or karma, cause and effect, or proving or disproving the stories of different cultures, including so-called Buddhist culture.

Practice is about recognizing what is going on  
in  
this  
moment

... and using this moment of clear seeing to practise so that clear seeing becomes more and more how you are, and with

that clear seeing, your capacity to recognize what's going on in this moment increases. So it doesn't mean not having thoughts, not having feelings, not having stories, it means seeing them for what they are. Knowns, arising within Knowing. Now what does happen inevitably with practice is that the strength, the pulling power of habits, patterns, tendencies dissipates over time when you don't feed them, they get weaker and eventually they will wear away.

Having said that, you can recognize when a thought comes up: "I wonder how much time I'll have to sit on this cushion before I get the prize?" ... whatever that prize may be. Self-image does have its ideas of what the prize would be, howsoever vague they might be, but they're all kind of around the theme of "It'll be ME, but BETTER!" [students laugh]

So recognize those stories for what they are and be amused by them. This idea of being a good boy or a good girl is pretty pervasive, let's face it. From the belief that if we're a good boy or girl, some red-cheeked dude in a red fat suit with white trim, invented, by the way, in the 20th century, will leave us what we want under a dead tree in our living room... there are all kinds of beliefs that we swallow without knowing that that's what we actually are doing. There's the swallowing of the Real Thing, which is going to make us all happy and peaceful, worldwide, well... sweet black water that is expensive is not a panacea, it's not going to cause happiness and peace to break out, that should be obvious. Have some fun identifying personal mythologies, cultural mythologies. Recognize that self-image, that contraction into a sense of a self with a reason for being and a description of how it is and how the world is, is not a real thing, it's a fiction, it's a delusion, it's actually going on in the sense that it is part of that process of perception and cognition and you're seeing it, which is great, that's the clear seeing that you want to have more of.

Now sometimes, sometimes we become very convinced, self-image becomes very convinced of its own stories about how it is and how the world is. Self-image never never never wants to be wrong and it has a remarkable capacity for shifting what's available, people, places, things, words, so that it can appear not to be wrong, it can get itself very very busy. Learn to see it in yourself, learn to see how these contractions come up, how they have a story, how they will try and strategize so that they will never have to be wrong. The funny thing about this, and it is funny, is that the fact that the contraction's there, the fact that whatever story, whatever set of words is there is there, is not a problem. In fact, it's pointing to the fact that you're knowing it, you're seeing it, it's a moment to practise. And practice is not arduous, it's just dropping whatever it is that's going on and recognizing the totality of the whole bodymind in the whole moment.

Self-image is an activity, it's not an object.

Now, it might be helpful, as we seem to like jingles, if I jingle you a little song, "The Ballad of Self-Image". [Osho sings, to the tune of "She'll Be Coming 'Round The Mountain":]

Self-image is a nasty little thing  
O self-image is a nasty little thing  
In the midst of contraction  
You forget complete action  
O self-image is a nasty little thing.

Self-image is a stupid little thing  
O self-image is a stupid little thing  
Trying to become a being  
There's no complete seeing  
O self-image is a stupid little thing

Self-image is a petty little thing  
O self-image is a petty little thing  
Peering here and peering there  
Thinks it's safe within its lair  
O self-image is a petty little thing

Self-image tells crazy little lies  
O self-image tells crazy little lies  
It was born to deceive  
And it wants you to believe  
All its crazy little stories to be true

Self-image is a generous little thing. Mmm hmm!  
O self-image is a generous little thing  
Looking round it we can see  
It isn't you it isn't me  
But a pointer to the vast reality

Self-image ain't a being or a thing

O self-image ain't a being or a thing  
An attempt to locate Knowing  
Arising it is showing  
The Knowing which is really everyyyyythiiiiing.

[students giggle as Osho draws out the last notes of the song]

The verse:

Seeing a twisting road,  
"May all beings  
Abandon false paths  
And always clarify narrow views."

Clarifying narrow views means that you can bring them up in daisan or practice interviews and maybe, maybe we'll both have a little laugh.

Thank you for listening.

## Every Breath You Take 54: Seeing a Dusty Road

Dharma Talk presented by Ven. Shikai Zuiko osho

Dainen-ji, July 11th, 2009

Hey! Yes, you, and you, and you, and you, and you, and you, and you, and you, and you, and you, and you, and you, and YOU, over there... Wanna have a little fun? Hmm?

Okay! There you are, the Knowing of the bodymind. The bodymind is how Knowing knows, as long as it's alive it's very active. There are infinite possibilities available. So again, you're practising the fact that you're the Knowing of it, so let's take this wonderful plastic toy and play around with it a bit.

So, I'm going to say a couple of words, just notice what happens, what presents itself when I say: a dusty road.

Now, where is that road? What was your experience of it? Because let's face it, those two words "dusty road" and your understanding of what that is comes out of your experience. I was thinking this morning that it's interesting that, in the past 60 years, many of the dusty roads with which I was familiar as a child in the Ottawa Valley have now been asphalted over, so no longer is there that tunnel of dust that you can see for three or four miles away if you're standing, waiting to be rescued from the desolation of the countryside. It doesn't happen anymore. So our image of "dusty road" is very much caused by our experience of dusty road, and young people who may show up here 50 years from now and be listening to this may not have any experience whatsoever of dusty road. Now there are people around who have never seen a cow in person, or in cow-dom? In bovinity? [Osho and students laugh]

So yeah, experience of things is really very interesting. So you've got the experiencing of the bodymind and the myriad of little sparks that shot off as pictures or sounds, thoughts with the words "dusty road". Now, a dusty road in the countryside of rural Ontario is quite a different thing than a dusty road in Sub-Saharan Africa, the yellow stinging dust gets in your eyes and up your nose and you cannot see, you literally cannot see in front of you. You have to have your mud lights on, your fog lights on and it still doesn't make any difference. So there are many dusty roads, and dust has been used to talk about dharmas, moments of experiencing.

Today's verse:

Seeing a dusty road,  
"May all beings  
Be straightforward in intention  
With no obsequiousness or deceit."

So there we are. We're walking on a dusty road and we're seeing that dusty road. Now, interestingly enough, just as all of us are sitting here in the Hatto, none of us are experiencing the Hatto in the same way. Think about it, that's so obviously true. You're sitting there, and you're sitting there, and you're sitting there, and I'm sitting here. There are many different points of view, so even if we were all in a bus, driving on a dusty road, none of us would be experiencing it in the same way from exactly the same perspective. It is our own experience of anything that we can know and we've heard that in practice. And you practise your experience of waking up for that moment [Osho claps hands] and practising at that moment, you'll have more moments of waking up to reality.

So many points of view. MANY points of view. The more points of view that are understood, the more intelligent one can be about choice, about recognizing those clottings into a sense of self with their little mini beliefs about who you are and how the world is. Not a problem, you are not that clotting into a sense of self. How could you be? You're the Knowing of it. So you have choice, you have choice not to follow that contracted action.

But interestingly enough, we tend not to notice a lot of stuff that when we do start to notice it makes us go: "Duh! How could I have not noticed that one of the goldfish up on the third floor has in the past number of weeks turned completely white? Duh..." [Osho laughs] Not a bad thing! A good thing to see how when self-image is focussed on its ideas about what's important, getting the task done, being seen to be a good student, not wanting to make waves... So self-image has many many little agendas. Those are habits, they're patterns. YOU did not even invent them. They were just things that the plasticity of the bodymind took on because of the situations, the prevailing social and cultural factors through which the particular bodymind came as it was born and grew up.

But you're the KNOWING of that, so you're learning to see that and any time you see any pattern whatsoever, there is the recognition that you're not that, so there's a moment of Reality. That was going on. You're the Knowing of it. So Knowing practises and Knowing has the capacity, clearly evident, to know moments of experience. And so the intention when you set out to practise, the intention, a course of action that you intend to follow, an aim that guides action, an objective... when you start to practise, you may not be clear about it, but you get clarity as you continue to practise, the intention, the aim, is to wake up fully and completely so that anytime, anywhere, you will know that you're not the knowns. You can make the choice not to act out habits and patterns and to do it as quickly as possible as clearly as possible, because after all, as the Daiji-no ge says:

The Great Matter is birth and death.  
Life slips by and time is gone.  
Right now, Wake Up! Wake Up!  
Do not waste time.

'Cause time is not a commodity that we can put in a little bank somewhere and take out some when we feel like it. "Oh yeah, I'm going to buy myself some time!" [Osho and students laugh] There will be a moment, and it could be now, or now, or now, when there will be that last breath.

That's it.  
Gone.

Of course we all have little scenarios about that, whether we know it or not, and the scenarios might be dramatic or humourous, or they might not even be fully formed in any way. Maybe we don't go home and sleep in a coffin, as I've heard some do, including the actress Sarah Bernhardt, she used to do that. But, we don't know when we will die, but you know you are breathing right now and that can and is a signal to notice what else is going on in your life which is presencing in the only place it can possible presence which is right now.

So,

Seeing a dusty road,  
"May all beings  
Be straightforward in intention,  
With no obsequiousness or deceit."

Well, obsequiousness, a nice word, it goes back to the Latin, it means "to follow" from the word "seque", or  
.readily compliant  
.excessively eager to please or to obey all instructions  
.servile  
.fawning

Well, I venture to say we wouldn't really want any of that, right? We're not going to buy obsequiousness when we go to that mythical store to buy some time. So, do we do it? Does self-image do it? Have we played it out? I bet we have, each and every one of us. We've stood there, and we've listened or have been told something and maybe we've made a conscious choice not to even listen to the words, but to obey the pointing finger and we go "Yeah yeah, yes, okay sir," tugging on our mythical little forelock.

There's a wonderful picture, a couple of years ago when Saddam Hussein was still the leader in Iraq, there was a picture of Saddam Hussein who incidentally you may have noticed was perhaps the tallest person, that's an interesting thing too, if you look into groups of people who are leaders, often the leader is the tallest person... there he was in full glory, military outfit, lots of ribbons, a beret, and that big moustache. Behind him there were a dozen or so other guys, different sizes, all wearing that same moustache. Isn't that funny? And it's not limited to dictators. Look at corporations, look at government, look at political parties, look at, look at, look at... Wanna fit in? Gotta dress like them. Dress like him. So when you have the opportunity, you might notice how often, when people are in situations when they're receiving information and instruction, they're nodding away, they're not listening to the words, they're just nodding away like a puppy. [Osho pants like a puppy] "Yeah yeah."

So the trick becomes to see those patterns and to practise with them. Over time they will open and you'll start to find that you will be able to ask questions, you will be able to notice when you don't understand something and to explore it more fully. Now isn't that what teachers are all about? To help you explore things more fully? So when you find yourself nodding

away, in any situation, nod nod nod nod... as soon as you notice it, feel the breath, stand up straight, open to the whole bodymind, open to peripheral vision, and see that pattern because it is deceitful. You're acting out something that you do not know to be true. It may be actively in opposition to what you may or may not know to be true. Yet we'll play stuff out, and again I say "we" but I mean of course the patterns of self-image, the contraction into a sense of self with its stories, "I'd better just nod and look like a very agreeable person, even though I really don't understand."

So, that's deceit. Deceit is the act of deceiving, a trick, a strategem, a betrayal, something designed to catch or ensnare. Again, from the Latin, decipio: to ensnare, to take in. So, we don't want, self-image does not want to let on that it doesn't understand, so it doesn't have, when the pattern is running, the guts to say "Excuse me, I don't understand what you're saying. Excuse me, I don't know what that word is." and it'll just nod nod nod away. It's no wonder we find ourselves getting into trouble. Self-image is a gutless wonder. It's asked what it thinks of something, the taste of something, or did it enjoy something and it'll quick [Osho snaps fingers] look for signs as to what the right answer is and it'll nod away.

However, as the dust clears, as we start to see that, as the wind dies down, the dust'll drop away, we don't need to track it further with us, we do not need to carry it on to the next step on that straight path, we can recognize that the seeing of any patterns, whatever we call them, we can recognize the seeing of them is a moment of clear seeing. No dust? Clear! Saw it! Done! Great. Now get onto the next one because as we also know, as soon as we start to say "Oh, I really understand that", as the Roshi pointed out, there is no understanding at that point because more of the same, contraction into a sense of a self is being acted out. So don't let the sand get in your eyes, even when you're sleeping. There is no Sandman who comes and fools you and puts dust in your eyes, the contractions into a sense of self do that quite adequately, really, we do not need any assistance. What we need is what we're getting, the assistance at being able to see reality as it is, recognize that none of those patterns and contractions are who we are, recognize that we have choice, there are infinite possibilities, and at the same time, in THIS [Osho claps] moment with that wordless recognition that this is the only place where your life is happening.

Feel the breath, sit up straight, open the eye gaze.

The verse again:

Seeing a dusty road,  
"May all beings  
Be straightforward in intention,  
With no obsequiousness or deceit."

Thank you for listening.

## Every Breath You Take 55: Seeing a Straight Road and Seeing a Dusty Road

Dharma Talk presented by Ven. Shikai Zuiko osho

Dainen-ji, July 18th, 2009

The air is heavy this morning. Heavy with water. Big raindrops have been falling off and on. We've had lightening. The sky has been dark as evening in the early morning. So all in all, it's been a pretty exciting day so far.

And with EVERY BREATH YOU TAKE, you can appreciate the excitement of being alive in a bodymind. The firing of neurons, the sending of messages throughout, the seeing, the hearing, the tasting, the touching, the feeling, the smelling, the breathing in and out, the thoughts, the contractions into a sense of self that come up. This is all being a human being. You're the Knowing of the experiencing of the bodymind. The bodymind is how Knowing knows.

The verse:

Seeing a straight road  
"May all beings  
Be straightforward in intention  
With no obsequiousness or deceit."

"Wait a minute..."

"Wait a minute... I think I kind of recognize some of those words from last week. What the... What's going on..."

So synapses are firing. And yes, good for you! Except for the very first line, that was last week's verse.

Now, I could spend some time going into "reasons why that happened"...why I made a mistake... We love, self-image loves "reasons why that happened" and it spouts its little stories about "reasons why that happened" as if it had nothing to do with it. As if the bodymind that spoke the words, that wrote the words had nothing to do with it because...

Like, if my eyes were younger, then I would have seen.

Oh, if I bothered to turn the light on when I was writing, then I wouldn't have written that verse down last week, then I wouldn't have made that mistake!

So we go through—we're all familiar with it, you've all done it, don't try and fool me! [students laugh] This thing we call "self-image", this contraction into a sense of a self does not want to make mistakes. It wants to be seen to be... perfect... always right... Whenever something happens that it was involved in, as it were, it did not have anything to do with it:

"Someone else heard what I said and interpreted it in the wrong way!"

"Someone else neglected to do something."

"Someone else was perfect, but my perfection was marred by the bozo moves of other human beings who happened to be in the vicinity."

Well kids, you know what? Doesn't wash. It does not wash.

Now, when I first started working in broadcast television, some two decades ago, we were still doing live broadcasts. So something would happen. A bad joke would be acted out. That used to be done a lot in early morning television. Terribly bad jokes were acted out, and I had a role which I'm not proud of, but I didn't know at the time, I was young, I was the "female", the butt, no pun intended, of most of the bad jokes. But anyway, fortunately, things were not recorded at that time. But, there was a sentence that was said when some sort of error would occur during a live broadcast and that was:

"They'll never notice at home."

So, Joe Lunchpail, renowned for their stupidity, apparently didn't notice much of anything. The people who would use phrases such as, "they'll never notice at home", seemingly didn't notice when things started to be recorded on videotape. So of course something embarrassing or silly would happen. Someone might say: "they'll never notice at home", someone else, usually a technician would say:

"Oh, wait a minute..."

Then the director would flip the switch on the microphone and say: "Roll back that tape." (At that time, videotapes were in reels that were two feet across, it was huge!) So, as things became miniaturized and there was more and more recording, there was obviously a great incongruity between the idea that no one would notice something and the fact that it was recorded, the thing that wasn't supposed to be noticed was recorded. Anyone who has made a visit to YouTube knows, has seen all the comedy and has seen all the hits, those things that at one time no one would have noticed at home get when they get played? Same thing with self-image: we think, self-image likes to think that no one will notice... when it takes someone's words and reinterprets them when it takes someone's actions and gives its own version of them...

So we become less than straightforward and less than straightforward in intention. So what's the intention spoken of in "Seeing a straight road"? Well, you can read all about it or hear all about it by listening to last week's Dharma Talk.

Of course the thought came up to me: "Should I do it over again?" because that's when I noticed. I didn't even notice until I went downstairs after giving the talk in the Hatto, and then this moment happened; I picked up my book where I'd written the verse and I looked as I was going to write down the verse for this week's talk, I looked and I thought: "O—M—G" [students laugh]

Hmm, I transposed. What to do? What to do? Well, I thought I could record it again, but then you all wouldn't be here. Besides, I only had the verse written down, I didn't have any content written down because that, in most cases, except for quotes, is as they say: "shaped at the point of utterance". There's no script.

I could just pretend. That's it! Let's just pretend it never happened. Then, some poor sucker in the future will go "wait a minute..." Maybe not some poor sucker, someone might be absolutely delighted:

"Look! She made a big mistake! I will expose it."

Well, the fact is, in the realm of all possibilities, it's not even a big mistake because the content is still valid, we just have mixed up first lines.

So, no obsequiousness, no deceit. Last week's verse was supposed to be:

Seeing a straight road,  
"May all beings  
Be straightforward in intention  
With no obsequiousness or deceit."

Good rules to have available when you're faced with life's sticky moments. When someone, say, asks you a question and because a complete explanation does not come tripping off your tongue, self-image contracts and comes up with an excuse;

"Oh, I didn't get enough sleep last night."

"If only I would have a great big shot of whiskey right now, then I'd be able to tell you the answer..."

...or whatever self-image's story might be. Learn to recognize it. It is, as they say, BS. It's the stuff of comedy and we should all know that because as we start to look at media, as we are looking at media, as we are looking at the essence of the folly of the human condition, we see more and more that mistakes and the cover-up of same are the stuff of comedy.

Now. Let's go on to:

Seeing a dusty road,  
"May all beings  
Shake away the dust of defilement  
And unfold purity."

Now that kind of makes it sound as if you're taking a sheet and shaking it out, and all the little crumbs and dust mites and bits of skin are flying away. Well, if that works for you, that's fine. There's the open space of experiencing: vast, with a myriad of dharma, moments of experience coming and going, being born and dying. When you notice that the open space becomes congealed, in that there's an obstruction, there's an "I", there's "me", there's a pattern pulling everything else to it as attention is fed into it, you've noticed a defilement of that open space. That is what you are learning to do when, as now, you are sitting in zazen, eyes open, noticing experiencing.

When you as the Knowing notice anything at all, you don't have to talk to yourself about it because of course, talking to yourself about it is self-image contracting, becoming some sort of accountant or judge saying: "Well, should I practise here?" Well, that's where you practise, at that moment. You are learning to do that.

Each time you do that, that congealed space that was pulling in beliefs about who you are and how the world is is opened. As the Roshi called it, a "knot tied in space" is opened and the purity of this moment of experiencing and THIS moment of experiencing is opened. You experience that yourself over and over and over again. That's what you're learning to do.

So, the verse again:

Seeing a dusty road,  
"May all beings  
Shake away the dust of defilement  
And unfold purity."

Thank you for listening.

## Every Breath You Take 56: Seeing a Road Free of Dust

Dharma Talk presented by Ven. Shikai Zuiko osho

Dainen-ji, August 1st, 2009

So feel the breath. That's a sure sign that you are alive in this moment. So feel that breath, feel bodymind as it shifts and changes and moves in and out, perhaps crackles and pops, moves in and out with the activity of life. Recognize: that bodymind, the thing you think of as YOU is made up of oh, ten, twenty, thirty pounds of bacteria, cells that are not you, organisms that are not you, so whether you like to think of it or not, you've been colonized, as with all living beings. You shave your head and you're cutting the tails off little organisms that are burrowed deep into the pores, eating, eating, eating... Now, if that doesn't make you itch, I'm sure something else will...

But, with EVERY BREATH YOU TAKE, you have the opportunity to practise the only thing that's ever going on and that ever was going on: this moment. Every moment of waking up, clear seeing, free of the dust of delusion and fabrication enables you to practise that moment of clear seeing, of recognizing that you are Buddha, you are Awareness in itself, it's just that the dust gets in our eyes from time to time and we don't recognize that. So it needs to be pointed out to us with, in Dogen's lineage, grandmotherly kindness. As we all know, a Granny can slap you upside the head if that's what you need, and with the other hand give you a cookie, because somehow or another, you know that it's in your own best interest.

Today's verse from "The Practice of Purity":

Seeing a road free of dust,  
"May all beings  
Always practise great compassion,  
With hearts that refresh and nurture all."

Now, when I read through the text, what was printed was:

Seeing a road free of dust,  
"May all beings  
Always practise great compassion,  
With hearts that refresh and mature all."

So, I did some research and found that indeed that "nurture" or "nourishing" seems to be the word, the interpretation, the meaning that is favoured and I can't remember, this was translated so long ago with the Roshi, it was over at Zazenji, I think we may have used "nurture". But, we might have used "mature". Hmm. What to do? Choice: get mad because the proofreaders read the wrong thing? Spend an inordinate amount of time tracking down who was the stupid hmm mmm mmm [students laugh] who made that mistake? Pointless, isn't it? But it certainly, certainly is what human beings like to do. So that gets pointed out to us in our practice all the time. We sure do like to find out what hmm mm mmm left the mud on the front carpet of the porch because somehow or other it seems to us to be more important to load off on the (air quotes here, air punctuation) "guilty" one than to fix, than to take care of whatever it is that needs taking care of. This may get pointed out to us as well because as human beings we sure do a lot of it, and not over big matters, oh no no no, not at all, starting out with little things and somehow or other when we start out with the wrong approach toward little things, when by wrong I mean least useful approach towards little things, as with everything else, the big things seem to take care of themselves in that we get into this gigantic habit, globally of looking around to see who we can blame for whatever it is that's going on.

Now, here we are, we're walking down that road, the non-road really, because we're not going anywhere, but we can see through metaphor, that road has had dust on it, it's been straight, it's been curvy, and now it's free of dust, so in this moment, this moment of clear seeing, this moment of noticing anything whatsoever, the road is free of dust and that [Osho snaps fingers] moment ...we practise. Because that moment is free of dust, clutter, it certainly is a lot easier to see, to know when something extraneous presents itself. When something is clear and free of dust, it is a lot easier to see when the tendencies of self-image come up and want to complicate, when those tendencies want to create stories, panoramas, active little scenarios, a stranger on a white horse, clattering, clattering, clattering towards us to rescue us. Someone pinning a medal on us for being so terrific, we did the right thing. Someone proclaiming us a saint because we're soooooo nice. All the little chimeras of self-image can be seen at the moment of clear seeing, you've recognized reality, and as those patterns of identification with our own personal fictions, our own personal belief systems about who we are and how the world is clarify, we do become capable of making wiser choices, or doing the best thing in the moment, for all concerned.

The wish in the verse is that "all beings always practise great compassion". Compassion, hmm? Boy, is that a drippingly misunderstood word. Is that not something that people will knock around? Is that not something that sometimes when they say it, they get all soft around the edges? You know what I mean. So compassion. Karuna. Warmth. That basic warmth, first of all, for yourself through having seen those habits and patterns and tendencies, having seen them for what they are, which is not you, they are knowns, you are Knowing, and by taking the choice to practise that moment of reality, the whole bodymind in that whole moment, over time, the tendency to become trapped and dragged along and to act out those patterns, ceases. But because we've seen it in our own experience, because we've experienced it, we see the functioning of habits and patterns and recognize, they're not us, well... so the same for others, and out of that can come a basic understanding, a warmth, which at a certain point will enable us to see the action that is necessary to take moment to moment: upaya, skillful means.

The verse goes on to say, practising this compassion: "with hearts that refresh and nurture all". Nurture: to nourish, it means:

- .breeding
- .upbringing
- .training
- .the sum of the environmental factors influencing the behavior and traits expressed by an organism
- .the act of bringing up.

So nurture, noun or verb, but basically it's doing what needs to be done in that moment, when the situation is seen clearly, starting first of all with ourselves, and then developing the capacity to take the most useful action in situations and the action is based in the Four Great Vows:

All beings without number I vow to liberate.

...based in the understanding of the Samu chant:

May all beings be happy  
May they be peaceful  
May they be free

So that choice of action when based in clear practice, when based in moments of wisdom free of dust, cannot help but refresh and nurture all.

The verse again:

Seeing a road free of dust,  
"May all beings  
Always practise great compassion,  
With hearts that refresh and nurture all."

Thank you for listening.

## Every Breath You Take 57: Seeing a Dangerous Road

Dharma Talk presented by Ven. Shikai Zuiko osho

Dainen-ji, August 22nd, 2009

August 22nd, 2009. We can tell by the sound of the air conditioner and by the fans that the hydro is still working. The brownout nay, the blackout hasn't yet happened. Sometime in the future, it might. But with EVERY BREATH YOU TAKE, you can accept and realize that right now, we're sitting pretty. It may be hot outside, it may be humid, but we're cool in here. In the future, the sound of the air conditioner and the fans on the recording may not be an issue because maybe there'll be no way to play the recording back.

But that's in the future so in order for us even think about that, to consider it, we have to make up a story. Interestingly, that's what we do a lot of the time: make up stories. Unfortunately, until we start to recognize that's what we're doing, we don't know that that is what we're doing.

Popular culture is such today that even in a magazine called "Fashion Magazine", this information was given out to the Fashion Magazine reader:

Thoughts, five percent coming from actual sensory data, ninety-five percent assumption and misinformation. Estimates are maybe 50,000 to 70,000 thoughts per day.

...and that is not just the property or the venue of Fashion Magazine readers, they're talking about human beings, all human beings.

...and up to two thirds of the thoughts are negative.

Isn't that interesting? So today's verse:

Seeing a dangerous road,  
"May all beings  
Abide in the realm of what is true  
And escape the distress of wrong actions."

"What? Wait a minute. Wait, wait just a minute... That sounds really familiar! Am I having a moment of déjà vu? Again? Maybe in a previous life... Maybe I was there 1600 years ago when these verses were being written and read? Wouldn't it have been in Sanskrit or some other language, then? It wouldn't have been in English, would it?"

"What the hell?" [students laugh]

Well, "seeing a dangerous road", this life is a dangerous road, believe me.

Danger: exposure, or vulnerability to harm or risk.

Doesn't that just define life? And guess what the prize is at the end? [Osho and students laugh] Everyone, all equal, but what we can do is look at how we are living the life that is living as us right now in this moment, which is the only moment that's going on, and this moment is the only thing that's ever and always been going on.

Now, some people will say things like: "I'm really having a hard time wrapping my head around that one." I say of course you are, because it's a thought. Recognize any thought for what it is: a moment of reality, a dharma, a moment of experience arising in this moment is part of the reality of the life that is living as you in this moment. And you, the Knowing of moments of experience, moments of experience known by the bodymind, can make the choice to practise at that moment of clear seeing. [Osho snaps fingers] There!

And, when we practise anything, we get better at it, and this practice of practising the whole bodymind in the whole moment is the practice that does, over time, allow you to live as the freedom that is experiencing in this moment, and it does allow you to escape the distress caused by wrong action.

What is wrong action? Well, we could simply say it is choosing unwholesome, or contracted conditions over the open experiencing of the bodymind in this moment. It's not about eradicating portions of experiencing, not at all, that's what the usual mode of living our life with the usual understanding of who and what we are encourages. We can learn to see that.

Now, "seeing a dangerous road". It could be like a dangerous road, a road with land mines, but it could be the road in front of your house where there are cars, many of them being driven by people who are on all sorts of prescription medication, [Osho and students laugh] which if you have ever taken certain prescription medication, will let you know that they are whacked out of their gourds. Run! Get out of the way! [Osho and students laugh loudly]

So, any road can be a dangerous road, but a very interesting fact, and I'm sure this has occurred in your experience at one

time or another, when something that is a direct threat to your life is happening, there is no time to worry about it. There is no time to crank up a state of fear or of being afraid. Why? Because it will paralyze you and you would not be sitting here at this time. If someone is hanging on your throat, there's no time to worry whether this guy's going to kill me or not. What happens is the body, bodymind responds because the bodymind is built for survival at a basic level.

So, worry, fear? Leisure activities my friends. Now, is that how you want to spend your free time? Worrying? Fearing? Being anxious? Well, of course the choice is always up to you, but since you're sitting here facing this wall, looking into the actual experiencing of the bodymind in this moment, I'd say that's not what you want, in fact, quite the opposite. You're here because something has let you know that there is more to this life and to the experience of this life than is commonly known. When we have lived our life defined by, imprisoned in the beliefs of the patterns of social culture, we may have and have had these moments of recognition, these little holes in the wall where the light comes through, where we think:

"Wait... wait... there's more."

(And that was a tiny little tribute to Leonard Cohen, not an exact attribution, perhaps.)

However, there we are, we said: "What the hell? Is this really my life? Am I really supposed to be this way? Well, I've tried that, and it didn't work. I've tried being a socially acceptable individual and let's say, it may have been slightly flawed."

So here we are, we end up sitting on the zafu, facing the white wall, looking into this moment of experience as it is, learning to recognize that it is not only on the zafu, facing the wall that we can see the life that is living as us as it really is. Practice is not confined to what you do in the Hatto, or in the Zendo, in the formal practice rooms. Anyplace, anywhere, anytime, when you notice yourself being fearful, worried or anxious, guess what? You've recognized a piece of reality. Wow. And at that moment of recognition, at that moment of clear seeing, you can practice that moment of clear seeing, that moment of waking up to reality. And, if you keep on practising and practising, there'll be more moments of waking up to reality, more moments when the distress of wrong action can disappear.

Now, there have been many stories in nursery rhymes and in fables about beings who get anxious, who worry, who come up with certainties about what the future will bring, who can make a meal out of fabricated dangers. We've all heard about the boy who cried wolf.

"Wolf! There's a wolf!"

The village comes out to look, there's no wolf. The next day, this little attention seeking git comes out:

"Wolf! There's a wolf!"

Everybody comes out, there's no wolf. This goes on for a few days, and one day, a real wolf shows up and the boy cries:

"Wolf! Wolf!"

Of course, nobody came! [Osho and students giggle] You can only believe certain stories so many times, then you get a little bored with it. I had a friend once who was prone to committing suicide. [students laugh] Yes. And one day, after like numerous attempts, and the thing is, if she wanted to do it, that was fine, but one day she showed up in the Royal Ottawa Hospital and nobody came to visit her because everyone had just become a little "crying wolfish" about it.

And there's also the story of Chicken Little.

"The sky is falling!" [Osho clucks like a chicken] "The sky is falling!"

All the chickens in the yard, looking up. [Osho clucks some more, students giggle] Wasn't happening.

There's another story about a neighborhood where there was a garage and a kid walking past the garage looked in and saw the light reflecting off coils.

"A snake! It's a snake, it's a big huge snake!"

Goes running off to tell the other kids about the huge snake. Then they kind of get close, have a little look at the light reflecting off the coils and before you know it, the mythology, the urban legend was that there was a great huge snake in that particular garage. Now, the idea of something like that could be awfully handy if you were in a neighborhood that was prone to break-ins. But anyway, long story short, one kid was sent into the garage to get something, wouldn't go and the owner of the garage who may or may not have been one of his parents said:

"There is no snake in there."

They went in, turned the light on, and there it was, a coiled hose.

But as we know, when we fabricate things, when we get involved with our stories of what could or could not happen, and don't recognize that that's what we're doing, not only do we cause ourselves unnecessary distress through falling for these stories, but we involve all sorts of other beings in it, setting up limitations, setting up dis-ease, unease, inability to make the most fruitful decisions in any situation. When we're abiding in the realm of what is true, which does include thoughts, if they're going on, they're going on, they're part of the reality of this moment, when we can see them for what they are and see the content, we can often be amused by the content. When we can recognize that that dharma, that moment of

experience, that thought, that content is simply a small percentage of the totality of reality in that moment, and practise that moment of clear seeing, we can rest assured that attention will be caught up with something else before we can even notice it, it happens often that quickly, but that is another moment to practise.

So:

Seeing a dangerous road,  
"May all beings  
Abide in the realm of what is true  
And escape the distress of wrong actions."

Now, the realm of what is true is not just seeing and hearing and tasting and touching, feeling and smelling and breathing in and out, it is also true that stuff happens! So last week, stuff happened. Little batteries, little positives and negatives, little bits of electronics and whatnot and whatnot failed, so there was no recording. Now, just to get slightly forensic about it, there could have been a rush of self-image, contraction, beliefs like:

"This should not have happened to me, my words are so valuable, they should have been recorded right then and there. How am I supposed to deal with this? I don't have anything written down, I can't repeat it. What will I do? Go back into the room?"

But that's like the usual mind, that's the way it functions because it is the centre of the universe. The fact is, stuff happens. Now, I'm sure it could have happened in the usual world that the person or the group responsible for setting up the situation might have had one of those "Oh, frak!" moments. But, because that can be recognized as a contraction into a sense of self with a little thought, and practised, it doesn't override, it does not have the opportunity to take over and create a whole situation. As they say, you know, "Shit happens".

So I don't know. Pretty hard to judge. Can't tell what's going to happen in the next moment, ever. But we can stick to the facts of the breath, of seeing and hearing, tasting, touching, feeling, smelling, of the fact that there are patterns and tendencies, and the fact that we are not those patterns and tendencies, we're the knowing of them. As we continue to practise, that becomes more and more apparent.

So have fun today! Have fun every moment as you travel down this dangerous road.

Thank you for listening.

## Every Breath You Take 58: Seeing a Gathering of People

Dharma Talk presented by Ven. Shikai Zuiko osho

Dainen-ji, September 5th, 2009

Wake up! Wake up!  
Your life's not done.  
You're still breathing.  
You can have more fun!

With EVERY BREATH YOU TAKE, the bodymind gets the oxygen that it needs to nourish all those cells, some of which as we already know are not even you, but it helps nourish those colonies that are living all over you in places that well... we won't get into that.

With every breath you take, you can practise the forms more thoroughly and we have just practised the chanting form. You may have noticed it was pretty good this morning, wasn't it? There was some resonance going on there. It was terrific! So let me ask you a question: do you have to like every person in the room to practise the form of chanting and to have it be harmonic and resonate? The answer: NO! What you're doing when you're sitting there breathing in and out, allowing the breath to go over the vocal cords, is you're doing your practice. You are noticing when attention becomes narrowed because let's say maybe you're concerned about the way the guy next to you is chanting. [Osho giggles] So you recognize it because you're studious. [students laugh] You recognized that contraction into a sense of self and you remember to practise the whole bodymind in the whole moment and that opens and guess what? Those sound waves that come out of your bodymind resonate with those around.

Another question: do the drums have to like the guitar for them to be in harmony, to resonate together, to produce a piece whose harmonic resonance reaches others? Obviously not. Did Gilbert like Sullivan? Did Sullivan like Gilbert? Well "The Pirates of Penzance", whether it happens to be your personal preference or not, is a big hit, it's been a big hit with audiences for 150 years, roughly, and for the longest time those guys wouldn't even get in the same room together. So what we start to understand, not just with practice but in general, liking and disliking, these patterns and reactivities that arise for us in many different circumstances need not control what we do.

You're the Knowing. Reactivities are knowns. Any known, any moment of knowing a known, any dharma, is the moment you practise mindfulness of the whole bodymind in the whole moment because you're using the noticing of one aspect of reality to notice the rest of the reality of that moment, practising the whole bodymind in the whole moment. This has

nothing to do with like or dislike and we start to understand that through seeing how much of our life has been based on like or dislike, either reacting to it or wanting to be or not be liked or disliked.

Today's verse—finally: [students laugh]

Seeing a gathering of people,  
"May all beings  
Display the profound Teaching  
So that all may gather in harmony."

The profound teaching? We're not our thoughts and feelings. We're not our reactivities. We are none of those things and none of those things need determine the actions that we choose to take.

Early on in practice, we might think that because certain patterns can be so strong, we might think that we have no choice.

"Well I've always been like this and it's served me well" can be something that might come up.

"I've always had a tendency to be a really picky person."

"I've always reacted to smells"... and on and on an on...I'm sure you've got your own variations on that theme and that's what they are, they're variations on the theme of misunderstanding the reality of the whole bodymind in the whole moment.

Now in Greek, harmon: A fitting together, a joining, a concord, an agreement, musical harmony.

So here we sit in concord, together, looking into the experiencing of our own, as it were, bodymind in the whole moment because we can only do our practice, we cannot do the practice of someone else. Out of that, as exhibited very recently in the strength of the chanting this morning, out of that comes a harmony, a concord of sound, the joining together of many difference resonances which have travelled over as many people as there are in the room, has travelled over that many voice boxes and vocal cords. When we step out of our own way and get over that contraction into a self which is, for the sake of this since we're talking like and dislike: "I wonder how I'm doing?" or "Good, I'm doing better than them" which of course disrupts the harmony.

The basic understanding is that here we are, practising the Dharma, the Teachings of Reality. And why would that be? Well, for each and every one of us there has been a recognition that the usual social culture with its many biases and ghettos and harmful points of view need not be, and indeed, is not the totality of reality. So, resonating within each and every one of us, before we even knew what it was, there was this chant:

May all beings be happy  
May they be peaceful  
May they be free

So we end up sitting in front of a white wall on a beautiful Saturday morning looking into, as Dogen said, the self, in this case, the contractions into a sense of self that come up and disrupt the basic harmony and the possibility of that harmony to produce, when it's working well, to produce for example: Dainen-ji, because that is how it came about. There was a gathering of people wanting to understand for themselves the profound teaching that indeed it is possible to gather in harmony. So harmony doesn't mean liking or disliking, but resonating in a way that is in line with the purpose or in the case of music, the piece.

The verse again:

Seeing a gathering of people,  
"May all beings  
Display the profound Teaching  
So that all may gather in harmony."

Thank you for listening.

## Every Breath You Take 59: Seeing a Tall Tree

Dharma Talk presented by Ven. Shikai Zuiko osho  
Dainen-ji, September 19th, 2009

The leaves are turning, their colours changing from green through the various shades, in some cases to bright red, in some cases burgundy, in some cases brown. At a certain point, the stem is released from the tree and the leaf flutters down.

Here we sit, breathing in oxygen, the work of the trees. Now it's sometimes said that trees are the lungs of the planet but that's because human beings came up with that description. Perhaps tree might say: "Look at them, aren't they cute? What they have inside them are the trees of the planet, taking in oxygen, letting out carbon dioxide so that we can take that

carbon dioxide and feed on it and let out the waste: oxygen." But of course, that's a cartoon.

The verse:

Seeing a tall tree,  
"May all beings  
Shed the struggle of self-righteousness  
And be free of pettiness and aggression."

Well, pettiness and aggression are based on values which have been determined in whatever manner they've been determined: THIS is important. THIS is not. THIS is worth having and saving and protecting. THIS is not. Where do these values come from? Well, human beings made them up. They're stories.

So, here we are, in Ottawa. Let's go back 400 million years, at which time we wouldn't have been around, but if we were, we would have been sitting at the bottom of a tropical sea. However, there are no human beings on the planet, no human beings. Giant ferns have evolved. The sea recedes, it dries up, the mud becomes limestone embedded in which there are the remains of all these different types of plants and a few animals, one of which was the squid. Cephalopoda are fossilized in this area. Over time, the plants evolved and changed and before you know it, only a couple of hundred millions years, there were giant stands of white pine in this part of the country that grew tall.

Now, a tree is a tree is a tree. The tree has no value until people come along and start saying to themselves: "What can I use this for? What can I make out of it?", which evolved into a very simple point of view:

"How can I make some money? How can I make more money?"

Out of that comes a system of evaluation, so certain trees become more valuable because they could make tall masts for ships that crossed the water between here and Europe. Bringing what? Well, basically if we look into the history, I can encapsulate it by saying bringing people who were slaves, more or less, perhaps not with that title but with that function which is to work forever for someone else so that they can make more and more money, cutting down the great stands of trees which were the best for the masts of sailing ships.

So, let's not go off track. Before people started to value trees, a tree was a tree was a tree and we know that life in general is very flexible; it adapts. We've all seen trees growing horizontally out of rocks where there appears to be no earth whatsoever and then, having made it out of the rock, the little cells go: "Hey! We can go straight up now" and the vertical tree grows. Still, there is no value to it because no one has stood around, looked and said: "Yeah, you know, I could cut that down and that angle, that angle, that's really amazing. I'll take it, I'll skin it, I'll polish it up and I'll sell it." But that didn't happen when trees were just trees were just trees without an artificial sense of value.

Now, we do that to ourselves all the time. We have value systems that we didn't even know that we had and as we sit, as we face that bare white wall, we start to see these patterns, these unquestioned assumptions we have about who we are and how the world is and what's going on. These patterns were not patterns that we as Knowing chose; they were just stuff that we picked up from other people, stories about what was valuable and what was not. So of course we all want to be valued. That's the story of self-image. Now, does a tall white pine want to be valued? No! Of course, a metaphor, but metaphors can be useful in reminding us of what's going on and what we're doing. What we're doing is sitting, it has been said, sitting "like a withered tree" looking into the rising and falling of moments, and as the Knowing, recognizing those moments of experience, those dharmas, and using them to practise more and more deeply, to practise the reality of the whole moment so that eventually, our tendency to fall into the patterns of self-description fade in power... And actually, they become more and more amusing, after you get over the embarrassment of course. At least, that's been my experience.

So keep on doing what you're doing. Don't believe any of the stories because they're wrong. If you're telling them to yourself, and you're listening to them and following them, you're listening to and following an idiot. [students giggle] Why would you want to do that? Now, come on, you don't want to do that, do you? No no no no. [Osho and students laugh]

So sit like a withered tree. See what comes up. Use it to open fully the whole bodymind to the whole moment.

The verse again.

Seeing a tall tree,  
"May all beings  
Shed the struggle of self-righteousness  
And be free of pettiness and aggression."

Thank you for listening.

# Every Breath You Take 60: Seeing a Grove

Dharma Talk presented by Ven. Shikai Zuiko osho  
Dainen-ji, October 3rd, 2009

EVERY BREATH YOU TAKE signals that you are alive in this moment, now. Of course, that won't always be the case. One day, somewhere, sometime, there'll be that final out breath and it'll be too late for you to practise this moment, to wake up. As is said,

The Great Matter is birth and death.  
Life slips past and time is gone.  
Right now, Wake Up! Wake Up!  
Do not waste time.

Today's verse:

Seeing a grove,  
"May all beings  
Be worthy of the respect  
Of shining beings and of humans."

Well. A grove. A grove of trees. A grove of trees, a little undergrowth and usually a purpose to produce something. A grove of trees can remind us that just as a grove cannot be one individual tree, a community cannot be one individual. A species cannot be one specimen. We can be reminded that although the process of being a human being is the same for all human beings, the meaning that is made of experiencing depends on factors of time, location, where we were born and into what and what we learned. The content varies wildly but the fact of being a human being remains the same.

We're sitting in the Hatto and although you may have been in the Hatto many many many many times, perhaps you have never considered that YOU can never experience someone else's point of view of the Hatto. This morning we have fourteen radically different points of view of experiencing of the Hatto. We don't even know if we're seeing the same colours. We can make an assumption that we're not because seeing and what is seen and how they interact in the bodymind is different. Although the process is the same, the result can be different for each individual.

So, having said that, you all have recognized the fact that as you are alive in this moment, you have the opportunity to question into practice and open the habitual stances that have controlled the action that you may take in the world.

Now, in the verse, the last line says: "Worthy of the respect of shining beings and of humans." What's being talked about with those "shining beings"? In another translation, the word used is "celestials", so stars. We have there, the respect of the shining beings, the stars and of humans. How come? What does that mean? Does that mean a belief system of angels or beings that are different and superior to us? Well, that is the meaning that can be taken from it, and that is the meaning that has been taken from it over the course of history by many, creating cosmologies. But hey, here's another way of looking at it: there's something that's talked about called the Wheel of Becoming (and remember "Wheel") which talks of the Hell Realm, hungry ghosts, the Animal Realm, the Realm of Shining Beings, the Realm of Gods and the Realm of Humans. When this was put into iconography in Tibetan Dharma, you see a very ferocious being holding this wheel, the ferocious being was Death, and reminding us that we better shape up or we'd end up in one of these unfortunate realms like the Hell Realm, the Realm of the Hungry Ghosts, the Animal Realm and what we really want to be in that understanding is Shining Beings or Gods.

Now, another way of looking at it, since anything can be looked at from many different perspectives, another way of looking at it could be since it is a wheel, it goes round and round. In any given moment in any given life in any given sequence of experiences, perhaps we're talking about each individual and the possibility of making choices that allow attention to develop into contracted states that can cause the Hell Realm, that can cause that grasping, that searching for something that the Hungry Ghost Realm can point to. Hungry ghosts are depicted as strange creatures with big, big eyes, tiny, tiny mouths, long spindly arms and fingers and they can never get enough because they can't get it into their mouths. They can never grab onto what they want and eat. We've all experienced that. We've all experienced "This is great, but if only I had more of such and such and such and such, then things would be better."

The Animal Realm, the realm that's just concerned with its eating, its procreating, its excreting. That's it. Now, I really think this is kind of harsh for the animals because I've seen behavior with animals that has been far more dignified than the behavior exhibited by many humans. But I'm not judging... [students giggle]

The Realm of Shining Beings. So that's when you've done things pretty well. Pretty well, pretty well, pretty well... [students laugh] Yes! And you can bask in that light that is reflected by the state being bounced off others around. But of course when we sit in front of the wall it bounces off and sometimes it blinds us and sometimes it flashes and sometimes it just makes us want to throw up because we're so embarrassed about what we've been doing.

The Realm of the Gods: nice. Very nice. So perhaps there's some sort of aspiration to attain that god-like quality when mere mortal and lesser beings will come forward to seek and to worship.

So have you not experienced variations of that as the Wheel of Birth and Death turns? Of course you have, that's why you're here. There's been at some point a recognition that none of this stuff is necessary, these are things that go on, these are habitual patterns but it's not necessary to narrow the intelligence of the bodymind by falling into any of these patterns and acting them out over and over again.

Certainly there are many examples, many many many public examples of how this occurs and what the result of such beliefs can be, but here you have the opportunity to open it up, to open up any pattern that wants to expand and become who you are because you're not that. That is attention enraptured by a pattern.

So you can see it. You don't need to be it.

So you sit and you notice moment to moment dharmas, moments of experience and you use that to practise the whole bodymind in the whole moment and in the process of doing that, the tendency to identify and to find yourself as a SELF with a singular perspective opens. The inherent intelligence of the bodymind is allowed to open and flower and this is a gift to the moment, to the bodymind, to all beings. Moment after moment as we practise, we become what we are and the tendency to play out patterns that are and have been defined by usual social orientations wear out and the energy of the bodymind is available to do what needs to be done, take what action is best for as many beings as possible.

The verse again:

Seeing a grove,  
"May all beings  
Be worthy of the respect  
Of shining beings and of humans."

And speaking of groves, this is October. Yesterday, the Chiden and I drove out to the country and we went through a heavy mist and then we saw trees: magenta, burgundy, plum coloured leaves, brilliant yellow, gold, lemon yellow, brown, a beautiful display of death. 'Cause let's face it folks, the next thing for those leaves was to fall to the ground and the whole cycle of birth and death, that wheel continues.

See it. Know it. Enjoy it. Wake up. Right now, eh?

Thank you for listening.

## Every Breath You Take 61: Seeing High Mountains

Dharma Talk presented by Ven. Shikai Zuiko osho

Dainen-ji, November 7, 2009

Here we are, sitting up straight, feeling the breath, moving that mass of bones and cells, parasites, bacteria... in and out.

Now, for the sake of convenience, we can call it "you" and "me", but we all know that we don't really know what it is. We don't really know what's going on anywhere except this moment. This is what you are learning to see. The verses from "The Practice of Purity", written some 1600 years ago, were written to point to the many activities of human experience and provide pointers to practice.

Today's verse:

Seeing high mountains,  
"May all beings'  
Roots of virtue stand forth,  
Their summits above all grasping."

Now there might have been little slides or movies or stills pop up when you heard "high mountains". If so, they most probably were Mount Everest—29 000 plus feet, Mount Fuji, seen in pictures, maybe even visited—12 389 feet, the Monserrat mountains in Columbia— 10 000 feet, the highest mountain in the Rockies, Mount Elbert in Colorado—14 440 feet. Or, you might not have thought of anything like that at all.

But here we sit, actually in this building, resting on the earth, which has in it, parts of the Laurentian mountains, parts of the Canadian Shield, one of the oldest mountain ranges in the world. The rocks were deposited during the Cambrian times, 540 million years ago. At one time, this might have been a very high mountain, but sometimes when we're sitting on our zafu, we can become dizzy with the height from which it seems we are experiencing. That can happen when we start to conceptualize about anything.

Bottom line: "all is change" is not just a convenient phrase, it's a fact.

Now, do mountains have roots? Of course, in a way they do, roots being just a word, how something is affixed to something else and how it is informed by that within which it is rooted. So: mountains, limestone, which means there were particles that drifted down through a tropical ocean, covering plants and animals that had died and were lying on the bottom. They show up here and now as fossils. That's what this area is: not only are we sitting on a part of the mountain,

we're also sitting on what once was the bottom of a tropical sea.

So change. Each time you notice something about how you are, you're experiencing a moment of clarity, a moment of clear seeing, no matter how confused self-image may want to label that moment, it's not so. It's a moment of clarity. Practise it. You want to have more of them. That's what you're doing. Don't listen to the little voices, don't believe the stories that you should be experiencing something else, that's dukkha, basic unsatisfactoriness.

So let the breath presence the whole bodymind and there'll be another moment and another moment and another moment, changing rapidly. Practise and keep the change.

[quiet giggle from one student]

[Osho speaks to the student who giggled:] Thank you.

[more students laugh]

Predictable, but you know...

Now right now, speaking of change, right now in Ethiopia, there's a rift opening. It started in 2005, it's now 20 feet wide and the split is growing. It's now 35 miles long and a lot of that happened in a couple of days. I looked at photographs and for sure, somewhere in the world, there are some people, I won't give any genders, who, informed by the ob-gyn school of feminism may be looking at those photos and saying: "Oh my God! Oh my God! Gaia is going to give birth!" [students laugh]

Of course, a story.

Now here we sit, cultivating "roots of virtue". As has been spoken of in previous Dharma Talks, that word, which is just a metaphor for a set of conditions experienced by, or is a label for or a set of descriptions of a set of actions that we may take, so we'll just say, allowing, no matter what happens, our basic understanding, which is becoming embodied the more we practise, that all that's going on is this moment and we need not be carried away by any story that presents itself, nor can we grasp and hold onto anything that presents itself. Fortunately, we don't have to.

Makusa.

And from Jinmyo osho's Dharma Talk, "Tada", things as they are, doing not-doing, sitting there practising and how does this get to us? It comes to us through the roots of the Lineage, the roots most firmly established in a historical way, as far as we can tell, by Dogen zenji in the 1200s. Before that, of course there were the cast of characters starting with Gautama Sidharta who may or may not have said this, that, or the other thing, but who did wake up and managed to teach something valuable, incredibly valuable, vital to growing up and taking responsibility for being a human being:

We're not our thoughts and feelings. Those are just things going on. Drop them, there are far more interesting things to spend your time looking at, to spend your time doing.

So with every breath you take, practise this moment. Don't waste your time on those same old stories. They're boring. They're not even funny anymore. [students laugh] But, the more they're practised, the more comic they may seem. We start to see some facts: there is no self or other, each thing does make everything else what it is. Stone was liquid, mountains were high to a child standing across the river in the park looking at the Champlain lookout. That's a very very high mountain. Don't be fooled. Where you sit, wrapped around the breath is the ten directions and the three times.

So:

Seeing high mountains,  
"May all beings'  
Roots of virtue stand forth,  
Their summits above all grasping."

Thank you for listening.

## Every Breath You Take 62: Seeing Thorn Trees

Dharma Talk presented by Ven. Shikai Zuiko osho  
Dainen-ji, November 28th, 2009

EVERY BREATH YOU TAKE... every breath lets you know you're alive. So, you still have a chance to practise and to wake up to the reality of this moment. No, not that one, it's already gone, this one right now. It's already gone even as you speak of it.

Wow, what to do? Can we catch up to it? No... 'cause it's not really "this moment", those are words used to describe something that can only be experienced. That's important to remember about words.

WOOOOORDS [Osho draws out the sounding of the word]

words! words! words! words! words! [Osho chirps the words]

They're sounds made by the bodymind that a collective puts meaning upon but they are never never never the experience.

So "The Practice of Purity" uses words, verses, and today's verse is:

Seeing thorn trees,  
"May all beings  
Quickly cut through  
The thorns of passion, aggression, and stupidity."

Yeah! Yeah, sounds like a good idea! Passion, aggression, and stupidity. Now you may have noticed for example, the word "passion", well, we may be coming to the end of the little phase when if a teacher or practice advisor uses the word "passion", the assemblage of disparate cells sitting in front of them will go:

"Yeah, but, aren't we supposed to be passionate about the things that we do?"

Misunderstanding. I think we're actually, as I said, as a collective, running out of the understanding that somehow or other, this thing "passionate" meant something good. Well, it doesn't mean good or bad in the case of what's being described here, the klesas of passion, aggression and stupidity. What is being talked about with these words is the tendency we have for the energy of attention to rush into a knot of contraction, or a congealing of the energies of attention into a sense of a self that has a storyline. So, passion, aggression: directed to the other, or stupidity: just ignoring what is going on.

We see that these three words basically describe the different states produced by this contraction into a self with stories about how it is and how the world is and "other" which is everything else, we're describing the congealing, the building up of energy which would be inwardly focussed, outwardly focussed, or just disposed to putting a covering over anything that might be noticed.

Now, none of these things are useful because they drain the capacities of the bodymind and they catch us up just as thorns do, thorns on bushes. We, none of us sitting here will most likely ever see thorn trees, or thorn bushes that are as big as they are today in certain parts of North Africa around the Golden Triangle or the Fertile Crescent and in South Asia because there, there has been and are thorn trees with thorns on them that are big enough to puncture the tires on those huge construction equipment machines. Imagine that, huh? You wouldn't want that near your foot. So, these "thorns" that are being used to describe passion, aggression and stupidity, and the ability of these unopened tendencies to grab, distort, tear reality, these thorns of passion, aggression and stupidity can be cut through and they can be cut through time after time after time as they are seen in this moment.

Now thorn trees, as I say, we'll never see big ones like that, which is not to say that big ones that are growing in hotter climates will never grow here, they may grow here as the climate changes. These primal plants will grow bigger and bigger, but we're not going to see them. Things change. Everything changes. This moment is nothing solid. You can't hang your hat on this moment, you can't hang anything on this moment because it is the rising and falling of moments of experience which always changes.

The instruction is when you notice ANYTHING—and that means... ANY THING—you've noticed a portion of reality: Feel the whole bodymind in the whole moment and allow any tendency for contraction to grow and to snag the fabric of reality and rip and tear it, allow that to open through simply "makusa". Doing nothing, just seeing, being the Knowing that you really are, recognizing that any moments are knowns. Any thing that is known is a known and points to the fact of knowing.

Now, students often get a little... impatient... because we have patterns that tell us things that we've come to believe about ourselves: that we're pretty smart, this should not take us very long, after all... Well, recognize that as a pattern. None of us know anything and really... There is nothing to know. There is just this moment presenting itself, it's not as if there's a whole pile of knowns hanging from those thorn tree branches and we have to find a way to get to them. No, not at all. There's just this moment. We see the ways that we get snagged.

Speaking of not knowing nothin'... I started to look into thorns thinking, because of course the first thing that came to mind, the first image that came to mind was guess what flower?

Say it out loud.

[students:] "Rose!"

Yes!

Wrong!

Those are not thorns.

[Osho and students laugh loudly]

Those are prickles. [more laughter]

That comes direct from the Bureau of Sharp Protuberences That Grow On...

[more laughter]

So then we read a little bit further into it and the thorn is defined as a "sharp, modified stem". Modified? Hmm. Now, opinions vary. Some say that the sickle shape of the thorn is for clinging and climbing. Well, roses, which have prickles, so you could say the crescent shaped prickle is for climbing and clinging. Makes sense because there are lots of climbing roses. So I think okay, I can see that, all these plants climbing, growing up over things, and when the things that they grow up over disappeared over time, they were left to grow into menacing branches with great, sharp, pointy thorns and then someone said: "Yeah, well, they have those things to protect themselves." Is that true? No, that's an interpretation as well. That's a story.

[Osho speaks in a high, "teacherly" voice] "No, wait a minute, they must have them so that they can grab onto animals passing by and thus drop pollen and what is needed for reproduction and the spread of the species. They can carry it to distant places."

Yeah, that's a good one, Blanche, we'll buy that. [students laugh] So before you know it, we have all these different stories and they're taken very very seriously. The thorn tree, if you choose to look it up and follow it, the thorn tree plays a major role in certain cults. I'll say no more. If you're interested, there are stories.

But, what you can remember, whether you're looking at a prickle, or a thorn, or if you've caught or been caught by a piece of thistle, which has little prickles or thorns on it, you can remember that just as you can free yourself or your garment from that little thorn or prickle, so you can by practising, cut through the thorns of passion, aggression, and stupidity so that you no longer get snagged on them, and so that the fabric of reality is as it is which is open, free, and bright.

So, the verse:

Seeing thorn trees,  
"May all beings  
Quickly cut through  
The thorns of passion, aggression, and stupidity."

Thank you for listening.

Ouch! [Osho jumps as though she had just been pricked, students giggle]

## Every Breath You Take 63: Seeing Trees Heavy With Leaves

Dharma Talk presented by Ven. Shikai Zuiko osho  
Dainen-ji, December 12, 2009

EVERY BREATH YOU TAKE reminds you it is this moment and you're alive. We're all in the process of dying. From the moment we're born, that's the case. Life: a terminal disease.

So use that moment of feeling the breath to practise the moment by feeling the whole bodymind in the whole moment. Use that moment of noticing anything to practise the recognition that this is this moment. All knowns arising in this moment are knowns and what you really are is the Knowing of them. That's Reality. You are practising Reality.

Because the Reality is that attention funneled into any patterns whatsoever obscures the radiance and light inherent in this moment of experiencing, sometimes we can be overshadowed. Sometimes we can be lost, it would seem, in the mumblings of old patterns.

"I hate her. I really dislike her."

"I'm so much better at this than he is."

"Look at him. Who does he think he is? Look at the way that kunsu is hanging." [students laugh]

"I'm too tired. I am just too tired to do this. When I've had a good rest, then I'll be able to do it."

Eventually we start to learn that no matter what the topic is, no matter what the content, it's actually the context of this moment. So we are not any of our mumblings and rumblings. We are what we choose to do. And you, apparently, have chosen to make yourself available to the Teachings of Reality.

Today's verse, from "The Practice of Purity":

Seeing trees heavy with leaves,  
"May all beings,  
Form a canopy of light  
From changeless liberation."

So. Words are only metaphors and if we busy ourselves looking around for "trees heavy with leaves", we might have a hard time, but we have memory of trees heavy with leaves. And it's guess what time of year? Ho ho ho ho ho! Okay! Needles

maybe are not technically leaves, but they do function in a similar way, providing nutrients, gases for the tree.

During this season, the festive season, the season of anxiety as wishes collide with the letdown of unfulfilled hopes and dreams, you may perhaps be able to use trees to remind you that as practice matures, as patterns open never to form again, there is a liberation from the accustomed pull of all those patterns. We may see them but we make a choice not to be them. We recognize them as being simply bad wallpaper, awful old blacklight posters from some other life. And perhaps the dread or the suffering occasioned by attention moving into those patterns is just a memory, perhaps even a comedic memory because how we could ever have believed some of the bullshit we've believed ourselves to be is, let's face it, folks, hilarious. [students erupt in laughter]

So. Once we start to recognize those moments of freedom from the weight of patterns—and they're not “ours”, we didn't cause them, we didn't pick them. Why would we pick some of the patterns that have run rampant in our lives? Did they make us happy? Think about it. Would you really pick that way to be? No. You start to see them for what they are: rantings and ravings picked up like burrs acquired walking through the undergrowth in the forest of your life.

So look up and use those moments of freedom that you have experienced as the base for continuing to see and practise moments of reality, and that can seem as if it is a canopy of light over you because when you're not believing your own stories of being picked upon, of being isolated, of being special, so very special, of being the centre of attention, it's pretty hard for anything to rain on your parade because there isn't a parade, there's just this moment of experience.

When you see trees “heavy with leaves”, when you see fir trees that have been massacred for a pagan festival in the name of compassion (that's quite a contradiction, however, let's not go there, that's a whole different topic), when you see trees that have had their trunks cut off from their roots, you use that moment of recognition to actually practise, to feel the breath, to feel the whole bodymind in the whole moment.

No matter what festive insanity is going on around you, no matter what patterns are being acted out by whom, no matter how strange you might feel with your gut stretched with that wonderful festive meal, you can practise that moment of recognition.

Another breath, another moment of clearly seeing reality.

Today, the 12th of December, 2009 is the thirtieth anniversary of the death of Joshu Dainen roshi, Anzan Hoshin roshi's teacher. As part of the Lineage, we can directly experience his influence, we can directly experience how important roots are to any living organism, and a sangha is a living organism. With this base, with these roots coursing through you, carrying the nutrients, the information that you need to practise, you can use the memory of this verse to help you do that.

Seeing trees heavy with leaves,  
“May all beings  
Form a canopy of light  
From changeless liberation.”

Thank you for listening.

## Every Breath You Take 64: Seeing Flowers in Bloom

Dharma Talk presented by Ven. Shikai Zuiko osho

Dainen-ji, December 19, 2009

EVERY BREATH YOU TAKE is this moment. The breath that was let out before is gone gone gone. The breath you let out now could be the last. That's just reality.

Wrapped around the breath, the bodymind presences seeing and hearing and tasting and touching and feeling and smelling and gurgling and thoughts and all the processes that are knowns which you as the Knowing can know, which enables you to practise. The moment you notice anything whatsoever, you've noticed a tiny tiny tiny piece of reality. That moment of noticing reality, that moment of clear seeing is what you're practising because, as with anything, the more you practise clear seeing, the better you will get at it, and Reality, over time, bodies forth knowledgeably as the bodymind in this very moment.

Today's verse from “The Practice of Purity”:

Seeing flowers in bloom,  
“May all beings  
Subtle perceptions of wonder  
Blossom forth like flowers.”

Well we don't really need the flowers to remind us of our subtle perceptions, but as with all metaphors, they're useful for looking at our own experiencing. Flowers now are gone, it's wintertime, there's snow on the ground. The ground is frozen and hard, but we know, if we think about it—and we may not—we know that in that frozen ground, there are roots and bulbs and seeds, materials that are lying dormant, doing whatever it is that they do to prepare themselves for the melting

of the frozen ground, the flowing of the liquids that nourish the tissue of the bulbs and seeds, that in combination with the warmth of the sun, the increasing warmth of the ground, push out shoots, new growth that eventually we'll see as flowers. Even in the Arctic, for those brief days of summer, if you bend down and look very closely at the ground, you'll see the tiniest little, most perfect little flowers blooming.

We tend not to think about things like this much because as with everything else, it would seem we've become so used to our comments about the thing, whatever it is. We taste something and rather than tasting it, we have to close the deal by letting everybody around know that we've tasted something. We look at a flower and we have to say to ourselves, perhaps even out loud (and I have noticed that this talking out loud is increasing in the public arena) or if we have someone with us, a comment on how "beautiful that flower is!"

When we look around, when we actually notice how we are, we may notice that we believe that our words are the wonder, the fact that we can talk is wonderful! [Osho and students laugh]

When we learn to see that contraction into a sense of a self that has a habit of commenting on everything, we may notice that that actually obscures that moment of clear seeing, that moment of tasting, that moment of touching, and abstracts from the wonder of the moment of perception.

Now it could be a while before we will actually be seeing flowers in bloom but, given that this is the Christmas season, we will see pots being forced to bloom, sold in grocery stores, flowers in ugly green plastic pots. We can take the bulb, put some stuff around it that comes in a nice clean plastic bag, water it a little bit and eventually it will bloom, and we can be reminded of the wonder of flowers, of blooming, of blossoming.

I've always, when seeing particularly amaryllis in grocery stores, I've been touched when I see amaryllis that have been on the shelf for too long, or in transit too long, and there are these pale leaves and pale stems starting to grow out of the box. It's a reminder of, to me, the incredible wonder that goes far beyond words, of the relentlessness of this thing called "life", how plants can grow through asphalt, tiny little lilies-of-the-valley in the springtime, little green spears activated by warmth and moisture pushing through asphalt. That indeed is wonderful.

So as you feel the breath, as you sit up straight with this thing we call, in English, the bodymind (and that's not what it is, that's just a metaphor for this incredible assemblage of disparate cells that you like to call yourself, that we like to call "me") as it is a known, when there is a knowing that it's slumping, that it's feeling a little tired, that its eyes have closed, that it's engaged in thoughts, at that moment of [Osho claps] knowing, you practise the whole bodymind in the whole moment. And that indeed is wondrous as well.

So with every breath you take, you're alive. Your little pale tendrils are getting stronger as you practise. As the rocks of misunderstanding, the rocks of contraction into a sense of self are seen for what they are—which is, let's face it, not really there as such, presencing but not permanent—as you practise each moment of clear seeing, clear seeing becomes more and more truly who you are and there is a blooming and blossoming of who you are.

The verse again:

Seeing flowers in bloom,  
"May all beings"  
Subtle perceptions of wonder  
Blossom forth like flowers."

Thank you for listening.

## Every Breath You Take 65: Seeing Trees in Bloom

Dharma Talk presented by Ven. Shikai Zuiko osho

Dainen-ji, December 29, 2009

EVERY BREATH YOU TAKE moves that meat machine that you call "you" but you're starting to recognize that you're not that, that is how Knowing knows and you are the Knowing. That is what enables you to practise. Bodymind is how Knowing knows.

Dharma, moments of experience surround the breath that's moving in and out. Any moment at the moment of noticing anything at all, practise the whole bodymind or notice that you have been practised. It wasn't the thing that you think of as you that did something, there is no controller, no director, no watcher, there's Knowing, and there are moments of contracting into a knower, a watcher... a dictator.

So at the moment of noticing anything at all, open to the rest of the reality of that moment.

Now some 1600 years ago, some people got together and over time, nobody knows how much time, nobody knows how many people or what their names were, they got together and what came out of it were the verses that are recorded in the "Avatamsaka Sutra" which Anzan Hoshin roshi and I translated as "The Practice of Purity". These give reminders of things that can be noticed and things that can be practised.

Now I've been thinking over the past some time, quite a long time actually, of how what we human beings do is distance ourselves from people who lived in times far before our time. It's as if they're not real people, somehow or other that they are these cardboard cutouts, collages made out of our experience of having read something or been told something. In this season, I noticed a Christmas crèche with what are apparently Far Easterners or Middle Easterners in a manger and those kings who brought gifts, and this may have in fact been our only exposure to people who lived before we did and in places different from the place in which we were living and are living right now.

So how to overcome that misunderstanding? Well, in this day and age it is easier to overcome because we have access in ways that have never been possible in human history of knowing what's going on with people who speak differently, speak a different language than we do, and even though this is decreasing, may dress differently than we do. Our understanding is that "hey, guess what?" People are the same: the process of being a person, of being a human being is the same for every human being.

Wow. Could that be possible for people who lived 1600 years ago? Or 2500 years ago? Well indeed. Now, the context within which people were living was different, for better or for worse, it was different. There weren't the "mod cons" (modern conveniences) that we enjoy, although we find that in fact, as there are more and more discoveries being made about artifacts left behind by peoples, that many cultures were quite different than we have imagined them to be.

So, the verses were written for people just like you and me, ordinary, breathing in and out, seeing, hearing, tasting, touching, feeling, smelling people. The sun came up. They said: "Ah fu— [students laugh] time to get up." Or: "Wow! Time to get up!" The sun went down. "Let's party!" And that happens to be true in many cultures. Roman culture had more wine bars per city block than, I think, any modern city. So the similarities are widespread. The context may be different, the climate may be different, the foliage may be different, but the encouragement to look further than one's habitual experience is what the verses are providing.

Today's verse:

Seeing trees in bloom,  
"May all beings  
Have flower-like features,  
And be marked with nobility."

Well, I guess we can just dismiss this, huh, 'cause there's no trees in bloom right now. Look at what it's like out there. It's raining, we've got freezing rain, "slippy slidey, won't even be able to walk to my car..." But, all words are metaphors anyway, they are not the thing that is being talked about, they are not the experience. So, "Seeing trees in bloom", well, trees are in bloom with little twinkly lights all over the neighborhood, or they're in bloom with tufts of snow, or they're in bloom with frozen streams of water, icicles. I think for the sake of expression, we could say "yeah, of course we can when seeing trees in bloom wish that all beings have "flower-like features and be marked with nobility". We don't have to wait until the sandcherry in the yard unfolds into its little pink flowers. We don't have to wait until the dogwood unfolds and blooms into bigger flowers to notice more about our experience in this moment.

What's being talked about here:

"May all beings  
Have flower-like features"?

Wouldn't that be surprising? Hmm? "Looks like an English rose" and actually looked like that? Would we not be surprised? Would we not recognize that the metaphor has somehow magically turned into the reality and it is in fact I'd say could be quite surprising if not horrifying to look at someone and find that they have petals all over their face that were not glued there for a photo shoot? When we read "flower-like features", we can take the word "flower-like" and recognize there is this unfolding to the full potential, there is this opening that occurs. Flowers are indeed romanticized, but many do have a delicacy and an appeal and are associated with what we in every culture call "beauty", perhaps because of the colour, perhaps because of the transient experience of a flower which makes it apparent that that which is born will die. We can take from the verse the "flower-like features" to mean fresh, although fading, vain although vanished, but in this moment: open.

"And be marked with nobility" is the last line of the verse. We could do a whole Dharma Talk on the marks of nobility of the Buddha, which developed in cultures when people told stories and things became misunderstood and became solidified into the idea that it was a good thing to have a big bump on top of your head, it was a good thing to have arms like elephant trunks that hung down by your knees, and it was a good thing to have—well I won't go there, we're talking about the naughty parts now. There were many other signs of a Buddha and you can certainly run a search on the White Wind Zen Community website to get more information about that. But let's make it a little bit more personal because although we have certain lumpy heads here and there, although we might have arms that vary proportionately, we have no one in the monastic sangha whose arms reach down to the ground yet. (But given how primates are progressing, how much they're learning to do, it wouldn't surprise me one day to see Koko sitting there [Osho and students laugh] Koko being a famous gorilla with a vocabulary. In fact, that would be neat. Wouldn't that be neat? [Osho and students laugh])

However, we do know and we know this from what our very eyes see moment to moment, what our bones experience moment to moment, that when the bodymind is open, it expresses a quality of dignity, it is not being at that moment warped and distorted and gnarled by contractions, it is open, expressing its full intelligence and functioning as it should, unobstructed by the gnarls of delusion. You've seen it, each and every one of you. You had seen it probably before you started to practise when someone said "stand up straight" and they did and it was obvious something dropped away from them and the bodymind was more dignified, more graceful, more present. To that there is a noble quality, there is a quality of presence, a quality of allowing this moment to be experienced fully rather than falling for a fabrication, a story, a made up bit of business about what's going on in this moment. That warps us, it denies and distorts the bodymind's intelligence.

So:

Seeing trees in bloom,  
"May all beings'  
Have flower-like features,  
And be marked with nobility."

Thank you for listening.

## Every Breath You Take 66: Seeing Fruits

Dharma Talk presented by Ven. Shikai Zuiko osho

Dainen-ji, January 2, 2010

January 2nd, 2010, the beginning of the second decade of the 21st century. Wow!

EVERY BREATH YOU TAKE is this moment. Every breath you take nourishes bodymind, giving you what you need to practise in this moment right up to the point of that last breath. So come on, it's just logical, you're alive right now. Don't plan to do tomorrow or even in the next moment what you can do right now. After all,

The Great Matter is birth and death  
Life slips past and time is gone  
Right now  
WAKE UP!  
WAKE UP! [Osho yells these two lines]  
Do not waste time

Today's verse:

Seeing fruits,  
"May all beings  
Fulfill the consummate Teaching  
And realize the Way of Awake Awareness."

Remember, this was written some 1600 years ago, in a different context and by that is meant the reality of a different place on the globe, a different climate, a different set of vegetation, different clothing, different household appliances, no tv, no internet, no "Axe" deodorant, no "Regenerist". Different context. That is very difficult for us to understand because self-image, that contraction into a sense of self is concerned and convinced only by what it believes to be true, only by its own set of understandings and it manages to effectively block out all sorts of other possibilities of understanding. Simple things like the fact that the process of being a human being is the same for all human beings.

Self-image becomes convinced of its own beliefs. "This is the way things are and this is the way they've always been." But you, sitting in front of that white wall know that the moment of knowing anything, including that sense of a contraction into "me", is the only moment you have to practise. So you're practising that moment of knowing, that moment of clear seeing.

Now today when you were walking here, you may have been seeing a whole lot of wonderful fluffy snowflakes, you might have been hearing as well as feeling the texture under the foot which may have been a little bit of ice with a little crunch moving into the softness of newly fallen snow, and perhaps a little slip! Any moment of knowing anything at all is the only moment that you can practise.

Now, some nearly seven decades ago when I was a kid, and it was during the Second World War, fruits were not as abundant as they are today, especially during this time of year in the North (and we are, we Canadians, a Northern people, after all we are sitting in the second-coldest capital city in the world and no the first is not Moscow, so have another guess but that's an aside). So some seven decades ago and before that, the appearance of a withered little orange in a Christmas stocking was a big deal! And that smell as the little cells containing the oils burst was extraordinary as it floated in the cold air of the kitchen or living room and mixed with smoke from a coal or wood fire was memorable because that was the festive season. But today it's different. Today we walk down the street in our winter gear, pull open the door of our local grocery store and there they are: orange and yellow and red, the ovaries of the tree world! 'Cause that's what they are, that's what fruit is.

The verse:

Seeing fruits,  
"May all beings  
Fulfill the consummate Teaching  
And realize the Way of Awake Awareness."

So each seed inside each fruit is the future. It's not a dead thing. Those fruit have been plucked and sorted and wrapped and shipped and granted, the fleshy outer parts are decaying, we call it "ripening off the tree" but really, we all know what's going on. That fruit, the flesh is wrapped around the fertilized ovules which are the seeds. Now because each thing does make everything what it is, you may recall that a few months ago, the price of lemons went way up. Why was that? The bees are disappearing, they're not doing the job of transporting pollen to fertilize the flowers of the citrus trees because for an unknown reason or reasons, their population is declining.

However, each seed contains possibilities for the future. So we can start to understand what the verse is saying by fulfilling the "consummate Teaching", the perfect Teachings of Reality which say this moment is perfect, it is as it is. Once we intercede with a concept like "this moment's perfect, BUT IF...", once that "but" creeps in there, well, what do we have? Basic unsatisfactoriness, dukkha, suffering because that tiny little step into "but if" is the beginning of toxic and dangerous fairy tales about how things will be "if only..." or should be "if only..."

No problem, you know what to do and in fact, if those "if only"s are strong, you have kind of a heads up because you know it might happen. It's a bit like a tiny little gnat, you might miss it if it's circling around your head, but if you have a giant fruit bat with a wingspread of a meter circling around your head, you might do something.

So if those fruit bats of familiar states start to come up, you don't have to do anything about them, you just don't feed them. You practise the whole bodymind in the whole moment, you practise the consummate Teachings which help you realize the Way of Awake Awareness.

What is the Way of Awake Awareness? It's the practice of Reality, the practice of things are they are and that means the spotting of that fruit bat is a good thing. The fruit bat is not a problem, the gnat is not a problem, maybe the "gnat" is a bee, who knows? There you are are, sitting in the midst of this moment of Reality, practising the Way of Awake Awareness.

In this week's eMirror, there is an excerpt from Anzan roshi's comments on "Falling Down and Falling Away" from the series "Seeing Eye to Eye: Commentaries on Eihei Dogen zenji's Yuibutsu Yobutsu" and he's speaking of shijin datsuraku, falling through the bodymind.

"Falling down or falling through, there is no one to fall [...] the bodymind no longer contains a self looking out at a world that is separate from it."

There is no separation. There cannot be. The seeds are not separate from the flesh. The seeds are not separate from the future. So practise this moment when you smell the rot of overfed states. Practise sitting up straight in the only thing that's going on which is this moment, and let everything fall away.

After all, everything requires a little fertilizer and some of those really heavy states could fertilize fields and fields of fruit trees.

Sit up straight.

Open the eye gaze.

Have fun!

2010. Come on!!

Thank you for listening.

## Every Breath You Take 67: Seeing a Vast River

Dharma Talk presented by Ven. Shikai Zuiko osho  
Dainen-ji, January 9, 2010

Here it is: 9th of January, 2010.

EVERY BREATH YOU TAKE comes into the body laden with water. When you're outside it's frozen. Those crystals can strike inside your nose and lungs and as you're sitting here, you might find yourself manufacturing your own river of salty water because it is that time of year.

The verse:

Seeing a vast river  
"May all beings  
Enter the stream of Reality

Flowing into the ocean of Awake Awareness."

Now it's hardly likely they're talking about the vast river of your cold, contextually, probably it's one of those large, old rivers. Perhaps the Ganges because that is the part of the world in which these verses were written some 1600 years ago. And a reminder that these are reminders that can be used today to remind you to practise.

Now, 71% some say--I'm not going to quibble over figures--a lot of the world is water. So is a lot of that bodymind sitting there that from time to time you are convinced is YOU because contractions into a sense of self which pull up patterns of this and that, of thoughts, of feelings, of descriptions, causing you to seemingly get swept away by them, but hark!

You're the Knowing of that!  
You are the Awareness  
of that sense  
of getting swept away by delusion.

It really is unbelievable because there is nothing to believe. There is the fact of experience, your experience. There is the fact that [Osho strikes the floor loudly] this produces an effect on the bodymind which you, the Knowing of the knowns experienced by the bodymind can hear, see, feel that brightness that can occur if you were woken up from having been drowning in a portion of that ocean of reality. You're woken up to the fact that the breath, seeing, hearing, tasting, touching, feeling, smelling, all of those dharma experienced with the bodymind are known by the Knowing which is what you really are.

The verse encourages a person seeing a vast river to continue to enter into the stream of reality. So when we've started to practise and we do our thirty minutes a week, like face it

that's not even putting a scrap of toenail into that stream of reality. So if we really want to wake up to that which has already and always been going on, we have to immerse ourselves a little bit more into that stream of reality. There we go: it's hitting the ankles... thoughts come up...

"Oh no! What will happen when we get up to the knees,  
it's going to be so fast,  
it's going to be so cold,  
I'm going to be asked to do this,  
I'm going to be asked to do that, I'm going to be told to believe that I can make it across."

Yadda yadda yadda.  
Blah blah blah.

Then something happens and for a moment Knowing clearly sees the reality of the moment. There's not a problem that thoughts are present, there's not a problem that you were lost. The very fact of seeing that you were lost lets you know that you are no longer lost and you have entered more completely into the reality of the moment which is what's always been going on, except those patterns of attention that caused us to get lost in only small aspects which become big aspects of that moment because we feed them and they suck away at attention like a giant tick so that all we can see then is this giant tick and we're not aware that, we don't see that, we don't know that, we don't recognize that the rest of experiencing, let's say 97% of what we're experiencing has disappeared. No wonder we feel a little weird. [students giggle] Things are out of balance.

Now, you don't have to believe that because it's a waste of time. We all know that we're basically fundamentally lazy so why waste time in believing things that use up time and energy when you can just sit there in the ocean of Awake Awareness and, according to this metaphor, fed by the stream of Reality and just watch that stuff go by.

Oh look, there's a dead dog floating along. Oooh. Don't have to do anything about it.

Beautiful flower.

A glass ball.

A nice shell.

A memory from when someone said something horrible to you,  
you thought.

It can just flow in that current.

No problem! It's not you, it's not about you. You're the Knowing and you don't have to do anything except sit there and open to that which is already and was already the case. The whole bodymind in the whole moment.

Now we can get a little scared because we think "Oh yes, so the ocean of Awake Awareness, so I have to believe that this is what's going on."

Or, we might go:

"Why can't I get there?

What is wrong with me?

I'm sitting here all caught up in the weeds.

Everybody else is just floating along merrily.

Look how happy they are!" [students laugh]

And as soon as we see that, guess what? That's the life raft, as it were, that's the water wings.

Wow! Look at that! So you take a deep breath... Oops a little salt up your nose... Oh that's just your cold, relax, it's okay.

[students giggle]

We sometimes fear this thing,

this being asked to be just like everybody else.

Well, nobody is asking us to be just like everybody else.

Not at all!

Never never was the case.

Sure, the process of being a human being is the same for every human being that's ever walked on the face of the earth.

Now, this is not the time and place to get into a discussion as to who decided when whatever became what we call a human being. So we won't go there, but

breathing in, breathing out,

being born, breathing out,

breathing in, breathing out... dying.

That's the process of being a human being. [students giggle]

So we don't have to settle for our own stories about how we are and how the world is. We can just see them because we're the Knowing of those stories. We're not the stories. That can be quite a relief. Some of the stories that we do make up can be really really awful, horrifyingly embarrassing, but we're not asked to share those. We're not asked to take a bad one and turn it into a good one, not at all.

We can just see them flowing by,

flowing by in that stream of Reality,

into the ocean of Awake Awareness,

which is what we are,

we just don't know it

when we're caught in the weeds.

Now about 30 years ago, I mic'd and taped a waterfall. There were eight microphones in one little location. It was amazing because even though the overarching sound was that "whoosh" [Osho makes throaty waterfall sound] of a waterfall, of currents of water splashing on rocks, when it was recorded, amazingly each little track was different from the other. The water, when broken down had different rhythms according to its context. Amazing.

So there is no solid thing called "waterfall", there is no solid thing called a "stream", there is no solid thing called an "ocean". There are words which describe, roughly, size, perhaps location, little pointers, so there is no one style that all humans have to adopt to be Knowing in itself, not at all!

Different rhythms, different tastes.

And you sit, you, made up of a large percentage of water, you sit being breathed in and out because you're the Knowing, the Knowing of the whole bodymind in the whole moment and each moment that there's a moment of [Osho strikes the floor] waking up and seeing that stream of reality, you practise and that Awake Awareness is more and more completely, that open Knowing is more and more completely more and more of the time, a manifestation of who you actually are.

When you're seeing things as they really are,

when you as Knowing recognize that every known is just that, and not who you are,

you have all the freedom you could possibly want as you splash around as Awake Awareness in that ocean of Awake Awareness,

as you splash around as Knowing in itself.

So, once more:

Seeing a vast river

"May all beings

Enter the stream of Reality

Flowing into the ocean of Awake Awareness."

And uh, listen, if you check a map, if you look at a globe, you can flip it and turn it and get out big magnifying glasses but nowhere on that globe are you going to come across white letters over blue saying: "The Ocean of Awake Awareness".

[students giggle] It's all around you. Right now! You are that so have fun with it and don't get any up your nose.

Thank you for listening.

## Every Breath You Take 68: Seeing a Reservoir

Dharma Talk presented by Ven. Shikai Zuiko osho

Dainen-ji, January 23, 2010

EVERY BREATH YOU TAKE... or every breath that takes you because in a sense, in a very real sense, there is no solid and permanent "you", what there is is a series, a multitude of contractions into a sense of self with a story attached to it—a thought, when you get it down to its basics, it's a thought.

Any time you notice a thought

or anything else that the bodymind is experiencing,

any other dharma,

the instruction is to notice that which has already presented itself which is the breath, seeing, hearing, tasting, touching, feeling, smelling,

all the other dharmas or moments of experiencing,

experienced in that moment by the bodymind

and known by Knowing,

which is what you are.

Continuing on with "The Practice of Purity" from the Avatamsaka Sutra, the verse:

Seeing a reservoir,

"May all beings

Wake up right now to

The truth of the seamlessness of the Buddhas."

Now reservoirs, at least my experience of reservoirs has always been quite exciting because a reservoir is, in this country, something that kind of looks like a spaceship (especially if you're a kid) with very long legs going up into the sky and it says on it: "Renfrew". [students laugh] And, nearly every town, even on other continents have reservoirs with water, which is being stored for future use. When we go to the movies, reservoirs often present themselves, there is the excitement of seeing that first sign: "El Paso", "Detroit", "North Fork", "Yellowgrass, Sask." They are signposts, advertisements, containers for a very precious resource: water.

So as an aide-memoire to what it is that you're doing, a reservoir, or a picture of same in a film or a photograph can act as a reminder that what you're doing with this bodymind, this reservoir of energy, is practising the truth of the Teachings which say that each thing makes everything else what it is, and don't for a minute think of that printed on an article of clothing.

Now a reservoir has to be seamless or it will leak.

The truth of the Teachings is seamless

and they can prove and do prove themselves

to you

each moment you notice what is actually going on.

Each moment when you are poked and prodded to see a thought as a thought, to see a contraction as a contraction, to actually notice Reality, you may start to notice how we affect each other. [Osho and students laugh]

So we start to question into our assumptions about who we are and how the world is and sometimes we can get so caught up in old patterns, old patterns of belief about who we are that we'll fight like crazy to keep them in spite of having that mirror of the Lineage of instruction shining on us. We refuse to see as we clutch to our belief about what's going on.

"No, I won't! I can't! It's impossible for me to do this! I'm too old! I'm too old... you don't understand."

"Well, I'm too tall. My bones are too long, I just cannot sit like that."

"I just can't do it and I resent you telling me that I can do it. I also have a—I don't think I mentioned this but if I did, you probably didn't listen—[students laugh] I have a thing about authority." [Osho and students laugh some more]

Hey, listen, I'm just a kid from a small town. Drop it! What I'm saying to you is, can you see how energy has gone into that self, how it has created someONE who is operating from this thought which is a belief, another name for it, a belief about how you are and how the world is and it's nonsense.

Then something might happen, we might go WHOA! Now where did that thought go?

"Well, I know it's just lurking..."

Sit up straight,

feel the breath,

open the eye gaze,

feel the bones,

see the seeing,

hear the hearing,  
now where is it?

And at that point, often the most hardened contraction into a sense of self will have to admit that it has experienced in its own experience the truth of what is taught. The accumulation of those moments, the practising of those moments of waking up is what we're doing until in fact all there is is Awake Awareness bodying forth. There's a bodymind and it's doing what it has to do when it has to do it, without all the chit chat, without all the contractions into the impossibility, without all the contractions into the creation of hierarchies that don't exist, there's the freedom of this very moment. And this one. And this one, unencumbered by the chains that we've used to tie our own hands to our own throat. [Osho laughs] Not so smart.

So, the truth of the "seamlessness of the Buddhas... the Buddhas... the Buddhas?  
Buddhabuddhabuddhabuddhabuddha...Wait a minute, I thought there was just one!?"

Well, if there were just one, what we would have is a cult, the Buddha Cult. Buddha means "one who has woken up" and when we chant the Ten Proclamations, when we chant the Lineage, we're chanting to people who have woken up before Gautama Siddhartha did. We don't know all their names, how could we?

Gautama Siddhartha woke up, made the connection, some sort of connection between what had happened and what he had done and was able to teach others, but not like this, not where you come in through the cold and you open the door of the monastery, step into a nice, warm place and then afterwards you go home, shuffling, maybe wingeing, maybe whining, maybe joyful 'cause it's all over, but you go home and forget a lot of what has been taught, which is okay. That's how self-image is. Gautama Siddhartha said, when asked to teach: "No." [Osho and students laugh] and eventually weakened, I guess, under the pressure and said:

"Okay, but here's the deal: you have to come and follow me, you have to be by my side which means you're going to have to leave your little home where you're waited on hand and foot" (because it was men at the time, mostly) "You're going to have to do your own stuff, okay? I can keep my eyes on you 24/7. If I don't, you'll just slide back into your usual behaviors."

So, that was the first monastic sangha. It still rings kind of a bell today. The truth was that there is no separation possible between dharmas, moments of experience. The air we breathe is the very air that has been breathed by every human being, every being, every air breather since the beginning of time. There are bits and pieces floating around and I read in the Harper's Index today that there is quite a high possibility that we're still breathing in bits and pieces of people like Julius Ceasar, and it's funny because you have to name the bad guys, in a way, not that he was a "bad guy", but he did a lot, he was notable and it did involve a lot of killing. But that's an aside about how we don't have the names of just the average guy and gal who did okay. But anyway, back to the verse:

Seeing a reservoir,  
"May all beings  
Wake up right now to  
The truth of the seamlessness of the Buddhas."

So you, on your own time can research, can read, and it will all point to this very fact, the fact of your own experience that you are not any thought or feeling that you may have and that you have choice and the more you practise, the more choice you have until there is absolutely no belief left to keep those things alive, and there's open experience, unconditioned by conditions.

In today's eMirror, there's a text of the Roshi's quoted, it starts with Dogen, commenting on Dogen's "Yuibutsu Yobutsu":

...the eye is just like the body, and the mind is the same as the body. [...] everything is "fully revealed."

The Roshi comments on Dogen:

In many of the Mahayana sutras there are blazing bursts of light when the Buddha speaks and proclaims the Dharma. But in this word spoken now and this sound being heard, in the light that shows the colours and forms that are seen and that light up your eyes, the Buddha's body is directly revealed.  
What could be more obvious?

That's from the teisho "Seeing Eye to Eye".

Now, when you notice leaks, as it were, in your metaphoric reservoir, and you may notice them when they're pointed out to you by a practice advisor or a teacher, only you can take the necessary action. The teacher can't run up to with a little bicycle pump and some glue or chewing gum, and stop that leak, but they can say to you: "Look! You're making a lot of noise there [Osho and students laugh heartily] and you really don't have to. Perhaps you might be able to look into this from this angle and this angle and this angle and this angle."

The process of practice is having how you are reflected back to you so that you can see more and more clearly. What self-image will often want to do is to take that as a criticism, but I have noticed that that's not happening as much any

more. People seem, and maybe it's because the base of practice has been established here so that the very simple things, the simple basics of practice are now embedded in the environment of the monastery, but the taking of instruction, even though there may be vivid displays of patterns such as oh you know, redness of the face, dry mouth, gasping, [Osho and students laugh] it's not being taken personally.

Now, I speak from deep knowledge of taking things personally, so indeed it too can be opened and remember the process of practice is the same for everyone. There'll be variants, of course. Just as the process of being a human being is the same for everyone; the content may be slightly different, the strength of patterns may be slightly different, but it's the great leveler. Self-image really can resent that if you let it, it likes to get in there and criticize and boast. It likes to believe that it's the best, or the worst, the strongest, or the weakest, needs this, doesn't need this, thank you very much, F you. [students laugh] It's more exciting than a Disneyland ride, the time frame may be a little different but it's a lot of fun.

So, the verse again:

Seeing a reservoir,  
"May all beings  
Wake up right now to  
The truth of the seamlessness of the Buddhas."

Thank you for listening.

## Every Breath You Take 69: Seeing a Pond

Dharma Talk presented by Ven. Shikai Zuiko osho  
Dainen-ji, February 6, 2010

The ponds in the monastery grounds are frozen over but we can have a memory of how the ponds looked before the freeze.

EVERY BREATH YOU TAKE stirs memory.

Awareness is the only condition.  
All that arises as the display of awareness.

So memories, thoughts about the past, feelings, thoughts about sensations, thoughts about the future, thoughts about what the ponds will look like in the spring are all arising in this moment. None of them are a problem, none need to be eradicated or changed into something else, they are as they are. We need do nothing with them and we also can remember that words are only words, they are never the experience itself, they are never the experience that they are describing.

Now, you have can have, of course, an experience of a word. If you're listening the experience of the word starts with the waves that are created between the lungs and the throat and the voice box and the tongue and the teeth of the speaker and their impact on your bodymind, the impact on the eardrums, the impact down the hammer, the anvil, and stirrups and then too many details to possibly comprehend which happens faster than we can even talk about it. And there's an effect produced by those words, but that effect produced in the bodymind is not what is being described. So there's a multiplicity of moments of experience that we in our feeble way do the best we can to describe.

Today's verse from "The Practice of Purity" from the Avatamsaka Sutra:

Seeing a pond,  
"May all beings  
Be eloquent in speech  
And skillful in teaching."

Eloquent! Eloquent? Oooh, I like it. Eloquent... which comes from Middle English which goes back through to the Old French and back to Latin.

eloquence: to speak out

So we're talking about speaking out, we're talking about the formation of words to propel out of the bodymind to suit a purpose. Now, when we hear the word "eloquent", well depending upon our experience of reading about speakers, or our experience of hearing about them, or our experience of seeing and hearing at the same time, may cause different meanings or different senses of what the word is describing to spring forth.

Eloquent. Now, we might picture some old Roman dude standing with a toga, wait is that a purple stripe? Yes, it's a purple stripe at the edge of the toga so this is part of the ruling class, someone to be listened to. Then we might have a memory of oh, who was it who was it who was it....? Was it Cicero, I think who put pebbles in his mouth to speak through so he could train himself to form his words well? Or "eloquent", it might bring forth a memory of a writer that perhaps we've gone to listen to reading from their work and the words might have sprung forth and taken to the air like humming birds. We might

have been bored. But if we were to speak forth such a thought, well, what would our friends think? So, let's just sit here with a knowing smile and nod, "yes... yes"

So we all have our own experience of eloquence and it means:

-vividly or movingly expressive.

It can mean powerful in the sense of discourse. Then we have to look at what do we mean by "powerful"? Well, one definition is the ability to get things done.

-adapted to express strong emotions or to state facts, arguments with fluency and power.

[Osho proclaims dramatically:]

Seeing a pond,  
"May all beings  
Be eloquent in speech  
And skillful in teaching."

Well, there we have a little bit of bad acting, but is that not what self-image does all the time? Is that not what happens when space becomes knotted and a little mask comes up, something that we want the world to see and believe? Hmmmm.

Now, back to the face of the pond. The pond, a pond can look oh so calm as it dapples in the sunlight, oh so calm as the scum grows across it, very very calm, much like this room appears to be. Appears. If we were to take the top off each and every skull and if there were indeed visual and audio representations of those thoughts and feelings, would this be a calm room? Well speaking only from my own experience, I don't think so.

So we deal with this rocketing of thoughts, of feelings, of biochemistry and of course we remember when noticing anything at all, any condition whatsoever arising that it's the display of Awareness and we are Awareness itself, Knowing in itself and therefore we can practise that moment of clear seeing.

Now, the pond, the pond can look very calm. You may look very calm, even serene as you walk into Daisan or a practise interview, but one or two of you might have experienced what happened when the stick of the word stirs up that pond: "How is your practice?"

All of a sudden there are weeds growing up, all of a sudden, there's an old rusty can and a tire that we trip on and oh my God what's in that mud, is it a snake? No problem, no problem, it's the noticing, it's the knowing that causes you to deepen your practice. We think that we have to clean, rather self-image thinks that it has to clean the pond. "I'm gonna clean all this stuff out of it, THEN I'll be able to practise." Well, it's that very interesting mess of toothless combs, old scarves, a forgotten mitt, a piece of dog bone, the weeds and the mud that enable you to practise. That's the fertilizer for waking up. The moment you see it is a moment of waking up.

The moment you see any thought,  
any contraction,  
any attitude,  
any feeling of the foot on the floor,  
any tightening or knotting of space,  
the moment of noticing  
is a moment of clear seeing,  
it's a moment of waking up.

That's what you're practising and it makes sense because when we practise something, we get better at it, so by getting better at recognizing conditions as they arise within Awareness, getting better at recognizing anything that is experienced as knowns, Knowing practises that moment of knowing until eventually all there is is the bodying forth of Awake Awareness, Buddha. You're practising those moments of clear seeing and it doesn't matter whether it's a piece of algae, it doesn't matter if it's a stone reflecting and looking like gold, it doesn't matter whether it's a dead frog, what matters is that moment of recognizing a thought, a feeling, a moment of seeing, hearing, tasting, touching, feeling, smelling, experienced by the bodymind wrapped around the breath.

We look into a pond, the smooth surface of a pond and if we don't disturb the pond, we might see our own face in it, but hold on, even this is an illusion because a reflection is not an accurate representation of our face, it's a reflection, it's a reversal.

We'll never ever see our own face.

That's reality. However, as we face the wall in zazen, we can see more and more clearly these moments of experience that arise, these tendencies and patterns of contraction into the old familiar way of looking at something that we wove together into a personality, we can see it for what it is: random and chaotic, basically. At the moment of clear seeing, we can recognize that as a moment of clear seeing and practise that moment of clear seeing, of waking up and we'll get better at it. It just happens.

So, this is what Teachers have been doing since the beginning of the Lineage. Teachers being people who through their own experience have recognized the truth of the Teachings. And gee whiz, you know, when you find a good thing, don't you want to tell other people about it, no matter what that good thing might be?

Well imagine here you have people who have found unconditional freedom, freedom from conditioned experiencing and it feels good! [students giggle] So come on down! Teachers have been doing it for 2600 years, Gautama Siddhartha, although there were Buddhas, people who had woken up before Gautama Siddhartha, Gautama Siddhartha for some reason or another, maybe just because people asked him to and finally he buckled under and said "Okay, I'll teach you what I know". Since that time there have been Teacher after Teacher after Teacher in this transmission of Awake Awareness, passed on Buddha to Buddha, face to face.

In the opening comments of the "Eihei gen zenji goroku: The Recorded Sayings of Zen Master Dogen"—Yasuda Joshu roshi and Anzan Hoshin roshi translated this work—Anzan Hoshin roshi wrote:

Dogen's words arose through his desire to communicate the actual nature of experiencing to his students so that they might realise the Way of the Buddhas and of the Lineage of Dharma Ancestors in their own lives. While such words can never touch the basic point, they never leave the basic point. Such words point to this moment of present Awareness as the root of the Way, and the root of our lives. The practice, an actualization of our own actual nature, arises through this very bodymind now.

So hearing the words, recognize: the only place you're hearing them is now.

You can feel the clothes on your body  
glasses on your face if you have them  
hair on your head (if you have it)  
knees  
body moving in and out with the breath...

Feel your bum on the zafu.  
Feel what it feels like to breathe in deeply for a moment, to allow the ribcage to open fully.  
Smell what you smell.  
Feel your teeth and tongue in your mouth.

This is it!  
This is now!  
This is the moment to wake up!

Why not?

Nothing to lose... except those contractions that may cause you problems to a greater or lesser degree.  
Use them.

At the moment of recognizing:  
feel the breath,  
sit up straight  
open the eye gaze  
feel the whole bodymind in the whole moment

be before thinking.

Seeing a pond,  
"May all beings  
Be eloquent in speech  
And skillful in teaching."

Thank you for listening.

## Every Breath You Take 70: Seeing a Well

Dharma Talk presented by Ven. Shikai Zuiko osho  
Dainen-ji, February 20, 2010

Well.  
Well well well.

Thank you for walking through the snow, through that frozen water, lacy water, apparently, every flake is different. Every one? Hmm... But you know what I mean...

So you walked through the snow, you stepped on frozen water and walked into the front door of the monastery, in itself, a source of instruction in the Dharma.

EVERY BREATH YOU TAKE is, and this is true, every breath you take is now.

And now.

And now.

It can't be captured but it can be recognized.

And are YOU making the choice to breathe now? Hmm? [students giggle]

Give it up. You are being breathed.

Today's verse in "The Practice of Purity":

Seeing a well,  
"May all beings  
Have the capacity to clarify  
And so elucidate all things."

Now, as you may have guessed by now, I like looking up words. So, "well":

-Middle English from Old English, wellen, to bubble and boil

-High German, wella: wave (that was in use before the 12th century)

-well: an issue of water from the earth

-a pool, fed by a spring

-a pit, shaft, a hole sunk into the earth to reach a supply of water, oil, brine, or gas

-an enclosure in the middle of a ship's hold to protect from damage and facilitate the inspection of pumps

-a compartment in the hold of a fishing boat in which fish are kept alive

-an open space extending vertically through floors of a structure

-a space having a construction or shape suggesting a well for water

-something resembling a well in being damp, deep or dark

-a deep, vertical hole

-a source from which something may be drawn as needed

So we're sitting in the Hatto of Dainen-ji, a well of Dharma that has come to this spot and is occupied and is maintained and is fed, as is any well, by many different streams flowing through subterranean channels, flowing through places that we may never see into. We do know that wells that are fed by water passing through layers and layers of stone will be purified as harmful particulates are leached out. So the well of Dainen-ji, a resource of Dharma has been fed for, in recorded history, 2600 years since Gautama Siddhartha sat down under that pipal tree and said: "Alright, that's it, I am done searching around. I am done standing on one leg covered in ashes. I am done starving myself. I am done staying awake for 48 hours. I am done being buried in the sand up to my neck. I'm done with it. I'm just going to sit here until I know what's going on."

Now, of course, I'm exaggerating, I don't know whether he did all those things, but in my own experience, I went to a lot of workshops before I ended up in this well. It's likely Gautama Siddhartha encountered many different schools of thought about what was going on with the bodymind and what this life was all about. So he sat, he woke up, and people came and said: "Teach us, teach us!" He said:

"Okay, but you have to leave everything behind, your usual identifications behind because I know you guys, you're outta my sight and you're repeating, you're saying old stuff..."

First monastic sangha. [Osho and students laugh]

... so ... the Lineage, this information was passed on and passed on, all those waters, all that stream contributing to this well here today. Even in your own experience, look at you. Awwwww, look at that...[Osho laughs] You've come from different places, different times, different backgrounds. You bring "particulates" with you in that water that makes up 70, 80, 90 percent of the bodymind, which of course we never really think about unless we're crying or having to go to the bathroom, but we are water.

Monks: unsui, clouds and water. There's been that recognition that we are simply a small particulate in this universe. We're being breathed in and out and we have choice. We have choice to make the right choice. You are developing the skills when you're sitting to know what's true and what isn't and to make a choice accordingly.

Now of course there are always particulates of difference in waters, and they're still safe. A little bit extra salt, a little bit extra calcium, little bit extra magnesium is not a problem. It mixes in the well.

We had, when I was growing up, a pump in our backyard that went down through layers and layers and layers and layers and layers and layers and layers of limestone. To get water, you used the pump. The water was highly sulfurous. It was pure, as pure as you can get, not one hundred percent but pretty close, but it tasted like rotten eggs. It wasn't a problem because, as we human beings know, we can invent a story about anything. It would have been very simple, acting upon the way people responded to the taste of that sulfurous water and the certificate from Health and Welfare saying it was some of the purest water around, it would have been really easy to put it in bottles and sell it as an elixir for curing everything because that's what people wanted. They would come up to that well and they would pump a cup and say: "Oh, I wonder if

this is going to make my scrofula go away?"[students giggle]

We didn't do that, but after my father died and I sold the property, the fellow who took over, who bought it, painted the pump gold. [Osho and students laugh] But he didn't make a thing out of it because you don't have to, people will make things out of things themselves.

"Why is it gold? Oh my God!"

"Oh, it tastes like sulfur, oh it's awful! But I bet it's really good for you, it'll probably get rid of my..."

So this is what people do, this is what human beings do, wanting things to be better. Hoping and dreaming, they make up stories. At the flip of a pump handle, they make up a story, and nothing really has to be going on but a story will get made up.

So when people find themselves longing for a drink of truth, they might set out on their own journey in many different ways, from many different backgrounds with many different particulates and they might end up at this well where, for 2600 years, waters have been mixing and have been clarified and are made available, freely available to anyone who puts one foot in front of the other and shows up.

So, the verse again:

Seeing a well,  
"May all beings  
Have the capacity to clarify  
And so elucidate all things."

Thank you for listening.

## Every Breath You Take 71: Seeing a Spring

Dharma Talk presented by Ven. Shikai Zuiko osho  
Dainen-ji, March 6, 2010

A couple of weeks ago, all was frozen. There was ice on the streets, ice in the yard, squirrels were all hidden away in their nests. But today the front pathway is all clear. Even since this morning ice on the street has melted and it springs forward that spring is here!

Oh sure, chances are there will be some more snow, there might even be some freezing, but can't you feel it? Didn't you notice it in the colour of the light, the quality of sunlight. When you got out of bed it was dark, but it wasn't as dark as it was in February, the darkest month, the coldest month, but everything changes.

Today's verse from "The Practice of Purity" and my comments entitled "Every Breath You Take":

Seeing a spring,  
"May all beings'  
Skillful means increase  
And roots of virtue never wither."

Now, spring, well they are not talking about this all encompassing word that we use to describe the fact that the freezing is dissipating, the weather is changing, what was frozen is melting and that melting produces water, this very valuable element that allows things to grow, keeps our cells puffed up nicely, enables us to function as an organism and makes up the vast majority of the elements present on this blue pearl we call "home".

Spring can also mean things such as "moving upward and forward in a single motion". Those squirrels that are now starting to come out "spring" from branch to branch. It means to "move suddenly upon". If I were to "spring" out from behind the door in the Zendo, it might surprise you. Which leads to:

.to appear or come into being quickly  
.to issue or emerge suddenly  
.to extend or curve upward  
.to move out of place  
.to pay another's expenses.

"Hey, I'll spring for that coffee."

It also means, and this is the meaning that I'm choosing to use given the context, "a small stream of water flowing naturally from the earth".

The verse again:

Seeing a spring,

"May all beings'  
Skillful means increase  
And roots of virtue never wither."

Now "roots of virtue", we've discussed that before. We've discussed what happens when one takes a risk and looks at what comes up, what is seen during the vulnerability of zazen, and at the moment of seeing anything, the moment of you as the Knowing noticing any known whatsoever, that moment of a tiny, tiny, miniscule waking up is what you're practising. That moment of clear seeing is what you are practising and as with anything, the more you practise it, the better you are going to get at it. It just makes sense, the bodymind has an opportunity to reconfigure however it has stored what we tend to call patterns and over time, they wear out.

Now, springs, that water, that small stream flowing naturally from the earth can be used in a decorative manner. They can be harnessed in a way that makes them perhaps more accessible and more useful. In Japanese temples, there are many stone basins that have a bamboo spout and have bamboo cups on long sticks which you can use to drink from or to wash your face or your hands. That spring, that flowing water can become useless if it becomes blocked with bits of old leaves, acorn shells, moss that's gotten out of control. It can lose its usefulness.

Springs, although all from water, can be different. The water can be different. When we're talking about—most accurately, when I was talking about—pumps and other sources of water, we recognized that the makeup, the chemical content of a particular area can be seen in the water, particulates from the surrounding stones and earth and so on can show up in the water and give it a different taste, give it a different look. This isn't a problem, it's all the same water, it's all going to be recycled in this machine that we call the Earth that's located in this recycling machine that we call the Universe.

The cycles of this recycling machine we call the Universe are a lot longer than say, the recycling machines that we use here to press plastic bottles and aluminum tins to turn them into more plastic bottles or fleeces. But everything flows and runs.

Now, with each and every one of us, there is a flow that can become blocked, just as a spring springing from the earth can be blocked by unsightly debris (and there is a lot of unsightly debris around). You walked here this morning, isn't it astounding to see how in say the past 20 years there has been this increase in food left lying on the side of the road: those triangular slices of pizza boxes, drink containers... it's incredible. Where does it all come from? Well, people throw it away. They're walking down the street, going about their business, sucking on their giant slurpee and it gets that final [Osho makes a sucking sound, students giggle] Then what do you do with it? Well, obviously you just throw it on the ground. Why is it obvious? Because that's what everybody's thinking. We do, without thinking about it, mimic or model what others are doing around us.

I checked out this theory of mine at the bus kiosk at the Rideau Centre. I was standing outside of it waiting for the bus and this great, hulking 17-year-old was standing beside me, sipping on his giant slurpee as he's gobbling down some concoction from MacDonald's, and then he just let the paper and the container, just let them, loose from his hand and they fell at my feet. So I picked them up and said: "I think you dropped something" and I put it in the wastebasket. He looked at me and it was quite funny to see what was going on on his face. First of all, he couldn't believe anyone had spoken to him, there's this little old lady standing there saying "I think you dropped something" and he knows it's trash and I know it's trash and he knows that he's fracked up big time. [students laugh]

We stood staring at each other and he goes: "Oh my God, I didn't even think about it. I didn't even think about that. If my mother were here, she'd kill me." [students and Osho laugh] So we had a little talk and we picked up a few more things that were lying on the ground around that basket.

We model, we do what others do without thinking about it, and so, in the context of practice, the same thing does apply and that's why as you move from introductory workshop to associate student, to general student, to probationary formal student, to formal student, to taking monk's vows, more of course is expected of you in how the bodymind is deported in the context of practice because this isn't a game, it's real. This is reality, kids, this is all there is right now. None of us know if there's going to be another moment. I hope there is because I'm holding a water glass and it would go crashing to the floor if all of a sudden I didn't have another breath, might cause problems, someone would have to clean up after me.

When we're sitting, let's just say we're this spring and because many are in training as formal students, there may be a possibility in the minds of others of at some time taking monk's vows and becoming this spring for information to people who come from a disposable world, a careless world, and want to know what they can do to clarify their life. So if we're going to do it, hey, it's not just talking the talk, you walk the walk and students, other people see that and respond to it.

Just as that spring, that nice spring that we talked about with its bamboo vessel, falling into a stone basin, can become clogged up with, hey, I'll take a risk, old MacDonald's wrappers, pieces of string, gum, well, those kind of objects can represent contractions that we experience when we're sitting. Those contractions, those knots, those congealings of space that have beliefs about them, beliefs that seem to define a self with its certain attitudes, its certain understandings and often its VERY CERTAIN understandings of how we are and how the world is, those bits are what are being cleaned up as you're sitting.

You see it and your job is, at the moment of recognizing, the moment of knowing, the moment of noticing that congealing, recognizing that's a moment of clear seeing, you're seeing it and you can do something about it. Now because it exists not

in a way that we're used to, not as a thing but as an effect on all the cells of the bodymind, you can't kind of pick it up and put it in a trash basket. You can look at it and say yes, sometimes you'll see it, sometimes you won't, that's why we have Teachers, that's why we have Practice Advisors, to remind you of the moments when you saw it, you did something about it, and you recognized, you experienced an effect because that is what is going to teach you. We can only point and mirror and model.

One thing that does happen, just like with trash on the street, there can be these knots, these congealings that can get in the way and we might see the trash on the street, and there's a lot of it so no one expects us to go out there with our little trash picker and clean it all up, but we can do our part. When you're sitting in the Hatto, your part is the only part that you can do. Your job is to see that. That's what you're doing right now in your job as a student.

When you see anything, when you recognize any moment of experience whatsoever, clear the spring, clear that stream by feeling the breath, by sitting up straight, by opening the eye gaze, that's your job. No one else can do it for you.

Once again, the verse:

Seeing a spring,  
"May all beings'  
Skillful means increase  
And roots of virtue never wither."

Those "roots of virtue" which have as was talked about during Dharma Talks on previous verses been established, those roots are established, those roots of basic mindfulness, those roots of an ever increasing understanding eventually will turn into an outflow that can nourish, can water the soil for other beings who want to open their lives to the unconditioned freedom of experiencing. First of all, you have to clean up your own shit, right? Yes. Whose job is it to do that? It's your job.

Rather than being heavy-handed and introducing lots of edicts, lots of "thou shalt not do this that, and the other thing", there is seeing those patterns, those knots of contraction, seeing them as not who you are. Why? Obviously, 'if you see it, you can't be it'. No t-shirts, please. [students laugh]

Seeing it means that it is something that is seen, it is not the seer, it is a known, it is not the Knower, a sense of Knower is another known. [Osho taps hands lightly together] A moment of reality, a moment of seeing clearly. No one else can do it. It's your job.

And there's no pay. [Osho and students laugh]

So have fun as the ice melts, as those contractions into a sense of self cause freezing, cause the tongue to become a bone, cause all sorts of things to well up in the bodymind. They're not who you are. You are the knowing of them and the means of clearing them up do become more skillful, not edict or verbally bound, but are sensed, are known; and it is your own moments of knowing,  
of dealing with,  
of practising at those points of noticing any obstruction whatsoever,  
any gob of old wadded up newspaper in the pond,  
any piece of old tinsel,  
of old Christmas tree  
that's blocking that flow of the spring,  
maybe even,  
sadly,  
a dead animal.

But you know, you deal with that, don't stand around waiting for someone else to do it, there's no big list, there's no universal list saying which job is yours and which job is someone else's. That kind of attitude, which has increased, and may now be wearing out in the "gen pop" as they're referred to in prison, it may be wearing out, people are taking more responsibility for what they do in everyday situations. But you have, by opening the door here, going through the workshop, walking up the stairs, going through the different phases of studentship, you've kind of cranked it up a bit, there's no question about that.

So all you have to do is recognize that there's no need to stop, you just keep on doing it and that's the way you can use what you've uncovered, what you've cleaned up to increase the capacity to act more skillfully, to express more skillfully, and to help liberate all beings. [a car alarm goes off outside on the street]

On cue! [students laugh]

Yeah! [more laughter]

Thank you for listening.

## Every Breath You Take 72: Seeing a Bridge

Dharma Talk presented by Ven. Shikai Zuiko osho  
Dainen-ji, March 27, 2010

Here you are. It's obvious, isn't it? Indeed, in fact, here you are!

EVERY BREATH YOU TAKE lets you know that. By noticing every breath and what surrounds that breath, which is the bodymind, which is how you as the Knowing of knowns know anything at all, the bodymind experiences the world. The world experiences the bodymind and as you are practising, sitting zazen, practising anapanasati, mindfulness of breath, mindfulness of this moment, you are waking up to the fact that you are not who you thought you were and that's a good thing, isn't it? Because self-image does tend to experience a rather limited gamut of emotions...

[boastfully]

"I'm the best! I AM THE BEST!"

[quietly]

"Fuck, I hope that nobody uncovers the fact that I'm such a shit. How come I am such a little turd? Everyone else is so wonderful."

... and variations on that theme...

"I can fool them all. I'll memorize a few good phrases about practice."

"I can't fool anyone. I can't even remember what she said in the last sentence."

That's how it goes, folks, that's how it goes. Now, we do not have to fall for any of those storylines. That's what we're starting to see. And the breath is a bridge, metaphorically, of course, from this moment to this moment to this moment. So every breath you take, every breath that sets the jellies and bones and hair and eyelids and fingernails moving ever so slightly is a reminder that

This is your life.

This is it.

This is freedom.

The verse:

Seeing a bridge,  
"May all beings  
Be like a bridge  
And bear all across to freedom."

Now words can present certain problems because they're not true, they're not absolutes. No thing is the word that is used to describe it because how could it be? Because you call it something different in a different language, does the thing change? No, but we're so used to words that we make assumptions, we make assumptions that we're all talking about the same thing, or we make the assumption that the word IS the thing and therefore we can nod our head, raise our eyebrows and go "yes, um hmm, that's right, that's right".

We can play with words. Words are great fun. I would never, never for a moment suggest that we give up words, we should all have words, lots of words, better words, and learn to use them appropriately which is to inform, elucidate, throw a light on, and if we're really lucky, make us laugh.

So, a bridge, something we can go across. Now, in "Freedom and Tyranny" there's a whole Dharma Talk on 'bridge', so I won't go where that one went, but if you're interested, you could always have a read of it later. You might find it amusing.

As we sit, as we engage in zazen, as we engage in kinhin, as we engage in practice interviews, and daisan, and dokusan, what we're doing is crossing that bridge from a previously held understanding of who we are to the experience of the freedom of who we really are. Sometimes we can get stuck running in place on that bridge or sometimes so many people can start running at the same time with the same rhythm with the same cadence that the bridge collapses and this has happened innumerable times in the course of human history.

The bridge, the breath from this moment to this moment to this moment. We sit in daisan and in practice interviews in front of someone else who is sitting across from us and that space between can sometimes seem to be uncrossable, uncomfortable. We can perceive it as a ritual. We can perceive it as a chance to allow self-image to act out its little moments of understanding, or it can be seen for what it really is: a bridge. The person sitting on the other side of that space, on the other side of that—and here Osho holds up her hands in quotation marks—"bridge" as an opportunity to have clarified the misunderstandings that we have, but we're not used to that. Something that could help us clarify our understanding may be addressed and self-image gets very reactive because it's not used to being given information in this way. It feels criticized.

"Oh, I can never do anything right."

"Oh, I spend all this time preparing..."

Yes! Yes! You saw it! You were preparing weren't you? Did you see that for what it really is? It was a thought. Did you remember to practise at that moment?

"Pardon?" [students laugh]

So this process of learning to practise, learning to experience the freedom of the open bodymind, to experience the openness of each and every moment, unclouded by the contractions of self-image, of patterns...

Now, what's a pattern? Why do we call it a pattern? Well, a pattern is something that gets repeated over and over and over again. Although it is not the same old pattern (it can't be because it's happening new in the moment) it bears similarities, so that can often give us a heads up as to what we could expect in certain situations such as sitting across from the Teacher or the monk who is there for a practice interview, it gives us an opportunity to see how that pattern performs. We start to see more and more of the details of it and you can practise each time you notice a detail. The form, the deportment of the bodymind for daisan and practice interviews is that the student sits perfectly still. This can be perceived as being troublesome because we can be uncomfortable. Well, whoever said practice was going to be comfortable?

Those moments of reactivity of contraction into a sense of self pulling a pattern that says things like: "Oh no, not again, I thought that was really good, I guess she just doesn't understand, she's an authoritarian bitch..."

Sometimes this is said out loud... [students laugh] which is good because there's nothing wrong with having a thought, you're not your thoughts. None of us are or ever were our thoughts. Nothing has ever been accomplished by a thought. We are what we do or say so when we do or say something, that gives us the opportunity, we, those who have crossed over the bridge, to point out to you what's going on in your experience so that you can see more and more clearly at an earlier and earlier point in the process of perception and cognition the details of experiencing. Each moment of noticing a detail is a moment of clear seeing. You're practising that moment of clear seeing.

Makes sense doesn't it? You practise a moment of clear seeing and guess what happens? You start to see things more clearly more of the time. You start to see what's actually going on in that process of perception and cognition. You start to see the impossibility of being two things at once, or a multitude of things at once such as: "I'm such a good student. I'm such a bad student." Those are just thoughts. You are neither of those things so why believe them?

Practise at the moment of seeing them, you will then see them more and more clearly, more and more often, until you will actually be sitting in the freedom of shikan taza: just sitting:

Just sitting whether you're walking, standing, at the movies,  
whatever you're doing,  
shaving, pulling that long hair that persists in growing in the middle of your cheek,  
whatever you're doing,  
there's just the activity of that moment  
and then whoops!  
What's that?  
There it is!  
"I'm so ugly.  
This hair growing in the middle of my cheek.  
Oh my God..."

[students laugh]

... it pulls the space of experiencing, it ties it up, it can make (air quotations) "us ugly".

Moment of seeing it: it's just a known, you are the Knowing of it. Practise that moment of knowing, that moment of clear seeing. There it is. Shikan taza. Just sitting. Nothing to do. Gong goes. Stand up. Sit down. Eat. Do the dishes. Get on with whatever it is that is to be done in the freedom of open experiencing.

As this becomes more and more prevalent, a thought might creep in that really, one of the best things you can possibly do is show other people that bridge. That bridge to freedom.

Now sometimes this journey has us crossing bridges. Sometimes we have to make decisions as to whether to burn one or to cross it, but we in the land of metaphor, burning bridges is a metaphor.

So the verse again:

Seeing a bridge,  
"May all beings  
Be like a bridge  
And bear all across to freedom."

Feel the breath.

Sit up straight.

Notice seeing, hearing, tasting, touching, feeling, smelling free from labels about them because they are experienced.

Thank you for listening.

## Every Breath You Take 73: Seeing Flowing Water

Dharma Talk presented by Ven. Shikai Zuiko osho

Dainen-ji, March 27, 2010

Today's verse, from "The Practice of Purity", comments on the Flower Garland or Avatamsaka Sutra:

Seeing flowing water,  
"May all beings  
Unfold clear determination  
To wash away delusory stains."

It is that time of year when nature presents opportunities itself for water that may have been frozen to start to crack. As the air heats, ice does start to crack and it starts to flow, particularly on our Ottawa river. Now it has changed over the years, but say 50 or 60 years ago, when this was a logging town, there were great rafts of logs on the river. The ice would keep them bound in place then the ice would start to crack and they would start to flow down the river.

Now, when we first come to practice, we may have a perhaps "icy" exterior, not icy in the sense of cold, but icy in the sense of only temporary, but we often try to maintain and to keep in place these aspects of what we call our "personality". In the forge of the master, the Hatto (and the forge of the master is actually a traditional way of talking about, for example, the dokusan room or having daisan, or in the Hatto where the Teachings of Reality are presented) the heat of that starts to melt those icy masks, those "delusory stains" about how we are and how the world is.

At this time of year water is starting to flow more often, it will start to flow in our own ponds in the monastery grounds, it will flow in the river, it will flow on rivers that you may see when you go traveling. On seeing that, perhaps the verse:

"May all beings  
Unfold clear determination  
To wash away delusory stains."

...may resonate for you.

Now, determination. What does that mean? Of course we all go: Aha! We know what that means, that's to determine something. But what does that mean? Well, one way of looking at it is the direction or tendency toward a certain end. The certain end... well the certain end is we know what, that last breath is the certain end, as the Great Matter says:

The Great Matter is birth and death  
Life slips past and time is gone,  
Right now, wake up! wake up!  
Do not waste time.

That contraction into a sense of self wants to go: "yeah, but not me, I've got time, I'm going to wait until everything is in place and then I will wake up, after I've lost 30 pounds, after I've determined the right colour hair, the right shape of glasses, and when I finally find those shoes, THEN I'm going to wake up!"

Well, that is delusory. It doesn't mean you can't have the right pair of shoes, it doesn't mean you can't play around with hair colour, but recognize why you're doing it. It's very interesting, we often start to play around with hair colour and hair styles when we're in our 40s. I spent my quarter of a million dollars on hair products, so I know whereof I speak. So we change colour, we change cuts, we change the way we present facial hair if we're a male, but if we're older, even as a woman [Osho giggles] that facial hair starts to come up. It does, it does, that's life. [Osho and students laugh]

So, the idea that there is anything that can stem this inevitable flow towards the inevitable, uh, it's delusory, but you can still have fun.

Now, this moment, yes, this moment right now, this breath right NOW is the only one that's going on.

Now, sometimes when I've asked people what is significant about the breath, when does it happen? They say things like: "Always". When we look into that a little bit, it's not long before the obvious fallacy of that statement presents itself. Of course it's not always, otherwise there would be so many people on earth it probably would have fallen down somehow because it would be just too heavy with all those people. So it's not always, it's now and we never know...

We can fill ourselves up with vitamins,

we can go to bed early,  
we can sanitize our hands and everything else,  
but that is not going to prevent the inevitable and we never know when that inevitable moment of the last  
[Osho exhales a long raspy breath]  
will present itself.

Surely you don't want to have, when there is a recognition of the fact that that is the last one, who wants to have an "Oh shit!" moment? [students laugh]

Notice the breath that is this moment. Notice the bodymind wrapped around that breath, the seeing, the hearing, the tasting, the touching, the feeling, the smelling, all the knowns which you as the Knowing of this moment can open to.

So, "determination", you recognize that there is a possibility of waking up. In fact, there have been many moments of waking up to reality. When you wake up from a thought, when you see that you were caught up in a thought, you're no longer caught up in it. I mean that's just true because if you're caught up in a thought, you're not seeing you're caught up in a thought, how could you? You're caught up. The moment that you know that there was a thought that you got caught up in and now you're no longer caught up, that's a mini mini mini moment of waking up to Reality. The instruction is sit up straight, feel the breath, open the eye gaze, which is a very long way of saying: feel the moment, see the moment, know the moment as it actually is, all of these things are present.

Now, "delusory",  
washing away those delusory stains, the  
laundry of birth and death.

Delusory:

- .a tendency to deceive
- .of the nature of an illusion
- .lacking reality
- .tending to lead one into error

Piece of advice, the Roshi gave me this piece of advice when I first started to practise: don't decide anything when you're in a state, any sort of state, don't make any big decisions, or even small decisions. Practise first. You notice a state, you've noticed you were caught up in a delusory stain, a belief about how you are and how the world is, which if not totally skewing, is at least partially conditioning what you are understanding in that moment.

So you notice it.  
Feel the breath of this moment.  
Feel the breath that is this moment,  
the breath as a touchstone to this moment.  
See the seeing  
hear the hearing  
feel the whole bodymind in the whole moment.  
Let whatever state pass,  
then make whatever decision you need to make.

I'm certainly not saying that your decisions are going to be perfect, but they will still be more clear-headed than they may have been if they were pushed and fueled by passion, aggression, and stupidity.

The beauty of this practice is that the instructions are always the same. We don't believe that at first because what we're used to is lots of stages.

"Right, okay, so I feel the breath, that means the next time around, I'm going to do something else." And sometimes we'll even make up things that we're doing, but it's always the same, the instruction is to open to this moment as it is. And how do you do that?

Feel the breath  
sit up straight  
open the eye gaze  
feel the whole bodymind in the whole moment.

Use that washboard of the ribs to wash away those delusory stains that are on the laundry of birth and death. [students laugh]

So remember, spring, it's springtime now. Just as the ice is breaking up, so previous conceptions about how we are and how the world is are breaking up when we start to see them for what they are: contraction into a sense of self with a belief, a belief about ourselves, a belief about how the world is. These condition the basic intelligence of the bodymind, making it less than it really is.

Who needs that?  
I for one,

do not need to be  
more stupid.

You can make your own choice of course, and obviously, but I don't think any of us want that.

So, with the flowing water, with the currents, with the flotsam and jetsam that comes up as you sit right there, you have the opportunity to wash away those delusory stains. Now, obviously, your determination is present because you showed up today and anyone who is listening to this recording or reading the Dharma Talk showed up and indicated quite clearly and self-evidently that there is a determination. Sometimes we're not exactly sure what our determination is about. Sometimes it's about pleasing the teacher, sometimes it's about getting a good mark and since we don't give marks, that's pretty vain isn't it? But we have these things, they're carryovers, they're patterns, they're stuff we've picked up. Sometimes we just want to be a good boy or a good girl, sometimes we want to really put on that good boy or good girl face so that nobody can see what's underneath, but you see it's transparent because the fact of being a human being is the same, basically, for all human beings.

So whatever malicious, corrupt, devious, overbearing, insensitive, too sensitive facets might come up as patterns come up, relax, they're not you, you're the Knowing of them, you don't have to act them out. Brilliant in its simplicity, that's reality.

Once again, the verse:

Seeing flowing water,  
"May all beings  
Unfold clear determination  
To wash away delusory stains."

Thank you for listening... and rub a dub dub! [students laugh]

## Every Breath You Take 74: Seeing a Garden

Dharma Talk presented by Ven. Shikai Zuiko osho  
Dainen-ji, April 3, 2010

The birds greeted us this morning gently tweeting, and squawking, cajoling, seducing in their little avian ways. Yesterday was April 2nd and it was an April 2nd that I don't think we've seen for a long time, if ever. It was a beautiful day. It was a confusing day because anything from the skimpiest of shorts and tops to parkas with mittens... [Osho and students laugh] Strange.

If you look at trees in the distance marking the skyline, there's a haze, almost mist-like around them and if you look a little closer you'll find that that haze is in fact the radiance of potential leaves, it's buds that are pushing their way out, some of them are different shades of green, some of them are burgundy and red, violet even, with the potential of budding into the full leaves of that particular tree.

In our garden in the monastery grounds, should you look around, should you look beyond the thin layer of leaves from last season, you'll find all sorts of activity. There are little snowbells: one tiny white flower hanging down like a bell from a green stalk. There is the potential of ferns, like little little worms you can see them starting to push through the earth around, green with little brown hairs. There's budding in the rectangular bed on the west side and even though it's used as a kitty litter box that use seems to provide fertilizer because the black currents are going crazy. The blackberries are going crazy. There they have the little buds ready to burst forth with leaves, then flowers, then fruit. It's a very rich time but yet it's a very gentle time.

The air is gentle on your skin.

Bodymind seems to respond well, seems to enjoy that softness. But don't get caught up in it 'cause it'll change.

Today's verse from "The Practice of Purity":

Seeing a garden,  
"May all beings  
Clear away the weeds of fixation  
From the garden  
Of the senses.

Coincidence... that we're talking about gardens today? Seeing gardens? Nah, things just happen that way. That's just how it is.

Do we need to categorize it? No! No... But we humans have developed, it would seem, a passion for categorizing, a passion for labelling, a passion for making that which is only temporary, solid or seemingly solid... an impossible task. But we will pick up on things and develop patterns of contraction around that thing, allowing attention to focus, and we don't even know that we have the choice, at any point, to stop that seemingly automatic pattern from kicking in. Then we sit down in front of a white wall and we learn to see more of the process of fixation.

So, what we're doing, according to this verse, this metaphor, is clearing away the "weeds of fixation". Well, that's nice, isn't it? You think: yeah weeds, they can grow quickly, they can obliterate that which is fresh and new and growing. They can seemingly obliterate the rest of the reality of, in this case, the garden.

When we allow patterns of labelling to define who we are, leaving them unquestioned, we end up with these little beliefs about who we are and how the world is. And allowing that to define who we are limits the ability of the bodymind to experience fully this moment because this moment is obscured, portions of it seemingly obliterated.

Well, just because we can't see the fern doesn't mean that the potential of the fern isn't there, it's just hidden away temporarily behind those leaves.

So you as the Knowing of knowns,  
recognizing  
from time to time,  
even if you cannot yet express it completely yourself,  
recognizing  
that the bodymind is how Knowing knows,  
the bodymind has all these senses:  
the seeing and hearing and tasting and touching, feeling, smelling...  
some of which can seemingly become obliterated when attention is fixated  
or congealed  
or pointed towards,  
or totally caught up in  
any one thing.

So with your indulgence, let's have a little fun here:

Are you breathing?

A pin could drop.

Well, I'm going to take a leap and say yes you are.

Was the capacity to express an answer obliterated? Yes it was! [Osho and students laugh]

Why?

Well, if you look into something like that, ah, it could be any number of reasons, but there could have been this contraction into a sense of self that doesn't want to stand out,

that doesn't want to make a mistake,

that doesn't want to get picked on,

that just wants to be safe and slide through.

Maybe?

I don't know, I'm only speaking from my own experience in the past but something like that was present, otherwise how would you answer the question?

Are you breathing?

How would you answer the question? ARE you breathing?

I don't hear anything yet...

Are you breathing? [some students say "yes"]

Whoa!!! [Osho claps and students laugh.]

There's life in the corpus, there's life in the body of students. This gives you an opportunity to see that indeed, when there's fixation, even if we haven't recognized it, and identified it, there can be, I don't want to offend anyone, a dumbing down of how we interact with what's going on around us.

So, please, notice the breath now.

This is going to be,

no surprises,

a deliberate and intentional state of fixation.

So, feel that nose,

feel the breath going in and out of the nose.

Notice thoughts about the breath that might be coming up.

Direct the eye gaze to the end of the nose.

Really get into that breathing.

Put all of your attention on that activity, and that itself is an impossible task, it's difficult for us to put our attention on any one thing for any length of time...

But really, feel the belly moving in and out with that breath.

All you want to attend to, all you want to pay attention to is that breath.

Now there might be a thought saying "Yeah, I'm gonna pay attention to the breath but I don't want to be caught out like I think I was a few minutes ago, so I'll recognize that I'm too smart to put ALL of my attention into this, could be a silly exercise." So if that's there, that's not a problem, that's part of what's going on, so just let it be there, you don't have to do anything, you don't have to get rid of it. The breath is what we want to fixate on and this won't be permanent, of course. I'm not inducing you into some sort of trance that you will carry forever with you, this is just a way of looking at experiencing of the bodymind.

So just the breath, concentrate just on the breath, just on the end of the nose.

Now prepare to notice the difference:

Now,  
lift the head slightly.  
Open the eyes. Open fully to peripheral vision.  
Feel the back.  
Feel the back of the neck,  
feel the skull  
the ears, hearing fully the birds chirping and tweeting again  
the feet, the knees,

noticing the full, sensual activity of the bodymind.

Today's verse again:

Seeing a garden,  
"May all beings  
Clear away the weeds of fixation  
From the garden  
Of the senses.

Now, your weed-clearing device?

Practising at the moment of noticing anything at all by simply feeling the breath, opening peripheral vision, feeling the whole body in the whole moment, opening past any sort of fixation whatsoever.

The world is a garden.

Thank you for listening.

## Every Breath You Take 75: Seeing a Forest of "Sorrowless" Trees

Dharma Talk presented by Ven. Shikai Zuiko osho

Dainen-ji, April 17, 2010

...so...here we have numerous assemblages of disparate cells moving with the air that is being brought into the lungs and then expressed, sitting in front of a white wall.

A pure white wall?

Hey, wait a minute, what are we talking about when we talk about "purity"? And of course you will all remember, this series called "Every Breath You Take" which is pointing to the fact that as long as you're breathing you have an opportunity to practise, is based on the commentaries, translations of the Avatamsaka Sutra by Anzan Hoshin roshi and myself, called "The Practice of Purity".

Now, the practice of "purity"... "purity"... "purity"... what does that mean? On a cursory hearing we might think, "oh that means that we're really good, not contaminated by anything". Well that's all very vague.

Is there anything at all that's "pure"? Well, no, it's just a word.

"Pure", "purity", you're looking at the white wall.

Does "white" describe all combinations that end up being called "white"?

No it doesn't. Look at that white wall and depending upon where you're standing, depending upon your point of view, it can be seen as being golden or blue or grey in the shadows or purple even, depending on what's around it.

At certain times of day that "white" looks greenish. Why?

Because there's a red brick wall on the west side and as we all know, well... anyway... as we know: [students laugh] brick—red has a complimentary colour, has a shadow which is greenish.

So both in the Hatto and in the Zendo downstairs, the shadows tend to be influenced by that redness and have a lovely, lovely bluish, greenish quality.

So "purity", "The Practice of Purity", it's talking about what you can do when you notice that the field of experience has shrunk a bit, that there's a knot in it, something that has been described as say, "impure", a contraction. A moment of noticing it: feel the breath, sit up straight, open the eye gaze, don't get caught up in and propagate that knot.

Today's verse:

Seeing a forest of "sorrowless" trees,  
"May all beings  
Leave behind greed and lust forever  
And not give rise to anxiety and fear."

Hmm. Ok.

Sorrowless... "Sorrowless trees", what does that mean?  
What are they referring to?

Well, not surprisingly, I'm going to tell you  
and this is from the work of an Indian doctor who had a very keen interest in homeopathy. Now, I want to be very clear,  
I'm not promoting homeopathy, I'm just giving you a little insight into her bio. Her name is Dr. Rupa A. Shaw and she writes  
about the ashoka tree. The botanical name is *Saraca indica ashok*. Ashoka, one of the most legendary and sacred trees of  
India and a very fascinating flower in the range of flower essences. It's a handsome, small, erect, evergreen tree with deep  
green foliage and very fragrant, bright orange-yellow flowers.

"Ashoka" is a Sanskrit word meaning "without grief" or "that which gives no grief" and there are other translations, one of  
which is "the tree of love blossoms" and it's regarded by the Hindus as sacred, being dedicated to Kamadiva, the God of  
Love. It's a symbol of love. Its blossoms are used in temple decorations, and, according to legend, Gautama Siddhartha was  
born under an ashoka tree, so in that part of the world it can be found planted around Buddhist monasteries.

Now, there are stories that drinking water in which the flowers have been washed is widely considered a protection against  
grief. Now, we're getting close to folk stuff here about essences of various substances, so A: there's no advocating here for  
use of anything else other than the feeling of the breath, the sitting up straight, the opening of the eye gaze when you  
notice something's contracted.

A little bit about folklore around what things can do for you:

In the 16th, 17th century, white, heavy white makeup was said to cover and perhaps even help skin that had been marked  
by smallpox. It contained lead—guess what? The lead went through the skin into the body/mind poisoning people.

Right in the front yard we have a local flower called bloodroot. Bloodroot had a reputation, some say Native Indians from  
this area (let's blame it on the Indians, huh? that's pretty common...) said that this particular plant could be used to destroy  
cancers and so on. So you know how it goes, snake oil salesmen, the people who say: "here, take this magic essence, you  
will be healed" got into it and actually killed quite a lot of people recently, and people who used it on their skin and so on  
ended up terribly disfigured.

So, tales are interesting, don't base the things that you do on tales, on fictions. Check it out because, here, this sounds good  
huh?: "also the ashoka is a healer for deep-seeded sorrow, grief, and disharmony in one's inner being due to events such  
as bereavement, failure, suffering, disease, and isolation". Now, if that would have spread widely, there would be no  
ashoka trees on the planet because we would have been in there...

"Using the essence, a profound inner state of joy, harmony and well-being is produced." Interesting. It's also seen as a  
remedy for women. Now... [Osho and students laugh loudly] There is no remedy for women... [Osho and students laugh  
again] for men, and "there ain't no cure for love". It's a remedy for women, it allows them to be feminine. So you see, that  
little thing: women and feminine, different, huh?

"A guardian of female chastity." [students laugh again] Fairytales!

"The Vrikshadevatas, the gods of trees who represent fertility are known to dance around the tree and are worshipped by  
childless women."

"Herbally, the bark of this tree is a household remedy for uterine disorders." Quote: "weeping woman, weeping womb".

It's interesting, this is ancient Indian, but when I was in nurse's training in the late 50s, menses was called by one of the  
nursing instructors "the weeping of the disappointed womb". That's horrible! And everyone can appreciate the double bind  
that women are put in, and have been put in: If they're menstruating, they're unclean in most cultures. In some they will be  
banished. They're not allowed to cook. They will "curdle milk"... but yet... but yet... the glory is to bear children. We won't go  
any further with that, it's just kind of something to think about, but not while you're sitting here. If you notice you're  
thinking about something, you've noticed something about reality, that thought is actually present. What has allowed you  
to see the thought as a thought is that the body/mind has opened and there is actual knowing of breathing in and out,  
seeing, hearing, tasting, touching, feeling, and smelling.

So there are stories,  
there are stories

and here is another one about what Ashoka did:

Ashoka the person is said to have helped a young woman monk who would bleed heavily during menstrual periods. In fact,

if she was upset about something, the bleeding would start at once, even if it was not time for her regular period. Her nature was very sensitive and she was easily affected by any small upset. Because of her suffering, she was very irritable and had thoughts of suicide. Being a monk at a very young age had burdened her with great responsibilities of taking care of others, learning about religion and teaching also. It was battle for her to go on. At this stage, she was also having high blood pressure and dizziness. The first essence that helped her was ashoka flower to overcome the deep-seated grief and sorrow. Her attacks of dizziness and her suicidal thoughts became much less, her uterus responded as well with no more excessive bleeding.

There you go: successful, done, and as I said, it's surprising there are any ashoka trees left on the planet.

So, you see a forest of "sorrowless" trees...

yellow, beautiful yellow flowers,  
fragrance,

and the verse is saying that you can use that seeing of the forest of "sorrowless" trees to have the thought that all beings "leave behind greed and lust forever and not give rise to anxiety and fear".

So, the bodymind is walking along, doing what it does, it sees that forest of ashoka trees, or any tree for our usage, but in the historical context of 1600 years ago, they were ashoka trees. There's a contraction into a sense of self that goes: "Oh! There's an ashoka tree".

So, there's the verse. We notice that what has happened is, there has been, a process of perception and cognition. The moment of noticing anything, the noticing of the trees before words of description come in is an opportunity to practise. The noticing of the stories, about what they mean or what, most likely, what "I", what self-image wants to do with that ashoka tree, there's a moment of noticing it, that's the moment when you can practise feeling the breath, standing up straight, feeling the feet on the floor.

We can recognize "greed" and "lust", "anxiety": words. They are talk about the experience. A very simple fact that we ignore over and over again is that experiencing always comes first, experiencing occurs before thinking, it always has, since the beginning of human beings. Experiencing, then language was developed, apparently first to broadcast to a wide number of people, most probably danger. So you have like: [Osho yells:]

"Let's get out of here!!" because it means to the group of primates there that something is coming that's bigger than us and will have us for dinner unless we move quickly. "Don't forget the babies", you know, that kind of... [students laugh]

Then this developed as peoples became peoples and wandered into different parts of the land, across water and so on, they developed different ways of talking about something because it became talking, it now had words. And then we had the people who may have developed and acquired MORE words than anyone else, so then they would talk about experiencing and over a couple of thousand years, who knows how long, there was a point, and it's not one pivotal point, but there was a point when logos—the word—became more important than experiencing and the word was in the hands of a very few. Tales about how we are and how the world is spread so we have a proliferation of contraction into a sense of self, self-image, that has caused the most enormous catastrophes that have ever happened on the planet. The planet, it shudders and there's a volcano. It shudders again and something opens up and cannot be counted, but the contractions into a sense of self, I'm willing to hazard a guess, have destroyed more than volcanoes and floods and so on and so on. There we go, we've done it to ourselves and we can stop.

In today's eMirror, from Anzan Hoshi roshi's "Without Difficulty: Commentaries on Jianzhi Sengcan's Xinxin Ming: Words on Trusting Awareness,"

Focusing and excluding, accepting and rejecting, attachment and avoidance are all the efforts and mechanisms of self-image. From this process of contraction and limitation all of the consequences of self-image unfold: self-pity, a sense of poverty, aggression, and all of the disturbed states that rack the bodymind with tortuous regularity.

So, 1600 years ago there was talk about leaving behind "greed and lust, not giving rise to anxiety and fear". It's talking about how to practise the teachings of reality; the Dharma.

If there are words present in your thoughts, if you notice thoughts, or you notice that there has been a focusing in on something, chances are, there are words there, so hey good! You recognized it! Feel the breath, practise in that moment, allow opening further to occur. Don't be fooled. I'm not saying that words cannot be useful, I mean obviously, there are so many words contained in the CDs and the texts and the tapes that to say that words are not useful would be crazy, but don't believe the stories that you're telling yourself. Don't believe the stories that someone else might be telling you. Check them out yourself, and each time you notice that there's a story present, you've noticed the reality of experiencing in that moment.

Feel the breath,  
Sit up straight,  
Open the eye gaze.

And if the story is interesting, or there is an interesting word, go and google it, see what you find, you never know. Google it

on the website of the White Wind Zen Community. You never know where it will take you and what you will learn, and isn't that wonderful?

Do not get stuck, there is no need to.

And have fun!

Thank you for listening.

## Every Breath You Take 76: Seeing a Park

Dharma Talk presented by Ven. Shikai Zuiko osho  
Dainen-ji, May 1, 2010

EVERY BREATH YOU TAKE allows you to practise the energies of the whole bodymind are dedicated, as you sit there, to practising the whole bodymind in the whole moment, and every breath you've ever taken, from that first [Osho gasps like a newborn] has ended up, has led to this moment. Imagine!

You can't fault the logic, that's the way it is.

Today's verse:

Seeing a park,  
"May all beings  
Follow the ways of practice  
Which move into unfolding as Awake Awareness."

A park: "a protected area in its natural or semi-natural state, or planted and set aside for human recreation, or for the protection of wildlife or natural habitat, or endangered species".

Well, I do think it's not too big of a leap to consider ourselves an endangered species...

As you step past the dharma gate,  
past the Mountain Gate,

(and you have passed through many dharma gates getting yourself right here to this cushion today) so you've passed through those dharma gates, those gates that have written on them:

"Great!"  
or  
"Don't want to"  
"Don't go here"  
"Would rather..."  
"Oh, I feel..."  
"What the hell?"

[students laugh]

You saw them for what they were, either a barrier or an invitation, the choice was up to you and obviously you made the choice with that breath to practise and step through that dharma gate.

The Mountain Gate you encounter as you enter into the grounds of the monastery, and for the sake of this metaphor, you entered into this "park", a protected area in its natural or semi-natural state. When first we bought Dainen-ji, we had a lawn out front. Imagine, a lawn!? So a decision was taken that the grounds of this particular—for the sake of the metaphor this particular "park"—would be as much as possible returned to or turned into a natural state appropriate to this part of the country that we live in and that, as you can see, is ongoing. Plants have been planted that may have disappeared from this area but that were originally indigenous to this area, plants and bushes and shrubs that do what plants and bushes and shrubs do which is make seeds, and the seeds, sometimes surrounded by fleshy fruits, if they were meant to be eaten by other beings were then carried to other areas and dropped, not from little burlap sacks like Johnny Appleseed but we won't go into that, you all remember the worm... gnashing away and then dropping behind it...

So in this natural habitat, this endangered species can for whatever lengths of time it chooses, for some it's 30 minutes a week, no it's never 30 minutes a week, it's actually what, let's see... 7:30 to 9... an hour and a half, an hour 45 minutes...

Okay. They come here once a week and in this planted park can look at and see more and more clearly the impediments to Awake Awareness, those contractions that come up, greater or lesser, that tie knots in space and seemingly inhibit the freedom and openness of the whole bodymind.

So in this Awake Awareness theme park [students laugh] we have the opportunity, not just in the Hatto, and not just in the Zendo when we put on our robes (and in some cases they can seem to be 'the robes of a good practitioner') Well, that doesn't really wash because as you start to mature your practice, you start to understand with the whole bodymind that practice is not something that you are doing just in the Hatto or in the Zendo. Practice is something that you've discovered, you've come upon, something precious that has been handed down person to person for 2600 years, free of beliefs and provably true in your own experience each time you choose to, as the verse says, "follow the ways of practice".

The simplicity is to feel the breath, sit up straight, open the eye gaze; which is a long way of describing that moment when the whole bodymind is experienced fully and completely in the whole moment, unobstructed. All the little weeds have been cleaned up. Oh, a little one might surface from time to time but you see it very quickly and use it to practise with and as that knot in space unfolds, Awake Awareness is present, as it always was, undisturbed.

Now, practice is not confined to the Hatto and the Zendo, the formal practice spaces, you practise going down the stairs, hands in shashu. (Although sometimes there can be a big sigh of relief that you've left the formal practice space), and the hands come down and you pitty-pat down the stairs because after all, "we're free, free!" [students laugh] Just like the end of school!

But when you notice you're doing that, recognize, (and this one is very obvious isn't it?) you're acting out a usual social pattern; church is out, or school is out, or some arduous and unwelcome activity is over. You practise at that moment and use the forms that you have been presented with, (and as with all sorts of tools, the more you use them, the sharper they get!). And what are they used for? For seeing, feeling, knowing the whole bodymind in the whole moment.

If thoughts come up about what self-image says they are, recognize it's there. That contraction, that thought, is part of the reality of the moment.

How could it be separate from it? It's there.

So you see it,

so you use it,

so you feel your feet on the floor,

you take a moment

you feel the whole bodymind,

you feel that breath that is expanding the lungs

expanding the rib cage,

and thereby,

the very fact of doing that

straightens all the vertebrae in the spine

then the head is placed correctly as in balanced at the top of the spine,

rather than falling down the front of the body like a bowling ball.

So you can do that any place, anywhere, any time, particularly in this "park" which is here so that you can experience how you are moment to moment.

Teaching and learning is not confined to the Hatto or the Zendo or the Shuryo. It's everywhere. If something puzzles you, all you have to do is ask. Now that's easy to say, isn't it?

"All you have to do is ask."

But, you think, "I'd like to know"—(and this is from a student during a recent meeting in the grounds)

this was the student's question—"Well I'd like to ask about, I know I should know, and I'm pretty sure that somewhere there I do know, maybe I won't, you might think I'm stupid..." [Osho and students laugh]

Please notice how there's this whole little chorus of voices.

That's the most important thing; to notice that.

Recognize; it's not you.

You are the Knowing of that; those are knowns and they are hangovers from what bodymind has learnt in usual social encounters.

We really want to cover our ass;

so we can spend an inordinate amount of time explaining how we really know what we don't know.

You can cut through that,

you can let yourself know that there is no question more stupid than the one that isn't asked. That question that isn't asked can fester like a splinter and stuff forms around it and depending upon the nature of the splinter, different sort of stuff forms around it and some of it can be very toxic. If there is something you want to talk about, a question you want to ask, clarification required:

Ask.

So this student, this student did get past all the barriers, all the dharma gates that came up in asking the question

(this happened sitting in the rain shelter out in the "park")

the rain shelter which thanks to the efforts of many is complete, with cedar shakes on the roof and it's a lovely place to sit. So we're sitting there looking out over the park and we clarified dharma gates through experience, the experience of a few moments ago, this became more clear to the student who actually showed up with the book he was reading with little questions written in it and a list of questions, (which is just wonderful because then it's much easier to address concerns or interests) and when "I think I read something, I'm not sure, maybe I heard it in a teisho, but it was something along the lines of..." What to do but point out how the student has confused themselves at that moment and how that type of confusion can be practised with and how the experience of that type of confusion can lead to clarity and that writing down the question might be a good thing to do.

Something else the student wanted to talk about was how conditioned experiencing causes suffering and what that actually means. Well, my glance landed on the pump in the pond (and as pumps do... it accumulated stuff... and fortunately I hadn't yet had time to remove some sticks and a couple of pieces of bread and some leaves and things that accumulated on that pump)..

So I asked the student to focus on that pump and to say what would have been said had that been his singular focus, had that been the only thing he noticed going on in the park: What would he think of people who were tending the park? Well, picture it yourself, this morass; twigs, bread, leaves, pollen. Well, descriptions come up that might include the words "messy", "not caring", "unattractive" and would that be true of the grounds of the park?

Of the care that was given to the rest of the park?

Not at all. And as we straightened and "zoomed out", the student said "I get it! I get it!" [Osho and students laugh]

We can see how the experiencing of whatever is being experienced can and does become distorted when it's pulled through a knot in space, when it's pulled through contraction (the morass) that, at the very least, distorts the situation slightly and, at the very most, distorts completely so that the end result becomes the inevitable historical carnage that the species of which we are a part has produced. Who wants that?

So. As you're sitting there, when you notice anything whatsoever, which means that attention has for a moment started to bring whatever is noticed, whatever known, whatever dharma gate, whatever dharma is there, attention has begun to move towards it and if it's followed, it will make it bigger and bigger and will distort the rest of the experiencing in that moment.

Isn't it simple? Isn't it like that taste of water? That's all that you have to do as you sit there following the ways of practice, unfolding into Awake Awareness.

Another example:

I wasn't sure whether to mention this or not, but I will. Experiencing that is conditioned causes suffering. Well, for a number of years I have raised questions, sometimes not particularly skillfully about the yellow light in the Zendo and in the Hatto. "Why can't we buy light that's bright instead of this yellow?" Then in November I had a cataract operation on my right eye and I looked around and when I was looking at the light with my right eye, it wasn't yellow. When I cover my right eye, it was yellow. So, my experience of the quality of the light, not just in the Zendo and the Hatto, everywhere, was conditioned by the yellowing of the fluid in an old eye! But knowing that is a good thing because I now have all sort of movies and art that I can look at, now that I have the left eye with its bionic lens, and can see the colour more truly. So when the scratching and itching of the operation was gentled out, Friday morning I woke up and I looked, I could not believe it: no yellow. It was fantastic, it was bright, it was luminous. [Osho and students laugh]

So beware of saying you know it's such and such a way because you can "see it with your own eyes".

[more laughter]

So I apologize to anyone that I caused to suffer in any way whatsoever complaining about yellow light.

How could I know?

The verse again:

Seeing a park,  
"May all beings  
Follow the ways of practice  
Which move into unfolding as Awake Awareness."

Enjoy your time here.

Thank you for listening.

## Every Breath You Take 77: Seeing People Wearing Adornments

Dharma Talk presented by Ven. Shikai Zuiko osho

Dainen-ji, May 8th, 2010

Kudos, there you sit  
breathing in and out and  
using EVERY BREATH YOU TAKE  
to open any dharma gate that presents itself.

So, no matter what arose, no matter what reactivities, recoil, reluctance, no matter what stories and images of a self arose this morning, you were using every breath you take to put one foot in front of the other and here you are unfolding Awake Awareness because that is what you're doing.

The verse:

Seeing people wearing adornments,  
"May all beings  
Be adorned with the Buddha's  
Thirty-two marks of nobility."

Now, that may pass over some heads, it may arouse shock and even horror in some others when they think of what they've read of the thirty-two marks of the Buddha's nobility, which include:

gait like a swan or a king elephant or a king lion, or a royal ox, thighs like banana sheaths, a smile so wide it can be seen from behind, [students laugh] four canine teeth which are crystal and rounded, a lion-like jaw to contain those forty teeth that beam out, a body emanating a halo of light around the person for two metres, long ears like lotus petals, flat feet, marks of thousand-spoked wheels on the soles of the feet, calves like an antelope, thighs like a deer, sexual organs concealed in a sheath, a protuberance on the head, high raised ankles like a horse, projecting heels, a tongue long and big enough to cover the face, exceptional taste buds, elephant trunks (although unwrinkled) for arms...

So I would say to someone who wished upon me to be adorned with the Buddha's thirty-two marks of nobility: "Uh, I'll pass."

This raises questions for us, and the questions are, one question: is this the description of a real person? Well, I'll check that "no".

Is it the description of a mythological creature? Or, is it the creation of a mythological creature?

Well, what one must do, what I must do when I come across something like this is look at how people are and how much they could possibly have changed over 2600 years, and I'd say... not very much, really. The basic drives are the same, the basic habits and tendencies are the same. What happens when there's someone in the neighbourhood, in the country, someone getting a reputation through people talking one to the other? Well, of course, attributes, things, do become exaggerated. I mean, there's the old joke about fishermen, sport fishermen who may catch a five inch fish. By the time they come back to shore, it's an eight inch fish. When the fish is no longer present at all and they're talking about it around a table having beers with their buddy, it's a twelve inch fish. Twenty years later, talking with their buddies around the table and having a beer, it could be a two foot long fish. This is what people do, we exaggerate. So I think it is safe to assume, safe to come to the conclusion that in this description some exaggeration has taken place.

Now, in researching this, I read many different sources and many different points of view as to what may have been described and what may have been meant. For example, in some accounts they say "flat feet", in some accounts they say "protuberances at the heel", in another account, "feet with a level sole", in another, that's expanded upon saying "feet with level tread so that he places his foot evenly upon the ground, lifts it evenly and touches the ground evenly with the entire sole".

So maybe Gautama Siddhartha did have flat feet, but we do know from our experience of kinhin, practising while walking, that as we become more learned about the actual bodymind, we start to be able to feel the foot with the foot, we start to be able to tread more lightly, we start to be able to tread with the heel, the outside of the foot, the inside of the foot, the toes and we start to notice that this is bendable, it's flexible, and we may cease to slam our feet down as some may have been in the habit of doing in the past. We see people on the street like this all the time.

"The mark of the thousand-spoked wheel on the soles of the feet"... Well, when we slam down, especially in those ancient times, callouses would have built up, many people not even having the luxury of sandals. The poor have been notorious through history for not even having basic garments and footwear available to the more well-off. Gautama Siddhartha was one of the more well-off, so perhaps his feet were cared for and perhaps rather than thick calloused soles that were just like the leather soles of a shoe, it was possible to see the myriad of lines that are on hands and feet, your own included, so check it out.

When we hear things like: “a gait like a swan, or a king elephant, or a king lion, or a royal ox”, we can look gently, we can see that what may be being talked about is a graceful deportment of the bodymind, yet exhibiting strength.

But as it happens, people start talking and they exaggerate the deportment of a five foot ten person who is walking around with a carriage that holds the skeleton, holds the bodymind, straight with an erect demeanour, with an open presentation, and it may be described by one person as being really tall, particularly if that person is say a child who is four foot seven. “Oh really tall!” And that can easily turn into: “Oh, eighteen feet” over time and distance. “He’s really tall and he GLOWS!” which is a metaphoric way of talking about someone who may attract attention by the difference in their deportment of the bodymind from the mass of people. And with a background of royalty, chances are that in the crucial years growing up when nutrition can help determine the height, there’s a good chance that Gautama Siddhartha was fed well so there’s a good chance he may have been taller than the average, normal mass of a denied population.

There can be all sorts of reasons why difference would become exaggerated. Also, there’s the tendency that the relaying of information from person to person has to change its content.

Now, there is a game that people sometimes play at parties. It’s so long ago, I barely remember... But someone might start the game and whispers something to the person next to them.

“Milly likes peppermint ice cream.”

The next person is whispered to, and that person whispers to someone else, and the last person to receive the information says it out loud to usually great hilarity:

“I believe the valley is Milly’s home.”

The message is changed entirely because people relay what they think they heard.

Have you ever encountered that in your own life? Indeed we all have and we do of course any time we watch television news, it’s particularly egregious today when what you hear is not what happened. So why would they be different? Why would people 2600 years ago be any different than we are today? Why would they not exaggerate and change?

Now bear in mind, it is said that the first image which would be statuary or a drawing, of Gautama Siddhartha, some experts say was not presented until the first century, Common Era (C.E.), which would be fifteen, sixteen hundred years old after this miraculous, now mythological creature walked around. So, I’m quite content to rest in the idea that this was in one sense an ordinary man who became known because he was not part of the usual mass and that stories were made up that became accepted as a description of a mythological character.

Anyway, it’s a lot of fun.

Now, “Seeing people wearing adornments.” Adornments, things that we wear or hang on our bodies to make other people believe that we are not as plain and simple and unworthy as a contraction into a sense of a self, as an image of a self say that we are. We’re still at it today. There are vast industries built up around this tendency. We slap on designer glasses, for example, where the initials of the designer have become so large that that’s the first thing anyone sees. What does that mean about us? Well, of course it means we have the savvy and the bucks to buy the product of this particular designer. We do it with t-shirts, we do it with shoes... I won’t mention any names but any of us who’ve been around in the marketplace will have our own examples.

I’m kind of of the old school that believes that if I’m going to advertise for somebody, I’d better get paid for it. Instead, we take on these symbols in the hope that we will be perceived to be worthy by dressing like someone else, by adopting the mannerisms of someone else, by pretending to be anyone other than ourselves, we want to gain prestige.

Because these designer things can be very expensive, an international industry has grown up around the fact that people want these the things. So these knockoffs that are found of just about anything are incredible. One can walk down the street carrying a knockoff, carrying a plastic version of a leather bag, with the same initials—with slight discrepancies, so perhaps if the “knockoffers” get taken to court, they can plead that it’s not the same thing at all—with the same gigantic metal letters of the designer clanking away, and we can believe that we’re worth more, are MORE worthy than we actually are.

The adornment situation is one that can be fun to look at and to see how it functions. Of course what happens with practice, and we must not forget that these verses are reminders to practise, we can use anything we encounter, anytime, anywhere, first of all to practise that moment of noticing. So we may notice on the streets someone walking down the street with a hat that has the designer’s name in glowing neon across the front. We might remark on it, go: “Ooh”. The moment of “ooh”, Knowing, which is what we really are, is acknowledging that is is knowing a known and the known in this case has to be the fluorescence of that gigantic hat.

At that moment feel the breath  
feel your feet on the pavement  
feel the whole bodymind without making a big deal about it  
because the reason why you’ve noticed in the first place is that the bodymind is actually there in that moment, wrapped around the breath.

So you practise.

What can happen sometimes, the information can be "oh, I want to get one of those..."

Suspect that! [students laugh]

Be suspicious! [Osho laughs]

It's something you've noticed about the contemporary environment, contemporary cultures, habits, patterns, and you can practise with those and be reminded by this verse that what you were doing is practising something that's been around for 2600 years that speaks to the dignity of the human bodymind and reminds you to...

stand up a little straighter  
to actually feel the breath filling the body  
to release shoulders that may have crawled up or become tense  
and to be as you really are in that moment  
and who you are...

well...

isn't that the question?

Have fun! And thank you for listening.

## Every Breath You Take 78: Seeing the Unadorned

Dharma Talk presented by Ven. Shikai Zuiko osho

Dainen-ji, June 5, 2010

EVERY BREATH YOU TAKE means:

"Hey! You're still alive!"

Isn't that great!

We don't know if the next breath will even happen, so it's risky, this business of being a human being, being alive.

We didn't ask for it. I mean, did any one of you put in your little order saying:

"I want to be born at one o'clock in the morning February 6th, 1942, in Moose Jaw, Saskatchewan to these people..."

I mean it wouldn't be the same as that, but did anyone put in an order? [students laugh]

No! It just happened. Random and chaotic, in a random and chaotic universe and here we sit, being breathed. The breath, the activity of the breath surrounded by random and chaotic cells, most of which, well many of which, some say now—they used to say 15% was not us, that it was in fact bacteria, little things flagellating around, stuff upside down in our pores, their little tails waving in the air, not even us! Bacteria in the intestines, not even us! But we're so happy to say, self-image is so happy to say: "This is ME!"

[Osho exhales with disgust. Students and Osho laugh]

Reality does tend to get covered over.

Today's verse:

Now, of course, as with anything that's spoken or written down and heard, it can be misunderstood and it will be misunderstood at some point by some people because this is what happens. "Unadorned" means plain, in fact, without ornamentation, without excess that is unnecessary to the functioning of whatever it is that is being talked about, be it a piece of clothing, be it decor, be it how we ask and answer things, how we do the forms, how we understand the forms. Unadorned, nothing extra, there's nothing needed.

Elaboration has many meanings, but it means to express at greater length or detail. So let's say for the sake of this verse, to take something that's very simple and to add lots of other stuff around it that's not needed for the expression of the thing that needs to be expressed. But you know we're used to it because self-image likes to elaborate, it likes to express things in greater and greater detail and when we can see it quite clearly, why is it doing that? Well, bottom line: to cover its ass.

Perhaps, in your own experience, there has been a question that you wanted to ask. So, you find yourself in daisan and I might say: "Is there anything that you would like to talk about? Any question, comment....?" And the student, not any student in particular, once again, this kind of stuff is so common and I'm sure it's been around since the beginning of practice, that's a couple of thousand years, and people have patterns that are remarkably the same, regardless of where and when...

So, there can be a tightening [Osho makes a laboured inhalation],

the eyes might open wide  
there might be some sort of little movements around the mouth:  
“Mmmm... mmm.... mmmm... uh.... well... I'm pretty sure I know the answer to this one...”  
[Osho and students laugh loudly]

Okay...

“I mean, I've heard it before and I know what you're going to say...”

Uh huh....

“But, I just want to be sure. I've read a lot about it...”

Mmm hmmm...

So we can start to see this elaborate network, this tangling of attempts of self-image to present itself as all-knowledgeable.

So the question then comes: “Uh.. I've heard it some many times before. I mean, I know that I know it. You're going to think I'm stupid... Uh... mmmm...”

Okay. I might say one of my favourite things: The only stupid question is the one that doesn't get asked because then self-image is trying to answer itself and since that contraction into a sense of a self doesn't know what it is talking about, that question might fester and fester for years, causing all sorts of caustic complications... So if you have a question: ask it! It's as simple as, in the beginning, when people come to an introductory workshop, they are told that if they sit, they can request to have an interview. So the question is: did you sit? The answer: there is one of two choices, but often people will... self-image... okay, patterns, they're not the person, they're thing that every person has acquired over the years, will figure that there is a third way of answering that is going to pass because this will confuse or entrance the person asking the question:

“Well, I really wanted to...” [Osho laughs]

Hey, the answer: yes or no.

So when you have something that you'd like to talk about, you have an opportunity just to notice the many ways that self-image has developed to make excuses for itself, to try and cover every possible view that could be taken of the person asking the question. Well, it's a shell game, none of it's really happening, none of it means anything, but the fact that you can see it means it is a part of the reality of that moment and it gives you the opportunity to practise. You see it: oh! And you don't have to shut up and pretend it's not happening. You can say: “Look at that!”

And I'll go: “Yeah, good for you! You saw it! You saw this futile attempt of self-image to make itself bigger, better, grander, smarter than self-image might think it actually is.”

So, keep it simple, down to the basics, the W5: Who, What, When, Where, and Why? Good guidelines.

Sometimes too, we'll be given an instruction and self-image will come up with:

“Okay but... in the such and such of the whatever... this and that was said...”

...but it has nothing to do with the actual carrying out of the instruction. So then we engage in the futile, ultimately, exchange of information that just clutters up the space and uses up time that could be used to do the thing.

This is just—it's not a matter of you should and you shouldn't—just be prepared to see when that kind of thing happens, you're seeing something very important, you're seeing a pattern, a contraction into a sense of

self with a belief of how it should or shouldn't be, what do you have to do? Hey! Nothing! Makusa. You just see it, and the just seeing of it is seeing a portion of reality and then you are seeing everything else that is going on that is known by the bodymind: seeing, hearing, tasting, touching, feeling, smelling, breathing in and out...

Unadorned.

Naked knowing.

Nice, on a hot day.

And, simplicity, the context of a human lifestyle, can denote freedom from hardship, effort, or confusion. You can be simple about seeing confusion.

Oh look! Confusion! There it is, arising in the reality of the moment, along with everything else. No big deal.

As a species, we have spread a lot of elaboration around, we have spread it so thick that it's toxic. People get together to "discuss", but they're not discussing, they're firing points of view. There's confrontation. This is kind of an aside, but see it when it happens in yourself, it's not you, it's patterns, you're seeing it, you can practise at that moment because there has been an opening in that mass and tangle of confusion.

Have fun with it!

With every breath you take, you have the opportunity to see those interesting details of the process of perception and cognition, and not to be trapped by elaborate schemes designed to cover up stuff that doesn't need to be covered up.

The verse again:

Seeing the unadorned  
"May all beings  
Release elaboration  
And practice simplicity."

Thank you for listening.

## Every Breath You Take 79: Seeing People Obsessed with Pleasure

Dharma Talk presented by Ven. Shikai Zuiko osho

Dainen-ji, June 26, 2010

Seeing people obsessed with pleasure,  
"May all beings  
Delight in Reality,  
And be unwavering in love for it."

Where to start?

Well, how about right now with this breath because this moment, which is no longer that moment, is the only moment that's going on.

This has always been the case and when you take the opportunity to cut through whatever entanglements may have come up between the moment of waking up this morning and now allows you the opportunity to see the process of perception and cognition, the activity of that mass of cells wrapped around the breath, which of course we like to call "me", but really, really, there's a lot of that stuff that is just colonizing, a lot of little parasites living there, sucking off this thing you like to call "you". [Osho and students laugh]

However, first: "Seeing people" so of course that implies everyone else but you, and don't we love to do that? [Osho and students laugh]

Because when we see others doing something, that means we've noticed that our attention has moved towards focusing

on that, something other, so we have a situation right there:  
self and other.

And we do,  
let's face it,  
get a certain amount of pleasure out of  
seeing other people doing stuff.  
So we can sit there  
and cluck our little tongues  
and go: "OMG, I would never!..."  
because self-image does like to—  
(because it's used to doing it and it's not you, you're the Knowing of it),  
—self-image does like to  
try and position itself  
and  
it does that by creating  
self and other,  
this and that.

So because you're practising this moment, no matter where or when this moment occurs and you see that movement, self and other, you have an opportunity to practise the whole bodymind, I mean it is there, you might as well notice it.

Now, "obsessed", it's a great word.

Obsess, from the Latin: to besiege, to occupy. It even means to sit opposite from, so again there is a creation of self and other.

From about the 1530s on, one meaning was: the hostile action of an evil spirit. So right there we have a creation of self and other, a negation of responsibility, one could say.

1670s: the action of anything which engrosses the mind. Mind and body; fundamental split right there, which is not true, obviously body and mind arise together right now, right here around the breath.

More modern meanings are: compulsive or irrational fixation, an unhealthy fixation. And of course that has developed into something over which we have no control. So, all sorts of behaviours have become somehow or other, evil spirits that take us over.

Pleasure? Well, ha ha!... That has been knocked around a lot by all sorts of people from Epicurus to Cicero, to Schopenhauer, and so on, and I know that sometime in the future there may be someone listening to this who will come away with the idea that this practice affords no enjoyment, that somehow or other, it is an ascetic practice done only by dour people who deny themselves.

Well, that's simply not true because that denial implies, again, a focusing into a self that is acting in opposition to the very aliveness of the bodymind.

Because, face it: experiencing the senses openly is a lot of fun, that's why in practice it is possible to sit hour after hour day after day, sitting, walking, standing, practising, with pain, with thoughts, with this thing and that thing and the other thing, and it could be classified as one of the weirdest ways to have fun that people have ever come across. [students laugh]

But we start to understand that the fact of the experiencing of the bodymind is not the problem. The problem is that we believe, we have a tendency to believe, all of those thoughts that come up saying: "If only..." or making promises: "If I just get the right face cream, then I will not have to face the horror of a photograph taken where I look remarkably like my father..."

And on and on.

We create fictions, fictions are used against the common weal, fictions are used to sell products that can never deliver what they promise, fictions have been used to promote radical killing of others.

So when we start to look into what's really going on, when we start to look into reality, a myriad of things are uncovered.

Pleasure is defined as: a broad class of mental states that human and other animals experience as positive, enjoyable, or worth seeking, including happiness, entertainment, enjoyment, ecstasy, and euphoria.

If we look it up under Psychology, we uncover the Pleasure Principle, which describes pleasure as: "a positive feedback mechanism motivating the organism to recreate in the future the situations which it has just found pleasurable. According to this same principle, organisms are motivated to avoid situations that have caused pain in the past."

Hmmm. "The experience of pleasure is subjective and different in individuals who will experience different kinds and amounts in the same situation."

...we're starting to swim in a sea of words...

Many pleasurable experiences are associated with satisfying basic biological drives such as eating, exercise, sex, defecation. I mean, having a pee after you've been sitting in a car for nine hours can be what? Great! [Osho and students laugh]

Other pleasurable experiences are associated with social experiences and social drives: accomplishment, recognition, service.

The appreciation of cultural artifacts and activities such as art, music, and literature offer pleasurable experiences.

Substances ingested specifically to produce pleasurable experiences can become something that bodymind craves and can lead to a narrowing of attention and what is called habituation, dependence, or addiction.

So it's not easy, this simple little verse, you can have a lot of fun with it.

Seeing people obsessed with pleasure,  
"May all beings  
Delight in Reality,  
And be unwavering in love for it."

So when you notice anything whatsoever about experiencing, you have a moment of recognition of experiencing that has been presented to you by the bodymind presenting itself.

You practise at that moment by feeling the breath, sitting up straight, opening the eye gaze, by noticing that you've noticed.

Over time you start to understand through  
your own experiencing  
that looking for one word to explain everything is ridiculous,  
so powers of observation, of seeing, of knowing, of experiencing are freed  
and you start to understand through actually living with Awake Awareness in the moment,  
you start to understand that there are choices,  
you start to understand that in each human bodymind  
where the heart is still beating,  
there is this process of perception and cognition,  
you start to understand that the creation of self and other  
does not really do any service,  
it makes us less intelligent  
because it's setting up a conflict.

With basic understanding of the process of being a human being, there is karuna, this warmth, this recognition that the process of being a human being is the same for all human beings and that involves making choices that may be difficult.

When we can actually understand through our own experience what we like and what we want, we can make choices that are actually free choices, free from experiencing that has been conditioned by previous experiencing.

So use every opportunity,  
appreciate that breathing in and out can fall under the category of pleasure,  
that even pains in the knees,  
when in the context of the moment,  
when not focused upon,  
can fall into that category of pleasurable experience.

But you don't need to categorize them when you're sitting because that means—if categories come up when you're sitting, categories that say "well this is this and that is that"—that as soon as you've noticed [Osho snaps fingers] that,  
you've noticed a contraction into a sense of a self with views about how it is and how the world is,  
so at that moment, practise,  
recognize that view as unnecessary. You don't have to get rid of it because that would be setting up this and that, that would be setting up an opposition.

Reality is the totality of this moment, which is wrapped around the breath.

You're the Knowing of it.

Use every opportunity and be surprised!  
Experience the richness of the moment,  
the flickering of colours,  
various sounds,  
eyes blinking,  
hair growing.

There you sit.

Use it.

Have fun with it!

Thank you for listening.

## Every Breath You Take 80: Seeing Those Without Obsession

Dharma Talk presented by Ven. Shikai Zuiko osho

Dainen-ji, July 3, 2010

Good morning.

So, you managed to successfully cut through whatever obsessions might have been telling you that it was too beautiful a day and you were just too this way or that way, and you just had too many things to do to actually attend the sitting...

But here you are! It's amazing, isn't it that at some place and some time many many many years ago, some say 2600 years ago, someone sat down and decided to look into what it really was to be a human being? What this process of perception and cognition was all about, what this process of being a person, being a human being was all about?

Well, when we sit down to practise, what we're doing is studying the vital living experience of being alive in this moment. That's what we're actually doing. Formal practice gives us a chance to see the functioning of this process of perception and cognition. So we can look into what it's like when we have an obsessive pattern that comes back over and over again.

Obsession is the act of anything that engrosses the mind, a compulsive or irrational or unnoticed pattern or fixation.

Today's verse:

Seeing those without obsession,  
"May all beings  
Not incline towards fixation  
On fabricated things."

Well bearing in mind this set of verses was apparently written 1600 years ago, so I guess we can say that when we're "seeing those without obsession", we may be noticing people who are not hoarders, who are not engaging in activities and substances that are detrimental to their dignity and cause them to act out in ways that they may not when they are free of those obsessions.

But the point I put forward last week for your consideration was that when you notice the watching of other people and how they're doing, you're noticing a basic stance of self-image: self and other. So the verse can help remind you of that so that you can look at your own experiencing which is the only one that you can really do anything about.

So, "seeing those without obsession" can remind you to look into your own process of perception and cognition and notice when any sort of obsessive or repetitive pattern is there. You have everything that you need to do the most useful possible thing with it which is to practise the whole bodymind in the whole moment, recognize that that pattern is not who you are, it's a pattern. You're the Knowing of it. That seems to be quite obvious at the moment that you notice it, so at the moment of noticing any aspect of reality, any moment of reality, any dharma, you're having a moment of clear seeing.

That's what you're practising so that you'll have more moments of clear seeing.

Yesterday morning a student came to see me. We sit outside, weather permitting, and for an hour we look at things that he has noted and brought forward from various texts that he's been reading, or thoughts that have come up or questions that have come up. We sit on the lovely covered bench that's beside the koi pond, the bench that was built by the Chiden supervising other students—the rain shelter, now that it has shingles on it.

We sat there in the dappled sunlight watching the koi being fish, swimming in water, but they're not just being fish swimming in water. There's big Barry: nearly three feet long, orange, black, white, with a very distinctive personality. There's Doug: not quite as long, white with a little boo boo on his tail which we've been treating, and Doug (he or she as the case may be, we're not sure) has a different personality from Barry. And then there's Nigel, who because he's a cripple—he came here with only one pectoral fin and badly chewed tail—is smaller although the same age as Barry and Doug, and he's a little bit shy.

So they're swimming around being Barry and Doug and "Nige" and we're sitting in the sunlight with the shadows of leaves dappling on us and the student said:

"Osho, can I talk about something that doesn't have anything directly to do with practice?"

I said: "You're sure about that, hmmm?" [students laugh]

So the student sat up straight and said: "There's really, since we're practising with this bodymind and this bodymind moves through different situations, there's really nothing that's not related to practice."

And the thing that comes up with that comment is a contraction into a sense of self that's exhibiting a pattern of picking

and choosing, saying: "this is practice and that isn't. If we're sitting in the Hatto on the zafu, this is practice. If we're sitting in the Zendo on a zafu, this is practice. If we're sitting on a zafu in Daisan, this is practice... But if it's something that happens outside of those very particular parameters, it's not practice."

"Osho, that's ridiculous what I'm thinking, isn't it? It's just ridiculous."

"Okay, yeah, it is, so what do you do?"

So of course he sat up straight, opened his eye gaze and said: "Well what I wanted to say was, what I'm going to say is: you know, I noticed I waste a lot of time talking to myself. I waste so much time telling myself how difficult everything is going to be. I've only really started to notice it now, but I'll wake up in the morning and I'll start going through this list of stuff that I've done a million times before and I create such a huge burden for myself that I can barely move. But I'm starting to see it. And what I'm starting to do is when a thought comes up like 'I have to do the dishes now...' instead of sitting there contemplating and telling myself stories about how difficult it's going to be for me to do those dishes—I do it until I've created something that is impossible—I've started just walking through those thoughts and doing whatever it is."

So we can, each of us, look into how we are with all of that stuff and recognize we can save ourselves a lot of wear and tear, not to mention wear and tear on those around us because really, you know, when you hear stuff about "how hard" everything is to do, it can be wearing.

And remember also, truth is the first casualty of self-image because it fabricates things. It was telling this student that washing a couple of plates was so difficult that it was impossible to do. So he had a great long list of things that he'd taken care of in spite of and actually because of noticing those patterns saying: "everything's too difficult".

Over time, that kind of nonsense wears out and the truth of the matter presents itself more and more clearly over and over again and we can understand through our own experience that there is freedom from the weight of fabrication, from the weight of our stories. And we do carry them with us and they are weighty. They're weighty to the point that it shows all over our bodymind. We make ourselves extreeeeeeemely tired often by thoughts about things, whereas the things, the moment they're done, may even give us a little rush of, what do we want to call it... accomplishment, satisfaction, energy? when we deal with the truth of the situation.

So, the verse again:

Seeing those without obsession,  
"May all beings  
Not incline towards fixation  
On fabricated things."

And that inclining toward fixation is indeed the beginning of the downward slope into that great pit of obsessive thinking.

So, here you sit. You made it to the monastery. From the moment you walked through the gate, you walked into a place of practice. Practice is not confined to the zafu in the Hatto, the zafu in the Zendo, the zafu in daisan. The whole place is here just so you can practise.

And have fun with it! Look at Bodhidharma's big googly eyes when you're walking by in kinhin. How can you not have fun? [students laugh]

Thank you for listening.

## Every Breath You Take 81: Seeing People Who are Happy

Dharma Talk presented by Ven. Shikai Zuiko osho  
Dainen-ji, July 10th, 2010

Yesterday, here in Ottawa  
it was hot, hot, hot, hot, hot, hot...  
People were walking on the street,  
they were riding on the buses,  
they were riding their bikes,  
they were riding in their cars,  
shiny with sweat.

And I had taken the bus out the the wilds of Gloucester to get some antibacterial medication for Doug. Doug is the big white fish in the pond, who has a pimple near his tail... her tail?... we're not sure. We think it's a pimple because Doug is four years old, as are all the koi this month and they are reaching sexual maturity, so I think it's just teenage acne. But, we have to take care of these things because it would be horrible to have a bacteria spread through all of the fish and kill them.

So, I braved the heat and the humanity and went on the bus to pick up the medication. After I bought the supplies, I

crossed the boulevard and was standing at the bus stop. The sky had been gradually darkening and there was that ozone that you can smell in the air before a storm. There is a heightened sense of anticipation or tension. A stillness comes upon the land,  
and then there was a rumble,  
and these big drops started to fall.

To my right, there was a fellow on a bike, on a racing bike. Middle aged guy, with perhaps a little bit more around the middle that was more—  
than he would really have liked to have had  
there  
in that tight racing suit of black and red,  
but I don't know, I don't know anything about that—  
he had his helmet on, and he's pedaling like crazy.  
The drop starts, one falls, a whole bunch fall.  
He makes a turn, as if he's going to stop, find some shelter from that rain.  
Then  
it comes pouring down,  
he gets back on his bike and starts to pedal in the rain.  
And I was standing outside the bus shelter  
and had decided not to put the umbrella up,  
and I'm just standing there,  
the rain is just coming down.  
The rain is coming down on him,  
and it's coming down on me  
and we look at each other  
and we smile.  
We were happy!  
For just that moment.

Today's verse:

Seeing people who are happy,  
"May all beings  
Be serene and joyous,  
Gladly offering to the Buddhas."

Now of course, I made an assumption about what that fellow was experiencing,  
but just the little sequence of events  
and the fact that I'm a human being  
too,  
and he's a human being too,  
and the process of being a human being  
is the same for all human beings.  
So we'd both been in the heat.  
Seemed a perfectly safe assumption that the moment that rain hit, he'd made the decision that it felt so good that he was going to pedal on.

So, I thought "Ahh, happy".  
That moment happy.  
And I was glad.  
And I was was joyful that I'd noticed that, that that exchange had happened. Because, we know how it is.  
We can get so concerned about our own stuff...

"Oh, my shoes are gonna get wet"  
"Oh, the bus is gonna be late because of this"  
"Oh, I'm gonna get splashed"  
"Oh, eh, yeah, it's fine now but the rain'll stop in 30 minutes and it's gonna get all hot again".

Yeah, how much do we hear that kind of stuff, hmm? But there, the moment open [Osho claps] Happy.

"Seeing people who are happy"  
Well it's pretty hard to judge.  
Actually, what's happy?  
What's hysterical? [students laugh]  
What's a moment of appreciating the moment and what's drugs?  
You know, it's hard. [students laugh]  
But we can look into our own experience.

That's what we're doing.

Now, what is happy? It's a commodity, basically, now.

It's bought and sold.

The promises...

The promises...

If you want to be happy, you can buy a program, a software program that you can put on your computer that's going to remind you that you're happy.

It'll come up subliminally.

It can remind you that you are happy.

It can remind you that you want to lose weight.

It can remind you that you want to gain weight.

It can remind you that you are a good person and you deserve to be happy.

So we've commodified happiness.

Happiness can only be experienced, let's face it.

Do you know what makes you happy?

Do you know what gives you that moment of just experiencing,  
rather than thinking about just experiencing,

rather than deciding

"Well is this happy or not?"

Or,

"This is good, I want more of it. I'll recreate the circumstance. I know, I'll go buy a pile of magazines and I will answer every one of those tests:

'How happy are you?'

I'll find out"

And we find out through these tests research that has been done about happiness.

Here are some of the attributes:

"Good relationships and social interaction--extroversion

Extroversion"

Which is the first time I've heard of that, but, I guess it's the opposite of introversion? So being outward.

"Marital status"

Well, depends on who you read doesn't it? Married are happier than singles, except for all those single women who are supposed to be happier than they are single but are going around buying all kinds of implants and prosthetic things to ensure some future happiness. So we can't rely on that one.

"Employment"

So, what you do for a living.

"Your health

Democratic freedom

Optimism

Endorphins released through physical exercise

"And eating chocolate.

"Religious involvement

Income

Proximity to other happy people"

And this happiness has been, for centuries, the topic of philosophical discourse.

Aristotle, 350 before Common Era stated that

Happiness is the only thing humans desire for its own sake, unlike riches, honor, health or friendship.

John Stewart Mill 1863 utilitarianism.

Happiness.

You make a choice for the happiness of the greater mass. Happiness for the greater good.

But happiness, what is it?

"How will I know if I have it?"

"Who can tell me?"

So we divide it.

There is the happiness that comes with this  
and the happiness that comes with that.

Happiness is different from contentment.

Actions are right if they promote happiness.

They are wrong if they don't produce happiness.

But, what is it? What is it, really? Little six steps. Little courses you can take to ensure happiness.

"Step one. Be optimistic"

"Step two. Follow your gut"

"Step three. You have enough money to meet your basic needs."

"Four. Stay close to friends and family" Unless of course... [students laugh]

Serious. I found this on the web, so you can too.

"Find happiness in the job you have now."

"Smile. Whether you are happy or not. It changes your mood" So why not?

So there is all sorts of stuff that you can read about happiness. But, by looking into the knowns, the experiences of the  
bodymind

you might start

to notice

moments that if you were called upon to label,  
you might label happiness and the cause, the situation,  
the context may surprise you.

Because, we tend to over-think everything.

Practice is very simple. It says,

if you are thinking and you've noticed it, you've noticed thoughts.

Practice in that moment of clear seeing.

Sit up straight.

Open the eye gaze.

Feel the breath.

You're alive.

You are practising that moment of clear seeing.

You will have more moments of clear seeing.

And with those moments of clear seeing,

you may see clearly things that bodymind actually enjoys.

Things, that might be labeled, if we wanted to label things,  
as producing the thing that we really don't know what it is,  
but we'll call it "happy".

So they can be, these experiences you have,  
can be reminders that it is possible to know your own experience  
more and more intimately  
and to make choices based on that.

We do samu.

The Samu Chant reminds us.

May beings be happy.

May they be peaceful.

May they be free

So we can say "happiness"

Happy

Having what we need. Beings having what they need to survive.

Peaceful

No need to engaged in aggressive actions.

Free

Freedom from conditioned experiencing, from reactivities, which grab us around the neck, grab all beings around the neck,  
choking us and narrowing down what we are experiencing so that what we end up believing that we are experiencing is  
"same old, same old" because patterns have been activated and fed.

Now, I am not talking here about any state whatsoever.  
I'm not talking about "blissful" states.  
What is that? Seems to be ignoring a lot of stuff.  
But noticing when there is an absence of any sense of problem whatsoever  
and there is a natural joy.  
Again this can be experienced,  
but it is hard to put it into words because it starts to slip away  
with the labeling.

Just before the sitting, Chiden and I were out on the front porch looking at the koi, and there was Barry.  
Barry, the biggest one, huge, orange and black.  
There was Barry with his mouth and head out of the water,  
the other two were feeding in the same area as Barry and these koi were obviously having a whale of a time because they  
have a new source of flowing water that the Chiden put in.  
And they play in it.  
It's obvious what they are doing.  
They are having fun.  
They are "happy".  
So there is this massive fish playing around in the water.  
I look at the Chiden. Chiden looks at me. We look at Barry.  
There is that big mouth mouth going "Orp! Orp!" [laughter] in the water .  
And for that moment,  
I was "happy".

The verse again:

Seeing people who are happy,  
"May all beings  
Be serene and joyous  
Gladly offering to the Buddhas."

Thank you, for listening.

## Every Breath You Take 82: Seeing People Who Suffer

Dharma Talk presented by Ven. Shikai Zuiko osho  
Dainen-ji, July 17, 2010

Seeing people who suffer,  
"May all beings  
Unfold knowing the essence  
And expel all anguish."

Well... "the essence", "suffering", "anguish": hot button words.

Okay, "Seeing people who suffer", now what do we mean by "suffering"? Well in this case, let us say we mean anything that is not open and unconditioned. So let's say we're in an unfamiliar situation and we have a pattern and the pattern says we don't know what to do, so there's a contraction into a sense of a self who doesn't know what to do and that can get bigger, that sense of inappropriateness, that sense of not knowing when everyone else does, that sense of being the only person in the room, really, because that's what self-image does, it contracts around itself until it can make itself unable to function, makes the bodymind unable to function. We can call that suffering.

"I pushed the wrong button! OMG!" [students laugh]

"Ugh! How can I carry on? [Osho whispers] I'm so stupid. They'll all know, I'm so stupid. Oh I'll never be able to..." and it goes on and on from there.

If anyone in the room has never experienced anything like that, please raise your hand. [students laugh heartily]

Okay, the process of being a human being is the same for all human beings, who have ever walked on the face of the earth and that covers a lot of territory for sure,  
but the process is the same,  
the process of perception and cognition is the same.

Of course there are minor mechanical differences.  
What is known, what is meaningful,  
and the meaning that is made out of experiencing

varies wildly according to place and environment and so on, as we know, that's why we can have such radically different points of view that on the whole result in a lot of suffering for a lot of people. But the process is the same.

So what was discovered 2600 years ago when Gautama Siddhartha sat down under the pipal tree and said: "That's it, I'm not moving until I know what's going on".

So he figured it out:  
he's not any of the knowns,  
he's the Knowing  
so that applies to all people.  
We are the Knowing of knowns.  
The bodymind is how Knowing knows.

We have choice.  
The things that attention turns to—  
or is drawn to  
or is sucked into without us even realizing it—  
can get bigger  
and condition experiencing  
so we end up suffering.

Now, indeed, there are all sorts of unpleasant and downright atrocious things that happen to human beings and that human beings do to each other and anything else around, really, because when that sense of a self is propagated in its many forms, it blinds human beings to the rest of reality.

So we see "people who suffer", and it can be any manner of event, we have this little verse:

"May all beings  
Unfold knowing the essence  
And expel all anguish."

So, the "essence" in the Buddhadharma is that the essential nature of everything is that there's nothing behind anything making it what it is. The idea of some "thing" is a delusion about that thing. At the very least the idea of something can only highlight particular aspects of that thing, but cannot present and is not the totality of that thing; a gong, a glass, your life, your suffering is what it is to you when seen from a certain point of view.

Now, I recommend that you look up and read "Essentially Real: Commentaries on Eihei Dogen zenji's Hosho Dharmata" by Anzan Hoshin roshi.

The reality of Reality is that each and every thing transcends ideas and instead is just such, the display of Suchness."

So, the essence of the reality of something, of a dharma, the Dharma about that dharma is that it is sunya; empty.

So go back to someone walking into a room that they haven't been in before: a thought comes up, attention goes into it. Why? Because it's following well-worn pathways in the bodymind and all of a sudden, there's someone who doesn't know what to do, who starts to squirm, starts to believe the story of self-image that they don't know what to do and they really shouldn't be here because soon everyone will start to know they don't know what to do...

And that gets in the way, it clouds the ability of the bodymind to function to the point where many students have experienced forgetting things,  
forgetting to ring the densho to enter into the Zendo for daisan,  
forgetting to stop, look, and bow when the senior bows,  
forgetting that it is possible to close doors quietly,  
and on and on and on...

We've all experienced it.  
Until we start to see that we're the Knowing of that contraction coming up,  
we're the Knowing of that thought.  
We don't have to follow it.  
The instruction is at that moment of seeing, recognize:  
moment of clear seeing,  
you're seeing it  
moment to practise,  
to practise that moment of clear seeing.

And we start to understand that we may have misunderstandings. We may believe that in order to practise, we have to

have no thoughts. Well, that's silly. You'll have no thoughts when you're dead, guaranteed. [students laugh]

So as long as the breath is moving into and out of the bodymind, you can practise in the midst of whatever morass of thoughts and feelings are present. That stuff is the manure that makes the flowers of open experiencing bloom.

So use it.

Recognize that the essence is that those thoughts—and we'll talk about just thoughts and feelings right now because that's the thing that trips us up mostly, thoughts and feelings—are present, their presence is not a problem.

They produce effects in the bodymind and the effects can be so strong that the strength makes us believe that the story is real and that is who we are.

Now, sitting here in the Zendo, think of a lemon. Okay? Think of a lemon. Where would you find one? Where would you find in your home this imaginary lemon? And for those of you who are "homeless", the monastics, picture that imaginary lemon. Picture yourself walking and picking up that imaginary lemon. Pick up a knife. Cut that lemon in half. Careful now! Careful... Take a half of it, cut it in half again. Pick up a quarter of the lemon, put it in your mouth, bite down on it and suck on it.

What happens? The bodymind responds physically to the imaginary lemon. Even talking about it, I can feel little bits of saliva coming up. The bodymind is really intelligent. It experiences something and very quickly there is a response and the response is remembered. Now that's true, that capacity, that intelligence of the bodymind applies to every thought and every feeling that we have. An effect that is tangible, that is obviously present in the bodymind occurs.

You're starting to see things like that, and interestingly, science is starting to see things like that too. This is being studied and guess what? What we think affects how we are! Wow! So this is something that's been done, that's been practised for 2600 years and you're doing it right now.

You start to notice that when you make the choice to practise at the moment of seeing the thought, whatever it might be that there is an opening that occurs. That process of contraction and the subsequent effect in the bodymind as the bodymind responds as it has learned to do, is interrupted, the pattern is interrupted.

And you may notice when you do practise

at the moment of noticing thoughts or feelings

that the anguish, that contraction,

that compaction of thoughts, that increase in uncomfortableness does open.

You don't have to believe it, you just have to do it and notice what happens. You can start to understand now why we do things the way we do them here. You may start to understand at a deeper level, the use of forms.

For example, during samu we have the functional talking form. That can seem harsh, we want to talk, we want to let other people know all sorts of things, we want to fill that uncomfortable silence. Then we start to understand that not only can we do what we're doing, and practise, we start to see more patterns about how we are, previously unquestioned, and that's excellent.

We notice that during longer periods of sitting,

when we do a retreat,

when we do a Dharma Assembly,

when we attend sesshin and O-sesshin,

we have opportunity to see more and more clearly

the process of perception and cognition.

We start to understand that we are the Knowing

and that the essence is that everything is sunya, empty.

That sense of a self is sunya, it's empty, it always was,

we just didn't notice except for those moments when we did know it,

but perhaps didn't have words to explain it

or didn't have the knowledge to pursue what we had discovered.

But we did pursue it whether we knew it or not and then we end up sitting in front of a white wall on a lovely Saturday morning.

So, the verse again:

Seeing people who suffer,

"May all beings

Unfold knowing the essence

And expel all anguish."

And don't worry about leaving that anguish in little puddles on the floor. [students laugh] No problem! So have fun with it as you breathe in and out because one day there'll be just breathing out and it'll be too late.

So have fun with the aliveness of this moment.

Thank you for listening.

## Every Breath You Take 83: Seeing People in Good Health

Dharma Talk presented by Ven. Shikai Zuiko osho

Dainen-ji, July 24, 2010

Maybe you woke up this morning and a thought came up that you "weren't feeling very well" or maybe a thought came up: "Oh wow! Feeling great!..."

"Oh, not so much..."

Regardless,  
regardless of wanting to come to sit,  
not wanting to come to sit,  
feeling good, feeling bad,  
growing older by the nanosecond,  
you all put your feet on the floor, put one in front of the other,  
maybe noticed the breath moving the body in and out,  
maybe noticed seeing, hearing, tasting, touching, feeling, smelling, thoughts... Regardless, you kept putting one foot in front of the other because here you are, right now!

Isn't that great? [students giggle]

And EVERY BREATH YOU TAKE, every breath moving in the bodymind, then the prior breath being breathed out lets you know that you're alive in this moment.

Now, today, two verses in one; two, two, two verses in one Dharma Talk:

Seeing people in good health,  
"May all beings  
Enter complete and perfect knowing  
And be without illness or afflictions."

Seeing people who are ill,  
"May all beings  
Know the body is empty and open  
And release struggle and conflict."

You can see how these go, as it were, hand in hand, two sides of that coin of birth and death, flipping through the air with each breath.

You're breathing in, you're alive.

You're breathing out, it's kind of iffy because you don't know whether you're going to have another in breath.

Those are just facts.

Now, when we see people who are in good health, how do we know we are seeing people who are in good health? There is always something going on with bodyminds: "If it's not one thing, it's another".

But we can see there's a certain energy and vitality that we can recognize, (although self-image is not too prone to just purely observing what's going on because it has its eyes out and it sees stuff that it likes and doesn't like, sees things that it wants and doesn't want): So, let's just leave it at, a momentary impression of good health, your own or someone else's, can be used to think that it is possible, through each dharma gate, to enter into perfect knowing and "be without illness or affliction".

Now that again depends on how we look at it because face it: if we're born, we're going to die.

None of us know when.

That's just life: "Life: an incurable disease."

And we don't know when.

So we know that now there's this breath and we can practise. We do not need to add to what the bodymind is afflicted with, which is of course the fact of being a bodymind, it oozes, it grows things, it loses things, it hurts, and who knows what will strike it out of nowhere? But when we go around with the addition of a complex of thoughts about the possibility of all the horrible things that might happen to us and to others, we're causing more stress and strain on the bodymind, we're causing more stress than whatever moment to moment living is offering it and we're causing it, we sometimes say "unconsciously", depends upon the crowd that you hang out with, but if we don't know we have a choice, does that mean we don't have choice? No. There is always choice.

So, the sentence "enter complete and perfect knowing and be without illness or affliction"; is entering into the fact that, as we chant it,  
"Awareness is the only condition"  
and everything  
lumps, bumps, fish, cats, sounds, candles flickering, a piece of lint on the floor, a little sore on a tongue, an eye that's got something in it, an irritation caused by who knows what...  
All of those things, each dharma is arising within Awareness.  
Awareness, Knowing,  
what you really are is Knowing in itself  
and you're being invited with each moment of noticing anything,  
each dharma,  
to open that dharma gate and enter  
into complete and perfect Knowing,  
that cannot be disturbed by whatever arises within it.

Seeing people who are ill,  
"May all beings  
Know the body is empty and open  
And release struggle and conflict."

"Empty and open" simply means empty and open of all our thoughts and feelings about it, it's not who we are, we're the Knowing, bodymind is how Knowing knows anything at all. So, it is empty of all our thoughts about it, it is empty of all our patterns that we've accumulated over time that can affect when they come up. Everything we experience impacts on the bodymind because that is how we experience.

Remember the lemon... Sucking on the imaginary lemon in a space that has no lemons in it. Right? What happened? You might even notice now there's a tiny little bit of response from the cells in the mouth. Everything affects the bodymind, but it is not who we are and when we recognize that moment after moment and practise that recognition, what we're doing is releasing the struggle against all our thoughts about what's going on. That opens attention more so that we can actually attend to the reality of what's going on.

If we have a knee that's got a pain in it, we can get caught up in our thoughts about the pain in that knee so much so that all of our attention goes into that, into the thoughts about it. By not attending to how the knee actually is, we cannot then take those momentary, again nanoseconds of time to recognize that "ooh, we'd better slow down a bit with this knee on this bow at this time because something's going to get caught, something's going to get snagged on that little sensation that we have". We can open around it, we can adjust how we're carrying the bodymind in that moment to make a difference, to make things more easeful for the bodymind to deal with what it has to deal with.

Now, I want to be very clear here, let's be very careful; I'm not promising eternal youth, freedom from the afflictions, let's say it, the degeneration moment to moment of capacity that the cells of the bodymind are going through.

I mean that's it,  
the process of aging,  
it's gonna happen.  
It is happening.

Right now,  
even as you're sitting there.

So that stuff is gonna go on, why make it worse?

Why make a choice to make it worse by using your energy to think about how horrible it may be or even how horrible it is now?

It's not "horrible", it just is.

If you're into thinking about how "horrible", well obviously it's a fiction, it's a leisure activity, a leisure time activity, worrying about how "horrible" things are going to be, or how "horrible" they are now, it's just whatever is going on now is what's going on now and when attention is open, you can do what needs to be done, without struggle.

And interestingly, what's the struggle against?

Yourself.

Self-image, struggling with self-image.

Poor bodymind just gets ignored.

You can learn to see that and each time you notice anything whatsoever, any dharma whatsoever, that's a moment of clear seeing, that's a moment of knowing knows.

It's that moment of clear seeing, that recognition of Knowing,

that's where you practise because when you practise, as you practise, as you continue to practise, as with all practice of anything, you get better at it.

The whole bodymind is learning.

So as with anything, it's better to learn it now while you're still breathing, wouldn't you think? [students laugh]

So, every breath you take allows you to enter complete and perfect knowing, it's right there. It allows you to understand that it is possible, in the midst of this decay, it is possible to not add to illness or affliction, and you can know that the bodymind is empty and open. It's not who you are!

And you can see and feel with every cell the release of struggle and conflict.

So here we sit.

Everybody breathing still?

Good. Good.

What does that mean? Well, it means we're all alive in this moment, which is no longer that moment, moments being something that can be talked about but they cannot be grasped in any way, but you can use the feeling of the breath moving the bodymind in and out as a touchstone to this moment which can help you release the tendency to wander off into ideas about illness, ideas about struggle, it can help you release, which is actually very helpful to the bodymind...

So have fun with it all!

Thank you for listening.

## Every Breath You Take 84: Seeing People Who Appear to be Attractive and Seeing People Who Appear to be Unattractive

Dharma Talk presented by Ven. Shikai Zuiko osho

Dainen-ji, August 21, 2010

Seeing people who appear to be attractive,  
"May all beings  
Always have unstained confidence  
In the Awakened and wakeful ones."

Hmmm... Well well well...

Seeing people who appear to be unattractive,  
"May all beings  
Be free of attachment  
To any unwholesome thing."

My goodness! What are we saying here? Let's look at another translation:

Seeing handsome people,  
They should wish that all beings  
Always have pure faith  
In the enlightened, and enlightening ones.

Are they saying that all enlightened and enlightening ones are handsome? Hmm.

Seeing ugly people

Oh my goodness! [students laugh]

They should wish that all beings  
Not become attached  
To anything not good.

Well well well. What is being talked about by these verses in "The Practice of Purity"?

Well, a cursory reading could come up with attractive—good, unattractive—bad. Isn't that the basis of all consumer culture? To be simplistic about it...but yes, hmm, handsome people are enlightened, ugly people are not good; cursory reading. Is that what we're really talking about?

Well no, we can't really be satisfied with that, can we? Oh, I think through the course of human history, some have been. Let's bear in mind as well how things shift and change, how meaning shifts and changes, how values shift and change. In certain cultures, even today, being very, very overweight, being very shiny with a huge stomach and rings of fat around the neck is considered to be unbelievably attractive. Why would that be? Well, if one wants to track it down, there are answers available.

Yet, on the opposite side of the scale, to be that way is regarded gross and a default, a flaw in character no matter what the cause. We all have examples of the pull of attraction, and that's what the word means, attractive, means something that attracts, something that draws us to it. And attraction has fallen into basically physical attraction and it has, I think it's pretty well been proven, in many instances and to all of us, that physical attraction can have a significant effect on how people are judged in terms of employment, social opportunity, friendship, sexual behaviour, and marriage.

Well, in many instances humans attributed positive characteristics such as intelligence and honesty to attractive people, and what about the unattractive people? Well, you got it, everything bad. Is that a good way to be? Well, not for the one person that you can actually influence. When you notice these patterns of pulling towards or attraction, practise. Practice tells us that we can know our patterns and know them for what they are which are patterns that the bodymind has set up. You did not pick them! Like Topsy they just kind of grew.

One day, you may start to see them.

One thing you can do anyplace, anytime, anywhere is practise the whole bodymind. The narrowing of attention into any pattern whatsoever shows you immediately you notice it, it's going on, a small portion of reality is being blown up to be the most significant thing.

Now, it's not that these patterns, when they are taken to be the whole of the moment, the major thing going on in the moment, it is not that these patterns are harmless... Some have more or less harmless consequences, like not putting a lid on a jar properly just because it's something you're not used to doing because you always lived by yourself so you always knew that the lid wasn't on the jar properly. It's not something that you want to propagate when you're living in a situation with all kinds of other people. Why? Well, pickles get dropped and kimchi gets dropped and glass gets broken and people get cheated off and on and on, so the consequences are there. Relatively harmless, a jar of pickles and cutting someone's foot on broken glass is not the end of the world. There are very few things that are the end of the world, in fact only the end of the world would be the end of the world... [students laugh heartily] would it not? But we have our little linguistic devices that propagate other patterns, so in certain contexts, it's not a problem.

In other situations, there can be problems that flow down through generations. Now, like all mammals, humans reproduce. Somehow or other there have been all sorts of mythologies that have grown up around this fact of reproduction. Now I'm not saying it's right and I'm not saying it's wrong, I'm saying it's a fact. I'm saying it's something that some of us may choose not to do and some of us may choose to do. The key word is choice. But there's a lot of non-choice that goes on in that particular area because again of mythologies around cultural, personal, and social patterns.

So I don't know, we will never know, I've never seen any figures on this but there are a lot of situations that arise when someone at the advanced of maybe 30, 35, 40 will look at their birth certificate, look at the date on their parents marriage license and go: "Whoa!" [Osho and students laugh] How come?

"Yes, I know. I was premature... At eight pounds eleven ounces? I don't think so."

So many children as adults may be faced with the fact that "wow", they were the reason that their parents, who now seemingly really hate each other, got together in the first place. It's not fun. It's not fun at all.

So when we think about that, the strong patterns for reproduction come up.

So, something attractive appears on the scene. Schwing! [giggles] That could end up being somebody... [more giggles] if responsibility is not taken and responsibility recognizes that the brain is the only brain that the body has. (Despite mythologies that are around that Mr. Dick has a brain of its own).

So, what's the reasonable thing when we're living in a world that's rapidly becoming overpopulated? Well in any situation, whenever you're going to do anything, the reasonable thing is to sit down and say: "Well, this is what I think I'd like to do. So I will make all the necessary arrangements and then that is what I'd like to do, what do you think about it?" consulting the other partner. But there seems to be a lot of stuff that happens even now when people go: "Well, I want this: home, family, that's what I want and I'm going to get it by any means" and before you know it, there it is...

"Honey, what are you going to do? Are you going to stick with me?"

Well, anyway, we don't need to say anymore about that but it does certainly fit in with the idea and the fact that attractiveness, again, is in the eye of the beholder, it's been shaped by culture and it can produce responses, physiological responses that can and must be taken responsibility for.

Seeing people who appear to be attractive,  
"May all beings  
Always have unstained confidence  
In the Awakened and wakeful ones."

So when you've entered through the door and the gates of practice have swung open, you have an opportunity to look at patterns that arise and to do what the instructions tell you to do, which is: when you notice anything at all, feel the breath, sit or stand up straight, open the eye gaze.

Take the responsibility for looking at your situation, what you want to do, and what is the most appropriate action to take in the circumstances.

Now, "Seeing people who appear to be unattractive", right there is an interesting field to play around in because you start to notice what patterns are telling you, start to question into those patterns. We "know" certain things, we take them for granted: young is attractive, old is unattractive. On this side of the globe, thin is attractive, unthin is otherwise. Having lots of hair is attractive, unless of course you have big muscles and wear a "wife beater", well, in which case having no hair at all can be attractive.

Look at social trends, become aware of them because they are patterning you. Look into this moment, which is the only one that's going on ever, and see the pull of patterns. Question into them.

Now:

Seeing people who appear to be unattractive,  
"May all beings  
Be free of attachment  
To any unwholesome thing."

Now that's the translation that the Roshi and I came up with "To any unwholesome thing" and this is based on traditional references to "wholesome" and "unwholesome" as far as this moment goes. When there is contraction, when there is a contracted state, it can be referred to as unwholesome. Why? Because it has affected the wholeness of this empty and open and luminous moment. This contraction, this knot in space has taken something that is whole and complete and without edge, and made it less than wholesome, made it unwholesome. So by recognizing that use of the word, we can understand it's not saying that unattractive people are unwholesome, it's saying that you have the opportunity to recognize when the open space of experiencing becomes contracted because of cause and effect and a pattern is produced that starts to condition the rest of experiencing.

Now, another way of looking at it is this: everything we experience is experienced with the whole bodymind. When we're in a state, it's apparent, everything changes. The facial muscles change, they distort, they contort, it's horrible, it's as if we grow fangs and foam at the mouth. Well, when you see something like that, when you recognize it, you might be wise to avoid that situation. When you see it when looking in the mirror, do everybody a favour, don't go out in public! [students laugh]

Feel the breath,  
feel the whole bodymind,  
let that unwholesome state open.

Now fashion, hmm, fashion doesn't just mean the clothes that we may or may not buy that we may or may not expect to make us the most attractive person in the neighbourhood. No, fashion means things that people believe to be true, things that go on that are things to be achieved, things to be used to make self-image, (and that's what it's aimed at), better and better.

It's interesting, fashion changes like crazy and that can be fun to notice because even if you're not a person who notices it, you are affected by it. Businesses are built on reducing all to certain types, to a certain demographic and that can be interesting. It doesn't mean that one needs to go out on the street with a big placard: "Down with demographics! Down with demographics!" because that really is pissing in the wind, it's not going to do anything for anybody and you would just be wasting your time, but what demographics do is reduce us all to types. It's interesting to note that that happens, and you know, in magazines, if you've flipped through them you'll often find there are quizzes and dammit, we want to fit in. Sometimes we'll even cheat on the quiz to get the right or desirable answers. Imagine that! Cheating against ourselves! I know about this, I've done it.

We like lists, self-image likes to place itself, and listen, it likes to label. I've not yet met a student who has read the "Five Styles of Zen" who has not after reading it said: "Well, I think mostly I'm such and such a type..." It's good to identify that tendency. So read it, read "Five Styles of Zen", you'll like it. (Link to the

text: <http://www.wwzc.org/book/begin-here-five-styles-zen> [1])

Now, language changes as well. The meaning we put to it changes and each and every one of us may put a different meaning to the same word, which is reasonable to expect because we've all had different experiences of the word, maybe even in the same place at the same time, but the experience is different. And language is changing really quickly today which is a neat thing to bear in mind. If someone calls you a "beast", this is a compliment. If someone says something you do is "sick", it's the "ultimate sickness", that means it's really good. If someone says you're so "bad", that indeed is a rare compliment. So what you hear and what you think you hear and what's being said may not ever be the same thing, just bear that in mind, it gives lots of possibilities, lots of room to play.

Know what you're doing. The way you know what you're doing, and "doing" being the actions that you take, is by having considered all possibilities that arise through the various causes that affect you, various patterns that are stimulated by various situations. Make a choice. Do not be pushed and pulled by your own chemistry or prevailing fads, unquestioned fairy tales about who you should be and how you should be. Learn to see how these have affected you because that

changes too.

For instance, in 1942 during the war years in North America, the biggest sex symbol was Betty Grable who was wholesomeness in itself. This was farm fresh with the little checkered apron and the little pigtailed. But now, today, it's who can put forth the most skin, really. So things have changed, perceptions and patterns have changed and they're changing more and more quickly. In 1994, "Vamp", a black nail polish that was brought out, could not be given away and now, 16 years later, black is one of the top selling nail polishes. Paleness, bloodlessness is cool, but so is a deep tan. So the definitions and examples of what is attractive are many and varied.

Good girls, apparently, were "in" for a long time, but not really when you study it. (A recent saying: "Good girls go to heaven, but bad girls go everywhere".) So our perceptions are shaped by people that we don't even know. It's a fun area to look into. What's attractive, so-called, and considered attractive by the general public and people who are pumping product, changes. Don't take it for granted, it's fun to look into.

Oh, another word that's changed: "vixen". This is a hot word now. What it really means, what it meant in the beginning was vixen, a female fox. A fox in all sorts of mythologies from all sorts of areas of the world is known to be a shape changer, something not to be trusted, something that would seduce you and take you into realms that you've never experienced before. Today, that's desirable but yet a few years ago, vixen also meant quarrelsome, shrewish, and malicious. But now, apparently it's a desirable quality.

So have fun with all of this. Start to look into what's going on, what influences are affecting you. And remember, the instructions for practice are very simple:

Whenever you notice anything,  
anything  
anything whatsoever  
a colour, a sound, a form, a pattern...  
it's all-inclusive.

You're the Knowing, you're the noticing.

Everything else, everything that is noticed is a known, it's known by the bodymind. The moment of noticing anything is a moment of clear seeing.

You don't have to make a decision:

Feel the breath,  
sit up straight,  
open the eye gaze.

Practise that moment of clear seeing.  
And have fun!

The verses again, oh before I say the verses and close, I did decide to address these two verses today and I think you may see why, however, if anyone comes forward with anything that they would like to have addressed that may have arisen because of these verses, I'd be delighted to hear what you have to say, hear what you might like to have answered or explored and to do that in the next Dharma Talk. That's true for any of the Dharma Talks, please come forward if you have something that you'd like to inquire about or comment on. And you don't have to agree, it's more fun that way.

Seeing people who appear to be attractive,  
"May all beings  
Always have unstained confidence  
In the Awakened and wakeful ones."

Seeing people who appear to be unattractive,  
"May all beings  
Be free of attachment  
To any unwholesome thing."

Thank you for listening.

# Every Breath You Take 85: Seeing People Who are Grateful

Dharma Talk presented by Ven. Shikai Zuiko osho

Dainen-ji, September 4th, 2010

Breathing in,  
breathing out,  
bones rattling, creaking, groaning,  
celebrating life in this moment,  
which is the only place  
that this life  
is taking place...

...it's always been the case but somehow or other we just didn't notice it, and one day we did, and then we heard "this is the only thing that's going on" and that might have shaken something in us and we decided to put one foot in front of the other and show up at a sitting, show up to be taught, to learn what's really going on before those contractions into a sense of self tell us what we'd like to have going on, what should be pleasurable, how we want the rest of the world to be...

Ah! Self-image just doing its usual stuff.

The verse today:

Seeing people who are grateful,  
"May all beings  
Come to know the richness offered by  
The Awakened and wakeful ones."

Well, we can gloss our little eyes over that one, glaze them and think "yeah, grateful sure, 'attitude of gratitude', so what?" [students laugh] and go back and continue our little snooze. But surprise, surprise, if you start to look at it, you find that there are many different meanings and most of them come down to noticing what's going on in this moment. A compilation of definitions:

1. affording pleasure

Seeing people who are affording pleasure? Hmm.

. pleasing to the senses

Seeing people who are pleasing to the senses?

. gratifying

Seeing people who are gratifying?

. delicious

Seeing people who are delicious?

. as a grateful present, as in food grateful to the palate, grateful sleep

Now those are a little old fashioned speak, old speak I guess we could call it.

Definition 2: having a due sense of benefits received, kindly disposed toward one from whom a favour has been received; willing to acknowledge and repay and give thanks for benefits, as a grateful heart. Well. And the word comes from Latin as many English, French, Spanish, Portuguese, and on on do, from "gratis; pleasing." So we can understand that if you want to have fun with the word, look it up, prepare to be surprised.

Seeing people who are grateful,  
"May all beings  
Come to know the richness offered by  
The Awakened and wakeful ones."

Now, how do we know by seeing someone that they're grateful?

Well, I'm making an assumption; here you are.

You showed up again, so there must be something that knows, sees, appreciates that there is benefit to be received and that it's in fact the Lineage that's pointing to different ways that you can look at your experiencing and open beyond the usual understanding of it to the richness that is here in each and every moment.

Now, gratitude and being grateful is a very individual thing. We're grateful for different things at different times.

Not all of us are grateful for the same things.

If we were, I would really be out of here quickly because what we'd be looking at then is some sort of a cult where we've been told what we should be grateful for. That's not the case.

Gratitude, the appreciation of pleasure, the appreciation of gifts that may not come wrapped up in a little package with a bow on top, are very individual.

I'm grateful to all the cats who had a nice poop in the rectangular box that was supposed to be a garden bed at the back of the building.

Why?

The blackberry bush which had been in the front yard and had only borne, to my knowledge, one berry, was transplanted into that cat box and it went wild! There are still berries hanging there ripening. I made, I think it's six pots of blackberry jelly—from cat poop! [Osho and students laugh]

So we can open to experiencing as it actually is, the world as it actually is, all inter-related and it's surprising what you see.

I look at the koi in the pond that have—they're four and a half years old now—they were maybe five inches long when we got them four and a half years ago and now the largest one, Barry, is three and a half feet long and about as thick around as my thigh.

And how did that fish end up there?

Well, if we looked into it, we could see that there was the capturing of, the raising of, the shipping of into the pet store, but then a pond in our yard, that used to be a lawn.

And then the idea arose to have a water feature and through the labour of basically everyone who has been around the monastery since the idea was raised, including all the monks, including Jinmyo osho who was up to her knees in mud at one point, Saigyō chiden, Jido anagarika and others...

I don't want to offend anyone but there are just too many to mention, otherwise it would be like an award show, eh?

[Osho and students laugh]

"I want to thank everyone including my mother and father who made me..."

But this water feature with two ponds and three huge fish in it came to be there through the efforts of many people including the people who cleared the land for this property where this house was built nearly two hundred years ago... so on and on and on...

So it goes,  
giving with one hand,  
taking with another,  
contributing.

So I look at those fish and well, I'm often just speechless because first of all it's so amusing to see them. How is it possible? There they are: huge! And then how did they get there in our urban, once was a lawn, grounds? So interesting.

So then there are other ways that people express gratitude: The fact that they recognize something and it's very personal.

Someone might recognize that someone's done a good job.

Now the fact that it's their job doesn't mean you can't recognize that they're doing it well and it doesn't mean you can't say to them: "Wow! You're doing that really well, I appreciate it." Try it sometime. See what happens to them. That's fun to see... the response of individuals.

Now you've all heard, as well, expressions such as:  
"how you take care of your zafu and zabuton matters,"  
"how you take care of lining up your shoes matters,"  
"how you hold your water glass matters."

And we may have heard something like that in a teisho through our haze of sleepiness and think: "oh yeah sure, that's right" and then not quite understood how that's possible, how is it possible that how we handle a cup or a glass matters?

Well, I'm going to tell you:

because you never know how what you do is going to affect someone else.

Something as simple as how you handle a water glass can actually change a person's life.

I know this because someone told me once that they had come to an introductory workshop when it was being given by the Sensei and the way he handled his water glass affected them so strongly...

(they didn't quite know why or how at the time)

but

it affected them so strongly that eventually they ended up taking monk's vows.

So how is that for life-changing?

So everything you do does matter.

A grateful feeling.

What is a grateful feeling?

How do you feel grateful?

Well again, that's individual.

We do know that, as with all feelings,  
there are sensations in the body that occur because of something that has happened,  
something that we've seen or heard or felt.

As we move through the environment of our experiencing  
the bodymind is affected  
and then Knowing may or may not go beyond the sensations,  
it may compile then into a list and come up with a story  
or it may not because in the end what really matters is what we do,  
not what we think about how we're feeling in the moment,  
but what we actually do.

Now, here we are, Saturday morning, sitting with others who for their own individual reasons and there's not one clear reason other than the moment when we discover for ourselves that what is taught is true: We're not our thoughts and feelings, we are the Knowing of them.

And here we sit, having dealt with, and dealing with thoughts and feelings and patterns which are not always pleasurable. Let's say, they're not always the thoughts that a "nice" person should have. Sometimes we actually actively set out to try and change these things into nice things, which is of course a waste of time because what you do when you notice anything is practise.

You feel the breath, you sit you straight, you open the eye gaze.

So here we are, all together yet apart, yet individual, different sizes, different shapes, different tones, everything different, and someone moves and that impacts on someone else, it has an effect. Well, because of the situation in the Hatto and during zazen we choose not to act out based on whatever thoughts, feelings, reactivity might come up.

We can be touched very deeply by something someone does and want to hug them [students giggle] but can you imagine the chaos? [students giggle]

Or we might want to hit them.

Can you imagine the chaos?

So we're taking responsibility

and we are doing what Dogen zenji taught:

looking into the self;

the arising of those moments of a contraction  
into a sense of a self  
with the stories about how it is.

We bang up against each other  
and those reactivities that come up  
are seen for what they are: Something that we alone can take responsibility for  
and we practise with it  
and over time,  
over time that reactivity doesn't happen,  
everything becomes smooth  
and in the sangha, in the Hatto  
there's harmony like milk and water  
as opposed to oil and water.

Now those are not feelings, those are facts, right?

So we sit and we practise, doing what uncountable numbers of people have done over 2600 years.

For your amusement I'll read a few words from the thesaurus that were under "grateful":

"Thankful, pleasing, acceptable, gratifying, agreeable, welcome, delightful, delicious, acceptable, acknowledging, affable, agreeable, amiable, beholden, blissful, cheerful, cognizant of, comforted, compatible, complacent, congenial, consoling, cordial, crediting, delectable, delicious, delightful, desirable, en rapport, enjoyable, fair, fair and pleasant, favourable, felicitous, fine, genial, good, goodly, gracious, gratified, gratifying, harmonious, heartwarming, honeyed, indebted to, likeable, mellifluous, mellow, much obliged, nice, obliged, pleasant, pleased, pleasing, pleasurable, pleasure-giving, pleasurable, refreshing, rejuvenating, restorative, restoring, rewarding, satisfying, sensible, sweet, thankful, under obligation, welcome."

Seeing people who are grateful,  
"May all beings  
Come to know the richness offered by  
The Awakened and wakeful ones."

I'm so grateful that you're here

and

thank you for listening.

## Every Breath You Take 86: Seeing People Without Gratitude

Dharma Talk presented by Ven. Shikai Zuiko osho

Dainen-ji, September 18th, 2010

### EVERY BREATH YOU TAKE

can be felt with the whole bodymind  
each cell vibrates with the oxygen  
that supplies the energy  
that in the mitochondria in the body  
ignites  
and provides energy.

The verse today is:

Seeing people without gratitude,  
"May all beings  
Not add to the punishment  
Of those who are hurtful."

Well. Well well well. Well...

When we start talking about feelings, which of course is what gratitude and ingratitude are, they are words that describe sensations that the body has felt but they're not the feelings themselves because feelings, let's face it, can only be felt accurately by the person who is feeling them, and when it gets wrapped in a word, the whole thing is changed.

So gratitude: the state of being grateful, thankfulness.

"Seeing people without gratitude," now what do you see if you're seeing people without gratitude? Well, if you're the gratitude or ingratitude police, [students laugh] you can pretty well decide what the symptoms of ingratitude should be, lash out your metaphoric whip [Osho makes a whipping sound] and take the offender off to some hell, but that's not what we're doing here.

What we're doing with these verses and with everything else is just pointing to aspects of experiencing that you can notice and become more aware of.

Now, number one:

when you find yourself, and this would be you as the Knowing of experiencing finding there's been a contraction into a sense of self that is looking around with its beady little eyes, putting on its badge, saying that it is from the Department of Gratitude and it's peering around at other people, you've noticed self-image, a contraction into a sense of a self. You're the Knowing of it, you are not that known...[Osho claps:] for that moment of recognition...

So at that moment you practice, allow the rib cage to open practise the whole bodymind in the whole moment and if you had in mind to say something like: "You ungrateful son of a—" cut it off before you start because it's not going to add anything to the situation, in fact, it might do what?

Well, it might make things worse, it might accelerate then into a "he said, she said, he said, she said" and then this whole little knot of contraction a maelstrom of emotion which does no good for anyone.

We've experienced enough of that in the course of humanity on the face of the planet and I for one think it's time that we bloody well stopped. [students giggle]

So, gratitude, the word came from the Middle English, which came from the old French, which came from late Latin, gratitudo, from the Latin: gratus:

.pleasing.

Isn't that nice? Shouldn't it always be like that? Sure stuff happens, we forget things, we misunderstand. Now does anyone really set themselves up to forget? Does anyone really set themselves up to misunderstand? Unless they're a malicious son of a bitch and really trying to trap someone else in some sort of situation (but none of us in this room are like that and I'm sure we've all experienced it)...

So basically, we want to understand. My experience with beings, not just human but my more favourite beings [students and Osho laugh heartily] well not really, just sometimes, but beings want useful interaction.

They want to have fun, it's not just girls who want to have fun (it's a song for those of you who may not be up on your top thousand songs in the course of your life) but yeah, everyone enjoys having fun. Why? Because we feel good when we do it and the fun doesn't have to be noisy. The fun can come from walking into a room, seeing someone else there, they're sitting there quietly drinking their coffee, they notice you enter, because you're the senior they make the move to get up, you put up your hand, you look at each other, both of you know what's going on and you go on your way. That's fun! No words spoken but obvious understanding, everybody on the same page of the sutra, that's a lot of fun. That's not hurtful, that's not bad.

Now, speaking of bad, here's another translation of this little verse [Osho reads in a stern tone]:

Seeing ungrateful people,  
They should wish that all beings  
Not increase the punishment  
Of those who are bad.

[Osho and students laugh]

Yeah, the Department of Gratitude. So this is something that can't be legislated but if we notice ourselves looking around and making those kinds of imaginings about others, as soon as we notice it, we have a vivid example of that contraction into a self, self-image doing what it does: creating dukkha, suffering, bad space, literally.

That moment [Osho straightens and breathes in] feel the whole bodymind and you've learned something. The next time something like that happens to you, you will be able to see it more clearly and earlier.

That is the process of practice.  
Bad space opens.

Now the business of emotions is something that has in fact caused a lot of people to spend a lot of time thinking and writing and trying to discriminate between this, that, and the other thing, and why? What are they? Are they good? Do we want to have more of them? Should we have less of them? Should we develop through practice, a distancing from these? Do we become cold, unthinking human beings?

No, quite the opposite.

However, feelings, they're written about by people who are not practising and as early as 1884, William James wrote that "emotion disassociated from all bodily feeling is impossible".

A lot of people have asked why should we pay attention to the posture of the bodymind? Why should we pay attention to the forms, the way of deploying the bodymind? Well, here's William James again: "the more closely I scrutinize my states, the more persuaded I become that whatever moods, affections and passions I have are in very truth constituted by and made up of those bodily changes we ordinarily call their expression or consequence".

So there's a guy who didn't practise but he was looking into the human condition and his conclusion: everything we experience, every little thought is reflected in the bodymind.

Every little occurrence in the bodymind is affected in what is called commonly "the mind" but mind and body are together so there's this whole interactive situation

and by sitting up straight,  
by standing and walking up straight,  
by noticing the bodymind more and more completely,  
we start to be able to see more clearly how as attention moves,  
how as the bodymind is affected by the environment, by the context,  
it produces all sorts of experiences,  
some of which the usual mind,  
the mind that is not practising,  
has come to call

[emotively:]

feelings and we love them!

We want to have more of them!

And if we're not having them, someone will be around to say:

"you, you're not having enough feelings" or

"you, what you're doing is you're suppressing them, that's not healthy"...

So anyway, on and on. Pop psychology. We've had enough of it.

Of course we, as interactive beings, human beings that interact with the world, experience all sorts of feelings. Unfortunately we spend much more time, it would seem, talking about them than actually experiencing them.

So next time you have a bunch of them, or even a little one, and you notice it, recognize:

that's a moment of clear seeing!

Ah!

Practise the whole bodymind in the whole moment.

Experience what's really going on.

You're increasing your palette of understanding.

That's a good thing.

The last thing you want to do, really, is to act out random and chaotic states because sometimes we don't even know what they're caused by. We're prone to blaming them on other people... But it could be something we ate, it could be a set of patterns that we've had for a long long time, it doesn't matter, looking more clearly, taking the time to stop and look, to see more clearly, to experience the whole bodymind in the whole moment allows you to see more.

Take it from one who knows.

I'm not making this up.

So,

Seeing people without gratitude,  
"May all beings  
Not add to the punishment  
Of those who are hurtful."

Now, I still don't really know what that means, "the punishment of those who are hurtful"? Perhaps the verse is trying to say—and it was written 1600 years ago and it's been through many different translations—but we do know that when we lock ourselves down into a self-protective situation, that we are locking ourselves off from experiencing, we are locking ourselves off from whatever learning may be present in that moment.

Another characteristic basic of this pattern that we call self-image, these patterns that we call self-image, is that it never wants to be wrong. Never.

So, something will happen and sure, lots of things go not as planned, but be grateful for the "not as planned" because that's where we actually learn. When everything goes along swimmingly, we can get, oh, let's say a little in a groove of just sliding through, everything being nice, nice, very nice.

When something comes up that trips us and what we might call colloquially a "mistake" happens, that's a very rich area.

That's better than manure for growing your practice, far more useful!

Now there can be all sorts of attitudes and views expressed—that's fine!

You can be expressing them to yourself—that's fine!

Pull yourself up through that breast bone,

feel the whole bodymind alive in the moment,

do whatever it takes to keep attention from funnelling down and putting up its little protective shields.

You're not holding it back, but by the mere fact of holding the bodymind up, that protective armour cannot weave itself together.

And see it.

Just notice what happens...

It's a lot of fun!

So, that's quite a bit to say about something that is really about: don't look at other people and decide whether they're being grateful or not. Notice yourself doing that and by noticing yourself doing that, you have a chance to practise and you are therefore not adding anything extra to this shifting pile of sand we call samsara, and everybody might have a bit more fun.

What the heck, huh? [students laugh]

Why not?

Seeing people without gratitude,  
"May all beings  
Not add to the punishment  
Of those who are hurtful."

And watch out for those Gratitude Police...

Thank you for listening.

## Every Breath You Take 87: Seeing Mendicants

Dharma Talk presented by Ven. Shikai Zuiko osho  
Dainen-ji, October 2nd, 2010

Well, up to this point the breath has been rattling the bones in each and every one of you, so you are alive.

"Eh... who cares?"

"Yeah. Hrmph. But there's so much that I have to do..."

"Oh my goodness, here I am, I'm sitting on a beautiful, beautiful October morning and I have to write that letter..."

or

"I have to take care of this thing, what am I doing?"

And then there's a moment, you go: "Oh!" and Knowing, which is what you really are, says:

"Dude! [students laugh] Wait a minute. Remember the instruction."

And so at that point you've noticed that what has happened is the bodymind has released itself somewhat and that releasing that the bodymind is learning to do is in fact what enables Knowing—you—to notice that you were caught up in the mumblings and grumblings and dissatisfactions of self-image:

a contraction into a sense of self with stories about how it is and how the world is.

And here you are, you're sitting in Dainen-ji, 240 Daly Avenue, Ottawa, Ontario, Canada, North America, the World... the Universe

and it's ever so tiny, really, were we able to look down from way up there.

But regardless of the facts,  
self-image will say it is front and centre  
and it is the only thing that's going on.  
Well obviously that's not true  
but yet we fall for its stories over and over again,  
and not only do we fall for its stories,  
we propagate them,  
stories of basic unsatisfactoriness...

When you notice a story of basic unsatisfactoriness,  
and we are RICH with them,  
if we had a penny for every little thought of basic unsatisfactoriness,  
we'd have one large piggy bank...  
but we don't,  
we fall for it  
and guess what we do in our infinite generosity?

We pass it on to others by whining and complaining,  
and they pick up on it like a virus  
and so it spreads,  
basic dissatisfaction  
spreads.

But here you are, sitting in Dainen-ji and you have the opportunity while facing that white wall to look into things that science is now saying are actually true about being a human being.  
It's only taken science 2600 years to catch up.

That's a good thing! It's a good thing they're catching up,  
it's a good thing that popular culture has access to findings and practices that came about through mindfulness as we know it.

The verse today:

Seeing mendicants,  
"May all beings  
Be harmonious and serene,  
Training themselves thoroughly."

So "mendicant", from the Latin of course

.mendicant: begging

.mendicant: one who relies on charitable donations, relying exclusively on charity to survive

It's funny how we don't really think about things, what they mean, how they impact our lives and so on. Now a mendicant order, there are a number of Christian mendicant orders that take vows of poverty and vow to expend all their time and energy on practising or preaching their religion or way of life and serving the poor and they make do with what is given to them.

We have all seen or seen pictures of the mendicants in Theravadin orders who go around with their big bowl collecting food from people and that's their main meal of the day, and they don't touch money, they're not allowed to touch money, they survive because of the generosity of lay people.

In Kyoto, all over Japan in fact, I said "Kyoto" because that's where I first saw it, you'll see monks wearing robes that are somewhat similar to what we wear, although shorter in a very unsettling way [students and Osho laugh] just above the ankle, and huge hats which cover their eyes. People give alms to the mendicant monks, this is done once a day.

Now, in this situation, the situation of Northern Mountain Order, we find that right from the beginning it was exactly the opposite.

In the beginning when the Roshi first started teaching, he would go around to places provided by students to give instruction, to lead sittings and then at a certain point, he rented accommodation over on Somerset Street East, which he paid for.

When I came along, a year or so after that, it didn't occur to me to ask how this was all happening because it just doesn't occur to us, so I started practising there and never once did the Roshi ask for anything from his students. For instance, during Sesshin, as he had to work to pay the rent and buy the food, sometimes he'd fix the morning meal and then leave, and we—sometimes there was one, two or three people, and often it was just me—we were sitting there until he came rushing back at lunchtime to make the noon meal.

And one day I thought: "Wow, what he's doing is really amazing so I should contribute." So even though I had not been asked for a thing, not a fee, nothing, I raised the question of a monthly contribution.

Then after taking monk's vows, it came about that more students were coming so we needed larger accommodations, so he and I went walking around all over Sandy Hill, Centretown and so on, looking for a place and we didn't have any Sangha funds, and the accounting system was this ball of wrinkled bills and whatnot at the bottom of the Roshi's monk's bag. [Osho and students laugh]

So we found a place and there was no question, at that point I was the one who had more money, so pay the first month's rent, last month's rent and keep things going in between. People came along and contributed and it went along that way for the first three or four years. There were a couple of lay monks who were contributing, then Jinmyo osho came along and she took monk's vows, there were people staying in residence who when they did stay and do residential training would contribute and so on. At a certain point it became formalized.

The point I'm making is that in the beginning, one hundred percent of the practice of anyone who wanted to practise was supported by the monks. Over the years thanks to the contributions of many, contributions of effort, (I think it's called in the popular domain "sweat equity"), contributions of effort, we're in a position where only about a third of the upkeep of the monastery and the practice environment is paid for by the monks and those in residence. So people have come forward and ways have been put in place and so forth.

So "seeing mendicants" is something that doesn't really in that sense apply to this situation, but the wish that all beings...

Be harmonious and serene,  
Training themselves thoroughly

...is something that we all can identify with,  
especially monks  
because that is the reason why each and every one of us  
who has contributed to the practice environment  
has contributed to the practice environment  
because we can see the possibility,  
we can see the actual result when individuals,  
by practising with their own patterns  
and with a vision in mind that is in fact a unified one,  
being the recognition that when beings do not act out their patterns of poverty,

harmony

in the sense that people are in the same room with each other and doing tasks that are useful for the common good,  
produce a sense of balance,

a sense of harmony  
and that this is worthwhile,  
but in order to do that training is necessary  
because we have grown up,  
all of us,  
each one in the room,  
in a culture that says as individuals we have a right to do whatever the hell we want.

And that really hasn't worked out too well...

All we have to do is look around,  
see what's happening to recognize that there has to be a certain mutually held understanding  
and that this is something that can be fostered and trained  
and it's certainly not about giving up individuality,  
it's about opening up those patterns that may have been expressed over and over again in sometimes less than desirable  
or attractive ways,  
patterns of what we may have considered to be our individual personality.

So, "seeing mendicants"  
and we don't see them very often  
once in a while we may,  
we can recognize this as an historical reference to this particular community,  
but  
on the other hand we can also recognize the richness of the lives that live as us,  
the richness of the life that lives as  
you and you and you and you and me  
and everyone,  
all beings,  
and that when that gets covered over by the contractions of self-image  
into a whining, complaining, nastiness  
that it's not fun for anyone.

So by feeling those feet on the floor,  
by standing up straight,  
by opening the eye gaze,  
what happens?

Well, we notice that when we do that,  
the thing that we were going on about—  
not we, let me change that—  
the thing that "self-image",  
the thing the pattern was going on about  
lessens.

That's just universally true,  
and you've noticed it enough times that your own experience tells you it's true  
over and over and over again.

Granted, sometimes we have to be reminded to do that,  
that's what teachers are for,  
that's what practice advisors are for,  
they are there to remind you of the richness of your own bodymind  
in this moment,  
which is the only moment that's going on.

We don't know if there's going to be another one...  
and we can't recover the last one.  
There's nothing we can do except recognize  
that there's this moment  
open up that ribcage  
feel those bones  
see the seeing  
hear the hearing  
and recognize there is nothing lacking.

So,

Seeing mendicants,  
"May all beings

Be harmonious and serene,  
Training themselves thoroughly."

So we all want you to do that.  
You can all do it.  
And as you sit there breathing in and out,  
and as you put forth effort,  
and as you contribute,  
you can recognize that twenty years from now, twenty-five years from now, fifty years from now,  
there may be bums sitting on those zafus that haven't even been born yet  
and you helped provide them with the opportunity  
to practise the reality of being a human being.

That's pretty great!

So thank you for doing it.

And thank you for listening.

## Every Breath You Take 88: Seeing Aristocrats

Dharma Talk presented by Ven. Shikai Zuiko osho

Dainen-ji, October 16th, 2010

This whispering of the leaves reminds us that everything that's born will die.  
Those leaves were once just little buds and then they unfurled,  
spent the summer doing their thing,  
making food,  
and now it's time...  
The colours come out,  
the green disappears and then the leaf falls from the tree.

But in the meantime, there's the whispering, moved by the same air which you are breathing in and out.

EVERY BREATH YOU TAKE gives you the opportunity to practise, to feel the whole bodymind in the whole moment.

Today's verse:

Seeing aristocrats,  
"May all beings  
Always keep to pure activity,  
Moving past all contraction."

"Aristocrats? What the hell?"

What's an aristocrat? We all came from the same place...go back, I don't know, 50,000 years, 100,000 years and there we were, pulling ourselves up from out of the mud, and somehow or other, these beliefs arose, having to do, I think, a lot with land, power... because if you had the most stuff, well, you could call the shots and everyone else would go "Ooh ah, ooh ah" and bow down into the mud as you passed by.

It's funny,  
reincarnation—just a little sidebar—you never hear anybody saying "I'm the reincarnation of this nameless, faceless droog who spent his brief 16 years of life on earth working 20 hours a day trying to get enough to live, nobody ever says that's what they were in a former life, do they?"

No, they were a princess or a prince or a queen or a wise philosopher.

It's nuts.

Anyway.

"Seeing aristocrats",

I invite you to go back in time 1600 years when these verses were written,  
and there we are:

we're standing on some dusty corner,

we're covered with dust,

we probably don't have any shoes or if we do, it's something we've had forever and it was passed on to us  
(at least we know it wasn't made out of old plastic bottles or tires but something else [students laugh])

and uh, oh I guess maybe we've lost a lot of our teeth,

which is a shame like at 22...

and um, there's grime embedded in every pore and on our face

so of course we look a lot older than we really are and we haven't changed our underwear— well we don't have underwear, do we, we might wrap a little something around, but it's all pretty nasty so I don't think we want to go any further into that... [Osho and students laugh]

But anyway, there we are, we, the hoi poloi, the mass, the wad,  
and in the distance, we see a stately umbrella,  
maybe on top of a stately elephant that's all decorated up with more jewels than we can even dream of,  
and on top there's someone about whom they say:  
"Oh, here he comes, the Poobah, the Grand Poobah"  
and so we may prostrate ourselves in the dust,  
or we may bow our heads, depending upon what the forms are,  
and who knows what we were thinking at the time, but the verse is just saying:

"May all beings  
Always keep to pure activity,  
Moving past all contraction."

That's what we're supposed to think of when we see the aristocrats, but we'll never know how people used that verse but in any case, it is a good reminder, "seeing...whatever..."

Who is an aristocrat? A member of a ruling class, or nobility, which of course is all stuff that we've made up, the stories about who's noble, who isn't, who's the ruling class, well the person with the most stuff is the ruler, usually. And deals were made, you've all read a little bit about history, and stories about deals are coming out now, including royalty, and their alliances with the "unspeakable", but I'll let you find out about that on your own.

So, we can say a member of the aristocracy, a noble person, a person with tastes, manners, beliefs, and so forth of the upper class—nouveau riche, let's say. So really, you look around, what are you supposed to do? People do like to have individuals that they can model themselves upon, but that's turned into vast fields of muffintops because certain stars, pop stars wear clothing that's too tight and too short for them. Why? Well, oh I bet it has something to do with money, I bet the more you show, the more you go, so those CDs are flying off the shelves, or I guess to be more accurate today, concert tickets are flying out of the ticket booths because you never know, you might catch a glimpse of something that will become international news. Isn't that crazy?

Is that the new aristocracy?

Well, we can peruse the word, we can look into it, and it has something to do with modelling, let's say, how we shape who we are, and it's often shaped upon and around those who are public figures.

However, here we sit, and we're practising,  
and we are in a situation that's been spoken of  
by Dogen zenji over 800 years ago,  
and he said anyone can practise  
and he meant it.  
That was his view,  
that issues of class, race, means, sex or gender, meant nothing  
as far as practice goes.

Anyone with the will could do it and wake up.

This of course was acceptable to only a very few at the time

and any of you who have read the "Rahai Tokuzui"

(link:<http://www.wwzc.org/book/raihai-tokuzui-bowing-and-acquiring-essence>), and I suggest that you do, and also to read or listen to the Roshi's teisho on the Bendowa (link:<http://www.wwzc.org/book/bendowa>), can recognize that here we sit in the most unusual of situations.

We live in a world where questions of race, beliefs, gender, are divisive.

Here we sit in a situation where those questions just won't be raised as a discriminatory tool.

They will be brought up so that we can look at them

and see the extent to which self-image—contraction into a sense of self with beliefs about who we are and how the world is—damages.

We're sitting in a place where anyone who has the will can practise and wake up. In the process of doing that, of course, many of the beliefs you have about who you are and how the world is will necessarily get smashed to smithereens and you can scramble around like Humpty Dumpty trying to glue them together and it's not going to work.

Now, a fundamental mistake that we make:

self-image has this belief that you have to "want" to do this,

and by "wanting" to do this, often what we'll mean is that we have to be gung ho:

"Yeah, I can hardly wait to get into that Hatto!" [students laugh]

"I'm going to practise my ass off!"

And if we're going drag, drag...

"I don't want to" (the little thoughts)

"I'd rather be doing anything in the world, I'd rather poke my eyes out with sticks..." [students laugh]

But—AND

that's the fuel for your practice,  
that's the shit that makes the flowers grow [giggles]  
because that's the cutting through—  
and what's meant by cutting through?  
Well, that's just one way of talking about it,  
it's the cutting through,  
it's seeing the entanglement of it  
and recognizing,  
even though the biochemistry of reluctance [Osho laughs] is racing through your body,  
having that moment where you think:  
"Okay, I'm gonna do it. One foot in front of the other."

and you end up doing something that self-image had no intention that you do  
because it is, inevitably, the destruction of that—  
(those because there are many—)  
contractions that come up that present themselves as a self  
with a belief  
about who you are and how the world is.

So another belief about that is that,  
let's say the teachers, the monks, the practice advisors, and so on,  
have wanted to do this ever since they came across the idea of practice,  
like there they were, little undiscovered continents of purity, [students laugh]  
keen,  
keen as mustard to get in there and shave their hair off and sit down for hours on end...

Well, I don't know, maybe I'm the first to tell you, but it wasn't like that for me. Not at all.  
And it is the taking one step after another that leads you  
to seeing that all the stuff you think,  
especially those words that form when there's no one in the room,  
are thoughts.  
You may be talking to someone if there's someone in the room,  
that's a different matter,  
but when you're talking to yourself,  
you really are crazy  
because you're listening to self-image  
that does not know what it's talking about.

But you start to see that!  
You start to be able to loosen that contraction  
by noticing  
that for no reason whatsoever,  
out of the clear blue,  
like a flash of lightening,  
BADANG!  
there!

You see that was a thought,  
and you were caught up in it,  
(because you don't see it when you are caught up in it)...

so you recognize that moment of lightening,  
and it might be tiny,  
you know  
you might not even notice it...really  
but you notice that the bodymind has presented you  
with this beginning of an opening,  
this moment of clear seeing,

of seeing that a thought has been seen.  
You as the Knowing are knowing a known,  
which is that thought.

You're practising that moment of clear seeing  
because the more you practise something, the better you get at it.  
So you will have more moments of that happening.  
That can be confusing too because when we start to notice more thoughts, self-image's conclusion of course is:  
"I'm having more thoughts than I ever had before".  
But it's not the case, what's happening is you're noticing more,  
you're knowing more of the thoughts for what they are.

So, aristocrats again, back to aristocrats. We don't really see any aristocrats around but what we can do is use the verse:

"May all beings  
Always keep to pure activity,  
Moving past all contraction."

as an encouragement to practise when we notice anything whatsoever.  
Now, aristocrat also has the meaning in it: "noble".  
Noble implies a certain dignity and courage,  
a certain willingness to do the right thing  
under sometimes extremely unsatisfactory circumstances, like say,  
sitting an O-sesshin can sometimes be "unsatisfactory",  
you know, the body, oh it complains,  
it's not that the O-sesshin is "unsatisfactory",  
it's that the body gets stressed and pulled  
because it's a whole bodymind activity,  
so it can be uncom—uncomfortable? [Osho laughs]  
Oh, a wee bit uncomfortable  
from time to time...

But yet, numerous people have managed to make their way through by recognizing moment after moment is all that's  
every going on.

In the moment,  
in the present,  
there is only this moment,  
this breath,  
with this bodymind wrapped around it.

That is what enables you to practise, that understanding.

So when you see people, for instance, who have sat many O-sesshin,  
it can remind you that they did not necessarily sail through that O-sesshin  
in a way that we might like to think is possible,  
they may have had moments of recoil and reluctance,  
but they stuck with it,  
and they stuck with it...  
and they stuck with it...  
and there is something noble and dignified  
about the possibility of each practitioner actually doing that.

People do notice, students do notice what others around them are doing.  
They often can model themselves, how they carry the bodymind, what they do or say, on their seniors,  
and that's why the instructions are very clear in this situation,  
that you align with whatever the senior is doing,  
because chances are they might know more as to what's going to happen than the person standing in front of you might,  
which in some occasions can be an associate student or a general student who has just started,  
so you align with the person who is leading,  
the more senior person in the room.

So people do notice, and how do we know they notice?  
Well, sometimes they will actually express themselves  
and I was reading the eMirror, which is our newsletter,  
one student took the time to write:  
"Thank you to Chunen ino for making everything, yes, even kinhin, more fun".

That's great! [students and Osho laugh]

And further on:

"to Saigy chiden for cheerfully changing my samu assignments every time I injure my back".

So the eyes are upon each and every one of us and reminders like this are very helpful. We can notice how people are, we can ask questions, we can open up past our assumptions about who we are and how the world is. The only silly question is the one that never gets asked. Why is that silly? Well because often those questions will fester away, covered over with assumptions and beliefs about how things are...

"Oh, I can't ask that."

"Ooh, ooh, I'd better not comment on this thing because..."

That is listening to contraction into a sense of a self with a belief, it's listening to self-image, and it does not know what it's talking about.

So, with your eyes open, when you go around, you start to be able to notice more and more clearly that each moment, each being you see and interact with can inform your practice, it can remind you to actually practise in that moment.

The verse again:

Seeing aristocrats

(And they're the ones who throughout history were not covered with mud and crap.)

Seeing aristocrats,  
"May all beings  
Always keep to pure activity,  
Moving past all contraction."

Thank you for listening.

## Every Breath You Take 89: Seeing Ascetics

Dharma Talk presented by Ven. Shikai Zuiko osho  
Dainen-ji, October 23rd, 2010

It's a brilliant October day and you have hauled yourself away from whatever warm nest you might have been involved in. You've cut through, through seeing thoughts for what they really are, a lot of recoil and reluctance, and perhaps, even if you were keen you may have noticed that that's a thought too.

So it's not the content, it's the fact of noticing  
a dharma – a thought  
a dharma – a moment of seeing something  
a dharma – a moment of feeling the bodymind,  
the sensations of the bodymind,  
the feet on the floor.

So anything that Knowing—which is what you really are—knows  
is a moment in which you can practise the whole bodymind  
with EVERY BREATH YOU TAKE.

You have to be alive to do this practice. There are no corpses practising. I know, I know, sometimes we may feel like that, or sometimes we might even rather be... But the reality is, as long as you're breathing in and out, as long as that heart's pumping, you can notice, you can notice those moments of clear seeing and practise, and put an end to the nonsense patterns that can literally tie up the bodymind and make us feel all sorts of ways that work against our enjoyment of this moment.

Today's verse:

Seeing ascetics  
"May all beings  
By rigorous practices  
Come to the Only Condition."

Well, as we chanted,

Awareness is the Only Condition.  
All that arises as the Display of Awareness.

Everything that arises shows us that  
Awareness is the Only Condition.  
Why? Because we're aware of it.  
There's a Knowing of all of these dharma.

This is the Seamless Expanse of all that is.

Hey, that's how it is.  
Wow.

So that's what you're practising, the Three Jewels says it all, and if you need to be reminded, feel free to go to the website and to do an internal search for "the Three Jewels", there is all sorts of information there.

The interesting thing about any sort of research on any topic having to do with the Dharma is that you'll find all sorts of points of view, and that's really interesting because when you have different points of view popping out, you're seeing things from a larger perspective, and you're not settling for a slogan, you're not settling for a word as It, you're not settling for The Word—logos—because that's murky, murky, murky. Check your history.

Okay, so ascetics, ascetics, what pops to mind? Well, we don't see it often in this part of the world and this time in history, we don't see people going around naked, covered in ash with their hair just growing wild, we don't see people standing with a crutch under one arm because they've vowed to stand only one leg for months or years, we don't see people with one hand up in the air because they've vowed to hold one hand up in the air for months or years, we just don't see that kind of thing.  
We don't see people being buried up to their neck in the ground...

One thing, unfortunately, that we really don't see enough of is people keeping silent, even in the face of verbal abuse.  
[Osho and students laugh]

Fasting, fasting, now that's another ascetic practice,  
and the commitment to eating only certain foods in a certain way,  
the avoidance of medicine or treatment in hospitals...

Well, that opens up all sorts of areas of exploration which I really don't think we'll get into here, but there are all sorts of practices, things that people do that have fallen under and come to be viewed as ascetic practices.

Now, the word ascetic comes from the Greek "askesis" (and I have no idea how to say that) and it means exercise or training and it was originally associated with any act of discipline that was done in the training for a specific activity, so this of course became associated with athletics, which is what the Greeks were up to a lot, and now it has evolved over the centuries into a word that is viewed as someone denying themselves any sort of worldly pleasures with the aim of pursuing religious or spiritual goals. So in the popular imagination, asceticism can be seen as excessive or masochistic.

That's the problem with words, isn't it? But in the so called spiritual form, asceticism was engaged in to bring about greater freedom, freedom from compulsion and temptation, peacefulness of mind, to aid in an increase in clarity and power of thought.

In the early twentieth century, the sociologists got into it and they came up with classifications, of course, because we human beings love classifications.

Worldly asceticism: those who live ascetically but don't withdraw from the world.  
Otherworldly: people who withdraw from the world in order to live an ascetic life.  
...and this source said: "monks who live communally in monasteries, hermits who live alone."

Of course obviously there are a lot of problems with this line of thinking and the first one is, and I've always had problems with this: "withdrawing from the world": how do you do that? How do you withdraw from the world? Here we are, sitting in the Hatto, the second floor of Dainen-ji, breathing air that has come from the outside in, that has been breathed in and out by the trees, by all the animals, by all beings, what can we do, what magic little button can we push that will make us withdraw from the world?

Now, okay, okay I'm prepared to cut people a little slack with this, I know what they mean, they mean that we're withdrawing from the hurly burly of usual social activity, but that's just not the case, is it?

Now, Gautama Siddhartha, the Buddha, the one who did practise an ascetic lifestyle, he himself did not write about this, but tales were told after he'd woken up and come into contact with people through his various wanderings around India. The story is that he'd adopted an extremely ascetic lifestyle after leaving life in a palace which, compared to how the usual grunt got along, was probably incredibly decadent, what with food... [Osho and students laugh] ...water, stuff like that.

It's interesting too, the things we do take for granted, so you say food: decadent, water: decadent. Here we are sitting in the Hatto in Dainen-ji when more than half the world is sitting or lying down or in the process of dying because of not having food and water and shelter, these things that we take for granted every moment.

Anyway, Gautama Siddhartha, 2600 years ago, left the palace wanting to find out who he was, what this life was, what was going on, so he did as many of us have done: he looked around, he saw people doing things and decided well, they're doing it, they're seeking after the answer to what's going on, so perhaps I'll stand on one leg and cover myself with ash for a while. And that wasn't really it, so he engaged in other practices of denial in his wanderings until apparently he was existing on one grain of rice a day and there are carvings, rupa, showing an extremely emaciated person.

One day, rumour has it, the story has it, someone, apparently it was a milkmaid—those milkmaids eh? [laughter]—seduced him with some milk and rice and he took a grain of rice and said: "That's it, I'm giving up this not eating business". Then, having done whatever he thought he could do, sat down on a bunch of grass and said: "That's it, I'm not moving until I figure out what's going on".

And he realized that he's not his thoughts and feelings,  
he's the Knowing of thoughts and feelings and bodily experience  
—wow—

the Knowing of the experiencing of the bodymind,  
not contained within the bodymind  
wrapped up securely in stories about who he is and what is going on.

So he dropped all of that, stood up, starting to walk around and have a good time, and he was having such a good time, people started coming up and saying: "Hey, you look like you're having a good time!" [laughter] "What do you know that I don't know?" And so it all started.

Well, that's how people are, yes? Yes.

So, Gautama Siddhartha, after having experienced the decadence of palace life, and the futility of that type of asceticism, chose a path which was basically meeting the needs of the body without crossing over into luxury and indulgence, and he taught the practice of sitting, looking into experiencing moment to moment, just as you're doing right now as you sit there in this whole body activity, which has also been described as "riding the wild horse of mind".

Yahoo cowboy!  
There you go! [laughter]

It's true, I did not just make that up.

So riding the wild horse of mind is a whole body activity,  
it requires exertion and you find—  
well, the metaphor is a metaphor, there's no horse there—  
but there can be a lot of "up and down" as you're sitting.

You start to notice things about experiencing in the moment,  
how your stories about how this is really, really, really, incredibly rigorous and painful  
maybe just don't hold up to scrutiny...  
because in order for sensation to turn into pain  
that you don't think you can bear for another moment,  
it requires a lot of thoughts  
and a lot of attention focussing in on those thoughts.

So as you're sitting there, you're seeing that how the mind is is reflected in how the body is.  
If the bodymind is falling forward,  
if it is crunching down,  
if it is straightened,  
you start to notice that there's more available of the Reality of this moment  
than whatever it is that self-image was using to amuse itself.

You've had a moment of clear seeing.  
At that moment of clear seeing,  
you practise the whole bodymind.  
That's how the bodymind learns.

So you just keep doing it and doing it,  
that's the discipline,  
the willingness to learn,  
and in order to learn,  
there are parameters that are set so that you can see how you are doing.

The forms we use at Dainen-ji in this practice are there to show you how you are,  
to show you how you can feel into more and more of the bodymind.

One way of looking at it,  
if we did not know what we are doing,  
we could call the great bows an ascetic practice,  
and we could really, really get into them,  
doing so many that we're on automatic  
and we've cranked up so many endorphins that we're actually out of it.  
Well that kind of thing is not encouraged because  
that would be obsession,  
that would be falling into a state.

So, when you are doing a great bow,  
you are feeling how the bodymind is,  
you are feeling how the bones are,  
you are feeling how  
when you raise the arms,  
you can feel the sides and the back,  
you're feeling when you breathe out and drop down to the floor,  
you're feeling the creaks and the groans,  
perhaps what you're doing is balancing a bit more carefully  
rather than falling for your thought about, say, going out of balance,  
because what happens when you have that thought that says:  
"Oh, I think I'm going to fall!"  
well you just might...

We've all experienced that phenomena,  
but when you start to notice those thoughts,  
recognize it as a moment of clear seeing and feel the whole bodymind.  
You notice you can feel more and more completely into the nuances of experiencing in this moment.

So, the verse again:

Seeing ascetics  
"May all beings  
By rigorous practices  
Come to the Only Condition."

So, be rigorous in your practice.  
Recognize you're alive.  
Practise that vitality.  
Awareness is the Only Condition.

Thank you for listening.

## Every Breath You Take 90: Seeing People Who Are Disciplined

Dharma Talk presented by Ven. Shikai Zuiko osho  
Dainen-ji, October 30th, 2010

Feel that breath.  
Feel the rise and fall of the shoulders,  
the ribs.  
Feel the movement of the clothing on your body.  
See the seeing,  
colours and forms.  
And sounds...  
hear the hearing.  
Notice anything that's arising.

At the moment of noticing anything whatsoever,  
and that anything can be a little squiggly thing floating in the jelly of your eye,  
or it can be a thought,  
or it can be a sensation in the knee,  
anything  
whatsoever,  
this is a total, all-inclusive, everything welcome practice,  
use whatever presents itself to practise this moment:

feeling the breath, sitting up straight, opening the eye gaze.

So since you're still breathing, you're alive and that means that when I ask you to turn around and look at the room, you can do that.

So, turn your head around, torque the body a bit, yes, I really mean it, I'm not trying to fool you [students laugh]

"What the...?" [Osho laughs]

Look around, look at the people in the room. [students look around]

Thank you. [Osho laughs]

Isn't that interesting.

Today's verse, I believe it's number 90 in the Every Breath You Take series [Osho laughs]:

Seeing people who are disciplined,  
"May all beings  
Keep clear determination in practice  
And not wander from the path of Awakening."

So, what did you see when you looked around?

You saw people who are disciplined.

There isn't a mirror in here, so you can't see yourself

... really...

(and this is a sidebar—you know of course, you have never, can never and will never see yourself, you might see a picture, that's a moment in time that's gone through all sorts of media, you might see yourself on film: same thing, we can never see ourselves.)

Someone says: "mirrors hold everything..."

What is that?

That's a reverse image...a "mirror" image

So we can never see ourselves,

so that can help us understand a lot about the misunderstandings,  
false beliefs that we might have acquired in the course of a lifetime,  
I mean, that one's just funny. Others are not so funny.

So, discipline.

What images come up?

What thoughts arise when we hear the word "discipline"?

Well, it depends what we've been browsing on the Web, perhaps,  
or it might depend on what images we've seen,  
it might depend on... oh...people that we've known,  
it might depend on books that we've read,  
but

on the whole, it has a vaguely off-putting type of quality to it.

But what it really means, "discipline", the word itself, from the Latin, is

.teaching, instruction, education.

Student, pupil, trainee, "disciple", someone who's learning something. When we hear the word, we don't think of that. The word became used in English, the earliest known usage was in the 15th century.

So, a willingness to learn, "discipline".

Each and every one of you sitting here this morning,  
and each and every person who may listen to the recording in the future,  
or read a transcript, is exercising that discipline, that willingness to learn.

Who knows what might have come up for you this morning as you opened your eyes, and if you are practising, you may notice that when the eyes open, it is quite bright and clear,  
but

quickly

our favourite little patterns will come in

and oftentimes they will involve reasons why you don't want to do the thing that you're going to do.

So the discipline, the willingness to learn means allowing the memory that "Oh yes, a thought, that's a thought, when I notice anything, like a thought, which that is, the instruction is to feel the breath, feel the bodymind..."

[in a whiney voice] "But ohhhhhohohohohohoho unnnnnnnnnhhhhhhhhhhhhhhhhhhhh....." [students laugh]

[Osho takes a sharp intake of breath!] "God, I'm gonna be late!"

So, foot goes on the floor... and before you know it, there you are. You may have driven an hour, you may have driven half an hour, you may have walked across the city, you may have walked from up the stairs or down the stairs to get to the practice hall, but you embodied that discipline, that willingness to learn, and it is through that exercise, the acceptance of that discipline that eventually you'll start to see that whatever those thoughts are, they're just thoughts, they can't hold you back.

Now, you can let them hold you back  
because each thought does have effects on the bodymind.

Body affects mind,  
mind affects body,

but each time you recognize a thought, a feeling, a dharma,  
a moment of experience,  
for what it is,  
basically: NOT YOU  
it's just something going on,  
you have an opportunity to practise.

And it is interesting that we've developed all sorts of habits, all sorts of patterns, and sometimes because of these habits and patterns, we really don't know what's going on. Someone might point something out to us, a teacher might say something to us and we take it personally.

"That bitch. Can't she see I'm really trying? Doesn't she know that this whole operation rests on my shoulders?"

And yadda, yadda, yadda,  
because self-image is really into self-aggrandizement:  
(you have to do that when you don't exist!),  
you have to fabricate a very strong shell to try to provide armour  
so that you don't see the chinks in the wall,  
so that you don't see the fabrications,  
but of course you can't help but...  
and all of that stuff that comes up starts to become,  
when you let it,  
comedic.  
It is the stuff of the human comedy,  
so give it a chance,  
have a good laugh!

But we don't like to laugh at ourselves, do we?  
That thing we think of as "we",  
that contraction into a self takes itself very, very seriously.

But then it starts to loosen and we recognize that not only is that stuff not only not unique to us,  
but that's what people do,  
that's what they've always done.  
That explains a lot of the stuff that's gone on, outside, as it were, in the world.

So recognize that if someone should offer you a moment to look into  
what's going on  
with you,  
it's not a matter that you have done something "wrong" and will get "punished"  
but rather,  
you can recognize that with the help that's provided  
by the whole environment of the monastery  
for looking into how you are  
in the moment,  
you have an opportunity to notice  
habits,  
patterns,  
thoughts,  
oh my!  
And to do something right,  
which is to practise that moment of  
clear seeing.

So in a sense, it's not a matter of obeying rules that if broken will bring down the wrath of the Buddhas and Dharma Ancestors.

That would be terrible.

That would be something that begins with R- - I - I - N, which comes from the word religare, to tie together, but that's as far as I'm going to go because I don't want to trash anybody's belief systems... on tape. [students laugh heartily]

So, the verse again:

Seeing people who are disciplined,

...and that can even be you as you walk by that window on Rideau Street and catch a glimpse, that can be every person in this room, every person in this monastery.

Lots of other people, of course, who are not practising in this community or in any practice community whatsoever, exercise discipline, of course they do.

I'm not saying it's something that only students of White Wind Zen Community have, although interpretations have echoed back of things like that around, oh things such as ignorance and stupidity, and so forth, words that we use when talking about the Dharma. Of course we're not saying that only practitioners here possess certain qualities or can be described with certain words, no, not at all.

But give yourself credit for the discipline that you do exhibit each time that you put one foot in front of the other to come to a practice hall, each time you bend down to pick up a leaf that's found its way into the front hallway, each time you wipe dust off a zafu or zabuton, that is the willingness to learn in action.

So,

Seeing people who are disciplined,  
"May all beings  
Keep clear determination in practice  
And not wander from the path of Awakening."

And since the path is what you're doing right now,  
and is not something that's straight and clear because those are just words or descriptions,  
just metaphors.

Each time you feel the breath and sit up straight,  
you are on the path of Awakening  
with each breath that you take.

Each time you ask a question when you're unsure of something about practice,  
in spite of perhaps feeling that you don't really want to ask  
because that might make you look silly,  
recognize that as contraction into a sense of self  
with a story about what's going on,  
and ask away.

There is no place to go.  
There is only here.  
There is only this moment.  
That's always the case,  
that will always be the case,

and nobody gets out alive.

Thank you for listening.

## Every Breath You Take 91: Seeing Armored People

Dharma Talk presented by Ven. Shikai Zuiko osho  
Dainen-ji, November 6th, 2010

It's a funny thing,  
when we let it,

when we are willing to take the chance,  
EVERY BREATH WE TAKE

can show us what it is to be a human being.

It can show us misunderstandings.

It can show us that not only do we not know everything, we really don't know anything at all.

That's kind of funny.

But...

Universally, we pretend that we know,  
we know the right way,  
we know the right way to be,  
we know how everyone else should be.

Sounds kind of harmless,  
but then we do things like kill others who don't believe the same thing that we do,  
or we make a "mistake",  
we do something and self-image comes up going: "Oh no!"  
and we start spinning stories,  
and the stories are that we're so new at it, whatever it is,  
how could we possibly know?  
or someone distracted us,  
how could we possibly know?

So we start to tell ourselves little... stories,  
I won't say lies, I'll just say little distortions about what actually happened because self-image, that contraction into a sense of a self with a story, likes to believe it is infallible, and it will armour itself with all sorts of little quotes and sayings, and all sorts of associations with power that it can pull out to defend why it finds itself in the situation that it is in.

Now we all know, because we're sitting here in the Hatto, that any time anything comes up, we don't have to judge it right or wrong, we just have to see it for what it is:  
a movement of attention,  
a leaf in the wind,  
a shift of colour, form, sound,  
and a cue to feel the breath, sit up straight, open the eye gaze,  
to practise mindfulness in that moment,  
to practise  
as a verb,  
as something that you DO  
moment after moment.

Today's verse:

Seeing armoured people,  
"May all beings  
Be armoured with integrity,  
And move to the state beyond learning."

"Armoured people..."

Now, we're fortunate that we don't often see people bearing weapons. In fact, I was reminded today of the surprise that the citizens of Ottawa experienced way, way back in October 1970, mid-October 1970, when the Government of Canada proclaimed the War Measures Act and people woke up and went to work seeing soldiers on the street with big guns, Parliament Hill occupied by the army. As I said, we're fortunate in that other than for ceremonial occasions, occasions that remind us of times when self-image with its grasping into self and other and its myriad belief systems gets into killing each other, only on ceremonial occasions do we often see people wandering around with guns. But the shock of seeing soldiers on the street changed the city on that particular day, it changed the whole feeling of the city because people were feeling threatened, something bad had happened.

But we can feel that sense of threat, when we create it, when self-image creates threat for itself, and armours itself with its various deceptions, such as  
ignoring what's going on,  
pulling a blank,  
pretending that it feels differently or has a view that is different than it actually has  
because it doesn't want to say what its view actually is  
because what if it's different than the Powers That Be.  
So we shut up.

Is that integrity? No, of course not, total misunderstanding of any situation.

What is integrity? It's the situation of being whole, entire, undiminished, and implies a level of living in wholeness and truth in all aspects of our lives.

So because we know that we can express an opinion, a point of view,  
and because we know it may not be accepted by all,  
and because we know what it really is:

a string of words coming up that throw another perspective on a situation,  
we can feel our feet,  
we can feel the breath,  
we can sit or stand up straight,  
we can open the eye gaze,  
and we can say what we actually think in that moment.

That doesn't mean that that might not change over time with more information because otherwise we're doing what the usual mind does, what self-image does, which is locking ourselves down into a belief system which we can use as armour. And we've all seen in our own experience how when we—what shall I call it?—distort the truth, when we say something that's incomplete, when we say something that's not whole, we start to have to scabble to remember what the fuck it was that we said so that we don't give ourselves away.

Oh, it's horrible, it's just too much work.

So we know that through practising mindfulness, and what is mindfulness? Well, there's the activity of the actual practice of using the noticing of any detail of experience, any detail whatsoever, to notice the rest of the details of that moment, the breath being as a touchstone to that moment of experience. Mindfulness is paying attention to the details and through this, we learn to see beyond the contractions of conditioned reactions to our world. Any pattern of self-image, contraction into a sense of a self that has a little belief about how it should be, and let's see, can I put it in a couple of words?...

How should self-image be?  
How does it think it should be?

Oh, wait a minute, I know!

It thinks it is perfect all the time.

It thinks it knows everything and if anyone suggests that there might be something outside of that view, it reaches around in its little bag of tricks to come up with justifications about why it is indeed perfect.

When you start to see that, well, for heaven's sake, you're seeing the beginning of politics.

So what do you do when you see this?

What do you do when you see the grasping after details that will prop up a point of view?

Well, you're seeing dharma, moments of experience, you're seeing moments that you can use to actually put forth the effort to practise and open past that moment of conditioned experience and notice the rest of what's going on:

seeing, hearing, tasting, touching, feeling, smelling,  
candles flickering,  
stomach gurgling,  
your hair growing,  
breathing in and out,  
hands, feet,  
everything that's going on in that particular moment,  
rather than settling for some tattered old story.

So you keep on doing this and doing this and doing this,  
you keep on cutting free of that armour,  
and over time,

and what length of time is it?

Well, it certainly depends,

but over time, when you are living your life with integrity,  
doing the best you possibly can to say what you mean and mean what you say,  
and using as best you can each moment to see more clearly into how you are,  
how the world is,  
to see context and content:  
you can move past any conditioned experience.

It just doesn't happen anymore, and you move into the state (the word used in the verse), the "state beyond learning".

Now that doesn't mean that one cannot still learn things, but what that does mean is that in a situation a teacher has dealt with everything,  
everything has been worn out,  
all associations, all conditioning:  
worn out,  
no longer happening.

And in reading through stories about the past, the history of Dharma, this is the point where Teachers may leave and go off wandering around on their own, or travelling, and at some point are called by students to teach, as the Roshi was when he came to Ottawa. Called by students to teach, the Teacher settles down and transmits what they've learned to others. And so the Dharma is perpetuated, it's carried on.

And seeing into the actual nature of experiencing in this moment, ultimate freedom, freedom from all conditions is made real and if that were the case for everybody, we never would be seeing armoured people on the streets, we never would be hearing about the atrocities, some of which, a tiny amount of which we hear about every day, they just wouldn't be happening because they couldn't...

But, oh sigh, dear me, that's just a fairy tale. Isn't it? Well, I know for sure it's not going to be happening in my lifetime, or in yours most probably, but instead of wasting energy into moaning and whinging and complaining and sighing and regretting, what we can do is feel our breath in this moment, notice the experiencing of this moment and do whatever we do with integrity.

We can walk the talk, 'cause that's the way it has to be...

The verse again:

Seeing armoured people,  
"May all beings  
Be armoured with integrity,  
And move to the state beyond learning."

When you're "armoured with integrity",  
you don't need to be armoured at all  
because nothing can hit you,  
as it were.  
It's a lot lighter than carrying around all that stuff.

Thank you for listening.

## Every Breath You Take 92: Seeing People Unarmed

Dharma Talk presented by Ven. Shikai Zuiko osho  
Dainen-ji, November 27th, 2010

Breathing in and out,  
in the bright, clear morning of the Hatto,  
a little bit of snow has fallen outside and light reflected off the snow brightens the day even further.

So you're breathing in and out,  
you're alive...  
for now.  
But since now is what's going on,  
feel that breath,  
sit up straight,  
open that eye gaze,  
notice seeing, hearing, tasting, touching, feeling, smelling,  
the clothes on your body,  
this moment:  
bright  
right now.

The verse:

Seeing people unarmed,  
"May all beings  
Always be free of  
Acting out of contraction."

Now chances are that in our day to day experience, we're not going to see people who are carrying weapons, that's just not what this group we call Canadians, on the whole, do. There are certain specialized circumstances where people may be armed and responsible for what they're doing, but on the whole, most of the people who we see most of the time will be unarmed.

Now, if I were a betting kind of monk, I would bet there is no one in this room who is carrying heat... [students laugh]

So, when we see each other, when we encounter each other in the monastery, we can remind ourselves that all beings could experience this type of freedom, the freedom from harm, but we don't want to get all airy-fairy and Pollyanna-ish about the issue.

I think a point of clarification may be necessary for future generations: unarmed in this context means without weapons. I say this because in colloquial expression, big biceps and triceps, big muscular arms are starting to be referred to as "guns",

[Osho and students laugh] so there could be the possibility of some confusion in the future.

So, seeing people who are not carrying weapons...

"May all beings  
Always be free of  
Acting out of contraction."

And as we all know, when we contract in on ourselves, when human beings contract around a concept, an idea or a state, it gets bigger and horrible things can and do happen.

It's not necessary.

It's not inherent to being a human being.

So as you're sitting and you notice a moment of contraction with a little belief, the belief can be "this is great!", it doesn't matter, that moment of contraction, that little wisp of a thought that may not be fully formed is a moment when you can practise the whole bodymind in this moment. It's not that the thought or contraction is bad or good, we don't need to do that, we don't need to get into labelling, but what we're doing is recognizing we don't need to carry any excess baggage of any sort whatsoever, and from the looks of things, it's something that human beings like to do.

But we don't have to do it,  
it uses up our energy,  
it eats up and closes down that freedom,  
the freedom of lightness of movement and spirit.

So when you notice anything at all about your experience, practise mindfulness in that moment.

The verse again:

Seeing people unarmed,  
"May all beings  
Always be free of  
Acting out of contraction."

Thank you for listening.

## Every Breath You Take 93: Seeing People Debate

Dharma Talk presented by Ven. Shikai Zuiko osho  
Dainen-ji, December 11th, 2010

With EVERY BREATH YOU TAKE,  
with every breath that breathes you,  
you have an opportunity to  
practise the whole bodymind  
in the whole moment.

You see and you're learning to see,  
and you're seeing more clearly more often,  
patterns that have formed that tend to grab attention,  
or that attention is pulled toward  
that narrow the field of experiencing,  
that condition  
what you do experience and what you do notice.

So you notice attention caught up in something, some dharma,  
there's a moment [Osho claps] of noticing it that's bright and clear,  
that's where you practising  
because you want to have more and more of that clarity.  
That is possible.

How do you know it's possible?  
You just experienced it.

We're not used to that, we're always looking around for the rules, we're looking around for what we should do.  
Who is looking around?  
Self-image,  
looking around.

Self-image is afraid of so many things, isn't it? It's afraid, basically, of being wrong, of being somehow called out, of being seen through.

The basic thing that we're learning to see,  
that we're learning to see through,  
is the fact that there is no such thing as is described  
in those multiplicity of moments of experiencing  
of patterns  
that we call  
self-image.

The verse:

Seeing people debate,  
"May all beings  
Be able to counter  
All inverted views."

"Seeing people debate? I guess that must mean that it's okay to argue with the Teacher..."

Of course it's okay to argue with the Teacher, but the Teacher is going to say: "Here, look in this mirror that I'm holding up in front of you" [Osho makes "wham wham wham" sounds that indicate the mirror is reflecting a wavy image and students laugh heartily]—

Fun house mirror—  
and you see

what is being pointed to

is a contraction into a sense of self that has learned to be a certain way in situations.

So arguing is not what's referred to here with the word "debate".

Think about it, this text, the original text, The Practice of Purity, which comes from the Avatamsaka Sutra Chapter 11, Flower Garland Sutra, at those times in India, which is the place apparently where over some years (nobody exactly how many years) some people (nobody knows who they were, nobody knows how many there were) but some said, "look at this debating thing that we do, which is quite interesting. It's a form of entertainment, there's a formal engagement when two people agree to discuss in a certain way, a certain topic. So one person takes this view, another person takes the opposite view. Or, one may be the questioner and one may answer the questions."

It can be very entertaining because what happens is people are exposed to logical thinking which can in fact be very funny.

We have all come across versions of this:

Does Shikai osho have a tail? No, but she has two cats.

Do cats have tails? Yes.

Shikai osho has a tail, I win! [students laugh]

Logic!

So we have people in northern India debating, engaging in, we could say a discussion or a consideration of something by presenting ideas on both sides of an issue. This travelled to Tibet and was picked up by Tibetan monks and perhaps you've seen on videos or in film and so forth, or pictures, people or monks debating. When the person who asks the question is asking the question, they will go [Osho claps] they will clap each time their question is presented. You've seen that, it's a very physical activity, and like all things that have rules, they can become formalized and then just the rules are acted out rather than it being the lively discussion that it was intended to be.

And in fact, the transition say, from cultures, from languages, across languages, presents interesting moments of knowledge.

In Middle English, the word "debate" came from the Old French *debatre*: to batter. So you can see where our argument comes from and how many discussions about anything today, these days, have reached the point where it's a battering of one against the other. You're wanting to hit the nail on the head and drive that opponent into the ground. So arguing is a way of life, confrontation, a way of life. Is it useful? Obviously not. Better that people engage in crump or hip hop dance offs, in my view, it's more fun to look at. [students laugh]

Anyway, that's just my point of view.

Seeing people debate,  
"May all beings  
Be able to counter

All inverted views."

So, an "inverted view" would be a case where attention has gone into a view that has been presented because of previous experience and has become a pattern, something contracted that says: "well this is how things are". What we get a chance to see in the monastery—and the whole monastery is devoted only to this—we get to see the process of perception and cognition, each one of us. There is no one apart from it. So you started last week? Just because you started practising last doesn't mean that you have to confine yourself to only noticing certain things because you're "not worthy" of noticing other things, not at all. The whole environment is here so that you can see more and more clearly into your own experiencing.

Yesterday I had a conversation with a student, in fact an associate student, which means coming to the monastery once a week, and he remarked upon how crowded and jostling and chaotic the front hallway had become after sittings. I said: "Really? So, tell me more."

He said: "Yes, when people leave, nobody seems to know what to do." And then he rephrased it more accurately and said: "I don't know what to do!" because of course that's another pattern, we look out from behind our eyes and say everybody else doesn't know what to do, rather than looking into our own inverted view.

I said: "Okay, tell me more, what happened?"

He said: "Well, I noticed that I didn't want to do the wrong thing." And then he said: "I know that was a thought, that was a known, that was a contraction, that was self-image."

So I said: "Yes, good job! What happened then?"

He said: "Well, I looked around because I remembered vaguely that you said: 'When you don't know what to do, look at what a senior is doing' because logically, they might know."

So he looked and saw a formal student who was not bowing when someone stood at the door to bow to leave. That student was taking care of his boots, taking care of his coat, getting ready to go out into the cold and then the associate student noticed a couple of other more senior students who were doing exactly that as well. So he said to himself: "Well, that's what I'm going to do" and it worked out.

A form is a way of using the bodymind to the best possible advantage for seeing the process of perception and cognition. So the student discovered for himself how contraction into a sense of self can confuse the issue.

There is no rule that says no matter what people are doing they have to stand there in the front hallway, one foot up in the air, one hand with a boot in it, and balance and turn around, hop around, and bow to the person who is leaving. That's not the form. [students giggle] I've seen it, have you not? [Osho and students laugh heartily] I'm not making it up, folks!

When one allows oneself the opportunity, takes the risk to actually recognize that concentration into a sense of self that is causing confusion by saying things like: "Oh, I'd better ask someone about this". Instead, the student said to me yesterday: "I realized I didn't have to ask anybody because the environment was full of information when I allowed myself to practise which stopped my attention from folding into that view that doesn't want me to make a mistake anytime, anywhere. Is that self-image?"

Now, I might have been tempted to say: "No, you're way off base" just as a joke of course, but we don't do that, do we? We say what we mean, we mean what we say. I said: "Yes, that's it, good for you, keep it up, good work".

So "Seeing people debate..." We don't often get a chance to see people debate, maybe around a presidential election, or election of a prime minister there might be a debate, but certainly it seems to have turned into a lot of—what's the word?—mudslinging, character assassination, non-witty witticisms and so forth... but that's just my view.

But

"May all beings  
Be able to counter  
All inverted views."

is something that we can wish for because if everybody did it, wouldn't that be great? If everybody took care and saw their own process of perception and cognition and saw how when something occurs there's a flare in the bodymind, a flare of energy, and you recognize once you've seen it, at that moment, you practise the seeing. You're not practising to rub that thing out or to get rid of it, and if it comes up again, it doesn't mean you're a bad student, but that's what self-image will say because oh my goodness, it's got a lot of scripts. And as I say, I'm always delighted to hear something unique and different that self-image has come up with, so please don't hesitate, if you notice you may feel embarrassed because you had a thought, or self-image had a thought, or a thought came up that self-image rushed in and judged it to be inappropriate, that's probably one that I might like to hear about. [Osho and students laugh]

So, the verse again:

Seeing people debate,

"May all beings  
Be able to counter  
All inverted views."

Ah, now, in another text, translated by another translator, this verse was given as

Seeing people debate,  
"May all beings  
Be able to refute  
All erroneous doctrines."

In the context of the formal, say old Indian or Tibetan monastic debates, that might be okay, but it's not something that I think any of us would want to engage in, really. We have to remember: person, place, appropriateness and amount. So you may come across someone, particularly another student, who is saying something that you don't agree with as a doctrine, or as something that is part of the Teachings, just ignore the tendency, or practise when you notice the tendency to want to refute that "erroneous doctrine", because really, it's not your business, it's something that they have to deal with. It's a moment of experiencing, a contraction into a sense of a self that has a little belief about what's going on. Practise at that moment and you can always seek out a Teacher or a practice advisor and ask about it, but don't get involved, especially in social situations, in refuting other people's "erroneous doctrines", you will become a virus on the social scene, people will avoid you, you know? No one likes a know-it-all.

But, when we see inverted views, our own, we can open them through the process of practice. When we see the inverted views of others, we may start to develop and may have started to develop that karuna or compassion that recognizes that being a human being is the same for all human beings, we can't work with their inverted view, but we can work, as it were, we can practise with what we recognize in ourselves, and that's the way to go.

Now, I'm sure there will be some who will want to argue with me about this and I say: bring it.

Thank you for listening.

## Every Breath You Take 94: Seeing People of Right Livelihood

Dharma Talk presented by Ven. Shikai Zuiko osho

Dainen-ji, December 18th, 2010

The crow broadcasts through the still, cool air of this December morning.  
[in response to crow crowing outside on the grounds]

What's the crow broadcasting?

Well, maybe his job availability. [students giggle]

What's their job?

Well, you may have not noticed or you may have noticed not,  
but those crows,  
very busy guys.

They're the ones dealing with road kill.

Have you ever wondered where all those little flattened squirrels go?

Well, inside of the crows who clean them up.

Bits of burger left in McDonald's wrappers that people throw around?

Crows, they deal with them,  
and there's more and more of them around the city.

Why is that?

Because we're getting messier and messier,  
I guess.

But anyway,

that's what they're doing,  
they're doing what they do,

they're cleaning up the messes that other beings leave: their right livelihood, they're doing what needs to be done.  
Then they're flying in the air while doing this, as birds do.

Today's verse:

Seeing people of right livelihood,  
"May all beings  
Succeed in right livelihood  
Never needing to do what should not be done."

"Oh good, now she's going to give a list and I can tick off whether I'm in the right livelihood group or not... I'm pretty sure I am..." [students laugh]

Thank you. [students laugh heartily]

But no, no, I'm not going to give you the eightfold path, if you want to find out about the eightfold path of right livelihood, right conduct, and so forth, you can google it, you can go to the website, to our website, you can do an internal search... if indeed

you are a sincere student  
who wants to understand.

Well, there you go...

And,  
the question of right livelihood is intimately connected to the precepts  
and

you can apply what I just said to the precepts.

You can search them out,

you can read "Cutting the Cat", the Roshi's texts on the precepts, and that will give you more insight than if I were to just say some words, which of course since you don't have pencil and paper with you right now you most probably wouldn't remember anyway, if you're anything like me.

So, there we go,  
let's not waste the air time  
by doing things  
that don't need to be done right here, right now.  
Seek them out,  
it's interesting, looking into what is meant by right livelihood  
when it's spoken of in Buddhism  
and here  
may reveal to you that indeed  
we're talking about two different things  
in many cases.

Right livelihood can mean something that does not compromise the precepts,  
it can mean a way of making a living that does not hurt beings.

Now, it is said that the Buddha said, and it's recorded in the Tripitaka,  
that business in weapons,  
business in human beings,  
any business dealing with meat,  
any business dealing with intoxicants,  
any business dealing with poison,  
are not right livelihood.

Well that's just too easy, isn't it?

Because I think most of us can agree that many doctors, many pharmacists deal in materials that are very useful to human beings depending on the circumstances, but too much of it... well, what do we have? We have a poison.

Business in meat:

well, in some cases, people who eat meat, even though they may consider themselves to be Buddhists in various schools, won't kill something themselves, but they will buy the product from others who are in the business of killing animals.

So we might have different views come up about that.

It might be an interesting topic for debate.

So there's no one answer for what is right livelihood,  
there's no big comprehensive list,  
but indeed  
the verse itself points to the fact  
that the wish is for all beings to succeed in right livelihood,  
livelihood that is not harmful to other beings,  
and it points to what we can do something about  
which is look into our own points of view about what we're doing,  
how we're doing it,  
and generally  
what's going on.

We Canadians tend to

somehow have this assumption that we're better  
than lots of other people because of the things we don't do.  
Well, this is just nonsense.

Look into the weapons industry: guaranteed we'll find little bits of weapons that are made probably right here in our fair city, or if they're not made in this city, they're designed in this city. So we contribute just as heartily as any other country does to the trade in arms, which I think we may agree can be harmful. [students giggle]

We look into something as simple as say working in a clothing store. Well, look at the label. Made in which unnamed Eastern country? May very likely have been made by people of diminished capacity or children who are paid very little if anything and are worked inhuman hours. Is it wrong livelihood to be part of the chain of perpetuation of what one could say is slave labour?

What about being a diplomat? Well, as the recent scandal revealed, diplomats play around with the truth. Hmm. Are we shocked? Of course not. Do diplomats do a good job? Let's not go there.

So there are many other respectable professions that, when you look a little closer at them, perhaps reveal themselves to be based in playing around with the truth.

Oh dear, oh dear! What are we doing to do? How can we have right livelihood?

Well, there are no dictates that can be made as to what you should or shouldn't do. Only you can do that and the fact that you're here, sitting on this Saturday morning, facing the wall, looking into the process of being a human being, does in fact show your sincerity, does in fact show that you're willing to look into and to answer these sometimes difficult questions.

Now the other..., a couple of weeks ago—most of you know about this by now—our big white koi disappeared. We thought, being the innocents that we are, that perhaps he'd been snatched by a big bird. A student who is a biologist said this was impossible, there is no bird that could carry away that fish. So, at my doctor's office, I mentioned this and the doctor said:

“Oh, he's been stolen because big white koi are considered to be very lucky for certain populations. I was in Toronto a few weeks ago and this Chinese couple, doctors, friends of mine said:

"Don, you know we're the most superstitious people ever. We're going to take you on a little field trip because we want you to see something."

And they drove out to Scarborough to a Chinese restaurant and they walked in and there in the middle of the room was a huge tank with a great big white koi in it. And, the friends said:

"See? The owner paid \$40,000 for that fish because of its good luck."

I wish I could say it was our Doug,  
but it wasn't,  
or we don't know.  
But \$40,000!...  
so I told this story to someone and they said:

"Well, why don't you raise white koi?" [Osho and students laugh heartily]

Well, that would be trafficking in beings.  
Yeah yeah yeah,  
but what about the fact that we have koi in the pond?  
Is that not enslaving them?  
Well, yes it is,  
but the Chiden and I,  
after the Chiden with help built the ponds and the waterfall,  
we thought it looked kind of empty to have these beautiful ponds and no occupants,  
no fish swimming around.  
So we talked to the Roshi  
and the matter was discussed  
and then lo and behold  
we were in a store—  
a purveyor of trafficked beings known as a pet shop—  
and there were some koi.

So we picked them up.  
They were quite tiny then  
and have been used (and been useful)  
many times.

As the verse says:  
"the bird flies like a bird... the fish swims like a fish"  
so we can see beings in their environments doing what they do.

And they're beautiful to watch.  
And you know, they think,  
no question about that.  
There are nasty rumours around that fish have a three second memory,  
well it's not true.  
They can communicate,  
they're interactive,  
they like playing around with you,  
they like call and response,  
so that's all very very interesting,  
but our intention would never be to just raise white koi  
because  
when you think about it,  
then what would you do if one changed colour...?

Hmmm?  
Do you retire it?  
Does it go to sleep with the fishes? [student laughs]

Questions, questions, questions.

And the goldfish that we have,  
well,  
we can say they were rescue fish.  
We got them from a store.  
Their destiny?  
To be fed to other fish, feeder fish.

Now was the lady who scooped them out  
and put them in the plastic bag,  
was she engaged in wrong livelihood?

Well, the job is,  
as I see it,  
just to look at what's going on  
and think about things  
that we may never think about ordinarily.  
We may never think ordinarily  
about that chain of events  
that occurs in any trade endeavour,  
but  
when we open our eyes  
we can start to see  
that there are lots of things that  
we have never considered before,  
and that makes it interesting,  
that makes life  
really  
more and more  
interesting.

One of the most interesting things that comes up  
is that contraction into a self  
that wants to get everything right on that quiz!!  
That wants to know that it's engaged in right livelihood,  
that wants to know  
that it's doing the right thing  
all the time!

Well kids, you know what?  
It's getting more and more difficult to actually even come up with a list.  
Are the religious in right livelihood?  
Well let's just ask a lot of Catholic families  
who over the years are revealing things that occurred  
that are not, I would say,  
part of anybody's right livelihood.  
But it's not just confined to that particular area.  
There are lots of Buddhist teachers  
who are engaged in all sorts of, oh dear,  
inappropriate behaviour, let's say: lying, cheating, stealing: nasty.

So, "seeing people of right livelihood" ...  
how do you know?  
And what are you doing looking at them and judging them?  
But again, this was written 1600 years ago,  
so it may indeed have been easier,  
and if you were in a village,  
there were far fewer people than what we are normally used to  
and what our large cities are normally used to,  
so you probably knew what everyone  
was up to.

Is the fashion industry right livelihood?  
Is being a model agency right livelihood?  
Or is that trafficking in human beings  
with the sole purpose  
of convincing other human beings to buy stuff  
made by small children for no wages  
right livelihood?

I think not.

But that's just a little bit of fun that's going on here right now.

So "seeing people of right livelihood":  
notice the seeing,

notice how self-image wants to judge,  
turn it back on yourself,  
recognize that you can question into anything,  
you can look and say,  
hey, what's really going on here?  
And you can do it just for fun.

"Oh my, no, not fun, is that right? Is that something that's good?"

Well, apparently it is  
because when beings have what they need  
to eat,  
when beings have shelter,  
when beings have what they need for life,  
they start to play around,  
that's the first thing they do.  
Isn't that interesting?  
They start to want to have  
fun.

You people,  
I know most of you are intimately connected to and have had experience with right livelihood.  
I know that many of you have pets that were rescued from situations caused by other human beings  
where they were being indiscriminately bred  
just so puppies could be sold,  
when they had been abandoned,  
at a whim most probably.

And I must tell you yesterday I had a hard time keeping my hand off the phone or off the SPCA website because I read in  
the paper that a three-month-old dachshund, my favourite kind of dog, had been abandoned at a toboggan hill in the  
freezing cold.

I mean what's going on? What are people up to?

So when you see what you're doing,  
when you see tendencies that come up,  
no problem,  
they're not you,  
you're the Knowing of them.

Feel the breath,  
sit up straight,  
open the eye gaze.

The verse again:

Seeing people of right livelihood,  
"May all beings  
Succeed in right livelihood  
Never needing to do what should not be done."

Ho ho ho.

Thank you for listening.

## Every Breath You Take 95: Seeing People of Right Livelihood Part 2

Dharma Talk presented by Ven. Shikai Zuiko osho

Dainen-ji, December 25th, 2010

Verse:

Seeing people of right livelihood,  
"May all beings  
Succeed in right livelihood  
Never needing to do what should not be done."

I presented some thoughts on that last week and people did have questions about it and reactions to it so I thought maybe

we could have a little presentation of one's views.  
They don't need to be pre-prepared, of course.

But, any thoughts on right livelihood?  
What is right?  
Livelihood is what you do for your daily crust, as it were.

Tando?

TANDO: I want to mention a couple of things that had come up during practice interviews, questions that students asked which had to do with sort of "what's the one safe job that I could do [Osho and students laugh] ... that I could be really sure is a right livelihood? And how does a monk know that they've got the right kind of job?"

What I responded was that there's no island that we can go to where what we do is completely safe and pure and everything is perfect and pristine and we know that's it. I was reading this morning the Roshi's comments on complete livelihood from "The Eightfold Path" where he talks about mutuality and that everything is intertwined. So we just have to, as Shikai osho was saying a few days ago, the profession of assassin probably... [students laugh] not such a good choice, but with whatever we're doing we actually look at it not just from the standpoint of this is right or wrong, but how can we practise completely with everything that we do, as we're doing whatever we do with what we say and how we interact with people, and how we are, how our attention is.

Osho: Yeah, the new meaning of "How are you?" How is your practice? Different language spoken around practice than is spoken out on the street.

"How are ya?"

"G'day! I'm fine!"

[Osho and students laugh] It's not what we're asking. We're asking what are you noticing about this moment of your life, what's going on? What contractions? What patterns? How did you get caught up? And interestingly, a lot of times... Something was uncovered the other day, someone thought that they shouldn't have any thoughts at all, that having thoughts meant bad practice: misunderstanding! You never know when something is going to come up. That's where we learn, when we misunderstand things, because in the process of correcting all sorts of insight and knowledge can be gained.

So don't be afraid that you're going to say something "wrong", there is no right or wrong here in this moment.

STUDENT: I had been wondering about right livelihood for a while because I had heard the term. Then one day when I was speaking with the Roshi, he asked me where I worked and I said I worked at a large software company. And he said: "Is it proprietary software?" [students laugh] And I said: "Yes" and he said: "Evil!" [more laughter]

So then I started to think about it and it was true, I was working for a company that made software that allowed arms manufacturers and other kinds of not so nice companies make more and more money off the backs of more and more people. Our software analyzed their information and let them make business decisions about how to make more money. It didn't seem all that "right livelihood-ish" but I also needed to eat, so I didn't quit the next day.

But this year, having been diagnosed with a rather serious illness, I was going to say "terminal", but we're all terminal... [Osho and students laugh heartily] it did somewhat concentrate my attention to what I wanted to do and so to me in the term "right livelihood" there might also be the opportunity for freedom of choice. I think: "What if I really only have a year or two or ten? Is this actually what this bodymind enjoys the most? Would really like to be doing at its best?" So to me, right livelihood includes that consideration.

Osho: Having a good time with it, having fun. Yeah! Having fun because when we're not enjoying ourselves, and again words get very slippery...

What do we mean by "enjoy"?

But if over and over and over again there's this kind of:

"Ughhhhhh....." [students laugh] "I hate this...."

...and we find we're getting more and more that way, well it might be an opportunity to look at what we're doing and say do we really want to be doing this thing? And that comes up not just around the job that we may get paid for so that we can eat and do what we want to do, but increasingly with practice you'll have moments when you go:

"Oh! What am I doing?"

We may find ourselves in situations that are incredibly familiar and we may often confuse familiarity for comfort or ease or enjoyment, so you start to get a better sense of what it is that the whole bodymind is really happy doing. And you'd probably be surprised... I never thought sitting watching goldfish... [Osho and students laugh] would be one of those things. Never crossed my mind!

So thank you.

Anyone else?

STUDENT: I'd like to say that in my careers I have always tried to be in a job that fitted my personal integrity and my last career was doing environmental protection work, which is pretty mother, apple-pie type of stuff, but even in a job that you feel is helping and not harming and is something that you really believe in doing, there are times when in that job you're asked to do things that you know are not right. So even though the livelihood is correct, sometimes your employer or your manager will ask you to go down a path that you don't feel comfortable doing and that's a bit of a dilemma because you have to make a choice then whether you are doing to stand up and say no, and possibly end your livelihood or go along with it.

I think that's a choice that people make daily in a lot of their occupations, regardless of what they are doing, when they are asked by people to do things they know are not right. It's not just a matter of right livelihood but also how you carry yourself within that livelihood, I think.

Osho: Back to what the Tando was saying, "how you are," you're learning to look into how you are doing whatever it is that you're doing and because you're seeing more and more completely with more and more more openness and less pulling through previously held conditions or previously held patterns, you're actually present for what it is that's going on, and you actually might notice that you're being asked to do something.

STUDENT: Yes, and what I've noticed is that all of a sudden you start to feel uncomfortable and it's a physical discomfort, and the bodymind is telling you that you're being directed in a way that you don't want to be directed and you have to listen to that.

Osho: I remember there was a student who was working in the hospitality industry. Now of course when you get back to the things that were seen as not being right livelihood way back when, like 2600 years ago, there are the lists, right? Not dealing in illusion, not dealing in intoxicants of any sort, not trafficking in beings not telling fortunes and so forth, you know, there's a list which is not all that long. But you think: not dealing in alcohol. Alright. There's this person, this student, very sincere, and in the hospitality industry, there they are, they're making a livelihood in an industry that if they stuck by the books, they could make a very good case for not being engaged in that industry, but increasingly we see that more and more the service industries are where people can get jobs. Even people with Master's degrees, PhDs and so on, there is growth in that hospitality industry.

This particular student was asked to join in the culture of the particular place of employment, and part of the culture was that you gave short shrift when measuring out beverages, probably later in the night too... The later in the night, the less the alcohol, but this was just what was done, it was expected, and if you didn't do it, management would get on your case and the others would be saying, you know "why are you not doing this" and so on. So this person had to make a choice around that and they chose to go somewhere else because like, that's just wrong, that's stealing, that's not nice.

So being able to look at things from multiple points of view is always useful.

STUDENT: I also think that when you can be sincere in what you are doing because in most cases we actually know what is right or wrong before we start thinking about it.

Osho: Yes, in examining what's actually going on, and making the choice that you know is right instinctively.

STUDENT: Yes.

Osho: Takes a little courage, though, sometimes to do that. And it would be nice, it says here:

"May all beings  
Succeed in right livelihood  
Never needing to do what should not be done."

You know, that's a little wish when you're doing the impossible, seeing people of right livelihood. Who are these people? How can we pick them out? Should we be picking them out?

But I think with all of these verses, all of the texts that are written, they're just ways of introducing more flexibility into looking at our moment to moment experience. So, as you were saying, a lot of the times we do know right away what's right and what's wrong, so it's a matter of execution. How we carry things out is also important.

And if you're feeling your feet,  
feeling your breath,  
standing up straight,  
opening the eye gaze,  
then you can just say  
"I'm not going to do this"  
and walk away.

STUDENT (lay monk): Osho, we vow that we will not act in support of any nation's military and I asked the Rishi about that once because as a consultant, I thought that that meant that I could never do work for the military, but my understanding

of his response was well, when you look at the details of what you're doing, sometimes you can understand that a little bit better. So, I think in that case he said that soldiers and their families and children are people too and therefore there may very well be some action that you can take so that simply by working with those people as individuals, as beings, that would not be in support of military actions, or war-making, or weapons-making and that would be just fine. So, something that seemed to be clearly "on the list" of things not to do, when looked at carefully, there are in fact things that could be done that would be useful.

Osho: I went through a similar discussion because I was offered a contract to go to a military base here around the time of the Bosnian crisis. There was the prospect of refugees coming into that area, into the camp, so what were people going to do? How should they be treated? What could people expect to have happen and so on. So, I went up there for a day, trying to present ways of giving the soldiers, the administration and so on, all the people that were there, the peripheral workers, a way of appreciating more clearly through an experience that was obviously not actually happening, they were imagining it, what it was like to be a person displaced from your home, from everything that's familiar and how people who were working, expecting to work with these refugees could make things easier for them. That contract was paid for by the military.

So, you look at what's going on on many different levels and that makes life more interesting because you're not stuck with a bunch of "do not's". Who wants a bunch of do not's, even with sugar sprinkles, you know? [students laugh, Osho laughs]

Thanks! [everyone laughs again]

STUDENT: Osho, what I gather from this is the list can be misleading if it's taken literally, or if it's just followed as the list of "do not's" like you said. Or like the verse said: may all people succeed in not doing what doesn't need to be done. So, a continuous looking into from as many angles as you can is what's important and that's what we need to learn from this, rather than looking for a list or looking for a right answer because that can change and might not be true or correct right now.

Osho: Yeah and it can change like [snaps fingers] that, especially now with the rapidity of change because of the increasing rapidity of communication. Now it's fast, really fast. So you want to know, like what's going on here? Really?

My background was working in television. So way back in the day, news stories went on the air as film that was shot and developed and edited. Then came the move to video tape and the videotape machines. The video tapes were two feet across. The tape itself was three inches wide, it was huge. So just picture an ordinary tape recorder you would put a reel on, but picture it a hundred times bigger, that's what it was like, it was really weird. And cameras, the electronic cameras were big, they were huge in studio, you would roll them around. So everything was bigger and harder to make available.

Then there was the development of ENG, Electronic News Gathering. So that come on and everybody was excited because there's this flexibility now, there's this movement, you can go out very quickly, you don't have to wait for things to be developed, you don't have to physically edit with a razor blade and stick it together with crazy glue and then put it on a reel and then run it down to telecine (the room from which film was rolled during a television show). No, it was just this new thing that was great.

We were out one day covering the appearance of a politician and there were about 12 people at this mall, and the director says: "Get them all together! Get them all together!"

So we get these 12 people around and then look at the picture after. There's the politician and the 12 people, and it looks like he's being cheered by a mob. [students laugh]

[Osho claps] That's what goes out on the air.

Well that really gave me a lot of pause for thought and a new way of looking at what's actually going on. It didn't sink in at the time, and there is no way I was going to give up that job. I wasn't practising or anything at the time, I thought: "That's interesting, that's propaganda."

And to see a whole group of people who were willing participants in that lie that went out on the air, that went all across the country to however many, a couple of million people, were watching. Most hadn't thought about it a bit. The director's point of view was, well, it makes a better picture. Reality is not necessarily a good picture, so you have to juice it up.

So you can keep those kinds of things in mind too. What is it that you're looking at? Are you looking at what you think you're looking at? And recognize that on the whole, people don't get together and say: "Well, we're going to consciously delude the public into thinking that this person is an incredibly popular guy". No, they didn't do that, it just happened, like most of history, it kind of just happened.

STUDENT: It might have been a more interesting story to show him standing there all by himself in the mall!

Osho: Again, it could have changed history... Little things like that... And we're starting to find all sorts of hidden away facts, now that the 50 year factor for information (after 50 years, a lot of information can be released), all sorts of stuff about all kinds of people. And you go: "Oh no, he didn't!"

And yes, he did and it's right here!

So by looking into how we fool ourselves when we follow our usual assumptions, and we recognize we're not different from every other human being on the planet...

"Maybe this is all a mass delusion... Maybe...?"

And we start to see how people are in general through looking into how we are moment to moment and what can be done about it, and it can kind of soften the edges of often virulent opinions... (I've been known to have in the past)... [students laugh]

But right livelihood, is there such a thing?

...we can make choices about things that we do see.

Yes?

Yes? What would you like to say?

Ino: Anything that helps one and the people that one interacts with to have a better time and to have a better time with what you have rather than pursuing something that you don't have...So I think that right livelihood is something that helps you to be just where you are and have a good time with it. And you can have, actually a good practice if you begin to see that you can have a good time with very little. You can have a lot of fun with things that you didn't know you had! [Osho and students laugh]

Osho: For sure.

Ino: But in any profession as such, there's always this kind of nastiness or consequences that are causing harm and destruction to someone somewhere. It's hard to avoid that.

Osho: Yes, indeed. Yes, you use a cellphone and there's some mineral that comes from the Congo...

Ino: Yes.

Osho: Well, I'm not going to go any further into it, but anything that we do, when you track it down, you find that at many places along the line, someone is at the very least getting short shrift, if not downright exploited.

Now, I watched something, and I recommend it, called "Good Hair", a documentary by Chris Rock, a comedian. Now, I think, right livelihood, comedians are on the whole, the actual job, the willingness to get out there and throw a light on social culture, I think it's right and good: Some are, not everyone, but comedy is a wonderful thing.

"Good Hair" is about the multi-billion dollar hair industry in the US that extends globally and it grew because people with nappy hair, Afro-americans are told basically from birth that if they have nappy, curly hair, it's bad hair. So the culture has grown up that they want to have hair like white people: smooth, shiny hair that flows in the wind and whips around, that that's good hair.

A lot of this hair comes from India, and I think that his research said that hair from India is the third biggest export industry, human hair.

So Chris Rock went to India, went to a temple where the act of tonsure is done to ensure good luck, it's always good luck, long life, appease the deities... So these women who have grown their hair very long go in and have it shaved off. It's worth watching the documentary just to see the skill with which the razor-wielders cut that hair off. It's brilliant, it's astonishing.

But anyway, then the temple sells the hair into the industry. Those women, many of whom I'm sure could do a lot with ten bucks, do they get it? No. So it gets worse from there, but it will tell you things just about how people are, and it's fun to watch.

The beauty industry? Right livelihood? [Osho and students laugh]

Anyone have anything else they would like to say?

If thoughts come up, I encourage you to write them down because at some point, since this topic is very ripe, it's one that can open windows on many different areas of human endeavour, at some point we'll do a mondo, which is what this is called, when there's an opportunity to speak and ask questions, present views, and no one is going to sort of attack you or say "you shouldn't be thinking that! How could you think that?" [students laugh] That's not going to happen, so we'll do this, we'll put out a little poster, a little something in the eMirror saying this is what we're going to do, so anyone who wants to make a little presentation of some thoughts they've had that have come together around a certain thing or questions they want to ask and so on, they can do it, we can do it, we can share info.

STUDENT: Osho, do you mean about anything or specifically more or right livelihood?

Osho: Well, anything, we can fit it in. And what is apart from practice? Is there anything that is really apart, away from it when you're practising? You're practising with this very bodymind and it's not as if you actually go and put your head on another one when you go out doing what people call "the rest of their life", it's the same bodymind that has practised and practice becomes embodied, literally.

So yeah, we can approach anything.

STUDENT: For myself, I'm just thinking at this point my right livelihood is employment insurance... [Osho and students laugh] ... so I've got lots of fodder to think about my next choice of livelihood.

Osho: Well, it's interesting too, sometimes people can get into an unfortunate kind of space about employment insurance, as if there's something shameful about it, makes them less worthy. But you think: "I paid into this! I worked for years so this is what it's for." Things can get kind of slanted and twisted in our own consideration.

Good. Leave nothing behind! [Osho and students laugh]

STUDENT: Gassho Osho, I had a question about right livelihood.

Osho: Yes.

STUDENT: The issue of making money and working for a company that's a for-profit company... I guess I'm wondering if you could ever have a company with a goal of making money that was incorporating right livelihood? It's always been a question that I've had, whether that in itself is a problem.

Osho: Well, it's interesting, that's interesting. Tell you what: since it's something you think about, jot down a few words, accumulate a little and we can make that part of some future discussion. I will too. It brings into question the whole idea of what a company is. Is a community that is incorporated a company? And so on. It raises lots of questions that are fun, so we can't really get into it right now, but...

STUDENT: Money.

Osho: [laughs] Money, money, money, money... Anything else? Okay, we'll close then.

## Every Breath You Take 96: Seeing a King

Dharma Talk presented by Ven. Shikai Zuiko osho

Dainen-ji, January 15th, 2011

Seeing a king,  
"May all beings  
Become sovereigns of Reality,  
Always displaying the Teaching of Truth."

Well... how many of you saw a king on the way to the monastery this morning as you trekked through the snow?  
—props for doing that,  
you got out of bed at the time that you'd set and,  
oh, there may have been little nits of self-image  
swirling around saying:

"Oh, my nose is stuffed, yes, yeah, it's really stuffed... [students giggle] Out of compassion for all those people who are going to sit in the Hatto, I guess I'd better not go today. [Osho and students laugh]"

And then we sort of [Osho inhales through the nose] clear,  
and then we might notice that when attention has opened from that thought of how impossible...  
(but how kindly and kingly you are in your generosity)

... that it's not such a big deal  
one foot in front of the other  
and here you are.

[Osho claps slowly three times.] Well done.

Now, "seeing, a king",  
like everything,  
it's interesting to look into what that actually means.

Now I can remember at the tender age of, I think it was around five, when we immigrated from Chester in the UK to 100 miles, roughly, northeast of here. We were driving down the road and I remember seeing the "Pembroke Lumber Kings".

I thought that's great!  
You picture kings, all this lumber... [Osho and students laugh]  
Hockey players, hockey players.

So the way language is used was of interest to me at a very early age  
because you couldn't rely,  
I realized, you couldn't rely on what things "said".

Now, right here in Ottawa, we have the “Garlic King”.

Great! I love garlic, I love that creamy potato garlic sauce that's made to go with certain types of shawarma, I love it, so the “Garlic King” surely should have the best tasting sauce?

Not so. [students laugh]

You're never too old to be fooled.

What does it mean this word: “king”.

Of course it means someone who is better than we are,  
someone who in many points in history had control of our very lives.

We would have situations where the ruler of the kingdom would claim everything and then persecute those who took a little bit because they were hungry  
or they didn't have clothes,  
or their kids were sick, you know, on and on

Basically: not fair.

If one could look and see an unbroken familial tree from a certain source that may be somewhere close to heaven, yeah, that's right, the Kingdom of Heaven... yes...

So we can see how we get fooled over and over and over again:

beliefs fold into stories  
and then there's another line,  
mystical powers attributed to it  
and so on...

I find it great fun to look at these things, not in a serious way (not for anything longer than say six minutes at a time),  
coming in looking, saying: “Oh my goodness!”—  
the surprise of recognizing something is wonderful.

You start to, as you practise,  
you start to be able to see your own patterns,  
your own belief systems.

The most important ones are beliefs about who you think you are  
and these belief systems are often based on and fuelled by something called “poverty mind”.

If there's stuff that's better than you are, then you're worse than it.

Unless of course you enter into conflict or you rob or copy or fawn; all kinds of despicable behaviours to acquire something that was never that other person's right in the first place.

You know, it's the basis of commerce, let's face it.

You've all seen little jars of marmalade, little tins of biscuits that read: “These were made for HRH so-and-so since 1896”.  
So when you can have the stamp of the king—or the queen, (we'll not look into that word today)—this means of course that your product and you therefore by association are better than the wad, the hoi polloi.

Well, we look at it, (and we can look at it in any country), and we find that it's simply not true and certainly not applicable right now, right here in this Hatto.

You're being asked and encouraged to use any reference, any site, any symbolic image or any image that can symbolize this superior being, to remind you that you can be the master of your domain.

You're looking into your experiencing moment to moment.

Now, we like to really hang on to stuff. We have stories about ourselves: we're very driven...

... like to where? [Osho and students laugh]

This kind of self-definition is definitely a limitation and worse than that, simply a waste of time and energy,  
very important: energy.

The older you get, the more you can recognize this simple equation: energy of the bodymind that you can use to actually do things is necessarily limited, so if there's a choice of, say, spending a lot of time being “driven” by patterns of wanting to be better than everybody else at everything, wanting to outshine, when you look at it, you can see how attention has folded into this story and that,

here's the magic,  
the magic of Reality,  
as soon as you see that:  
it's a moment of clear seeing,  
you're seeing reality as it actually is.

There's this contraction,  
there's this story,

content doesn't matter.

You've all heard that, over and over again, so we can substitute any content into any belief, it doesn't matter. Now, it can be interesting if you're writing a blog, perhaps, but not particularly interesting in this moment right here in this Hatto, not relevant at all, other than:  
you noticed something about experiencing,  
and it opened up,  
and you're not following it.

After a while, you'll notice that not only is it unnecessary, it's energy-consuming, and can become a stumbling block to actually doing well at whatever you're doing.

Because you know how it is, if you have someone looking over your shoulder looking over every little thing that you're doing saying: "Mmm mmm, not good enough, you can do better than that..."

Now isn't that an insane statement? "You can do better than that", when you're saying it to yourself?  
Because if you could, you would, would you not, if you were that being driven to perfection?  
I mean really, that's just silly.  
So you see that.  
No problem.

Moment of clear seeing.  
Feel the breath,  
sit up straight,  
feel the whole bodymind,  
allow that rib cage to open  
and that oxygen to get into the lungs,  
and then it goes to the brain,  
and all of a sudden you feel slightly more awake...

Wow! It's amazing: not a metaphor...  
Hmm.

So you may uncover for yourself all sorts of interesting things:  
You can use that word "king" to recognize that something's being pointed to, that it is obviously meant to be taken as better than you for somebody's reasons.

Now royalty are few and far between.  
Some of them have really disastrous stories; they get into so much trouble!  
Even now we have a situation, where Edward they say abdicated because of his love for an American divorcée but was intimately connected with the Nazis.  
Now, I don't know what's going on, so we won't talk about that anymore,  
but it's really interesting  
if you're interested in those kinds of things.

But what's royalty now? Who's a king now?  
Well, you heard the King, 40 years ago, was Elvis Presley.

"The King".

There I was, sitting in Pembroke, Ontario, I  
looking at a black and white television and this young man came on the screen and they blacked him out from the waist down. [Osho and students laugh heartily]  
Now, what makes you want to look more?  
What makes you want to find out something?  
Well, when you're not supposed to...  
Anyway, that was "the King" in one area  
and I'm sure you all have your individual experiences of that word.

When it pops up, use it, practise your own bodymind in this moment,  
recognize how much of what we think we should present to the world is shaped  
by forces based in "filthy lucre".  
They want you to be dissatisfied with yourself and to feel the anxiety, the pull of, the sadness of, and the depression of not being "good enough"...

"However, if you buy this and use this, you will be as good as" whatever icon is represented by the product.

I wish I could say it's a lot more complicated than that [Osho and students laugh]... but hmm.

So, as you look into the Reality of your own experiencing and see contraction into a sense of self and its stories: better than, worse than, and you're seeing both of them so you're obviously the Knowing of that presentation of quaint beliefs about who you are and how the world is.

You practise that moment of clear seeing,  
that moment of recognizing reality in its completeness.  
There's that thought, that pattern, whatever you want to call it:  
it's there!  
... there's also the bodymind moving its breath in and out.

Without that breath, hey, you're somebody else's problem, you're not your own problem. [students laugh] Once that stops... well...

So, you may as well recognize that indeed you are sitting up straight and you can sit up a little straighter.  
We can always sit up a little straighter.  
And then we can start to understand through doing this over and over again that it's not actually something confined only to the zafu,  
we can feel the whole bodymind in the whole moment  
and guess what?  
you can feel the feet on the floor if you're walking in kinhin,  
or down the stairs,  
or out in the street,  
or on the red carpet,  
you can feel those feet.  
oh!  
you can feel that skeletal structure straighten  
you can feel little spaces between the vertebrae  
you can feel what happens when the shoulder blades drop down and back  
you can feel when the lungs, of their own volition go:  
"oh thank goodness that person really for a moment recognized what was going on rather than being all consumed with their thoughts about who they are and how the world is".  
It's a remarkable difference.

And you may start to understand that the stories of self-image are remarkably similar to each other and those of other people. Sometimes they're funny but not when we take them seriously.

When we start to see them for what they are, which is thoughts about experiencing in this moment, and practising in that moment they lose their power to dictate, as some evil king, what it is you're going to do.

So at that moment, by displaying the Teaching of Truth, which is:  
you're not your thoughts and feelings,  
you're not any of the things that you pretend are who you are,  
they're just stuff going on like snowflakes and candles flickering,  
but they can, when taken to be the truth about who we are and how the world is,  
they can and have caused catastrophic harm.

So,

Seeing a king,  
"May all beings  
Become sovereigns of Reality,  
Always displaying the Teaching of Truth."

And how, I leave you with this question:

How do you do that?

Enjoy doing it, it's quite refreshing.

And if anyone can come for daisan and give me a really good story, I'd just love that.

So, thank you for listening, you sovereigns of Reality.

## Every Breath You Take 97: Seeing a Prince

Dharma Talk presented by Ven. Shikai Zuiko osho  
Dainen-ji, January 29th, 2011

Good morning intrepid practitioners, students who have stepped past whatever commentary came up this morning, or at whatever time, self-image, old patterns:

too cold, too tired, too this, and even: too keen,  
doesn't matter what the content is, any time you notice anything, which of course includes thoughts, you've experienced a moment of clear seeing,  
you've noticed a thought,  
you've noticed part of reality.

The practice of feeling the breath, sitting up straight, opening the eye gaze, allows attention which may have started to fall into old patterns, to open and that present moment is completely seen, the whole bodymind in the whole moment,  
Knowing as you,  
you as Knowing.

The next verse in Every Breath You Take is:

Seeing a prince,  
"May all beings  
Be born in the truth  
And be children of Awakening."

Well that's pretty straightforward, isn't it? We see a prince walking down the street [students giggle] and we say: "Oh! May all beings be born in the truth, (just as the prince was born in the truth of the king and the queen) and be children of Awakening". So it's encouraging us to use every moment to actually practise.

But wait a minute, wait a minute... aren't we missing a verse? We went through "Seeing a king" and now it's "Seeing a prince"... Okay, maybe the next one would be...? [Osho flips pages] No, no queens, no princesses. So we're going to spend just a brief amount of time talking about something that's not here, which is queens and princesses. Now what do queens and princesses have in common?

I'm not going to give you the answer, you can figure it out yourselves, [students laugh], nor am I going to launch into any kind of tirade or dogma or riff, but isn't this interesting? Now this text, "The Practice of Purity", was written 1600 years ago. So at that time, we can easily say you know, the way it was then, that females were basically for reproduction, and okay, sex. That's it, that was their value.

But this is Eastern, surely things were different in the West? Well think about Henry VIII, for example.

So we have a situation where what's missing can point to a whole segment, a whole closet full of patterns about humanity.

Now why might we, as students of Reality, be interested in looking into that kind of thing? Well, those patterns unquestioned occur to all of us, so as we look into, say the content of patterns, as we look into the disposition of bodymind according to unquestioned patterns of self-image, all sorts of interesting things can be uncovered.

Now, I received a little note from Mishin tando who is responsible for making sure all of these Dharma Talks have the right title and the right number, and there are a lot of them, this is 96, and she had asked for the text of the verses because she had noticed and gotten thrown because there was no "Seeing a queen" after the king, or "Seeing a princess" after the prince, and this caused her to think:

"Hey, wait a minute, I must have accidentally deleted something. Well, you're not alone Mishin tando, [Osho and students laugh heartily] a lot has been accidentally deleted since... [more laughter]

And then I was having a meeting with another student the other day and this student was quite excited because he had experienced a moment of [Osho snaps fingers] waking up to Reality. Now we won't grade these things, but what he did notice, he was all caught up. He was in a produce store, and he had bought some turnips, two little turnips and on the till it said "\$2.80". He said: "Wait a minute, \$2.80 for two little turnips?" and he started to get angry, and then through that state, he spoke to the cashier and said: "How come these two turnips are so expensive?" and she said:

"Sir, you're looking at the wrong cash register, look there."

80 cents. [students laugh]

Now, he started counting out \$2.80 because he hadn't heard anything that she'd said and all of a sudden, for no reason whatsoever, there he was, in the moment, seeing the woman in front of him and recognizing that sounds were actually coming out her mouth, and he was aware of the sights and sounds and smells and his feet and his hands, and the breath, and the eye gaze opening and he realized he hadn't heard a darn thing. So he said to the woman:

"Excuse me, I'm very sorry, I didn't hear anything that you said, I was all wrapped up in my state about the cost of these turnips."

And she said: "You're actually admitting it?" [students laugh]

And then she said: "Marry me!" [loud, loud laughter from the students]

And he said: "I already have a wife at home I don't listen to." [more laughter]

Now, he saw years and years tumbling with this pattern, he hadn't seen it every before. So, he was quite pleased and had recognized that he had something he could work with that might make a lot of things a lot better for him and for those around him.

So, when we can see patterns, cultural patterns, which is what we acquire, we don't go and shop for them, and say: "here, I'd like one like that, which makes sure that I will not pay any attention to one half of the population, give me that one" no, that doesn't happen.

But, unquestioned assumptions about how things are and how the world is can be seen, practised with as they come up, and that allows us to more clearly see what's going on.

You know, we have a situation now where, for example, the suicide rate amongst girls between 15 and 25 is on the rise. Why would that be? Their grandmothers were involved in making a world of equality. Well, I guess some parts just got left out, and those parts that were not big enough were added to, in the hope that if they were big enough, then they would have a life of happiness forever after.

Plastic surgery didn't answer the problems, didn't deliver love ever after, may have promised it, but didn't deliver, and maybe these granddaughters are starting to see that what they see as reality and what they experience is a pretty dull picture... But we won't go into that, I just throw that out so that it's available, it can perhaps help open your eyes to more of the things that are going on, you children of Awakening.

Now, China doesn't have enough girls. Why? They threw them out, literally. Girl babies: not wanted. Girl fetuses: not wanted, and it's affecting the ecology of the species.

Not everything, only a tiny little bit can be introduced in the course of this Dharma Talk, which is about your practice in this moment, but a sense of history can be interesting, and it is important.

When I first came across this practice, when I first saw the Roshi and made an appointment to go and see him and he taught me what the practice was and he said: "Go and do it, and if you don't do it, don't come back."

It was pretty clear, no arguing with that.

Then very shortly afterwards, I took monk's vows and all of a sudden, I was Shikai shamini. Hmm. The masculine is shramon. Then, after a little while, I was going to become godo-ni. Godo-ni? The little "ni" at the end, the feminization of words.

Now, come on: godo versus godo-ni? We talked about this, and the Roshi, wanting to make sure that practice was available, as it should be, to anyone regardless of parts, changed language. The Lineage of Patriarchs became The Lineage of Ancestors. Shramon, and shramoni became anagarika. Godo-ni lost its "ni", became godo. This is significant because without compromising the integrity of practice, the integrity of practice was made available to anyone who walks through the door.

You may have noticed that in this sangha, there are not special sittings for survivors of Catholicism, people who prefer their steak medium rare, those who like to dress in dresses on the weekend... However, you may see, when you see sanghas described, that there are groups who have formed to practise what they call the Dharma according to the colour of their skin, according to their lifestyle and sexual orientation. Now, the Dharma is available to anyone. What you do with someone and how you do it when you are not sitting in the Zendo or in the Hatto should not affect your interaction with and presence in the practice place with the rest of the sangha. That other stuff is nobody's business.

So the creation of ghettos within any lineage, within any practice community indicates to me very clearly that what we have is another reenactment of social culture with all its patterns of exclusion, and it's not the Dharma. It might be nice calming meditation...Okay.

So, back to

Seeing a prince,  
"May all beings  
Be born in the truth  
And be children of Awakening."

So, kids, when you notice anything, feel into the truth of the matter:  
that bodymind breathing in and out,  
pulling up through that breast bone so that  
the spine straightens  
the shoulders drop back and down  
and recognize that you're the Knowing of experiencing,  
the bodymind is how Knowing knows,  
and you are not any of the knows.

Have fun with it!

Thank you for listening.

## Every Breath You Take 98: Seeing the Elderly

Dharma Talk presented by Ven. Shikai Zuiko osho  
Dainen-ji, February 5th, 2011

[Osho whispers:]

Psst!

Psst!

Yeah, you! And you... and you... and you...

Surprise!

With EVERY BREATH YOU TAKE you're getting older and older... and older...

and one day [speaking now:]

You'll be elderly... [students laugh]

OMG.

"Me?" "No, there's gotta be a way, there's gotta be a way"...

And so we seek out ways, ways of occupying our time, really, between now and THEN, you know what I mean.

Today's verse:

Seeing the elderly,  
"May all beings  
Be able to decisively cut through  
And not follow contracted conduct."

Well, it's always a good idea, when anything is seen, when anything is recognized with the sense bases, that we remember to practise, we remember to feel the whole bodymind in the whole moment. That whole bodymind and what is being known by that whole bodymind, what is being sensed by it, is not who you are, you're the Knowing of it. So Knowing practises in this moment, without discrimination as to the object that is known.

In today's eMirror, there's a quote from "Without Difficulty: Words on Trusting Awareness" by the Roshi and after the sitting, at some point during the day, you might want to have a read of it.

... the seen, the heard, the touched, the smelled, the tasted, and the cognized. (...) The coming and going of each and every thing is the nature of each and every thing and presence as the coming and going of this moment. Being without aversion in this case means not falling into rejection but not falling into acceptance either. (...) Moving in the One Way means making no move against how reality naturally expresses itself but instead just sitting up straight, releasing strategies and allowing reality to be as it is. Be without difficulty.

Well, what does this have to do with seeing the elderly?

Well, it's the fact of the seeing.

Now, there may be all sorts of thoughts that come up, there may be all sorts of feelings that come up and in my experience, being officially one of the elderly, this involves things like pushing you out of the way on public transportation.

[Osho and students laugh]

It's an amazing thing, somewhere after 50, you kind of start to become more and more invisible. That can be handy at times, but you of course, none of you here would do anything like that.

The seeing sees what it sees. At the moment of noticing you're seeing something, you're practising, your feeling the whole bodymind in the whole moment, and you would not push an elderly person out of the way so that you could get a better seat on the bus, but it happens.

Now, in thinking about this Dharma Talk, I thought: this is actually really difficult because we must remember what we're talking about is not the object of the senses, not what has been perceived, we're not really talking about how one should treat those who are elderly, but quite naturally, when contracted conduct is not followed, things can be—how shall I say it?—more civilized in how we treat other people.

So I went and looked at several other sources for translations of this verse. Another one is:

If they see an elder,  
They should wish that all beings  
Be able to clearly cut off  
And not practise evil ways.

... which of course brought into mind: witches!

How, we have these pictures of elderly with warts and this thing and that thing, and moles and hairs growing and somehow this is evil. Perhaps that's what they meant, I don't know, but I found it interesting.

If we see an elder in the context of practice, we are seeing someone who has been around, has been practising longer than we have. What does that make them? Well to keep things simple, they have, through the act of applying their bum to the cushion over and over and over and over and over and over and over and over and over again, whether they wanted to or not, they most likely have, or will soon, take monk's vows. So that means they're wearing black. Those are your elders in the context of sangha.

What does this mean to you as students? It means they are resources. It means that when questions come up, you can ask them.

Now, I'm speaking right now from my own experience, and this is my own point of view, as it were.

I've had students come into daisan and bring up something that has been bugging them for a long time, like a splinter in their thumb, and it's developed a lot of pus around it and it's really painful.

So I say: "Listen, why didn't you come and we could talk about this splinter before it reached this point?"

And they say: "Well, I wanted to but I didn't want to bother you."

Now, in a social context, which this is not, that may or may not be useful, so I'm not going to comment on the usefulness of that in a social context, but the more I continue in this environment, in this community, in the Northern Mountain Order, the more I realize the only reason I'm here is to be "bothered"!

[Osho and students laugh]

Without the "bothering", what is there?

This of course establishes, needs to have established a certain understanding, and the understanding is this: if I am doing something that requires my full attention, when you knock on the door or when you send an email, I will say to you: "I'm doing something right now that requires my full attention, are you available in ten minutes?" I will tell you honestly what's going on.

I think that's a fair deal!

You have something, I'll tell you something, both are true to the best of our ability, so bother away!

But be prepared, you may ask a question and self-image may not like the answer it's going to get, but that's what happens in practice interviews, that's what happens in daisan because bear in mind, self-image, that contraction into a sense of self that has its views about how it is and how the world is, wants to be correct. It's totally convinced it is correct and gets really pissed off when you say:

"Look at you. Look at self-image, look what it believes in the face of your actual experiencing in this moment."

It says things like: "I know you really don't have the time to see me..."

Really? How did you find this out? Am I not looking at you with these very eyes? Are you not looking back at me with those very eyes? Are we not arising in each others' minds in this moment? How can you believe that bullshit you're telling yourself? But this happens all the time, it is not uncommon.

As we start to, through recognizing when we notice anything,  
any seeing, hearing, tasting, touching, smelling,  
any thought,  
when we've recognized it for what it is,  
and practised that moment of recognition  
by allowing the whole bodymind to be recognized,  
we start to see more clearly what's actually going on,  
the Reality of this moment.

As the weeds that we've woven around us  
by believing the many stories of self-image  
start to disentangle,  
we start to experience freedom  
from conditioned experiencing

... and there are traps with that too  
because self-image will go:

"oh yes!!"

and if it's an engineer, it will get out its little calipers,  
it will get out its little computer

and it will start to try and chart out,

to draw a diagram of what it had done to experience that moment of freedom.

When it's pointed out by a well-meaning elder during a practice interview, or during daisan, it will say: "well, it's really useful and that's just the way I am."

That's a pattern speaking.

You're being invited, cajoled, maybe embarrassed, you are being shown in many ways the process of perception and cognition. You are being given means to see how you are in this moment and to practise at that moment of clear seeing so that getting caught in the weeds happens less and less.

And indeed, sometimes it's not comfortable. Sometimes your face might redden, sometimes you might get all moist around the eyes, sometimes you might shoot venomous darts from the eyes, all kinds of interesting things can happen... (and I've been on both sides of it so I know what I'm talking about) ... Those are not you! They're things that bodymind has learned to do: patterns.

So with the willingness to walk, walk, walk, walk, walk, kneel, sit, sit, sit, sit, sit...  
...over time, patterns wear out.

Now, back to the verse:

Seeing the elderly,  
"May all beings  
Be able to decisively cut through  
And not follow contracted conduct."

Now, another interesting thing: it doesn't matter how old you are when you're practising, because in that moment when you're seeing how you are, when you are as you are, there is no life or death, there is no old or young, there's just this moment. And again, if you notice a statue of Manjusri around the monastery, if you read in the eMirror under "Who, What, When, Where, Why?" about Manjusri, you'll uncover this, here's a quote from "The Secret Life of Manjusri" series by Anzan Hoshin roshi:

Manjusri, the oldest and most significant of the bodhisattvas, the embodiment of prajna, transcendent wisdom, depicted as a youth because whatever arises is always fresh and an understanding which can meet experiences clearly must also always be fresh, always be new, always be renewed with each and every moment.

The magic of Reality.

So, breathe in and out.  
Sit up straight.  
Pull up through that breastbone.

Have a good time!  
Why not?  
This breath could be... yes, this one right here.... you're breathing it out... could be the end of in breaths...

Thank you for listening.

## Every Breath You Take 99: Seeing a High Minister

Dharma Talk presented by Ven. Shikai Zuiko o-sensei  
Dainen-ji, February 19th, 2011

Well. Here you are again!

How come?

It's interesting, it's an interesting question, that "how come?", because a lot of the time, self-image does not know. Oh, sometimes if asked it will come up with a story about the "greater good" and wanting to save the world, or be a better person, but it does spend, at least in my experience, a lot of its time saying:

"No. NO! No no no no no... I don't deserve this, no. Not me! Maybe others, but not me. Arg."

But then there's something that can't be denied...you find it impossible, there's been that little, to quote LC, "the hole in the wall, where the light comes through."

There's been that moment of clear seeing and so, oh, we pull on our galoshes, grumbling all the way and end up here on this very bright morning with the snow outside, the weather can't decide whether it's spring, it will melt later in the day... I mean it seems we just can't trust anything anymore.

Today's verse:

Seeing a high minister,  
"May all beings  
Always practise right mindfulness  
And all their activities be true."

Well the day that happens, monkeys will fly—oops! Dear me!

But what we have with all these verses, written 1600 years ago, are reminders that in the course of going about our daily concerns, we run across all sorts of things.

Well, we've been through kings and princes, we didn't go through queens and princesses, but that's okay, we've addressed that issue.

We see bridges,  
we see people who are disciplined,  
we see mendicants,  
we see people begging,  
we see people suffering,  
we see people obsessed with pleasure,  
we see a park,  
we see trees,  
we see gardens,  
we see water,  
we see tall trees,  
we see dangerous roads,  
and on and on and on...  
the same things that people were seeing 1600 years ago.

So "seeing a high minister", well, we're in the capital city of Canada so our chances of actually seeing, in the flesh, a minister in the government, are higher than they are if we were in Moose Jaw, Saskatchewan.

However, we have television, we have the Web, we have newspapers and magazines, we have radio so contact and the opportunity to see for example, a "high minister", is high.

Now, these people are elected of course for the greater good, to do what will be beneficial to the vast number of people who will never be in a position to be in, in this case -----the Parliament and make decisions. But something happened along the way, something happened to this parliamentary system when people would get together, in Britain, and point at one person and say:

"You go, and you represent us."

And the fellow—and it was a fellow—would be more accountable because he'd have to come back and say what he did. But then, you know what happens in situations, someone says: "Well vote this way, if you vote my way, in the long run it'll be better for you and your people, and uh, oh here, by the way, buy yourselves a pair of sleeves or some oats for your horse, or come and have a drink with me at the pub."

So it begins: corruption.  
What's corruption based on? Lies.

Lies people tell each other and tell themselves.  
So when we're sitting and we are practising mindfulness,  
what we are learning to see is all those expressions of patterns that  
that may not be exactly telling us the truth.  
We start to see them for what they are: something that bodymind has learned.

We didn't pick and choose, I mean would you pick a pattern that says you're the best at something or other and then have to live up to that? Probably not, in the harsh cold reality of the moment. You don't need to do that.  
Having a belief like that just gets in the way of actually fully expressing yourself in the moment at whatever task you are doing,  
so the belief that one may be carrying around that you're the best at something is what causes people to choke, athletes and so on.  
There are all kinds of examples of that because if you're the best, you have to prove that you're the best, "Oh my! Look at all those people! Look at all those people...."

So energy gets redirected into that belief and it becomes less and less possible to actually perform in that way, so there's a choke that occurs.

This can come up in the doing of forms,  
we see it,

we try so hard,

we want to do it perfectly

and so much attention and energy is going into the perfection that we actually lose the capacity to notice what's actually going on.

So we'll be in a situation where we are the only person in the room who is putting their hands down after a bow, everyone else is not, their hands are still in gassho but ours are not, ours have gone down and then there's that moment [Sensei claps]

Ooop! Back to alignment.

But mistakes aren't problems,  
they're not even "mistakes "  
really

because the purpose of all the forms is to show you—  
you the Knowing of experiencing, the Knowing of knowns—  
how you are.

So at the moment when the hands have "taken on a life of their own".

you can see it,

you can know it

and

at that moment you practise,

you actually feel the bodymind,

the whole bodymind

in the moment.

It's not that you're bringing more senses to the situation,  
the senses are already all there,  
but what information they're sending out has become hidden  
behind the balloon of the story about what's going on.

So you learn to see that,

you learn not to believe it,

you learn that the content,

no matter how appealing it may be,

is something

that you really can

ignore.

You don't have to go for the content,

it's same old, same old,

but

you're noticing the fact of a pattern

and at the moment of noticing a pattern,

it's a moment of clear seeing,

it's a moment of waking up to Reality,

teeny tiny,

but you practise that moment, that

that's what you're actually practising.

And what happens when we practise something?  
We get better at it.  
We sometimes forget that,  
we sometimes forget that  
whether it's skateboarding or embroidery,  
whether it's singing or painting,  
whether it's mindfulness practice,  
the more we do it,  
the magic of Reality:  
the better we get at it.

Isn't that reassuring?  
Well maybe not... [Sensei laughs] ...  
sometimes it might just get you through that moment.

Seeing a high minister,  
seeing or doing anything,  
we can be reminded of all beings,  
we can have the wish or desire or the fairy tale  
that all beings will always practise right mindfulness...  
Now we know that's never going to happen... "always" is a suspect word,  
but  
we can use a moment of noticing something  
to remember what it is we're actually doing.  
We start to uncover the many ways we actually lie to ourselves.  
We don't even know that we're lying because we're not used to looking into moment to moment experiencing.

For example, a decision was made some time ago to go to a certain movie this afternoon. And then a thought came up:  
"Oh, refreshment for the retreatants!"  
And there was an immense sense of relief.  
So I thought: "Wait a minute, hold on, what's going on here? That movie deserves and needs to be seen on a sunny day  
because coming out of that movie into the twilight of a perhaps colder by then, winter evening might produce unpleasant  
feelings."

We start to be able to see more and more clearly this process of perception and cognition,  
of how what we choose to do when based in mindfulness,  
produces choices  
and actions  
and activities  
that are more true,  
more appropriate to  
whatever situation we happen to be in.  
And that's useful.

In day to day encounters, students have talked to me about this because people are always asking others what they think  
about things.

"Do you think this coat makes me look....?" (fill in the blank).

What do you do in those kinds of situations?  
What's the truth about that kind of situation?  
Well the truth about that kind of situation is that you know what's going on because you have established and are  
establishing a practice,  
you know, through your own patterns,  
through the experience of being a human being  
more of the story, more of what's actually going on,  
so you can make a better choice a  
s to what to say.

Now to some people you could say: "It's hideous," and then there'd be [laughing]:

"Yeah, I thought so, I'm just checking with you!"

Or you might say: "I like the colour, maybe a different fabric?"

So you start to become more adept at how you conduct yourself,  
how you interact,  
and that's surely got to be a good thing.

Are you lying?  
No, of course not, of course you're not lying,  
you're being more and more truthful about what's going on.

Out of that also comes the capacity to perhaps ask or raise uncomfortable subjects.  
Self-image has ideas about the kind of questions it should ask in daisan or practice interviews.  
It self-edits and it goes: "No, I can't ask that because..."  
and we fail to recognize that self-image does not know what it's talking about. If it did, it would be sitting on the other side  
of that vast divide  
that sometimes seems to separate the practice advisor from the student, the Teacher from the student.

You can bring anything to talk about.  
You may not necessarily like the answers.  
Sometimes a practice advisor or a Teacher might blurt out: "That's really stupid."  
It's happened.  
You might then say: "Well, that person's being rude."  
You can ask: "Are you being rude?" or "I feel offended."  
And then that's another topic of discussion.

When you notice self-editing,  
and this is really easy to notice once you kind of get the hang of it,  
there's a little, when you look closely,  
there's a little table inside your head  
and at it there are sitting little people with books and highlighters  
and they check these thoughts that come out of little machines like ticker tape,  
and they redact,  
they'll make big black marks: no, not this, no not this, no not this.  
And if you believe that, have I got a bridge for you!

[Sensei and students laugh]

Some of the stuff, you see, is very funny once it's exposed to the air.  
We start to see that we have amazingly repetitive  
thoughts and patterns,  
and we can see that this is, in general, how culture works.  
We notice that more and more frequently now, t  
here are remakes of movies that were just made a few years ago.  
Come on, people!  
What's happening to creativity?  
Where's the freshness?  
Oh I see,  
I buy that freshness, I  
spray it on  
and then  
everybody's going to love me.  
Great.

We have commerce spinning stories for us.

We can't go out-  
why would we want to?  
—with our little sign saying: "Truth in advertising",  
well you know that's not going to happen because  
it's inherent in advertising that lies must be told so don't waste your time.  
What you can do is develop a more discerning eye, ear.  
You can see more clearly the process of perception and cognition  
and you can find things  
more and more amusing.

And we can hold those in elected office accountable.  
We can, when we suspect that we are being lied to, r  
aise the question.  
If it's a face-to-face situation,  
raise the question.

We don't have to live like robots,  
putting up with stuff,  
but many many many many many millions, trillions

of people over the years,  
have put up with stuff.  
I mean, imagine those poor people who actually built those pyramids  
so that one guy or gal and their family could reappear in the afterlife.  
One could say in a way they are, they have  
reappeared in the afterlife as desiccated corpses wrapped in linen  
that other people can study and gawk at...  
but I have a feeling that's not what they had in mind when they built those pyramids.

So we see more and more clearly  
the ways we lie to ourselves as a group,  
as individuals.

Speaking of Egypt, it was interesting recently  
with the raising up of people there to get rid of someone who had been around far too long  
and I mean, when you have an old man like that  
dying his hair black  
and believing it looks good,  
[students laugh] there's something that happened to his cognitive powers, okay?  
That in itself is suspect.  
But apparently the army was told to go against the people  
and there was a situation where  
they took their headsets off,  
got on their cell phones and many  
called their parents.

"What do you think we should do?"

They said: "No no, don't go against the people."

So it didn't happen. Interesting. There are more and more pieces of information so perhaps people are starting to  
understand things in a different way.  
Perhaps as a species,  
we're starting to see and question into some of the lies,  
however...

What you can do right now,  
moment to moment is  
feel the breath  
sit up straight,  
whether you're walking,  
whether you're standing,  
whether you're walking down the stairs to come for daisan,  
you can practise.

Use the forms to look into the experiencing of the bodymind in each and every moment.

The verse again:

Seeing a high minister,  
"May all beings  
Always practise right mindfulness  
And all their activities be true."

We have the capacity, so, take it on!

Do it, moment to moment.

Thank you for listening.